

*The United States and the Latin American Sphere of Influence. Vol. 2. Era of Good Neighbors, Cold Warriors, and Hairshirts, 1930-1982.* Edited by ROBERT FREEMAN SMITH. Malabar, Fla.: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1983. Maps. Notes. Selected Readings. Pp. xi, 147. Paper.

This brief account (with its attachment of approximately thirty pages of “documentary vignettes”) of United States policy toward Latin America since the Good Neighbor era perhaps should have been subtitled “An Essay in Reactionary Revisionism.” Unlike the first volume, essentially a book of readings on Caribbean intervention during the first third of this century, this work represents a distillation of Smith’s thoughts on what has gone wrong in our approach to hemispheric problems. In places, particularly in his account of Truman’s and Eisenhower’s policies, Smith persuasively argues that these two leaders did not, as their critics charged, neglect Latin America. In other places, particularly in his coverage of United States programs from the Alliance for Progress to Carter’s human rights campaign, Smith’s frustration over misguided altruism and futile efforts to “win the hearts and minds” of our Latin American neighbors obtrudes in the text. Smith at least makes clear where he stands: we cannot purchase the friendship of Latin American governments with aid programs; “decent democratic regimes” (as JFK discussed in the early 1960s) operate in an inhospitable climate in Latin America; and, in a choice that United States Ambassador to the United Nations Kirkpatrick will applaud, we should prefer authoritarian regimes to totalitarian ones.

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*With Shield and Sword: American Military Affairs, Colonial Times to the Present.* By WARREN W. HASSLER, JR. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1982. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. x, 462. Cloth. \$29.50.

After World War II, Warren Hassler and a few other citizen-soldiers and -sailors returned to campuses across the nation where they gradually transformed United States military and naval history into a significant scholarly endeavor. As Hassler’s new study of the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force reveals, however, he and many of his contemporaries were never completely able to escape the narrow perspective of the officers who before had virtually monopolized historical writing about their professions.

Hassler seeks to provide a “comprehensive” history of the armed forces, their “operations and policy (together) with (an assessment of) the personalities and characters” (p. ix) of individual leaders. His book nevertheless speaks to a limited audience. Detailed descriptions of battlefield maneuvers dominate the essentially narrative text. These martial exploits are loosely connected by Hassler’s revival of the tiresome charge that the peacetime apathy and “head-in-the-sand attitude” (p. 387) of the United States public have repeatedly had to be overcome by the courage and improvisational abilities of the armed forces on the battlefield. Hassler is troubled by the ambiguities of international as well as domestic politics.

The author systematically skirts the many legal and moral problems raised by the involvement of United States forces in Latin America. His chapters on the Mexican and Spanish-American Wars contain nothing new and are told from the limited viewpoint of those who held commissions and spoke English. In sum, this is a book more likely to appeal to armchair generals and future junior officers than to anyone else.

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