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FDR'S GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY REVISITED

Francisco Cuevas-Cancino

Third Morgenthau Memorial Lecture
on
Morality & Foreign Policy

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Introduction

In the second edition of the Morgenthau *Festschrift, Truth and Tragedy,* scheduled for publication in 1984, there will be fifty or so pages of previously unpublished autobiographical material. This material is interesting in many respects—not least of all in the insights it offers into the life and psychology of a most complex man. For instance, Professor Morgenthau had very ambiguous feelings about his role as a foreign policy expert. I will quote from one of his more contentious observations:

> While I may be best known for my contributions to foreign policy, and more particularly to American foreign policy, it is a paradox that my major intellectual interest from the very outset of my academic career has not been foreign policy or even politics in general but, rather, philosophy. After the Second World War, I made a conscious choice to concentrate my efforts upon foreign policy, and more particularly American foreign policy, because I realized that the existence of the United States and even of mankind depended upon a sound foreign policy. What good was it, in other words, to speculate on philosophic topics if, in a couple of years or in a couple of decades, the world would be reduced to radioactive rubble? And so ever since—that is to say, for more than twenty years—I have been caught at this, which you might call self-imposed public service, which by no means coincides with my real intellectual interest.
>
> I hope that I have made a few minor contributions by publishing a few articles on the subject, but I wish that foreign policy were no longer problematic and I could really concentrate my efforts upon what I am interested in. I should also say that what one can say in an original way about foreign policy is extremely limited. You can apply the basic principles to the situations, but essentially one says

the same thing all over again in a different context—geographic, political and military. The intellectual excitement in doing this diminishes with the number of times one has done it.

I remember very well, however, Professor Morgenthau's reaction in April, 1980, when he received a telephone call from the *Los Angeles Times* requesting an article that would touch on the problems President Carter was facing in Iran with regard to the American hostages and would offer some observations about the generally parlous state of world affairs. He leaped into this with great enthusiasm, sending off the article to Los Angeles within two days and giving us permission to publish it in *Worldview*'s June, 1980, issue. As far as I know, this was the last article he wrote. The opening paragraphs afford a taste of Professor Morgenthau's often ironic sense of the world:

> Henry Kissinger not long ago called for a new consensus on American foreign policy. In a sense probably unanticipated by the former secretary of state, such a consensus has already been formed both at home and abroad. Its main tenet is that our foreign policy is in a sorry state.

It is not only such pungent analyses, but also Professor Morgenthau's concern for the moral dilemmas plaguing U.S. foreign policy, that continue to inspire the efforts of many even outside the United States. Thanks to Francisco Cuevas-Cancino's translation of Professor Morgenthau's classic work, *Politics Among Nations,* an enormous Latin American audience can share Morgenthau's postulations of the principles of interstate relations.

Ambassador Cuevas-Cancino today represents Mexico at the Court of St. James. A student of history—Simón Bolivar is his particular area of interest—he brings to his duties a scholarly perspective not often found in the practicing diplomat. His longtime involvement with U.S.-Mexican relations has led him to choose as the subject of this third Morgenthau Memorial Lecture, "FDR's Good Neighbor Policy Revisited."

Robert J. Myers
President, CRIA

November 2, 1983

FDR's Good Neighbor Policy Revisited

Francisco Cuevas-Cancino

I would like to express profound appreciation for an opportunity to present my lecture in an auditorium of the Central Synagogue. Of course a synagogue is a meeting place, but it is also a place of prayer; and what I have to say has a lot to do with man's obligations toward God. Both East and West have taken a godless path. It is impossible to build solid policies when man abandons the search for God. Many of our present-day efforts are simply appalling; but in matters relating to foreign policy, our godless path points toward our annihilation as a species and toward the end of history.

Recent events have put before me an inevitable question: Does the invasion of Grenada by the United States and a few Caribbean forces impose changes in a text prepared before that event? I might now place greater emphasis on the vital role played in our hemisphere by the old British and Dutch colonies—those non-republican but democratic governments not wholly integrated within the Organization of American States. In any event, the matter of GNP is such an overriding one in any consideration of hemispheric affairs that the recent and lamentable episode is naturally included in my remarks.

The very idea of a United States policy toward Latin America is rejected today. We are no longer permitted to speak in such

general terms of a region that is composed of more than a score of republics, each with its own history and its own racial component. If the United States is to get along with its southern neighbors, it is said, it must have twenty or more individual policies, each fitted to the nation concerned.

This statement, apparently accepted on both sides of the Rio Grande, has puzzled me for a long time. There are national differences of even greater scope in Western Europe—consider Socialist France and conservative England—yet it seems perfectly acceptable to generalize a European policy. Further to the East, we find a number of nations that are vastly different—and often enemies—mistakenly characterized as "satellite states" and lumped together for policy purposes under the heading "Communist states."

What can be the reason for this atomization of U.S. Latin American policy? NATO, of course, and the Warsaw Pact are military realities that deserve our attention. But the countries of the Western Hemisphere too are tied together by their own military pact—though the Rio Treaty does not seem to impose on Washington any desire for a unification of policy. We must look for a deeper cause, one at the root of the difference.

During the last century there was no such atomization in the U.S. approach to Latin America. Neither Jefferson nor John Quincy Adams thought it necessary. We look in vain for any inkling of it in the writings of Henry Clay. The interests of the United States in the Caribbean were, of course, different from those in the River Plate, but they were conveniently included under a single policy. That was the common practice in the various interpretations of the Monroe Doctrine that preceded Cleveland's intervention on Venezuela's behalf.

Both the Pan American Union and the Organization of American States presuppose an identity of approach by the United States. The epic-making treaties of Bogotá in 1948 embodied precisely the idea of continental unity—something that was most becoming to a group of republics committed to the pursuance of a democratic society and to the freedom and well-being of the individual. Let me reiterate these ideals that crystalized the humanistic aims of the Americas: that the Western Hemisphere is in fact the utopia dreamed of by Campanella and Thomas More;

that it is always ready to receive the poor and the unhappy from the old and tired world of Europe; that it is a continent of hope, with endless new vistas of prosperity; and that it is a conglomerate of republics, all thoroughly convinced that the democratic way of life is the only means of solving the shortcomings and overcoming the sufferings of mankind.

Such unanimity of aims does not exist today. For one thing, other systems have appeared. Even more important, our faith in the common destiny of the Americas has disappeared. Here I anticipate the accusation that I am confusing cause and effect. After all, the foreign policy of the United States has always suffered a two-way pull: one North-South, under which Latin America receives priority treatment, the other East-West, where the transoceanic responsibilities of the United States take precedence. Owing to the framework left by the last war, the latter has exerted the stronger pull. The Latin American nations must suffer silently their winter of discontent, and member-states can only cry softly until the glorious sun of confrontation with the Soviet Union hides beyond the horizon of history.

Washington has taken great pains to keep the Atlantic Alliance alive and well. No effort is spared to convince European nations of the necessity of a joint anti-Communist stand. But where the North-South axis is concerned, there is no such attempt. Washington is plainly not interested in obtaining the active support of the Latin American republics. And these heirs of Hispanic empire, in their wealth, their population, and even in their political influence, have not inconsiderable resources. There was a time when Washington thought that its best card was as spokesman for a united American continent. Backed by the unflagging support of all the republics to the South, the power and influence of the United States did indeed increase considerably. The change, in the forty-odd years since the war, has been one of 180 degrees. There must be some deep reason to justify this, for surely a policy that completely isolates the Great Power before the Third World has some obvious shortcomings.

For two generations and irrespective of party differences, American statesmen and politicians have not deemed it worth-

while to change this U.S. approach to Latin America. Today, inter-American relations are merely a series of efforts designed to tidy up basic differences of approach to world politics. On the part of the United States, such efforts are all very similar. Whether it is called Alliance for Progress, Good Partnership, the protection of Human Rights, trade and not aid, or any other such name, there is a common denominator: to stop the disintegration of a hemispheric policy—to prevent its decline, and nothing more. Many have been the efforts purely and simply to buy the Latin republics; few, if any, have been the efforts to include them in the formulation of United States policies. The "hubris" is always there. What can a world power—a nuclear power at that—have in common with those *mestizo* republics down South? Thus an attempt to change the rules of postwar politics has never materialized; nobody is interested in having the republics of the South behave toward the United States as good neighbors. Servants yes, allies never. Such is the dictum that has come down from Washington since 1945.

It is when we look at the view of Latin America and Europe from Washington that the reason for the difference of approach becomes apparent. The European countries respond to United States policies with a degree of cohesiveness that does not seem to exist in our republics. Latin America's philosophy of life—one that principally takes a political approach to social and economic factors—differs widely from that of the United States. It is the presence and preeminence of this great nation itself that provides the common factor around which Latin America rotates. Reactions vary from one of careful distrust to one of outright opposition, with manifold gradations and constant changes. The United States faces neighbors who are not desirous of supporting its policies, yet lack enough confidence to blatantly contradict them. Washington is thus compelled to play one Latin American nation against the other and to come to makeshift compromises on this or that international item. The United States surely has few enemies down South...and only a few, lukewarm friends.

And yet a comprehensive policy, where a unity of purpose was forged for all the New World, was preeminent only two generations ago. This was the policy that FDR followed during the twelve years that he led the affairs of this Republic. It is this

particular period of United States foreign policy that I intend to reexamine briefly here.

I feel particularly grateful to the Council on Religion and International Affairs for inviting me to deliver this lecture. It enables me to look again at what I wrote many years ago and to revise my conclusions in the hard light of international facts. To proceed in any other way would be to fail to pay homage to the method that Professor Morgenthau applied to international politics and which altered completely the traditional evaluation of its problems.

At this point it seems proper to introduce some subjective considerations into the discussion. Barely a year ago we celebrated the centenary of FDR's birth—an opportune occasion for summarizing the countless essays, monographs, and biographies dedicated to such an outstanding president. My profession has prevented me from keeping up with the innumerable publications that this great country produces every year; and I certainly have not done justice to the proliferating richness of what you nicely term Rooseveltiana. My credentials are of another kind: I am one of the pioneers of the study of Roosevelt's policies. I was lucky enough in 1950 to persuade the Guggenheim Foundation that the Good Neighbor Policy had been a particularly brilliant achievement for the whole of our hemisphere and was a subject worth studying. My research was done at a time when the scholars who journeyed up to Hyde Park were few and far between. I still recall my amazement at the rapidity with which Professor Schlesinger went through the enormous stacks of files that daily were brought to his table. Professor Friedel was also at Hyde Park, working in his quiet way at what was believed to be the "definitive" biography. The book that embodied my findings, published only in Spanish, came out in 1954. It also contains first-hand materials provided by the main characters of the great Rooseveltian play, who are now gone. In this respect I treasure a multitude of souvenirs. I recall with particular pleasure, for instance, the day Mrs. Roosevelt invited me to lunch at Val-Kil Cottage; or the day I was finally able to meet with Sumner Welles at the Knickerbocker Club in New York City. Others left a less

favorable impression. During my interview with Nelson Rockefeller, I struggled at length in broken English only to find, when saying goodbye, that he spoke fluent Spanish.

It has frequently been argued that Roosevelt's policy was neither distinct from those of his predecessors nor outstanding in any of its characteristics. This matter will have to be cleared up before proceeding further.

The passage of time has confirmed my belief that the Good Neighbor Policy was altogether different from Latin American policies that either preceded or succeeded FDR's. A policy is like a plant: If, like an acorn, it falls into good earth, it will become a great oak and be counted among the giants of the forest; its disappearance will change all the surroundings. The ways in which a policy develops are usually deeply and closely tied up with the international realities of the moment. The Good Neighbor Policy, however, first occurred in the mind of FDR. It came into being after Roosevelt had suffered the polio attack that altered his whole personality, purging him of an aristocratic pride that had tinted with disdain his early public life. The Good Neighbor Policy had its roots in the Christian idea of neighborliness: Human beings were meant not only to share the same city, village, community, or even the same building, but to be as one with their own kind, suffering with their neighbors and therefore committed to helping them physically, yes, but above all with charity. The neighbor Roosevelt meant is the one described in the parable of the good Samaritan.

Christianity can achieve perfection only in a Christian community. The Good Neighbor can flourish only in a community of good neighbors. Thus appears a second element that distinguishes Roosevelt's policy: As the architect of the New Deal, his leadership was meant to protect those immense masses of forsaken people whom John Steinbeck has portrayed for posterity, who were suffering without hope the onslaughts of modern technology coupled with cannibalistic capitalism. Similar people existed to the south of the United States, and when the New Dealer spoke as a Good Neighbor, an immediate and positive reaction occurred. An early and excellent example is found in the ex-

change of letters between FDR and President Calles of Mexico in 1933. Calles, one of the leading world reformers, placed his confidence in a statesman who refused to make the recovery of private debts the official policy of the United States. Latin America could indeed trust Washington when the White House accused banks of forcing money upon unwilling nations and refused them any support to collect their capital.

The importance of any single impetus for a particular policy is justly questioned by the Realistic School that Dr. Morgenthau was foremost in creating. Yet discussion of the whole episode of the Good Neighbor Policy would be sadly wanting if we failed to emphasize its religious foundation. FDR once described himself as a Christian and a Democrat. Even today you can stand before the altar of the little church in Dutchess County where he loved to pray. There, surrounded by all the wealth and beauty of the Hudson Valley, you understand what the man wanted for his nation and for the wide community of neighbors: a world in which the great achievements of modern science could be harnessed to diminish human suffering; a world in which small democratic nations could look to the United States for leadership, of course, but also for understanding and—yes, why not say it—for sympathy and kindness. Latin American nations placed high hopes in such leadership. They could certainly trust completely a leader who declared that the well-being of Jesús Hernández, a *mestizo* who felled trees right in the middle of the Amazon Basin, was as important to the government in Washington as the well-being of Johnny Jones, who worked as a hired hand in Terre Haute, Indiana.

The Good Neighbor Policy developed and flourished through twelve momentous years. Since some of them were war years, it inevitably suffered contradictory currents, and, indeed, it passed through different stages. At the time I was writing my book, I considered the Good Neighbor Policy to have brought a permanent change to the continent as a whole. Today I realize that it developed steadily and brilliantly from 1933 until 1942, when it began to decay quickly, and died at the same time that FDR died.

Relations between the great Northern nation and its neighbors to the South then returned to the usual state of misunderstand-

ing—a little worse than the usual, as a matter of fact, because direct confrontation between the two superpowers was increasingly the theme of the postwar era. Ever since, North-South relations have wandered ceaselessly in the morass of international insignificance.

As far as Latin America is concerned, the Good Neighbor Policy was an exceptional period. Historically distinct, this period developed under unique conditions. Since then our world has moved into another orbit, one in which Latin America finds no place. It is my hope that this lecture will help you to understand why, instead of being the dawn of a new day, the Good Neighbor era appears to us clad in the pinkish twilight of an Indian summer.

Ideas, good ideas, excellent international ideas—many are the politicians who express them, but how few are the statesmen who can hammer them into a policy. Like many of FDR's emergency programs, the Good Neighbor appeared in his First Inaugural. For almost every one of his great speeches there are numerous drafts in existence, but there is only one for this. In his strong and old-fashioned handwriting he wrote the whole of it in the solitude of his Hyde Park library. Each of the main ideas is developed separately on those long yellow sheets that for some reason are identified with the legal profession. There it stands—the dedication of the United States to the policy of the Good Neighbor.

Like all new policies, this one began tentatively—the more so because, Aphrodite-like, it was born naked of any implementation. Before it reached its stride, an internal struggle developed within the Roosevelt administration. The width and depth of the economic crisis had provoked an influential circle among FDR's advisors to urge a policy of "America first." (It was not very different from the one now coming from Washington.) The very best thing that the United States could do to help the other nations of the world, they said, would be to put its own house in order; when the U.S. recovery was well under way, it would permeate all other economies and all would share the land of milk and honey. This approach initially received the approval

of FDR. Soon, however, internationalist circles—represented in the Cabinet principally by Cordell Hull—prevailed. Reciprocal trade agreements, as well as programs of international aid, were approved and implemented; the Good Neighbor would achieve its salvation not alone but in full partnership with other nations.

A religious idea, the Good Neighbor Policy was a universal doctrine. During its first years Roosevelt applied it outside Latin America as well. Why, then, did it become a regional policy? The obvious explanation is chronology. Roosevelt developed the idea of the Good Neighbor Policy in thorough fashion in a speech at the Pan American Union almost immediately after his inauguration, and naturally it became tied to the Western Hemisphere. But this explanation seems rather flimsy in a lecture that does homage to Hans Morgenthau. We must provide a better answer.

I might start with Sancho Panza, for through him Cervantes expresses the haunting idea that only well-to-do men can afford to be good. So it is with nations. They can model their conduct in accordance with ethical principles only if sufficient strength assures their ability to guide their own destinies. In the jargon of international affairs, a Good Neighbor is a satisfied nation, a strong nation, a nation whose very existence is not endangered, and a nation surrounded by minor states that morally or materially can be coerced into following a similar approach.

The point was made a few thousand years ago with the sad end of the Tell el Amarna period. It is clear that the Pharaoh Aknaton's Good Neighbor Policy had fatal results for the Egyptian Empire: The Empire disintegrated. Even today the desperate messages that high dignitaries sent to Thebes make painful reading. Here was Egypt, endangered by the unsatisfied nations on its eastern border and, at a time when only a policy of active militarism would allow Egypt to keep the upper hand and maintain the tenuous balance of power in the region, refusing to take that immoral course. The Hittites as well as other warring states took the Pharaoh's approach as a sign of weakness that promised great rewards.

In Roosevelt's time, the proper conditions existed for a Good Neighbor Policy in Latin America—and only in Latin America. Elsewhere, the Good Neighbor Policy was treated with calcu-

lated coldness or was the butt of many a political joke that had the effect of labeling the U.S. president mentally incompetent. Not surprisingly, other statesmen used this policy to advance their own nationalistic aims. If a world of good neighbors was to be forged, it would have to begin with all the republics of the hemisphere, and this became the primary aim of Roosevelt's foreign policy. But to proclaim such an intention was insufficient; proof was required. This was Roosevelt's commitment to the principle of nonintervention.

Many scholars in this country have asked why Latin Americans make such a fuss about nonintervention. Certainly, with the power of the United States so overwhelming, isn't its very presence—as the cynical dictum of Talleyrand suggests—already a form of intervention?

If we agree with Reinhold Niebuhr that power is the greatest form of evil, we must then accept its corollary: that the greater a nation's power, the greater must be its exercise of moral restraint. Where a great power is concerned, there is a great distinction between action and inaction. For that matter, *every* decision taken by the government in Washington carries weight in the whole continent, and only Washington itself sets its limits. This is not the case with small nations. When a nation wielding only a little power directly intervenes in the affairs of others, it is behaving like the jackdaw that has embellished itself with peacock feathers.

Since greater power carries greater moral obligation, the United States has to be a better neighbor, so to speak. Both before and after Roosevelt, the right of intervention has been invoked by the United States—and justly so—as one way of exercising its sovereignty. Equally justly, Latin America has considered *non*-intervention a sine qua non of international cooperation. The principle of nonintervention was developed under FDR at the conferences of Montevideo, Buenos Aires, and Lima and was written into the Bogotá Charter, where it became one of the cornerstones of the inter-American system.

Many of us thought that with the unanimous ratification of the Charter those old and evil pages in the history of the Americas had been turned once and for all. How wrong we were! Today the hemisphere is more divided than ever. Intervention

on the part of the United States is rampant. And as Hamlet suggested for the kingly toasts in Denmark, the nonintervention principle is honored more in the breach than in the observance. The record speaks for itself. For two generations now the great Northern power has again been imposing its sovereignty upon unwilling or impotent neighbors: at various times upon the Argentina of Perón (once, alas, under President Roosevelt himself); upon the Guatemala of Arbenz; upon the Cuba of Castro (indeed, on not a few occasions); upon the Dominican Republic; upon many of the Southern nations under the guise of protecting human rights; and today upon Central America in general. The moral confidence that a powerful neighbor must inspire if it is to lead the continent has been destroyed completely.

In 1940, just before finishing his term, President Cárdenas of Mexico wrote a long letter to FDR. "I want," he began, "to express my thanks for the understanding and patience you have shown in solving the numerous and inescapable difficulties that always arise between neighbors." And he concluded: "Only with your administration have we Mexicans felt able to discuss problems freely, disregarding our differences as far as power is concerned, and thus pursuing common decisions dictated solely by our search for justice."

I can find no better definition of what nonintervention means. The moral restrictions imposed by Roosevelt on the conduct of foreign affairs certainly enhanced his stature and in the long run—as can be said too of Louis IX of France—served the interests of his nation well.

The age of the Good Neighbor was a troubled time. Looking across the ocean at events in Europe and the Far East, Roosevelt wanted a continent welded together under the moral leadership of the United States. Leadership there had always been, but what changed now was its quality. Since Roosevelt offered the right kind of leadership, it is of paramount importance to emphasize its characteristics.

I find that the United States systematically applied three principles in its attempt to create exceptionally close bonds with Latin America: preferential economic treatment; a system of

political consultation; and a commitment to defend jointly the whole of the continent. The means for achieving the first were: reciprocal trade agreements; special economic help by means of the Ex-Import Bank or the Office of the Inter-American Coordinator; the assurance that United States interests did not enjoy a privileged place in Latin America; the desire to grant equal opportunity to Latin citizens and national companies. (They believe they are as good as we are, Roosevelt once said, and in many cases that is so.) The means used in implementing the system of political consultation, principally conducted by Sumner Welles, offers an excellent example of diplomatic achievement. The Latin ambassadors in Washington were briefed often and, when there were important questions, a proper approach was made to the Latin capitals themselves. Of course the final decision was made by Washington, but always under the common auspices of the inter-American community. As to the third principle, this was accomplished by means of joint resolutions that gave rise to international military committees and ultimately to a joint hemispheric defense—well in advance of the oncoming war.

Some critics, looking back at this wartime era, assert that the Good Neighbor Policy was subject to gigantic misinterpretation. FDR only wanted to carry the whole continent against the Axis; he never really believed the doctrine he preached. I could quote from the Hyde Park archives a thousand documentary proofs that refute such accusations. The basic Christian ideal and the need to make constant efforts to implement it internationally were always in Roosevelt's mind. But just as the Gospel assures us that he who seeks the Kingdom of God will receive other rewards along the way, so the United States was able to benefit from having good neighbors on whom it could depend to fight aggression.

Various periods can be distinguished in this endeavor to unite the Western Hemisphere in the face of the Fascist threat. Neutrality marked the first. The ideal of keeping the New World out of the quarrels of the Old was deeply ingrained in the North American consciousness. The Neutrality Law—to which Roose-

velt did not object—was implemented in such a way as to assure the safety of the whole continent. However, it soon became evident that neutrality was not enough, and, in a famous and often misunderstood speech, Roosevelt requested that international neighborliness now rise to a new level of communal cooperation and that all states accept and apply the quarantine principle.

Aggression—he said in Chicago in 1940—is a disease and requires that we act toward the aggressors as if they were contagious. The Americas did act accordingly, taking common and active measures to avoid being entangled in the twilight war and even went on to create new principles of international law. Anticipating the consequences of the defeat of France and Denmark, they assumed provisional authority over those two nations' Caribbean colonies; and assuming responsibility for self-defense, they jointly fixed the enormous rhombohedron that, by implication, threatened action against third countries in regions outside their jurisdiction. For the first time, republics that had been only the object of U.S. protection were giving formal approval to the principle embodied in the Monroe Doctrine.

These preparations proved to be stepping stones. The Japanese aggressors found the hemisphere in a highly evolved state of political symbiosis. All the republics understood that their own future was at stake. The Rio de Janeiro Conference was the culmination of long years of active neighborliness. Outstanding Latin American statesmen vied with each other in efforts to achieve continental cooperation. The mistrust that had prevailed during the First World War was all but forgotten. Brazil and Mexico declared war on the Axis; military assurances were freely offered; economic sacrifices were accepted by all in good spirit. And the war effort of the United States was greatly strengthened by Latin American neighborliness. What better praise can there be for FDR's policies?

I have had to exclude, in the vast picture I have drawn, the minutiae of everyday diplomacy and the details of the careful political implementation of the Good Neighbor Policy. To change the ill-will and mistrust that Roosevelt found when he took over the presidency was certainly not easy. Soon after March, 1933,

however, many Latin American statesmen and politicians found a new and sympathetic hearing in Washington. Gone were the days when they had to arrive hat in hand and bearing suitcases filled with files that explained the supposed incompetence of their governments.

And not only a sympathetic hearing, but courageous decisions too. Many of these also affected the vital interests of the United States, as, for example, the refusal to intervene when President Cárdenas nationalized the oil industry in Mexico. Other decisions, reactions to still other neighbors' plights, also had vast political consequences—the Lend Lease Act, for one, with Roosevelt asking his country to forget the dollar sign. All such decisions, and particularly those directly affecting the American republics, created bonds that went beyond statecraft. One thinks of the love born in Cuban hearts when Roosevelt obtained from Congress the annulment of the Platt Amendment; or in Panamanian ones, when their country obtained a fairer share of the Canal.

The Good Neighbor Policy appears to me as one of those strange and beautiful flowers that bloom just before the death of the plant. With the scientific revolution that was accelerated by the war came a complete change in the thinking of the human race. People like me can still speak of a world in which tradition was received with awe, old values were respected and those moral frameworks inherited from the Greco-Roman world still considered outstanding. The Good Neighbor episode could only have arisen in an international comity convinced of the soundness of Christianity; among countries certain that Western democracy as they knew it was the only way of political salvation, parties to the belief that the Industrial Revolution would never outgrow its usefulness. Roosevelt's tenets of faith and his convictions were those of a world that exists no longer. In a way, this world is as far from us as is the Antonine Dynasty, which Gibbon, gilding his Georgian Latinism, described as offering the best government ever.

Is it only as an episode, etched into the stones of history, that the Good Neighbor Policy should be studied? A dangerous theory, I would say, for it could then easily be argued that a solution for the Americas lies today in the realm of amoral pragmatism. The will of a nuclear power is paramount; Latin American republics should simply respect the dictates of the most high, intoning the *Vae Victis* imposed by an alien and superior technocracy. Once more Hobbes's Leviathan raises its ugly head, and the moral principles defended by FDR can simply be forsaken.

I count myself among those who believe that the wide differences between past and present-day affairs do not leave us morally castrated. The Good Neighbor Policy cannot be repeated, but the guidance obtained from it will serve as a magnetic needle for inter-American relations. Even if the future of the Western Hemisphere seems well assured by United States military preparedness, it is still morally wrong to consider nuclear superiority an instrument of policy. There may be doubts about the role of Christianity in the Americas, but let us not be blind to the fact that many of its tenets provide excellent norms for the conduct of foreign affairs. Our common spiritual past impels us to approve FDR's approach: to conceive of neighborliness as a moral and not purely physical factor. Today's realities should not lead us to forget the Gospel's warning that success will be worthless if in the process we lose our American souls.

We must remember that the evil temptations of power have increased manyfold with today's informatics revolution. Moral limits are more necessary than ever. A nation heavily tainted by materialism has even more reason to remember a leader who never ignored the weak and the poor, who always strove toward the Christianization of his country's policies. The temptations of world power should be fought, first of all, in the trenches of a true inter-American system. The permanent message of the Good Neighbor Policy is the virtue of humility in the field of international affairs. Here lies a most difficult policy to follow: to curb the tendency to go it alone when convinced of one's might; to consult weaker nations and seek their advice, even if the resulting compromise is weaker than the initial resolution. This, and nothing less, is what we ask of the United States.

I can hear the cries from all sides; What you are suggesting is pure weakness; that has always been a sure way of losing a

good cause, missing a good fight. Your policies—many critics will add—have already been condemned by Nietzsche. *We* are realists and, as such, must make certain that our country continues to have a truly national foreign policy.

But a successful policy should carry other countries with it, not browbeat them into submission. A civilization based on armed imposition is doomed to destruction; an amoral policy is in the end completely futile. If we take a look at the results of United States interventions to the South, we must agree that they comprise a painful and dismal record. One can argue convincingly that a Good Neighbor system of inter-American consultations could not have done worse and, in fact, would surely have served United States interests far better.

During the Turkish wars in the Mediterranean, the custom was to put every single prisoner in the galleys until ransomed. Any man who surmounted such an experience had acquired such moral stamina that he had the makings of a great leader. Life imposed a similar experience on FDR. This man knew that only through spiritual humility does truth emerge; and his suffering convinced him that only a just cause, pursued with infinite patience, can succeed. Through painful personal experience he became aware of the enormous spiritual strength that could be summoned to shore up weakness. One anecdote of the way FDR fought courageously to overcome his disability comes to mind. The great athlete, whose physical prowess once knew no bounds, had become incapable of walking. His friends tell of the admirable way in which he doggedly dragged himself up stairs and, while lifting himself at every step, continued to speak in order that he might put onlookers at ease.

Pride is the ever-present adversary of a successful foreign policy, and any moral weakness that a nation shows will be exploited to its disadvantage. Roosevelt himself was not above making serious mistakes. It happened during the war years, as part of the effort to implement the decision of the Rio de Janeiro Conference that all Latin American republics would break diplomatic relations with the Axis powers. Unforeseen difficulties

presented themselves in Chile and Argentina. The latter began to suffer from the internal political crisis that is unresolved forty years later, putting an end to its elitist government of the great landowners. A careful and joint inter-American approach was indispensable here, but President Roosevelt, preoccupied with the tremendous military effort, had no time for diplomatic *souplesse.*

FDR's war cabinet had a different political color, and simmering feuds exploded. Sumner Welles withdrew and Cordell Hull—who looked like an eagle and sometimes acted like one—was left to deal with unfriendly Argentina. It is painful for me to recall how the world power then behaved toward this Southern neighbor and the interminable series of diplomatic pressures and de facto sanctions unilaterally exercised against it. It took the Chapultepec Conference to put things right, enabling the United States to save face.

The U.S. approach to world politics changed completely with its new military might. All postwar negotiations were conducted without the bother of consulting the Latin American nations. Security reasons there may have been, and these were indeed invoked. But there is no denying the State Department's hand in thwarting Churchill's efforts to give the new world organization a regional foundation. Washington purposefully guided the United Nations toward direct universal membership. It fell to the Latin American republics—still under the belief that Roosevelt's ideals would prevail—to ensure a proper respect for regionalism in the United Nations Charter and to take the lead in organizing the OAS.

Even under FDR the Good Neighbor Policy failed. It found itself wanting before the great strains of a war situation. Victory's immense responsibilities carried the United States to the heady heights of a superpower. The political circumstances that gave birth to the Good Neighbor Policy no longer existed. We shall wonder in vain whether the great leader could have devised new postwar formulas to keep alive what had been one of his great political ideals. Yet it can be persuasively argued that the incomprehension and power politics that divide our hemisphere began during the last years of Roosevelt's presidency.

Has the Good Neighbor Policy something to offer our world today? I would like to take my cue from an exchange of communications in 1935 between Roosevelt and Morgenthau (not Hans but Henry, then his secretary of commerce). The United States Congress had approved the Silver Act, and many countries—among them China—found themselves in very difficult circumstances. Morgenthau passed on to FDR the complaints of some American missionaries in China. The president's reply offers the wide vista one always expects from a true statesman. "Those missionaries," said Roosevelt, "belong to a system that has exploited China and that implies the orthodox application of a monetary policy that has nothing to offer China and has no place under the New Deal. China has been a haven for those who are equal to the moneylenders that Jesus expelled from the Temple. Many years and a few revolutions will be necessary to break their hold on China. It seems to me," FDR concluded, "that the interests of the United States are not those of the moneylenders and that our policy should be to allow that country to stand on its own feet."

In international matters, the Good Neighbor means understanding, and understanding is motivated by the refusal to see one's country as the keeper of the whole political truth. Neighborliness means charity and is thus the opposite of that national pride which in world affairs has caused so many fatal mistakes. If the substance of the Good Neighbor had been kept, our world, and certainly our continent, would be a better place today—and the position of the United States would be morally respectable and politically much stronger.

Every nation has special characteristics that have proven productive in its history, even if we have failed to notice them. U.S. successes in the material field have been so colossal that we easily forget that other quality that shone so brightly at its birth. The profound religious convictions of its Founding Fathers assured the nation's independence and its consolidation. The religious strain was perceptible during most of the nineteenth century. Roosevelt felt these religious values as deeply as the Founding Fathers, and his Good Neighbor Policy must be understood in that context. It is not by chance that it has often been called the Good Neighbor Doctrine: It implied a true code of

international conduct and, as such, was unique. Very few before him had dared to implement internationally the basic Christian virtue of charity.

As is always the case with ethical standards, their application is extremely difficult. The forces that thwart them are very strong. Let that not excuse us from the continuous effort of comparing the practical and the ideal. Consciousness of the need to bring a superior element into play will render less materialistic—and therefore less near-sighted—the foreign endeavors of all the American nations.

The spiritual approach called the Good Neighbor Policy originated in the United States. It could rise in no other Western nation. And, given the present weight of the United States in world affairs, how greatly has its loss been felt! The return of this great republic to its spiritual commitments of yore seems to me absolutely indispensable. I see it as the only way to halt this maelstrom that has completely destroyed the OAS and may extend even further. FDR's inheritance, itself the product of the best part of United States tradition, makes it imperative for the United States to act. It is perhaps not too late, but it is certainly high time.

Exchange With Francisco Cuevas-Cancino

QUESTION: I would like your estimation of John Kennedy's program, the Alliance for Progress, and also your feelings about the fact that, at least to some extent, this country was invited by six other Caribbean nations to undertake the Grenadian intervention.

CUEVAS-CANCINO: They are really two questions. As to the first, I am not too sure of the spiritual value, in the sense of moral value, of Kennedy's policies. I think there are many who feel the same way.

Now, as far as the second is concerned, institutions are meant to be respected in times of trouble. Anybody can create an agreement to do something that is not necessarily right.

QUESTION: Last summer, former President of Costa Rica Carazo said in Geneva that it would be a good idea to move the OAS out of Washington. What is your thought on that?

CUEVAS-CANCINO: Many years ago I belonged to a small group that advocated doing exactly that: moving the OAS away from Washington. Since Bolivar's idea was to put an organization of pan-American countries in Panama City, we thought that we should go there. But, alas, Panama City is not Washington, and we have never gotten to first base.

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QUESTION: Could you go into more detail about the economic

development component of FDR's policy and how that policy might be applied today, particularly with respect to the foreign debt problem of the Latin American countries.

CUEVAS-CANCINO: I'll try to synthesize. FDR always had great faith in what the American system was and saw no reason why, given the right chance, the United States could not out-produce any rival. Therefore, what he wanted was to make a world in which the better prepared would have the better chance. And he also thought that if the riches of the United States increased at the rate he considered possible—and which, in fact, they did through the last years of his presidency—the influx of that richness to all the neighbors would have an enormous, shall I say "fireball," effect, whereby everybody would be producing better and enjoying the benefits.

Take, for instance, the present set-up of the International Monetary Fund policies, which requires that we restrict our imports. Mexico was an importer of U.S. goods and had to cut back. Now look where it is! This is really cutting off your nose to spite your face. What all nations need, and especially the United States as the greatest world producer, is greater trade, not lesser trade.

So, to summarize, FDR's policies always had the effect of affirming his faith in progress and in human beings, rather than denying it.

QUESTION: We all share your sentiment about alliance and unification—and I surely share your sentiment on nonintervention. However, what I wonder is how one achieves unification with a number of states or countries that are themselves not unified—or, in any case, are marked by internal dissension—and with countries whose leaders and wealthy classes are not devoted to the interests of the country but to their own self-interest. How do you propose that we undertake this?

CUEVAS-CANCINO: The problem is really the basic one of today's world. Surely I don't have an answer. But how I see it is this: You cannot change national conditions in any country in the world, whether in Afghanistan or Grenada or Poland, by imposing it from the outside. You have to let the people work from the inside

to create a better system.

Roosevelt's thinking, to my mind, was that if democracy were given a chance, it would succeed, notwithstanding a wealthy middle class. I suppose that now, with the appearance of all the new Communist states, there is tremendous doubt about that, as I mentioned in my lecture. Yet I see no other way but to put your faith in people and give them the chance to change things. Eventually, to put it bluntly, instead of having a very closed Communist state, we would soon have something like Yugoslavia—and after that, who knows?

Now, of course, the wealthy classes in Latin America, to be concrete, want to relinquish neither wealth nor power, but which class in history has given them up willingly? The only way of helping the necessary change to take place, instead of imposing it from the outside, is to put in motion those elements that will enable the people to do the changing. I think that if you discuss these things together, the differences of opinion will not be much greater than those you would find if you imposed a new system from the outside. The desire to create those elements of change have been alive and welcome in Latin America at any given moment, and it is only when the North-South axis has been completely devoid of meaning that sights turn elsewhere.

My hope is for a strong and well-constructed organization of inter-American states, so that the basis for progress, though it will not be immediate or easy, at least will be on the right track, will start again.

QUESTION: First a clarification and then a question. I thought that in your address you said that "it is impossible to build a constructive peace without belief in God." And then, later on, you said that "the Good Neighbor Policy can only arise in a community believing in Christianity." Is that correct?

CUEVAS-CANCINO: I don't know if the quotations are exact. A belief in God is not necessarily limited only to the Christian faith. But Roosevelt was a Christian, so I have developed Christianity because I was speaking of the Good Neighbor Policy.

QUESTION: Then, my question is this: Do you believe that people

who are atheists or Buddhists or Communists have little contribution to make in terms of peace? Nehru, for example, was an atheist; Bertrand Russell and others did not believe in God. Would you say, following your comments, that they have no contribution to make to peace?

CUEVAS-CANCINO: I would have to start by querying your examples. Nehru said he did not believe in God, but I doubt very much that he didn't. It is the sort of position a man takes when he's planning the governing of India and *has* to take this position. What he actually thought is another thing. From the reading I have done, which is not everything on the subject, and from my memory of how he spoke in public, I would say that he was a profound believer.

And the same happens with today's scientists. They all say, "No, the reality is *this.* No God exists and therefore we don't have to pay homage to the first principle." But if you don't have that, where do you go?

QUESTION: So, large numbers of atheists in the world—for example, Buddhists who don't believe in God—have no contribution to make to peace?

CUEVAS-CANCINO: I don't think that you're putting "God" in the same context I am putting it. If you're going to understand God in the purest sense, or in the Muslim sense, there are many people who do not believe in God. If you include as "God" a belief in a first principle from which all good emanates and which you have to approach in your own efforts, I think you would find that many more people would be considered believers. To put it in a very modern and perhaps imperfect way, if you believe in any principle that curbs your passions and that obliges you as a human being to provide for a greater improvement in your qualities and respect for other people, you are doing right. Whether you call that "God" or not, I'm not interested, but you are following those same principles.

To sum up: The moral basis of my interpretation of the Good Neighbor Policy begins with the presence of evil in international affairs. I emphasize the Christian aspect here, since Christianity

is a religion that strongly underscores the necessity of divine aid to overpower sin. In international affairs, the best solution from a moral standpoint is certainly the Good Neighbor Policy.