

To be in the world ¹

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It is an exaggeration to insist, as many have done, both in the United States and elsewhere, that the world changed forever after September 11, 2001. In the case of the United States, for example, the administration of George W. Bush, which took office at the beginning of that year, was unilateralist and isolationist before the attacks on the Twin Towers and it remained unilateralist and isolationist after the attacks. What changed in U.S. foreign policy is that terrorism, and, by implication, other non-state and intermestic threats, replaced traditional state-based threats as the nation's top priority. In addition, the response to this threat became military and aggressively imperialistic while remaining unilateral.² Sadly, from a Latin American perspective, the attacks appeared to push the U.S. to revert to an older mode of strategic thinking that had dominated the period of the Cold War, in which the hemisphere was decidedly less important than other regions of

¹ Texto de la conferencia pronunciada por el profesor Joseph S. Tulchin, en la Universidad Católica de Córdoba, en ocasión de las 2ª *Jornadas Internacionales de la Agenda Regional frente al Contexto Global* - "*Seguridad regional como factor de estabilización*", organizadas por la Facultad de Ciencia Política y Relaciones Internacionales, los días 26 y 27 de agosto de 2004.

² In her testimony before the 9/11 Commission, April 8, 2004, Condeleezza Rice, the National Security Adviser to President Bush confessed that she, personally, had been preoccupied with traditional state-based threats at the time of the attacks.

the world. In addition, the attacks reinforced the historic tendency of the U.S. to impose its agenda on the rest of the hemisphere, and to insist on a Manichean zero-sum posture of “with us” or “against us.”

In this sense, the terrorist attacks on the U.S. were profoundly significant in Latin America. They stopped the process of change in hemispheric affairs that had begun with the end of the Cold War in which the nations of the hemisphere —with the participation, or at least the acquiescence, of the U.S.— moved to form a community of shared values. And, with the subsequent unilateral decisions by the U.S. to fight terrorism with military forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, Latin America lost a considerable portion of the relevance it had begun to achieve in U.S. foreign policy over the course of the 1990s. Worse, because of a long tradition of passivity in their actions, most of the nations in the hemisphere appear to be losing relevance in global affairs as well.

My principal argument is that Latin America still has —as it has had since 1990— a unique window of opportunity to expand its autonomy in the international system because the bipolar competition of the Cold War no longer exists. In the absence of a clear enemy, of an “other” to be feared and opposed, the U.S. was disposed to rely more on its ability to persuade and to share its political and cultural values, what Joseph Nye has called “soft power.”³ The majority of the nations in the hemisphere, newly democratic for the first time in history, were, in turn, disposed to be persuaded by an appeal to democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and a market economy, and to use their own commitment to these values as their soft power. However, it is necessary for the nations of the hemisphere to seize the opportunity. To do so, the nations of Latin America have to learn to think strategically and to become proactive in hemispheric and global affairs. To maximize their role, their opportunity, they have to appreciate first how they could participate at different levels of the international

³ Joseph S. NYE, *Soft Power – the Means to Success in World Politics* (NY: Public Affairs Press, 2004).

community, and how to recognize and use the stock of soft power they have. They have to learn how to “*BE IN THE WORLD.*”

While the U.S., under the administration of George W. Bush, has been following a unilateralist and hyperrealist foreign policy, it nonetheless remains clear that, with the exception of very narrowly defined, short term military objectives, the U.S. with all of its sophisticated hard power and its remarkable stock of soft power, is incapable of achieving its foreign policy objectives and protecting its national interests without the collaboration of other nations and without the active involvement of multilateral agencies, whether they be the UN or the WTO. This is for two quite different reasons. The first has to do with the nature of all non-traditional threats in the international community – something true even before the Cold War ended – that they cannot be managed or eliminated by a single nation-state, no matter how powerful. The second has to do with the fact that you cannot impose values on others, you must persuade them of their virtue. And, in the current global environment, the best way to convince others is to create a community in which those values are shared.⁴ Unilateralism simply is counter-productive. To put it another way, soft power is most effective in a multilateral, consensual framework. Peacekeeping and nation building, as well as dealing with terrorism, are only effective as community efforts. The case of Haiti is paradigmatic.

For both of these reasons, then, it remains true that the opportunity for proactive involvement in rulemaking is still available to the nations of the Western Hemisphere. The key to the answer is to understand the linkages between soft power and hard power in U.S. thinking and to see the historic ties between values

⁴ The concept of international community has been a matter of debate for centuries. Until the 20th century it was generally limited to questions of international law or Kantian categories. Beginning in the 20th century, a concern for norms in international relations was referred to as “idealism.” Today, among scholars, it is referred to as the English school of international relations. See Ian HALL, “Review article: still the English patient? Closures and inventions in the English school,” *International Affairs*, 77, N° 3 (2201): 931-42.

on the one hand and security policy on the other.⁵ These linkages, together with the transnational nature of new threats in the international system mean that every nation, no matter how small and “weak” in traditional terms, has some leverage, some legitimacy, and some credibility in the international community. And, as soft security threats, or non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism, assume greater salience, the potential roles for weaker countries —and the nations of Latin America— may be taken to fall into this category —are actually more accessible and important than they were before 9/11.

To understand how the nations of Latin America can exercise their influence in the international system, it is useful to see security as occurring or existing on several levels.⁶ If we were to deconstruct terrorism into its component parts, we could see that it consists, in addition to its spectacular, violent acts, such as the destruction of the Twin Towers or the bombing of Atorcha train station or the destruction of the Jewish Community Center, of illegal acts that begin as local criminal behavior and then extend outward territorially to include international criminal behavior, such as money laundering, arms smuggling, and the misuse of information technology. Seen in these terms, security is an intensely local phenomenon and extends to national, sub-regional, regional,

⁵ Robert LITWAK, “The New Calculus of Pre-emption,” *Survival*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Vol. 44, n° 4, Winter 2002-2003. “Soft security threats” is the current phrase used to describe what during the 1990s the academic literature referred to as non-traditional threats, see John Ikenberry and Michael W. DOYLE, eds. *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), James N. ROSENAU, “Stability, Stasis, and Change: A Fragmenting World”, *The Global Century. Globalization and National Security*, Vol. 1, eds. Richard Kugler and Ellen Frost (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1993), Ellen FROST, “Globalization and National Security: A Strategic Agenda,” *The Global Century. Globalization and National Security*, Vol. 1, eds. Richard Kugler and Ellen Frost (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1993), and Jessica MATTHEWS, “Power Shift: The Rise of Global Civil Society,” *Foreign Affairs*, 76-1 (January/February 1997).

⁶ Raul Benítez MANAUT, *The five levels of security* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2004).

hemispheric and global dimensions. At each and every level, the nations of Latin America potentially have opportunities for action, for protagonism. Each of these potential or hypothetical opportunities must be explored as part of national strategic planning. The ease of seizing these opportunities will vary from level to level and from country to country. Some might find space in the national context, or, at the global level, but not at the hemispheric level, for instance; or, at the sub-regional level and not at the hemispheric level.

An easy way to observe how each level or way opens the way to quite different opportunities and challenges, and offers different costs and benefits, is to study trade and trade policy. As we have explained in our recent volume, trade is a series of multilevel non zero sum games. The success of each country in trade policy is a function of its ability to reconcile internal sectoral differences and deal with dynamic situations.⁷

Overwhelming hard power does not guarantee success in seeking policy objectives in trade negotiations or national security in general. More important for Latin America, relative weakness in terms of hard power does not mean a nation is barred from the table of rule makers. Take the case of how to deal with terrorism in hemispheric affairs. The U.S. wants to understand all hemispheric cooperation in terms of its own agenda with reference to terrorism. Terrorism is the number one priority. Latin American nations are uncomfortable with that. The only effective response to this *idea fija* is for the Latin Americans to draft an agenda that suits them and that takes U.S. priorities into account. That shouldn't be too hard. Terrorism is, in fact, an international issue. Working to protect the entire region from terrorism should not be too controversial. The problem is how to join together to make the U.S. listen to Latin American priorities. That is difficult because never in their history have the nations of the region collaborated

⁷ Vinod K. AGGARWAL, Ralph Espach, and Joseph S. TULCHIN, eds., *The Strategic Dynamics of Latin American Trade* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

to achieve collective security goals. They have collaborated on occasion to oppose the U.S.; but, they never successfully have collaborated to achieve sub-regional or regional ends.⁸

The recent episode in Haiti may prove to be a starting point in building an hemispheric agenda that can be “sold” to the U.S., the reverse of the usual flow of influence. Haiti is important because of the role played by a number of nations, such as Chile, and, later, Brazil, and even later, Argentina, in the peacemaking, and because of the unity among the Anglophone nations of the Caribbean sub region in opposition to the U.S. and in defense of democratic processes. The key motivating factor behind Chile’s decision to send troops to Haiti is to prevent another bloodbath. The Ruanda case and the failure of the international community to respond is what drove the response of the UN in the Haitian case. And, it was the action of the UN that drove the Chilean decision.

Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, as Chile’s representative to the OAS, more than ten years earlier, played a decisive role in getting the hemispheric organization to pass the Santiago Declaration in support of democratic government. In that declaration, the OAS stated that democracy was a value shared by all members of the organization. Sending troops to Haiti is one way to demonstrate that Chile, for one, is prepared to defend democracy with something more than words. It isn’t clear in the Western Hemisphere how to compel compliance with the rules of the game at the hemispheric level. For Muñoz, the task today and in the future is the implementation of the standards articulated by the international community.

Developing a Latin American agenda should not be that difficult. Muñoz had no difficulty ticking off the key items of that agenda⁹ are: implementation of existing human rights standards; defense of the right to democratic governance; promotion of post-conflict

⁸ Heraldo Muñoz’s recent speech at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C., April 13, 2004.

⁹ Heraldo MUÑOZ, *op. cit.*

reconciliation; and reduction of inequality and poverty in the region. These are all elements of soft power. In addition to differences of opinion among the countries of the region, there are important differences between the OAS and UN on these issues and that each of the organizations has a comparative advantage in some, not all. For example, in the area of human rights, the OAS has the advantage because it has a regulatory or supervisory organization that operates through the mechanism of a group of independent, private actors, while the UN works through a commission whose members are states, including some members who are notorious violators of human rights. On the other hand, the OAS does not have anything to match the Security Council of the UN, and the OAS is paralyzed in the search for mechanisms to enforce compliance with the rules of the game. Those mechanisms that do exist are left over from the Cold War and cannot be used without total dominance by the U.S., which other member states cannot accept. That is not the case in the UN.

But soft power has its disadvantages. Values are ambiguous and hard to measure. Another development since September 11, 2001, that has reduced Latin American influence in world affairs is the institutional deficit that has struck several countries, like some sort of plague. To make use of soft power and to become rule makers, it is important for the nations of the region to deal with their democratic fragility, corruption, organized crime, juridical insecurity, no development strategies, high levels of unemployment, poverty and y inequity that difficult the international responsible participation that is central to the use of soft power.

Another feature of responsible international behavior necessary to maximize the effect of soft power is consistency and accountability. Nations must become predictable. That is the lesson to be drawn from the behavior of Argentine president Néstor Kirchner, whose government came to power in October 2003 insisting that defense of democracy and human rights were the pillars of its foreign policy and then proceeded to make Havana one of the first stops on the foreign minister's first trips, without bothering to talk about human rights with the Castro government or with groups of

dissidents on the islands. Small wonder that Argentina under Kirchner has not been able to consolidate a global role as a spokesman for human rights.¹⁰

It is entirely possible that the autonomy for which the nations of the hemisphere yearn may be more easily achieved at either or both of the sub-regional and global levels than at the hemispheric level. It would be an historic irony if any of the nations of the region, and Chile is a strong candidate, become legitimate rule makers at the global level while they are unable to achieve close relations with the U.S or with their neighbors. It is highly probably, to take another example, that, in the short run, Brazil will become more of a rule maker at the sub-regional level through the success of Mercosur and at the global level, at least in matters of trade, than at the hemispheric level. In fact, that may become the center of Brazil's strategic policy. Brazil took the lead in negotiating a trade treaty between Mercosur and the European Union. But, as Chile learned when it suffered the wrath of the U.S. for not voting in the UN Security Council in support of the U.S. position against Iraq, it is not sufficient to be a global player only in trade. Global players are global players and they are expected to move on the world stage in more than a single dimension. Until Brazil succeeds in finding dimensions of its global role to complement its action as a leader of a trade block, its power will be limited to blocking action by others. It will be difficult to become a rule maker. The Brazilian experience at Cancún and after is a model of this success/failure.¹¹

The most difficult part of the international scenario for Latin America is collaborating among themselves to define a Latin American security agenda. It is not central to the effort that the agenda be for or against the U.S. The crucial challenge in to achieve a way of understanding the world—a way to be in the world—that is consistent with their collaboration among

¹⁰ See, "Cuba: el gobierno ratificó la abstención," *Diario La Nación*, April 15, 2004.

¹¹ Jeffrey DAVIDOW, *El oso y el puercoespín* (Mexico, D.F.: Grijalbo, 2003).

themselves with or without the support of the U.S. The starting point for such an effort should be the shared community of values that binds together the entire hemisphere – respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law and the desire to reduce poverty and inequality. The methodology should be the understanding that security exists on multiple levels and that cooperation can begin at any level and can be built by dealing with traditional or non-traditional threats to security. The best news of all is that autonomy in the international community begins at home. Soft power – influence – can be increased merely by strengthening the rule of law, by reducing poverty and inequality, or by buttressing democratic institutions – all of which depend on the political will of democratic leaders. As Shakespeare might have said had he read Nye or Keohane or Tulchin, rule makers are made, not born. 