

WORLD WAR I AND “CONTINENTAL SOLIDARITY”*

STUDENTS of the hemispheric system have generally neglected the era of World War I, probably because no major inter-American conferences were held between 1910 and 1923. Yet the disparate reactions to the European conflict represented a crisis of “continental solidarity”; World War I gave rise to a potentially important challenge to United States leadership and helped shape future patterns of hemispheric relations. The war called forth two rival blocs—United States-Brazil and Mexico-Argentina. These blocs differed over more than war policy. Their rivalry reflected an inter-American power struggle, each side invoking “continental solidarity” to gain support from other American nations. The impact of World War I upon the inter-American system and, in particular, the Argentine attempt to convene a Latin American congress need fuller examination.¹

Woodrow Wilson hoped to inaugurate a new era of hemispheric cooperation. During 1915 he consulted Latin American governments about the instability in Mexico. The resultant offer to mediate among warring factions and the extension of *de facto* recognition to Venustiano Carranza both had a multilateral character. In addition, during 1915 and 1916 Wilson and his close adviser Edward House sought support for a Pan-American Pact, a forerunner of collective security concepts later developed in the League of Nations. The Pact would have guaranteed territorial integrity and independence under republican forms of govern-

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¹ The only complete study of Latin American policies during the war is Percy Martin, *Latin America and the War* (Baltimore, 1925). Most of the subsequent works on the subject have relied heavily upon Martin's influential book. See Thomas Bailey, *The Policy of the United States toward the Neutrals, 1917-1918* (Baltimore, 1942), 305-39; Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, *The Western Hemisphere: Its Influence on United States Policies to the End of World War II* (Austin, 1968); Gordon Connell-Smith, *The Inter-American System* (New York, 1966), 53-59; J. Lloyd Mechem, *The United States and Inter-American Security* (Austin, 1961), 77-87; Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Cornell, 1954), 109-28. Martin and most later writers adopt an artificial country-by-country organization and implicitly or explicitly define “continental solidarity” as a Latin American acceptance of United States policy. Mechem, for example, labels Argentine and Mexican attempts to effect unified policies “pseudo-cooperative proposals of the noncooperators.” (p. 85). In addition, scholars have left largely untapped the wealth of material on inter-American politics contained in the complete files of the United States Department of State.

ment, placed controls upon armaments in the hemisphere, and provided procedures for arbitrating inter-American disputes.²

The core of Wilson's "New Pan-Americanism," however, consisted less of real cooperation than of multinational endorsement of United States policies and values. Wilson invoked continental solidarity primarily as a means of dealing with revolution or political instability within the hemisphere, and those Latin Americans who had been or might be victims of this policy were naturally unenthusiastic. Carranza resented offers to mediate his country's internal disputes when he claimed supreme control. He bitterly complained to participating South American governments that allying with the United States in order to meddle in Mexico's domestic affairs was hardly a step toward hemispheric solidarity. Chilean statesmen, always wary of supranational bodies because of the Tacna-Arica dispute with Peru, loudly criticized the Pan-American Pact as an instrument of United States tutelage. They warned that the United States could use the "guarantee" of republican government to intervene at will and that arms control would enhance United States power over Latin America.³ Many Latin Americans felt that interventions in the Dominican Republic and Haiti threw Wilson's intentions into question. And United States failure to abide by a decision of the Central American Court of Justice, a multilateral body created at the instigation of the United States, discredited Wilson's talk of legality and multinational arbitration.⁴

Problems growing out of the Great War in Europe revealed most dramatically the limits of Wilson's "New Pan-Americanism." The dislocation of trade and finance throughout the hemisphere brought cries for inter-American cooperation. In 1914 the Pan-American Union established a committee to define the obligations of belligerents and neutrals and to propose ways of enhancing the collective influence of the American continent. Subsequently, almost every country in South America urged united action in favor of neutral rights. Woodrow Wilson could have established himself as the political and ideological leader of the

² For Mexican policy see Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality, 1914-1915* (Princeton, 1960), 480-94; and Isidro Fabela, *Historia Diplomática de la Revolución Mexicana* (2 vols., Mexico, 1958-59), II, 125-34. On the Pan-American Pact see Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, *The Caribbean Policy of the United States, 1890-1920* (Baltimore, 1942), 322-330 and United States Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920* (2 vols., Washington, 1939), II, 472-500.

³ Fabela, *Historia Diplomática*, 125-34; *Lansing Papers*, II, 477, 482.

⁴ The court decided that the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty between the United States and Nicaragua violated the rights of other Central American states. Callcott, *The Caribbean Policy*, 388-90.

hemisphere and attempted to make Pan-Americanism an effective international force. But unlike Franklin Roosevelt during World War II, Wilson eschewed even the appearance of continental cooperation. He ignored Latin American appeals and unilaterally issued his peace proposals and caveats on neutral rights. *La Nación* of Buenos Aires expressed a widespread Latin American disgust at "the unwillingness of the American Government to ally its actions with those of other nations in favor of a common interest. . . . Because of this the neutral countries have been exposed to suffer, each one for itself."⁵ Wilson's ambiguous record on Pan-American cooperation and his failure to build a strong inter-American system during 1915 and 1916 opened the way for challenges to United States leadership during 1917.

The United States began actively to seek Latin American support for its policy after it severed relations with Germany. On February 3, 1917, the United States abandoned the neutral policy of the rest of the hemisphere, and even though Wilson had not consulted or even advised other American republics of his actions, he appealed for them to follow.⁶ Here indeed was a crisis for continentalism. Did solidarity dictate following the United States because German violations of neutral commerce also affected Latin America? Or did solidarity lie in creating an effective neutral bloc which would operate independently of the uncooperative United States? After February 1917 Latin Americans debated the problem of what constituted true hemispheric unity, and each country began to take sides, lining up largely according to their inter-American political interests.

The United States found its greatest support among Caribbean nations which were tied, for a variety of reasons, to United States power. Cuba, Panama, Haiti, and Nicaragua, all protectorates of the United States, were understandably willing to sever relations with Germany.⁷ Despite important German investment in Guatemala and Honduras, both of these countries were also conspicuously pro-Ally. The Guatemalan president feared that El Salvador and the revolutionary govern-

⁵ Martin, *Latin America and the War*, 20-24; Mechem, *The United States and Inter-American Security*, 77-80. The efforts of Latin American governments may be followed in greater detail in National Archives, Records of the Department of State Relating to World War I and Its Termination, 1914-1929, Microcopy 367, 763.72112/356, 399, 433, 438, 477, 494, 502, 503, 554, 571, 585, 638, 683, 1180, 1229, 1538, 1578, 1624; 763.72119/354c, 354c. *La Nación*, Jan. 24, 1917, 763.72119/518. (Hereafter, microfilmed State Department records will be cited as NADS with appropriate microcopy, file, and document numbers.)

⁶ United States Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, 1862-), 1917, Sup. I, 108.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1917, Sup. I, 221-38; *Lansing Papers*, I, 593-94. The Dominican Republic was under United States military rule and thus had no independent policy at all.

ment in Mexico were plotting against his dictatorial regime, and he sought United States friendship as protection against these potentially hostile neighbors. Honduras feared that unless it also followed, it would lose United States favor in a boundary dispute with Guatemala.⁸ Costa Rica's position was particularly interesting. Federico Tinoco, encouraged by an official of United Fruit Company, had recently seized power, and President Wilson denounced the American company and refused to recognize the unconstitutional regime. Tinoco knew his government could not last without recognition (a proposition which ultimately proved to be true), and interested Americans advised him that a strong pro-Allied policy might win Wilson's favor.⁹ In addition to each country's special reasons for sympathizing with the United States, most of these governments welcomed the war as an excuse to suspend constitutional guarantees and curtail internal opposition. All of these countries also had important economic ties with the United States and wanted to minimize economic pressure by adopting United States war policy. Only El Salvador, an ally of Mexico and free of economic connections with the United States, did not fall into line.

In South America, Brazil became the United States' strongest supporter. Brazil's alignment arose partly from its analogous position as an Atlantic nation with a merchant marine and partly from its traditional strategy in inter-American power politics. Around the turn of the century the Baron of Rio-Branco had guided the country into an informal alliance with the United States. Stability and good government, Brazilians believed, drew them closer to Anglo-Saxon nations than to their unruly Hispanic neighbors. And United States friendship promised to be useful in isolating the power of Argentina, Brazil's greatest rival. Most Brazilians considered their country the natural leader of the southern continent, just as the United States led the countries north of Panama. Carrying out this role, Foreign Minister Lauro Mueller began trying to align other South American governments behind the United States.¹⁰

Brazil's closest ally in South America, Bolivia, also lent strong support

⁸ *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 222-24, 236-37. Box 110 of the seldom used Papers of Lester Woolsey, Solicitor for the State Department, (Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.) contains five diaries kept by Robert Lansing which relate exclusively to Latin American affairs. See the diary dated February-April, 1917, for information on the war policy of each country. The Guatemala-Honduras boundary dispute may be followed in *Foreign Relations*, 1917, 760-800.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1917, Sup. I, 243-44; *Ibid.*, 1917, 302-43; *Ibid.*, 1918, 233-38; Ray Stannard Baker, ed., *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters* (8 vols., Garden City, N. Y., 1927-39), VIII, 13; NADS M-367, 763.72/3977.

¹⁰ *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 222, 251-52; *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), especially Feb. 7, 1917, 8. E. Bradford Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio Branco and Brazilian-American Relations* (New York, 1966), *passim*.

to the United States. Bolivia's policy stemmed almost entirely from its position in inter-American politics. In the War of the Pacific, Bolivia had lost a seaport, and the government hoped that an alliance with Brazil and the United States would eventually help it recover the vital area. Bolivia especially welcomed Wilson's proposal to restore a seaport to Poland, another country which had lost land to more powerful neighbors.¹¹

While the United States and Brazil sought to promote an anti-German consensus in Latin America, a rival bloc of neutralist powers exerted pressure in another direction. The movement began when Mexico, a week after suspension of diplomatic ties between the United States and Germany, invited all neutrals, including the United States (which had not yet declared war), to offer mediation to European belligerents. Unless an international conference began within a reasonable time, Mexican leader Carranza suggested, neutral countries should suspend exports to warring nations and force them into negotiations through economic pressure.¹²

Carranza's peace initiative was designed to boost his image at home and to provide a neutralist program which might stop a stampede toward belligerency. Carranza feared that if the United States went to war against Germany, Wilson might order an invasion of the Vera Cruz oil fields to protect Allied fuel supplies.¹³ Moreover, if Latin American nations then followed the United States, Mexico would be in an unenviable position of isolation. Any alliance with the United States in a war was clearly impossible: the Mexican Revolution had always contained a strong strain of Yankeeophobia, and Pershing's soldiers had just left Mexican soil. Carranza hoped that his peace proposal would stimulate formation of a strong neutralist bloc, with or without the United States, and serve warning that he was prepared to use Mexican oil exports as a diplomatic lever.

The years of revolution had undermined Mexico's prestige in Latin America, and Carranza's proposal encountered criticism. Chilean newspapers jabbed at a government which would initiate ambitious programs for world peace but which could not suppress rebellion within its

¹¹ *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 222; NADS M-367, 763.72/5478; *La Prensa*, Feb., 1917, carried a daily column, "El Opinión en Sud América," which covered opinion regarding the war in the newspapers of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

¹² The text of the Mexican note and all answers to it are in Mexico, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, *La Labor Internacional de la Revolución Constitucionalista de México* (Mexico, 1918), 431-56.

¹³ NADS M-367, 763.72/5166; E. David Cronon, ed., *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921* (Lincoln, Neb., 1963), 111. See also *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 241-42.

own borders. Brazil carefully disassociated its suggestions for hemispheric unanimity from the Mexican plan. And the Bolivian government countered Carranza's initiative with a circular proposing that all nations in the hemisphere simply subscribe to an innocuous statement of neutral rights.¹⁴

Carranza's plan, however, struck responsive chords in Ecuador, Colombia, and Argentina. Ecuador, which before 1914 had marketed its principal crop in Germany, was gravely afflicted by the wartime commercial disruption. Declining tax revenues, a result of the loss of markets, forced suspension of payments on railway bonds held in the United States and Great Britain. The State Department repeatedly urged Ecuador to resume payment, and the issue became a major irritant in relations between the United States and Ecuador. Because of its own commercial vulnerability, Ecuador had been a constant advocate of united action in defense of neutral rights. Responding positively to the Mexican note, Ecuador suggested an inter-American conference in Uruguay to "mitigate the rigors of the present war."¹⁵

Colombia also favored a conference of neutrals. The United States Senate had repeatedly failed to ratify a treaty apologizing for the secession of Panama and indemnifying Colombia. As long as the treaty remained unapproved, Colombia's national honor prevented alignment with the United States, and its government hoped a conference might delineate a neutral position for Latin America. The Colombian government suggested that the three nations which had advanced concrete proposals for united action—Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador—confer privately and then broaden the meeting to include other neutral states.¹⁶

Clearly, there was growing support throughout Latin America for some kind of inter-American conference. And while others debated what to do, Argentine President Hipólito Yrigoyen decided to act. Arguing that Buenos Aires was the logical place to assemble a congress of Latin American neutrals, Yrigoyen informed Carranza that he would soon issue invitations. The purpose of such a conference, he explained, would be to consider methods for promoting peace, humanizing the war, and gaining greater respect for neutral rights. Carranza expressed approval of the idea, and the Mexican-Argentine neutralist alliance was born.¹⁷

¹⁴ *La Prensa*, Feb. 15, 1917, 9; Feb. 17, 1917, 7 (Chile); Feb. 27, 1917, 9 (Brazil); *Labor Internacional*, 438-39 (Bolivia).

¹⁵ *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 233. On the bond dispute see *ibid.*, 1917, 732-47.

¹⁶ *Labor Internacional*, 442-43. Reports on how the issue of the treaty affected Colombian war policy may be found in *Foreign Relations*, 1917, 292-300.

¹⁷ *Labor Internacional*, 439-40. *La Nación* (Chile), Feb. 28, 1917, summarized in *La Prensa*, Mar. 1, 1917, 9 reported the aims of the conference.

Yrigoyen changed Carranza's proposal in several important respects. Carranza called upon all neutrals (Scandinavian as well as Latin American), included the United States, and advanced a specific program. Yrigoyen shifted the emphasis specifically to Latin America and expressed his goals only in the vaguest terms. Carranza's objective was peace; Yrigoyen's was an independent Latin American policy. Above all, the Argentine initiative represented a bid for hemispheric leadership. The major Buenos Aires newspapers pounded away at the theme that the United States had neglected its responsibilities in the continent. Wilson had no right, their editors argued, to urge other nations to adopt his war policy when he had consistently refused to participate in any cooperative action. Furthermore, by departing from the neutral stand of the rest of the hemisphere, the United States had forfeited all claim to continental leadership. The implication of newspaper commentary was unmistakable: Argentina had become the custodian of inter-American unity.¹⁸

The Argentine government expressed no hostility toward United States interests and had little reason to uphold neutrality at any cost. But many Argentines did not want their foreign policy to be a "tail to the United States kite," much less to a Brazilian one. The guiding principle behind Argentine policy throughout the war was not necessarily the need to preserve neutrality but the desire to be a hemispheric leader, charting a different course than Brazil.

The United States could have quickly quashed the Mexican and Argentine initiatives and satisfied many Latin Americans by convening a conference itself. State Department officials, however, never seriously considered such a move. A memorandum of the Latin American Division dated November 17, 1917, appears to be the only explication of the Wilson administration's persistent unilateralism.

It would seem undesirable and inexpedient that any Congress or Committee of Latin-America as a whole, should be permitted to assist the United States in war work. The past experience of our country has clearly demonstrated the inefficiency and undesirability of a multiplication of Committees (*sic*), also Latin-American Committees to cooperate in the war, would only be actuated by rival jealousies, with interminable discussions and no action. Another important point is, that should Latin-America be treated as a whole, no special recognition of the peculiar position occupied by Cuba and Panama would be possible.¹⁹

Not only did the United States continue to pursue an independent pol-

¹⁸ *La Prensa*, Feb. 5, 1917, 4; *La Nación* (Argentina), Feb. 4, 1917 in NADS M-367, 763.72/3546; *La Razón*, Feb. 5, 1917 in 763.72/3576½; *La Época* (governmental organ), no date, in *New York Times*, Feb. 9, 1917, 4.

¹⁹ NADS M-367, 763.72/8444. See also Julius Lay's handwritten remark on 763.72/5164.

icy, but it actively opposed the other proposals for multilateral action. In reply to the Ecuadoran suggestion, the State Department wrote that United States endorsement of a congress "might be misinterpreted and cause division of opinion among American republics."²⁰ At the same time the Secretary of State rejected Carranza's invitation.

The United States reply to Mexico was careful and courteous; its tone reflected the State Department's apprehension about Carranza's unfriendliness. Carranza's suggestion of an embargo on exports, coinciding with the adoption of the radical Mexican Constitution of 1917, seemed to indicate that the Mexican president might withhold oil from the Allies. The Zimmermann telegram, intercepted two weeks after Carranza's message, increased uneasiness about collusion with Germany, and the Wilson administration put into motion a broad policy of conciliation toward Carranza. Avoiding a curt rejection of the Mexican peace plan, Secretary of State Robert Lansing politely replied that the United States had seriously considered the Mexican proposal but that German provocations on the seas and in the Zimmermann note made United States participation impossible. To preclude charges of obstructionism, he added, "The President would not . . . wish the Mexican Government to feel that his inability to act in the present stage of affairs should in any way militate against the attainment of the high ideals of General Carranza. . . ." The considerate tone of the reply stemmed less from genuine goodwill than from the fear that offending Carranza would intensify his supposedly pro-German feelings.²¹

In addition to refusing the Ecuadoran and Mexican proposals, the State Department asked its representatives in some South American capitals to survey attitudes toward the proposed Latin American Congress. Most diplomats reported scanty support for the Argentine project, and the ambassador to Argentina wrote that talk of a conference had decreased. By the end of March 1917 all plans for a congress of neutrals seemed stalled.²²

The United States declaration of war against Germany on April 6 brought the issue of continental solidarity back into prominence. Woodrow Wilson did not directly appeal for others to go to war, but throughout the conflict the United States made clear that it hoped Latin American nations would break relations with Germany as a gesture of continental unity.

Latin American governments which had previously expressed strong

²⁰ *Lansing Papers*, I, 246.

²¹ Robert Lansing, *The War Memoirs of Robert Lansing* (New York, 1935), 310-16; *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 238-39, 67.

²² *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 240-42; NADS M-367, 763.72119/525, 662.

support for the United States rapidly severed relations with Germany, often at the suggestion or the insistence of the United States. The State Department had arranged in advance for Cuba and Panama to follow the United States into the war. Wilson himself expressed concern that the United States bring "Guatemala in the war, and very possibly Honduras, as it would offer a constant check upon Mexico in case its Government should adopt any measures in the interest of Germany." A suggestion of financial aid and military protection induced Guatemala to break relations with Germany. Honduras hesitated longer, but a warning that the State Department was "regarding with the most careful scrutiny the attitude of the government of Honduras" brought that country into line. Nicaragua likewise severed relations after receiving a forceful recommendation from the United States. Haiti, warned that further delay "would tend to place her in a difficult position," also reluctantly acquiesced. Costa Rica took similar action, although its support did not prompt Wilson to recognize the Tinoco government. Brazil, which had a steamer sunk on April 3, also broke relations with Germany, and Bolivia, citing an incident which occurred the year before as the *casus belli*, quickly followed Brazil.²³

The Argentine project for a Latin American congress, which had been quiescent for about a month, suddenly revived. Yrigoyen once again began informally approaching various governments, asking whether or not they would accept a formal invitation. The United States ambassador reported, "Brazil having taken one side, national vanity impels Argentina to seek to lead the other."²⁴

By mid-April there were two clearly defined positions within the hemisphere. The United States and Brazil, with the support of most of the Caribbean nations and Bolivia, advanced the idea that continental solidarity dictated a war policy favoring the Allies. Argentina and Mexico championed the notion that Latin American nations should meet

²³ Lansing, *War Memoirs*, 313-14; *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 245-48 (Cuba and Panama); NADS M-367, 763.72/3773, 3801, 3971, 3952, 6772, 7781 (Guatemala); 763.72119/592, 763.72/5016 (Honduras); *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 278-79, 289-90 (Nicaragua); *ibid.*, 276, 279, 301 (Haiti). Costa Rica did not break relations immediately but intimated that recognition by the United States would result in such a step. Recognition was not forthcoming, and Tinoco finally severed relations in September, 1917, still hoping for United States approval. *Ibid.*, 287, 329; *ibid.*, 1917, 321-22. *Ibid.*, 1917, Sup. I, 252-53 (Brazil and Bolivia).

²⁴ During the latter half of April, *La Prensa* carried a column called "Asuntos Internacionales" which daily reported conferences concerning the congress between Argentine officials and various ministers from Latin American countries. The details of these meetings are not reported, but their frequency indicates that Yrigoyen was vigorously pushing his project. NADS M-367 763.72/4934, and *La Razón*, April 26, 1917, enclosed in 763.72119/628 shed some light on the purpose of the congress.

and determine policy in a multinational setting. The policies of most smaller South American states remained relatively fluid, and both blocs turned attention upon Chile, the other major power in the hemisphere. Chile's decision to side with Brazil and the United States or with Argentina might have had a decisive effect in swaying the rest of the southern continent.

Chile was reluctant to enhance the prestige of either of its South American rivals and maintained an independent policy. Like their counterparts in Brazil and Argentina, Chilean statesmen opposed any action which might appear to subordinate themselves or their country to the leadership of others. As an Uruguayan official pointed out, cooperation among ABC nations was unlikely because "national and personal interests and ambitions would clash at every point."²⁵ Moreover, Chile had no concrete national interest in supporting either side. Chilean politicians feared that, at any inter-American conference, Peru would raise the Tacna-Arica boundary dispute and that the other conferees would support the Peruvian claim. Still, Chile had little reason to join Brazil and the United States in abandoning neutrality: unlike these Atlantic powers, Chile had no grievance against Germany, and the *Baltimore* affair and recent suspicions that the United States favored Peru's boundary claim had produced an ingrained Yankeeophobia.²⁶

Both the United States and Argentina tried to obtain Chilean support. Head of the State Department's Latin American Division, Jordan Stabler, noting that Chile exercised great influence over the policies of Ecuador and Colombia, concluded that "should Chile throw in her lot with the United States, any action on the part of Argentina would thereby be neutralized." Stabler recommended "working with Brazil" in order to "get into very close touch" with Chilean representatives.²⁷ Yrigoyen was also meeting frequently with Chilean diplomats in Buenos Aires, and the Chilean newspaper *La Nación* reported that Yrigoyen had assured Chile that the conference would consider no matter except the war.²⁸ Despite courtship from both sides, however, Chile remained firm-

²⁵ NADS M-367, 763.72119/525.

²⁶ Chilean opinion, official and unofficial, may be conveniently followed through reprints of editorials and interviews contained in *La Prensa*, especially Mar. 7, 1917, 10; Mar. 9, 1917, 9; Mar. 19, 1917, 8; April 23, 1917, 7; April 25, 1917, 9. Revealing editorials from various Chilean newspapers are also enclosed or summarized in NADS M-367, 763.72/3810, 3923, 4561, 4714. See also Fredrick B. Pike, *Chile and the United States, 1880-1962: The Emergence of Chile's Social Crisis and the Challenge to United States Diplomacy* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1963), 155-57.

²⁷ National Archives, Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations between the United States and Chile, 1910-1929, Microcopy 489, 711.25/25.

²⁸ *La Nación*, April 21, 1917, quoted in *La Prensa*, April 23, 1917, 7.

ly nonaligned. Throughout the war the consistent themes of Chilean diplomacy were independence from the policies of rival hemispheric powers, avoidance of inter-American conferences, and maintenance of neutrality short of overt German provocation.

On May 2 Germany agreed to indemnify Argentina for the sinking of an Argentine ship, the *Monte Protegido*, and Yrigoyen, believing that Germany's concession lifted Argentina's stature to new heights, finally issued formal invitations to a Latin American congress. The invitations stated that the "idea" of a meeting had already been accepted by Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

This claim, composed more of bravado than of veracity, aroused the indignation of several countries which had attached so many conditions that their "acceptances" amounted to polite refusals.²⁹ Not only did Yrigoyen misrepresent the policies of several South American states, but he appears falsely to have intimated to some Central American governments that the United States approved of the proposal. Unaware of Washington's opposition, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and El Salvador all promptly accepted the invitation.³⁰

Yrigoyen's bandwagon bluff could not succeed. The United States quickly instructed its representatives in Latin America to express United States opposition. Wilson himself took time out from a busy wartime schedule to meet with the Argentine ambassador and afterwards reported that nothing would come of the congress.³¹ Brazil assured the State Department that it would not participate, and on May 3 Brazilian Minister of Foreign Relations Lauro Mueller was replaced by an official with even stronger pro-United States sympathies. After the new Brazilian minister asked the United States to try to convince Peru to reject Yrigoyen's invitation, the Secretary of State informed the Peruvian minister of United States opposition.³²

Peru was already inclining toward the United States position. Germany had given no satisfaction for sinking the Peruvian ship *Lorton*, and the United States seemed to favor Peru's position in the Tacna-Arica dispute. The Peruvian minister subsequently reported to the State Department that, although his government had at one time accepted the Argentine idea as a matter of courtesy, it had recently informed Argen-

²⁹ NADS M-367, 763.72119/608 (Brazil), 613 (Chile), 622 (Bolivia). The text of the invitation is translated in 763.72119/619.

³⁰ NADS M-367, 763.72119/609, 619.

³¹ NADS M-367, 763.72119/595, 5874, 608.

³² NADS M-367, 763.72119/608; *Jornal do Comercio*, May 20, 1917, contained in 763.72/5703.

tina that it would join no conference "purporting to depart from joint action under the lead of, and with, the United States."³³

Argentina's misrepresentation of many countries' policies and countermoves by the United States and Brazil combined to terminate Yrigoyen's ambitions, at least for the time being. Central American states retracted their approvals; Cuba and Haiti predictably refused; Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Uruguay, Chile, Venezuela, and even Paraguay, a country with strong economic and political ties to Argentina, expressed non-support or sent highly conditional acceptances. Only Mexico, El Salvador, and Ecuador accepted without preconditions.³⁴

Solidarity behind Argentina clearly failed to materialize, and Brazil's actions continued to have a greater impact in South America. On May 30 the Brazilian government repealed its neutrality decree, stating that continental unity precluded enforcement of neutrality laws against another American nation.³⁵ Uruguay, which both Argentina and Brazil had tried to bring into their spheres of influence, followed Brazil in revoking its neutrality legislation on the grounds of continental solidarity. Although the Uruguayan government had at one time expressed interest in the Argentine proposal, it had favored "Pan Americanism, not Latin Americanism," and when Yrigoyen's purpose remained vague, Uruguay

³³ *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 297. See also James C. Carey, *Peru and the United States, 1900-1962* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1964), 31.

³⁴ The only Latin American nations which have published correspondence regarding the congress are Mexico, in *Labor Internacional*, and Argentina (see footnote 49). State Department files, however, contain fairly complete reports of each country's attitude and even contain the texts of much of the correspondence. This summary of each country's position is derived from NADS M-367, 763.72119/606, 607, 608, 615, 625, 662, 667, 671, 676; *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 317-18; and Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, Decimal File, 1910-1929 (National Archives, Washington, D. C.), 710.11/336. (Hereafter, non-microfilmed State Department documents will be cited as NA, RG 59, and appropriate file and document numbers.) El Salvador was an informal ally of Mexico and was hostile to the United States partly because it felt that the Bryan-Chamorro treaty had violated its rights in the Bay of Fonseca. Martin, *Latin America and the War*, 510; NADS M-367, 763.72/3576. Colombia is the only country whose position during May and June is not clear. Colombia, *Anales Diplomáticos Consulares de Colombia ... Tomo VII* (1916-1923) (Bogota, 1957), 176 reports that after April, 1917, Colombia could not "practically second" a congress. Martin, *Latin America and the War*, 424, cites this document as proof that Colombia did not support Argentina, and most historians have followed Martin. The State Department, however, received many rumors that the Colombian minister in Buenos Aires was actively urging the congress, and Harold Peterson, *Argentina and the United States, 1810-1960* (New York, 1964), 333, who relied upon State Department sources, accordingly reported that Colombia energetically supported the initiative. The report in the *Anales*, written after Yrigoyen's attempts had clearly failed, may not be quite accurate; or the minister may have been encouraging the congress on his own, without instructions from his government.

³⁵ Brasil, Ministerio das Relações Exteriores, *Guerra da Europa: Documentos Diplomáticos, Attitude do Brasil, 1914-1917* (Rio de Janeiro, 1917), 51-55.

placed itself clearly in line with Brazil and Bolivia rather than with Argentina.³⁶ After the Brazilian and Uruguayan moves, pro-Allied sentiment seemed to increase greatly in other countries as well. In Chile and Peru, for example, influential people began to argue that continued neutrality would violate inter-American unity and disgrace national honor. Chile and Peru did remain neutral at this time, but both appear to have seriously considered severing ties with Germany in the summer of 1917.³⁷

During late June and July the neutralist position weakened even in Argentina. The German sinking of another Argentine vessel, the *Toro*, increased pro-Allied sentiment in that country. In addition, a United States "goodwill" squadron under the command of Admiral William B. Caperton exerted subtle pressure. According to international law, the fleet of a belligerent could not stay more than twenty-four hours in a neutral port, and Caperton's impending visit to Brazil and Uruguay undoubtedly hastened revocation of neutrality decrees in those countries. The Navy Department hoped that a visit to Argentina would produce a similar result, but the Argentine government invoked a technicality to claim that its neutrality was not compromised even though it allowed the fleet to stay longer than twenty-four hours.³⁸

President Yrigoyen continued to report that fifteen governments had accepted the Argentine invitation to a congress, but such an exaggerated claim must have been primarily designed to enhance his image at home. Only Mexico still actively supported a conference, and in late July Yrigoyen finally informed the Mexican minister that the venture had been postponed.³⁹

³⁶ *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 200, 301-02; NADS M-367, 763.72/3577; NA, RG 59, 710.11/336. The grounds for revoking neutrality was that no American country at war with states of another continent would be treated as a belligerent. See Felix Etchevest, *Doctrina Brum* (Montevideo, 1919). In October, 1917, Uruguay threatened to accept Argentina's renewed hints regarding a congress unless the United States successfully persuaded European governments to give up their rights of extraterritoriality in Uruguay. The United States supported Uruguay to forestall its association with Argentina, the European nations acquiesced to the treaties, and Uruguay broke relations with Germany. *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Sup. I, 316-17, 333-34, 337-39, 341; NADS M-367, 763.72119/875-877.

³⁷ For general opinion in Peru see NADS M-367, 763.72/6055, 6129, 6250 and especially National Archives, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Peru, 1910-1929, Microcopy 746, 823.002/39, 43. For Chilean opinion at this time see NADS M-367, 763.72/4982, 5782d, 6094.

³⁸ For different interpretations of this episode see Peterson, *Argentina and the United States*, 310-11, and Hipólito Yrigoyen, *Pueblo y Gobierno* (ed. by Instituto Yrigoyenano, 12 vols., Buenos Aires, 1956), VIII, 146.

³⁹ *La Prensa*, July 1, 1917, 5; July 12, 1917, 8; *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 308; Report of the Minister of Foreign Relations of Mexico, September 1, 1917, in National Archives, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929, Microcopy 274, 812.032/26.

Although the threat of a Latin American congress receded, the United States still hoped to coax Argentina away from its neutralist position. Brazil suggested that the Allies withhold shipping for Argentina's perishable export products, but State Department officials shelved this proposal. The Allies needed Argentine commodities and had just received intelligence which they hoped would have even greater impact.⁴⁰ The British government had forwarded to Washington some decoded telegrams sent from Count Karl von Luxburg, German minister in Argentina, to his government. On September 9, 1917, the State Department had three of them published in American newspapers. In these telegrams Luxburg referred to Argentine Minister of Foreign Relations, Honorio Pueyrredón, as a "notorious ass," and he recommended that Argentine ships proceeding through the blockade zone to Europe be "sunk without a trace." Such statements were a considerable affront to Argentine national honor and caused a furor in Latin America.⁴¹

Contrary to State Department hopes, the Luxburg telegrams did not change Argentina's policy. Lansing presented copies of the telegrams to the Argentine ambassador the day before publication, but they encountered mysterious delays passing through United States telegraph offices. Yrigoyen was embarrassed that first word of the telegrams came from United States newspapers rather than diplomatic sources, and he blamed the United States for failing to consult him in advance.⁴² In addition, the German minister's characterization of Minister Honorio Pueyrredón provoked as much humor as rage. The wife of the United States ambassador wrote that "the whole of Argentina has screamed with laughter at poor Mr. Pueyrredón being called a Notorious Ass by Luxburg. They call him 'Notorio Honorio.' . . . He is now always drawn as an ass."⁴³ Most importantly, Yrigoyen's political opponents, the conservative press and conservatives in Parliament, began badgering the administration to break relations with Germany. The Luxburg incident, and war policy in general, became less an international question and more an internal partisan matter. To assert the primacy of his party and to affirm executive control over foreign policy, Yrigoyen became even more determined to maintain Argentina's neutrality.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ NADS M-367, 763.72/6653, 8634.

⁴¹ Lansing, *War Memoirs*, 328; *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 322-23.

⁴² Yrigoyen, *Pueblo y Gobierno*, IX, 105-09.

⁴³ Mable Stimson to Mrs. R. L. Ashhurst, Sept. 17, 1917, Papers of Frederic Jesup Stimson (Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston).

⁴⁴ Peter Smith, *Politics and Beef in Argentina: Patterns of Conflict and Change* (New York, 1969) argues that Yrigoyen's economic policies show little discontinuity from the agrarian-based policies of his conservative predecessors, but Smith's emphasis on continuity cannot be extended to the realm of foreign policy. Conservatives generally favored

The failure of Argentina's first attempt to call a Latin American congress, the visit of Admiral Caperton, and the release of the Luxburg notes, did not stifle Yrigoyen's ambition to host an inter-American gathering. In late October Germany had torpedoed another Brazilian vessel, and Brazil became the first nation in South America to declare war. Just as Argentina's first invitations to a conference followed the Brazilian suspension of relations, so Yrigoyen renewed the proposal after Brazil's declaration of war. A number of circumstances made the new initiative seem propitious.

By the fall of 1917, Yrigoyen was plagued with domestic problems—provincial disruption, labor violence, and an increasingly strident pro-Allied opposition. Even if it had little chance of success, the proposal for a Latin American bloc gave Yrigoyen an opportunity to pose, domestically, as a figure of international importance. The prospect of hosting a Latin American conference lent respectability to his neutralist position and diverted attention from the country's difficulties.

In addition, impetus for a new appeal stemmed from the Pope's peace plan of August 1, 1917, and from Argentina's ties with neutral Spain. Considered highly pro-German by the Allies, the Papal proposal influenced Yrigoyen, a devout Catholic, and for the next two months he conferred often with the Papal Nuncio and the Spanish ambassador in Buenos Aires. Newspapers reported that the Pope had offered Argentina a leading role in peace negotiations and that Spain, also a prominent neutral, was urging Yrigoyen to assemble Hispanic nations.⁴⁵ After the successful German offensive in Italy in the fall of 1917, neutrality seemed a more tenable position and Papal mediation a more realistic goal. Mexico also began pressing Yrigoyen to revive the project, and the invitation subsequently sent to Mexico contained coded ciphers which were on no other invitation.⁴⁶

The Yrigoyen administration also feared that Brazil, the only Latin American country preparing to contribute troops to the war, would soon

the Allies, and Yrigoyen sided with the *neutralistas*, who consisted primarily of the more radical gaucho wing of his party and the Socialists. Contemporary observers recognized little continuity between the old elite and the Yrigoyen administration and often commented on the great split between them. NA, RG 59, 710.11/385; NADS M-367, 763.72119/2687; *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I 328, 330; article by Ernesto Hidalgo in *El Universal* (Mexico), June 26, 1918.

⁴⁵ NADS M-367, 763.72119/732, 878, 975; 763.72/7096, 8468.

⁴⁶ NADS M-367, 763.72119/878; 763.72111/6779. Neither State Department records nor the Papers of Leland Harrison, the Department's code expert, (Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.) reveal the contents of this coded message, although all telegrams sent between Argentina and Mexico were censored as they came through Panama and forwarded to Harrison.

acquire the laurels of combat and the prestige of shedding blood on French soil. Unless Argentina could somehow convene a meeting in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro would surely become the center of attention in South America. By this time, Argentine officials must have doubted that Latin American nations could ever arrive at meaningful unity on war policy, but to Yrigoyen the outcome of the congress had become less important than the appearance of Argentina's primacy in South America.⁴⁷

Yrigoyen's invitations again met resistance, especially from nations with strong economic ties to the United States. Most Central American states declined, as did Venezuela, whose government was trying to remain aloof from any hemispheric alignment.⁴⁸ Both Colombia and Ecuador, the earliest advocates of a congress, sent negative responses, perhaps out of concern for their coffee and cacao exports. The United States had recently begun licensing imports, and countries growing nonessential commodities began to fear imminent closure of United States markets. In its reply to Argentina, Colombia claimed that its economy greatly depended upon United States commerce and that participation in the congress might prompt reprisals.⁴⁹ Ecuador, having been pointedly advised of United States opposition, accepted the invitation only on condition that the United States first approve the gathering. On December 7 Ecuador further clarified its policy by breaking diplomatic relations with Germany, ostensibly because of a violation of protocol. But Ecuador's action undoubtedly represented an attempt to ward off cacao restrictions and to decrease State Department pressure for payment of the railway bonds.⁵⁰

Despite these reversals, the persistent Argentine president began employing his own diplomatic leverage over neighboring countries. He asked the Uruguayan minister to return to Montevideo and personally urge his government's acceptance. Rejection, Yrigoyen implied, would be considered a personal affront and might cause Argentina to assist the radical Blanco party in Uruguay.⁵¹ Yrigoyen also reminded Paraguayans of their political and commercial dependence upon Argentina. The Paraguayan president, who had attained power with Yrigoyen's assistance, promised to send a representative but said that his country would vote to

⁴⁷ NADS M-367, 763.72/7990; 763.72119/875.

⁴⁸ *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 356, 364, 365, 383.

⁴⁹ Yrigoyen, *Pueblo y Gobierno*, VIII, 32-55. The lengthy note of refusal from Colombia is the only document on the congress, except for the texts of the invitations, which has been published in an Argentine documents collection.

⁵⁰ NADS M-367, 763.72/6736, 7435½; *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 383-84.

⁵¹ NADS M-367, 763.72119/944.

refer every question to a congress which included the United States.⁵²

Yrigoyen exerted similar pressure on Peru, and not wishing to antagonize either side, Peru devised an ingenious plan which had United States support.⁵³ Argentina had informally assured Peru that the likely result of the congress would be a collective severance of relations with Germany. Peru proposed to test Yrigoyen's sincerity by asking for prior pledges: the first item on the agenda would be suspension of relations with Germany; Argentina would support this position; the participants would follow the recommendations of the majority. Bolivia, Ecuador, and Uruguay joined Peru in agreeing to attend if Argentina fulfilled these conditions.⁵⁴

But Yrigoyen stalled and would not give formal assurances. Chile had accepted the Argentine invitation only if Yrigoyen promised that no decision would be binding and if he previously announced the precise agenda of the conference. If Argentina agreed to insist that all follow a majority vote, Chile would refuse to attend.⁵⁵ It is possible that Yrigoyen was willing to break relations with Germany as he had intimated. But he undoubtedly conceived of the action as a last step, after a well-publicized offer of mediation, rather than as a first step, which would suggest a rubber-stamping of United States and Brazilian policy.

Yrigoyen realized that the opposition of Brazil and the United States lay behind Peru's preconditions, and he tried to convince those governments of his benign intentions. In late November the Argentine Undersecretary of Foreign Relations asked the Brazilian minister to examine the dossier of correspondence regarding the congress, and Yrigoyen invited the United States ambassador to do likewise. In a lengthy interview, the Argentine president also informed the ambassador that he would gladly extend an invitation to the United States. The State Department, fearful that Yrigoyen might think the United States wished to participate, instructed the ambassador not to visit the *Casa Rosada* again.⁵⁶ In another attempt to embarrass Yrigoyen, State Department

⁵² NADS M-367, 763.72119/951, 1062, 1094.

⁵³ In September, 1917, after a cabinet crisis, Peru had issued an ultimatum requiring Germany to meet demands regarding the *Lorton* sinking. When Germany refused, Peru severed relations on October 4. Peru, *Ruptura de Relaciones Diplomáticas con el Gobierno Imperial de Alemania* (Lima, 1918), 50-123, in NADS M-367, 763.72/12538.

⁵⁴ On the Peruvian plan see NADS M-367, 763.72/12538; 763.72119/942, 944, 955, 963, 973, 994, 1005.

⁵⁵ *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Sup. I, 364.

⁵⁶ NADS M-367, 763.72119/949, 952; *Foreign Relations*, 1917, Sup. I, 381-82, 388-89. The United States ambassador to Argentina believed that the United States should agree to attend the Argentine congress. He felt sure that an eminent delegate from the United States could lead all nations into a declaration of war. He also believed that a refusal would

officials then released to the press a second series of Luxburg telegrams.⁵⁷ Inter-American leadership, rather than war policy, was the major problem in United States-Argentine relations.

Throughout December, the Argentine government continued to evade the Peruvian plan and to urge a conference with no prior commitment to the United States-Brazilian position. But by late December only Mexico and El Salvador had unequivocally accepted the invitation, and Yrigoyen "postponed" the congress, which had been set for early January. The Argentine initiative was never again revived, but Mexico's President Carranza once again actively took up the cause of Hispanic unity.

Carranza received word that the congress was postponed only after the departure of his delegation. Although he could have intercepted the mission and requested its return, he permitted it to continue to Argentina and later to travel to other South American countries.⁵⁸ Carranza used the ill-fated Argentine congress to dispatch what was really a financial commission designed to build economic ties between Mexico and South America.

The United States, pressed by war needs, had embargoed food exports to Mexico in the fall of 1917. Even in normal times, Mexico depended upon United States agriculture, and widespread crop failures in many parts of Mexico had created a desperate situation. To ease the famine, Carranza sent Luis Cabrera, a highly nationalistic financial advisor, to

embitter Argentina against the United States but that an acceptance, by allowing Yrigoyen to save face, would gain his gratitude and friendship. Draft of unaddressed, undated letter in folder "1917," Stimson Papers.

⁵⁷ *New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1917, 1-2. The telegrams purportedly exposed a "deal" in which, after sinking the Argentine ship *Toro*, Germany publicly agreed to sink no more Argentine vessels within the blockaded zone (so that Yrigoyen could claim a great diplomatic victory) while Yrigoyen *secretly* promised to allow no more ships to sail. The interpretation that Yrigoyen compromised Argentina's neutrality by making this secret deal with Germany was first written by State Department official Leland Harrison and published in the *Times* along with the telegrams. Harrison, whose routine job involved censorship of mail and code-breaking, would probably not have been adverse to "news management." Yet his version, appearing in Martin, *Latin America and the War*, and in all later studies, has never been questioned by historians. The Yrigoyen administration, when confronted with the telegrams and the charges of a secret deal, denied that Yrigoyen had ever made a secret promise and suggested that Luxburg's reports were the work of a madman. The truth of the incident needs to be researched, for the standard United States version raises unanswered questions. For example, after the United States had published the first set of Luxburg telegrams in September 1917, the Yrigoyen government itself seized from the telegraph offices all other messages sent by Luxburg and turned them over to the United States (Harrison) for decoding. Surely Yrigoyen would not have done this had he known the telegrams would divulge an embarrassing secret deal. All of the facts surrounding the Luxburg telegrams, including Luxburg's reliability, should be scrutinized.

⁵⁸ *El Salvador never prepared nor sent a delegation.*

Washington in early December 1917 to seek relaxation of the embargo. Before discussions even began, however, Cabrera sensed that the United States would demand a rollback of revolutionary legislation, and he quickly left Washington to head the Mexican delegation to Argentina.⁵⁹ Carranza instructed Cabrera to spread the "Carranza doctrine": in its broadest sense this meant economic independence from the United States and increased unity among Latin American nations.⁶⁰ Mexico was obviously seeking to find supplies elsewhere and trying to build connections which could balance United States influence.

At the same time that Cabrera was seeking food imports, Argentina and the Allies were conducting critical negotiations over purchase of the Argentine wheat crop. The major obstacle to a wheat convention was Yrigoyen's demand that the Allies permit exportation of enough fuel to meet Argentine needs. The Allies, particularly the United States, initially balked at this commitment.⁶¹ Mexico, with an abundance of oil and a shortage of food, seemed a natural trading partner for Argentina, which had almost no domestic fuel supply but a bumper crop of cereal.

Yrigoyen and Cabrera met frequently for several weeks.⁶² In February Cabrera reported to Carranza that he had arranged an exchange of wheat, flour, and corn for Mexican petroleum. Later he received authorization to obtain Chilean wheat and to charter Chilean ships to carry the purchases.⁶³ For four months the Cabrera mission traveled around

⁵⁹ NADS M-274, 812.50/46; *Foreign Relations*, 1918, 601; NADS M-367, 763.72119/1052. Allied intelligence reports also indicated that Cabrera may have hoped to arrange a loan from Germany through the Buenos Aires branch of the Banco Germania del Sur. NADS M-274, 812.51/420, 429b. For greater detail placing the Cabrera mission in the context of United States-Mexican negotiations see Emily S. Rosenberg, "World War I and the Growth of United States Predominance in Latin America" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1973).

⁶⁰ *El Universal*, June 27, 1918, July 1, 1918; NADS M-367, 763.72119/1252; NA, RG 59, 710.11/357a. The "Carranza doctrine," was, in part, a revival of the 1857 "Calvo doctrine," which forbade diplomatic intervention on behalf of a foreigner for any purpose. The fear that this radical concept, already written into the Mexican Constitution of 1917, would spread to other Latin American nations prompted the Solicitor for the State Department to have a 123 page memo drawn up on "The Attitude of the United States toward the Carranza Doctrine." Box 18, Lester Woolsey Papers. The apprehension of United States officials toward the Cabrera mission is well illustrated in Franklin Lane, Secretary of Interior, to Lansing, Dec. 15, 1917, and Dec. 20, 1917, vols. 32, 33, Papers of Robert Lansing (Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.).

⁶¹ The wheat negotiations may be followed in National Archives, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Argentina, 1910-1929, Microcopy 514, 835.6131/5 *et seq.*

⁶² NADS M-367, 763.72119/1511.

⁶³ Intercepted telegrams in NADS M-274, 812.00/21799b and in NADS M-367, 763.72119/1478; National Archives, Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Chile, Microcopy 487, 825.852/1.

Argentina, Paraguay, and Chile procuring large amounts of wheat for Mexican consumption.⁶⁴

A trading relationship between Mexico and Argentina seemed logical enough, but the economic ties never became firm. Shipping between neutrals presented a major problem because Allied countries controlled most of the world's oceangoing transportation. Moreover, on January 14, the same day that the Mexican delegation arrived in Buenos Aires, the Argentine government signed a wheat convention with the Allies and obtained assurance of fuel supplies in return. After the wheat convention, Argentine needs were no longer as pressing.⁶⁵ And Mexico's demand for South American grains soon eased as well. Corn, not wheat, was Mexico's normal staple, and in July the United States partially lifted its embargo on corn and a few other food commodities.⁶⁶ Despite Carranza's efforts, Mexico grew increasingly reliant upon food supplies from the United States.⁶⁷

The second failure to convene a congress in Buenos Aires and the return of Cabrera's mission in the spring marked the end of wartime efforts to organize an alternative to United States-Brazilian policy. In the spring of 1918 Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, and Costa Rica all declared war on Germany. The United States no doubt could have pushed other Latin American nations from a rupture of diplomatic relations into a declaration of war, but the State Department wondered if "the demands which they might consider themselves entitled to make would not prove more disadvantageous than the effect produced by their action."⁶⁸ During 1918, sale of wheat and nitrates drew Argentina and Chile closer to the Allied cause, although Woodrow Wilson remained disappointed that these important nations did not fully support the United States position.⁶⁹ Despite continued refusals by the United States Senate to ratify the Panama treaty, even Colombia passed a resolution supporting the Allied cause.⁷⁰ Only Mexico and Venezuela remained strictly neutral, but there was no collaboration between them. The Gómez dictatorship in Venezuela had spawned an active group of

⁶⁴ National Archives, Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations between the United States and Mexico, Microcopy 314, 711.12/136. The transactions between Mexico and Chile, however, did not go smoothly and augured badly for continued commercial relations. See NA, RG 59, 612.253.

⁶⁵ See the wheat negotiations in NADS M-514, 835.6131/5 *et seq.*

⁶⁶ *Foreign Relations*, 1918, 627-28; María Eugenia López de Roux, "Relaciones Mexicano-Norteamericanas (1917-1918)," *Historia Mexicana* XIV (1965), 460-66.

⁶⁷ National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., *Trends in the Foreign Trade of the United States* (New York, 1930), 61-63.

⁶⁸ NADS M-367, 763.72/9031, 10402, 11083.

⁶⁹ Lansing, *War Memoirs*, 316.

⁷⁰ NADS M-367, 763.72/7338, 8191.

emigrés, and many Carrancistas, who had themselves once been expatriates plotting against a tyrannical regime, gave moral support to Gómez' opposition. Although international policy might have made Mexico and Venezuela natural allies, domestic situations prevented any rapprochement. By the end of the war, significant challenges to United States leadership had receded.

Wartime experience prompted the United States to reassess its Latin American policy. Officials ceased to focus almost exclusively on the Canal Area, as they had prior to 1914, and expanded their interests in South America. The war revealed an inconvenient, even dangerous, disunity within the hemisphere, and United States officials longed to rationalize Latin America into a harmonious group of stable democracies, all following the example of the United States. During the twenties, United States officials would seek ways to prevent serious conflicts within the hemisphere and would concentrate upon solving the numerous boundary disputes which continually disrupted inter-American politics. The State Department would become more concerned about the image of the United States, particularly in South America. World War I thus actuated far greater United States interest in South America, in particular, and in hemispheric unity in general.⁷¹

The war dramatized several versions of "continental solidarity." Mexico inaugurated a conscious campaign to build Hispanic ties and to propagate revolutionary and Yankeeophobic doctrines.⁷² Argentina, though not as radical as Mexico, staked out its position as the southern rallying point for Hispanism, and in the 1920's there was frequent interchange between Argentine and Mexican intellectuals.⁷³ Mexico and Argentina tied their ambitions for continental leadership to Latin American unity and independence from the United States. But Brazil believed that an alliance with the United States offered the surest path to preeminence. Brazil hoped that the United States would exercise its power on behalf of Brazilian interests in South America, and, in fact, the two countries often collaborated on hemispheric affairs. World War I strengthened the close relationship and began a pattern which would continue through World War II, the Korean War, and the 1965 intervention in the Dominican Republic. The war also pointed out how national rivalries

⁷¹ See, for example, NA, RG 59, 710.11/377; NADS M-367, 763.72119/2604. Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919* (New Haven, Conn., 1963), *passim*.

⁷² In the early twenties the State Department expressed anxiety at the effect of Mexican propaganda and, no doubt, tended to exaggerate its revolutionary character and its pervasive nature. See NADS M-274, 812.20210/orig. *et seq.*

⁷³ Clarence Haring, *South America Looks at the United States* (New York, 1928), 141-60.

prevented the development of an ABC power bloc. The much-heralded treaty of ABC unity, signed in 1915, had been a chimera.⁷⁴

For the nations of Latin America the war presented choices of hemispheric alignment. United States intervention in the war offered an unparalleled opportunity for a Latin American or a Hispanic movement. But in the end, the military and economic power of the United States and the success of the Allied cause doomed Argentina's bid for leadership and dashed Mexico's hopes for inter-American economic ties. The contest over what Manuel Ugarte termed the "destiny of a continent" continued, but the failure to mount an independent Latin American initiative during the war years and the further consolidation of the United States-Brazilian alliance substantially strengthened United States leadership throughout the hemisphere.

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⁷⁴ Chile and Brazil had ratified the treaty; Argentina had not.