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U.S.-Latin American Relations in the 1950s: The Impact and Inconsistencies of Former President
of Penn State Milton S. Eisenhower

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Abstract:

This thesis analyzes the work, speeches, and writings of Milton S. Eisenhower regarding Latin America in the 1950s, starting at the preparations for his trip to South America which occurred in 1953 and ending with the reflections on the decade in his book called *The Wine Is Bitter: The United States and Latin America* which was published in 1963. The results found that Dr. Eisenhower's words and the ideas that he presents to the American public are not always an accurate representation of the reality of the relationship of the two regions that existed during that time. The essay gives context on some significant interactions between the US. and Latin America during that time period and how the words of Dr. Eisenhower contradicted many events and efforts that were actually occurring. Military intervention in various nations, particularly in Guatemala, and the existence of strong tensions throughout the United States regarding the Cold War and spread of Communism influenced the relationship between the two hemispheres and the decisions that were made. The contrast between history and Dr. Eisenhower's obscured viewpoints due to his strong patriotism and dedication to the promotion of the U.S. government is evident throughout the following analysis.

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Chapter 1: An Introduction to Milton Eisenhower and Latin America in the 1950s

Many Americans today know the name of the former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower. This President led the United States during a critical period after World War II when the foreign policies that he decided upon had a large impact throughout the world, especially for the country's neighbors to the south. Most notably, his actions in Guatemala in 1954 changed the reality of the U.S.-Latin American relations permanently. The recent conclusion of World War II and the start of the Cold War at the time of his presidency left the nation in a place where any change in foreign policy was critically important to history.¹ The Eisenhower Administration influenced the future of Latin American policies and politics according to many scholars with how he set a precedent for operating in the era of competition with the USSR. It is written that "the belief that U.S. hemispheric policies should incorporate a commitment to programs of economic and social development and should keep a distance from repressive regimes began in earnest under Eisenhower, laying the roots for the grander projects that followed." President Eisenhower holds a big name in U.S.-Latin American relations after having taken leadership during a critical era.²

Fewer know the name of his younger brother, Milton. However, Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower is a man that influenced the country in his own significant ways. He tended to work

¹ Michelle Denise Getchell. "Revisiting the 1954 Coup in Guatemala: The Soviet Union, the United Nations, and 'Hemispheric Solidarity,'" *Journal of Cold War Studies* 17, no. 2 (2015): 73-102. muse.jhu.edu/article/582435. 73-74.

² T. T. Allcock (2014). The First Alliance for Progress? Reshaping the Eisenhower Administration's Policy Toward Latin America. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16(1), 85-110. https://doi.org/10.1162/jcws_a_00432

in the background on major political and governmental issues throughout his career. For that, he has left out of the history taught to students today even though he advised every president from Calvin Coolidge to Richard Nixon.³ Milton was more than simply the brother of the President of the United States.

In his long life, Milton S. Eisenhower contributed to many facets of American development. He got involved in government and in education administration in a variety of ways, connecting with people across the country and sometimes even across the globe. When growing up in Abilene, Kansas, he was the youngest of six brothers, including Dwight, and was never pressured by his parents, David and Ida Eisenhower, to follow a particular path. His parents worked to teach all six of them a sense of fairness and objectivity. Each of the sons grew up to follow their own unique paths, but Milton was the first of all of them to be drawn towards government. For many years, Dwight was known throughout Washington D.C. as “Milton’s older brother” instead of the other way around, but Dwight eventually made a name for himself as well after his memorable contributions during World War II.⁴

In the following thesis the effects of Milton Eisenhower’s advice towards the U.S. government throughout his career will be analyzed for a deeper understanding of the significance of his work during the 1950’s regarding the relationship between the United States and Latin America. I will begin by providing a background on the career of Milton Eisenhower up to the relevant period. In the same chapter, historical background will be given about what this relationship was like before and during the 1950s. The following two chapters will dissect

³ Stephen E. Ambrose and Richard H. Immerman. *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. 8.

⁴ Ambrose and Immerman, *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman*, 10, 15, 47.

different elements of Milton's beliefs about the relationship at opposite ends of the decade. One will be based on his thoughts after a tour of South America that he took during 1953, and the other will be regarding the book that he wrote about his own perspective on the development of the relationship during this decade. I will end this essay with conclusions about how Milton Eisenhower's perspective and influence on the relationship between the United States and Latin America compares to how other historians and scholars view the situation.

Throughout this essay the most significant sources used are several books and some archival material. Milton Eisenhower wrote a book called *The Wine Is Bitter* in 1963 as a review of all of his experiences and knowledge with Latin America, which is a piece that heavily influences this project.⁵ Another piece that will be referenced frequently is a report that Milton submitted to President Eisenhower and his administration after an important trip that he went on to South America as a U.S. representative during the year 1953, a copy of which was found in the Penn State Archives collection of "The Eisenhower Papers."⁶ These two will be the main sources of understanding Milton's opinions and influence.

There was a lot of pressure surrounding the actions of the Eisenhower administration regarding Latin America, so understanding President Eisenhower's efforts and his role in the development of the relationship during the time he was in office was a necessary element of this thesis. In an effort to understand what other historians say about the relationship between the United States and Latin America up to and during the 1950s, I read the books *The Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America* by Tom J. Farer, *The Killing Zone* by Stephen G.

⁵ Milton Stover Eisenhower. *The Wine Is Bitter: The United States and Latin America*. Doubleday, 1963.

⁶ The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers. The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA.

Rabe, and *Talons of the Eagle* by Peter H. Smith. These scholars agree that the relationship that these two nations had was precarious up to, during, and even after the near decade of Eisenhower's presidency. From a biographical standpoint, I also used the book *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman* by Stephen E. Ambrose and Richard H. Immerman in order to gain a deeper understanding of Milton's life and career as a whole. Several other articles, journals, and archival materials were used to gather information throughout this project to supplement, contrast, or support the main sources listed.

What an analysis of these assorted works demonstrates is that the reality of history that occurred does not match up perfectly with the way that these situations were presented by Milton. It is clear throughout his various works that his words were meant as a way to promote his nationalistic perspective and maintain respect for the administration among Americans despite the rising tensions. It is a form of propaganda, advertising the U.S. ideals and garnering support for the nation by making the ideals and intentions seem honorable and desirable. Discussing the repercussions of his work advising not only his brother, but other presidents as well leads us to realize that he was more than just a statesman who valued education, but an invisible force working within the U.S. government to influence the outcome of the relationship that the United States pursued with Latin America during the 1950s. They maintained a sense of control over the spread of Communism in Latin America, but at the same time created a strain on the dynamic between the two hemispheres.

Chapter 2: The Meaning of Histories Surrounding the Thesis Topic

To understand how the perspectives and policies of the United States were influenced by Milton Eisenhower and what their impact was, we must first understand his position in American government and what happened up to and during the 1950s regarding interactions with the two regions. Milton had a hand in the ongoing actions of the U.S. government in more aspects than just the policies that the nation held towards Latin America. The region of Latin America, which included many different nations, had experienced various interactions up to the point which this essay highlights and from that had developed their own policies, thoughts, and ideas about the United States. Up to this point, the relationship was strained due to the colonization and imperialism history, but the two hemispheres were amicable enough to support each other in World War II. Milton, as we will see, had a hand in many notable efforts in the U.S. government up to the point of interest in this thesis, so his influence is significant in the telling of the history. He had close relationships with many presidents and lent an ear to major decisions for his decades-long career. All of this background will provide a lens through which we can view the words of Milton.

A. Milton's Career Development

At a young age, Milton had made a bet with one of his brothers, Dwight, about school grades, and the instinctual competition between siblings ended up sparking in him a deep love of learning. He began reading everything that was available to him, and even ended up skipping a grade. Milton studied hard and kept up with politics and government as much as possible, idolizing Woodrow Wilson throughout his young life. When he graduated high school, he got a

job working for a local paper as a reporter, leaving it to enlist in the military once he was old enough since World War I was going on at the time. He went to France to fight, but started his university education at Kansas State as soon as he returned in 1919.⁷

Milton's government career began in Washington when he received a job working in the Department of Agriculture from 1928-1942. He worked his way up the ranks in the office and became the "number-two man" in the department early on, making a name for himself and forging valuable connections throughout the city (although some knew him because he was said to have made "the best homemade bourbon in Washington" during the days of prohibition). The Agricultural Department served as a major player of the New Deal under Roosevelt with the creation of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), the Soil Conservation Service, and the Farm Security Administration, so the work that he did became well known to many. These were some of the most significant actions taken by Roosevelt in altering the government and economy to get out of the Great Depression.⁸

His close interactions with Roosevelt throughout the establishment of these programs lead to a strong relationship of respect between the two men. When World War II was beginning, Dr. Eisenhower was the person who came up with the idea of the Office of War Information (OWI) to help the public understand U.S. efforts and actions during the war. This program was implemented and is a well-known project of WWII that is remembered still today. However, President Roosevelt did not put Milton in charge of establishing this office; he had a different plan with which he needed Milton's help. He was put in charge of the War Relocation Authority, a committee tasked with moving Japanese Americans off of the Pacific Coast.

⁷ Ambrose and Immerman, *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman*, 17, 25-30.

⁸ Ambrose and Immerman, *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman*, 42, 47-48, 50-52.

Executive Orders had been distributed to contain Japanese Americans due to anxiety around alliances, and Milton was asked to head this project. He traveled from Washington to the West Coast to begin setting up camps right away; Roosevelt told him that “the greatest possible speed [was] imperative.” According to Ambrose and Immerman, Milton fought hard and pulled a lot of strings to find room for Japanese Americans students to continue their education at different universities so that they would not have to abandon their education, which shows how highly he values higher education and the ability to learn. His own words are that the Japanese Americans were “needlessly uprooted and subjected to indignities of historic proportions.”⁹ However, other sources do not credit Milton with having aided the situation, claiming that it was the efforts of the students themselves that organized their transfer to schools outside of the restricted area when the news came out. Only about 75 students actually left to continue their learning while most stayed with their families in the internment camps.¹⁰ In reference to educational efforts within the camps, another source mentions the establishment of school programs for children living there but does not speak on sending interned university students to other schools.¹¹

Not long after the war concluded, he took a position as President of his alma mater, Kansas State University. In 1950, he took up the job of President of the Pennsylvania State University, then called the Pennsylvania State College. He held this role at the time of his 1953

⁹ Ambrose and Immerman, *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman*, 58-59, 63-65.

¹⁰John H. Provinse. “Relocation of Japanese-American College Students: Acceptance of a Challenge.” Relocation of Japanese-American College Students: Acceptance of a Challenge. Accessed February 13, 2024.

<https://www.lib.washington.edu/specialcollections/collections/exhibits/harmony/interrupted/text/provinse>.

¹¹ Greg Robinson. War Relocation Authority, December 15, 2023.

https://encyclopedia.densho.org/War_Relocation_Authority/.

trip to South America, the details of which will be discussed later on in this essay. Less than a decade after that, he left Penn State, wanting to move back to Washington after the death of his wife, but was begged by Johns Hopkins University to take a position there. He stepped into the role of President for that school as well in 1956. His task in each of these roles was to shake things up and move each institution away from traditional ways of doing things.¹²

Even during this portion of his career when he was not working for the government, he still consulted frequently, especially for his most famous older brother. *Reader's Digest* once referred to him as “the most influential person in the new government” under the President. The two brothers discussed every major decision that President Eisenhower made in office in depth before it was made, with Milton driving or flying into Washington almost each weekend for the 8-year term. This would mean that Milton was privy to decisions that the administration made regarding policies towards Latin America and therefore knew well of the true intentions behind actions they made or the self-serving reasons behind supposedly “selfless” willingness to help the nations of that region develop. President Eisenhower often said that Milton was the most intelligent person that he knew, which explains why he constantly sought out his advice. Milton would later say that it was inappropriate to use personal relationships to accomplish political goals, so he apparently ensured that his close relationship with the President stayed above board, although the extent to which he accomplished that is up for interpretation. His prestige was so powerful that when Dwight fell ill towards the end of his first term, the Republican Party needed him to consider running for President, but he refused claiming a strong distaste for campaigns

¹² Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 203-204; Ambrose and Immerman, *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman*, 55.

and politics.¹³ Milton may not be the Eisenhower that historians debate today, but he certainly had a compelling influence on government, politics, and education during his career.

B. A Critical View of the Relationship Between the United States and Latin America During the 1950s

As discussed below, the view that Milton had on the relationship that existed between Latin America and the United States up to, during, and after his major tours to the region was partially clouded by his love of and dedication to his own nation. Most historians argue that the period of the Cold War left the United States ruthless in its focus on defeating Communism, regardless of whether they were protecting human rights and preventing war in other countries. The U.S. government's worry during this era was that socialist revolution would blow through Latin America. To United States officials and leaders, this meant the acceptance of a form of government that they feared would cause turmoil worldwide, but also the failure to stop their competitor (the USSR) from influencing nations that they wanted to maintain power over. Viewing the history now decades later, this concern showed a tendency towards hysteria more than any educated or thoughtful predictions on what may occur. One historian even argues that after visiting Latin America and seeing the conditions firsthand, he could not blame the Latin Americans for how they would "scorn democracy, detest the United States, and embrace violence."¹⁴ The behavior of the Soviets at that time had a large influence on American policy, more so than the ongoings of any part of the world. The deep-rooted fear of Communism was

¹³ Ambrose and Immerman, *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman*, 146,149, 152, 155-157.

¹⁴ Tom J. Farer. *The Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988. xxi.

arguably more influential on American policy than the desires of the United States' own citizens at certain times.¹⁵

The Cold War therefore influenced the dynamic between the United States and Latin America in many ways. In policy it is clear that the nation was focused on containment, but there was also military action that took the dynamic a step farther. The author of the book *The Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America* writes, "U.S.-trained and -armed troops hunted down and killed Cuba's revolutionary hero, Che Guevara, in Bolivia in 1967, and crushed opposition to U.S.-supported governments everywhere else in Latin America, except Cuba. Cuban exceptionalism was particularly rankling, a cruel thorn piercing the American psyche." This quote demonstrates the insistence of the U.S. on intervening in any situation where they thought that Communism may be infiltrating Latin American society. The Third World was imagined as an arena in which the U.S. and the Soviet Union competed during the Cold War. Other people and nations were cast as pawns that could help the big powers gain more influence.¹⁶

At the conclusion of the Second World War, the relationship between the United States and Latin America was already precarious after a complicated history. The introduction of policies that came from an overpowering fear of Communism did not prove to be helpful in strengthening it. The lack of U.S. support during colonial times was apparent and led to a deep-rooted sense of mistrust since the United States failed to support Latin American nations in the late 15th century to their independence from Spain in the early 19th century. Toward the end of

¹⁵ Farer, *The Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America*, xiv, xviii, xxi, xxxi.; Smith, Peter Hopkinson. *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations*. New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000. 4, 7.

¹⁶ Farer, *The Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America*, 3-4.

the 19th century, the U.S. goals for Latin America shifted from acquiring territories to having a “sphere of interest,” but that was only after the United States took advantage of a vulnerable Mexico to take more land for themselves. They instigated an independence movement and revolution to make Texas its own republic in 1837, and it worked until the U.S. annexed the territory a few years later in 1845 before Texans had the opportunity to truly establish themselves as a new republic.¹⁷

Spreading democracy has been used to justify imperial behaviors or unjust acquisitions since the dawn of the U.S., with the nation trying to justify their actions using the concept of “manifest destiny” and insisting that acquisition by them will “bring untold benefits” to Mexico. American leaders (and other imperialists in general) had a belief that “non-white peoples were incapable of responsible self-government and were therefore unsuited to democracy.” According to historian Peter Smith, during early 20th century military interventions and occupations, U.S. armed forces did little to “construct, strengthen, or bolster democratic practices or institutions” because their racist beliefs said that Latin Americans were unsuitable for democracy. They felt that stability through law and order was more beneficial for these regions.¹⁸

The introduction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy promised an abrupt change in how the U.S. treated Latin America. The United States pulled out troops, avoided intervention, and started cooperating and treating them more equally, claimed Roosevelt. However, the Good Neighbor Policy did not represent a decrease in need or desire for power. In reality, it represents the U.S. changing their strategy from direct force to cooperation in order to grow their power even more, especially since European forces were also pulling out at the time

¹⁷ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 22, 27.

¹⁸ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 40, 43-45, 49, 63.

as a result of World War I recovery. Roosevelt wanted to promote trade, improve economic practices (like taxation), and increase loans and investments in order to gain leverage for the U.S. But Latin America's willingness to support the U.S. in World War II demonstrated a large growth in the relationship between the two regions as a result of the Good Neighbor Policy. Many remained frustrated, however, that the United States gave far more attention to Europe and other parts of the world than to Latin America, as exemplified by the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, which allowed U.S. spending of \$1.3 billion in foreign aid and none of it went to Latin America.¹⁹

Some actions from the U.S. during the ensuing 1950s were undeniably obvious examples of power-hungry behaviors that did nothing to benefit the already complicated relationship that they had with Latin American nations. Most notable of these was the infiltration and overthrow of the Guatemalan government in 1954. The actions in Guatemala were carried out by the Dwight Eisenhower administration, with the obvious consultation of Milton Eisenhower as the President's brother and confidant. Historian Stephen Rabe highlighted this when he wrote, "The U.S. decision in the early 1950s to destroy the constitutional government of Guatemala represented a momentous event in the history of inter-American relations." The United States government was extremely concerned that Communists in Guatemala were working directly with the Soviet Union and that they were a dangerous threat to democracy throughout Latin America.²⁰

¹⁹ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 65-66, 74-82, 86, 148.

²⁰ Getchell, "Revisiting the 1954 Coup in Guatemala: The Soviet Union, the United Nations, and 'Hemispheric Solidarity,'" 73-74.

The desire to intervene was partially influenced by the United Fruit Company, which was a large agricultural company (now known as Chiquita Brands International) that had built an empire off of banana plantations in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. It was a business that had a grip on the entire nation of Guatemala by the time of the coup. One historian writes, “Through a subsidiary company, the United Fruit Company owned and controlled not just the banana business and the land the plantations were on, but much of the countries’ most important infrastructure: railways, hospitals, ports, and telegraph lines.” When President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán was elected as the new democratic leader of Guatemala in 1952, he began implementing reforms to make the country more equitable, one of which was an agrarian reform law that would redistribute 1.5 million acres of land to around 100,000 Guatemalan families. The UFC knew that this would mean loss of political power, so even though the Guatemalan government was offering to pay them what the UFC had claimed it was worth in tax documentation (\$1,185,000), the company tried to claim that the land was worth over 15 times what it really was. The Guatemalan government’s refusal led to the UFC seeking out support from the Eisenhower Administration. It was just the right push forward for the coup which came shortly after this disagreement.²¹

Prodded by the United Fruit Company, the CIA began tracking and monitoring the Guatemalan Communist group, known as el Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo (PGT), in the 1940s, but there was never evidence that linked them to Moscow despite U.S. suspicions. When Communists gained attention in Guatemala in 1952, the CIA built up forces to sabotage efforts to rally, infiltrate circles, and even kill off political and military leaders. The U.S. government was

²¹ Olúfémi O. Táíwò. “When the United Fruit Company Tried to Buy Guatemala.” *The Nation*, December 6, 2021.

<https://www.thenation.com/article/economy/united-fruit-guatemala/>.

so convinced that the Guatemalan government was connected to the USSR, despite several CIA studies which later found no evidence of Communist activity, that they took down the Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán. They then proceeded to analyze 500,000 government documents in an attempt to find “the mass documentation which undoubtedly exists in Guatemala attesting to activities and workings of international communism there.” Again, they found nothing substantial to support their ideas.²² When the PGT reached out to Moscow to ask for help in stopping the U.S. invasion, they went to the UN and condemned the invasion but gave no material support and took no further actions.²³

The actual overthrow consisted of three main efforts: (1) a psychological warfare operation, (2) a physical invasion of the country led by Colonel Castillo Armas, and (3) a campaign aimed at convincing Guatemalan military officers to strike against their President. Armas collected a group of supporters to “invade” Guatemala from Honduras on June 18th, 1954, but the group didn’t do any real fighting in the end because the CIA had wrangled substantial support from the Guatemalan military. The complete takeover happened on June 27th. The actions taken in Guatemala were used as a point of pride in President Eisenhower’s 1956 reelection campaign since he was so successful in keeping the Communist spread from reaching them. The reality, though, was that politics in Guatemala became far more aggressive after 1954 and it was difficult for citizens to express political views and beliefs because they had

²²Stephen G. Rabe. *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016. 36, 43, 45.

²³ Getchell, “Revisiting the 1954 Coup in Guatemala: The Soviet Union, the United Nations, and ‘Hemispheric Solidarity,’” 73-74.

seen that example of military officers turning on the government and forcibly overthrowing a leader.²⁴ Most scholars today view the infiltration negatively, seeing it as a sore spot in American history where the government over-exaggerated and inserted their power where it wasn't needed. Arbenz's nationalism was mistaken for Communism despite the fairly small size of the PGT.²⁵

Overall, the effect of U.S. policies and actions on the relationship between them and Latin American nations created tensions and turmoil that affected both hemispheres. Many Latin Americans continued to feel wary of the United States and their intentions, regardless of the seemingly positive efforts of the Good Neighbor Policy. But because of Milton Eisenhower's stubborn commitment to patriotism, he believed that there was little reason for them to be so mistrusted. As we will see, he made compelling arguments in some of his speeches and writings, but the validity of his case looks differently when put next to examples in history.

²⁴ Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America*, 47-50, 55.

²⁵ Getchell, "Revisiting the 1954 Coup in Guatemala: The Soviet Union, the United Nations, and 'Hemispheric Solidarity,'" 75-76.

Chapter 3: Touring South American Republics and Telling the Experience

Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower was a man with complicated viewpoints. He was deeply intelligent and understood the world around him to an extent that warrants recognition. He was both analytical and critical of everything that he saw around him. Yet, he was also stubborn. In a lot of cases, he was determined to find what he believed to be true about Latin America, highlighting the narratives that emphasized his point while making contradicting occurrences seem unimportant. With his position in society, and his brain, and his willingness to speak out about what he saw, Milton was able to have a powerful influence on societies in the United States and in Latin America. But did this influence have the same effect that he thought it did?

In his many speeches, articles, and talks as well as his book about his travels, *The Wine Is Bitter*, he promoted the notion that he and his companions were able to change the way that the people of Latin America viewed their relationship with the United States, as well as change the way that the people of the United States viewed their relationship with Latin America. He made it clear in his writings that from his perspective, the United States had led the development of the relationship up until that point and that they would continue to do so under his own guidance. What he saw and did and learned on his trips provided valuable knowledge that could alter the course of both hemispheres and the rest of the world moving forward from that point in time.

A. Trips to Latin America

As the brother of the President of the United States and a well-known and respected educator, Milton was sent abroad for the first time as a Special Ambassador and Personal

Representative of the President in 1953.²⁶ This journey was a result of his brother having been overly ambitious with his initial hopes and promises of visiting Latin America once he came into office.²⁷ President Eisenhower had told the world of his goal to take time out of his busy schedule to visit Latin America as soon as he could during his time in office. However, a few short months in, he realized that the demands of the role were too high for him to personally leave for such an amount of time, seeing as the “East-West” tensions were climbing at that point. Instead, he announced that he would send Milton on his behalf.

Right away, Milton sat down with Secretary of State John Dulles and drew up a plan for which U.S. officials should accompany him on this trip. The team that they created was composed of five powerful men including Milton. His companions were: Assistant Secretary of State John M. Cabot, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Andrew N. Overby, Assistant Secretary of Commerce Samuel W. Anderson, and the Deputy Director of the Office of South American Affairs in the Department of State W. Tapley Bennett Jr.²⁸ Part of the need for a group of officials besides only Milton on this mission was that it was helpful to have educated and invested companions to work with. However, Milton added in his accounts that there was also a part of this that was due to his familial relationship with the President. The two brothers knew

²⁶ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is bitter*, xi.; The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 01, ME-Authored Articles 1949-1985, “Report to the President: United States Latin-American Relations,” 1. [hereinafter Report to the President]

²⁷ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 6-7.

²⁸ Report to the President, 1.

that some may speculate on Milton abusing his relationship in order to put his opinion in his brother's ear, so they wanted to ensure that his judgment and hard work would be respected.²⁹

President Dwight Eisenhower made the announcement about the trip on April 12th, 1953, during an address at the Pan-American Union Building,³⁰ and a short two months later this group departed from Washington D.C. on June 23rd.³¹ The President laid out several goals for the mission before the group headed out. The first of these was to show the Latin American leaders that the U.S. was concerned about the relationship between the two regions and that they felt that this relationship was important for all futures. The second goal was to determine what factors posed the biggest barriers to having good relations. The third and final goal was to discover what the U.S. might be able to do to improve the relationships between them and each of the nations in Latin America.

After meeting Presidents, cabinets, and other leaders throughout the 10 republics in South America over the course of 36 days, the five men returned to their nation's capital on July 29th, 1953. It is important to note that this was less than a year before the invasion and takeover of Guatemala in June of 1954, as explained on page 14 of this thesis. Milton shares that each of the officials and leaders that they met expressed a shared desire to build better relationships. They felt that they would not be able to successfully give their attention to all 20 republics of Latin America, so they focused on those in South America for this particular mission, making their way to Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. The trip was a long process. Yet, Milton disclosed that he thought that they were able to

²⁹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 9-10.

³⁰ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 7.

³¹ Report to the President, 1-2.

see the various elements of societies in these nations that would be influential in the development of the relationship that the group hoped to have with them. When they returned, they were eager to share their findings with the U.S. government and the rest of the nation. As it appears in Milton's reports, the men of this trip felt that they had the "keys to the castle," so to speak. The officials of the trip returned to the United States feeling like they had new answers and insight into how to develop a relationship that was more sustainable and profitable for them.³²

This relationship that the U.S. government was so concerned about creating had several requisites that were thought up by Milton and shared in several speeches and articles following this trip. It started with the need to achieve a complete "understanding" within both the governments and people of every Latin American republic and the United States, but the second requisite built on that by requiring mutual respect in addition to the understanding. "Nations, like people, have dignity and pride. Only if each respects the rights, interests, aspirations, cultures, and sensibilities of the others can there be true friendship and cooperation between disparate nations," wrote Milton in his report of the trip while detailing the concept of mutual respect.³³ He believed that there was no place where a solid and genuine relationship could exist when two or more sides of it did not respect each other fully for everything that they were. The third requisite was sovereign equality of states, meaning that each party should be viewed as

³² Report to the President, 1.

³³ Report to the President, 6-7.; The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 03, Reel 2, "Press release on address to Junior Chamber of Commerce, Warren Pa." 1.; The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 03, Reel 2, "Press release on convocation address and Univ. of R.I." 2.; The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 03, Reel 3, "Remarks by Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower Personal Representative of the President of the United States At the Pan American Union," 7-8.

equal in the relationship regardless of land, population, military power, economic capacity, etc. Next, requisite number four was mutual security. Milton noted that this was a promise that is exemplified in the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro of 1947 where they declared that “an attack on one state would be an attack on all.” The need for nations to support each other’s safety was necessary in creating a positive friendship. Finally, the fifth requisite was adherence to mutual goals. With this, each party involved in the relationship would need to be adamant about sticking to the goals that they agreed upon for moving forward together.³⁴

Along his journey, keeping in mind the goals given to him by President Eisenhower, Milton was tuned into analyzing the relationships that he encountered. The observations he made during those 36 days led him to the conclusion that these 5 requisites were the foundation that would allow them to grow to support one another. From the way he saw it, the requisites that he had developed for good relationships would be the key moving forward to achieving more productive, positive, and plentiful interactions. He was adamant that the United States appreciated Latin America, despite the issues that existed in this time period (See Chapter 2: The Histories Surround the Thesis Topic). He felt that Latin America was hesitant to trust the United States, but that they could be won over through U.S. support.³⁵

B. Discoveries About the Relationship from the First Trip

In his time abroad, Milton’s observations accumulated rapidly. He analyzed what was and what could have been through an optimistic and hopeful lens. Once the group returned, each of

³⁴ Report to the President, 6.

³⁵ The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 03, Reel 2, “Untitled Review of an Address; Hazelton, PA, May 6th 1953”.

Milton's companions was able to set up an official meeting with their respective departments to debrief on the findings of the trip. All relevant Cabinet members were represented throughout this trip and subsequent conferences. Yet, the brother of the President did not have a department to share with as he didn't hold an official position in the U.S. government.³⁶ Before returning to his educational duties at Penn State, he therefore wrote a detailed twenty-three page report on his findings and his recommendations, which was approved by the President's Cabinet before being submitted officially to the U.S. President himself on November 23rd, 1953.³⁷

A large part of this report emphasized understanding, or, rather, the lack of understanding between the two hemispheres.³⁸ From his point of view, there were a lot of misunderstandings that Latin American people had about the U.S. He believed that the feelings and conceptions that many citizens and even officials held with regard to the intentions and actions of the United States were not an accurate representation of the truth. The concept was reinforced when he referred to the impression that Latin Americans held of the United States that they would readily sacrifice the welfare of their neighbors to benefit themselves as a "big lie." Past selfish actions seemingly were not a good indication of future actions. He understood that this concept was likely to have been built up in the years encompassing World War II since the U.S. experienced a decline in the purchasing power of U.S. consumers. Milton acknowledged the likelihood that Latin Americans did not have a realization that this decline was happening, yet reminded his audience that the United States continued to ensure that both domestic and foreign markets had

³⁶ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 8.

³⁷ Report to the President, 1.

³⁸ Report to the President, 9.

access to essential goods in this period. While this notion is up for debate, it is important to understand what he claimed to be correct or incorrect and why.³⁹

One of the asserted misunderstandings that he mentioned in the report was that the people of Latin America supposedly believed that the U.S. had control over the “International Bank” and got a final say of who was and was not granted loans, as well as thinking that they were able to determine conditions for loans.⁴⁰ The “International Bank” refers to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a bank that was owned by many nations in collaboration and still exists today as a branch of the World Bank and is a cooperative effort of 189 countries to support development around the world and impact global problems.⁴¹ Even back in 1953 when Milton’s first official tour of South America was taken, there were other nations besides the United States involved in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, so, with this framing, it might not make sense that educated Latin Americans would believe that the U.S. decided everything about the loans that were being requested. However, many scholars argue that the history of loans between the U.S. and Latin America would indicate that the equality of power in this bank was not actually balanced.⁴² For decades, the loans between Latin American nations and the United States were negotiated and debated to fit U.S. needs and desires, not the

³⁹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 9.

⁴⁰ Report to the President, 8.

⁴¹ “International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.” The World Bank. Accessed November 9, 2023.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are/ibrd>.

⁴²Henry Bacha. “A Global Americans Interview with Dr. Christy Thornton, Author of Revolution in Development: Mexico and the Governance of the Global Economy.” Global Americans, March 25, 2021.

<https://theglobalamericans.org/2021/03/a-global-americans-interview-with-dr-christy-thornton-author-of-revolution-in-development-mexico-and-the-governance-of-the-global-economy/>.

other way around. By contrast, Milton wrote that the U.S. had a say and an influence as a powerful country and large contributor to the bank, but he felt that their ability to promote or block certain loans was a misconception that overly inflated reality.⁴³

Milton's report also noted that many people in Latin America placed blame on the United States for their difficulty growing industries and developing public power simultaneously and effectively.⁴⁴ His report explained the view that, if an area cannot support the development of new industries because they lack the resources and the capacity to provide substantial power to such projects, these areas will be forced to ration power. Many businesses will then need to shut down since they are unable to receive the energy needed to run their trade. Latin American officials that Milton spoke to on his journey felt that the United States was not providing enough support to help them grow their public power supplies in congruence with the growth they were attempting to achieve with their economy. The United States knew that their friends to the south looked to them for guidance as they developed their respective nations, but he repeatedly enforces his opinion that giving them blame for mistakes that they made is unfair.

Additionally, Milton believed that there was a misunderstanding of U.S. intentions in some of their economic policies, specifically the use of price controls on raw commodities that were traded between the U.S. and Latin America.⁴⁵ Trade between the United States and Latin America accounted for \$3.5 million worth of spending in each direction in 1952, making this a significant issue for both sides; he even referred to the importance of Latin America and cooperation with them as being equivalent to the importance of all other areas of the world

⁴³ Report to the President, 8.

⁴⁴ Report to the President, 9.

⁴⁵ Report to the President, 9.

combined.⁴⁶ But Milton believed that it was unthinking for officials in this region to be against policies that the U.S. needed to create in order to keep their own economy in good standing. However, Latin Americans were often frustrated that items they had strong production of were being given price controls in U.S. markets when in high demand. One instance of this was a price control set on wool in trade with Argentina and Uruguay in policies from 1950 that disregarded other aspects of their existing economic relations. There was a history of trade relations between these countries, yet this control prohibited Argentineans from expanding their businesses and working with the demands that they received. They were unable to have authority over their business because of the trade laws established by the U.S.⁴⁷ In the eyes of Milton Eisenhower, there was no reason to be upset over errors like this example because the U.S. government had a perfectly understandable explanation for their actions. It was not done simply to hurt Argentina and Uruguay's economies, it was done for the purpose of stabilizing the economy of the United States and that was the part that was misinterpreted, according to the analysis that Milton made.

Despite all of these misunderstandings, this report presents a strong notion that the relationship between the two hemispheres was improving. He claimed that there was a growing awareness within people in the South American nations he visited -since he interacted with government officials, leaders, businessmen, and scholars among others- and in the United States of what would need to be done in order to develop more secure and stable acquaintances out of

⁴⁶ Report to the President, 2-3.

⁴⁷ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950, National Security Affairs, Foreign Economic Policy, Volume I, Part 1, eds. Daniel J. Lawler and Erin R. Mahan (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2010), Document 219.

one another.⁴⁸ He saw that many Latin American leaders had a strong understanding of the culture, leaders, and democracy in the U.S., which was extremely encouraging. The two hemispheres were at this time “cross-fertilizing each other to their mutual enrichment” through numerous and frequent interactions.⁴⁹ He believed that this constant exchange was really powerful for creating mutual respect and understanding as discussed in the five requisites for good relationships that Milton describes. Having a mutual goal to try to make their relationship better, it was helpful for officials from each party to know that the flow of information between them would be able to construct something more satisfactory.

Industrialization in Latin America was a pressing issue at this time in addition to cultural exchange, as was highlighted in Milton’s writings. As the population of this region grew rapidly, it became clear that production would have to grow and expand to support the number of people relying on it.⁵⁰ There were a lot of raw materials in this part of the world, but they were constantly being traded out to other countries to be turned into actual products because Latin America lacked the facilities to make something out of the materials they had. Time and money were being wasted by selling their raw materials to other countries only to buy back the product that was made from them. At this point, the U.S. officials and scholars saw that industrialization would be essential for the growth of each nation in the region. A lot of the time, this process was funded by private U.S. investors that worked with local investors to establish successful businesses and industries. Milton shares that at the time there was about \$6 billion invested long-term in Latin America by the U.S., which accounted for 30% of U.S. private investment

⁴⁸ Report to the President, 12.

⁴⁹ Report to the President, 5.

⁵⁰ Report to the President, 12-13.

abroad.⁵¹ As a matter of fact, Milton shared that “many manufacturing industries, mines, processing plants, and businesses in South America are wholly or partially owned by United States enterprises.”⁵² The success of the U.S. economy in this period was extremely beneficial for building up the businesses and industries in Latin America because they had the means to invest in such things as a nation and as private corporations. This information is shared on more of a conceptual level, though, with little indication of how that realistically functioned within Latin American societies.

Milton liked to share how support from the United States was extremely helpful for the Latin American economies to have in their development, but failed to provide concrete examples of this playing out. He also liked to gloss over the fact that Latin American economies supported the U.S. economy as well since trading with each other has benefits on both sides. This served as part of the reason that the United States was eager to keep the region under their influence and out of the Communist grasp throughout the Cold War. The positive economic interaction between both sides could be seen as mutually beneficial, yet Milton consistently went to highlight how the United States benefited their neighbors in order to spin a positive image of his country.

C. Dr. Eisenhower’s Recommendations for the Future

Within the report that Dr. Eisenhower wrote and submitted to President Eisenhower, he finished the text off by explaining what he recommended the United States government do about all of the different things that he found on his journey. These recommendations were split into

⁵¹ Report to the President, 2-3.

⁵² Report to the President, 15.

two sections: “Strengthening Mutual Understanding” and “Strengthening Economic Cooperation.”⁵³ In this manner, Milton was able to organize his observations into actionable steps. He made it realistic for the nation to achieve the concepts of strong friendships that he preached about throughout the entire report, and in speeches around the country afterwards, by sharing a total of 19 possible methods.

The first section, “Strengthening Mutual Understanding,” highlighted the need of the United States to be persistent in their efforts to share more with Latin America and to listen to the knowledge and needs of Latin America. Milton wrote, “It seems evident that the first requirement is a better understanding in the United States of the importance of firm and abiding relations between the United States and the nations of Latin America,” indicating that this concept was the first step that would move the nation forward in the direction of positive relationships for the future. There are ten methods in this section for how to achieve mutual understanding and spread knowledge throughout both hemispheres of why it is necessary to understand and respect each other. The following list is a summary of each method that Milton discusses in the report.⁵⁴

1. Expand programs for intercultural exchange (i.e. binational institutes, exchange of people, scholarships, etc.).
2. Use media resources to spread understanding in Latin America and the U.S.
3. Expand the programs in Latin America from the United States National Commission for UNESCO, which serves to educate all parts of the world.
4. Have foundations in the United States to make available to Latin American students various scholarships to support study, especially study in the U.S.
5. U.S. businesses operating in Latin America should provide financial support for binational institutes and offer scholarships and grants to students.

⁵³ Report to the President, 19-23.

⁵⁴ Report to the President, 19-21.

6. U.S. businesses operating in Latin America should ensure that their ambassadors are displaying a good representation of the United States.
7. Distinguished American scholars should be given the opportunity to travel to universities in Latin America and lecture.
8. The United States should make space in the nation for private associations that work to educate about Latin America.
9. Use newspaper coverage to educate and communicate instead of only giving space to large, flashy headlines.
10. Utilize the opportunity to get all relevant parties to agree on the precedence of better relations at the Tenth Inter-American Conference in March 1954 in Caracas.

Each of these ideas demonstrates tangible goals that he believed would help all involved nations to improve their relations. Milton used his platform to encourage cross-pollination of cultures and knowledge through various manners, including travel, education abroad, and media outlets. He wanted each nation involved to make an effort to share factual information of others with their citizens, creating understanding not just within officials, but among all peoples. He even encouraged an increase in the simple act of recreational traveling between the U.S. and Latin America during his description of the first method.

Additionally, “Strengthening Economic Cooperation” is a huge overarching goal in his report, which is why he dedicates a section of his recommendations to it. There are nine ideas that he explains in this section with the hopes that the economic power of both hemispheres will grow through this cooperation. Milton claimed that having strong economic relations is “the key” to a good relationship overall.⁵⁵ If the nations of Latin America could team up with the United States and develop a system of trading, loaning, exchanging, and supporting that worked for everyone involved, they could create some impressively strong economies. He believed that if the U.S. could operate at a high level of economic activity and maintain relatively stable

⁵⁵ Report to the President, 12.

prices, it would benefit the whole world, so agreements on what will work best for their neighbors to the south would prove highly beneficial. The following nine recommendations expand on this idea.⁵⁶

1. The U.S. should adopt and adhere to trade policies aimed at stabilizing prices and exchanges.
2. The U.S. should adopt a long-range basic-material policy that allows it to stockpile specific imperishable materials when their prices are declining.
3. The U.S. should examine thoroughly its ability to amend present tax laws to remove any barriers to private investment abroad that existed at the time and deem whether such actions would be appropriate.
4. The U.S. should make available loans for economically safe development projects in foreign lands.
5. The U.S. should readily provide technical aid and guidance to increase development.
6. The U.S. should be willing and ready to give stockpiled goods if a nation is in a position of need.
7. The existing U.S. programs in Latin America that help educate technical skills should be expanded.
8. The U.S. should continue to support technical agencies operating as a part of the Organization of American States.
9. The U.S. should continue to support the International Monetary Fund.

Among these nine recommendations, one can see Milton's desire to support the economies of Latin America as they developed in a way that benefited the United States simultaneously. Many of the recommendations reflected the desires of presidents and leaders that Milton met during his trip since, as he told it, every one of them spoke to him of their need for loans and funding to improve agriculture and industrialization as soon as possible.⁵⁷ The United States was already in a powerful position and was much stronger economically than any of the nations it was trying to create this economic cooperation with, so they were in a position

⁵⁶ Report to the President, 21-23.

⁵⁷ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 195.

where it was needed for them to share their knowledge and power. The growth of their allies would only serve to build up their own economies even further in the future, so it was important that they were willing to provide assistance to nations in the south, as reported by Milton.

With his experience in education and in government policy, these recommendations and all of the findings of his trip were taken seriously by the Presidential Administration. Milton later explains that his report was more or less treated as foreign policy and that most of the recommendations were put into effect.⁵⁸ Following the submission of the document in November of 1953, Milton broadcasted on national television to share about everything that the report contained. He traveled to different cities and conferences to speak publicly about it in person, in the hopes that he could spread awareness of the importance of valuing the relationship between the United States and Latin America.

This travel was essentially a “tour” in the United States to present his ideas, and it happened at the same time as plans for a takeover in Guatemala were being formed. Milton was likely hoping to mask the actions being taken by his brother and the government that he endorses, so that others wouldn’t see the complicated truth of the relationship. The trip that he took to visit South America was symbolic of the United States’ desire to protect their influence on the region when the threat of Communism began to loom more seriously, yet he portrays it as something selfless and well-intentioned, meant to benefit their neighbors. While essentially tricking the public, Milton, President Eisenhower, and U.S. officials worked behind the scenes to determine plans to intervene in Latin America and develop a firm hold on them through the guise of building friendships.

⁵⁸ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 200-201.

Chapter 4: A Decade of Increased Tensions and Developing Perspectives

In the book the Milton published in 1963 about his experiences with Latin America, entitled *The Wine Is Bitter*, he refers to his present as a period in which nations are working to build alliances and good relations because they are learning that cooperation with others is the best way to grow themselves, claiming that “there is an abundant evidence of hemispheric interdependence.”⁵⁹ This perspective is similar to what he had said about the dynamic years prior in his 1953 Report to the President. However, by the start of the 1960s when this reflection was written, it would seem that he believed that the dynamic between the two hemispheres had progressed from a newly kindled shift towards amiable relations into a strong wave that was sweeping through the people in all of the Americas. After gathering more experience and interactions on a second “fact-finding” tour in 1958 through Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama, he had gained perspective of what had changed in the relationship up to that point.⁶⁰ The main persisting barrier that he identified was that many Americans didn’t know a lot about Latin America and therefore generalized something that they heard about happening in one nation as being characteristic of the entire region, even though they each had their own cultures and identities.⁶¹ It is difficult to create progress in relationships between the U.S. and each of these countries when they all remain lumped together in the American mind.

⁵⁹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 45-46.

⁶⁰ “Mission to Middle America.” TimesMachine, July 12, 1958.

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1958/07/12/91395270.html?pageNumber=14>.

⁶¹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 57.

He continued throughout the decade to encourage understanding between the nations, evidenced by his influence on the acceptance of the U.S. press in Argentina following his 1953 trip to South America. The dictator at the time, Juan Peron, had called for a ban against the U.S. press, but Milton helped convince him to restore it, maintaining a vital source of interaction between Argentina and the people of the United States.⁶² He remained insistent on the gravity of a positive relationship between both hemispheres even as time passed and the world continued to change and develop. There are many references to cultural interaction, economic development, progress of education, and the spread of communism throughout his book, which make for interesting points on which to view his opinion of the world at that time.

A. Cultural Interaction

“One nation cannot truly be the leader of all that wish to be free. It can serve as a focal point. It can give more generously of its substance than others. But it cannot force the free nations to combine their power, or to put aside selfishness.”⁶³ As evidenced by this quote, Milton Eisenhower continued to insist on the need for the U.S. to intertwine with Latin America as the decade of the 1950s passed. Since he first began his work as a representative and consultant, he believed that the mutual respect and equality of states was important for relations and that this concept relied on non-intervention in each other’s internal affairs.⁶⁴ While his hopes were brought to fruition in the conference at Punta del Este in Uruguay in June and July of 1961 with the creation of the *Declaration of Peoples of America*, which was a commitment to

⁶² Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 63-64.

⁶³ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 328.

⁶⁴ Report to the President, 10.

supporting each other in reform efforts that Milton referred to as “a new charter of hemispheric freedom, progress, and social justice,” it remained unclear whether or not the United States was as accepting of Latin America as much as they wanted it to seem.⁶⁵

Back in his first report, he had written that “virtually all of the nations of Latin America seek the goals of permanent peace, independence, rising levels of economic well-being, and the attainment of the basic values of Western civilization.”⁶⁶ The idea that he expressed here indicated that Latin Americans had a strong desire to westernize their cultures and lifestyles, meaning that it was completely their idea to do so. However, a long history of colonialism could easily be cited as an influence on the region's development into a society more similar to western culture than it ever had been in the past. Milton later acknowledged the existence of colonization in Latin American history by saying that the “Indians” of the region were “unfortunately” less willing to have “integrated society” when Spanish colonists came to their lands, labeling the indigenous groups as being “with ignorance, poverty, and strange customs.” This view is somewhat shocking to most scholars in our current time, seeing as Milton seemingly blames the complicated history between them on resistance to what he sees as a superior way of living.⁶⁷ He also believes that those that colonized Latin America are the “leaders” of the region, which demonstrates this idea even further.⁶⁸ There is reason to wonder when seeing these words whether these personal views influenced the way that he acted on the trips that he took as well as his need to fix things.

⁶⁵ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 307-309.

⁶⁶ Report to the President, 11.

⁶⁷ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 16.

⁶⁸ Report to the President, 5; Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, xi.

Despite Dr. Eisenhower's lack of appreciation for the original cultures and societies in Latin America before European influence came into the region, he consistently referred to the Americas as being a "family" and spoke of the need for mutual respect and understanding.⁶⁹ He even mentioned his belief that bi-national institutes should be established in the U.S. to encourage citizens to learn and speak Spanish and Portuguese, especially since these types of schools promote good relations among nations.⁷⁰ He also hoped that the same could be done in nations all over Latin America because the interaction with U.S. sponsored schools would teach young students to have "an intelligent loyalty to [the United States]." The need for the nations to get along is reinforced by the idea that the Allied victory in World War II was immensely helped by the people of Latin America providing support, troops, and raw materials at the same time as they were resisting Axis espionage.⁷¹ Milton's discussion of this shows that he felt strongly that there was an increased willingness to interact with Latin America and to treat them well throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s, which played an important role in creating a good foundation to work together during the war.

The efforts that he made throughout the 1950s, starting after the South American tour he made in 1953, to speak on the need of the United States to rely on Latin America were relentless. A text that he wrote in 1954 about the importance of education touched on this concept, saying:

We need also to learn to understand people of other nations and cultures as people. We must know their histories, their problems, their hopes, their aspirations. And they must thus know us. Otherwise, we cannot develop a genuine comprehension of those specific

⁶⁹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 11.

⁷⁰ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 91-92.

⁷¹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 182-183.

economic, social, psychological situations which often are determining in the ever-present issue of peace or war.⁷²

He made clear arguments in these words about the importance of having understanding among peoples. He tied it back to the idea that peace needs these concepts of thorough comprehension in order to exist, which was a strategic point to make in a post-war period. The U.S. could do several things to make efforts to bond with Latin America, but the biggest impact would come from the citizens of both countries having more interaction and putting effort into strengthening the bonds.

But another roadblock that Milton believed to be a relevant hindrance to the development of their relationship was the development of the Latin American culture itself. He spoke on this many times throughout his book. For him, social reform was seen as a big factor in the nations' ability to move forward together since the cultural standards in Latin America supposedly held the region back from overall growth. Milton and Assistant Secretary Rubottom believed after a trip taken in 1958 that financial aid would do little to change conditions or relations in Latin America unless serious social change also came about in almost all of the nations. These two men felt that the establishment of an Inter-American Bank, which finally got approved shortly after their return, would be extremely beneficial for this matter since the bank would be able to put conditions on the loans which would call for social reform. Milton also shared that in 1960, a main point in the speech that Dwight gave on stops on his own trip in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile was concern for Latin American welfare.⁷³

⁷² The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 01, ME-Authored Articles 1949-1985, *The Educational Record*: "Education for International Understanding," 247.

⁷³ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 229-230, 12.

Milton presented the example of President Arturo Frondizi of Argentina as helpful in understanding how Latin American culture supposedly reacts to serious policy change. Milton asserts that President Frondizi's decisions in office caused anger and chaos throughout the nation because he made many alterations that impacted society and the government. Frondizi was eventually forced out of office after refusing countless pleas for his resignation.⁷⁴ However, he was able to stop further inflation, immensely reduce unemployment, speed industrialization, strengthen the peso, and improve social services. Frondizi did this by going against the wishes of the wealthy and powerful in the nation who had given him the support he needed to win in the first place. The wealthy wanted to continue growing their wealth and not sharing it to others, so the changes were unwelcome invasions that sparked discontent throughout the government.⁷⁵

Real changes were needed to move the different nations of Latin America in a more stable direction since many were experiencing serious economic and political instability at that time with separation between classes that prevented progress. Milton claims that leaders in Latin America were more concerned with getting money through loans than they were about reforming tax practices, reducing military spending, or budgeting for low-income housing, health care, and education to make more of what they already had. This supposed hesitancy made it difficult for progress to come. He wondered if reform would spread fast enough to reach the poor farmers that needed it most in order to prevent revolution after having watched revolutions in Cuba arise. He claims to have discovered that it was difficult to get people to move away from their homes when it could mean a better life than the intense poverty they lived in because nobody wanted to

⁷⁴ "Argentina: By Right of Might." Time, April 6, 1962.
<https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,896035-1,00.html>.

⁷⁵ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 314.

go to some new land that had opened up in Bolivia despite the fact that it was ready for prosperous farming and agriculture. Changing people's ways of life was challenging and this issue posed a great barrier to overall development and to having better relationships between the United States and Latin America.⁷⁶

But these claims were hard to judge. No other information about this situation was provided in the book, a common trend in Milton's writings that can be seen throughout this thesis, so further explanation of what he is referencing is unavailable. It is unclear at some points whom or what Milton is discussing exactly, making it difficult to assess the extent to which he is being truthful in his writings.

B. Economic Development

The economic growth and development of Latin America was also a topic that Milton discussed many times throughout *The Wine Is Bitter*, noting that it was an important aspect to the potential flourishing of the region and another barrier to expanding upon their relationships. At the time the book was written, Milton reported that most of the region was extremely poor, with workers bringing in as little as \$75 per year in some places.⁷⁷ After the initial trip in 1953, the biggest takeaway that he found was that the republics of South America were in various stages of development.⁷⁸ Over the next few years, that development remained his priority in several aspects of the work, including the economic side.

⁷⁶ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 206, 126, 116-117.

⁷⁷ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 15.

⁷⁸ The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 03, Reel 2, "Suggested Introduction."

Industrialization was another element that he viewed as necessary in order to bring all American nations up to a level of development where they could more easily manage a strong relationship with the United States. In the report he wrote after the 1953 trips, he mentioned that it would be dangerous for nations to enter into new industries without research and preparation, so years later he and colleagues recommended that the Organization of American States (OAS) create a program with services to assist in that area. The idea that they created and then proposed at an OAS conference in 1957 was to have a committee from the OAS assist nations in researching the best and most practical industries for their country to enter into. This idea was one that gave the hemisphere hope for better development since it would be unwise and effectively dangerous for the economies of nations with small resources and low capital to begin industrial projects that are not sound.⁷⁹

In order to accomplish industrialization projects though, foreign capital in the form of both public and private loans and investments was necessary. According to Milton, foreign capital would be “essential to provide power, transportation, better communications, improved farming methods and machinery.” As he saw it, each nation should be doing everything in their power to attract private aid and not only rely on government loans.⁸⁰ Most leaders and educated peoples of Latin America were discontent about the amount of U.S. aid being sent to Europe after the second World War, feeling that it reflected a deeper care for Europe than for their region. Milton argued against this concern, claiming that it was invalid given that Europe was torn apart during the war. He also noted that Latin America had increased trade with the U.S.

⁷⁹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 152-153; Report to the President, 15.

⁸⁰ The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 01, ME-Authored Articles 1949-1985, *College Affairs*, “Dr. Eisenhower Says South America Needs Foreign Aid,” 2.

during the war and those levels continued afterwards as well. At the same time, he admitted that even though he felt that the efforts by the U.S. to provide aid in Latin America were minimized by the strong feelings of their peoples that more could be done, that the spending in Latin America at the time was little compared to other parts of the world. This lack of spending could have been a display of how the Presidential administration and other government officials of the United States did not share his belief that the region was an integral part of their own success. An increase in spending in Latin America could not be made without altering spending in other places, though, since the United States at the time did not possess the capacity to lend more while also staying out of their own financial crisis.⁸¹

The creation of the Inter-American Bank after many years of Milton suggesting it finally happened in 1958, which aided the predicament of the U.S. being unable to increase loans on their own despite the frequent protests from Latin American leaders.⁸² When he traveled to the region in the summer of 1958, he claimed that he met with an unnamed foreign leader. This leader begged for the U.S. to provide loans with low interest rates to help them build the schools, roads, and hospitals which they were saying that they “so desperately need.” He did not, however, follow up with any information, statistics, or evidence to validate the story that he tells in the context of the unspecified country’s situation at the time. The U.S. worried about giving money that wouldn’t stimulate the economy, though. Milton suggested that they create something similar to the U.S. Federal Housing Administration (a project created in the United

⁸¹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 72-73.

⁸² Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 11.

States during the Great Depression to help create jobs and affordable housing)⁸³ and provide capital or other things for labor on projects. While this project got set up, he would work on convincing private and public lending agencies in the U.S. to give money for supplies. The unnamed minister that he spoke to, however, questioned whether his nation could handle increased taxes to support such a project without causing revolution in his already politically unstable country.⁸⁴

Since Latin America was a huge trade partner for the United States, the country had nothing to gain from furthering economic instability in the region, at least not from where Milton Eisenhower viewed the situation. If for some reason the U.S. started buying less from Latin America, then their purchases from the U.S. would also decline because the two regions' economies were so intertwined. That change would be felt everywhere in the world, yet not everyone in either hemisphere understood the value of their relationship with one another. For instance, a lot of U.S. industrial and military items that "help defend the free world" were made from raw materials from Latin America, which was why they were militarily significant to one another. Even though the military capacity of most Latin American nations was very small, they had a need to stay united in times of war and to continuously have effective communication. That communication kept trade alive and ensured everyone had the resources that they needed to survive.⁸⁵

⁸³M. Justine Fritz. "Federal Housing Administration (FHA)." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 9, 2019.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Federal-Housing-Administration>.

⁸⁴ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 3-4.

⁸⁵ Report to the President, 3-4.

Coffee trade came up as a large source of concern for many Latin American leaders during conversations that Milton had during his various trips in the 1950s. The constant fluctuation of coffee prices caused a lot of issues in the development of the region since many nations were large coffee producers. A lot of leaders felt that the United States was intentionally trying to manipulate the price of coffee to benefit themselves. For example, Milton shared that a few years before he wrote his book the price of coffee worldwide had risen, which was great for Latin American markets. However, the United States started to buy less because of this expense, and that in turn harmed the economies of their neighbors to the south which had just barely begun to grow from this change. Milton suggested that the decrease in coffee demand that they were seeing at the time should lead to a reduced crop yield, yet the production continued to increase, creating harmful overproduction levels. Those markets were in need of a shift from coffee to another crop, such as wheat, in order to reduce the reliance on coffee as a resource for the economies since the demand was no longer there. The issue was settled in 1962 when 23 UN member states which were coffee-producing and -consuming nations signed an international stabilization agreement. It established exportation quotas for the producers and the reduction or maintenance of import taxes from consumers. At the same time, it created a fund for helping producing nations diversify their agriculture, emblematic of Milton's recommendations for amending the relationship in his report to President Eisenhower after the 1953 tour.⁸⁶

Milton also believed that inflation was a large barrier to economic development in Latin America. The prices were rising in many nations at the time, and he described how that could ruin economies and businesses. Milton uses the Brazilian President Kubitschek as an example of this, saying that he had a "printing-press spree" in 1961 which caused political and economic

⁸⁶ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 102, 75, 103-105.

instability when he printed money that could not be backed by monetary capital. *The Wine Is Bitter* states that this was in order to pay for the new capital city, Brasilia, he wanted to build and that he then paid government employees with the same invaluable money, so prices soared throughout the country. I could not find any history about this supposed instance, however there are sources that confirm that Kubitschek's strong efforts to develop the nation and build Brasilia led to high levels of inflation during his presidency.⁸⁷ The main nations that he noted as being successful in resisting inflation, which was spreading quickly through Latin America, are Chile, Colombia, and Peru by maintaining balanced budgets and moderate rates of economic growth.⁸⁸

The widespread lack of agricultural technology, research and development, also held back the region from growing to its full potential. Milton affirms, without citing any sources, that many Latin American nations did not have the advanced agricultural techniques that could be found in westernized nations. He said that half to two-thirds of working Latin Americans were farmers at this time since the region relied so heavily on agriculture with the number of farmers in the whole region being about four times that of the United States. Yet, the total production of the entire region combined was, according to *The Wine Is Bitter*, about half of that of the United States. Due to concern around this supposed lack of understanding for productive methods, many efforts were being made by the U.S. to utilize science to discover how to achieve optimal agricultural practices (crops, farming, livestock breeds, etc.) in some Latin American regions, but he declares that landowners and farmers alike were slow to change their ways in many areas. A

⁸⁷J. V. Freitas Marcondes. "Brasilia, The New Capital Of Brazil." *The Mississippi Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (1959): 157–67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26473231>.

⁸⁸ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 130-131.

case of this claim is the situation in Brazil at the time. Only about 2% of Brazil's land was being used for farming, which meant that that area was way over cultivated and dead, leaving the people weak with malnutrition and low life expectancy because, in Milton's eyes, they were so resistant to making changes. The United States established the Escritorio Técnico de Agricultura Brasil-Estados Unidos (ETA) in 1953, which was a joint effort between Brazil and the U.S. to improve agricultural conditions and educate Brazilian farmers on sustainable practices.⁸⁹

Overall, the need for economic development was seemingly obvious to Milton in his various interactions with Latin America. He shared consistently throughout the book his concern for the state of the region if they failed to improve their economies through industrialization, trade, resistance to inflation, and more efficient agriculture. The unspoken reality that he feared within this was that if they were unable to do so, the United States would suffer along with them and would lose out on the opportunity to expand their influence and prevent Communism. Despite his narrow view of how the nations of Latin America should run their affairs, he seemed sincere in his want for them to avoid crises and turmoil. Whether that "want" was for self-aiding reasons is up for discussion. He knew that the relationship between the two hemispheres could not flourish in the way that he saw to be ideal for all relevant parties unless there were better economies in the nations of Latin America.

⁸⁹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 112-120.; Frank W. Lowenstein. "Nutritional Survey of Rural Families in Jequitibá, Brazil, 1957-58." *Public Health Reports (1896-1970)* 75, no. 8 (1960): 744-57.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4590911>.

C. Progress of Education

When considering the barriers that were preventing the growth of Latin America into a reliable partner for the United States, the state of education in the area was a big draw of Milton's concern. He encouraged the betterment of educational systems from the start, saying that no other elements could improve without strong education, therefore making it the necessary focus of development.⁹⁰ Many of the nations had low literacy and education levels, which made for a main cause of the low national income. An increase in education in Mexico, though, was correlated to economic growth within the nation, demonstrating the power that such an institution could have over the progress of a nation.⁹¹

Access to schools in many nations was limited. Many primary schools existed, but few secondary schools were available in rural areas and families often lacked funds to send a child into the city to continue their education, so it ended there. The U.S. saw this problem of youths not being able to reach the schools and began projects to build, establish, manage, and improve different types of schools in several nations. They helped promote and establish many programs, organizations, and institutions that were successful in elevating the educational systems across the region. Nations in Latin America began working to improve academic standards, include more students from middle- and low-income classes, have more full-time teachers, separate students' politics from university policy, and separate religion and education under the instruction and guidance of westernized nations.⁹²

⁹⁰ Report to the President, 7.

⁹¹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 26.

⁹² Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 27-31.

Yet, he shared in *The Wine Is Bitter* of a time when a quality education seemed to cause a deeper understanding of the relationship between the U.S. and Latin America in a different way than he wanted. A Uruguayan intellectual came to him on one of his trips in anger and frustration that he would want to build a relationship with them after the history of interactions that exists. He claimed that the U.S. had unjustly allowed colonial elites to take resources from Cuba when the nation took power from Spain. He continued by saying that the U.S. had then forced Cuba to produce a single crop so that they would rely on them for everything else that they needed for success. Milton claims that this man and several other educated persons that he spoke to who shared similar opinions were seeing history “superficially” and with “colored lenses.”⁹³

But this actually was not true. The Uruguayan intellectual had reason to describe the situation in this way, seeing as U.S. economic imperialism in Latin America had led to an intense focus on the expansion of the sugar industry.⁹⁴ Throughout the period of slavery in this nation, the foundation for this industry was created, but the early nineteenth century was when the production boomed due to an all-encompassing level of attention during what historians often refer to as the “second slavery” of Cuba. This term is due to the intensity with which plantation owners were putting low-wage laborers to work.⁹⁵ After the dominance and imposition of the United Fruit Company (UFC) in Cuba that existed throughout the late 1800s, the U.S. military

⁹³ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 296.

⁹⁴ Frances Peace Sullivan. “‘Forging Ahead’ in Banes, Cuba.” *New West Indian Guide* 88, no. 3–4 (2014): 231–61. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134360-08803061.234-235>.

⁹⁵ Dale Tomich. “World Slavery and Caribbean Capitalism.” *Theory and Society* 20, no. 3 (June 1991): 297–319. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00213549>.

began to convert the UFC banana plantations into sugar plantations and teach Cubans new efficient practices to harvest sugar. This was supposed to be a helpful act where they shared knowledge and reduced the power that the UFC held in the nation, but what it really did was leave the Cubans with one option: sugar production.⁹⁶ A decline in sugar production in the late 1800s, after the emancipation of slaves in Cuba had passed in 1886, gave way to “the U.S. penetration of Cuban economy.”⁹⁷ They entered the scene as the Spanish exited, “and it was U.S. capital, machinery and technicians that helped to save the sugar mills that remained competitive with European beet sugar.” This led the Cuban economy to depend on sugar as a main source of income and on sugar trade with the U.S. in particular. This was not Milton’s understanding of the history, however. Economists and historians have studied this occurrence and discussed the validity and significance of it, yet Milton stands firm throughout his writings that U.S. intentions were pure and that all efforts that were made regarding the Cuban economy in this era were helpful.⁹⁸

Further, Milton portrayed many Latin American leaders as feeling that the United States could teach the people of their own nations something valuable. He claimed in an address in September of 1953, “They pleaded with me to find a way to permit a greater number of

⁹⁶ Sullivan, “Forging Ahead” in Banes, Cuba,” 235.

⁹⁷ “Research Guides: World of 1898: International Perspectives on the Spanish American War: Cuba in 1898.” Cuba in 1898 - World of 1898: International Perspectives on the Spanish American War - Research Guides at Library of Congress. Accessed January 31, 2024. <https://guides.loc.gov/world-of-1898/cuba-overview>.

⁹⁸ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 296.

democratic leaders to come and learn from us.”⁹⁹ There were many people that wanted to understand what knowledge had given the U.S. the ability to grow. The value placed on U.S. education was clear by the fact that 75% of South American students who studied abroad in the 1950s came to universities in the United States.¹⁰⁰ He wrote that one project at the time was bringing 12,500 Latin American students to U.S. universities, colleges, hospitals, and industrial laboratories to study. Yet, in his typical fashion, he neglected to cite what the project was called or any further details about its goals, so the validity of this statistic is questionable. Milton felt strongly that the United States’ willingness to share their expertise would help Latin American leaders understand the proper steps to growing their respective countries.¹⁰¹

While education can aid in the growth of overall prosperity of a nation, according to Milton’s writings, he also made it clear that education could be a powerful tool in promoting democracy. He said that he wanted education to be the tool that influenced the world to stay away from Communism. He hoped for all educators to be committed to democracy.¹⁰² Any leader must be able to take on a commitment to democracy and create needed changes such as tax reform and other internal efforts. Corrupt governments exist and must be fixed, yet this takes time, and democratic leaders are often blamed for that. To attempt to remedy this complication and keep the process moving quickly, Costa Rica created the Institute of Political Education in

⁹⁹ The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 01, ME-Authored Articles 1949-1985, *College Affairs*, “Dr. Eisenhower Says South America Needs Foreign Aid,” 2.

¹⁰⁰ Report to the President, 5.

¹⁰¹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 34.

¹⁰² The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 01, ME-Authored Articles 1949-1985, *The Educational Record*: “Education for International Understanding,” 243-244.

San Jose to offer 90-day training to teach leaders how to act on democratic ideologies. Their strategy was that once the leaders in their government had all gone through the same training and understood the same goals, they would be able to more efficiently implement those goals. This was an initiative by the Costa Rican government without supervision of the U.S., but still highlights his point that education is influential. At the same time, this example demonstrates that nations besides the United States can find ways to grow and progress on their own. Bringing education into government was a way to increase productivity by giving everyone the same knowledge.¹⁰³

The power of education is very real in the world in many different ways. Milton Eisenhower was able to see that, especially with his background as an educator and having held the President position at three different colleges during his career. Increasing the number and quality of schools available, providing opportunities to learn from the United States, and teaching leaders democratic ideals all served to expand a nation's capabilities.

D. Spread of Communism

Another topic that was at the forefront of Milton's mind over the course of the 1950s was containing Communism. This topic was extremely important, and it influenced the entirety of *The Wine Is Bitter* and other writings and speeches mentioned in this thesis. As discussed earlier, the fear of Communism ate away at the Eisenhower administration so much during this decade that they initiated the takeover of Guatemala's democratic government. Among other motives, the unproven feelings in the United States that Guatemala had elected a Communist President led them to take such drastic action. We will also discover the influence of Castro's

¹⁰³ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 312-313, 321-322.

Communist takeover in Cuba, which also happened during this decade. He took each of the themes that have been seen earlier in Chapter 4 of this thesis and wove them into the idea that Communism is a powerful influence on the choices and viewpoints that he shares throughout *The Wine Is Bitter*. But with the growing power of the Soviet Union during this period and the Cold War in full swing, it was an issue that plagued the minds of all U.S. leaders at the time, not just Milton. U.S. officials struggled to decide how to approach the issue without violating their policy of nonintervention in the internal affairs of other nations, yet they wanted to prevent Communism from entering their neighboring region to the south.¹⁰⁴

Since his first trip in 1953 he had held strong concern for the potential of Latin America to be susceptible to the allure of ultra-nationalism and Communist influence; however, the fear grew rapidly over the course of the decade. A conference with 30 democratic labor leaders that had previously come to study in the U.S. reported their concern for other labor leaders being “indoctrinated” by the Soviets and being pulled “behind the Iron Curtain.” As Dr. Eisenhower put it, the conference-goers “pleaded with us to find a way to permit a greater number of democratic leaders to come and learn” since the Soviets had been extending all-expenses paid invitations to leaders to attend propaganda conferences. Other sources confirm the circulation of Soviet propaganda of this sort at the time. He and his fellow officials were terrified that nations in Latin America would fall to Soviet influence and break away from the democratic ideals that they had spent time and effort spreading to the region. They feared the loss in their competition

¹⁰⁴ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, xii.

against the Soviet Union, and they feared the end of influence and connection between them and the regions of Latin America that may fall.¹⁰⁵

Milton hoped that in improving the relationship between the United States and Latin America, he would be able to stop the Soviet Union from gaining any sort of significant leverage in the area. He claimed that it was extremely easy for Communism to take over without good education.¹⁰⁶ In his efforts to preach democratic ideals, he encouraged the growth of power through persuasion as opposed to geographical control or economic dominance. The latter are important to fend off aggressors, he explained, but the mind must be overtaken by one side in order for people to support a movement. He wanted the nations of Latin America to believe that the force that the Soviet Union used was not as effective or just as the United States' methods of communication. Yet, the concrete actions of the United States contradicted this ideal in instances such as the military intervention in Guatemala in 1954 and the decades of economic control over Cuba through the sugar industry. Also, we can see in the above paragraph that the Soviet Union was relying on propaganda to spread their message, not force.¹⁰⁷ Milton also addressed the need for censorship to be eliminated in the region so that everyone could better interact with one another. He worried that if messages could not get across to the nations of

¹⁰⁵ Report to the President, 10; R. Hart Phillips. "The Future of American Propaganda in Latin America." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1945): 305–12. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2745382>.

¹⁰⁶ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 39.

¹⁰⁷ The Pennsylvania State University Special Collections, The Milton S. Eisenhower Papers, box 01, ME-Authored Articles 1949-1985, *The Educational Record*: "Education for International Understanding," 243.

Latin America, the United States would falter in their ability to keep them away from Communism.¹⁰⁸

There was a strong hesitancy among U.S. companies and the government to give loans and grants to Latin America, which was sometimes due to the nation's moral distrust of socialism. They were wary of enterprises or areas with socialized policies, not wanting to get involved in an agreement that could quickly turn around and harm them.¹⁰⁹ However, he had also mentioned in his report from 1953 that some Latin Americans were wary of taking loans from the United States due to Communist propaganda, which promoted the notion that U.S. economic investment in countries had a negative influence on the sovereignty of that nation, a concept that is validated by other sources regarding the influence of Soviet propaganda at the time.¹¹⁰

Soviet propaganda had also, according to Milton, spread the idea that the USSR had been able to industrialize very quickly and successfully while growing and stabilizing their economy greatly all because of the introduction of the Communist regime. Milton claimed that in reality they were far behind U.S. industries, had poor living conditions, and were taking credit for the industrialization that had started long before Communism was established. He said that the reason the USSR was able to "reach its few high priority objectives" was that they controlled every aspect of the process. But even outside of the Soviet propaganda that worked against Milton and his goals for better relations in the United States and Latin America, many leaders

¹⁰⁸ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 89.

¹⁰⁹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 158-159.

¹¹⁰ Report to the President, 8.; R. Hart Phillips. "The Future of American Propaganda in Latin America." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1945): 305-12. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2745382>.

and citizens in Latin America questioned whether the U.S. was interested in them solely because of the competition with the Soviet Union which continuously simmered throughout the period. Many remained unconvinced that the U.S. was genuinely interested in better relations, and saw the efforts being made as a “response to Castro-Communism.” He maintained his stance on the reasoning behind recent U.S. policies that had been aimed at strengthening the relationship between the two hemispheres, stating that there was a “long-maturing concern for and interest in Latin Americans.” Milton remained secure in his statements that a better relationship was needed and wanted by both sides regardless of Communism’s spread.¹¹¹

Cuba’s fall to Communism under Castro sparked fear among U.S. officials of potential deterioration of democracy in other parts of Latin America as well. One of the biggest issues that Milton faced due to Castro’s power was in the process of negotiating the release of 1,200 prisoners that had been taken captive after the failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961. Castro wanted to trade tractors for people, which was a bad look for the United States because if they made an agreement to barter with a dictator then they would be seen as putting equal stock in human life and in tractors. Kennedy reached out and asked Milton to be on a committee he was setting up with two democrats and two republicans to raise money for these tractors.¹¹²

However, because negotiating with a Communist leader was not politically correct, Kennedy and his administration claimed that they did not have anything to do with the efforts of the committee. This claim caused backlash from Congress and from the public because that would mean the group is going against the Logan Act, legislation enacted by the United States Congress that forbids private citizens from engaging in unauthorized correspondence with

¹¹¹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 128-130, 167.

¹¹² Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 274-283, 295-296

foreign governments.¹¹³ Citizens and officials alike sent letters to the group, asking them to stop their efforts and newspapers published articles criticizing their actions. *The Wine Is Bitter* states that Kennedy had previously promised to be public about support and organization for the committee as a condition of Milton agreeing to help with it, but then went back on his word when questioned by the public.¹¹⁴

In the end no prisoners were released, and no trade was made at that time, as the committee could not come to an agreement with Castro. They later negotiated the release of the “commandos” in exchange for \$58 million in food and medicine, with an additional \$2.9 million in cash added on.¹¹⁵ Dr. Eisenhower claims that the whole affair made Castro look very bad to Latin America, something which served to assist efforts being made by the U.S. to advocate for its style of democracy in the region. The prisoners were still not returned at that time. It wasn't until the following year when the governments made an agreement to trade food and medicine for the prisoners, which added up to \$55.9 million not including shipping costs.¹¹⁶

According to Milton, Castro's rise to power throughout the 1950's gave many U.S. officials a reason to worry about the state of democracy among their neighbors to the south.

¹¹³ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Logan Act.” Encyclopedia Britannica, January 23, 2023.

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Logan-Act>.

¹¹⁴ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 274-283, 295-296.

¹¹⁵ Historian. “Tractors for Fidel Castro.” Medium, November 20, 2021. <https://medium.com/historys-trainwrecks/tractors-for-fidel-castro-727ad1f098b0>.

¹¹⁶ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 274-283, 295-296.; “Readers Reject Castro's Offer to Trade People for Tractors.” 1961. *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, May 26, 1.

<https://ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/readers-reject-castros-offer-trade-people/docview/167935174/se-2>.

They hoped to create better relationships that would allow them to keep such an important partner on their side and away from the Soviet Union's influence. The propaganda that was being spread induced apprehension, and Milton doubled down on attempts to convince the leaders and citizens of Latin America that the United States was a good and trustworthy friend to have.

It is also important to note that the issue of Communism had not come up throughout the report that he wrote to President Eisenhower after his return from his 1953 trip. As the decade unraveled, his views on Communism became more intense and more of a plague on his mind. The Cold War's dominance on American politics and lives by the end of the 1950s is evident in this change in focus that can be seen in Milton's writings.

The goals of *The Wine Is Bitter* tie back to this final concept of "containing Communism." The fear of this style of leadership and government invading areas that the United States needed to maintain global dominance and to bolster its own economy was overbearing. On the surface, this book describes a desire of Milton Eisenhower to promote positive relations between the United States and Latin America. He spoke to Americans through this book about why it was important to value their neighbors and what he felt should have been done to provide more support to them. In the end, the reasons behind Dr. Eisenhower's need to write a book demonstrating the U.S.'s ability to support and foster growth among Latin American nations was a response to the increased tensions between the United States and the USSR during this period.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Milton Eisenhower's influence on American policies and people was significant in his career and spread outside of the scope of U.S.-Latin America relations during the 1950s. This truth is undeniable. His government work, his education work, his role as a personal representative of President Eisenhower, and his time spent consulting various presidents could indicate nothing but an impactful role.¹¹⁷ But that does not change the fact that many of the ideas that he promotes in his writings about Latin America conflict with the actions that the United States were taking at that time and throughout previous history to that point, as has been demonstrated throughout this essay.

Much of the narrative that he weaves about the relationship relies on denial and a clouded judgment based on strong nationalist tendencies. He says, "While we might cite instances in which capital has not been fairly treated, we could also call attention to many cases in which reasonable treatment has redounded to the benefit of both countries and has promoted an additional flow of productive investment."¹¹⁸ This exemplifies his consistent insistence that all of the bad that may have happened should be overlooked simply because there has also been good. He knows that he cannot completely deny the fact that there is a complex history between them, yet he doesn't put his patriotism to the side for long enough to analyze the situations and events that he encounters throughout his career. It's a circumstance that we see in a lot of leaders, politicians, and public figures. in today's world and throughout world history. It is not uncommon for people to be committed to their views, but in Milton's case it is abundantly

¹¹⁷ Ambrose and Immerman, *Milton S. Eisenhower: Educational Statesman*.

¹¹⁸ Report to the President, 3.

obvious that his nationalism pervades all of the writings, speeches, and critiques that he produced throughout his career.

In another instance, he is adamant that even though past efforts have been harmful and selfish, the recent efforts of the U.S. towards Latin America have been helpful and honorable. He noted that more than 30% of US long term investment is in Latin America and the total of private and public loans and investments amounts to over \$11 billion. I would argue that the concept that all past mistakes should be erased simply due to recent investments, which as we previously saw in this thesis were often driven by self-serving reasons, is unreasonable. It may even indicate a “white savior” perspective seeing how he spins his arguments around the premise of only presenting minimal information and leaving out other important pieces. Often he refers to the U.S. willingness to give loans and monetary support as evidence of their good intentions, disregarding any instances of anti-democratic behavior on the part of the U.S.¹¹⁹

The power that Milton’s words have to convince the audience to see his side is impressive and he uses a variety of language to promote his claims. As noted, he often even uses examples, although most of these examples, usually instances and statistics, that he references do not have any backing by research. The following excerpt is from the report he made to President Eisenhower following his trip to South America in 1953 and it demonstrates these tendencies.

We found attitudes toward United States business enterprises now operating successfully in Latin America to be mixed. Most thoughtful Latin Americans realize that the days when some foreign-owned enterprises might exploit local populations are gone. Today, United States enterprises usually pay higher wages to their employees than local employers do, and also provide better housing, working conditions, schools, hospitals and highways. They pay very substantial sums in taxes, and provide excellent technical training programs in many instances. Most of the United States managers and staff are well-educated, speak Spanish or Portuguese, work for the improvement of conditions in

¹¹⁹ Eisenhower, *The Wine Is Bitter*, 47.

the host country, and are, in general, effective, friendly representatives of the United States and its people.¹²⁰

In this quote a lot of the language that Milton uses indicates his strong desire to frame the U.S. as innocent within this entire context. For instance, he notes that any Latin Americans that were “thoughtful” would know that the businesses that the U.S. had and would go on to establish in Latin America were not trying to exploit locals, implying that any Latin Americans that pushed back on their imposition were unintelligent and incapable of understanding the true meaning of U.S. companies being there. He believed, or portrayed himself as believing, that his country would only ever be supportive for the sake of being supportive, even though in other places in this same report and throughout other writings he described the economic benefits that the U.S. received when having a strong relationship with Latin America. Milton continued into this argument by describing how enterprises in Latin America that were owned by the United States often paid workers more and provided better conditions than locally owned businesses. Plus, he wrote that American business owners paid large amounts of taxes and were respectful and friendly visitors to other cultures. He said all of this with such conviction that it is hard to question his claims, even though he provided no direct evidence to support them. Milton’s wording is persuasive and direct, using words like “substantial,” “excellent,” and “well-educated.” He knows how to articulate his message in a way that strikes the reader and conveys certainty, while deftly avoiding specifics whenever possible. For example, he refers to U.S.-owned companies paying higher wages than locally owned ones, but never mentions any specific number to create a comparison. When in his writings he does employ statistics, he never

¹²⁰ Report to the President, 8.

explains the source from which he got them to help verify the validity of his claims. Yet, it is easy for that lack to go unnoticed with how swiftly he utilizes language to his advantage.

Seeing the ways in which Milton presents situations to appear more positive than they are, I can't help but to wonder if his speeches and writings were a form of propaganda. In many cases the way that his words differ from reality appears to manipulate the situation. Whether or not he did it purposefully, he consistently distorts reality and makes the actions of the U.S. come across as helpful. Propaganda is defined as "ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause."¹²¹ Given the context of the time period and the desperation for the United States to prevent Communism, it seems plausible to connect the constant promotion of U.S. efforts in Milton's writings to the desire that the nation had to spread their ideals throughout the world. The strong tensions of the Cold War that existed at that moment lead me to believe that these writings were indeed propaganda that were used as a way to reaffirm the power and position of the United States in the eyes of Americans and the world. His claimed reasoning is that he possessed a desire to share knowledge, which could be reasonable on a surface-level since he spent much of his career in the education sphere. Yet, that argument is not as strong once his words are analyzed next to the historical context of the era. In addition, Milton's strong personal connection to the government in the form of his brother and confidant, President Eisenhower, could give even further cause to believe that he was working to promote the good image of the country. However, that concept is a theory that I cannot prove besides simply noting that the two brothers shared a very close relationship.

¹²¹ "Propaganda Definition & Meaning." Merriam-Webster. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/propaganda>.

Overall, Milton's work was influential, yet clouded. He displayed his strong nationalism with each word written or spoken. Being over half a century removed from this situation, it is easy to draw conclusions about how his works were not unbiased and likely were used as a form of propaganda because I can see the way that history unfolded before, during, and after this decade. When all of these interactions were actively occurring it was easy for scholars to get lost in the claims that people made and the actions that were taken all while tensions between the United States and the USSR continued to escalate. Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower may not have changed the relationship between the United States and Latin America the way that he believed he did, but his work as a respected leader and representative of the government impacted the American public and their impressions of Latin America while also, more than anything else, influencing the former President Dwight Eisenhower's actions and reactions regarding the region during his presidency.

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