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Jorge G. Castañeda

A TALE OF TWO LEFTS

JUST OVER a decade ago, Latin America seemed poised to begin a virtuous cycle of economic progress and improved democratic governance, overseen by a growing number of centrist technocratic governments. In Mexico, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, buttressed by the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, was ready for his handpicked successor to win the next presidential election. Former Finance Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso was about to beat out the radical labor leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva for the presidency of Brazil. Argentine President Carlos Menem had pegged the peso to the dollar and put his populist Peronist legacy behind him. And at the invitation of President Bill Clinton, Latin American leaders were preparing to gather in Miami for the Summit of the Americas, signaling an almost unprecedented convergence between the southern and northern halves of the Western Hemisphere.

What a difference ten years can make. Although the region has just enjoyed its best two years of economic growth in a long time and real threats to democratic rule are few and far between, the landscape today is transformed. Latin America is swerving left, and distinct backlashes are under way against the predominant trends of the last 15 years: free-market reforms, agreement with the United States on a number of issues, and the consolidation of representative

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democracy. This reaction is more politics than policy, and more nuanced than it may appear. But it is real.

Starting with Hugo Chávez's victory in Venezuela eight years ago and poised to culminate in the possible election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico's July 2 presidential contest, a wave of leaders, parties, and movements generically labeled "leftist" have swept into power in one Latin American country after another. After Chávez, it was Lula and the Workers' Party in Brazil, then Néstor Kirchner in Argentina and Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay, and then, earlier this year, Evo Morales in Bolivia. If the long shot Ollanta Humala wins the April presidential election in Peru and López Obrador wins in Mexico, it will seem as if a veritable left-wing tsunami has hit the region. Colombia and Central America are the only exceptions, but even in Nicaragua, the possibility of a win by Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega cannot be dismissed.

The rest of the world has begun to take note of this left-wing resurgence, with concern and often more than a little hysteria. But understanding the reasons behind these developments requires recognizing that there is not one Latin American left today; there are two. One is modern, open-minded, reformist, and internationalist, and it springs, paradoxically, from the hard-core left of the past. The other, born of the great tradition of Latin American populism, is nationalist, strident, and close-minded. The first is well aware of its past mistakes (as well as those of its erstwhile role models in Cuba and the Soviet Union) and has changed accordingly. The second, unfortunately, has not.

UTOPIA REDEFINED

THE REASONS for Latin America's turn to the left are not hard to discern. Along with many other commentators and public intellectuals, I started detecting those reasons nearly fifteen years ago, and I recorded them in my book *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War*, which made several points. The first was that the fall of the Soviet Union would help the Latin American left by removing its geopolitical stigma. Washington would no longer be able to accuse any left-of-center regime in the region of being a "Soviet beachhead"

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One left: Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Chile's Michelle Bachelet

(as it had every such government since it fomented the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz's administration in Guatemala in 1954); left-wing governments would no longer have to choose between the United States and the Soviet Union, because the latter had simply disappeared.

The second point was that regardless of the success or failure of economic reforms in the 1990s and the discrediting of traditional Latin American economic policies, Latin America's extreme inequality (Latin America is the world's most unequal region), poverty, and concentration of wealth, income, power, and opportunity meant that it would have to be governed from the left of center. The combination of inequality and democracy tends to cause a movement to the left everywhere. This was true in western Europe from the end of the nineteenth century until after World War II; it is true today in Latin America. The impoverished masses vote for the type of policies that, they hope, will make them less poor.

Third, the advent of widespread democratization and the consolidation of democratic elections as the only road to power would, sooner or later, lead to victories for the left—precisely because of the social, demographic, and ethnic configuration of the region. In other words, even without the other proximate causes, Latin America would almost certainly have tilted left.

This forecast became all the more certain once it became evident that the economic, social, and political reforms implemented in Latin America starting in the mid-1980s had not delivered on their promises. With the exception of Chile, which has been governed by a left-of-

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And another: Bolivia's Evo Morales and Mexico's Andrés Manuel López Obrador

center coalition since 1989, the region has had singularly unimpressive economic growth rates. They remain well below those of the glory days of the region's development (1940–80) and also well below those of other developing nations—China, of course, but also India, Malaysia, Poland, and many others. Between 1940 and 1980, Brazil and Mexico, for example, averaged six percent growth per year; from 1980 to 2000, their growth rates were less than half that. Low growth rates have meant the persistence of dismal poverty, inequality, high unemployment, a lack of competitiveness, and poor infrastructure. Democracy, although welcomed and supported by broad swaths of Latin American societies, did little to eradicate the region's secular plagues: corruption, a weak or nonexistent rule of law, ineffective governance, and the concentration of power in the hands of a few. And despite hopes that relations with the United States would improve, they are worse today than at any other time in recent memory, including the 1960s (an era defined by conflicts over Cuba) and the 1980s (defined by the Central American wars and Ronald Reagan's "contras").

But many of us who rightly foretold the return of the left were at least partly wrong about the kind of left that would emerge. We thought—perhaps naively—that the aggiornamento of the left in Latin America would rapidly and neatly follow that of socialist parties in France and Spain and of New Labour in the United Kingdom. In a few cases, this occurred—Chile certainly, Brazil tenuously. But in many others, it did not.

One reason for our mistake was that the collapse of the Soviet Union did not bring about the collapse of its Latin American equivalent, Cuba,

as many expected it would. Although the links and subordination of many left-wing parties to Havana have had few domestic electoral implications (and Washington has largely stopped caring anyway), the left's close ties to and emotional dependency on Fidel Castro became an almost insurmountable obstacle to its reconstruction on many issues. But the more fundamental explanation has to do with the roots of many of the movements that are now in power. Knowing where left-wing leaders and parties come from—in particular, which of the two strands of the left in Latin American history they are a part of—is critical to understanding who they are and where they are going.

ORIGINS OF THE SPECIES

The left—defined as that current of thought, politics, and policy that stresses social improvements over macroeconomic orthodoxy, egalitarian distribution of wealth over its creation, sovereignty over international cooperation, democracy (at least when in opposition, if not necessarily once in power) over governmental effectiveness—has followed two different paths in Latin America. One left sprang up out of the Communist International and the Bolshevik Revolution and has followed a path similar to that of the left in the rest of the world. The Chilean, Uruguayan, Brazilian, Salvadoran, and, before Castro's revolution, Cuban Communist Parties, for example, obtained significant shares of the popular vote at one point or another, participated in "popular front" or "national unity" governments in the 1930s and 1940s, established a solid presence in organized labor, and exercised significant influence in academic and intellectual circles.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, these parties had lost most of their prestige and combativeness. Their corruption, submission to Moscow, accommodation with sitting governments, and assimilation by local power elites had largely discredited them in the eyes of the young and the radical. But the Cuban Revolution brought new life to this strain of the left. In time, groups descended from the old communist left fused with Havana-inspired guerrilla bands. There were certainly some tensions. Castro accused the leader of the Bolivian Communist Party of betraying Che Guevara and leading him to his death in Bolivia in 1967; the Uruguayan and Chilean Communist

Parties (the region's strongest) never supported the local Castroist armed groups. Yet thanks to the passage of time, to Soviet and Cuban understanding, and to the sheer weight of repression generated by military coups across the hemisphere, the Castroists and Communists all came together—and they remain together today.

The origin of the other Latin American left is peculiarly Latin American. It arose out of the region's strange contribution to political science: good old-fashioned populism. Such populism has almost always been present almost everywhere in Latin America. It is frequently in power, or close to it. It claims as its founders historical icons of great mythical stature, from Peru's Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre and Colombia's Jorge Gaitán (neither made it to office) to Mexico's Lázaro Cárdenas and Brazil's Getúlio Vargas, both foundational figures in their countries' twentieth-century history, and to Argentina's Juan Perón and Ecuador's José Velasco Ibarra. The list is not exhaustive, but it is illustrative: many of these nations' founding-father equivalents were seen in their time and are still seen now as noble benefactors of the working class. They made their mark on their nations, and their followers continue to pay tribute to them. Among many of these countries' poor and dispossessed, they inspire respect, even adulation, to this day.

These populists are representative of a very different left—often virulently anticommunist, always authoritarian in one fashion or another, and much more interested in policy as an instrument for attaining and conserving power than in power as a tool for making policy. They did do things for the poor—Perón and Vargas mainly for the urban proletariat, Cárdenas for the Mexican peasantry—but they also created the corporatist structures that have since plagued the political systems, as well as the labor and peasant movements, in their countries. They nationalized large sectors of their countries' economies, extending well beyond the so-called commanding heights, by targeting everything in sight: oil (Cárdenas in Mexico), railroads (Perón in Argentina), steel (Vargas in Brazil), tin (Victor Paz Estenssoro in Bolivia), copper (Juan Velasco Alvarado in Peru). They tended to cut sweetheart deals with the budding local business sector, creating the proverbial crony capitalism that was decried much later. Their justifications for such steps were always superficially ideological (nationalism, economic development) but at bottom pragmatic: they needed money

to give away but did not like taxes. They squared that circle by capturing natural-resource or monopoly rents, which allowed them to spend money on the *descamisados*, the "shirtless," without raising taxes on the middle class. When everything else fails, the thinking went, spend money.

The ideological corollary to this bizarre blend of inclusion of the excluded, macroeconomic folly, and political staying power (Perón was the dominant figure in Argentine politics from 1943 through his death in 1974, the Cárdenas dynasty is more present than ever in Mexican politics) was virulent, strident nationalism. Perón was elected president in 1946 with the slogan "Braden or Perón" (Spruille Braden was then the U.S. ambassador to Buenos Aires). When Vargas committed suicide in 1954, he darkly insinuated that he was a victim of American imperialism. Such nationalism was more than rhetorical. In regimes whose domestic policy platform was strictly power-driven and pragmatic, it was the agenda.

A makeover for the radical left is exactly what is needed for good governance in the region.

These two subspecies of the Latin American left have always had an uneasy relationship. On occasion they have worked together, but at other times they have been at war, as when Perón returned from exile in June 1973 and promptly massacred a fair share of the Argentine radical left. In some countries, the populist left simply devoured the other one, although peacefully and rather graciously: in Mexico in the late 1980s, the tiny Communist Party disappeared, and former PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) members, such as Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, and the current presidential front-runner, López Obrador, took over everything from its buildings and finances to its congressional representation and relations with Cuba to form the left-wing PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution).

More recently, something funny has happened to both kinds of leftist movements on their way back to power. The communist, socialist, and Castroist left, with a few exceptions, has been able to reconstruct itself, thanks largely to an acknowledgment of its failures and those of its erstwhile models. Meanwhile, the populist left—with an approach to power that depends on giving away money, a deep attachment to the nationalist fervor of another era, and no real domestic agenda—has remained true to itself. The latter perseveres in its cult

of the past: it waxes nostalgic about the glory days of Peronism, the Mexican Revolution, and, needless to say, Castro. The former, familiar with its own mistakes, defeats, and tragedies, and keenly aware of the failures of the Soviet Union and Cuba, has changed its colors.

CASTRO'S UNLIKELY HEIRS

When the reformed communist left has reached office in recent years, its economic policies have been remarkably similar to those of its immediate predecessors, and its respect for democracy has proved full-fledged and sincere. Old-school anti-Americanism has been tempered by years of exile, realism, and resignation.

The best examples of the reconstructed, formerly radical left are to be found in Chile, Uruguay, and, to a slightly lesser extent, Brazil. This left emphasizes social policy—education, antipoverty programs, health care, housing—but within a more or less orthodox market framework. It usually attempts to deepen and broaden democratic institutions. On occasion, Latin America's age-old vices—corruption, a penchant for authoritarian rule—have led it astray. It disagrees with the United States frequently but rarely takes matters to the brink.

In Chile, former President Ricardo Lagos and his successor, Michelle Bachelet, both come from the old Socialist Party (Lagos from its moderate wing, Bachelet from the less temperate faction). Their left-wing party has governed for 16 consecutive years, in a fruitful alliance with the Christian Democrats. This alliance has made Chile a true model for the region. Under its stewardship, the country has enjoyed high rates of economic growth; significant reductions in poverty; equally significant improvements in education, housing, and infrastructure; a slight drop in inequality; a deepening of democracy and the dismantling of Augusto Pinochet's political legacy; a settling of accounts (although not of scores) regarding human rights violations of the past; and, last but not at all least, a strong, mature relationship with the United States, including a free-trade agreement signed by George W. Bush and ratified by the U.S. Congress and Washington's support for the Chilean candidate to head the Organization of American States. U.S.-Chilean ties have continued to prosper despite Chile's unambiguous opposition to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in the UN Security Council in 2003.

In Uruguay, Vázquez ran for president twice before finally winning a little more than a year ago. His coalition has always been the same: the old Uruguayan Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and many former Marxist Tupamaro guerrillas, who made history in the 1960s and 1970s by, among other things, kidnapping and executing CIA station chief Dan Mitrione in Montevideo in 1970 and being featured in Costa-Gavras' 1973 film *State of Siege*. There was reason to expect Vázquez to follow a radical line once elected—but history once again trumped ideology. Although Vázquez has restored Uruguay's relations with Cuba and every now and then rails against neoliberalism and Bush, he has also negotiated an investment-protection agreement with the United States, sent his finance minister to Washington to explore the possibility of forging a free-trade agreement, and stood up to the "antiglobalization, politically correct" groups in neighboring Argentina on the construction of two enormous wood-pulp mills in the Uruguay River estuary. He refused to attend Morales' inauguration as president of Bolivia and has threatened to veto a bill legalizing abortion if it gets to his desk. His government is, on substance if not on rhetoric, as economically orthodox as any other. And with good reason: a country of 3.5 million inhabitants with the lowest poverty rate and the least inequality in Latin America should not mess with its relative success.

Brazil is a different story, but not a diametrically opposed one. Even before his inauguration in 2003, Lula had indicated that he would follow most of his predecessor's macroeconomic policies and comply with the fiscal and monetary targets agreed on with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He has done so, achieving impressive results in economic stability (Brazil continues to generate a hefty fiscal surplus every year), but GDP growth has been disappointing, as have employment levels and social indicators. Lula has tried to compensate for his macroeconomic orthodoxy with innovative social initiatives (particularly his "Zero Hunger" drive and land reform). At the end of the day, however, perhaps his most important achievement on this front will be the generalization of the Bolsa Familia (Family Fund) initiative, which was copied directly from the antipoverty program of Mexican Presidents Ernesto Zedillo and Vicente Fox. This is a successful, innovative welfare program, but as neoliberal and scantly revolutionary as one can get.

On foreign policy, Brazil, like just about every Latin American country, has had its run-ins with the Bush administration, over issues including trade, UN reform, and how to deal with Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, and Venezuela. But perhaps the best metaphor for the current state of U.S.-Brazilian relations today was the scene in Brasilia last November, when Lula welcomed Bush at his home, while across the street demonstrators from his own party burned the U.S. president in effigy.

The Workers' Party, which Lula founded in 1980 after a long metalworkers' strike in the industrial outskirts of São Paulo, has largely followed him on the road toward social democracy. Many of the more radical cadres of the party, or at least those with the most radical histories (such as José Genoino and José Dirceu), have become moderate reformist leaders, despite their pasts and their lingering emotional devotion to Cuba. (Lula shares this devotion, and yet it has not led him to subservience to Castro: when Lula visited Havana in 2004, Castro wanted to hold a mass rally at the Plaza de la Revolución; instead, Castro got a 24-hour in-and-out visit from the Brazilian president, with almost no public exposure.) Lula and many of his

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comrades are emblematic of the transformation of the old, radical, guerrilla-based, Castroist or communist left. Granted, the conversion is not complete: the corruption scandals that have rocked Brazil's government have more to do with a certain neglect of democratic practices than with any personal attempt at enrichment. Still, the direction in which Lula and his allies are moving is clear.

Overall, this makeover of the radical left is good for Latin America. Given the region's inequality, poverty, still-weak democratic tradition, and unfinished nation building, this left offers precisely what is needed for good governance in the region. If Chile is any example, this left's path is the way out of poverty, authoritarian rule, and, eventually, inequality. This left is also a viable, sensitive, and sensible alternative to the other left—the one that speaks loudly but carries a very small social stick.

POPULISM REDUX

THE LEFTIST leaders who have arisen from a populist, nationalist past with few ideological underpinnings—Chávez with his military background, Kirchner with his Peronist roots, Morales with his coca-leaf growers' militancy and agitprop, López Obrador with his origins in the PRI—have proved much less responsive to modernizing influences. For them, rhetoric is more important than substance, and the fact of power is more important than its responsible exercise. The despair of poor constituencies is a tool rather than a challenge, and taunting the United States trumps promoting their countries' real interests in the world. The difference is obvious: Chávez is not Castro; he is Perón with oil. Morales is not an indigenous Che; he is a skillful and irresponsible populist. López Obrador is neither Lula nor Chávez; he comes straight from the PRI of Luis Echeverría, Mexico's president from 1970 to 1976, from which he learned how to be a cash-dispensing, authoritarian-inclined populist. Kirchner is a true-blue Peronist, and proud of it.

For all of these leaders, economic performance, democratic values, programmatic achievements, and good relations with the United States are not imperatives but bothersome constraints that miss the real point. They are more intent on maintaining popularity at any cost, picking as many fights as possible with Washington, and getting as much control as they can over sources of revenue, including

oil, gas, and suspended foreign-debt payments.

Argentina's Kirchner is a classic (although somewhat ambiguous) case. Formerly the governor of a small province at the end of the world, he was elected in the midst of a monumental economic crisis and has managed to bring his country out of it quite effectively. Inflation has been relatively controlled, growth is back, and interest rates have fallen. Kirchner also renegotiated Argentina's huge foreign debt skillfully, if perhaps a bit too boldly. He has gone further than his predecessors in settling past grievances, particularly regarding the "dirty war" that the military and his Peronist colleagues waged in the 1970s. He has become a darling of the left and seems to be on a roll, with approval ratings of over 70 percent.

But despite the left-wing company he keeps, Kirchner is at his core a die-hard Peronist, much more interested in bashing his creditors and the IMF than in devising social policy, in combating the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) than in strengthening Mercosur, in cuddling up to Morales, Castro, and Chávez than in lowering the cost of importing gas from Bolivia. No one knows exactly what will happen when Argentina's commodity boom busts

or when the country is forced to return to capital markets for fresh funds. Nor does anyone really know what Kirchner intends to do when his economic recovery runs out of steam. But it seems certain that the Peronist chromosomes in the country's DNA will remain dominant: Kirchner will hand out money, expropriate whatever is needed and available, and lash out at the United States and the IMF on every possible occasion. At the same time, he will worry little about the number of Argentines living under the poverty line and be as chummy with Chávez as he can.

Chávez is doing much the same in Venezuela. He is leading the fight against the FTAA, which is going nowhere anyway. He is making life increasingly miserable for foreign—above all American—companies. He is supporting, one way or the other, left-wing groups and leaders in many neighboring countries. He has established a strategic alliance with Havana that includes the presence of nearly 20,000 Cuban teachers, doctors, and cadres in Venezuela. He is flirting with Iran and Argentina on nuclear-technology issues. Most of all, he is attempting, with some success, to split the hemisphere into two camps: one pro-Chávez, one pro-American.

At the same time, Chávez is driving his country into the ground. A tragicomic symbol of this was the collapse of the highway from Caracas to the Maiquetía airport a few months ago because of lack of maintenance. Venezuela's poverty figures and human development indices have deteriorated since 1999, when Chávez took office. A simple comparison with Mexico—which has not exactly thrived in recent years—shows how badly Venezuela is faring. Over the past seven years, Mexico's economy grew by 17.5 percent, while Venezuela's failed to grow at all. From 1997 to 2003, Mexico's per capita GDP rose by 9.5 percent, while Venezuela's shrank by 45 percent. From 1998 to 2005, the Mexican peso lost 16 percent of its value, while the value of the Venezuelan bolivar dropped by 292 percent. Between 1998 and 2004, the number of Mexican households living in extreme poverty decreased by 49 percent, while the number of Venezuelan households in extreme poverty rose by 4.5 percent. In 2005, Mexico's inflation rate was estimated at 3.3 percent, the lowest in years, while Venezuela's was 16 percent.

Although Chávez does very little for the poor of his own country (among whom he remains popular), he is doing much more for other countries: giving oil away to Cuba and other Caribbean states, buying

Argentina's debt, allegedly financing political campaigns in Bolivia and Peru and perhaps Mexico. He also frequently picks fights with Fox and Bush and is buying arms from Spain and Russia. This is about as close to traditional Latin American populism as one can get—and as far from a modern and socially minded left as one can be.

The populist left leaders who are waiting in the wings look likely to deliver much the same. Morales in Bolivia has already made it to power. López Obrador in Mexico is close. Although Humala in Peru is still a long shot, he certainly cannot be dismissed. Such leaders will follow the footsteps of Chávez and Kirchner, because they have the same roots and share the same creed. They will all, of course, be constrained by their national realities—Morales by the fact that Bolivia is South America's poorest nation, López Obrador by a 2,000-mile border with the United States, Humala by a fragmented country and the lack of an established political party to work with.

Still, they will tread the same path. Morales and Humala have both said that they will attempt either to renationalize their countries' natural resources (gas, oil, copper, water) or renegotiate the terms under which foreign companies extract them. López Obrador has stated that he will not allow private investment in PEMEX, Mexico's state-owned oil company, or in the national electric power company. He has given away money right and left in Mexico City, financing his magnanimity with debt and federal tax revenues. Morales has deftly played on his indigenous origins to ingratiate himself with the majority of his country's population, to whom he is promising everything but giving very little. Morales and Humala have received at least rhetorical support from Chávez, and Morales' first trip abroad was to Havana, his second to Caracas. Humala, a retired lieutenant colonel in the Peruvian army, has confessed to being an admirer of the Venezuelan president. Like Chávez, he started his political career with a failed coup, in his case against Alberto Fujimori in 2000. López Obrador's deputy, certain to be the next mayor of Mexico City, has openly declared his admiration for Chávez and Castro, despite having been a high-level official under Salinas.

What will prove most damaging is that the populist left loves power more than democracy, and it will fight to keep it at great cost. Its disregard for democracy and the rule of law is legendary. Often using democratic means, it has often sought to concentrate its power

through new constitutions, take control of the media and the legislative and judicial branches of government, and perpetuate its rule by using electoral reforms, nepotism, and the suspension of constitutional guarantees. Chávez is the best example of this left, but certainly not the only one: López Obrador has already committed himself to "cleaning up" Mexico's Supreme Court and central bank and opposes any autonomy for the country's infant regulatory agencies.

This populist left has traditionally been disastrous for Latin America, and there is no reason to suppose it will stop being so in the future. As in the past, its rule will lead to inflation, greater poverty and inequality, and confrontation with Washington. It also threatens to roll back the region's most important achievement of recent years: the establishment of democratic rule and respect for human rights.

RIGHT LEFT, WRONG LEFT

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN these two broad left-wing currents is the best basis for serious policy, from Washington, Brussels, Mexico City, or anywhere else. There is not a tremendous amount Washington or any other government can actually do to alter the current course of events in Latin America. The Bush administration could make some difference by delivering on its promises to incumbents in the region (on matters such as immigration and trade), thereby supporting continuity without interfering in the electoral process; in South American nations where there is a strong European presence, countries such as France and Spain could help by pointing out that certain policies and attitudes have certain consequences.

But there is much bolder course, a more statesmanlike approach, that would foster a "right left" instead of working to subvert any left's resurgence. This strategy would involve actively and substantively supporting the right left when it is in power: signing free-trade agreements with Chile, taking Brazil seriously as a trade interlocutor, engaging these nations' governments on issues involving third countries (such as Colombia, Cuba, and Venezuela), and bringing their leaders and public intellectuals into the fold. The right left should be able to show not only that there are no penalties for being what it is, but also that it can deliver concrete benefits.

The international community should also clarify what it expects from the "wrong left," given that it exists and that attempts to displace it would be not only morally unacceptable but also pragmatically ineffective. The first point to emphasize is that Latin American governments of any persuasion must abide by their countries' commitments regarding human rights and democracy. The region has built up an incipient scaffolding on these matters over recent years, and any backsliding, for whatever reason or purpose, should be met by a rebuke from the international community. The second point to stress is that all governments must continue to comply with the multilateral effort to build a new international legal order, one that addresses, among other things, the environment, indigenous people's rights, international criminal jurisdiction (despite Washington's continued rejection of the International Criminal Court and its pressure on several Latin American governments to do the same), nuclear nonproliferation, World Trade Organization rules and norms, regional agreements, and the fight against corruption, drug trafficking, and terrorism, consensually defined. Europe and the United States have enormous leverage in many of these countries. They should use it.

Finally, Washington and other governments should avoid the mistakes of the past. Some fights are simply not worth fighting: If Morales wants to squabble with Chile over access to the sea, with Argentina over the price of gas, with Peru over border issues and indigenous ancestry, stand aside. If, for whatever reason, López Obrador wants to build a bullet train from Mexico City to the U.S. border, live and let live. If Chávez really wants to acquire nuclear technology from Argentina, let him, as long as he does it under International Atomic Energy Agency supervision and safeguards. Under no circumstances should anyone accept the division of the hemisphere into two camps—for the United States, against the United States—because under such a split, the Americas themselves always lose out. Such a division happened over Cuba in the 1960s and over Central America in the 1980s. Now that the Cold War is over, it should never happen again. So instead of arguing over whether to welcome or bemoan the advent of *the* left in Latin America, it would be wiser to separate the sensible from the irresponsible and to support the former and contain the latter. If done right, this would go a long way toward helping the region finally find its bearings and, as Gabriel García Márquez might put it, end its hundreds of years of solitude.