



## United States' Intervention and the Following Hegemony in Cuba and Chile: A Critical Appraisal

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### Abstract

*US hegemony as the result of its interventions in Cuba and Chile is a historical reality. The United States used to be scared that the imposition of Communism had minimized the Americans' dominance over there under the policy of nationalization. Although, the United States had tried his luck in Cuba twice, in decades of the 1960's, to vanish communism dangerous roots, but unfortunately faced defeat. Again in the 1970's decade, the United States faced the same threat of communism (in the form of Salvador Allende regime) in Chile. Chile has blessed with such rich mineral resources like Cuba, so the United States also had similarly established its strong hold inform of different significant companies. In order to prevent the power of Salvador Allende and his nationalization policy, the United States had launched a military coup in 1973 that resulted in success that also helps to minimize the communism threats in the region.*

**Key Words:** Cuba, US, Hegemony, Capitalism, Communism, Chile, Intervention

### Cuba and the United States Hegemony

Since the beginning, Cuba had been occupied a unique place in the mind of Americans in terms of security and stability for the United States, on the basis of this stance the United States had affirmed one thing for their own survival to get hold over Cuba was compulsory because of the Cuba harbor was provided more strategic importance to the United States. That was often used against their enemies. Hence, it can be analyzed that Cuba represented as a significant extension to the United States. (Louis & Perez, 2011, p. 28)

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Furthermore, in the early period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the United States had involved in rapid expansions. Just as in the era of 1840s Texas and the South-West part of the Americas had been annexed. The very next targets were Canada and Cuba as ideal sites. It is also noteworthy to know that their acquisition was quite difficult for the United States, because, at that time, they were under the rule of the Spanish empire. Nevertheless, it can be said, that at that time Cuba had been seen as the only Jewel of the Caribbean. (Louis & Perez, 2011, p. 18) Therefore, the United States got worried not only from Spain but also from other imperialist powers (France and the United Kingdom) because of their intentions of the annexation of Cuba. The US has observed this threat when the United Kingdom and France had tried their luck in the year of 1823. As a reaction to this, the US got alert from their harmful acts and had officially stood against them. (Benjamin, 1977, pp. 181-183) The US could not bear further European expansions over the Western Hemisphere. Hence, the United States firstly tried to purchase Cuba from the Spanish Empire in 1848 for a hundred million dollars. (Benjamin, 1977, p. 87) But, unfortunately, Spanish rejected this offer. At last, the United States had decided to let tolerate only Spanish imperialists on Cuba apart from other European powers. (Benjamin, 1977, pp. 188-192)

In the following decade, it had been revealed clearly that Cuba was the most significant island for the necessities of the United States. Thus, in the year of 1820, Thomas Jefferson stated that annexation of Cuba should be considered. Later on, many sessions had been held by many of the United States' prominent leaders on this stance. On one hand, the US was busy plotting to annex Cuba; on the other hand, overall Cuba was sunk into a violent conflict between Cuba nationalists and Spanish Colonizers. Furthermore, being a neighbor of the island, the United States' felt that, the critical situations of Cuba could not be ignored. Because it might affect not only the United States' commercial interests but also the United States residing itself. Therefore, the United States involved in a neighboring issue, because it was felt that the level of peace in Cuba could only come through intercession, ended this long-lasting violent conflict through the treaty of Paris. (Peace Treaty Signed At Last, 1898) During the American Spanish war, the Cubans, who had already faced harsh treatments from Spain but participated as the indirect force with the United States interference. Furthermore, in this new phase of Cuba, the United States had been attempting to intervene economically, politically and strategically. Because President Platt believed that Cuba was not ready to rule itself, for this he even stated:

“To ensure the success of free government, a certain condition seen indispensable. There must be a homogeneous people possessed of a high degree of virtue and intelligence. A sentimental longing for liberty will not have itself insured the maintenance of a republic.” (Platt, April 1901, p. 148)

“Social, racial and economic conditions in Cuba to not at first sight promise well for the permanence of republican government” (Platt, April 1901, pp. 149-152)

Basically, it had been perceived that Cubans were not able to run self-government peacefully because they had practices racial system; resultantly, the United States control was required. It became the basic reason for the United States to keep up her hegemony in Cuba for a very long period, which primarily moved from rising to fall.

First of all, foreign investment by the United States had been started at an extensive level in Cuba, because many Americans had firm believe on this stance that economic ties with Cuba could be profitable, necessary for the progress and stability of their country. Slowly and gradually, the United States was trying to influence the Cubans economy (Varg, 1990) as well as the military, just as Thomas Win penny noted that:

“Hershey, like other American businessmen of his day, found it reassuring that the entire island came under the jurisdiction of the Platt amendment that the United States Navy had maintained a base at Guantanamo Bay. Since 1903, and that the United States Marines were never far away.” (Winpenny, 1995)

It's notable to know that as time pass, the United States increased more power in Cuba, or it can be said that in a very tactful way the United States entered, maintained its complete cultural and economic influence on Cubans. Consequently, the Cuban elites used to send their children to the United States for learning purposes. In this way, Cubans got educated and took the prominent post of Cuba. Later on, they worked for beneficial purposes in the development process of Cuba. Furthermore, before to start the United States' hegemony over Cuba, it would be beneficial over here, to take a birds-eye view of the United States' intervention in the Cuban economy and politics etc. These interventions had been started in the era of colonization when the US intervened in the economy of Cuba which was highly based on sugar and tobacco. Primarily Cuban business had essentially dominated at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, significantly there were probably 39 American owned sugar mills there, which were even more productive because of the advanced technology then Cubans sugar mills. (Ayala, 1995)

Besides, the United States not only get domination over the Cuban economy but also established control over political aspects. This kind of involvement had started right after the establishment of Platt amendments that provided a clear path to the United States to intervene in sensitive affairs of neighboring Island. Afterward, by these establishments, the United States used to intervene in Cuban political affairs. Later on, at the start of 1930's former Ambassador Well, and other politicians of Cuba suggested that Plat Amendment had no more significant for Cuba because it had allowed the United States to interfere in Cuban sensitive affairs. This was assumed wrong in the perspectives of Cuba. Thus, this treaty had been replaced with the “New Relation Treaty of 1934”, which had ultimately

enabled the United States to formally abrogate the previous one. (Perez, 2011) Subsequently, the United States had released a statement in the Cuban newspaper, that the establishment of this “New Relation Treaty 1934” had replaced the long-lasting treaty of 1903 (Plat Amendment). That had instigated the United States’ to stop further intercessions in Cubans politics. (March 1935, Cuban News Paper) Luckily, a perfect time came when the relations of the United States’ got once again normal with Cuba, mainly in the regime of Batista (President of Cuba). He once again opened the way forward for the United States in terms of trade establishment in Cuban territory. Apart from trade enterprising, Batista formulated the idea of military alliances with the United States. Additionally, under a Lend-Lease Act, the United States delivered major armaments to Cuba, mainly for the purpose of defense. Furthermore, the United States had signed a series of agreements, which later opened the Cuban island for the US training military ground. (Perkin & Wright, 1962)

On the basis of the above discussion, it has been exposed that for a time being the establishment of New Relation Treaty of 1934 had stopped United States’ hegemony in Cubans island, but in a very tactful manners, Superpower had intervened, maintained once again its overwhelming hegemony over Cubans economy, politics and military as well.

On the other hand, the United State had involved in World Wars-I & II. Right after World War II, when the whole world was divided into two poles (from east USSR and from the west US). The rest of the countries used to align themselves with one of the superpowers, either to the United States or to the USSR. In this critical situation, the United States had greatly concerned that Cuba should eradicate or to finish communism instincts over there as well as to strengthen friendship with them. Because of these proximities and commercial relationships, the whole of Washington felt that Cuba had been one of the significant territories for the United States. Despite all efforts of the US against Communism, it gained popularity day by day among Cubans because of the United States' extraordinary expropriation of their benefits (*Pachter, H. M. (1963)* (commerce, military, politics etc.). The Cubans approved Communism for themselves. With the passage of time, the Cubans had also started to criticize the United States 1903 treaty named as Plat amendments, additionally many of Cuban big businessmen were highly concerned about their dependence on the neighboring territory of the United States. Henceforth, in a full-fledged form, a phase of retaliation had started among Cubans, fundamentally against the imperial authority of the United States.

Likewise, it can be apprehended that their extraordinary authority had made Cubans incapable. The US had stood successful to get the ability of the Cubans limited to make their own decision and run their government independently. Mentally they had started to believe that the fate of Cubans was not in Cubans hands anymore. (Bonsal, 1971, p. 261) Thus, in this tough period of crisis, one freedom fighter emerged among Cuban, who was communist oriented named Fidel

Castro. (Bonsal, 1971, p. 260) He was a man of great thinking and strong nerve & will. He took stand for the rights of Cubans in these critical epochs. He also had started a movement in the late 1950s named as Cuban Revolution. Through this, after a great struggle, he got success and became the leader of Cuba. Besides, he had launched a program of nationalization.

### **Nationalization Policy of Fidel Castro and its After-shocks**

First of all, within a month of his regime started, he had nationalized almost all the US sugar mills, businesses and large companies owned by upper and middle Cubans. (Bonsal, 1971, p. 273) In addition, he also nationalized private property and all foreign-owned property. (Hunt, 2004, p. 257) As a result of this nationalization policy, the United States got aggravated and launched the Bay of Pig invasion in 1961 with the help of its Central Intelligence Agency. (Hunt, 2004, p. 256) In which unfortunately the United States got failed. After this, the United States had intervened in Cuba again in 1962, known as the Cuban missile crisis (mainly confrontation among USSR and US about the deployment of missiles in Cuba). After these intercessions, the everlasting hegemony of the United States became to fall in Cuba.

### **United States Hegemony in Chile**

As far as the dynamic nature of the United States' hegemony in Chile is concerned, it is important to start with the beginning steps of the United States which later converted into concrete shape. Before to start this notable discussion (United States involvement and hegemony) in comparison to Cuba, there are a number of questions that emerge. The following questions are: Was Chile also the jewel of Latin America as Cuba in the Caribbean? Was Chile as significant for the United States as Cuba? Was the United States the only Superpower intervened in Chile? Last but not the least, the United States was able to maintain its hegemony in the first attempt?

Let elaborate the answer to the above questions in order to prove the statement of the dynamic nature of the United States. Chile has been blessed with natural mineral mines, mainly Copper mines, Industrial minerals (Lithium and Potash) and Nitrate mines (also known as white gold). Primarily Nitrate utilization had been started by Chileans earlier in the of 19<sup>th</sup> century. When for the very first time it was used for gunpowder purposes during the War of Independence (countries on the west coast of South America waged against Spain). Moreover, it is important to mention here the name of person Hector Bacque, who handled Nitrate in the first operation, which had happened in 1826. (Scott, 1913) Later on, this sort of operation had been started by different European countries, including the United States and Chile.

No doubt, Chile also has been blessed with Copper mines at an extensive level. Essentially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Chile was producing probably 750,000 metric tons of copper production. Thus, it can be evaluated by this reconsideration that, this mineral had been one of importance source for revenues of Chile, which gradually obscured Nitrate and became the only important source of export. The blessing of raw materials and mineral mines had essentially made Chile one of the important sources of attraction for the whole world. (*Calvocoressi, 2008*)

In the very first place, Great Britain emerged on the territory of Chile as the only super imperial power of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They came to control the minerals (Chile Nitrate, Copper and Silver mines), which made themselves the superior authority over Chiles. But gradually in the final decades of the nineteenth century, the United States had directed its attention towards it in order to boost the economy through Chile's raw minerals (Robinson, 1997, p. 155) to make the US the only sovereign power of Latin America. About this stance, the Secretary of State Richard Olney in 1896 declared that:

“The United States is practically sovereign in this continent and its fiat is the law upon the subjects to which it confines its interpositions.” (Robinson, 1997, p. 156)

Primarily in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the US had gradually entered the territory of Chile and gained dominant power over the Chilean economy. Significantly by the year 1920, the Chilean mining industries had been dominated by the three main companies of the United States<sup>7</sup>. This sort of domination had ultimately dominated the Chilean economy which established the US and Chile relations. Officially their relation had started back in the year of 1811, when Joel Robert Poinsett was sent as the first official agent from the government of the United States towards Chile, in order to investigate the prospect of Chile and Argentinean efforts for independence. Hence, the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be said the actual beginning period of their relations. Although the United States<sup>7</sup> had knowledge about Chile mining industries. Therefore, the US had established enormous companies over there, which later on controlled probably between 7% and 20% Gross Domestic Products of Chile that had been estimated by Theodore H. Moran. (Moran, 1974)

It's noteworthy, that since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the United States had strong control over the economy of Chile. With the passage of time, Chileans were discontented over the foreign extraordinary control on their natural resources. Slowly and gradually this discontentment gave rise to the first leftist political movement in Chile against this existing imperial power. That has been described by Brian Loveman in his words:

“Sought continually to undermine the position of United States firms, attacking the exploitation of Chilean resources by international monopolies and imperialism already by then a synonym for the United States” (*Loveman, 1988, p. 217*)

Besides, the establishment of the leftist political government in Chile, the United States' investment and business continued in a smooth way. With the passage of time, they had maintained the relationship between giving and take. Such as Chile needed funds from the US for their land in return, the US established its investment at an extensive level in Chile. Furthermore, in the 1940's the United States had provided perhaps 17 million dollars to *Corporacion de Fomento de la Produccion de Chile* (Production Development Cooperation) CORFO. It was an organization that had been established to primarily promote economic growth. As a result of this organization, the United States holds further control of the economy of Chile. (Loveman, 1988, p. 218)

Apart from economic ties, the United States' interest in the politics of Chile can be traced during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly the United States' supported it (Chile) in critical periods of War of Pacific and the Chilean Civil war, later in 20<sup>th</sup> century its involvement in politics was essential. Mainly right after the emergence of communism in Chile. Because the United States could not bear its existence at all, thus the United States had given financial assistance to the Chilean government in order to eliminate it completely on the surface of Chile. (Loveman, 1988, pp. 218-219)

In addition, the member of the communist party Gonzalez Videla himself nevertheless, had been elected as communist minister from the direct support of communist. But after two years of his election in 1948 the president of Chile took a decision in which he outlawed the communist party. Further, "authorized the confinement of communist leaders in remote parts of the country and cut ties with the Soviet Union". Moreover, President Gonzalez Videla had made the decision to appease the United States mainly through economic support. Because within two years of his tenure foreign loan to Chilean government agencies became increased four times. So, President Gonzalez's appeasement policies were the main cause of the establishment of the United States' hegemony over Chile Politics.

Besides, all efforts of the United States against Communist power, Chile had been still mostly under the atmosphere of Communists, among which the most famous person was Salvador Allende who had been providing services to the Communist party since 1940. (Alexander, 1978, p. 139) Even he himself associated with Fidel Castro in the 1960's. (Alexander, 1978, p. 140) Hence, his association can be considered a major threat to the United States. Because whenever Salvador Allende tried his luck for the presidency in Chile, the only Superpower United States stood against him. Significantly, Salvador had tried his luck in election consecutive four times (for the seat of the president). At last, he won the election in 1971. Henceforth, his presidency primarily based on *Chilena Al Socialismo* (Chilean path to Socialism). In which he promised

"To expropriate foreign holding in the major industries, central to his project for revolutionizing Chilean society." (Brands, 2010)

With this statement, the United States got threatened. Subsequently, President Richard Nixon of the United States' had started to impose sanctions on Allende in order to make his regime frail. In spite of these sanctions by the United States, the Allende introduced a policy of nationalization on foreign holding on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1971. It's noteworthy to discuss everything related to this act of Salvador Allende because after this discussion it would be easy to understand the United States' strict actions, inform of Covert activity 1973 against Salvador Allende regime.

At the start of Allende's victory, the United States' hegemony over Chile's economy was huge. As the economy of Chile had been controlled by the United States, such as 80 percent of the whole Copper productions, 50 percent of machinery and equipment, 60 percent of iron and steel, metal products, Industrial and other chemicals, 100 percent automotive assemblage and tobacco. Thereafter, the United States' direct investment pushed from good to invincible. Apart from this, the United States also had a stronghold over its politics and other affairs. Hence, it can be said that till 1971 the United States' hegemony was in peak, but the arrival of Allende had changed the situation completely. Allende like Fidel Castro had initiated a policy of nationalization against the United States foreign holding (Alexander, 1978, p. 146).

### **Nationalization Policy of Salvador Allende and its Upshots**

In the very first place, he nationalized almost all mining industries, usually referred to as *La Gran Minería* (The Great Mining) in Chile. He even submitted a complete proposal to Congress that *La Gran Minería* would be the monopoly of Chile. (Alexander, 1978, p. 147) Besides, these mining industries, Allende nationalized the key areas of the economy. For example, he nationalized the far-reaching agrarian reforms, judicial reforms, the participation of the public in government structures and participation in management as well. (Alexander, 1978, p. 159) His entire nationalization program aimed at a transition to Socialism. Because his economic plan was comprising on the public, private and mixed sectors. Gradually these policies of Allende had not only affected the United States foreign holding as well as Chile. Primarily the policies of Allende proved fatal for Chile, even many great personalities of the Chilean government disliked him, criticized his nationalization policy. Because it had been damaging the Chilean administration. Because there was no private investment that occurred during his three years tenure. In addition, inflation takes place due to excessive seized firms. (Alexander, 1978, p. 161-162) Gradually retaliation had started among Chilean. In 1972 large wave of strikes had been held by Chileans among which Trucker Strike was significant that had been supported by National Party and Christian Democratic Party, the Secondary Student Federation, the Law Society, the Medical and other professional and technical associations. Although, it was the start of the crisis



(which later had been ended by Allende), by the mid of 1973 Chile can be seen completely under the ocean of crisis. When another strike had taken by EL Teniente Copper mines against his government, which lasted for 70 days and severely affected the Chilean economy and politics. Besides, Chilean severe reaction against their leader Allende, there was the United States that stood against him in order to regain its hegemony. As a result, the United States essentially with the help of CIA began Coup d'état against Salvador Allende on 11 September 1973. Moreover, the United States felt that the overthrow of Allende was the only solution to secure its imperial authority over Chile. (Weisbrot, 2001, p. 160)

The overall United States' intervention of 1973 was an unforgettable event in which the United States instigated Coup which killed probably 20,000 people violently. This unforgettable intervention of the United States had considered vicious in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Weisbrot, 2001, p. 162) Even a year later President Gerald Ford declared that:

“The United States had done in Chile was in the best interest of the people of Chile and certainly in our own best interest.” (Chile and Allende, 1974)

Moreover, in the result of this intervention, Allende had been replaced by Pinochet (an ally of the United States). He controlled the situation once again as normal, which even had been described by Jonathan Kendall of the New York Times:

“Almost immediately following the overthrow of Allende, loans and private capital from the United States began flowing into Chile again.” (Jonathan, 1973)

Moreover, after analyzing the intercession in both territories, it can be evaluated that the United States was highly deterrent in its own aims. Specifically, the intercessions which had been held in the 1960's and 1970's decade evaluated altogether different in nature. Such as the 1961 intercession was offensive in nature, in which the United States made a plan with Central intelligence agency and attacked Cuba, named Bay of Pig invasion. While the second one was defensive in nature, in which the United States had tried to defend them from the Soviet Union because they had deployed missiles in Cuba. The last, in 1973 decades was highly offensive in nature, in which the United States had prepared such major measures against Salvador Allende nationalization policy in order to re-secure their rights. So here, it can be evaluated that for the achievement of basic interest the United States had started these interventions which were altogether different in nature that established its hegemony in dynamic motion. So, that in Cuba the United States hegemony was completely a lifeless budge, nudge and prod, where one can see the flow of rising and then fall, while the position of hegemonic structure can be seen in Chile too, where firstly the United States faced rise later fall and then again in result of military coup.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of the above arguments, it can be concluded that the United States hegemony once again maintained in Chile. It clearly has been discussed that the United States hegemony was a dynamic structure in both Cuba and Chile. Just as in Cuba its hegemony emerged and even reached to peak but faded away due to Fidel Castro's nationalization policies. Till today its hegemony has not been established again in Cuba. While the situation of United States hegemony in Chile has been completely different. Likewise, in the beginning, the United States maintained its hegemony and then lost it through Allende nationalization policies. But in this case, the United States did not lose courage, once again emerged and maintained its everlasting hegemony in Chile.

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