

“UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY AND STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS”

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The United States’ foreign policy and strategic interests in the Americas have been unchanged: it has sought economic and political stability through the promotion of trade and democracy; tended to its sometimes troubled border with Mexico; and sought to suppress the production and transit of illicit narcotics. Since the end of the Cold War (during which Soviet proxies sowed instability in the region), the promising strides made by democratic, free-market governments lulled U.S. policy makers who were distracted by events in post-Soviet-dominated Europe and an emerging Asia. U.S. engagement in the last decade has been “workmanlike,” with President George W. Bush showing innate interest in the Americas. But it took the provocations of Hugo Chávez to stir the public consciousness in a new appraisal of U.S. foreign policy and strategic interests in play in the Americas.

WHY THE AMERICAS MATTER

The Western Hemisphere is home to three of the United States’ top four foreign suppliers of energy. With the high costs of energy acting as a drag on the global economy, the fact that the Americas could easily be self-sufficient in energy today represents an extraordinary opportunity. The U.S. “homeland” shares thousands of miles of land and maritime borders with Canada, Mexico, and tiny Caribbean countries. Cultural and familial ties are growing stronger every day.

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U.S. trade with the Americas is growing faster than with the rest of the world in absolute terms,ⁱ with about a half a billion market-savvy consumers whose purchasing power is on the rise and who crave U.S. products. And, U.S. businesses have over \$400 billion invested in Latin America and the Caribbean.ⁱⁱ

Numbers are important, but so, too, is geopolitics. Elected leaders in the Americas, by and large, respect democratic institutions and work to strengthen the rule of law – and they should form a cadre of like-minded states in global diplomacy. The fact is the United States cannot pretend to compete in a global economy when nations that form its natural market are failing to realize their full economic potential and falling behind the rest of the developing world. Furthermore, the United States cannot protect its homeland against post-9/11 threats if its nearest neighbors are weak, unstable, or, worse yet, hostile.

NEW DYNAMICS RESHAPING THE U.S. ROLE

Although the 2008 elections will choose a new president and foreign policy team, nothing has been said or done in the campaign thus far to suggest that either of the major contenders for the presidency is proposing radically new approaches or even thinking great thoughts about the Americas. Some “Latin Americanists” might be disheartened by the fact that the 2008 campaign will not likely produce grand new strategies for the region. However that harsh reality may serve to focus attention on several inescapable facts that will reshape U.S. policy more than the best laid plans of its own political leaders.

First, the United States must redefine its role in the Americas taking into account that other protagonists are competing for attention and influence in the region. The immense North American market is no longer the singular source of trade and investment that it was a mere decade ago.

Second, the future of South America is in the hands of its own leaders like never before – with the resources, political mandate, and a broader choice of partners to shape their own destiny. Moreover, the unfinished business of retooling their own institutions and economies requires domestic fortitude much more than external aid.

Third, representative democracy has, at the same time, failed to address long-standing social ills and empowered populists who promise to do so by tearing down democracy itself. (Even the most skeptical observers could not have predicted the destructive, widespread effects of Hugo Chávez's new brand of populist imperialism.)

These foregoing facts combine to *impose* a new paradigm on how the United States interacts with its neighbors in the Americas – requiring *partnership* more than leadership. Since the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the Iraq War, much has been learned about the limits of military might. Even tough-minded diplomacy has limited application in a region with democratically-elected leaders who are accountable to their own people rather than to a sponsor in Washington.

The 2008 elections offer a time of natural renewal of U.S. policy and policy makers – and the timing is very good indeed.

TROUBLED LEGACY OF U.S.-SOUTH AMERICAN RELATIONS

Geography has spawned some remarkable, mutually beneficial partnerships in the region. However, precisely because of this proximity, the United States casts quite a shadow on its self-conscious neighbors. It seems like the only time Latin Americans are not complaining of U.S. interference is when they are grumbling about perceived indifference. The region's leaders expect vigorous U.S. engagement, but when U.S. diplomats speak clearly on issues or events in Latin America they are usually excoriated for poking their noses "where they don't belong."

Both U.S. and Latin American policy makers and opinion leaders share the blame for the awkward relations between the two regions. Most U.S. policy makers bring a characteristic pragmatism and impatience to the dialogue, and they become frustrated when their counterparts do not readily embrace U.S. recipes for action. On the other hand, at the slightest provocation many in Latin America's political class seek refuge in latent anti-Americanism – which may be one of the few things these elites have in common with the masses in their nations.

Despite shared Judeo-Christian traditions, Western values and democratic ideals that put most American nations on the same side of a great divide in the post-9/11 world, unresolved grievances toward the United States, which might be dismissed as eccentric or antiquated, are

rooted in very real humiliations of the past. While the United States has been a force for good the world over, the way it has thrown its weight around in the Americas has been particularly jarring among its neighbors. These sensitivities existed long before the Texan George W. Bush swaggered into the Oval Office and issued policy statements about “preemption.” And, it will take generations of mutually respectful dialogue and cooperation to clear the “static” that complicates communications between north and south.

THE CHALLENGES

Overcoming that historic baggage will take time. In the short run, how the United States addresses a number of pressing issues will impact its interests and image in the region:

- ◇ What the United States does about pending regional and global trade agreements will impact its credibility as a reliable partner.
- ◇ Whether it responds adequately to Mexican, Central American and Andean requests for anti-drug aid will impact the quality of life of innocent victims of deadly drug cartels and the governability of several vulnerable nations.
- ◇ Addressing the illegal immigration problem may require accommodating legal immigrant labor while helping neighbors grow their economies so desperate people do not have to abandon their homes to survive.
- ◇ How vigorously U.S. diplomacy defends representative democracy may determine whether the pendulum swings backward to populism, dictatorship, class warfare, and instability.

A Fragile U.S. Consensus. It is fair to say that, until recently, U.S. policy has been shaped around a tacit bipartisan consensus in favor of democracy and free markets as a development model for the region. Since the bitter, polarizing debates over President Ronald Reagan's policy to roll back communist threats in Central America, successive administrations have cultivated broad, bipartisan support for helping neighbors consolidate fragile democracies through market-led growth.

President George H. W. Bush launched the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, and the Brady Plan (which addressed the region's debt crisis). President Bill Clinton led the "Mexico bailout," responding to the 1994 *peso* devaluation, and he launched the modern Summit of the Americas process that same year. Plan Colombia, developed late in the Clinton years, is a prime example of a Democratic administration forging an ambitious initiative with the full backing of congressional Republicans. George W. Bush continued that program, which has produced dramatic results. Early on, the current president sought to employ the Organization of American States and Summit process to shape a broad, ambitious reform agenda. He also advanced a regional trade plan (with Chile, Central America, the Dominican Republic, and key Andean countries) with tacit Democratic support.

That fragile bipartisan spirit is being sorely tested as new Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress assume responsibility for key issues. While they ratified the agreement with Peru late last year after initial doubts, they appear much less committed to advancing the pending treaty with Colombia. Democrats and their allies in the labor movement cite the deaths of labor organizers in making very harsh judgments about Colombia, despite the progress that this friendly nation has made in improving the well-being of its people.ⁱⁱⁱ

In addition to trade, the U.S. aid program for Colombia faces an uncertain future in the Democratic Congress, despite the fact that most experts regard it as an impressive success story. A staggering amount of cocaine has been interdicted before it could be shoveled onto U.S. streets and schoolyards, and the coca production chain has been severely disrupted. Virtually all of Colombia's opium poppy crop, used to produce heroin, has been eliminated. The Colombian security forces have taken back the streets in urban areas, and kidnapping and murder rates are in steep decline for the first time in two decades. As narcoterrorist networks have been attacked by Colombian security forces, 35,000 paramilitary fighters have laid down their arms. Colombia's economy has rebounded from recession, proving that sound policy – not poisonous populism – is the answer to the region's nagging social unrest.

If Colombia is seen to be abandoned, the impact on U.S. credibility and influence in the region will be devastating. Some of the same politicians who chide the Bush administration for

under-funding aid programs may be among those voting to deny a faithful ally in the region a path to sustainable prosperity. The same people who have served up sober critiques about U.S. indifference or arrogance toward the region will be dealing the country's image the harshest blow in decades by rejecting a key ally that has done "all the right things."

The Ill Effects of "Bolivarian Imperialism." Another challenge in the region is the discord sown systematically by Hugo Chávez, Venezuela's budding dictator. Chávez has backed antiestablishment candidates throughout the region and has seen allies elected in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. The politics of confrontation and class warfare undermines an image of stability and regional solidarity that managed to reassure foreign investors and attract vital capital for much of the last decade. Chávez's petro-dollar diplomacy has managed to polarize the region and shake the consensus on key economic and security issues that had taken shape within the inter-American system. Using very public campaigns and building a network of grass-roots radicals in many nations, he has managed to silence those who might have criticized his march to dictatorship a decade ago.

Tentative U.S. Leadership and Flagging Solidarity. U.S. diplomacy may be shrinking from the challenge of resurgent populism. Constitutional crises in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador continue with very little comment from U.S. diplomats, who are struggling to look unperturbed but end up appearing uninterested. Those governments which once joined the United States in speaking their minds in the defense of democratic values – Canada, Chile, Central American countries, and Colombia – have gone silent. Those who wished that the United States would work more collegially have failed to coax the OAS to assume its rightful role in the multilateral defense of democratic order.

OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza has implied weakly that he has rescued the OAS from nostalgic interventionists, but he has done that at the expense of the Organization's relevance and his own credibility. It has been only a few short years since OAS countries agreed to promote and defend a "right to democracy,"^{iv} but, now, the grandiose rhetoric about democratic solidarity rings pretty hollow.

The Downside of the Windfall. High commodity prices have produced a windfall for Latin American nations rich in raw materials, fossil fuels, and farm products, and there is no

reason to believe that these prices will drop significantly in the near future. Although this income has buoyed some economies, there is no guarantee that governments will use these resources wisely to support sorely needed institutional reforms, capital investment, and sound economic policies. If the commodity boom allows policymakers to defer essential reforms, Latin American nations may find themselves unable to keep pace with Asian countries that have retooled to compete in the global economy.

The Limits of U.S. 'Leadership.' President George W. Bush would be the first to admit that discord over the U.S. war in Iraq has undermined his ability to "connect" with the region. Several countries have chosen leaders who define themselves in opposition to "the empire." Their divisive, populist rhetoric sows unrest in the Americas and challenges the consensus behind free market policies and democracy. The very idea that any government – let alone a foreign one – can resolve the region's social ills with another aid program is simply unrealistic. Nevertheless, U.S. interest is measured by many in terms of the generosity of U.S. foreign aid. And despite the fact that President Bush has doubled aid, visited the region more than any other U.S. president, and developed lucrative incentives for reform, some opinion leaders complain that he has not done enough.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

A new U.S. president can reinvigorate the North-South dialogue. The two leading presidential candidates have made an effort to describe their views toward the region.^v

Illinois Senator Barack Obama (D) commented on President Bush's spring 2007 trip to the region, saying the President "was right to underscore the importance of addressing the basic needs of millions of our neighbors languishing in poverty. The primary responsibility for doing so, of course, lies with the governments and societies throughout the hemisphere. Yet helping to lift people out of widespread poverty is in our interests, just as it is in accord with our values. When instability spreads to our south, our security and economic interests are at risk. When our neighbors suffer, all of the Americas suffer."^{vi} In a *Foreign Affairs* offering (July/August 2007), Obama included Brazil among key developing nations, along with India, Nigeria, and South Africa, that he would engage in "upholding the international order."

Senator John McCain (R-AZ) focused on security threats in the region in a June 20, 2007, address, noting, “Our security priority in this hemisphere is to ensure that terrorists, their enablers, and their business partners, including narcotraffickers, have nowhere to hide.... We must help governments establish sovereignty over the land, sea, and air, through broader partnerships with willing countries.” McCain criticized Hugo Chávez’s authoritarian moves in Venezuela and made explicit commitments to press for democratic change in Cuba, to maintain support for Colombia, and to extend trade and economic opportunities to encourage an “entrepreneurial economy.”

Free Markets Still Matter. Despite these challenges in the U.S. body politic and in the region, opportunities remain. For example, most countries retain an abiding commitment to free market policies. One-time labor leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has adhered to far-sighted economic policies as president of Brazil. Left-of-center leaders in Chile, Peru, and Uruguay advance responsible policies at home and are open to free trade with the United States and other countries.

Even the general public in Latin America has an overwhelmingly positive view of free markets. A recent Pew Global Attitudes Project survey showed that in the countries surveyed (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela), majorities have positive opinions of capitalism, free trade, and foreign companies. In fact, respondents in all countries surveyed expressed greater support for increased trade ties than those in the United States. With the exceptions of Venezuela and Bolivia, all countries showed greater support for foreign companies than five years ago, and except for Bolivia, support for free trade has risen in the past five years.^{vii} This resilient consensus leaves the next U.S. president room to maneuver in reinvigorating the vision of a hemisphere-wide free trade area. While some countries will opt out of this initiative at the present time, this does not mean that the promotion of this vision and framework should wait on the unwilling.

On September 24, 2008, presidents of 12 nations in the Americas issued a communiqué on the margins of the UN General Assembly to renew their “shared commitments to trade and investment liberalization, social inclusion, development, the rule of law, and democracy.” These leaders affirmed that fighting poverty and creating jobs are central objectives of such accords,

and they endorsed global and subregional trade accords aimed at these goals. Fortunately, this initiative is not intended to divide the region, inasmuch as these leaders invited others to join in these commitments and convened a ministerial meeting to press forward on this agenda.

A NEW PARADIGM

Toward Consensus and Partnership. The notion of U.S. *leadership* in the Americas has always been taken for granted. However, that sort of hierarchical relationship has fallen out of fashion since the Cold War was ended on terms favorable to a freer world. Even in the majority of nations that have very warm relations with the United States, today, the idea that they are following a leader has no appeal.

On the other hand, as elected governments across the political spectrum knit together associations with Asian and European economies, the United States is a natural partner. Moreover, in recent years in the Americas the United States has uniquely opted for using multilateral processes (e.g. the OAS and regular Summits) as policy instruments – opting for consensus-driven mechanisms based on dialogue among “sovereign equals” to forge common strategies. On very few occasions in the last decade could it be said that the United States has sought to impose a solution to a major problem in the Americas.

Even on priorities such as trade, the United States has refused to push key reluctant countries (notably Brazil) to adopt formulations that had been embraced by the vast majority of other states. Instead, U.S. diplomacy has preferred to seek common ground rather than impose its vision. This deferential approach can be effective when there is indeed an essential consensus; and this approach is required when dealing with democratically elected states that have defined their own objectives, priorities, and strategies – as is the case today in South America. However, the United States may find itself losing influence if it fails to defend those priorities and interests (as in the case of representative democracy, the rule of law, or essential security concerns) as they are assailed by a hostile neighbor (e.g. Venezuela).

A Commitment to Access and Consultation. How the next U.S. president devises a new policy for the Americas may be as important as what that policy turns out to be. The United States might begin to bury paternalism if the next president were to pledge months of

consultation with regional partners, culminating in a vision statement issued at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, scheduled for 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago.

The new president should not be pressed to map out a ten-year strategy for the future in the first days on the job. Indeed, the greatest contribution to building a solid policy is laying a foundation of mutual respect and consultation. In the meantime, regional leadership should embrace an opportunity to shape the new U.S. president's perceptions of the Americas and offer their own ideas to construct a new framework for U.S. engagement.

The new U.S. president should find a way to consult regularly with key Latin American neighbors, starting with his Brazilian and Mexican counterparts. A semi-annual informal, unstructured meeting could produce a consensus on key political and economic issues. The leaders would not have to issue policy pronouncements or plans but could instead use a private, *ad hoc* dialogue to discuss confronting threats to security, reanimating the OAS, using the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), shaping new cooperative initiatives, or bringing the region together on a global issue. Frankly, leaders of these key neighbors *deserve* this sort of access. It sends a message to the rest of the region that the U.S. president pays due attention.

Getting Over "The Wall" on Immigration. Although border security is a bona fide crisis today in the United States, high-pitched rhetoric about illegal immigration and the spectacle of building an actual wall on the U.S. southern border is a disaster for its image in Latin America. The current administration is applying vigorous border enforcement measures that may satisfy the legitimate concerns over a porous border. It is too late for President Bush to act, but the next president should be committed to modernizing U.S. immigration laws to accommodate the natural ebb and flow of legal foreign workers who contribute to the U.S. economy and return home. Of course, anything that the United States does to contribute to long-term economic growth in the region will increase jobs so that people can remain in their own countries and become consumers of U.S. goods and services.

Promoting a Free Market Culture. The real reason many policymakers seem single-minded about free trade is because it is all about freedom – not as an afterthought but as a central tenet. The only people who talk about trade as a panacea are those who want to discredit it when it turns out not to be. There must be a conscious, tangible link between free market policies,

democracy, and the rule of law to produce genuine, sustainable prosperity. So the United States cannot surrender on trade. A new president must look beyond congressional vote tallies and diplomatic impasses and offer a plan to knit together willing trade partners by breaking down barriers to commerce by 2010.

World Bank president Robert Zoellick, Bush's former top trade negotiator and deputy secretary of state, has outlined a vision for an Association of American Free Trade Agreements to institutionalize a culture of free trade, target barriers to economic cooperation, and engage the private sector in implementing agreements. Free trade agreements are a good starting point, but we need to link trade with "aid, good governance, property rights, and better working and environmental conditions."^{viii} Zoellick's vision is a recipe for continued U.S. leadership in engaging like-minded countries to use economic integration to fight poverty and offer people hope.

Even Brazil, which has insisted that a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is impossible without a global accord on reducing developed-world agricultural subsidies that disadvantage farmers in developing nations, could contribute to a pro-trade consensus. Breaking that impasse at the World Trade Organization talks would rescue the Doha round, open up room to move toward an FTAA, and bolster rules-based trade that benefits all humanity.

However, free trade agreements are not the only tools for breaking down barriers to commerce, integrating economies, and empowering entrepreneurs. Former U.S. Treasury official Nancy Lee has advanced the worthy concept of a regional investment accord that will harmonize economic and financial policies to incentivize trade in the Americas. The United States should look at its previous efforts in North America to expand such partnerships with Canada and Mexico beyond NAFTA, such as the Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America, and deploy similar programs in the rest of the hemisphere.

U.S. words and deeds should emphasize that the first and last goal of free market policies is to propel sound microeconomic reforms to attack the structural poverty in which 200 million of its neighbors live today. The United States should encourage reforms to make it easier to start a small- or medium-sized enterprise or access credit so that individuals can improve their own lot

in life rather than have to rely on corrupt and inefficient governments. Eventually, government will catch up, but poor people should not be expected to wait.

The United States should identify and promote best practices for educating at-risk youth, helping the poor, and retraining workers displaced by trade agreements. Mexico's housing credit initiative and Brazil's "Bolsa Família" (a stipend for families) are examples of home-grown initiatives that help the poor help themselves.^{ix}

Reassessing Anti-Drug Programs and Forging a Security Doctrine. The United States should commit to a comprehensive review of its "war on drugs." Nearly 10 years after the dramatic increase of support to Colombia and the Andes, it is logical to conduct a thorough review of the strengths and weaknesses of these programs and make adjustments. For example, placing U.S. aid to Mexico and Central America (*Plan Merida*) in the context of an integrated strategy in which all countries are asked to contribute to a common goal is much more promising than a hub-and-spoke arrangement where countries are perceived as doing the United States' bidding or defying U.S. "leadership."

In the post-9/11 world, the United States' closest neighbors play an enhanced role in helping ensure its security. The OAS-led hemispheric security process has gamely sought to update definitions of security, but governments have been disinterested in modernizing the policy-making or operational mechanisms in the Hemisphere. Although it may be impossible to conduct a constructive dialogue on such issues as long as Venezuela is led by a hostile leader, it is vital that the United States initiate such a dialogue with key, serious partners. Brazil is a key country with which such a cooperative approach is an absolute necessity, and that country has begun to modernize its own security capacity and to develop mechanisms for asserting its natural leadership in South America.

Indeed, U.S. engagement should have a security component, including operations and information-sharing to attack drug syndicates and other illegal groups (gangs and narcoterrorist groups) that operate with virtual impunity across borders. The United States must work with its neighbors to reinforce existing international programs to strengthen the capacity of governments to attack the acute threat of gang violence and to cooperate with one another in an integrated strategy to disrupt the drug-trafficking organizations that produce, transport, and distribute

deadly drugs. Again, the “Merida Initiative” – to provide roughly \$500 million to Mexico and Central America – is only a beginning. Substantial additional sums must be directed to Central American states that are at great risk due to unchecked cartel operations migrating south to evade stepped-up Mexican and U.S. enforcement efforts.

Promoting a Practical Agenda. The next U.S. president must advance a practical "competitiveness" agenda in the Americas, modeled on the highly successful Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). While the OAS and the Summit of the Americas churn out diplomatic poetry about defeating poverty in theory, APEC deals in reality. While the OAS political bodies offer up high-minded, long-winded, nonbinding declarations, APEC issues technical to-do lists outlining the measures that participating governments must adopt to break down barriers to economic integration.^x Latin America must spend its time seeking--and adopting--practical solutions to fighting poverty.

Seeking Partners to Fight Poverty by Empowering People. A new U.S. agenda should stress the work that countries must do for themselves in order to jump-start their economies, beginning with a robust respect for the rule of law and democratic institutions. Representative legislatures stand for the wishes and needs of the people and produce practical laws. Independent courts see to it that laws are applied without favor or discrimination. Fair regulations enhance quality of life and protect public health and safety. Even fair taxation has a role to play by supporting a state that has the weight and resources to enforce the rules of the game without fear or favor. Separation of powers provides checks on abuses of power. Democratic institutions intended to empower people have not kept pace with popular dissatisfaction. Many of those living on the margins of life have concluded that democracy has failed them.

Governments that pretend to be democratic without respecting free institutions are condemning their nations to failure. A sound regional policy should promote adherence to these tenets because they produce more just and prosperous societies. U.S. aid should be reserved for countries committed to accountable, effective government.

BURYING PATERNALISM IN A NEW PARTNERSHIP

The particular ideas and broad strategy suggested here envision robust and creative U.S. partnership to help countries do what they must do for themselves. This approach also expects countries in the region to accept responsibility for their own future and to view their relationship with the United States in a more modern, mature way. For too many years, U.S.-Latin relations have been dominated by a “zero-sum formula,” in which most of the region’s policy makers weigh their equities *against* U.S. interests. It is possible to turn the page and bury paternalism if leaders throughout the Americas are prepared to invest political capital to construct win-win formulas – genuine partnership.

ⁱ Author’s calculations based on U.S. Department of Commerce and International Trade Administration TradeStatsExpress database, available at <http://tse.export.gov> (accessed October 25, 2007).

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Balance of Payments and Direct Investment Position Data, available at www.bea.gov/ (accessed October 25, 2007).

ⁱⁱⁱ See Richard Lugar, "We Should Help Colombia," Miami Herald, October 8, 2007.

^{iv} "The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy, and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it." (Organization of American States, General Assembly, "Inter-American Democratic Charter," Article 1, September 11, 2001.)

^v It should be noted that the author is an advisor to the presidential campaign of Governor Mitt Romney and has been consulted on statements and position papers produced by that campaign.

^{vi} .” –Statement by Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) in response to President Bush’s trip to Latin America, March 8, 2007 http://obama.senate.gov/speech/070308-statement_of_se_7/

^{vii} Pew Global Attitudes Project, "World Public Welcomes Global Trade--But Not Immigration," October 4, 2007, available at <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/258.pdf> (accessed October 25, 2007).

^{viii} Robert B. Zoellick, "Happy Ever AAFTA," Wall Street Journal, January 8, 2007.

^{ix} See Roger F. Noriega, "Struggle for the Future: The Poison of Populism and Democracy's Cure," Latin American Outlook no. 6 (December 2006), available at www.aei.org/publication25225/.

^x There are several inter-American organizations dedicated to fighting drugs and terrorism that specialize in practical, technical agendas. The summit process produces reams of recommendations, but governments are not held accountable to adopt these measures.