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Good Neighbors in War Time: U.S. Policy toward Latin America during World War II

(Abstract)

World War II marks an important episode in the relations between the United States and Latin America. Before 1939 the U.S. was just one of several great powers competing for prominence in the region. Yet by 1945, along with diminishing European influence, Uncle Sam ended up in an unprecedented highly favorable position with its Southern neighbors. Additionally, Washington's changing role on the world stage shifted the tone of American policy toward Latin America. The article aims to explain how these changes came about by analyzing the political and economic aspects of U.S. – Latin American relations in the war period. The author concludes that U.S. policy in the Western hemisphere was a success due to the consistent policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration. However, the world war clearly demonstrated to the Americans that keeping the peace in the Western Hemisphere was essential for their national security. Consequently, the aftermath of World War II gave way to a new period in U.S. – Latin American relations, characterized by Washington's willingness to secure hemispheric unity even at the price of renewed anti-American sentiment in the region.

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