Flaccid Anti-Americanism: Argentine Relations with the United States at the Turn of the Century

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In 1888, the United States began preparations for the First Pan American Conference. This was the starting point of the modern Pan American movement; it set several key precedents for future inter-American meetings. Most significant, the US government shepherded conference delegates and piloted proceedings in an effort to advance international agreements that would foster stable conditions for inter-American trade and finance -- conditions meant to advance US business. Delegates passed motions favoring the adoption of the metric system, the creation of an inter-American bank, and the establishment of an international monetary fund. They agreed to work for the implementation of international regulations for patents, port dues, and sanitation. But when the US tried to win support for its most ambitious conference project, a customs union for the Americas, Argentine delegates balked. Influenced in part by much-publicized anti-American criticisms by the Cuban writer José Martí, the diplomat and future Argentine president Roque Saenz Peña rebuked the US for trying to isolate Latin America from traditional European trading partners. After considerable debate, the
customs union proposal was dropped.[1]

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[1]. "Instrucciones a que deberar ajustarse en el desempeño de su misión los Plenipotenciarios Drs. Vicente G. Quesada, Don Manuel Quintana y Don Roque Saenz Peña nombrados para representar a la República Argentina en el Congreso Internacional Americano que se reunirá en Washington el 2 de Octubre del año corriente de 1889," 24 July 1889; Manuel Quintana and Saenz Peña to Estanislao

Argentina's diplomatic assertion was not out of keeping with Argentine concerns about the rise of the US to international prominence, and associated evidence of unethical American business practices and excessive jingoism. As early as 1847, the Argentine Minister to the US, Carlos de Alvear expressed mixed feelings about manifest destiny and American expansionism. In reference to the Mexican-American war, Alvear justified the US invasion in the context of Mexico's political short-sightedness and military capriciousness. But at the same time he expressed sympathy for the plight of Mexicans and lamented American military aggression.[2] After 1880, Argentine journalists and politicians began to follow closely the political stands of American populists, reformers, progressives and others. Before 1910, for example, the widely-read Buenos Aires satirical magazine Caras y Caretas reported on the appalling working

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Zeballos, 20 January 1890, File 9/888, Box 1, First Pan American Conference, Political Division (Pol), Foreign Relations Ministry Archive, Buenos Aires, (MRE); Steven C. Topik, Trade and Gunboats: The United States and Brazil in the Age of Empire (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 44-57; Jack Child, "The 1889-1890 Washington Conference Through Cuban Eyes: José Martí and the First International American Conference," Inter-Ameriacn Review of Bibliography, vol. 20, no. 2 (1989): 443-456; Bill J. Karras, "José Martí and the Pan American Conference, 1889-1891," Revista de Historia Ameriana, vol. 77 (1974): 77-100; José Martí, Argentina y la primera conferencia panamericana (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Transiciones, 1955), 45-53; Martí to Editor, La Nación (Buenos Aires), 22 June 1888; Martí to Editor, La Nación, 14 November 1889; Martí to Editor, 3 February 1890.

[2]. Alicia Vidaurreta, "Tres visiones argentinas de los Estados Unidos," Revista de Historia de América (Mexico City), no. 111 (January - June 1991): 69-74; Thomas D. Davis, Carlos de Alvear, hombre de la revolución (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1964), 165-199.

conditions of Chicago meat packing plants, criticized the inhumanity of execution by electrocution in the US, sounded the alarm over New York's growing international predominance in banking, and lampooned the imperial aspirations of President Theodore Roosevelt.[3] Even so, when considered over the long term, the Argentine challenge to US commercial objectives in Latin America was anomalous.

So was the passion of the Argentine minister in Washington, Vicente G. Quesada. Named a conference delegate by his government, Quesada eventually refused to attend the meeting; he viewed as ominous Washington's dominance of proceedings.[4] Quesada warned Buenos Aires that smaller Latin American countries were in danger of being overwhelmed by US omnipotence at the meeting; why, he wrote his superiors, had Washington defined a conference structure that allowed the US to send ten voting delegates to the First Pan American Conference when Caribbean

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[3]. Howard M. Fraser, Magazines and Masks: Caras y Caretas as a Reflection of Buenos Aires, 1898-1908 (Tempe, AZ: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1987), 243, 247; "Los envenenadores de Chicago", Caras y Caretas, 14 July 1906; "Las ejecuciones por la electricidad en Norte América," Caras y Caretas, 28 September 1901.

[4]. Alicia Vidaurreta, "Vicente Gregorio Quesada," Investigaciones y Ensayos, vol. 41 (1991): 483-487; Rodolfo S. Follari, "Aspectos de la política de los Estados Unidos en la correspondencia diplomática de Vicente G. Quesada," Nuestra Historia (Buenos Aires), year 21, vol. 41-42 (December 1994): 342, 345; Domingo de Pantoja (Vicente G. Quesada), Los Estados Unidos y la América del Sur (Buenos Aires: J. Peuser, 1893).

basin states could send only one? "The Yankees," Quesada wrote, "consider the Americas their own and view the remaining nations as children under their tutelage."[5] Like Saenz Peña, Quesada rejected a customs union and what he believed were false related expectations for Argentina's inter-American trade. He would be the last prominent Argentine diplomat before 1930 to describe Argentine aspirations for trade with Mexico and Central America as a false panacea. For Quesada, the customs union was a cynical American ploy that came after the US had rejected bilateral trade agreements with several Latin American states. It was a ruse to deliver Latin American markets into the hands of American businesses. In a telling contrast, while the Argentine delegation boasted expert diplomatists including Manuel Quintana and Saenz Peña, two future presidents, the US delegation was led by John B. Henderson, Andrew Carnegie, Clement Studebaker, and other prominent business leaders intent on developing Latin American economic opportunities.[6]

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[5]. No. 78, Quesada to Norberto Quirno Costa, Argentine Foreign Minister, 23 March 1888, File 9/888, Box 1, First Pan American Conference, Pol, MRE.

[6]. No. 60, Quesada to Quirno Costa, 16 April 1889, File 9/888; Quintana and Saenz Peña to Zeballos, 6 March 1890, Box 1, First Pan American Conference, Pol, MRE. See also, Eduardo A. Zimmermann, "Ernesto Quesada, La Epoca de Rosas y el reformismo institucional del cambio de siglo," in La historiografia argentina en el siglo XX, vol. 1, edited by Fernando J. Devoto (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993), 28; Vicente G. Quesada, "Las teorias del Doctor Alberdi," Nueva Revista de Buenos Aires, vol. 1 (1881): 352-384; "Proposed Peace Congress of American States," James G. Blaine to the Governments

In the years that followed the Washington meeting, Argentina held a reputation in the Americas as a strong opponent of the US-led Pan American project; at the First Meeting, Argentines had led a remarkably succesful diplomatic move to block the US project for Pan American economic integration. A decade later, many Latin Americans felt that Argentina's anti-US position was confirmed by the Drago Doctrine, a strong statement against foreign intervention in Latin America. But over the following two decades, Argentine Pan Americanism was redefined. By 1920, Argentina was among the staunchest supporters of a US-led Pan Americanism that continued to stress close financial ties, the dismantling of trade barriers, and inviting conditions for American companies doing business in Latin America. What happened? What accounted for the transformation of Argentine Pan Americanism between 1890 and 1920 -- its increasingly close alignment with US policy?

At both the Second and Third Pan American Conferences (1902 and 1906), Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico all sought the

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of North and South America, 29 November 1881, in James G. Blaine, Political Discussions: Legislative, Diplomatic, and Popular, 1856-1886 (Norwich, CT: The Henry Bill Publishing Company, 1887), 403-406; Néstor Tomás Auza, "La conferencia oficiosa de Caracas y la posición argentina," Investigaciones y Ensayos (Buenos Aires), vol. 43 (1993): 271-273; No. 219, Osborn to Blaine, 22 July 1881, FRUS, 1881, 134-135; Rogelio García Lupo, La Argentina en la selva mundial (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Corregidor, 1973), 68-73; Joseph Smith, Unequal Giants: Diplomatic RelationsBetween the United States and Brazil, 1889-1930 (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 9.

passage of resolutions for the arbitration of international disputes that would advance the jurist Luis María Drago's convictions against foreign intervention in Latin America. But at both meetings, US diplomats worked successfully behind the scenes to prevent a resolution from coming to the floor that would set in place arbitration instruments to limit foreign military interventions.[7] As dissenters from the US agenda on Pan Americanism in 1889-1890, Argentine diplomats were able to block the customs union project. But when Argentina moved to introduce resolutions that questioned the tenets of regional order in US foreign policy, the US was equally at ease in garnering diplomatic support to block the move. Moreover, at the same time, Argentine policy was shifting -- paradoxically, it seems -- toward alignment with US Pan American objectives. In 1905, in a striking departure from the Drago Doctrine, Argentine Minister to the US Epifanio Portela expressed his government's approval for the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. Manifesting his

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[7]. No. 143, Argentine Minister, United States, to Manuel Augusto Montes de Oca, Foreign Relations Minister, 1 May 1906, File IV, Third Pan American Conference, Pol, MRE; No. 153, Argentine Chargé d'Affaires in Washington to Montes de Oca, 7 May 1906; No. 161, Argentine Chargé d'Affaires in Washington to Montes de Oca, 14 May 1906, Box 2, Third Pan American Conference, Pol, MRE; "Informe de los delegados a la Tercera Conferencia Panamericana," 12 November 1906; Delegates of the Argentine Republic to Joaquin Nabuco, President of the Third Pan American Conference, 22 August 1906, File 5, Third Pan American Conference, Pol, MRE; "El Perú y el neo monroísmo" La Prensa (Lima) 16 April 1906; "Firebrand in Calvo Doctrine," New York Herald, 9 April 1906.

sympathy for the race-based underpinnings of the Corollary, Portela described it as a civilizing force that showed a new and important interest by the US in the Americas.[8]

By 1906, Argentina had aligned itself firmly with US Pan American objectives. The Foreign Minister instructed Argentine delegates to the Third Pan American Conference to cultivate American friendship in a manner that would not offend the nation's traditional European trading partners. Delegates were instructed to criticize any future European colonization in the new world in conjunction with a more general statement condemning any nation that might intervene in the domestic affairs of a sister republic. Even so, the Foreign Ministry made clear that if the Monroe Doctrine arose as a theme of conference discussion, Argentine delegates were to praise the policy as having defended the interests of Latin American states for almost a century. In contrast to the Argentine position at the Washington meeting in

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[8]. No. 93, Portela to Foreign Minister, 21 November 1905; No. 17, Foreign Minister to Portela, 18 January 1906, File 1, Box 1, Third Pan American Conference, Pol, MRE; Antonio Bermejo, Lorenzo Anadon, and Martín García Mérou, Informe que la delegación de la República Argentina presenta a la Segunda Conferencia Pan-Americana (Mexico City: Tipográfia de la Oficina Impresora de Estampillas, Palacio Nacional, 1902); Theodore Roosevelt to Secretary of State, 8 October 1901, "Frederic Emory"; Joaquim Nabuco, "El acercamiento de las dos Américas," September 1908, Manuscripts, Subject Files, OAS Archive, Columbus Memorial Library, Washington (OAS); República Argentina, Delegación a la Tercera Conferencia Interamericana, Memoria de la Delegación de la República Argentina (Buenos Aires: Imprensa Nacional, 1906), 17-21

1889-1890, the government now issued instructions for conference delegates to advance ideas for better commercial relations in the hemisphere, to sponsor commercial treaties, and to support the international dissemination of trade data. Argentina would support American goals of the simplification and unification of tariff, consular, patent laws in the hemisphere from 1906 through the Second World War.[9]

After 1913, in conjunction with the passage of the Federal Reserve Act and the expansion of US banking to Latin America, US-led Pan Americanism shifted focus to problems of finance and monetary policy, including the establishment of central banks and currency stabilization. Argentina reasserted support for the US-led financial component of Pan Americanism by strongly supporting Washington's initiatives at the First Pan American Financial Conference in 1915, and by active participation through the end of the decade in the Pan American body created to help identify and correct areas of financial weakness in Latin America, the Inter-American High Commission.[10]

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[9]. "Instrucciones a los delegados que concurieron a la tercera conferencia Panamericana", July 1906, Box 2, Fifth Pan American Conference, Pol, MRE.

[10]. International High Commission, Memorandum on the Topics Submitted by the United States Section of the International High Commission to the Argentine Government, with a Favorable Recommendation for Inclusion in the Program of the First General Meeting of the International High Commission, at Buenos Aires, April 3, 1916 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1916); International High Commission, Report of Prof. Roscoe Pound Upon Uniformity of Laws Governing the Establishment and Regulation of

Several factors explain the sharp change in Argentine Pan Americanism after 1890. To begin, after 1890, the geographical focus, language, and tactics of US Pan Americanism changed markedly. As a result, some Argentines were less likely to view their nation as subject to US Pan American domination. In 1890, US proposals for a customs union, uniform patent legislation, and other mechanisms for harmonious commerce were outlined in a manner that applied to all parts of Latin America, and were presented in a form that highlighted precedent in American law and implied US predominance with, for example, US government control of the proposed customs union. Latin Americans found little in the language of the US Pan American proposals that would distinguish different countries in the minds of US government policy-makers. By 1910, though, Americans had established sharp policy-based divisions between the Caribbean basin and South America. Most significant, the US reached a de facto policy distinction whereby problems relating to economic stability in South America would be determined through the Pan American Union and other international negotiations, while threats to stability in the Caribbean basin would be solved

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Corporations and Joint Stock Companies in the American Republics (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915); "Memorandum," 13 April 1916, 810.51/628, Record Group (RG 59), National Archives of the United States, Washington, DC (NA); "Intercambio con Norte America," Nación, 11 December 1915; E. W. Kemmerer, "A Proposal for Pan-American Monetary Unity," Political Science Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 1 (March 1916): 66-80.

through military intervention.

Though the tenets of Pan Americanism would continue to apply to all the Americas, in practise they became more specifically relevant to nations not subject to US military occupation. With that geographical distinction in place, American leaders remained committed to the objectives of a US-led Pan Americanism, but were more inclined to incorporate South American political and business leaders into the implementation of policy -- through the Pan American Union. In sharp contrast to a US approach that Latin Americans found belligerent, heavy-handed, and dismissive of other nations at the First Pan American meeting, between 1914 and 1920 American efforts to standardize monetary and finance policy in the Americas focused principally on South America and incorporated the views of leading bankers and business leaders from Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and elsewhere.[11]

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[11]. Gilderhus, Pan American Visions, 56; Robert Neal Seidel, "Progressive Pan Americanism: Development and United States Policy Toward South America, 1906-1931" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1973), 72-81; Bryan to American Legation, Santo Domingo, 22 December 1914, 810.51/37a; McAdoo to Woodrow Wilson, 28 October 1914, 810.51/585; Bryan to American Embassy, Buenos Aires, 12 March 1915, 810.51/53, RG 59, NA; "El Congreso de financistas," El Día (Buenos Aires), 15 April 1915; "Finanzas panamericanas," La Razón (Buenos Aires), 21 August 1915; "Un Congreso más," La Razón, 2 September 1915; John Barrett, "The Buenos Aires Financial Conference," 8 April 1916, Box 97, Papers of John Barrett, LC; Ricardo C. Aldao to Frederic J. Stimson, 12 May 1915, Frederic Jessup Stimson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; George M. Reynolds, President, Continental and Commercial National Bank of Chicago, to A. J. Peters, Treasury Department, 26 April 1915; John D. Hoover to Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, 31 March 1915, Box 135; McAdoo to A. H. Wiggin, President, Chase National Bank, 11

Like Epifanio Portela when he offered support for the Roosevelt Corollary, other Argentines recognized the significance of these changes. The American distinction between the Caribbean and the nations of the far south dovetailed with a growing Argentine sense of their nation's exceptionalism among the peoples of the Americas -- an exceptionalism founded on race-based stereotypes and hiearchies. In 1890, Quesada's anti-Yanqui position reflected Argentine identification with other Latin American countries in the face of US economic expansionism. By 1905, Argentines were less certain of that linkage with Latin America. And by 1912, Argentines were certain that their interests were distinct from those of the Caribbean basin states. In that year, for example, Afro-Cubans rose in rebellion against the US-imposed Cuban republic. Cuban politicians had failed to comply with the promised redress of widespread discrimination and poverty among blacks. In May, under the political banner of the Partido Independiente de Color, Afro-Cubans took up arms against government authorities. Clashes with government troops continued for several months. Thousands of insurgents were killed. For the light-skinned rulers of Cuba, the rising was a sobering warning of the dangers of inter-racial confrontation. Yet, rather than forcing a government reevaluation of social

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May 1915, Box 136, Papers of William G. McAdoo, LC.

injustices, the rebellion entrenched racial animosities.[12]

Before the outbreak of violence, the Argentine chargé d'affaires in Havana had warned not of mounting domestic political tensions, but of the distressing escalation of American control on the island. In March, Jorge Reyes echoed Vicente Quesada when he reported a change in American policy from passive observation to active guardianship. He cited an impending railroad concession to Americans and the corrupt workings of the Cuban government in partnership with the US. When race rioting began in May 1912, the Argentine appraisal of American intervention softened. The Argentine Legation in Washington and correspondence from the Ministry now described the US presence in Cuba as justifiably protective of American business interests. In early June, American troops landed on the island to quell the violence. The Argentine chargé in Havana rationalized armed intervention on two levels. He reasoned that all foreign interests had to be secured against attack. Were the US not to assume this responsibility, a European power would intervene certainly. Reyes juxtaposed American efforts to protect private

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[12]. Louis A. Pérez, Jr., "Politics, Peasants, and People of Color: The 1912 Race War in Cuba Reconsidered," Hispanic American Historical Review, vol. 56 (August 1986): 509-539; Aline Helg, "Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930," in The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940, edited by Richard Graham (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 37-69. See also Eduardo A. Zimmermann, "Racial Ideas adn Social Reform: Argentina, 1890-1916," Hispanic American Historical Review, vol. 72 (February 1992): 23-46.

property with a reference to marauding "negradas;" this fiercely racist term for the revolutionaries intimated that African-Cuban unruliness and savagery lay at the root of the uprising, and justified American military intervention.[13]

An emerging sense, then, of racial superiority over other Latin Americans among Argentine middle classes and elites helps explain the Argentine realignment toward a pro-US Pan American policy -- and the distancing of Argentina from the anti-US Pan Americanism of Quesada. In 1915, the veteran diplomat and Foreign Minister Carlos Becú translated Argentine racial superiority into a model for strategic control in the hemisphere. While the US would be responsible for the Caribbean and Central America, Becú reasoned, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile might apply a "Monroeism of their own" to South America.[14] Like other Argentines -- and many Americans --- Becú believed that US authority in the Caribbean basin was founded on racial differences; in this racist scheme of international affairs, it seemed natural that a nation of light-skinned inhabitants would dominate countries in which the majority were of African or

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[13]. Reyes to Bosch, 12 March 1912; Bosch to Naón, 8 July 1912, File 5, Box 4, United States, Pol, MRE.

[14]. Carlos A. Becú, El "A.B.C." y su concepto político y jurídico (Buenos Aires: Librería "La Facultad" de Juan Roldán, 1915), 13, 19; No. 338, Tower to Grey, 27 October 1916, 245768, 2601, Foreign Office Series (FO) 371, Public Record Office, London (PRO).

native origin. Becú's critique of US expansionism, then, was offset by his own prejudiced rationalizations and a sympathy many Argentines shared for the US as a sister republic composed of "Europeans." Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, Becú reasoned, were suitable for white inhabitants by reason of "climate and geography." Becú gingerly side-stepped the large numbers of Native Argentines outside Buenos Aires, and the important population of African-Brazilians: despite this latter "disadvantage," Brazil was struggling "nobly" against the influence of the tropics, Becú asserted. He included Brazil in his proposal for a South American Monroeism based on the Brazilian potential for great power status. The ABC nations would dominate their dark-skinned neighbors just as the US influenced the Caribbean basin.[15]

Other examples of elite Argentine perceptions of a race-based hierarchy of nations help explain Argentina's Pan American

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[15]. Federico M. Moreno Quintana, La Diplomácia de Yrigoyen (La Plata: Editorial Inca, 1928), 395-458. For a discussion of race as an ideological basis for American foreign policy, see Hunt, Ideology, 46-91. In conjunction with Argentine perceptions of Latin American racial inferiority, there was a growing "admiration" after 1900 for the strength of the American "Anglo-Saxon" race. The Argentine diplomat Martín García Merou, for example, marveled at the energy of US industrial production. In 1905 he described admiringly what he viewed as the American work ethic as "work fever" -- a type of fanaticism characteristic of the energy of the American "race". Martín García Merou, Apuntes económicos é industriales sobre los Estados Unidos (Buenos Aires: Félix Lajouane y Cia. Editores, 1905), 18.

realignment. In 1917, the Argentine Minister in Mexico expressed sympathy for that nation's Revolution. At the same time, he doubted whether the indigenous majority was capable of republican government. Manuel Malbrán described Native Mexicans as without a civilized concept of nation or nationality. In addition, he voiced longstanding prejudices common in the US by characterizing violence as a character trait of indigenous Mexicans.[16] On several occasions during the 1910s, in response to the threat of cross-border incursions by Mexican revolutionaries into the US, President Victorino de la Plaza and other Argentine leaders made public their sympathy for possible US military retaliations and other measures needed to protect American lives in a battle for civilization.[17] As in the case of the US, Argentine perceptions of race and civilization in Latin America had much to do with two important historical developments -- popular and elite anxieties over the massive influx of immigrants and the conquest of Native peoples. Early in the twentieth century (and like the US a generation before), Argentina was still moving militarily, economically, and politically to dominate its frontiers and to assert federal authority over disparate regional polities, including Native peoples. As late as 1905, for example, the

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[16]. No. 1, Manuel Malbrán to Carlos A. Becú, 2 January 1917, File 20, Box 7, Mexico, Pol, MRE.

[17]. No. 1034, Stimson to Secretary of State, 14 January 1920, 635.1112/20, RG 59, NA.

estanciero Ramón Santamarina sent an expedition into the arid Chaco region, still a "frontier", to explore economic opportunities. Not unlike nineteenth century American exploration parties in the west, this group included a scientist and a cavalry sargent with nine soldiers. Like several other campaigns into the interior, the group faced what Argentines described as the constant danger of "Indian attack".[18]

As did Americans, Argentines transferred their search for national strength and central authority at home to their relations abroad. Ex-Foreign Minister Estanislao S. Zeballos described Argentina's natural quest for political and economic superiority in the region as an Argentine "Manifest Destiny", based in part on what Argentines believed was the belicosity of Brazil and Chile, the putative superiority of Argentine government forms, and the glories of Argentina's independence movement (which, according to Zeballos, had brought independence to Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Paraguay). Zeballos's visions of Argentine strategic greatness found support among a range of

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[18]. Augusto Golletti Wilkinson, "Una expedición al Chaco de principios de siglo," Historia, vol. 11, no. 44 (December 1991 - February 1992): 88-91; Néstor Tomás Auza, "La ocupación del espacio vacío: de la frontera interior a la frontera exterior, 1876-1910," in La Argentina del Ochenta al Centenario, compiled by Gustavo Ferrari and Ezequiel Gallo (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1980), 61-89; Eduardo A. Zimmerman, "Los intelectuales, las ciencias sociales y el reformismo liberal: Argentina, 1890-1916," Desarrollo Económio, vol. 31, no. 124 (January - March 1992): 545-564.

political leaders that included Victorino de la Plaza, Roque Sáenz Peña, Vicente G. Gallo, Tomás Le Breton, and Fernando Saguier. Some cited racial and ethnic dimensions as a basis for proposed Argentine leadership in Latin America. The author José Ingenieros invoked crude social Darwinist principals when he described "black" races as inferior and wrote of a new and superior Argentine race. The right-wing political theorist Manuel Carlés warned that Argentine "victory" would be based on the physical, intellectual and moral energies of those who were strongest.[19]

The diplomat Luís María Drago was among Argentines who worried about race and culture. In 1888, expressing the anxiety of many Argentines about the "primitive eroticism" of the tango, Drago had complained that, as danced by lower class and dark-skinned residents of Buenos's Aires port district, the tango was

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[19]. Roberto Etchepareborda, "Estanislao S. Zeballos y los debates secretos de 1914 en la Cámara de Diputados," Historia, vol. 1, no. 3 (September - November 1981): 30, 41; Estanislao Zeballos, "Mitre," Revista de Derecho, Historia y Letras, vol. 24 (1906): 93; Roberto Etchepareborda, "Política de poder en el Cono Sur," Historia, vol. 1, no. 4 (January - February 1982): 26-28; Roberto Etchepareborda, "La generación argentina del `Destino Manifiesto'," Investigaciones y Ensayos, vol. 16 (January - June 1974): 129-132; Manuel Carlés, "Determinismo de la victoria en Sud-América," Revista de Derecho, Historia y Letras, vol. 43 (1912): 170-181; Tulio Halperin Donghi, "Canción de otoño en primavera: previsiones sobre la crisis de la agricultura cerealera argentina (1894-1930)," Desarrollo Económico, vol. 24, no. 95 (October - December 1984): 366-386; José Ingenieros, Crónicas de viaje, Buenos Aires: R. J. Roggero, 1951 [orig. 1908], 190-193.

linked to the basest forms of criminality.[20] Though perceived in the Americas as a Pan American expression of solidarity with Latin America after the example of Quesada in 1890, the Drago Doctrine was likely not intended as such a statement (though the question of race remained apart from this document). Stated otherwise, the abruptness of the Argentine Pan American shift after 1902 may reflect an inaccurate international perception of what Drago meant. Many misread the Doctrine after the fact. In 1902, Argentine Foreign Minister Drago decried loan collection by foreign governments through military force. Drago insisted that these actions were contrary to the tenets of the Monroe Doctrine, which he supported. The Argentine minister in Washington, Martín García Merou, declared Drago's statement the first acknowledgement and acceptance of the Monroe Doctrine "as a principle of American public law by a nation of South America."[21]

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[20]. Marta E. Savigliano, Tango and the Political Economy of Passion (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 110-111; 128-130; Donald S. Castro, The Argentine Tango as Social History, 1880-1955 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 20; Luis María Drago, Los homgres de presa (Buenos Aires: La cultura argentina, 1921 [orig. 1888]), 48; Tulio Carella, Tango-mito y esencia. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1966. 77.

[21]. Drago to García Merou, 29 December 1902; Edward Winslow Ames, United States Chargé d'Affaires in Buenos Aires, to John Hay, Secretary of State, 5 May 1903, FRUS, 1903, 1-6. In practical terms Drago's comments were striking and brought Argentine diplomacy to the attention of the international community. However, the historian Dexter Perkins has noted that Drago's formal support for the Monroe Doctrine was not new in Latin America. In 1861 and 1862, the Mexican minister to Washington, Matías Romero, had issued a similar criticism concerning the French incursion in Mexico. Perkins, Monroe

In part, though, the significance of Drago's statement rests in its timing; issued on the eve of the Roosevelt Corollary and three decades of heated American military activity in the Caribbean basin, Drago's suggestions were bound for American rejection at a time when Americans were redefining radically what Monroe meant. Drago had expected US backing for his invocation of Monroe, but failed to identify the United States' own ambitions in the use of military force for filibuster operations. By the same token, those who later ascribed an anti-interventionist stand to Drago that focused on the US were mistaken. Drago likely meant no criticism of US authority in the Caribbean basin. Moreover, the Drago Doctrine certainly wasn't taken as a criticism in Washington; a short time later the US nominated Drago to a term on the International Court of Justice.[22]

Doctrine, 1826-1867, 438-439. In 1905, Argentine Foreign Minister Carlos Rodriguez Larreta reaffirmed Drago's interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine and expressed Argentina's support for this pillar of United States foreign policy. In 1906, the Brazilian Foreign Minister, Baron Rio Branco, is believed to have written an equally laudatory assessment of the doctrine. No. 244, A. M. Beaupré, United States Minister in Buenos Aires, to Secretary of State, 24 October 1905, FRUS, 1905, 48; J. Penn (Baron Rio Branco), "Brazil, the United States and Monroeism," FRUS, 1906, part 1, 116-124.

[22]. Luis M. Drago, La República Argentina y el caso de Venezuela (Buenos Aires: Conil Hermanos, 1903); "Discurso pronunciado en el banquete ofrecido al Secretario de Estado de los Estados Unidos, M. Elihu Root, en el teatro de la Opera, el 17 de agosto de 1906," in Luis M. Drago, Discursos y Escritos, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 1938), 85-89; John Bassett Moore, American Diplomacy: Its Spirit and Achievements (New York:

The most important factor in explaining the reconstruction of Argentine Pan Americanism after 1890 is the formidable transformation of the Argentine economy, and its striking linkages with the US. Driven by a booming export-led economy in beef and cereals, Argentine trade ties with the US increased rapidly. Even though Argentines complained bitterly about the American imposition of high duties after 1890, bilateral trade rose steeply. From 1891 to 1895 some $9.5 million worth of goods were traded. Between 1910 and 1914 the two nations exchanged $80 million in commodities.[23] Even though British exports to Argentina represented more than the combined sales of France, Germany, and the US during the first years of the twentieth century, American entrepreneurs continued to make notable progress in winning Argentine markets. Juxtaposing the periods 1894-1898 and 1899-1903, annual sales to Argentina rose by 100%, compared with increases of only 50% for the United Kingdom, and 26% for Germany. Moreover, in the first years of the twentieth century, in Argentina and elsewhere in South America, the US began to overcome such disadvantages as limited steamship transport, the absence of North American banking facilities in

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Harper and Brothers, 1905), 153-154, 157; Michael H. Hunt, Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy (New Haven, 1987), 131-135.

[23]. Tom E. Terrill, The Tariff, Politics, and American Foreign Policy, 1874-1901 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 159-183.

Buenos Aires, and poor sensitivity to market conditions. The British Board of Trade Journal in Buenos Aires observed that "harvesting machinery and windmills are almost entirely, if not exclusively, supplied to Argentina by the United States. There is very little chance to oust these American articles from this market."[24]

In conjunction with growing trade and financial ties to the US, Argentine political and business leaders increasingly identified the interests of American business and finance as their own. This is evident in the transformation of Argentine Pan Americanism after 1900 and the tendency of Argentine authorities to follow a US lead in the Pan American search for financial and commercial stability in the Americas. Also central to Argentina's Pan Americanism after 1900 was the strong ambition among political and economic elites to compete with the United States for commercial predominance in Latin America. Argentines found finance- and commerce-based Pan Americanism compelling in part because of Argentine economic growth and associated economic ties to the US. But Argentine Pan Americanism -- a set of

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[24]. CRUS, 1906, 156-157. See also A. G. Snyder, United States Consul General in Buenos Aires, "Details from the Consul-General"; T. B. Van Horne, United States Consul-General in Rosario, "Rosario," CRUS, 1906, 159-163; 163-165; "Ocean Freight Rates and Argentine Trade," Monthly Consular Reports, No. 224 (May 1899), 141-143; Lionel Carden, "The Decline of British Commercial Supremacy in Latin America," 13 August 1910, 30099, 381, FO 368, PRO.

policies that backed US leadership and policy on Pan American politics -- was also founded on the notion that inter-American policies meant to advance US international commerce might also advance Argentine commerce abroad. The Argentine drive for a ranking strategic and commercial position in the Americas was focused on Argentine economic expansion and projections for still more growth, Argentine diplomats pursued a weakly-conceived strategy of commercial competition with the US in the Caribbean basin, under the umbrella of Pan Americanism.[25]

In 1911, for example, the Argentine Minister in Mexico decried American imperialism: Mexico was becoming a "virtual dominion" of the US. Jacinto S. García proposed an ambitious solution -- an Argentine diplomatic rapprochement with the nations of the Caribbean basin. He predicted that the initiative would be well-received in the region and, as a result, would

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[25]. Eric Lott, "White Like Me: Racial Cross-Dressing and the Construction of American Whiteness," in Cultures of United States Imperialism, edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 474-495; David Rock, Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History and Its Impact (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 56-57; Martín García Merou, Apuntes económicos é industriales sobre los Estados Unidos (Buenos Aires: Félix Lajouane y Cía. Editores, 1905); Akira Iriye, "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," Diplomatic History, vol. 3 (February 1979): 115-128; Silvia Marchese, "Empresarios en búsqueda de un espacio político. La CACIP: realidad interna y rumbos externos," in Argentina en la paz de dos guerras, 1914-1945, edited by Waldo Ansaldi, Alfredo R. Pucciarelli, José C. Villaruel (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1993), 107-133.

garner votes for Argentina at international conferences. "There is no other road left," he wrote, "but that of reaching an entente with the nations most determined to strengthen themselves against the United States."[26]

García also insisted that his proposed entente would strengthen Argentina's commercial relations with Central America and Mexico. He founded this projection on an impressive recent increase in Argentine-Mexican commerce, though one based exclusively on the limited nature of Argentine economic growth. In fiscal 1909-1910, the US exported almost $13 million in goods to Mexico. Argentina managed less than $2 million. Though the disparity concealed a 7900% rise in Argentine exports from the previous year, this change represented only traditional areas of Argentine production. In 1908-1909 Argentina sent no cereals to Mexico. A year later exports of seeds and grains reached $1,662,669. Jacinto García reported this increase and projected more of the same. But with a comparatively weak banking infrastructure, with poor government support for business abroad, and with no international transportation system to speak of, Argentina could not capitalize constructively or consistently on

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[26]. No. 60, García to Bosch, 8 March 1911, File 27a, Box 1234, Mexico, Pol, MRE; Dorfman, Industria Argentina, 318-320; E. S. Zeballos, Speech Before Congress, 26 February 1913, in Congress, Diario de Sesiones (Argentina), Meeting 67, Sessiones Extraordinarias, vol. 3 (November 1912 - March 1913), 552.

this and other trade opportunities.[27]

The Argentine consul general in Guatemala inspired similar optimism in Buenos Aires in regard to Argentine commercial strength in Central America. In September 1912, several Guatemalan landowners approached Arturo G. Belgrano with a request for a variety of Argentine grass seeds. Corn seeds from the Argentine had already replaced the North American class in Guatemala. Belgrano expected that Argentina could rival the United States in the wheat varieties planted as well. He believed that this success might lead to the substitution for American grain imports into Guatemala of Argentine grain imports, and the production of sufficient quantities of the new Argentine variety to partially satisfy domestic markets, as well as provide for substantial exports. The consul was convinced that the heavier, more nutritious Argentine corn could easily compete with the American product -- known colloquially as "horse teeth." In late 1912, he successfully organized the first commercial corn shipment from Argentina to Guatemala. Besides a variety of fruit and cereal seeds, Bunge, Born y Compañía shipped 45 million

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[27]. Lincoln Hutchinson, Special Agent of the Department of Commerce and Labor, Report on Trade Conditions in Central America and on the West Coast of South America, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1906), 66-77; Noemí M. Girbal de Blacha, "El comercio exterior argentino de productos agrícolas y el mercado sudamericano (1900-1914)," Investigaciones y Ensayos, vol. 32 (January - June 1982): 243-290.

kilograms of yellow corn.[28]

The success of the first corn shipment was not followed by the anticipated surge in trade, in part because Argentina lacked a shipping line but also because planning remained haphazard. The reports of Belgrano and other diplomats in the field were enthusiastic, but superficial and haphazard. They spoke of promise and potential, but gave no details or data that might be useful to potential investors. Through the First World War, Argentina's trade with Guatemala remained negligible, as did trade with Mexico and Central America generally. Jacinto García and Arturo Belgrano both stressed the need for a Buenos Aires-Central America shipping route, but no such line was put in place. An absence of transportation also limited Argentine exports of hides, animal fats, and pork lard -- for which ready markets seemed to exist in Guatemala and elsewhere.[29]

While these and other initiatives failed between 1910 and 1920, Argentine policy makers nevertheless adopted Pan American strategies that spoke to their optimism about commercial competition with the US. They followed an American lead in trying to break down commercial and financial barriers, and in

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[28]. No. 34, Belgrano to Bosch, 21 September 1912; Belgrano to Bosch, 2 January 1913; Belgrano to Bosch, 11 December 1912, File 14a, Caja 1305, Guatemala, Pol, MRE; "Nota del Día," Diario de Centroamerica (Guatemala City), 26 December 1912.

[29]. Belgrano to Bosch, 12 April 1912, File 6, Box 1305, Guatemala, Pol, MRE.

building economic stability in the region -- this based in a confidence in the ability of Argentine businesses to compete with their American and European equivalents in the Caribbean basin. While political leaders reflected economic and commercial change in defining a Pan American agenda, they also spoke to larger changes in politics and Argentine political culture. It wasn't until after Quesada's anti-US stand that Argentine ruling elites faced open revolt, then still more threatening reformist political challenges from the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), the Radical Party. Initially representing a patchwork of political forces that included disenchanted conservatives, university intellectuals, and middle classes, radicalismo was eventually coopted in part by ruling elites who emerged to dominate the Radical party structure after 1915. Though the UCR governments of the 1910s and 1920s were far more moderate than the conservative rulers of the 1890s might have anticipated, the Radicales inspired a political retrenchment among ruling elites that responded to the dissent the UCR introduced. This was true both of the Conservative and Radical governments of the period, troubled by the more radical factions in Radicalism and parties further to the left whose strength had been made possible in part by Radical Party-initiated reforms. The result was that on foreign and domestic issues, iconoclasts like Quesada were more quickly marginalized from positions of authority; where critics of the US in the 1890s included the elite and politically

conservative Quesada, Roque Saenz Peña, and Manuel Quintana, by the 1910s, anti-Americanism was more concentrated in the minority left. By 1915, Manuel Ugarte and the socialist deputies Alfredo Palacios and Enrique Dickmann were making criticisms equivalent to those of the conservative Quesada a generation before. The most vociferous anti-American Radical party member between 1910 and 1930, Senator Diego Luis Molinari, was a far more radical (and in some regards more marginal) member of the ruling hierarchy than were Quesada, Quintana, or Saenz Peña a generation before.[30]

For thirty years after the Washington meeting, no Argentine diplomat would raise a voice against US commercial objectives within the Pan American Union. In fact, after the First Pan American Conference, Argentina emerged as a staunch supporter of an increasingly aggressive US agenda for the normalization of inter-American commercial and financial relations. In addition, the Argentine position in 1889-1890 stands in stark contrast to a long history of friendly US-Argentine relations in the nineteenth century, and in the early twentieth century, founded in the first instance on growing trade ties. Argentina's atypical

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[30]. Felix Luna, Breve Historia de los Argentinos (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1993), 158-171; Eduardo A. Zimmermann, "Reforma Política y reforma social: tres propuestas de comienzos de siglo," in La construcción de las democracias rioplatenses: proyectos institucionales y prácticas (Mar del Plata: Biblos, 1994), edited by Fernando J. Devoto and Marcela P. Ferrari, 22-25.

admonishment of the US in 1889 and 1890 underscores two important changes in US-Argentine relations between the late nineteenth century and World War I that came as a consequence of Argentine nation-building and fast economic expansion. First, Argentine officials identified with a Latin American cultural and economic plight in 1889, expressing a willingness to join José Martí in public leadership against perceived US efforts to dominate other nations. By 1914 Argentine officials had abandoned their identification with and interest in defending other Latin American countries. Moreover, in a context of the race-based nationalism and exceptionalism -- associated with Argentine economic expansion -- in the writings of Manuel Gálvez and others, Argentine leaders deliberately distanced themselves from "Latin America" and saw merit in US justifications for military intervention and dominance in the region.[31]

Second, the way Argentines envisioned competing with the US changed between 1889 and 1914. At the First Pan American Conference, Argentines aspired to hemispheric leadership by publicly challenging US commercial dominance and ambitions in the Americas as anathema to Argentine national interests, and by highlighting cultural and political differences between the US and its southern neighbors. Two decades later, Argentine leaders

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[31]. See María Inés Barbero and Fernando Devoto, Los nacionalistas (1910-1932) (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983).

continued to strive for regional leadership, and believed that such leadership should be based on competition with the US for strategic and commercial influence in the Americas. Yet, while in 1890, the Argentine refusal of a customs union reflected a vision of Argentine commercial success in a context of continued European dominance of Latin American commercial and financial markets, by World War I Argentine leaders no longer understood competition with the US as opposing American economic predominance. Increasingly, Argentine leaders accepted the conceptual underpinnings of what Quesada had decried a false panacea; they strove to compete with the US commercially by upholding the American vision of economic stability for the region, by rejecting concerns over US business predominance in the hemisphere, and by accepting the notion that on a level playing field, Argentine exporters could compete with Americans for markets as far away as Mexico and the Caribbean.