

 **THEDIALOGUE**

THE CASE FOR RENEWED COOPERATION IN A TROUBLED HEMISPHERE

Towards the Ninth Summit of the Americas

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This report draws on the deliberations of our June 2021 Sol M. Linowitz Forum, the first—and hopefully last—held virtually. It is informed by Dialogue members and staff, three working group background papers, and the advice and suggestions of colleagues throughout the hemisphere and beyond. We thank them and many others who drafted insightful commentaries and participated in our discussions on an array of issues over the past ten months.

We are particularly grateful for the three excellent papers prepared for the Forum on democratic governance, economic recovery, and health, with an emphasis on inter-American cooperation in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the efforts of the working group co-chairs and participants (see page 48 for lists) for their thoughtful contributions. We extend our sincere thanks to Dialogue co-chairs Ambassador Thomas Shannon and President Laura Chinchilla, along with Luis Miguel Castilla, Julio Frenk and Helene Gayle, for their skilled moderation of the sessions.

We thank Dialogue member and leading public intellectual Francis Fukuyama, who on May 26 helped set the stage for the Forum in a conversation with respected journalist Phil Bennett. Fukuyama shared his thoughts on global politics and the state of democracy, with a focus on the United States. We are grateful for briefings from Biden administration officials Ricardo Zúñiga, then special envoy for the Northern Triangle at the State Department, and Dan Erikson, deputy assistant secretary at the Defense Department. Forum discussions were also informed by valuable contributions from special guests Raquel Artecona, Beatriz Londoño, Ana Salas Siegel, and Adrean Scheid.

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We extend our appreciation to many people who assisted in the preparation of the report. Dialogue non-resident fellow Bruno Binetti provided critical research and extensive editing support and was a superb sounding board for ideas and recommendations contained in the report over several months. We are also grateful to program directors Margaret Myers, Ariel Fiszbein, Manuel Orozco, Santiago Canton, Erik Brand, and Lisa Viscidi for their expertise and key contributions. Peter Hakim, president emeritus and senior fellow, offered characteristically acute, albeit unsparing, comments. Abe Lowenthal, the Dialogue's founding director and current member, suggested several helpful edits and stylistic changes, along with some useful substantive recommendations. We appreciate his insistence that, in 2022, it was essential that the profound governance challenges facing the United States be an integral part of a report on the Americas.

We are grateful to the Dialogue team that shepherded the report through various phases, including sending it to all members for review and comment, and bringing the effort to fruition. Joan Caivano, senior advisor at the Dialogue, deserves special recognition for her constant prodding to adhere to a timeline and for overseeing copyediting and layout and design of the report. We are also grateful to Denisse Yanovich and Luisa Stalman, who provided invaluable support and assistance in the process.

Relations among countries of the Americas are generally cordial but often discordant. In recent years, facing an array of shared problems, governments have been unable to come together with a sense of common purpose. Any serious cooperation to find practical, constructive solutions has been lacking. Latin America and the Caribbean confront a bleak economic outlook in the coming years. Prospects for democratic renewal appear dim. At the same time, the United States is suffering from polarization, partisan rancor, and dysfunctional governance. And regional organizations have not been up to the task of fostering effective collaboration.

Over the past two years, the hemisphere—along with the rest of the world—faced a crucial test with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which ravaged the Americas more than any other region, revealing deficiencies in its health and education systems. The lack of leadership, at the national and regional levels, was disappointing. Most countries turned inward. In doing so, the United States missed an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the region by assisting governments with vaccines and helping to catalyze collective responses. Nations throughout the hemisphere likewise failed to pursue cooperative approaches.

The Ninth Summit of the Americas offers an opportunity for hemispheric leaders to reinvigorate efforts to tackle a common agenda. As host of the June gathering in Los Angeles, President Joe Biden should lay out concrete proposals to more effectively address challenges on which greater cooperation could make a real difference in people's lives. The Inter-American Dialogue's report offers eight recommendations on specific issues, ranging from the rule of law to climate change, migration, education, health, and economic and social recovery and development. These proposals recognize that, while this is not the moment for ambitious initiatives, incremental progress can and should be made through partnerships involving governments, the private sector and civil society.

While the report deals with the hemisphere's difficulties, it also points out the region's resilience and encouraging trends in a period of great uncertainty. Citizens throughout the Americas, especially the youth, are more connected to one another than ever. Many are pressing for greater inclusion and social justice.

Women's and LGBT+ movements over recent decades are finally yielding fruits reflected in decisions by the courts and Congresses to protect rights. Efforts by indigenous and Afro-descendant populations to shape policies are gaining ground, albeit too slowly. Awareness is growing of the threats to the planet posed by climate change. And young, innovative Latin Americans are launching regional, high value startup companies, attracting venture capital.

The report was written before Russia's barbarous invasion of Ukraine. The war's effects on the global economy and geopolitics will be far-reaching, with repercussions in the Americas. The response to Russian aggression by the United States and Europe was robust and coordinated. Collective action in defense of common interests and values is still possible. The Ukraine crisis only accentuates the urgency of enhanced hemispheric collaboration to deal with threats to democracy and issues like migration, refugee crises, and the transition to cleaner energy. The crisis also highlights the role of leadership in mobilizing a country—and a continent.

The Dialogue is an inter-American, non-partisan group. It is led by co-chairs—President Laura Chinchilla and Ambassador Thomas Shannon. About one-third of our 133 members are from the United States. The rest are from Canada, Spain, and 22 nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. Our membership is politically diverse. We include Republicans and Democrats from the United States and leaders of varied political perspectives from elsewhere in the Americas. All of us share a commitment to democratic politics, economic and social progress, and greater cooperation in inter-American relations.

This report reflects the views of the Dialogue's membership, which meets every two years at the Sol M. Linowitz Forum. Although not every member agrees with every statement or recommendation in the text, most endorse the report's content and tone and its principal recommendations. Dialogue members participate as individuals; institutional affiliations are for purposes of identification only. Finally, we are grateful for the financial support we receive from foundations, governments, corporations, multilateral banks, international organizations, and individual donors.

Michael Shifter, President | April 2022

The Americas face daunting, interlinked challenges not seen since the founding of the Inter-American Dialogue four decades ago. Much of Latin America and the Caribbean has been economically stagnant for nearly a decade, and authoritarianism is on the rise. In recent years, some of the region's disturbing trends, such as political polarization, distrust in government and institutions, and growing income inequality, parallel similar tendencies in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of Covid-19 two years ago exacerbated preexisting social, economic, and political challenges throughout the Americas. The disease's rapid spread and devastating impact revealed deficient health systems and weak governance. Leadership failures in many countries have had disastrous consequences. Economic hardship, social discontent, and democratic fragility—evident before the pandemic—became even more severe when joined with uncontrollable infections, soaring deaths, and lockdowns.

Covid-19 also posed a critical test for hemispheric cooperation. The results have been disappointing. In a kind of Covid nationalism, governments largely turned inward. On past health crises, the countries of the hemisphere worked together more or less successfully. Their inability to do so in the face of the pandemic has proved costly and underscored the marked decline in hemispheric partnership in recent years.

Across the Americas, political leadership committed to collaboration in tackling so many pressing challenges has been sorely lacking. With its strong regional and global economic influence and its immense power, the United States had been seen as a natural leader. But since the turn of the

century, the US government has grown more distant from the region and has failed to be adequately engaged in addressing its complex challenges. The relationship reached a low point during the Trump years. The Trump administration's offensive rhetoric coupled with a disdain for multilateralism and a democratic agenda in the Americas had a detrimental impact on Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Biden administration came in with good intentions, a more respectful tone, and a broader, more constructive agenda, but it has not met high expectations for deeper engagement. Most notably, it did not step up to play a leadership role on the biggest immediate issue facing the Americas: Covid-19 and its profound social and economic consequences. Over time, continued inaction in Washington could lead to growing skepticism in Latin America and the Caribbean about a constructive US role in the region.

At the same time, Latin American and Caribbean political leaders have failed to proactively tackle the myriad crises facing them, leading to disorder and drift. Traditional multilateral institutions within the inter-American system have also fallen short in developing coherent and effective regional efforts.

Across the Americas, political leadership committed to collaboration in tackling so many pressing challenges has been sorely lacking.

More recent initiatives that seek to integrate Latin America and the Caribbean politically and economically, without the involvement of the United States or Canada, have yielded few if any real benefits for the region.

Since its founding in 1982, the Dialogue has assembled leaders throughout the Americas and beyond to review hemispheric challenges and propose concrete ways to move forward together. This report is animated by that essential purpose. It is organized in six parts:

- ▶ Democracies under threat;
- ▶ Mixed results on social and economic development;
- ▶ Health and the lasting impact of the pandemic;
- ▶ The ongoing migration and refugee crises;
- ▶ Rebooting hemispheric cooperation: Back to basics; and
- ▶ Recommendations for a path forward.

The report combines an analysis of the main, interrelated challenges with policy ideas to enhance collaboration across the hemisphere, all with an eye towards the Ninth Summit of the Americas to be held the week of June 6 in Los Angeles, California. Conditions throughout the hemisphere have changed dramatically since the United States hosted the first such summit nearly three decades ago. Since that time, although there has been admirable progress on specific issues like education, poverty, inequality, and women's leadership, ambitious proposals, such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas, have failed to materialize, giving way to more dispersed efforts and a less coherent agenda. And unlike at that first summit, China is now a strong and permanent feature in the hemispheric landscape, considerably altering the politics and economics of inter-American relations as well as the domestic affairs in many countries in the region.

Although today's environment is very difficult, an opportunity nonetheless exists for increased hemispheric cooperation on an array of concrete issues. As host of the Los Angeles Summit, President Biden should seize that opportunity and partner with other hemispheric heads of state to propose practical ideas for joint efforts. Tackling the pandemic and preparing for future health crises should top the list. Despite the obstacles, cooperation remains a crucial goal and must be considered part of the solution to the many problems facing the Americas.

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DEMOCRACIES UNDER THREAT

Compared to the dark eras of frequent military coups, authoritarian rule, and massive human rights violations, in recent years democracies in Latin America and the Caribbean have shown considerable resilience and vitality. The region remains the most democratic in the developing world: The majority of the governments are dutifully elected, and civil society is robust and actively engaged in shaping the public agenda, often under adverse circumstances.

Over the last decade, however, most of the region has experienced a persistent and worrying erosion of democratic institutions, norms, and practices. The United States, where democracy is being tested to an extent not seen since the 19th century, is also part of a global “democratic recession.”

In contrast, authoritarian rule in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela shows no sign of abating. The Cuban dictatorship has transitioned towards a post-Castro generation; Nicolas Maduro has tightened his grip on Venezuela amid economic ruin and humanitarian disaster; and Daniel Ortega has destroyed the last vestiges of Nicaraguan democracy.

In other countries, a central reason for the current woes is the erosion of citizens’ trust in political and other elites—and often in the democratic system itself. This trend can be explained by stubbornly high levels of inequality, unchecked corruption, deficient public services, and lack of opportunities for social mobility. Many studies, including the comparative *Latinobarómetro* survey, reveal dissatisfaction with the government and business elites who have presided over economic slides and poor governance, and have failed to improve the well-being of ordinary citizens.

High levels of discontent are expressed in different ways: in some countries by massive, sometimes violent, street protests, while in others at the ballot box. The result is heightened political volatility, growing anti-incumbent sentiment, and distrust

of political parties and public institutions. Even in countries with sound economic performance in recent decades, the outlook is uncertain. Young people in particular are taking sharp aim at longstanding elite privileges and demanding greater inclusion in political and economic affairs. Chile’s new government illustrates this generational shift.

In many countries, owing to weakened institutions, forces on the extremes are driving politics, producing high levels of polarization and making it increasingly difficult for governments to devise consensus policies. Space for dialogue, negotiation, and compromise among diverse political and social actors is shrinking. And energized activist groups are exerting strong pressure to bypass intermediate political institutions—a pillar of representative democracy—and engage in direct communication with leaders.

In some countries, civilian leaders have called the military to step in and assume functions beyond the traditional ones of security and defense. Particularly in Brazil and even in Mexico, the armed forces have increased their influence over state-owned enterprises and other government agencies. In several Andean and Central American countries, the military has recently been the final arbiter of political crises. In light of the region’s tragic history with military rule, this pattern is unsettling and underscores the current deficits of democratic institutions and leaders.

Perhaps the most serious challenge facing hemispheric democracies are attacks against free and fair elections—the sine qua non of democracy.

Anti-establishment political figures, some with authoritarian impulses, have emerged in several countries. They rail against what they see as bankrupt traditional elites and claim to embody the general will of the people. Once in office, however, many of these leaders seek to concentrate power by taking over state institutions, limiting judicial independence, and attacking the press. This pattern has been evident for some time—examples include Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori in the 1990s and Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez in the 2000s—but has recently become more frequent. In the years since Latin America’s transition to democracy in the 1980s, such attempts to subvert democracy from within are unprecedented.

Some of these worrying trends apply to the United States as well. In recent years, the government has become more dysfunctional, public confidence in institutions has eroded sharply, and polarization has reached dangerous levels. The assault on the US Capitol in January 2021, which sought to overturn the results of a democratic election lost by Donald Trump, laid bare the profound damage to democratic norms that took place during his presidency. The damage is proving hard to repair, with threats to democracy persisting. Much of the Republican Party, still under the sway of former president Trump, insists on distorting facts about the 2020 election and seeks to restrict voting rights ahead of critical elections in 2022 and 2024.

As exemplified by the United States, perhaps the most serious challenge facing hemispheric democracies are attacks against free and fair elections—the sine qua non of democracy. The US experience shows it is possible to mobilize sizeable public support for false charges. Allegations of fraud—some substantiated, others contested, and yet others complete fabrications—are becoming more frequent, producing increasingly acrimonious disputes about election results. The October 2022 election in Brazil will pose a test for its democracy, as President Jair Bolsonaro has questioned, without proof, the validity of the country’s electronic voting system. This trend highlights the need to support

and strengthen national independent electoral authorities as well as regional observation missions, such as those conducted by the Organization of American States (OAS), and to make sure they remain credible and continue to adhere to the highest professional standards.

CHALLENGES TO THE RULE OF LAW

In Latin America and the Caribbean, broad dissatisfaction with government performance, deficient public services, and weak institutions can at least in part be attributed to stubbornly high levels of public and private corruption. Corruption, which tends to become a more salient political issue during difficult economic times, is enormously costly and saps citizen confidence in the democratic system.

In the 2010s, an anti-corruption wave, culminating in Brazil’s *Lava Jato* investigation, led to the prosecution of high-level politicians and business leaders in Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru. These scandals did not, however, result in long-lasting reforms to strengthen accountability and judicial independence. Several anti-corruption initiatives have been tainted by allegations of political bias. In turn, the record of judicial investigations has been mixed, with some supreme courts and tribunals putting limits on executive overreach, while others, along with certain lower-level judges, being more partisan in their rulings.

Some targets of investigations moved quickly to protect themselves. In 2019, the UN-backed International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), which assisted local prosecutors who were investigating corruption and human rights violations, was closed down. Similar OAS-backed organizations in Honduras and El Salvador were also dismantled. In Brazil, there

was a backlash to *Lava Jato* from the Bolsonaro government and many parties in Congress.

Linked to high levels of corruption, widespread crime and violence bedevil many countries in the Americas. Major cities in the United States, where guns are easily accessible, have seen a recent surge in crime. Latin America and the Caribbean remains the most violent region in the world, with one third of all global homicides despite having less than 10 percent of the world's population. Persistent social inequalities are a driving factor, with an increasing number of youth in the region who neither work nor attend school.

In many countries in the Americas, police forces are part of the problem. Officers often employ excessive force, especially against vulnerable populations, and sometimes have ties to criminal organizations. Reforms of the security sector are essential and must include more resources and better training and equipment, as well as closer civilian control of police forces and much stronger accountability mechanisms.

Organized crime has also become a grave and growing challenge in certain countries of the region. Criminal groups are increasingly taking advantage of and penetrating weak government structures, sometimes even exercising territorial control in areas without state presence. While Colombia's 2016 peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was an achievement that largely succeeded in demobilizing the insurgency, security in that country remains a major problem. With the state failing to provide adequate protection to many vulnerable communities, criminal groups have filled the vacuum. Some areas, such as the Colombia-Venezuela border, are particularly violent, as rebel and criminal groups fight to control illicit activities, often with the collusion of the Venezuelan government.

Few government responses to organized crime have made much of a dent. In fact, the situation has worsened. Since 2006, for example, Mexico's

military has combated drug trafficking in a US-backed drug war that has failed to curb the power of transnational criminal organizations. This campaign has claimed some 350,000 lives and led to widespread human rights violations at the hands of criminal groups and security forces alike. In many parts of South America, criminal organizations have also been adept in controlling state actors and dodging government strategies. Haiti, the hemisphere's poorest country, is an extreme case, punctuated by the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. Currently, gangs control parts of the Haitian capital and much of the country.

To confront the growing threat to democracy and the rule of law across the Americas more effectively, it is crucial to improve law enforcement capacities and make them consistent with human rights standards and practices, however difficult this task may be. National governments also need to better coordinate their efforts, sharing intelligence and working together to track flows of illicit money. In the *Lava Jato* investigation, a number of regional law enforcement agencies and judiciaries, together with the United States, cooperated effectively, showing that joint efforts

Current drug policies are not working and need to be revamped.

are feasible. The exchange of information among hemispheric governments must be more proactive, with the United States doing its part to boost the effectiveness of local prosecution of corruption.

Providing an enduring solution to the organized crime problem requires extending the presence of legitimate state authority and functioning institutions in areas of weak or nonexistent governance. Also critical is a strategy to address socioeconomic vulnerabilities, which frequently contribute to the appeal of criminal groups, especially for young people born into poverty and facing bleak prospects.

Criminal violence and corruption across the Americas are fueled in part by drug trafficking and consumption. Current drug policies are not working and need to be revamped. At a minimum, it is crucial to significantly expand treatment and rehabilitation centers for drug users. As the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission, created by the US Congress, recommended, the United States needs to multiply efforts to address US demand for drugs. Moreover, in light of the increasing importance of synthetic drugs on the market and the difficulty in stopping drug smuggling, it is worth exploring initiatives that would move towards legalization of some drugs. The aim would be to end the huge profits reaped by cartels, largely driven by the US market, which in turn lead to violence and corruption.

In addition, as the Mexican government has repeatedly pointed out, the United States needs to more effectively control the trafficking of arms to Mexico and other countries in the region, and to strengthen measures to prevent its financial sector from laundering drug money. The legalization of cannabis in some states and failed US-led anti-drug policies have undermined the credibility of Washington's prohibitionist approach in the region. The US government's inability to prevent or seriously address the opioid crisis—or adequately punish its perpetrators—detracts from its authority on this issue.

PERSISTENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Human rights violations are common throughout the Americas. Most prevalent is the excessive use of police and military force, particularly against low-income, indigenous, Afro-descendant, and other marginalized populations. In much of the region, women's rights are still systematically violated. Protests and manifestations of social unrest in the region are regularly met with violence and abuses, often leading to even greater anger aimed at government officials. In parallel, prisons throughout Latin America and the United States are overcrowded and exhibit abysmal conditions, sometimes becoming centers of criminal activity.

Politically motivated human rights violations are most egregious in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. In all three countries, political prisoners are jailed without due process, and members of opposition parties and the press are systematically repressed. Forced disappearances, torture, and censorship are the norm, while elections are far from meeting minimally acceptable standards.

As documented by Human Rights Watch and other credible independent organizations, human rights are also regularly violated in countries with democratically elected constitutional governments. Efforts to undermine the judiciary and attacks on the free press are on the rise. Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador and Salvadoran president Nayib Bukele have sought to weaken checks on their power, including by the judicial system, and have also assailed independent journalists.

Amnesty International cites the Americas, especially Brazil, Central America, Colombia, and Mexico, as notably perilous for human rights defenders, environmental activists, and journalists. In early 2022, the murder of five Mexican journalists in less than two months was particularly alarming. State institutions in most countries offer journalists inadequate protection, and rarely identify and

prosecute those responsible for violence against them. Impunity continues to be the norm.

Regional responses to the increasingly serious human rights situation and growing attacks on democracy have been tepid. High levels of polarization have made it difficult to forge a consensus and muster collective political will to at least recognize and condemn the troubling departure from democratic norms. While the inter-American human rights system, consisting of the commission and court, performs a valuable role in highlighting and litigating violations, it could be even more effective with greater political and financial support from the hemisphere's governments. Indeed, to maximize its impact, the OAS should concentrate attention and resources on defending democracy and human rights in the hemisphere.

The hemisphere's failure to effectively address the destruction of democracy in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba stands in contrast with the ambitious goals enshrined in the 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter. It has proved difficult to implement the Charter's calls for a multilateral and unanimous regional stance against autocratic rule. Hemispheric leaders too often denounce human rights violations committed by governments they oppose ideologically but stay silent when the same or worse acts are committed by their allies. Although such a polarized climate constrains

the hemispheric community's ability to press for democracy, it is crucial that governments and civil society craft a common strategy to strengthen institutions that apply pressure on autocratic regimes to free political prisoners and protect fundamental rights.

CIVIL SOCIETY: GROUNDS FOR HOPE?

In such a difficult context, the diverse groups that make up a growing and increasingly robust civil society sector are playing a vital role in reaffirming rule of law principles. The growth of this sector is the product of many years of political struggle and builds on the hard-earned democratic achievements in previous decades. Across the hemisphere, many citizens and groups are fighting corruption, defending human rights and human rights advocates, investigating and shining a light on abuses, and protesting social and economic inequalities, environmental degradation, and authoritarian rule.

From the massive street protests in Chile, Colombia, and Brazil to anti-dictatorship marches in Cuba and Black Lives Matter demonstrations

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in the United States, civil society groups have shaken political elites and tried to hold them accountable for their actions. At the same time, they have awakened long-dormant societal forces, drawn international attention, and managed to put previously overlooked issues on the public agenda.

By providing activists with the ability to widely communicate their messages, internet connectivity and social media access are increasingly crucial in shaping the politics of human rights and democracy in the hemisphere. The effects, however, have been contradictory. While new technologies enable citizens to share ideas and information, overcome censorship, and organize, they also facilitate the spread of misinformation and social control. This latter tendency has empowered populists and has had deadly consequences during the pandemic.

In a positive trend, governments and courts in many countries are slowly beginning to respond to sustained pressure from women's groups against discrimination, gender violence (aggravated during the lockdowns), and restrictions on reproductive rights. In 2020, Argentina's Congress legalized abortion. In other countries, such as Mexico and Colombia, high courts are ruling against strict abortion bans in a move towards recognizing the injustice and unequal treatment caused by such policies. The Mexican Senate passed a groundbreaking reform to the General Law for Women's Access to Life Free of Violence to ensure that women's shelters and justice centers are accessible to women with disabilities. In addition, there has been significant, if uneven, progress in recognizing LGBT+ rights. Indeed, between 2010 and 2022, 26 out of 35 countries in the hemisphere legalized same-sex marriage.

As a result of increased pressure from civil society and community groups, awareness is also growing across Latin American and the Caribbean about systematic discrimination against Afro-descendant and indigenous populations. Over the past three decades, the region's new constitutions and constitutional reforms have advanced multicultural and multiethnic goals and have given greater

guarantees to groups that traditionally have been targets of discrimination. Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities are increasingly asserting their rights and, in some cases, gaining long-delayed protections and increased ability to participate in their nations' political and economic affairs. Overall, however, progress has been uneven at best. The harsh and discriminatory treatment of Haitian refugees in a number of countries is cause for particular concern.

Still, and notably, Chile's 2022 Constitutional Convention, the first in Latin America with gender parity, is expected to produce far-reaching changes aimed at redressing social injustice. These actions include extending long overdue recognition and land rights to the country's important Mapuche population in its new Constitution.

Thus, despite some setbacks, civil society's efforts across the Americas have been resilient and continue to make important strides. In many countries, youth-led movements are advocating for human rights and pushing for more inclusive societies. Young urban activists are mobilizing and engaging in public online discussions. At the same time, however, polls suggest young people are deeply distrustful of established institutions and skeptical of the ability to bring about fundamental change through the ballot box. The future of democracy in the hemisphere will largely depend on the capacity of political systems to adapt and modernize in order to incorporate these new actors, new generations, and new demands.



MIXED RESULTS ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social tensions and political volatility in Latin America and the Caribbean are directly related to the region's disappointing economic performance. Over nearly two decades, the deceleration of regional economies has been stark: On average, Latin America and the Caribbean grew by 4.5 percent between 2003 and 2008, by 2.8 percent between 2009 and 2013, and by only 0.9 percent between 2014 and 2019. The uneven but significant reductions in poverty and inequality of the early 2000s were at risk even before Covid-19 hit in early 2020.

Economic stagnation has put great pressure on new and vulnerable middle classes, adding to frustration and fueling discontent. Social mobility has proved to be precarious. Slow growth suggests that governments once again became complacent during years of largesse. With few exceptions, South American countries did not take advantage of the China-led commodity boom of the early 2000s. That period of growth provided a small window of opportunity to plan for the longer run and to begin to tackle the very serious drags on productivity, export potential, and growth in Latin America. Only a few countries accomplished much in this direction by reforming tax and pension systems and investing in education, health, and research.

The South American commodity producers were not the only ones that missed opportunities. Mexico and Central America have not been able to leverage their trade agreements and proximity to the US market to generate sustained and more inclusive growth. Some of the obstacles standing in the way of the region's progress are familiar and include deficient infrastructure, low productivity, and weak institutions and rule of law.

The region's economic troubles and institutional frailties made it particularly vulnerable to Covid-19. According to the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America (ECLAC), regional gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 6.8 percent in 2020, the worst slump ever recorded, and worse than any other region in the world. Among the reasons were blows to tourism (especially for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean), volatility in commodity prices because of reduced global demand, and extended government-imposed lockdowns in countries with high labor informality. The dearth of vaccines for a long period deepened the disruption. In 2021, the region recovered some lost ground, growing at 6.2 percent on average, but with wide variation among countries. In 2022, growth is expected to slow to less than 3 percent.

Regional governments responded in different ways to the sharp economic contraction caused by the pandemic. Brazil, for example, increased spending

by more than 8 percent of GDP, while Mexico stuck to austerity. Despite noteworthy social measures and programs in many countries, ECLAC estimates that overall poverty in the region increased from 30.5 percent in 2019 to 33.7 percent in 2020, affecting a total of 209 million people. Meanwhile, according to ECLAC, the average Gini index, which measures inequality, rose by nearly 3 percent. The wide disparities between men and women in employment and poverty levels have also grown.

While the expansion of social safety nets and increased remittance flows during Covid-19 softened the blow of the recession, the effects will be hard to sustain because of high fiscal deficits, increasing inflationary pressures, and rising levels of public debt. External financing will be critical for the recovery but will be constrained by adverse economic conditions and political uncertainties.

To build more resilient and diversified economies, Latin American and Caribbean countries need much more domestic and foreign investment. According to the United Nations, amid the

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pandemic, foreign direct investment to the region shrank by 45 percent in 2020, the largest drop in the developing world. Of particular concern is Latin America's historic "infrastructure gap"—the difference between required infrastructure and actual infrastructure—which is estimated at about 2.5 percent of GDP every year.

On the positive side, Latin American entrepreneurship shows strong signs of vitality and capacity to innovate. As of early 2022, there are 27 Latin American "unicorns"—startup companies valued at 1 billion dollars or more—up from just four in 2018. Most of these disruptors are involved in the financial sector and ecommerce, generating added value and boosting financial inclusion. New digital payment systems and e-wallets are transforming the way Latin Americans do business, facilitating safe transactions and boosting productivity. These platforms are also improving governments' ability to reach vulnerable populations with targeted social policies, like cash transfer programs. Such companies would thrive and contribute even more to their countries of origin with proper incentives, fair tax systems, and clear regulatory frameworks.

In response to these financial trends, many Latin American governments are seeking to strike the right balance between maintaining fiscal responsibility and making critically important investments to address social demands. The choices they face have rarely been so difficult. Reducing subsidies or increasing taxes are obvious options, but these actions need to be weighed carefully against possible effects on already high levels of discontent and, importantly, governance and social peace. For South American countries going forward, international demand for commodities, especially from China, will be key to economic growth, but will also reinforce historical patterns of resource dependence—that is, over-reliance on commodity sales instead of diversifying, thus risking the perpetuation of boom and bust cycles.

Latin American governments are seeking to strike the right balance between maintaining fiscal responsibility and making critically important investments to address social demands.

The US government is far less constrained in taking action to address societal needs. Stimulus packages passed under presidents Trump and Biden for Covid-19 relief represented an expansion of social spending not seen since the Great Depression. In addition, the Biden administration gained legislative approval of a significant package to boost investment for decaying infrastructure in the United States. Another major package on social services or "human infrastructure" has stalled but might still be enacted in some form in 2022. Growing concerns about inflation, however, are reducing the political appetite for further spending.

To fight inflation in the United States, the Federal Reserve is expected to raise interest rates, which is likely to have a significant impact on Latin America's economies. Higher interest rates in the United States will likely divert capital from emerging markets to wealthier nations, curtailing foreign investment and growth in the region.

In addition to the direct financial impact, the pandemic was also notably disruptive to education, with serious consequences for economic growth,

innovation, and the future of social mobility, inequality, and labor markets in the hemisphere. According to the World Bank, learning losses caused by school closures amount to 159 days of missed schooling in Latin America and the Caribbean between March 2020 and February 2021, the most of any region in the world, and a potential loss in future incomes of 1.7 trillion dollars. By September 2021, a year and a half into the pandemic, nearly two-thirds of all children in Latin America and the Caribbean had not returned to the classroom, according to UNICEF.

The fact that so many students have been unable to continue schooling because they do not have adequate access to the internet and devices, coupled with the limitations of distance learning, underscores how crucial it is to undertake a major recovery effort. Such an effort should focus on reopening schools and providing students with the necessary support, while at the same time reducing the huge digital divide between and within countries. Priority attention should be given to remote and rural areas and marginalized and disadvantaged populations that often lack internet access. In addition to providing internet access, countries will need to revamp education systems to prepare citizens for a changing local and global economy and expand cooperation in higher education by pursuing cross-country links to enhance human capital development.

Governments also need to create new mechanisms for working with the private sector and multilateral banks to finance wide-ranging, growth-promoting sectors, including technology and the digital economy. Latin America is lagging behind other parts of the world on this challenge, which restricts the region's economic prospects. Burdensome regulations and tax regimes, lack of competition, and distorted prices need to be addressed. Government agencies should become digitized, which would have important by-products such as simplifying bureaucratic procedures, improving transparency, and making it easier for citizens to hold their governments accountable.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE US-CHINA RIVALRY

The growing competition between the United States and China will importantly affect the economic future of Latin America and the Caribbean. Both superpowers are key economic partners for the entire region, with the United States playing a more predominant role in Mexico and Central America, while China's economic presence is more pronounced in commodity-rich South America.

Contrary to what the US government would like, most countries in the region will understandably continue to resist picking sides because of the strategic and economic costs this would entail. Latin America's exports to the United States are more diversified and have more value-added than those to China, but the United States will not come close to attaining China's demand for commodities. Similarly, it probably cannot match the interest shown by Chinese infrastructure corporations in building transportation and energy infrastructure across the region.

Since the Obama administration, concerns in Washington in both political parties about China's increasing presence and influence in the hemisphere have grown. China's deepening investment in technologies that can be used for state surveillance is a particular worry for the US government. Both the Trump and Biden administrations have pressured US allies, including some in Latin America, against hiring Chinese corporations such as Huawei to supply 5G networks. Despite such protestations, many Latin American countries will continue to work with China to advance their economic development goals. China's comparatively low-priced technology and other exports are of growing interest in the region.

In response, Washington has sought to revitalize its engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean and compete more effectively with China. During the Trump administration, for instance,

Congress passed the Build Act in order to boost US assistance for infrastructure abroad. Since then, the new Development Finance Corporation has supported a number of projects in the region, rebranded under the “Build Back Better World” banner by the Biden administration.

Because of their geographical proximity and close economic ties to the United States, Latin American and Caribbean countries may be well positioned to gain from a process of “nearshoring.” Following the disruption brought about by the pandemic and growing tensions with Beijing, several US companies are considering a diversification of their supply chains by moving part of their production away from China. Before this can happen, logistical, regulatory, and political challenges need to be addressed. Taking advantage of this opportunity would require significant efforts by Latin American governments to improve human capital, provide essential infrastructure, reduce unnecessary costs, and send clear signals to markets and investors that governments will not change the rules of the game and will insure a level playing field regarding FDI flows.

If nearshoring starts to materialize, Latin American economies need to use the relocated platforms to promote value-added and technological development that benefits the entire economy. The US government has a role to play in ensuring that US companies located in Latin America respect workers’ rights, pay their fair share of taxes, and make a significant contribution to the communities where they are based.

These actions would improve US “soft power” in the region and boost opportunities for further economic integration.

Free trade agreements have been part of the US toolkit in the hemisphere for decades but have become much more problematic in recent times due to protectionism in both political parties. Rejoining the Trans-Pacific Partnership, as negotiated under President Obama but rejected by President Trump, has not even been discussed

by the Biden administration. Focused on its competition with China, the US government is still ambiguous about the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) as arbiter of trade disputes. Further, the United States heavily subsidizes its agricultural sector, a form of indirect protectionism that has limited trade integration with South America and complicated negotiations with developing regions at the WTO.

China, meanwhile, has explored the possibility of new trade agreements with Uruguay and Ecuador, while also bringing 22 Latin American nations into its landmark Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Chinese corporations continue to make inroads in the region in the form of investments, trade, and public works. At the same time, however, there have been setbacks for Beijing, including anti-mining protests in Peru, backlash against hydropower dams, and loan repayment problems in Venezuela, Argentina, and Ecuador.

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SAVING THE FUTURE: CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change will significantly shape the hemisphere's economic outlook; indeed, it is already having a growing impact. Rising global temperatures are producing more intense and more frequent droughts, floods, and hurricanes, imposing huge costs throughout the Americas. Extreme weather events aggravated by climate change are also driving emigration from Central America to the United States. Widespread droughts are lessening agricultural yields and hydropower generation. From California to the Amazon rainforest, wildfires are damaging fragile ecosystems. Worst of all, several Caribbean Island countries are in danger of outright annihilation.

The destruction of the Amazon rainforest, one of the most biodiverse areas in the world and an essential carbon sink, is of particular concern. In Brazil, where 60 percent of the Amazon is located, deforestation reached a 15-year high under President Jair Bolsonaro in 2021. In Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, and other countries, governments have failed to mitigate the negative impacts of agriculture, illegal mining, logging, and other industries on sensitive ecosystems.

However, Latin America as a region has the cleanest electricity in the world, and the deployment of clean technologies like renewables and electric vehicles is growing rapidly. The region is endowed with enough solar and wind resources to meet power demand 37 and 16 times over, respectively, and more than 150 energy storage projects are already deployed across the region. Almost 100 percent of the electricity used in Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Uruguay now comes from renewable sources.

In 2019, many Latin American countries agreed to a collective target of 70 percent renewable energy use by 2030, a regional goal more ambitious than that of the European Union. States across the

region have launched national electric mobility strategies, and Chile has put more than 800 electric buses on its roads. Looking towards the future, several countries in the region could competitively produce green hydrogen, which will be essential in the energy transition.

In a shift that could benefit Latin America, international investors are giving greater priority to applying environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in their investment decisions. International financing and the regional pooling of resources through multilateral development banks will be key to making climate-related investments. Instruments used elsewhere in the world, such as green bonds, designed to support specific climate-related projects, should be considered. Hemisphere-wide cooperation and more financial and technical support will be similarly fundamental to protect the vast biodiversity of the Americas, including oceans, rainforests, and other ecosystems.

Some progress in regional cooperation has also been achieved. In April 2021, the UN ECLAC-backed "Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean" (known as the Escazú Agreement) entered into force, though several countries have yet to ratify it. In addition, the region is benefiting from increased support for climate action from the Biden administration. Latin American countries also made significant commitments during the November 2021 COP26 meeting in Glasgow, including new decarbonization plans and an agreement to halt deforestation by 2030. Progress in meeting targets has, however, been weak, and Brazil and Mexico, the largest economies, have seen significant increases in emissions.

The Covid-19 pandemic pushed most Latin American and Caribbean countries, already suffering from a prolonged economic downturn and growing social and political turmoil, to the breaking point. Across the Americas, the pandemic was badly managed from the outset. The United States and Brazil have had the world's highest death tolls. Although Latin America is only 8 percent of the world's population, it accounts for nearly a third of Covid-19 deaths.



HEALTH AND THE LASTING IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Leadership failures explain part of the hemisphere's inadequate response to the pandemic. The presidents of Latin America's two largest countries, along with US President Donald Trump, refused to accept Covid's deadly consequences and spread false information about the pandemic and what measures their citizens should take. Many government agencies issued flawed and contradictory advice, measures to contain the virus were questioned and postponed, and science gave way to politics in defining national and local responses. Social media played its part as well, serving as a means for the dissemination of lies and false conspiracy theories about Covid-19 and about protective measures and vaccinations.

The acute economic and social conditions throughout much of Latin America and the Caribbean left the region highly vulnerable to Covid-19 and its multiple disruptions of everyday life. The informal sector, estimated by the International Labor Organization at roughly one-half of all workers, had little or no access to basic social protections. Most of these workers could not afford the missed income caused by lockdown measures. Many lived in densely crowded homes and neighborhoods where social distancing was simply impossible. Those setting health policies had little idea about the conditions under which most of their citizens lived and worked.

The impacts of Covid-19 have been felt most acutely by vulnerable populations already marginalized by poverty, inequality, and discrimination. Women and girls have been among the hardest hit, especially those who work on the front lines of the crisis in health care and other low-wage informal sectors, and those who are victims of domestic violence. Studies show a sharp increase in gender-based violence during the pandemic, exacerbated by the confinement and isolation imposed by stay-at-home orders and the reduced availability of shelters and support services.

Further, hospitals in many countries faced shortages of basic supplies, beds, and staff even before the pandemic hit, and were overwhelmed by the health crisis. For the most part, health systems in Latin America, and parts of the United States, are poorly financed and badly managed. Compounding the problem and deepening the divide, developed countries such as the United States moved quickly to secure large quantities of protective equipment and, later on, vaccines. As a result, Latin America and other developing regions were largely left to fend for themselves.

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Still, by the end of 2021 and early 2022, despite considerable variation, the region overall stood out for its relatively strong performance in vaccination rates, surpassing Asia, Europe, and North America. Latin America has a history of massive and successful vaccination campaigns, and a far lower level of vaccine skepticism than the United States.

On top of its health and economic repercussions, the pandemic also revealed the poor state of hemispheric cooperation. Collaboration on the Covid-19 crisis has been almost nonexistent, even among Latin American governments. Countries fought each other for scarce medical supplies and vaccines. Travel bans and border closures were implemented hastily and without consultation, exacerbating disruptions.

The United States did virtually nothing to assist Latin America or build multilateral approaches on a hemispheric level. The contrast between the United States' self-proclaimed hemispheric leadership and its absence during a major crisis was striking. After several requests from the region, the Biden administration eventually changed course. By January 2022, 54.5 million of the 350 million vaccines donated by the United States globally were sent to countries in the Western Hemisphere. This amount was grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the region's 700 million inhabitants, especially given vast supplies in the United States.

Most important, it is hard to square this limited response with US aspirations to continue to have influence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

For more than a year after the start of the pandemic, nearly all international assistance to Latin American and Caribbean countries came from China and Russia, both of which moved quickly to sell or donate protective equipment and vaccines to the region. Chile's rapid vaccination program, for example, was made possible by the purchase of Chinese vaccines, as was the success of Ecuador's vaccination campaign.

With Covid-19 far from defeated and new pandemics likely in the future, the hemisphere must learn from this failure. The Pan-American Health Organization must be given enough economic and political support to effectively coordinate policies across borders or to prod governments to design common responses. Countries should set up stronger hemispheric instruments to share information in real time, deploy emergency health professionals when needed, and continually evaluate their emergency preparedness. The United States should play an instrumental leadership role in what needs to be a more cooperative effort.

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Throughout the region every year, hundreds of thousands of citizens decide to leave their countries, often to escape poverty, lack of economic opportunities, domestic and street violence, natural disasters, human rights abuses, and authoritarian rule. Latin America and the Caribbean's deepening problems, aggravated by the impact of Covid-19, have led to further despair and have intensified pressures for even more people to flee.



THE ONGOING MIGRATION AND REFUGEE CRISES

In the Americas today, two tragic experiences stand out. The first is the exodus of more than 6 million Venezuelans since 2015, which represents 15 percent of the country's population and currently the world's second largest refugee crisis. Most Venezuelan migrants and refugees have moved to neighboring countries, with nearly 2 million to Colombia, more than 1 million to Peru, and roughly 500,000 each to Ecuador, Chile, and the United States.

The Colombian government has adopted a particularly generous approach to the large-scale migration, offering residency to the bulk of Venezuelan refugees. Other governments in the region showed solidarity with Venezuelan migrants at first but adopted more restrictive policies as their numbers increased, giving way to violence and abuses. In many cases, the crisis has been exploited politically, with opportunists playing on anti-migrant sentiments at a moment of economic crisis and heightened social tensions. Worryingly, in several countries, xenophobia is on the rise, reflected in growing intolerance expressed through social media and violent attacks against immigrants.

With little prospect of a quick transition to democracy in Venezuela and its economy still in shambles, governments and citizens across the hemisphere need to understand that Venezuelan refugees are likely to stay and to respond to this challenge. As a result, much more should be done to guarantee their integration into host societies,

including providing residence permits, recognizing their educational qualifications, and facilitating access to education and health services. Increased assistance from the international community to countries accepting the refugees is critical.

The second large-scale movement is northward to the United States. Serious problems on the US-Mexico border are a chronic issue and a constant reminder of the inability of the United States to reform its broken immigration system. Since the early 2000s, the bulk of migrants crossing the border have come from Central America's Northern Triangle: Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. They are mostly families and unaccompanied minors who intend to apply for asylum, many of them seeking to reunite with relatives already living in the United States.

In 2021, however, the pressures on the US border intensified, with 1.7 million apprehensions, the highest on record. Apart from deteriorating conditions in northern Central America, the reasons for the rise include a sharp increase in the number of Nicaraguans heading north to escape their country's brutal authoritarian regime, the deepening crises in Haiti, and growing numbers of migrants seeking to enter the United States, including from Ecuador, Brazil, and Colombia. In addition, the migration of young Mexican men, which had leveled off over the last decade, is once again on the rise, due to both worsening economic problems

Increased assistance from the international community to countries accepting the refugees is critical.

in Mexico and attractive job opportunities in the United States, especially in the service sector.

Despite great demand for low-skilled workers, and with more than 11 million unauthorized migrants already living in the country, the United States has not passed significant changes to its immigration regulations since the 1980s. The issue has become one of the most contentious and divisive in an already toxic political environment of heightened partisan rancor in Washington. US policy reached a low point under the Trump administration, with hardline, restrictive measures, including the inhumane separation of families and solitary detention of children, accompanied by aggressive, offensive rhetoric.

The Biden administration has sought to rectify some of its predecessor's most egregious practices, but significant abuses persist. These include the inhumane—albeit court-ordered—“remain in Mexico” policy, the expulsion of migrants under Title 42 for public health reasons (due to the pandemic), and the deportation of long-term migrants and, in the case of some Haitians, refugees to countries they barely know.

While politically very difficult in the current climate, the only long-term solution would be a thorough reform of the United States' antiquated and broken immigration system. Changes should include focusing on legal immigration, expanding the number of temporary work visas, protecting worker's rights, increasing the quotas for refugees and asylum seekers, and regularizing undocumented migrants already living in the country. Fundamental reforms need to emphasize managing migration in a more orderly way. The US economy and society greatly benefit from migration, and the country would do well to balance generosity and openness with efficient, humane, and professional border security measures not driven by enforcement-only policies. It also needs to respect human rights, with special concern for women and children.

The growing numbers of migrants across the region make migration a wider, hemispheric challenge. At a minimum, countries must establish clear norms and effective policies for integrating migrants, managing flows, protecting rights, and relieving dire humanitarian conditions. Moving towards more humane migration policies will be difficult in many countries, including the United States. It is a question, of course, of basic human decency, but also of real opportunity. There is ample evidence of the positive economic and social impacts immigrants have in their host countries. In the United States, for example, studies show that immigration helps offset demographic aging, increases GDP, and boosts innovation, among other benefits.

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Ten years ago, a Dialogue policy report highlighted that “most countries of the region view the United States as less and less relevant to their needs—and with declining capacity to propose and carry out strategies to deal with the issues that most concern them.” Today, US-Latin American relations are even weaker.



REBOOTING HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION: BACK TO BASICS

In part, this stagnation reflects increasing domestic problems besetting the United States, including widening inequalities, economic uncertainties such as inflationary pressures, and political dysfunction. The 2012 report observed that compromise was “an ebbing art” in Washington, “replaced by gridlock and inaction on challenges that would advance US national interests and well-being.” A decade later, the situation has further deteriorated on nearly every score. Politics have become more polarized, tribal, and toxic. The refusal of a significant share of a major political party to recognize Biden as a legitimate president raises serious concerns about the rule of law and democracy in the United States.

Such a complex and divisive domestic situation makes it difficult for the United States to credibly articulate and project a coherent foreign policy. The US approach towards Latin America and the Caribbean is today largely driven by domestic concerns and pressures. Washington devotes enormous energy to issues such as immigration which, though mainly treated as a domestic issue, has important foreign policy implications. For instance, politics in Florida remain as influential as ever regarding policy not only towards Cuba and Venezuela, but Nicaragua and Colombia as well.

The listlessness in the US-Latin American and Caribbean relationship can also be attributed to changes in the region over the past two decades. In the early 2000s, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean diversified their foreign policies, including by expanding ties with China and other Asian states. Sustained economic growth during this period provided a renewed sense of self-confidence among regional governments, encouraging more active participation in global affairs and the launch of new mechanisms to promote regional integration, often without the United States or Canada.

Yet years after the end of the boom, governments in Latin American and Caribbean countries reflect sharp internal divisions and show only scant, sporadic interest in cooperating with other regional

countries or the United States. Leaders seem overwhelmed by domestic problems and have little time or political capital to spend on foreign policy initiatives. The region’s natural leaders, Brazil and Mexico, have not shown much willingness or capacity to lead even in their traditional areas of influence, South and Central America, respectively.

While most countries pay lip service to the idea of Latin American solidarity, regional integration mechanisms have markedly weakened. In the last decade, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) collapsed, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) has limited relevance, though it now serves as a platform for China’s relations with the region.

While most countries pay lip service to the idea of Latin American solidarity, regional integration mechanisms have markedly weakened.

Economic groupings such as Mercosur and even the once highly productive Pacific Alliance have lost steam, largely the result of domestic political difficulties and ideological differences among members.

Amid the weaknesses in inter-American institutions, the two more traditional, US-backed organizations continue to function, but today command less confidence and play more limited roles than they did at the turn of the century. Both the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) mirror the region's polarized and fragmented political landscape. This fragmentation limits their effectiveness precisely when the region most needs their full support, in the case of the OAS to deal with political crises and defend human rights and democracy, and in the case of the IDB to help build a sustainable path of economic and social recovery post Covid-19. Today, the Biden administration's approach towards both institutions remains unclear.

Breaking the inertia will not be easy. A first step would be to create small groups of like-minded governments to tackle specific issues, such as trade facilitation or infrastructure connectivity. Building on this foundation, the region could gradually move to restore trust and encourage the involvement not just of the public sector, but also of business and civil society actors. Existing organizations offer valuable institutional resources and experience but are in need of reform. For a long time, the OAS has lacked the support it needs to defend democracy and human rights, and instruments such as the Democratic Charter have proved ineffective in deterring would-be authoritarians. Meanwhile, although the IDB plays a key role in financing development projects in the region, restoring greater consensus among hemispheric governments would enhance its effectiveness.

BIDEN AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Under Donald Trump, Latin American and Caribbean countries largely served as venues to advance the president's personal and political agendas. Aside from concern about China's growing presence in the region, these issues followed two parallel tracks. First and most important was immigration, a crucial issue for Trump's political base. His hardline stance against immigrants and promise to build a border wall were key factors behind his surprising 2016 victory. With a combination of threats (raising tariffs) and incentives (ignoring corruption and human rights abuses), Trump gained the collaboration of Mexico and Central American governments for his immigration goals.

The second focus of the Trump administration in Latin America was a renewed offensive against Venezuela, Cuba, and to a lesser degree Nicaragua. Although framed as an effort to advance democracy, a traditional US concern in the region, Trump's praise for many other authoritarian leaders made this rationale suspect. Rather, the president's aggressive stance against the Maduro regime, which included idle threats of military intervention, was largely motivated by Florida politics and ideological circles still frozen in antiquated mindsets.

Although the Trump administration was mostly indifferent to the region's concerns, relations were seldom confrontational. Various Latin American leaders were comfortable with Trump's transactional approach to foreign policy, which shielded them from US interference in domestic affairs in exchange for policy concessions on issues deemed important to Trump's administration. Anger about the imposition of steel tariffs and other punitive measures was usually held in check. Leaders saw nothing to gain by picking a fight with Trump.

President Biden promised a different approach. He would establish a more respectful tone and emphasize consultations and diplomacy, not threats or sanctions. His administration would also pursue a more wide-ranging agenda than Trump's, including democracy, human rights, anti-corruption, and, most notably, climate change. It would be a "values-driven" foreign policy, in sharp contrast to his predecessor's.

Building on his role as vice president under Obama, Biden would pursue a strategy with a \$4 billion price tag aimed at addressing the "root causes" of migration, especially from Central America's Northern Triangle countries. Biden also said he would lift the sanctions Trump imposed on remittances and travel of Cuban Americans to Cuba.

A few months into its second year, the Biden administration has made some constructive policy changes. Biden granted temporary protective status (TPS) to Venezuelan refugees in the United States and has supported negotiations as the way to end Venezuela's crisis. The president also increased the number of temporary work visas from Central America and started to rebuild the institutional architecture in the important US-Mexico relationship that had atrophied under his predecessor, including resumption of the North

American Summit and high-level dialogues on economic and security issues. Under the leadership of Vice President Kamala Harris, the administration has engaged the private sector for its "root causes" strategy, lining up commitments of more than \$1.2 billion from US companies under the Partnership for Central America.

Yet, despite an able team and good intentions—and as has happened in the past with other presidents—the new administration's policies in the hemisphere have been constrained by domestic pressures, limited political capital, and lack of interest among Latin American governments. The most important obstacle has been, once again, a sharp increase of migration across the US-Mexico border, which consumes a great deal of policy attention. Moreover, even under the most optimistic scenario, the "root causes" strategy would take many years to yield results. The administration's government "partners" in the Northern Triangle have proven to be largely corrupt and authoritarian, and resistant to the fundamental reforms essential for effective democratic governance. US government support for civil society groups throughout the region is important but has limitations for achieving sustainable results.

Despite an able team and good intentions, the Biden administration's policies in the hemisphere have been constrained by domestic pressures, limited political capital, and lack of interest among Latin American governments.

The administration's attempt to soften the most restrictive and inhumane policies of its predecessor (including family separation and "remain in Mexico") while avoiding a surge of migrants did not work out. The nearly two million migrants arriving at the US border overwhelmed the system and intensified political pressures, prompting the administration to consider reinstating the migration protocols.

In fact, the perception of chaos and crisis at the border has been a key factor in the erosion of President Biden's popularity and the emboldening of his political opponents. Further, Biden's decision to preserve key features of Trump's anti-immigration policies towards asylum-seekers and deport thousands of Haitian migrants to their crisis-stricken country have disappointed his progressive supporters. Likewise, policy change has been slow and difficult. It is much faster to undo executive policies than to reform even the executive-based parts of the US immigration system.

Some similarities between Biden and Trump can also be discerned in a continuing focus on countering China's substantial presence in the region. The difference lies mainly in rhetoric and style. While Trump often employed open threats and sanctions, Biden prefers diplomacy and engagement. Both have supported a business-led engagement with the region, whether through Trump's *América Crece* or Biden's *Build Back Better World* initiative. Biden, to his credit, has been more inclined to coordinate with like-minded nations on competition with China and to convene democratic nations to address weakening democratic institutions in Latin America and other regions.

Still, if the US administration frames competition with Beijing as a contest between democracy and authoritarianism, it is likely to encounter skepticism, if not resistance, in the region. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean cannot afford to alienate China and will instead want to engage with both Washington and Beijing to pursue their daunting economic agendas.

For Washington, Russia's presence in the region is also of growing concern, particularly in light of increasing global tensions with the United States on issues such as Ukraine and interference in the US and other elections. Russia's economic capacity is limited, far weaker than China's. The main focus of its involvement has been geopolitical and arms sales, mostly reinforcing longstanding relationships with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, but also trying to find ways to exploit the United States' declining influence in the region.

To date, the Biden administration has done little to roll back harsh sanctions on Cuba and Venezuela, which have failed to produce much in the way of political or economic changes in either country and are worsening the humanitarian crises in both. In the case of Venezuela in particular, other countries such as China, Russia, Iran, and Turkey have stepped in to assist and soften the impact of US economic sanctions.

Overall, Biden has prioritized his domestic agenda and avoided alienating key Congressional figures by largely continuing Trump-era policies towards the region. The Biden administration has been cautious and reactive in the face of several tough challenges, including the sharp rise in immigration, the unprecedented protests in Cuba in July 2021, and cascading disasters that have plunged Haiti into an ever-deeper crisis.

The administration lost a major opportunity by failing to offer any significant pandemic assistance to the region. It could have reacted more swiftly to provide more supplies and equipment, and, later on, vaccines. Instead, China made its presence felt by engaging in "mask diplomacy" and then "vaccine diplomacy" in a number of countries.

It remains unclear what the US administration believes it can realistically accomplish in pursuing laudable goals such as promoting democracy and combating climate change, and whether these objectives are compatible with other higher-priority interests such as migration or China's expanding role in the region. The awkward back-and-forth and

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eventual exclusion of Northern Triangle countries from Biden's summit for democracies in December 2021 illustrates the difficult balance.

Despite this set of constraints, over the next three years the Biden administration has an opportunity to pursue a more proactive US policy stance in Latin America and the Caribbean and open the way for greater hemispheric cooperation on a number of key fronts. These efforts should not take the form of grand initiatives such as an "alliance of democracies" or a continent-wide free trade agreement. One of the Biden administration's problems has been a gap between lofty rhetoric and what is practically possible given complicated on-the-ground realities.

Instead, the United States should be incremental and focus on concrete objectives. These might include fighting Covid-19; taking a stronger stance on human rights; opening lines of communication with Cuba; seriously revamping anti-drug policies; focusing sustained attention on improving the critical situation in Haiti; pressing for Congressional authorization of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals); and working closely with Mexico to improve conditions for asylum seekers there.

Moreover, to compete effectively with Beijing in Latin America and the Caribbean, Washington will need to boost its development assistance to the region and help promote private sector investment in combating climate change. These initiatives should include ecosystem preservation, mitigation efforts, climate adaptation, and the promotion of green industries and renewable energy sources. While a continental free trade agreement is not possible today, some trade and investment arrangements on a more modest scale are worth pursuing. Such partnerships could ultimately lead to an increase in manufacturing in the region.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PATH FORWARD

As this report shows, there is cause for great concern throughout the Americas. The ninth Summit of the Americas in June 2022 offers President Biden and his administration an opportunity to propose ideas for enhancing cooperation on specific issues, taking into account the main worries and priorities of other hemispheric heads of state.

Many of the problems require serious and sustained efforts at the national level; success will depend chiefly on the commitment and actions of leaders and citizens in individual countries. It is also essential, however, to identify and tackle issues on which collaboration among countries is feasible and could have a real impact. As an independent, inter-American organization, enhanced cooperation and deepening ties are fundamental to the Dialogue's mission. In that spirit, and in anticipation of the Summit of the Americas, we present eight recommendations, distilled from the previous analysis, for possible hemispheric action to deal more effectively with pressing challenges that demand creative solutions by diverse and resourceful actors.

1 | **FIRST, THE HEMISPHERE MUST LEARN FROM ITS FAILURE TO COOPERATE ON COVID-19.**

The United States should drastically and immediately step up its efforts to distribute vaccines and eventually retroviral drugs to all Latin American and Caribbean countries that require them. Given the evolution of Covid-19 and the likely occurrence of future pandemics, governments must strengthen the Pan American Health Organization with the tools it needs to effectively coordinate efforts and openly exchange information and research across borders. Shared guidelines on travel and other restrictions are also essential to prevent further disruption. Based on the experience with Covid-19, which has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, hemispheric governments and civil society groups should give priority attention to greater representation of women's voices in pandemic response planning and decision-making; gender disaggregated data collection; gender-sensitive policy responses; and expanded family leave services to enable working parents to care for sick family members.

2 | **SECOND, IT IS CRUCIAL TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE REGIONAL AND HEMISPHERIC INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN UNDERMINED BY DISTRUST AND POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION.**

The Organization of American States (OAS) should seek greater impact by focusing its limited resources on protecting human rights and democracy, which are at increasing risk throughout the Americas. This means strengthening the inter-American human rights system and OAS electoral observation missions and shielding them from political interference. Given grave and growing attacks on the press, the OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression must be fully supported. Since its creation, the success of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has rested on its broad legitimacy in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has recently weakened. A much-needed capital increase must come hand in hand with measures to make the IDB more accountable and focused on the challenges of insufficient infrastructure and connectivity.

3 | **THIRD, HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION IS NECESSARY TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE.**

From the crisis in the Amazon to the failure to integrate Central America's electrical grids, lack of regional cooperation is making it harder for the hemisphere to prevent and adapt to this pressing threat. The United States must step up its commitment to the multilateral climate change regime, including through open dialogue with China on this issue. Meanwhile, Latin American and Caribbean countries, as hosts to some of the world's most biodiverse regions, must acknowledge their responsibility in this global cause. In doing so, they will require continuous support from multilateral development banks and from major

economies more broadly. Accelerating ongoing efforts to boost renewable energy sources and invest in green industries is also key to diversify Latin American and Caribbean economies and set the basis for more sustainable and broader growth.

4 | FOURTH, MIGRATION IS A HEMISPHERE-WIDE CHALLENGE THAT REQUIRES GREATER COLLABORATION.

Cross-border cooperation is essential to assist in managing flows in a more orderly fashion and preventing abuses of migrants. Inhumane practices and police brutality against migrants must end; they represent a violation of human rights and are also ineffective. For the United States, reforming its asylum system and developing legal pathways for migrants and refugees should continue to be a top priority. This can be achieved by expanding the number of temporary work visas while protecting workers' rights and increasing quotas for refugees and asylum seekers. Coordination among Latin American and Caribbean governments in dealing with Venezuela's unprecedented refugee crisis should be strengthened by exchanging information, facilitating migrants' integration in their host societies, and sharing financial costs and best practices.

5 | FIFTH, THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMERICAS SHOULD TAKE STEPS TO COMBAT CORRUPTION AND ORGANIZED CRIME MORE EFFECTIVELY.

Once and for all, it is important for US policymakers to acknowledge that the decades-old war on drugs, which is still ongoing in Latin America with Washington's support, has failed. Approaches based exclusively on punishment and criminalization do not work and generate even more suffering for already ravaged communities. The United States needs to do a much better job of addressing domestic demand for drugs and putting in place more effective initiatives

to treat and rehabilitate drug users, along with better controlling the trafficking of arms to Mexico and other countries in the region. It is crucial to reform security forces and other state agencies, consistent with human rights standards and practices. There also needs to be better coordination among national governments to share intelligence and track flows of illicit money. To make the prosecution of corruption cases at the local level more effective, hemispheric governments, including the United States, must work together and be more proactive and open in sharing information.

6 | SIXTH, GREATER COOPERATION CAN HELP ACCELERATE THE REGION'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY AFTER COVID-19.

Latin America and the Caribbean must work quickly to embrace digitalization and attract investments in infrastructure, renewable energy, and the green economy. To do so will require cooperation among governments, universities, business groups, and civil society actors, among others, in order to improve regulatory frameworks, make governments more efficient, and improve the quality of education. Multilateral development banks play an important role, including through their private sector arms, by providing necessary financing and helping to catalyze innovative solutions in these areas. The CAF - Development Bank of Latin America is a critically important player that should promote greater regional integration and support essential areas such as the development of technology and digitalization, energy transition, infrastructure, and education, all of which would enhance Latin America's growth and competitiveness. Governments across the hemisphere should take advantage of opportunities to bolster their trade and investment integration.

7 SEVENTH, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN MUST ADDRESS THE ONGOING EDUCATION CRISIS.

In light of the dramatic impact of the pandemic on education and schooling in the region, governments, with backing from the private sector and civil society experts, should undertake a new regional initiative on education. The aim would be to address the considerable learning losses that took place during the pandemic and modernize education systems to make them more resilient to future shocks and better prepared to use technology to enable learning for all. Tackling this shared challenge for the region's development will require greater political and financial support. Stronger links and cross-country cooperation at the higher education level should also be promoted as a means of enhancing human capital development across the hemisphere.

8 EIGHTH, ALL GOVERNMENTS IN THE HEMISPHERE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO REVERSE THE DANGEROUS DETERIORATION OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND THE RULE OF LAW.

Given high levels of political fragmentation and the weakness of inter-American institutions, the creation of ad hoc coalitions of countries to address specific crises should be explored. A promising example is the Alliance for the Development of Democracy, made up of Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, which was formed in 2021 and is trying to engineer a more effective regional response to the Nicaraguan crisis.

To play a positive role, the United States needs to be more consistent in expressing its concerns about democratic backsliding and separate these from its geopolitical tensions with Beijing as much as possible. Although Washington's pro-democracy posture in Latin America and the Caribbean should be buttressed, the United States will become less

trustworthy and effective in advancing a "values-based" policy throughout the Americas and the world unless serious attacks on its own democracy are neutralized. The most valuable contribution the United States can make to strengthening democracy and the rule of law in the hemisphere is to reform its own governance institutions. In that way, the United States can be a more credible and reliable partner for democracies in Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

INTER-AMERICAN DIALOGUE MEMBERS FROM LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN, CANADA, AND EUROPE

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TABATA AMARAL (*Brazil*) is a Brazilian politician and education activist. She is currently a federal deputy for the Democratic Labor Party (PDT) representing the state of São Paulo. She co-founded two educational projects (Vontade de Aprender Olímpica and Mapa Educação), in addition to co-founding a political renewal movement called Acredito. In 2019, she was named by the BBC as one of the most 100 influential women in the world.

NICOLÁS ARDITO-BARLETTA (*Panama*) served as president of Panama from 1984 to 1985. Before that, he was Panama's minister of economic policy and World Bank vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean. He was general administrator of the Interoceanic Region Authority (ARI) from 1995 to 2000. He is an emeritus member of the Dialogue.

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FERNANDO HENRIQUE CARDOSO (*Brazil*) was two-term president of Brazil. He was also a senator from São Paulo and served as both finance and foreign minister. Currently, Cardoso is president of Instituto Fernando Henrique Cardoso, which promotes debate on democracy

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JULIETA CASTELLANOS (*Honduras*) is a sociologist and activist. She was rector of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) from 2009 to 2017, and served on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission following the ousting of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya. The US State Department awarded Castellanos the International Women of Courage Award.

LUIS MIGUEL CASTILLA (*Peru*) is former manager of the Office of Strategic Planning and Development Effectiveness at the Inter-American Development Bank. He served as ambassador to the United States, minister of economy and finance under president Ollanta Humala, and deputy minister of the treasury. He also served as chief economist for CAF—Development Bank of Latin America.

FERNANDO CEPEDA (*Colombia*) is a political scientist and diplomat. He has served as minister of government, chargé d'affaires of the Colombian delegation to the United States, ambassador to the United Kingdom, France, and Canada, and permanent representative to the United Nations and the Organization of American States. Cepeda was also a political science professor at the Universidad de los Andes, where he served as provost.

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MARIANA COSTA (*Peru*) is the co-founder and CEO at Laboratoria, a social enterprise that enables women from underserved backgrounds to start and grow a career in technology. She was named one of Peru's leading innovators by MIT and one of the world's most influential women by BBC.

JOSÉ MARÍA DAGNINO PASTORE (*Argentina*) has served as minister of finance, minister of economy and labor, head of the National Development Council, and ambassador-at-large in Europe. He has taught at various universities, including UNLP, the University of Buenos Aires, Harvard University, and the Catholic University of Argentina.

DENISE DAMIANI (*Brazil*) is a global technology executive and the founder and CEO of Denise Damiani Consulting, a company specializing in strategy and finance consulting for family-owned businesses. Before that, she served as operations vice president with Itau Technology and was a partner at both Accenture and Bain & Co.

MONICA DE BOLLE (*Brazil*) is senior fellow of the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) and adjunct lecturer at the Latin American Studies Program, Johns Hopkins SAIS. De Bolle was professor of macroeconomics at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and managing partner of Galanto MBB Consultants, a macroeconomics advisory firm. She was also an economist at the International Monetary Fund.

GARY DOER (*Canada*) is a senior business advisor at Dentons, a multinational law firm. He was the 23rd ambassador to the United States and former Premier of Manitoba. During his time as ambassador to the United States, Doer worked to ensure Canada's entry into the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

SYLVIA ESCOVAR (*Colombia*) is president of Grupo Empresarial de Salud, Sanitas, which is the largest private Health Corporate Group in Colombia. Previously, she worked in the public sector, holding various positions including financial vice president of Grupo Bancolombia, main economist for the Colombian Resident Mission of the World Bank, and head of the External Credit Division in the National Planning Department.

SERGIO FAJARDO (*Colombia*) was governor of Antioquia and mayor of Medellín. He ran for president of Colombia in 2018 and is a 2022 presidential candidate. A mathematician by training, he is also a journalist, subdirector of the newspaper *El Colombiano*, and columnist for *El Mundo* and *El Espectador*, among other publications.

LEONEL FERNÁNDEZ (*Dominican Republic*) served two non-consecutive terms as president of the Dominican Republic. Since leaving office, Fernández has been honorary president of the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development. Fernández also serves as president of the World Federation of United Nations Association.

ERNESTO FERNÁNDEZ-HOLMANN (*Nicaragua*) is an entrepreneur currently serving as chairman of Grupo Ayucus. He founded Grupo Financiero Uno, a commercial bank that provides financial services throughout Central America and was chair and CEO of the company until its acquisition by Citigroup in 2007.

CHRISTIANA FIGUERES (*Costa Rica*) is founding partner of Global Optimism, the convener for Mission2020, and vice chair of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. She served as executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and as director of international cooperation for the Ministry of Planning, and as chief of staff to the minister of agriculture.

LOURDES FLORES NANO (*Peru*) served as a member of Congress in Peru from 1990 to 2000 and was a candidate for president in 2001 and 2006. Previously, she led the Popular Christian Party and the National Unity Alliance and served as president of San Ignacio de Loyola University. She is currently the vice president of the Centrist Democrat International.

ALEJANDRO FOXLEY (*Chile*) served as foreign minister of Chile under President Michelle Bachelet, as minister of finance under President Patricio Aylwin, and as a senator. He is founding president of Corporación de Estudios para Latinoamérica (CIEPLAN) in Santiago.

JULIO FRENK (*Mexico*) is a global health expert and scholar currently serving as president of the University of Miami. Prior to assuming his current position, Frenk was dean of faculty at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, before that, minister of health of Mexico from 2000 to 2006.

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GEORGE GRAY MOLINA (*Bolivia*) was chief economist of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He was coordinator of the Bolivian Human Development Report Office and lead author for four National Human Development reports between 2004 and 2008. He is currently head of strategic policy engagement for the UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support.

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REBECA GRYNSPAN (*Costa Rica*) is secretary-general of UNCTAD the United Nations trade and development body. Before that she served as secretary general of the Ibero-America General Secretariat (SEGIB). She is also special international advisor to the Economic and Social Council of Argentina. She previously served as under-secretary-general and associate administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Grynspar was vice president of Costa Rica from 1994 to 1998.

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CARLOS D. MESA (*Bolivia*) was president of Bolivia from October 2003 until his resignation in June 2005. Before becoming president, Mesa served as vice president under Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. He is a historian, journalist, and was a candidate in the 2019 and 2020 presidential elections.

PAULA MORENO (*Colombia*) is former minister of culture of Colombia. She is the youngest woman and first Afrodescendant to be appointed a cabinet minister in the

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STANLEY MOTTA (*Panama*) is president of Motta International, a position he has held since 1990. He is also chair of Copa Holdings, ASSA Group, and Bahia Investments. He previously served as chair of the Regional Interoceanic Authority, the Panamanian government entity that received and managed the Panama Canal assets as a result of the Torrijos-Carter Treaty between the United States and Panama.

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MOISÉS NAÍM (*Venezuela*) is distinguished fellow at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and chief international columnist for *El País* and *La República*. He is also host and producer of "Efecto Naím," a weekly television program on international affairs that airs throughout the Americas. From 1996 to 2010, he was editor-in-chief of *Foreign Policy*. Naím previously served as Venezuela's minister of trade and industry, director of Venezuela's Central Bank, and executive director of the World Bank.

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ELLEN GRACIE NORTHFLEET (*Brazil*) was the first woman appointed to Brazil's Supreme Court in 2000, a post she held until August 2011. She served as the court's chief justice. She currently serves on the boards of the Federation of Industries of São Paulo—FIESP, the World Justice Project, and the International Council of Arbitration for Sports—ICAS.

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JUAN MANUEL SANTOS (*Colombia*) was president of Colombia and is a Nobel Laureate for his work on the Colombian peace process. He previously served as the first minister of foreign trade under President César Gaviria and as minister of finance under President Andrés Pastrana. Santos was president of the Freedom of Expression Commission for the Inter-American Press Association.

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MARINA SILVA (*Brazil*) is a politician and environmentalist. She was the Green Party's presidential candidate in 2010 and 2014 and the Sustainability Network's candidate in 2018. Silva served as minister of the environment from 2003 to 2008 and before that was a senator, representing Acre. She has received international awards, including the UN Environment Program's Champions of the Earth and the Sophie Prize.

LUIS GUILLERMO SOLIS (*Costa Rica*) was president of Costa Rica from 2014 to 2018. Solís has a long academic and political career, culminating in his election as the first president of Costa Rica to be a member of the Citizens Action Party (PAC). He is interim director of Florida International University's Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center. Solís is also an educator and has published numerous essays and books.

MATIAS SPEKTOR (*Brazil*) is an author, associate professor, associate dean, and co-founder of Fundação Getulio Vargas's School of International Relations. He was a visiting fellow at the London School of Economics, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. In 2013, he was Rio Branco Chair in International Relations at King's College London.

EDUARDO STEIN (*Guatemala*) served as vice president of Guatemala under President Oscar Berger and as foreign minister under President Alvaro Arzú. He has held positions in the International Organization for Migration, United Nations Development Program, and Organization of American States. UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Stein as special representative for Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees.

MARIA FERNANDA TEIXEIRA (*Brazil*) has over thirty years of experience in the financial services industry. Most recently, she was president of First Data Brazil and chief operating officer of First Data Latin America.

She is CEO of Integrow Beyond Numbers and founding president of the Group of Executive Women of São Paulo. She served on the World Bank's Advisory Council on Gender and Development.

ROBERTO TEIXEIRA DA COSTA (*Brazil*) served as chairman of the Latin America Business Council and on the Board of SulAmérica and Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social, and he founded the Brazilian Securities and Exchange Commission and the Brazilian Center for International Relations. He is also the president of the Market Arbitration Chamber (CAM) and sits on the Dialogue's Board of Directors.

MARTÍN TORRIJOS (*Panama*) was president of Panama from 2004 to 2009. As president, Torrijos oversaw the passing of a \$5 billion expansion plan of the Panama Canal and negotiated the Panama-US Trade Promotion Agreement.

JUAN MANUEL URTUBEY (*Argentina*) is governor of the province of Salta in Argentina, recently reelected to a third term. Before assuming his current position, he served for two terms in the Argentine National Congress. He ran for vice president in 2019.

MARIA PRISCILA VANSETTI (*Brazil*) is vice-president of Global Strategy and Business Development at Corteva Agriscience. She previously served as president of DuPont Brasil, where she began her career in 1981, assuming business leadership positions in the United States, Canada and Latin America.

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA (*Peru*) is a writer, politician, and Nobel Laureate. One of the most important Latin American novelists and essayists, he is famous for such works as *The Time of the Hero* (1963), *The Green House* (1965), and *Conversation in the Cathedral* (1969). Politically active throughout his career, Vargas Llosa ran for president of Peru in 1990.

ROBERTO VEIGA GONZÁLEZ (*Cuba*) is a lawyer, political scientist, and former magazine editor. From 2005 to 2014, he was editor of the Catholic Magazine, *Espacio Laical*. In 2014, Veiga and his professional partner Lenier González founded Cuba Possible, a civil society organization and platform for political dialogue and analysis in Cuba. He

served as director of the organization until 2019. He is currently director of the Center for Studies on the State of Law, Cuba Próxima.

JORGE VIANA (*Brazil*) was a senator representing the state of Acre until 2019. From 1998 to 2006, he was the governor of Acre and before that served as mayor of Rio Branco. A member of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) party, Viana specializes in environmental issues and agrarian reform.

MARÍA EUGENIA VIDAL (*Argentina*) served as governor of the province of Buenos Aires. She was the first woman to hold this office and first non-Peronist elected to the post since 1987. A member of the PRO party and Cambiemos coalition, Vidal was appointed minister of social development of the City of Buenos Aires by then-mayor Mauricio Macri, who then appointed her as deputy mayor in 2011.

JOAQUÍN VILLALOBOS (*El Salvador*) is a former guerilla leader during the civil war in his country who played a central role in the negotiations to end the conflict. An authority on security and conflict resolution, Villalobos is now a consultant for Latin American issues with the Inter-Mediate NGO based in London.

ELENA VIYELLA DE PALIZA (*Dominican Republic*) is president of Inter-Química, S.A., Monte Rio Power Corp, and Jaraba Import, S.A. She is also the head of Business Action for Education (EDUCA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of education, and a Board member of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS), the world's largest crop nutrient company.

ALBERTO VOLLMER (*Venezuela*) is chairman and CEO of Ron Santa Teresa, C.A., based in Venezuela. He is also founder of Project Alcatraz, a rehabilitation and reinsertion program for gang members. Vollmer sits the boards of several organizations, including the Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce.

ERNESTO ZEDILLO (*Mexico*) was president of Mexico from 1994 to 2000. Before that, he served as secretary of education and secretary of economic programming and budget. Zedillo is currently director of the Yale University Center for the Study of Globalization and a professor of international economics and politics. Zedillo was a co-chair of the Board of Directors of the Dialogue.

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BERNARD ARONSON is founder and managing partner of ACON Investments. In 2015, US President Barack Obama named him special envoy for the Colombian Peace Process. Aronson served as assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs during the George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations.

MICHAEL BARNES was a member of the US House of Representatives (D-MD) from 1979 to 1987 and chaired the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. He was a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy. Barnes also served on the Kissinger Commission on Central America, appointed by US President Ronald Reagan.

JIMMY CARTER was the 39th president of the United States. After leaving office, Carter founded the Carter Center, a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to the resolution of conflict, the promotion of democracy, and the protection of human rights.

JULIÁN CASTRO was US secretary of housing and urban development in the Obama administration. Before that, he served three terms as mayor of San Antonio, Texas, the first Latino to hold that office. He was a Democratic candidate in the 2020 presidential elections.

OSCAR CHACÓN is co-founder and executive director of Alianza Americas, an umbrella of immigrant-led and immigrant-serving organizations in the United States. Before that, he served in leadership positions at the Chicago-based Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights, the Northern California Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and several other community-based organizations.

JOYCE CHANG is chair of Global Research at JPMorgan. Previously, she served as global head of research. Before joining JPMorgan, Chang was a managing director at Merrill Lynch and Salomon Brothers.

LEE CULLUM is senior fellow at the John G. Tower Center for Public Policy and International Affairs at SMU. She is also a special contributor to the *Dallas Morning News* and serves on the Board of the American Security Project.*

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KAREN DEYOUNG is associate editor and senior national security correspondent for *The Washington Post*. In her more than three decades at the *Post*, she has served as bureau chief for Latin America, foreign editor, bureau chief in London, national editor, White House correspondent, foreign editor, and assistant managing editor for national news.*

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN is a senior fellow in the Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. She is director of the Initiative on Nonstate Armed Actors. She is also co-director of the Africa Security Initiative and was co-director of the Brookings series on opioids. Between 2020 and 2021, she served as a senior advisor to the congressionally-mandated Afghanistan Peace Process Study Group.

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA is Olivier Nomellini senior fellow at Stanford University's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and director of the university's Masters in International Policy. He chairs the editorial board of the journal *American Purpose*, which he helped found, and has written widely on political and economic development issues, including the book, *The End of History* and the *Last Man*.

ERIC GARCETTI is the 42nd mayor of Los Angeles, California. A former member of the Los Angeles City Council, Garcetti served as council president from 2006 to 2012. Previously, Garcetti was a visiting instructor of international affairs at the University of Southern California and an assistant professor of diplomacy and world affairs at Occidental College.

LULU GARCIA-NAVARRO is an American journalist who hosts an Opinion podcast at *The New York Times* and previously hosted NPR's Weekend Edition Sunday from 2017–2021. Before that, she served as an NPR correspondent based in Brazil, Israel, Mexico, and Iraq. In addition to winning multiple Peabody awards for her work in Iraq, she has also won awards for her reporting on migration in Mexico and the Amazon in Brazil.*

HELENE GAYLE is CEO of The Chicago Community Trust. She previously served as president and CEO of McKinsey Social Initiative and of the humanitarian organization CARE from 2006 to 2015. Gayle also served as chair of the Obama administration's presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

BOB GRAHAM was a Democratic US senator from Florida from 1987 to 2005 and the state's governor from 1979 to 1987. He was ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and senior member of the Finance, Environment and Public Works, and Energy and Natural Resources committees. He is the chair of the Florida Conservation Coalition and the Board of Overseers of the Graham Center for Public Service.

TARA HARIHARAN is managing director of Global Macro Research at NWI Management LP, a New York-based global macro hedge fund with an emphasis on emerging markets. She is a term member at the Council on Foreign Relations and a 2022 Economic Club of New York Fellow, and was awarded a 2014 American Marshall

Memorial Fellowship by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and was selected as a 2016 American Young Leader by the American Council on Germany.

CARLA A. HILLS served as US trade representative in the George H.W. Bush administration and as secretary of housing and urban development in the Gerald Ford administration. She is currently chair and chief executive officer of Hills & Company, an international consulting firm. Hills was a co-chair of the Board of Directors of the Dialogue.

DONNA J. HRINAK was US ambassador to Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic, and served as deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs. She is currently senior vice president of corporate affairs of Royal Caribbean Group. Previously, she served as president of Boeing Brazil, Boeing Latin America, and Boeing Canada and held executive positions at Pepsico, Inc. and Kraft Foods.

WILLIAM J. HYBL is executive chairman of El Pomar Foundation. He also served as US representative to the 56th General Assembly of the United Nations and is vice chairman of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. Hybl is president emeritus of the United States Olympic Committee and served as a member of the International Olympic Committee.

ROBERTA JACOBSON was US ambassador to Mexico from 2016 to 2018 and is senior advisor at Albright Stoneridge Group/Denton's Global Advisors. She previously served as a senior White House official overseeing southern border issues for the Biden Administration, assistant secretary of state for Western Hemispheric affairs, deputy assistant secretary of state for Canada, Mexico, and NAFTA, and deputy chief of mission in the US Embassy in Peru, among other senior-level positions.

JIM KOLBE was a Republican member of the US House of Representatives from Arizona from 1985 to 2007. While in Congress, he served for six years on the House Budget Committee and for 20 years on the Appropriations Committee. He is now a senior transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall Fund, a senior advisor at McLarty Associates, and president of JTKConsulting.

ABRAHAM F. LOWENTHAL is professor emeritus at the University of Southern California and president emeritus of the Pacific Council on International policy. He is a founding director of the Dialogue, the Pacific Council, and the Wilson Center's Latin America Program. He also served at the Ford Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institution, and Brown University.

JOHN MCCARTER served as president and CEO of GE Latin America from 1996 to 2003. He also served as president and regional executive of GE Energy Europe and director of Comverge. McCarter is currently a member of the Advisory Board of Columbia Power and serves on the Board of the Cooper Turner Beck Industries.

THOMAS F. MCLARTY, III served as President Clinton's first White House chief of staff and then as counselor to the president and special envoy for the Americas. He is currently the chairman of McLarty Associates, an international consulting firm, and chairman of McLarty Companies.

PETER MCPHERSON is president of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and president emeritus of Michigan State University. He is a founding co-chair of the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa. McPherson was previously deputy secretary of the US Treasury, administrator of USAID, and chair of the Board of Directors of Dow Jones and Company.

DORIS MEISSNER was commissioner of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service from 1993 to 2000 and has held several positions at the Department of Justice related to immigration policy. She is currently a senior fellow of the Migration Policy Institute.

AMNA NAWAZ is a senior national correspondent and primary substitute anchor for PBS NewsHour. Prior to joining PBS in 2018, she was an anchor and correspondent at ABC News and NBC News. She has received a number of awards, including an Emmy Award and a Society for Features Journalism award.*

MICHELLE NUNN is an American philanthropic executive and politician. She has been president and CEO of CARE USA. Before that, Nunn founded the volunteer-mobilization organization Hands On Atlanta

and became CEO of the organization's merger, Points of Light. She was Democratic Party nominee in the race for Georgia's US Senate seat in 2014.

SHANNON O'NEIL is vice president, deputy director of studies, and Nelson and David Rockefeller senior fellow for Latin America Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. She is an expert on Latin America, US-Mexico relations, global trade, corruption, democracy and immigration.

JOHN PORTER was a member of the US House of Representatives (R-IL) from 1980 to 2001. He sat on the Appropriations Committee and served as chair of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. Porter was a partner of the law firm Hogan Lovells in Washington, DC.

WILLIAM K. REILLY was senior advisor to TPG Capital and founding partner of Aqua International Partners, a private equity fund dedicated to investing in companies engaged in water and renewable energy. From 1989 to 1992, he served as administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency. Reilly was also president and later chairman of the World Wildlife Fund.

BILL RICHARDSON was governor of New Mexico from 2003 to 2011. Under the Clinton administration, he served as the US secretary of energy and US ambassador to the United Nations. Before that, from 1982 to 1996, he was a Democratic member of the US House of Representatives.

FRANCIS ROONEY was a Republican member of the US House of Representatives from Florida. He was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as US ambassador to the Holy See. He is former CEO of Rooney Holdings Inc., a diversified group of investment, real estate, and construction companies.

LINDA ROTTENBERG is CEO and co-founder of Endeavor, a global nonprofit that supports high-impact entrepreneurship. She serves on the entrepreneurship steering committee of the World Economic Forum. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and of the Young Presidents Organization (YPO).

CARLOS A. SALADRIGAS is chairman and CEO of Regis HR Group, a professional employment organization, and chairman of the Cuba Study Group. Saladrigas was

chairman of Premier American Bank and a co-founder and CEO of The Vincam Group, which in 1998 was the largest Hispanic-owned company in the United States and was acquired by ADP in 2000.

TIMOTHY R. SCULLY is professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame and director of the university's Institute for Educational Initiative. His other academic appointments have included executive vice president of Notre Dame, as well as vice president and senior associate provost.

DONNA E. SHALALA was a Democratic member of the US House of Representatives from Florida. Previously, she served as president and CEO of the Bill, Hillary, and Chelsea Clinton Foundation. Before that, she was president of the University of Miami from 2001 to 2015 and served as US secretary of health and human services from 1993 to 2001.

THOMAS A. SHANNON, JR. spent over 30 years in the foreign service, most recently as under-secretary of state for political affairs and as US ambassador to Brazil. He previously served as counselor and senior advisor to the secretary of state, assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, and as special assistant to the president and senior director for Western Hemisphere affairs at the National Security Council. He is now a senior advisor for Arnold & Porter. Shannon is co-chair of the Dialogue.

JAMES STAVRIDIS is a retired Navy admiral who served as Supreme Allied Commander Europe, commander US European Command, and commander US Southern Command. He was formerly dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and is currently operating executive with the Carlyle Group and chair of the Board of Counselors of McLarty Associates.

PAULA STERN served from 1978 to 1987 at the US International Trade Commission, where she was commissioner and chair. She is now founding chair and president of the Stern Group, a Washington-based international trade and economic consulting firm, and senior advisor of the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT).

ROBERT ZOELICK was president of the World Bank Group from 2007 to 2012. Previously, he served in the cabinet of President George W. Bush as US trade representative and deputy secretary of state. He is currently a senior fellow of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and a senior counselor with Brunswick Geopolitical.

** This member is unable to endorse the report because of the position she holds as a journalist.*

The most valuable contribution the United States can make to strengthening democracy and the rule of law in the hemisphere is to reform its own governance institutions. In that way, the United States can be a more credible and reliable partner for democracies in Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

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The Inter-American Dialogue engages our network of global leaders to foster democratic governance, prosperity, and social equity in Latin America and the Caribbean. Together, we work to shape policy debate, devise solutions, and enhance cooperation within the Western Hemisphere.

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