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# Good Neighbor Renditions and the Enemy Alien: The Latin American Civilian Internees of World War II and the Integrity of the Good Neighbor Policy

Casey VanSise  
casey.vansise@colorado.edu

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# Good Neighbor Renditions and the Enemy Alien:

The Latin American Civilian Internees of World War II  
And the Integrity of the Good Neighbor Policy

*Defended on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016*



*Inter-American union takes another step forward: First Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Panama, 1939*

Casey VanSise, *History*

Advisor:

Fredy González, *History*

Committee:

Mithi Mukherjee, *History*

Daryl Maeda, *Ethnic Studies*

## **Abstract**

This paper concerns a series of “renditions” of ethnically Japanese, German and Italian internees from their countries of residency in Latin America to the custody of the United States during the Second World War which were enacted through the framework of the Good Neighbor Policy. Despite many revisionist popular and scholarly contentions that the Good Neighbor Policy was an inauthentic application of the rhetoric that it aspired to, which traditionally cast the United States’ relations with Latin America as characterized by an attitude of respectful rapprochement premised on mutual recognition of autonomy, this paper instead uses the case of the “renditions” to argue that Latin America’s diplomatic influence was at least on par with that of the United States during the Good Neighbor Policy, even under the stresses of wartime conditions. However, I also argue that the mutual influence that the Good Neighbor Policy afforded to the United States and Latin America in the context of the “renditions” did not universally benefit Latin American civilians, such as those internees held as a consequence of these policies.

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## Introduction

“M. Nottebohm appears in any event not to have lost, or not validly to have lost, his German nationality.”<sup>1</sup> Thus did the International Court of Justice determine that Friedrich Nottebohm, a man who claimed citizenship in Liechtenstein, had not been illegally transferred to the custody of the United States by his resident Guatemala during the Second World War, and dismissed a case that may otherwise have had knotty implications for the determination of national identity. The ramifications of the Nottebohm Case have doubtlessly invoked much discussion and debate within the purview of international law, as was evidenced when the case arose in my international law course during the preceding semester in spring 2015. However, that the Nottebohm Case has proven to be a prominent source of dispute on the role of identity within that discipline highlights the significance of extending one’s appraisal to more broadly examining the historical circumstances within which the case was situated.

This paper will concern the rendition of ethnically Japanese, German and Italian residents of assorted Latin American countries to the wartime custody of the United States as enemy aliens, conducted under the auspices of the Good Neighbor Program during the period of United States involvement in the Second World War (1942-45). Additionally, the paper will examine the use of these detainees in prisoner exchanges with the Axis powers and later postwar “repatriations” to the defeated combatant states from 1942-48.<sup>2</sup> I employ the terminology “rendition” and “Good Neighbor renditions” to the case-study of the wartime deportation and internment of those Latin American residents perceived to have ethnic ties to the principal Axis

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<sup>1</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala): Judgments of November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1953 (Preliminary Objection) and April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1955 (Second Phase of the Case)* (The Hague: International Court of Justice, 1955).

<sup>2</sup> Tetsuden Kashima, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2011), 305-314.

powers in order to consciously evoke comparisons to issues of contemporary relevance.<sup>3</sup> Using such terminology is quite appropriate to examining the phenomena associated with these wartime policies, since it corresponds to a central tenet articulated herein: that what occurred in the applicable cases was the mutual product of the United States' and Latin America's ambitions to secure certain social, political and economic gains. In this regard, "rendition" and "Good Neighbor renditions" are also appropriate terminologies inasmuch as they have come to imply a mutual arrangement between countries to transport and detain prisoners therebetween in the contemporary context, which is a crucial aspect of the policies that oft-used past terms such as "deportation" do not always adequately convey in and of themselves.

The utility of characterizing these policies as "Good Neighbor renditions" is demonstrated by such terminology's distinct applicability to discerning the nature of the broader framework of diplomatic initiatives that informed them: the Good Neighbor Policy. Due to many of the historical debates surrounding the content and character of the Good Neighbor Policy, there are often disputes over whether it either represented an assertion of United States *realpolitik* over the American continents with a veneer of idealistic showmanship or composed a genuine rapprochement with Latin America embodying liberal values. Scholars of the former persuasion may be especially inclined to allege that the deported internees were rendered to US custody as a principal result of diplomatic pressure by the United States. However, such case-studies as the discriminatory attitudes toward the Japanese in Peru, the lend-lease materials sought in Colombia, the security concerns prevalent in Costa Rica, and the land reform goals

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<sup>3</sup> John Christgau, *Enemies: World War II Alien Internment* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 182-183; Heidi Gurcke Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy: Remembering the United States' Latin-American Civilian Internment Program of World War II* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2008): While using variations of the term "rendition" is not completely novel, since John Christgau fleetingly uses the term "rendered" when describing the Good Neighbor renditions and thereby actively invokes a comparison with the contemporary occurrence of extraordinary renditions in the context of the Global War on Terror, and former internee Heidi Gurcke Donald also makes similar comparisons to post-9/11 phenomena, I maintain that my consistent application of this moniker is fairly unique among scholarship on these events.

pursued in Guatemala should affect an understanding that many Latin American governments were quite willing to comply with US requests, with the caveat that this occurred at least partly on their own terms and granted them complementary benefits. This information is accompanied by the knowledge that not every Latin American government necessarily rendered internees to US custody, but either opted to maintain their own domestic internment programs or did not collaborate with the United States at all on this aspect of wartime policy. In consequence, I assert that it is more reasonable to contend that Latin Americans at least played a mutually critical role in voluntarily facilitating the Good Neighbor renditions. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to assume that the United States' principal goals converged with Latin American desires to profoundly shape the contours of the Good Neighbor renditions, but this interaction of interests was conditioned by specific circumstances on a case-by-case basis. By investigating the Good Neighbor renditions, I likewise aim to illustrate that, though a genuine spirit of mutual respect may have pervaded between the United States and Latin American governments in a manner that was authentically characteristic of the rhetoric employed by assertions of the Good Neighbor Policy, such benefits did not necessarily extend to residents of the participating Latin American countries.

In the next chapter of my paper, I will examine the case-study of *Liechtenstein v. Guatemala* (the *Nottebohm Case* of 1955) in specific detail, giving a basic overview of the particulars of the international legal proceedings between Guatemala and Liechtenstein regarding the citizenship of Friedrich Nottebohm. I will examine the case's unique status as a complex historical account of an individual internee's association with a variety of nationalities and the manner in which his preferred nationality conflicted with the outside application of nationality by other parties as delineated within a diplomatic context of international law. Upon examining

the *Nottebohm Case* from this perspective, I will proceed to illuminate its appositeness to highlighting the dynamics of United States-Latin American diplomatic interactions within the context of the Good Neighbor Policy, indicating how they emphasize a mutualistic diplomatic relationship between these two regions. Subsequently, I will assert the significance of these dynamics by drawing upon the evidential discernments achieved by a close-examination of the *Nottebohm Case*.

In the second chapter, I will employ United States foreign relations documents to illuminate the individual circumstances of US-Latin American interactions contemporary to the Good Neighbor renditions in a diverse variety of different countries, from Cuba to Paraguay. Examining these documents will afford further insight into Latin American agency over the shape and form of the Good Neighbor renditions in the cases in which they participated. It will also provide information on countries that opted out of the Good Neighbor renditions to labor the point that Latin America remained autonomous from the imposition of United States influence over their internal affairs, even in unexpected circumstances. Collectively, the foreign relations documents will be presented to emphasize the significant role that Latin American states played in mediating the manner in which the Good Neighbor renditions were implemented on a selective basis that afforded them a high degree of control over its manifestation.

In the third chapter, I will examine the various situations that were imposed upon internees as a result of the Good Neighbor renditions and, in some cases, subsequent repatriation to Axis and post-Axis states. I will engage with the degree to which internees voluntarily consented to “repatriation” to the ancestral homelands of their families (i.e. the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis), return to the Latin American homelands in which they had previously resided, residency in the United States, or release to a third-party state as a desired outcome in various



cases. Two excellent primary case-studies are the Costa Rican Heidi Gurcke Donald's *We Were Not The Enemy* and the Peruvian Seiichi Higashide's *Adios to Tears*, both of which are personal memoirs recounting the wartime experiences of the authors and their families within the context of the Good Neighbor renditions.<sup>4</sup> In both of these cases, despite their deliberations on the matter, the respective internees ultimately opted to remain in the United States following the war, where they had been held at the Crystal City camp in Texas. Conversely, other internees settled in third-party states or were "repatriated" to their family's ancestral homelands. Often, internees were consigned to these three alternatives due to an apparent inability to re-secure residency in the Latin American states wherein they had previously resided.<sup>5</sup> The extent and degree to which internees found themselves in their ultimate respective circumstances voluntarily or out of coercion is a subject worthy of investigation, given its relevance to determining the authenticity of the benevolence that was belabored as part of the Good Neighbor Policy. I will analyze the resulting personal and diplomatic repercussions of these policies with a cognizance of the nationality complications that occurred as a result of the Good Neighbor renditions, while using these accounts to further corroborate the overarching idea that the Good Neighbor renditions were a mutualistic endeavor on the part of the United States and Latin American countries. However, I will use this chapter in particular to help deconstruct the notion that a diplomatic recognition of mutual self-determination in the United States and the respective countries in Latin America, despite being emblematic of the Good Neighbor Policy, benefitted everyone that was considered a citizen or resident of Latin America.

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<sup>4</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*; Seiichi Higashide, *Adios to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala): Judgments of November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1953 (Preliminary Objection) and April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1955 (Second Phase of the Case)* (The Hague: International Court of Justice, 1955), 25.

I will segue into my concluding epilogue by summarizing my intervention in the overall historiography on the Good Neighbor renditions and their implications for determining the actual attributes that were definitive of the Good Neighbor Policy. By reviewing the variety of evidence that I have recounted in other chapters, I will relate the importance of achieving a comprehension of the Good Neighbor renditions that considers Latin America's role in acting as an active facilitator of the wartime policies and their joint role in pursuing the renditions for their own unique purposes, even when these activities occurred at the peripheral expense of some other Latin Americans, as with the internees. I will situate this crucial context against the broader backdrop of United States-Latin American diplomatic relations as a means of demonstrating how a mindful incorporation of the insights provided by the Good Neighbor renditions can affect a better understanding of the dynamics that have and continue to inform these relations beyond the scope of the Good Neighbor Policy. The totality of the evidence will thusly be reviewed to demonstrate the overall significance of attaining a more comprehensive awareness of the factors that underpinned the Good Neighbor renditions from a historical perspective.

In absorbing all of these chapters, it is my intention that readers will become better acquainted with the relationship between the United States and Latin America by observing the dynamics on display in the Good Neighbor renditions, and that this will help to support an awareness that Latin American countries have not invariably been subject to the whims of the northern power that has held frequent sway over their affairs in different historical contexts. Rather, individualized interests in the respective countries composing the region traditionally identified as Latin America have often taken advantage of their relationship with the United States to enhance their own status and made acquiescence to United States policy goals conditional on the satisfaction of their own desires. Drawing from these informed conclusions, I

will highlight the limitations that problematize conceptions of Latin America's place in the international order *vis-à-vis* the United States as the systemic reflection of a "colonial matrix," as described by the scholar Walter Mignolo, and thereby demonstrate Latin America's authentic sovereignty as a component of the period of the Good Neighbor Policy.<sup>6</sup>

### **Chapter One: The *Nottebohm Case***

By all accounts, the case of Friedrich Nottebohm attests to the complexity of the circumstances that could confront internees of Japanese, German and Italian descent who were detained and delivered to United States custody as part of the Good Neighbor renditions. Nottebohm was a resident of Guatemala rendered to the United States and interned in Texas who claimed a citizenship in Liechtenstein that was affirmed by Liechtenstein's government, but was considered to be a German citizen by the Guatemalans who rendered him.<sup>7</sup> *Liechtenstein v. Guatemala*, known more informally as the *Nottebohm Case*, was heard before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1955, and is well-renowned in international legal circles for its implications regarding the consideration of nationality. Within the discipline of international law, it has been a subject of frequent and persistent contention.<sup>8</sup> However, dizzying as the details of the case may be, these details reinforce the idea that Latin American states were successful in securing foreign acceptance of the notion that residents of Japanese, German and Italian descent were a fundamentally unassimilable element in their society, which owed much to a legitimately mutualistic culture of *quid pro quo* between the United States and Latin American countries during the era of the Good Neighbor Policy.

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<sup>6</sup> Walter D. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), xiii.

<sup>7</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala): Judgments of November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1953 (Preliminary Objection) and April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1955 (Second Phase of the Case)* (The Hague: International Court of Justice, 1955).

<sup>8</sup> Alfred Michael Boll, *Multiple Nationality And International Law* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2007), 110: Specifically, the case has incurred significant controversy over the status of citizenship in international law.

In the context of the *Nottebohm Case*, both of the national litigants sought to achieve a tangible improvement in their relative positions resulting from their involvement in the case. The government of Liechtenstein sought damages for Guatemala's wartime activities against Friedrich Nottebohm, as well as a restitution of the rights, privileges and properties previously in his possession, holding that the actions against him had been wrongful on the basis of his ostensive citizenship in Liechtenstein.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, the government of Guatemala in turn submitted pleas that any applicable reparations should be directed solely to Nottebohm and be calculated in accordance with Guatemalan domestic law, associated with their dismissal of the notion that Nottebohm had legitimately acquired citizenship in Liechtenstein, in contrast to the views held by the government of Liechtenstein.<sup>10</sup> However, the "decision" reached by the ICJ in 1955 as a result of the proceedings associated with *Liechtenstein v. Guatemala* is more accurately characterized as a dismissal. Neither Guatemala nor Liechtenstein could technically be said to have explicitly gained from the ICJ's conclusions, and even less so Nottebohm, the hapless subject whose status the case was premised on, since the case was ultimately dismissed in a manner that left matters at a *status quo ante* impasse.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the inaction that the outcome exhibited was just as, if not more, significant in its political implications, inasmuch as it evidenced the reaffirmation of a theretofore implicit consensus regarding the Latin American internees who found themselves in thrall of larger geopolitical interests. This consensus precluded the notion that Latin American residents perceived to retain ties to their native

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<sup>9</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala)*, 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala)*, 9-10: Guatemala held that Liechtenstein and the firm of Nottebohm Hermanos did not have a case for damages, though Friedrich Nottebohm was personally entitled to claiming some damages. Furthermore, the Guatemalan government maintained that it was absolved from responsibility on acting in accordance with Decree No. 900, which contained law related to agrarian reform.

<sup>11</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala)*, 26: The ICJ determined that Guatemala was not under obligation to recognize Liechtenstein's recognition of Friedrich Nottebohm's citizenship therein, and that Liechtenstein's claim was therefore inadmissible since Liechtenstein did not have the right to extend diplomatic protection to Nottebohm. The court therefore maintained that it was not called upon to deal with any of the other pleas put forward by Guatemala or the Conclusions of the Parties besides those which it adjudicated on in this determination.

Germany, alongside members of the other minorities targeted as part of the Good Neighbor renditions, could lead existences complementary to the vaunted characteristics of a Latin America governed by the logic of *Latinidad* and the overall framework that this nationality qualification undergirded.

At the heart of both the *Nottebohm Case* and the consensus that it reflected were the nationalities alternately projected onto and/or personally endorsed by the individual Friedrich Nottebohm. Born in Hamburg, Germany on September 16<sup>th</sup> of 1881, Nottebohm spent much of his young life in Germany in the company of his eight siblings.<sup>12</sup> Two years spent in South Africa would come to portend an extra-German existence for Nottebohm, which was manifested when he moved to Guatemala in 1905 at the age of twenty-four, where he remained for much of his life.<sup>13</sup> In advance of his arrival in Guatemala, and in collaboration with his brothers, Arturo and Juan, Friedrich Nottebohm opened the aptly named firm *Nottebohm Hermanos*, which engaged in commerce and banking, while also devoting a significant subdivision of their business to coffee production through their acquisition of several plantation properties from the Juan Aparicio family, thereby forming the *Compañía de Plantaciones "Cecilia" Limitada*. In time, the Nottebohm brothers' operation came to manage one of the most successful coffee industries in Guatemala, and indeed in Central America at large, eventually becoming the second largest coffee producer in Guatemala by the 1930s.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala)*, 13; Cindy G. Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare: Have We Exorcised the Ghosts of WWII Detention Programs or Do They Still Haunt Guantanamo?" in *Chicago Kent Journal of International and Comparative Law* (2011).

<sup>13</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>14</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare"; Regina Wagner, Von Rothkirch, Cristóbal, and Stull, Eric, *The History of Coffee in Guatemala* (Bogotá, Colombia: Villegas Asociados, 2001), 129-130; Christiane Berth, "Aus Hamburg in die Kaffee-Welten Zentralamerikas: Die Nottebohm Hermanos in Guatemala," in *Aufbruch ins postkoloniale Zeitalter: Globalisierung und die außereuropäische Welt in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren*, eds. Sönke Kunkel and Christoph Meyer (Frankfurt, Germany: Campus Verlag, 2012).

The wealth and influence accrued by Friedrich Nottebohm and his brothers in Guatemala did not prevent Friedrich from travelling abroad, whether on business or vacation in Germany or elsewhere in other countries from 1905-1939. His other brother Dr. Hermann's newfound residence in Liechtenstein prompted Friedrich to make several trips to the small principality from 1931 onward.<sup>15</sup> Friedrich's ties to Germany by way of his family background and frequent visitations preceding the Second World War had already incited a degree of mistrust about him on the part of certain parties even prior to the onset of the momentous conflict that would come to shape the world at large and Friedrich more personally. During the First World War, *Nottebohm Hermanos* fell under suspicion by the United States government and was resultantly registered as an alien enemy by the office of the Alien Property Custodian through the invocation of the Trading with the Enemy Act (TWEA), leading to the seizure of its properties in the United States. *Nottebohm Hermanos* filed suit in the United States following the war, and was able to regain its properties in a settlement once the United States government had confirmed that the firm did not meet the qualifications to be classified as "enemy alien."<sup>16</sup>

One may readily speculate that the legacy of the First World War for the treatment of the Nottebohm family and their business interests may have been one motivating factor when Friedrich Nottebohm applied for citizenship in Liechtenstein during his travels abroad in Europe at the onset of the Second World War. This citizenship was granted via the receipt of his certificate of naturalization on October 20<sup>th</sup> of 1939, and formalized the renunciation of his German citizenship.<sup>17</sup> Upon eventually returning to Guatemala, Nottebohm informed the

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<sup>15</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>16</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare.": Following the First World War, the Nottebohms were able to convince the U.S. government that only long-term residents of Guatemala had any interest in Nottebohm Hermanos and that the company was not an enemy or ally of an enemy as classified by the TWEA.

<sup>17</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare.": *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala): Dissenting Opinion of Judge Read* (The Hague: International Court of Justice, 1955), 48-49: In the dissenting opinion that he appended to the case, Judge John Erskine Read posited that evidence indicated that Friedrich Nottebohm naturalized into

authorities of his acquired Liechtensteinian citizenship, and this change was initially formally acknowledged by Guatemalan authorities.<sup>18</sup> While others such as Friedrich's nephews, Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm, had managed to secure Guatemalan citizenship upon the passage of a new law that allowed native-born descendants of foreigners to acquire citizenship in 1938, Friedrich himself was ineligible due to his foreign origins and therefore consigned to obtaining citizenship elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately for Friedrich Nottebohm, obtaining citizenship in Liechtenstein was not enough to prevent his detention by Guatemalan authorities and subsequently his deportation to the United States in October 1943, following the earlier deportation of Kurt and Karl-Heinz to United States custody despite their acquired Guatemalan citizenship in January 1943.<sup>20</sup> This deportation ensued despite the objections of Liechtenstein, whose authorities communicated their affirmation of Friedrich Nottebohm's citizenship in Liechtenstein and their resulting disapproval of Nottebohm's arbitrary rendition to the United States through the Swiss embassy at the time.<sup>21</sup>

Friedrich Nottebohm, alongside his nephews, was held at Camp Kenedy in Texas until 1944, when they were transferred to Fort Lincoln in North Dakota.<sup>22</sup> In December 1943, Friedrich, Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm were offered a chance at "repatriation" in Germany by United States authorities, but all of them declined this offer due to ambitions of returning to Guatemala at some point.<sup>23</sup> From December 1945 to January 1946, deliberations as to whether Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm could return to Guatemala took place, ultimately affecting the

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Liechtenstein citizenship not as an expedient means of being considered a non-German national by Guatemala, but in response to his previous experiences with the United States during the First World War, since there would appear to have been little anticipation that Guatemala would break its neutrality and align itself with the Allied states against the Axis powers at the time when compared to speculation that the United States might pursue this course.

<sup>18</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>19</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>20</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>21</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>22</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>23</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

outcome that both were permitted to return to Guatemala accounting for their citizenship there.<sup>24</sup> However, Frederich Nottebohm was not permitted to return to Guatemala upon his own release from US detention on January 22, 1946, and he therefore made Liechtenstein his place of residence.<sup>25</sup> Any attempts by Friedrich Nottebohm to resecure his residency in Guatemala were only complicated further by the passage of Decree Law No. 689 in Guatemala by 1949, which retroactively excluded anyone considered to be an “enemy alien” who had changed their citizenship after October 1938 from the benefits of having a legitimate claim to separate nationality.<sup>26</sup>

It is where the issue of citizenship is concerned that the pertinence of Friedrich Nottebohm’s circumstances to the eponymous case that inspired such international controversy becomes apparent. Insinuations that Friedrich Nottebohm changed his citizenship merely for practical reasons, but did not effectively abandon any ties to his native Germany, are rife throughout the relevant documents concerning the *Nottebohm Case*. Therefore, the actual relevancy of Nottebohm’s change of citizenship became a focal point of fervid questioning. For example, the submission on the part of the government of Guatemala alleges that “Mr. Nottebohm appears to have solicited Liechtenstein nationality fraudulently, that is to say, with the sole object of acquiring the status of a neutral national before returning to Guatemala, and without any genuine intention to establish a durable link, excluding German nationality, between

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<sup>24</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm’s Nightmare.": In December 1945, Karl-Heinz Nottebohm was released by the United States and permitted to return to Guatemala. The government of Guatemala also requested the release of Kurt Nottebohm, which US District Court Judge Vogel acquiesced to on January 10, 1946 by ordering the release of Kurt, after which time Kurt was promptly charged with having an unlawful presence in the United States and was given ninety days to return to Guatemala.

<sup>25</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm’s Nightmare.": When released, Friedrich travelled to New Orleans to apply for permission to return to Guatemala, but his readmission was refused by Guatemalan authorities. When Friedrich appealed the Guatemalan Foreign Ministry’s decision to cancel his registration as a citizen of Liechtenstein, his attempts were unsuccessful, and he was consigned to living in Liechtenstein given his citizenship there.

<sup>26</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm’s Nightmare.": The Guatemalan government took the official position that it was entitled to expropriate Frederich Nottebohm’s property in Guatemala without compensation since he was an enemy alien.



the Principality and himself.”<sup>27</sup> Perhaps more surprisingly, the ICJ’s own articulation of the final outcome of the proceedings more bluntly asserts that “naturalization was asked for not so much for the purpose of obtaining a legal recognition of Nottebohm’s membership in fact in the population of Liechtenstein, as it was to enable him to substitute for his status as a national of a belligerent State that of a national of a neutral State, with the sole aim of thus coming within the protection of Liechtenstein but not of becoming wedded to its traditions, its interests, its way of life or of assuming the obligations—other than fiscal obligations—and exercising the rights pertaining to the status thus acquired.”<sup>28</sup> While the ICJ technically determined that the case should be dismissed, this outcome aligned with Guatemala’s national position regarding Nottebohm’s intrinsic identity as a German national, as made evident by the above statements.

If the International Court of Justice implicitly acknowledged the validity of Guatemala’s position that Nottebohm’s deportation to United States custody was legitimate due to his recognition as a German national, to what can one attribute Guatemala’s continued justification of their actions in detaining and rendering Nottebohm abroad on the pretext that he maintained a German identity? It is notable that his nephews, Kurt and Karl-Heinz, were permitted to return to Guatemala after the war, whereas Friedrich remained in exile from his historic country of residence. One might initially hypothesize that these circumstances were accounted for by some divergence in their respective status as perceived security concerns outside of custody. However, this notion is dispelled by the evidence, which raises a myriad of complications. For instance, a November 1945 dispatch identifies Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm as being considered among the five most important internees from Guatemala representing ostensive Axis interests therein by the United States embassy in Guatemala, before seemingly contradictorily

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<sup>27</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala)*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala)*, 26: The International Court of Justice submitted their decision by a count of eleven votes to three, declaring the claim submitted by the government of Liechtenstein to be inadmissible.

proceeding with the statement that “there is no evidence to show that [Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm] were Nazi Party members or that they collaborated with the Nazi Party and its inimical activities. In some instances, evidence has been produced to show that the persons concerned were at least personally or passively anti-Nazi.”<sup>29</sup> Even earlier in 1944, a civil enemy alien hearing board in the United States determined that Karl-Heinz posed no wartime security threat.<sup>30</sup> However, the case of their uncle Friedrich provides little contrast with the evidence regarding Kurt and Karl-Heinz on this basis, since a subsequent memorandum from the United States embassy in Guatemala in December 1945 contained information that “Nottebohm’s name does not appear on the Nazi party list believed to be authentic, and there is no reliable evidence to indicate that he was a member of the party or even a sympathizer of Hitler.”<sup>31</sup> In addition to this report, authorities of the United States government expressed “grave doubt” regarding the credibility of a letter allegedly containing Friedrich Nottebohm’s assertions that he would “fight for the greatness of Germany and its cause,” which was speculated to corroborate Guatemalan claims against Friedrich to justify the legal confiscation of his properties in Guatemala.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it would seem untoward to suggest that the cases of Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm on the one hand, and Friedrich Nottebohm on the other, were divergent in their status as perceived security threats. Rather, the collective evidence would suggest that none of the Nottebohms interned as part of the renditions were even considered to be serious hemispheric security threats during and even preceding the time of their release.

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<sup>29</sup> Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign Against The Germans of Latin America in World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 167: The embassy statements additionally and frankly emphasize the weakness of the cases outlined against the Nottebohms, alongside their general manager, Martin Knoetzsch, who was also interned as part of the Good Neighbor renditions.

<sup>30</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>31</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>32</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

However, this in turn raises another question as to why the Nottebohms even continued to be held under internment in the custody of the United States when none were actually considered legitimate security threats at their release, and in the case of Karl-Heinz, even for a significant duration of his detention in the United States. On this count, the determination of the civil enemy alien hearing board regarding Karl-Heinz Nottebohm is telling in its assessment: “It appears that the only reason for keeping [Karl-Heinz] in internment is the contention of the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala and the U.S. State Department that his release would be detrimental to the economic policy of the United States in Central America.”<sup>33</sup> The economic motivation depicted in the hearing board’s determination also corresponds to the later 1945 embassy dispatch, which states that the “five most important internees [including Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm represent] major Axis commercial and/or agricultural interests in this country.”<sup>34</sup> As has already been noted, this same embassy dispatch explicitly outlined the implausibility of the Nottebohms’ supposed ties to the Third Reich, but barring the flagrant contradiction embodied by the dispatch’s varied contents on the affiliations of the five mentioned internees, the commonality of economic motivations recurs in the dispatch, as with the hearing board’s determination in 1944.

While these statements solely concern the nephews Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm as opposed to their uncle, one will recall that Friedrich Nottebohm was an important co-founder of the commerce and banking firm *Nottebohm Hermanos*, its coffee-producing subsidiary *Compañía de Plantaciones “Cecilia” Limitada*, and other enterprises. Even prior to the onset of the United States’ involvement in the Second World War, the United Kingdom added *Nottebohm Hermanos* to a roster of blacklisted companies on November 1, 1939, and the United States would later follow suit on July 17, 1941 by adding three Nottebohm-affiliated companies to a

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<sup>33</sup> Buys, “Nottebohm’s Nightmare.”

<sup>34</sup> Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 167.

“Proclaimed List of Certain Blocked Nationals,” accompanying a wave of bad publicity surrounding Nottebohm’s holdings in Central America.<sup>35</sup> By December 3, 1941, four days in advance of the Pearl Harbor attacks and the subsequent formal United States entry into the Second World War, Nottebohm Banking Co. and its subsidiaries had been forced into closure due to their position on the blacklist.<sup>36</sup> By 1942, the United States had also financially blacklisted Frederich, Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm themselves, alongside several other businesses affiliated therewith.<sup>37</sup>

Thusly, the totality of the evidence appears to vindicate the notion that the United States’ chief motivation for their activities against residents of Japanese, German and Italian ancestry in Latin America and their holdings, as with the Nottebohms in Guatemala, was economic in nature. Even preceding their involvement in the Second World War, the United States appeared to act in accordance with a notion of economic *realpolitik* that was not conducive with a spirit of equalized competition, wherein perceived foreign investments were targeted. Though the United States may not have largely been aware of the implausibility of the notion that the Nottebohms were acting in alignment with the Axis cause until 1944 at latest, the presented evidence would nevertheless suggest that the United States’ targeting of the Nottebohms, and by extension other alleged Axis affiliates and their holdings in Latin America, was conducted on the basis of diminishing their economic activities in the Western Hemisphere. This idea is in contrast to such hypotheses as advanced by proponents such as David R. Mowry that allege that the policy lead-up to the Good Neighbor renditions was affected predominately due to concerns of subversion

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<sup>35</sup> Special Cable to The New York Times, "Questions Nazi Purchase: Salvadorean Press Comments on Acquiring of Large Estate," *New York Times*, May 11, 1941; Buys, "Nottebohm’s Nightmare"

<sup>36</sup> "German Company in Guatemala Closes," *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1941.

<sup>37</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm’s Nightmare.": In 1942, the US government added Friederich and his nephews, Karl-Heinz and Kurt Nottebohm, to the US blacklist, alongside more family businesses, including the Nottebohm Banking Corporation. Much of the Nottebohms’ collective property located in the United States was later deemed to be vested in the US government, signifying that it could be held, used, administered, liquidated or sold by the United States in any manner that the US desired.

following from the precedent of the First World War.<sup>38</sup> Alongside both the wartime and post-war textual evidence to this effect, economic motivations are reflected by the fact that the United States blacklisted the Nottebohms and their various enterprises well in advance of its own entry into the Second World War, complicating the idea that security concerns were a principal concern to the degree that inhibiting economic competition by foreign powers was. Additionally, the United States may have conducted the blacklist procedure on the Nottebohms and others as a gesture of open solidarity with the United Kingdom, thereby helping to consolidate the emerging “special relationship” between the United States and the United Kingdom that would grow in proportion following the United States’ entry into the war.<sup>39</sup> Lastly and less ambiguously, the United States also apparently sought to benefit from the release of United States prisoners held by the Axis powers through prisoner exchanges and “repatriations”, though the consensual nature of this process exemplified by the Nottebohms’ mutual ability to opt out of a “repatriation” to Germany suggest that this was also merely a periphery goal.

While this information has added to discerning the role that the United States played in shaping the Good Neighbor renditions, and specifically the case against the Nottebohms, as concerns the influence of economic motivations, the cultivation of geopolitical alliances and the potential for prisoner exchanges *vis-à-vis* countering the threat of subversion, it does not answer the earlier query as to why Guatemala was inclined to readmit Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm, but not their uncle Friedrich. Moreover, by extension, it does not directly address Guatemala’s motivations for participating in the Good Neighbor renditions. However, what this information

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<sup>38</sup> David P. Mowry, *German Clandestine Activities in South America in World War II* (Ft. Meade, MD: Office of Archives and History of the National Security Agency and Central Security Service, 1989), v: David Mowry presents a thorough account of German intelligence organizations engaged in clandestine work in South America and reports on the US response to the perceived threat. This perception on the part of the United States was far greater than any actual danger, according to Mowry.

<sup>39</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

has yielded is critical context for assessing whether Guatemalan objectives strictly aligned with United States objectives in manifesting the Good Neighbor renditions, which might suggest an unequal or coercive partnership with the United States as a dominant force, or whether Guatemala pursued the Good Neighbor renditions to achieve their own unique ends, even though these ends would likely still be complementary to United States interests. As the succeeding information will demonstrate, the latter notion that Guatemala pursued the Good Neighbor renditions for purposes that complemented, but did not always directly align with, United States interests is more plausible.

While I have contended that the United States government was principally motivated by a desire to reduce economic competition from perceived (Axis) foreigners, as well as to shore up alliance support with nation-states such as the United Kingdom and to supply internees for potential prisoner exchanges with the Axis powers, Guatemala's motivations for both participating in the Good Neighbor renditions and their specific attempts to exclude Friedrich Nottebohm from his previous place of residence appear to be rooted in other factors notwithstanding the United States' goals and desires. This distinction between Guatemalan and United States motivations is highlighted by the separate treatment of Kurt and Karl-Heinz as opposed to their uncle Friedrich. When Karl-Heinz Nottebohm was promptly released from United States custody in December 1945 and permitted to return to Guatemala, contrary to the recommendations of the United States embassy in Guatemala, the government of Guatemala also petitioned for the release of Kurt Nottebohm, and his release was granted on January 10, 1946 by order of a United States district court.<sup>40</sup> Conversely, following Friedrich Nottebohm's release from United States custody on January 22, 1946, Friedrich attempted to apply for permission to reobtain his residency in Guatemala, but was turned down several times by Guatemalan

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<sup>40</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

authorities, and the passage of Decree Law No. 689 in 1949 only consolidated Friedrich's inability to return to Guatemala as a resident.<sup>41</sup> These divergent approaches by the Guatemalan government suggested that the Guatemalans successfully expressed their own diplomatic requests and expectations to the United States even when these did not correspond to the United States' activities (i.e. by securing Kurt Nottebohm's release from United States custody), and that their objectives did not always actively align with United States actions (i.e. since they refused to readmit Friedrich Nottebohm to Guatemala upon his release by United States authorities).

It is also worth noting that United States authorities suspected direct Guatemalan involvement in attempting to erroneously portray Friedrich Nottebohm as a potential German co-belligerent at an earlier juncture. This was due to United States suspicions that the Guatemalans were attempting to expropriate Friedrich Nottebohm's property using the dubious letter advanced as evidence for his Axis sympathies.<sup>42</sup> Though Kurt and Karl-Heinz Nottebohm were not subjected to the degree of scrutiny and opprobrium that their uncle was during and following the Good Neighbor renditions, it is also worth recalling that while Kurt and Karl-Heinz were born in Guatemala and ultimately acquired the right of *jus soli* citizenship, their uncle Friedrich was born abroad in Hamburg, Germany long preceding his arrival in Guatemala and never attempted to secure citizenship in Guatemala to complement his residency there. This distinction was likely critical to the manner in which the nephews and the uncle were respectively treated by the Guatemalan government. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that the Nottebohm family residing in Guatemala only had sixteen of their plantation estates returned to them in 1962 following the death of Friedrich Nottebohm, in a reversal of many of the preceding

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<sup>41</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

<sup>42</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare."

expropriations that dispossessed ethnic Germans of their assets and properties using a wartime pretext; these expropriations had later been exploited under General Carlos Castillo Armas in 1956 to justify the nationalization of these seized wartime properties following the determination in the *Nottebohm Case*.<sup>43</sup>

What this evidence would suggest is that Guatemala pursued the Good Neighbor renditions in part due to their benefits in facilitating land reform and property/asset seizures, which helped to accrue financial benefits to the Guatemalan state. This proto-*Dependencia* understanding of Guatemalan conditions may have eschewed affording rights to perceived foreigners such as Friedrich Nottebohm to have massive financial and property holdings in Guatemala, while acknowledging the rights of native-born Guatemalans such as Kurt and Karl-Heinz to maintain their properties in Guatemala.<sup>44</sup> This was quite likely premised on the notion that native-born Guatemalans were more likely to have more investment in the Guatemalan economy, as opposed to foreigners such as Friedrich who might distribute their holdings abroad as well (such as in Liechtenstein), which would also help to account for the Guatemalan government's decision to return property to those Nottebohm citizens residing in Guatemala upon the death of Friedrich.

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<sup>43</sup> Buys, "Nottebohm's Nightmare.": Following the ICJ's decision, the Guatemalan Congress voted on November 23, 1956 to expropriate all German property without compensation, prompting a diplomatic spat between Guatemala and West Germany that resulted in West Germany's refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Guatemala. The Guatemalan government determined that virtually all German property confiscated during World War II would be registered permanently as state property to pay for Guatemala's "war damages." In consequence, Friedrich Nottebohm was stripped of all of his Guatemalan properties and received no compensation for his loss, *cf.* Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 187.

<sup>44</sup> Raymond D. Duvall, "Dependence and Dependencia Theory: Notes Toward Precision of Concept and Argument" in *International Organization* 32 (1978): *Dependencia*, or dependency theory, posits an asymmetric relationship between a core composed of developed, and predominately Western, states (in the form of a "Global North") and a periphery composed of developing, and predominately non-Western, states (in the form of a "Global South"). Dependency theory grew especially prevalent in Latin America, where proponents used it as an analytical framework to justify concentrating industries in the domestic economy rather than relying on foreign imports from more developed economies. In this sense, Guatemala may have favored those with *jus soli* citizenship, who tended to be more integrated into the domestic economy (as with the native-born Kurt and Karl-Heinz), rather than foreign residents that maintained ties to outside economies (such as Friedrich, who had historic financial ties to countries such as Liechtenstein, Germany and the United States).



In summary, the presented evidence would suggest that it is reasonable to conclude that the divergent responses to and treatment of Friedrich Nottebohm and his nephews by the respective countries of the United States and Guatemala imply that the United States and Guatemala pursued the Good Neighbor renditions for different though complementary reasons in the case of the Nottebohms. The evidence from this case-study of the Nottebohms would suggest that while the United States participated in the Good Neighbor renditions to affect the reduction of hemispheric economic competition, to geopolitically reach out to other states and to accumulate internees for prisoner exchanges with the Axis powers, Guatemala did so specifically to achieve nationalist advancement through facilitating land reform, property seizures and asset expropriation, as a means of accruing exclusive benefits to the Guatemalan economy. While the attention lavished on the *Nottebohm Case (Liechtenstein v. Guatemala)* makes it a useful exemplar of the diplomatic contents that undergirded the Good Neighbor renditions and the effects that these diplomatic arrangements had down to the individual level, it is useful to ascertain whether the evidence of mutually beneficial reasons for engaging in the Good Neighbor renditions on the part of the United States and Latin American countries are borne out by other cases.

## **Chapter Two: Diplomats and Policymakers**

While the *Nottebohm Case* illustrates the manner in which United States and Latin American motivations for participation in the Good Neighbor renditions highlight a mutualistic culture of diplomatic respect within the context of the Good Neighbor Policy era, other evidence also lends credence to the idea that the Good Neighbor renditions were manifested as the mutual product of United States and Latin American objectives, rather than merely representing a hallmark of United States dominance over the region. In particular, evidence of this

characterization is prevalent in various United States foreign relations documents, alongside other corresponding and accompanying pieces of evidence. Taken together, this evidence reaffirms the conclusion that Latin America's interests did not tend to be subordinate to those of the United States, but rather tended to complement United States objectives in the context of the Good Neighbor Policy. Indeed, an examination of the totality of the evidence leads one to surmise that Latin America played a critical role in shaping the manifestation of the Good Neighbor renditions in an assortment of cases.

United States foreign relations documents from as early as 1939 that highlight the significance of having a source of prisoners for use in exchanges with wartime opponents confirm the importance of prisoner exchanges as a distinct United States policy objective that would carry over into the later Good Neighbor renditions. Under the heading of "The Repatriation of Americans and Others from Belligerent Countries," a telegram by Secretary of State Cordell Hull to the United States ambassador in France from September 29, 1939 reads

while there is still time and before [the practice of interning civilian enemy aliens *en masse*] comes into being, this Government earnestly hopes that the belligerent governments will give thought to means of avoiding this harshness to civilians, perhaps by mutual release for repatriation through neutral countries of adult males under parole not to bear arms, such paroles to be reported to the enemy government or governments through the Powers representing their interests in enemy countries.<sup>45</sup>

Ironically, this proposition foreshadowed the prisoner exchange aspect of the Good Neighbor renditions by providing an early template for the "mutual release for repatriation through neutral countries" of interned civilians. At first glance, this might lead one to conclude that the United States was more instrumental in shaping the dimensions of the Good Neighbor renditions than Latin American states were, since it had seemingly already formulated a method for the conduct

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<sup>45</sup> United States Department of State, *General, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1939, vol. I*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), 642: In the telegram, Hull also acknowledges that civilian internees who are considered to be enemy aliens should be treated according to the same principles that prisoners of war are in accordance with the Convention of Geneva of 1929.

of prisoner exchanges. However, Hull's emphasis on avoiding the practice of placing civilian enemy aliens under internment from the outset, and thereby foregoing the detention of enemy aliens, highlights United States opposition to the practice of effectively taking civilians as "hostages" to be traded, quite unlike what occurred during the Good Neighbor renditions.<sup>46</sup>

To what motivations can one then attribute the decision to render civilians of Japanese, German and Italian descent from various Latin American countries to the custody of the United States? It is worth noting that several Latin American countries maintained their own internment programs in cooperation with the United States, rather than deporting their citizens to the custody of the United States as part of the renditions. While twelve Latin American countries documentably participated in the Good Neighbor renditions, the states of Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela purportedly either maintained their own independent internment programs or did not collaborate with the United States at all.<sup>47</sup> Given that these countries maintained the integrity of independence in how to conduct their own affairs and manage their own residents, one may be inclined to speculate that those countries that did participate in the renditions acquiesced to the application of United States pressure. However, on the basis of the evidence, it would seem that those countries that would end up participating in the Good Neighbor renditions not only tended to do so willingly, but actively molded and used the renditions as an opportunity to facilitate their own objectives.

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<sup>46</sup> United States Department of State, *General, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1939, vol. I.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), 642.

<sup>47</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, vol. IX* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 297, cf. Selfa A. Chew, *Uprooting Community: Japanese Mexicans, World War II, and the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2015), 152-184: The Mexican-American borderlands scholar Selfa Chew has recently asserted that the case of a Japanese-Mexican family detained at the Crystal City internment camp in Texas complicates the pre-standing viewpoint that Mexico was not a participant in the Good Neighbor renditions, but had solely maintained its own domestic internment program in cooperation with the United States.

Indeed, one key section of an airgram dated from June 21, 1943 that is also attributed to the Secretary of State Cordell Hull implies that even the prisoner exchanges associated with the Good Neighbor renditions were enacted partly to support Latin American priorities tied to their participation in support of United States endeavors.<sup>48</sup> In the relevant section, Hull states that it was

the [State] Department's intention to obtain the release of the various officials of the American Republics who are held by the enemy in Europe and to discharge certain obligations to certain of the other American Republics to repatriate enemy nationals deported from those Republics for repatriation prior to the collapse of the exchange. The Department's proposal was drawn up in a manner to permit any collateral negotiations by other of the American Republics within the general framework of its proposal which would satisfy their requirements without reopening the question of a general exchange.<sup>49</sup>

That Hull makes reference to a “satisfaction of requirements” necessary to secure Latin American support for the objectives of the United States associated with the prisoner exchange aspect of the Good Neighbor renditions is quite telling in and of itself. It suggests a culture of mutualistic diplomacy between the United States and participating Latin American states that is relatively devoid of the Thucydidean dynamic often held to be characteristic of relations between the United States and Latin America.<sup>50</sup> However, Hull's elaboration that the “repatriations” of “enemy nationals” deported from participating Latin American states was enacted partly to secure the reciprocal repatriation of Latin American officials being held captive by the Axis powers is even more intriguing. This evidence would suggest that the United States was not

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<sup>48</sup> G.R. Berridge and Lorna Lloyd, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy, Third Edition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 11: According to the *Dictionary of Diplomacy*, an airgram is defined as a formal diplomatic communication sent in the diplomatic pouch [i.e. a container in which official mail is sent to or from an embassy without being subject to customs inspection] by air when a cable was considered too laborious (if encoding was needed) or too expensive (due to its length).

<sup>49</sup> United States Department of State, *General, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. I.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), 96.

<sup>50</sup> In Thucydides' account of the “Melian Dialogue” between the Athenians and the neutral Melians during the Peloponnesian War that took place between Athenian- and Spartan-aligned forces, he imparts the classic phrase that “the strong do what they can, while the weak suffer what they must” in accordance with the dictates of *realpolitik*, which is apparently quite contrary to the spirit of the diplomatic arrangements between the more powerful United States and Latin American countries that appears to be indicated by Hull's airgram.

uniquely devoted to utilizing those Latin American residents detained as part of the Good Neighbor renditions for the purpose of facilitating its own prisoner exchanges, but was similarly obligated to assist Latin American countries in re-securing their desired nationals from Axis custody using the deported residents for the exchanges.

The implications of Cordell Hull's airgram of 1943 are quite potent for contemplating the possibility that the Good Neighbor renditions evince evidence that the Good Neighbor Policy secured coequal diplomatic outcomes between the United States and the Latin American countries rhetorically embraced as part of the outreach associated with the policy. This is not least because these implications suggest that a key motivation traditionally attributed to the United States for enacting the prisoner exchanges may have also been the product of Latin American ambitions to mutually secure the release of their own officials, which complicates ideas that the prisoner exchanges were exclusively affected by the United States. Additional evidence corroborates the assertion that the United States was not necessarily essential to manifesting the prisoner exchanges associated with the Good Neighbor renditions. For instance, the head of the Special War Problems Division and Assistant Secretary of State, Breckenridge Long, noted that Latin American states "sent [the United States] Axis nationals only on the basis of our solemn promise to repatriate them [to Axis states]."<sup>51</sup> When tensions over the repatriation of the deported internees arose between the United States and Latin America, it is clear that Latin American states were able to leverage their cooperation with United States objectives as part of the Good Neighbor Program to their advantage. This was observed by another official of the Special War Problems Division, Albert Clattenburg, who expressed concerns that a breakdown in the prisoner exchanges could threaten Latin American cooperation with United States security

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<sup>51</sup> Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 196-197.

measures.<sup>52</sup> When faced with protestations on the part of countries such as Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru that the United States was not honoring its commitment to repatriate internees to the Axis states within due course, Breckinridge Long accordingly advised that the United States should send the internees to the Axis states as soon as possible, since the internees were “much less dangerous to [the United States] in Germany than they are south of the Rio Grande.”<sup>53</sup>

What the assorted evidence therefore suggests is that Latin Americans not only helped to shape the trajectory of the prisoner exchanges with the Axis powers, but that they were arguably the principal contributors to the prisoner exchange dimension of the Good Neighbor renditions. Recalling that the case of the Nottebohm family appeared to correspond to an overall United States respect for the desires of internees regarding voluntary repatriation, it would appear that Latin American states had a more vested stake in pursuing the prisoner exchanges than even the United States did. Thusly, rather than largely acting in acquiescence to the desires of the United States as other sources suggest, Latin American states actually actively sought to ensure that repatriations were affected as part of the Good Neighbor renditions.<sup>54</sup> That Latin America took such a proactive role in shaping the contours of the prisoner exchanges contrary to notions that the United States was most prominently responsible for advocating prisoner exchange encourages scholars to investigate the other ways in which Latin Americans were equally, if not more, influential in manifesting several of the policies associated with the Good Neighbor

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<sup>52</sup> Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 197.

<sup>53</sup> Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 196-197.

<sup>54</sup> Clinton Harvey Gardiner, *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate: The Peruvian Japanese and the United States* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1981), 56-57: Gardiner makes note of interdepartmental furor between the State Department and the Justice Department in the United States regarding the desirability and legality of “repatriating” prior Latin American residents to the Axis states, including Breckenridge Long’s alignment with the State Department in advocating for repatriation. However, Gardiner’s summary overlooks the crucial context regarding the State Department’s initial reluctance to advocate for repatriation, such as Long’s assertion that the situation he was confronted with was “like a pitchfork with me on the sharp end,” accounting for the contrasting pressures created in part by the persistence of Latin American states in demanding repatriation, see Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 197.

renditions. Significant to addressing these understandings is achieving a fuller understanding of what assorted Latin American countries sought to gain from their role in the Good Neighbor renditions.

Once more, evidence is readily acquired from United States foreign relations documents, from which one can infer a great deal about Latin America's unique role in helping to mold the specific form taken by the Good Neighbor renditions. In particular, several diplomatic communications make allusion to the role played by Latin American states in exploiting the Good Neighbor renditions to suit their own domestic policy objectives, and prominent among these objectives is land reform and expropriation of the holdings of those interned as part of the renditions. In the case of Guatemala, this is highlighted by several communications between the Chargé in Guatemala, Gerald A. Drew, and Secretary of State Cordell Hull in early 1943, within which Drew makes reference to domestic Guatemalan efforts to seize properties and holdings of internees without compensating their owners, and thereby attempting to affect nationalization of these properties and holdings; from Drew's assessments, one gathers that Guatemalan aims do not conflict with United States objectives.<sup>55</sup> However, in a separate communication from the United States ambassador in Guatemala, Fay Allen Des Portes, to Secretary of State Hull on April 20, 1943, Des Portes makes note of the fact that "[President Jorge Ubico] stated that the Guatemalan government could not constitutionally proceed to expropriation of Proclaimed List properties at the present time but at the Peace Conference his Government would present to the Axis Powers a bill for claims arising from the War which would be in excess of the value of the

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<sup>55</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 346-355: In particular, Gerald A. Drew devotes much of the discussion to the matter of retaining extant levels of Guatemalan coffee exports to the United States under new management.

Proclaimed List properties.”<sup>56</sup> Des Portes’ dissatisfaction with Ubico’s proposal is evident in his succeeding remarks, wherein he notes Ubico’s divergence from the previous assertion that the Guatemalan government would promptly proceed with expropriation, and declares that he finds Guatemala’s change in attitude to be inscrutable at the time of writing.<sup>57</sup> What one can gather from Des Portes’ exchange with Hull is that the internal domestic processes of the Guatemalan government were not wholly subordinated to cooptation by United States interests, and that the Guatemalan government exercised much of its own initiative in affecting outcomes as part of the processes associated with the Good Neighbor renditions, including expropriation and land reform.

Similar evidence is found in communications between the ambassador in Nicaragua, James B. Stewart, and the Secretary of State on August 31, 1943, wherein Ambassador Stewart discusses the legislative process in Nicaragua with respect to attempts to facilitate the expropriation of property and holdings associated with the Good Neighbor renditions.<sup>58</sup> The theme of internal deliberations within Latin American countries complicating United States objectives associated with the confiscation of properties and holdings recurs in this case as well, albeit more subtly than in the example of Ambassador Des Portes’ characterizations of the situation in Guatemala. While Stewart reports that Dr. Leopoldo Arguello Gil, an attorney for the Ministry of *Hacienda*, had consulted the Minister of *Hacienda* and one of his staff members, and advocated conceding to several changes to facilitate the process of expropriation that were ultimately consented to within the Nicaraguan government, Stewart nevertheless makes note of

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<sup>56</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 355-356: President Ubico also stated that the responsibility for payment for the expropriated properties demanded by owners would be deferred to the German government, which would be forced to compensate the owners for their losses.

<sup>57</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 356.

<sup>58</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 636-639.



the fact that the Nicaraguan House Committee did not recede from its recommendation to permit hearings for affected parties of the expropriations.<sup>59</sup> Stewart also consistently mentions that both he and his staff had assiduously maintained a policy of noninterference in these internal deliberations of the Nicaraguan government consistent with official State Department policy.<sup>60</sup> Collectively, this evidence contains the implication akin to that present in the case of Guatemala that Latin American countries such as Nicaragua possessed the autonomy to extensively contribute to the form of the expropriations that were undertaken accompanying the Good Neighbor renditions.

In some cases, Latin American governments were quite open in their unwillingness to assent to the requests of the United States as part of the Good Neighbor renditions. For example, this was the case in Costa Rica, wherein the United States embassy took exception to the activities of the Spanish minister Angel de la Mora y Arenas in ostensibly refusing to subject \$141,895.25 worth of Italian government funds in his custody that were being used to bankroll the subsistence of Italian residents of Costa Rica to the control of the *Junta de Custodia* therein.<sup>61</sup> However, according to Ambassador Fay Allen Des Portes in an airgram from June 1, 1943:

while this Embassy has maintained the position that the Spanish Minister's views should not be permitted to affect or restrict the Costa Rican Government's sovereign right to deal with enemy property within its territory, the Costa Rican Government, many of whose officials maintain cordial and friendly personal relations with the Spanish Minister, has tended to accede to his wishes in the matter for the following reasons: 1. The funds in question are deposited in the name of the Spanish Minister only and not in his name as representative of Italian interests here. Thus, technically, it may be interpreted that the funds are either his own, or the property of the Spanish Government. This circumstance

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<sup>59</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 638.

<sup>60</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 636-639.

<sup>61</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 100-123.

has been used by the Spanish Minister in order to bolster his bargaining position; 2. The Spanish Minister has indicated that to place “his” funds under the control of the Alien Property Custodian (Junta de Custodia) would stigmatize him as an enemy of Costa Rica and would be interpreted as an unfriendly act toward him and his government; [and] 3. The [Costa Rican] Minister of Foreign Affairs is particularly desirous of maintaining cordial relations with the Spanish Government.<sup>62</sup>

That Costa Rican officials prioritized their relationship with the neutral, though arguably Axis-sympathetic, Spanish government and its diplomatic representative in their country over their relationship with the United States concerning their role in the Good Neighbor renditions highlights the degree to which Latin American acquiescence to the Good Neighbor renditions was often conditional. In this regard, Latin America clearly had an important role in affecting the form that the Good Neighbor renditions tended to take.

It is equally worth noting that even cases exhibiting an ostensive Latin American government desire to acquiesce to United States pressures could often be accounted for by an accompanying desire to domestically exploit this acquiescence. Such a case is demonstrated by the correspondence between the ambassador in El Salvador, Walter Thurston, and the Secretary of State on June 26, 1943 regarding Salvadoran attitudes toward conforming to United States attempts to affect the freeze of assets and restrict the sale of properties belonging to firms or individuals on the Proclaimed List.<sup>63</sup> In the communication with Hull, Thurston notes that, in a personal query that he directed to President Maximiliano Hernández Martínez regarding the adoption of legislation to suit United States objectives of eliminating perceived Axis interests in El Salvador, Martínez responded that any such measures were presently considered to be

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<sup>62</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943*, vol. VI. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 106.

<sup>63</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943*, vol. VI. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 324-328.

unconstitutional and that the only solution to the problem was to call for a plebiscite to make amendments to the constitution.<sup>64</sup> Subsequently, Thurston states that

it is becoming increasingly obvious (and I was informed of the fact almost by direct assertion a few days ago by Señor Francisco Aguilar, a close associate of the president) that it is the intention to bring about General Martínez' continuation in office for a fourth term. Inasmuch as the Constitution of 1939 (itself the product of a Constituent Assembly designed to make possible Martínez's present third term) forbids succession in office, the only means by which this plan can be carried out is by another Constituent Assembly and change of Constitution. It is to be assumed that the President and his advisers would be glad to seize upon our desire to effect the liquidation of enemy alien interests in El Salvador as the pretext for convoking a Constituent Assembly.<sup>65</sup>

The internal exploitation of the Good Neighbor renditions and associated efforts to expunge Latin America of perceived Axis influences extended not only to domestic agendas of land reform and expropriation, but likewise to internal attempts by certain factions to retain power using these domestic (and foreign) agendas as a proxy.<sup>66</sup>

That Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua were all Central American countries, and thereby belonged to a region that had historically (and subsequently) been a major focal point of United States hegemonic ambitions in line with the Monroe Doctrine, should strongly attest to Latin America's ability to affect those outcomes that it desired within the context of the Good Neighbor Policy. What has seemed to be a characteristic dynamic of United States domination over Latin America, and not least Central America, is complicated by the totality of the evidence of diplomacy during the time of the Good Neighbor renditions. If the Central American countries were able to have such an instrumental role in shaping the contours

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<sup>64</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 325.

<sup>65</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. VI*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 325.

<sup>66</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. VII*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), 1163: Other cases also indicate that Latin American politicians exhibited an awareness of the ability to utilize the Good Neighbor renditions to advance their domestic interests, such as President Jorge Ubico's recognition that nationalizing *fincas* estates could be used to justify amending the constitution, despite his refrainment from doing so amidst the tense political climate that preceded his ouster around a month after he imparted this observation to Ambassador Boaz Long.

of the Good Neighbor renditions, then one would expect this pattern to recur elsewhere in Latin America.

Outside of Central America, further evidence helps to situate the Good Neighbor renditions as the partial product of Latin American influences over their manifestation. Nowhere is this likely more evident than in Peru, which deported its Japanese population to United States custody, alongside German and Italian residents.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, the very composition of those internees that were sent abroad to the United States was largely the product of Peruvian manipulation. Scholar Clinton Harvey Gardiner notes that Peruvian enthusiasm toward rendering proclaimed enemy aliens to United States custody varied by the ethnicity of the people involved, with the Peruvian government displaying a far greater inclination to retain Germans (who had more often insinuated themselves into the upper strata of Peruvian society) as compared to Japanese residents, who tended to be deported with a characteristic abandon.<sup>68</sup> That the Peruvians could manage to exercise such extensive influence in manifesting the Good Neighbor renditions to reflect an outcome that emphasized the preference for deporting certain residents over others illustrates the significant role that Peru played as part of the policy. This observation raises the question of Peru's motivations for insisting on maintaining this emphasis in its relations with the United States in the context of the Good Neighbor renditions. The most obvious answer to such a query is that internal Peruvian dynamics of socioethnic prejudice were being projected onto the broader implementation of the Good Neighbor renditions in accordance with mutual United States and Peruvian policy objectives, though an additional motivating factor is also implied by Peruvian concern over German detention of their officials abroad.

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<sup>67</sup> Kashima, *Personal Justice Denied*, 305: While over two-thirds, or 2,300, of the internees deported to United States custody by assorted Latin American governments were Japanese residents, over eighty percent of these Japanese residents were composed of Japanese-Peruvians.

<sup>68</sup> Gardiner, *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate*, 20.

Nevertheless, these dynamics are reflected by the mass disenfranchisement of Japanese in Peru preceding the onset of the Good Neighbor renditions. In 1937, the passage of *Ley* 8526 by the administration of President Óscar Benavides was a key portent of Peruvian policies that would ensue during the Good Neighbor renditions, as it “restricted the rights of Peruvian citizens if they were born to foreign parents by 1) annulling the registration of their birth if it was issued via a court order after June 26, 1936 (the date of DS 1936) and 2) indefinitely suspending their right to register with judicial authorities if they were born before June 26, 1936.”<sup>69</sup> *Ley* 8526 is a prominent exemplar of the discrimination that many Japanese residents came to be confronted with in Peru, which reached its peak during the Good Neighbor renditions. The starkness of the statistic that over eighty percent of those Japanese residents of Latin America interned under United States custody were sourced from Peru is a testament to intense Peruvian influence wielded within the context of its wartime diplomatic relations with the United States. While the United States in part sought to restrict the activities of any number of perceived Axis-affiliated residents of Peru, whether Japanese, German or Italian, the disproportionate amount of Japanese that got caught up in the Good Neighbor renditions is a sign that the Peruvians exercised extensive influence over the form of the renditions, in line with their own domestic policy interests. Peruvian prejudices were more instrumental to informing the character of the renditions than United States pressures.

Other countries in South America also display attributes of independence in mediating the form that the Good Neighbor renditions took, despite their acquiescence to many United States requests. In one airgram from February 23, 1944, Ambassador Wesley Frost

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<sup>69</sup> Stephanie Carol Moore. "The Japanese in Multiracial Peru, 1899-1942." (PhD diss., University of California at San Diego, 2009), 268-269: This meant that around 2500 Japanese-Peruvians born in Peru were dispossessed of Peruvian citizenship in violation of Article 4 of the Peruvian constitution, which conveyed *jus soli* citizenship to anyone born in Peru.

communicated to Secretary of State Cordell Hull that, while Paraguay had increased its control over enemy aliens, Italian subjects were exempted from classification as “enemy aliens,” unlike the Germans, to whom the designation was more frequently applied.<sup>70</sup> The fact that Paraguayans shared the Peruvian preference for favoring a certain ethnic subgroup over another, and expressed an inclination to focus greater energies on the arbitrary detention (and often subsequent rendition) of the other subgroup, implies that the Paraguayans possessed a similar spirit of autonomy in their ability to affect the outcomes they desired as part of the Good Neighbor renditions. Whether the Paraguayans were as motivated by overt ethnic prejudices in their divergent treatment of Italian and German residents seems uncertain on the basis of the evidence, but it is clear that Paraguayans also projected internal sociopolitical dynamics onto the international context of the Good Neighbor renditions. This evidence mutually suggests that the relations of Latin American governments such as that of Paraguay, and the United States, were interdependent in formulating the content of the Good Neighbor renditions.

In a similar vein, the case of Colombia also demonstrates that the United States found it either more prudent or more necessary to default to persuasion rather than pressure in motivating Latin American governments to accede to United States desires in the course of the Good Neighbor renditions. While a policy evaluation of Colombia from 1950 makes note of the fact that Colombia “was cooperative in the repatriation and detention of enemy aliens,” earlier accounts suggest that this had less to do with acquiescence to United States diplomatic pressure than it had to do with responding to other forms of the United States’ incentives.<sup>71</sup> In a telegram from March 15, 1944, Ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane stated that the Chief of Staff of the

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<sup>70</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944*, vol. VII. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), 1486.

<sup>71</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, vol. II. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 828.

Colombian Army, General Domingo Espinel, had wrote him a letter requesting four Douglas transport planes under Lend-Lease, and that the request was also in the process of being delivered by the Colombian embassy in the United States. In response, Lane replied that he “would be glad to endorse the request as both Colonel Densford and Colonel Weeks are convinced of the need of these planes but that I felt certain the Colombian Government would have a greater chance to obtain this equipment if favorable action were taken with respect to enemy aliens.”<sup>72</sup> Ultimately, this persuasion motivated the Colombians to subsequently intern 150 German residents.<sup>73</sup> While one might initially perceive this outcome to purely be the product of Colombian acquiescence to United States soft power, it seems more reasonable to frame it as the product of a mutualistic culture of exchange, wherein Colombians incentivized the United States to help themselves obtain lend-lease aid, whereas the United States incentivized Colombia to participate more fully in the Good Neighbor renditions. In this manner, the Colombians exploited the Good Neighbor renditions to affect a desired policy goal as well.

Especially revelatory of the dynamic between the United States and Latin American countries participating in the Good Neighbor renditions is a correspondence within the State Department accompanying a memorandum from December 26, 1945. The contents of the letter, sent by the Acting Secretary of State E.O. Briggs to the Ambassador in Ecuador, Robert M. Scotten, are highly demonstrative of a Latin American ability to exercise pressure over the Good Neighbor renditions, and read as follows:

For your information, the three Governments which made the requests referred to in the memorandum were Peru, Ecuador, and El Salvador. The [State] Department was advised that our position in the matter was creating so much ill will for the United States, particularly in Peru, as seriously to jeopardize the Good Neighbor Policy and that further

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<sup>72</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. VII.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), 806-807.

<sup>73</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. VII.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), 807-808.

argument would be fruitless. Since the United States Government could not legally effect deportations without the consent of these countries (and was in addition committed not to do so), it seemed that the only course open was to accede to the wishes of Peru, Ecuador and El Salvador. Since that was to be done, it was clear that the same opportunity would have to be offered to the other [Latin American] Governments concerned. They would in any event shortly find out about our action toward the three and would demand similar treatment, and it seemed far preferable to be frank with them from the start. While the Department regrets that Peru, Ecuador and El Salvador have seen fit to insist on the return of the aliens they had deported, acceding to their wishes does not represent an abandonment of the repatriation program.<sup>74</sup>

That the mutually expressed positions of three Latin American countries could foment a return of desired internees from their deportation to the United States, not least when these countries have a legacy of acquiescing to United States dominance in different contexts, illustrates the profound degree to which Latin Americans were able to influence the Good Neighbor renditions to suit their ends. Such a policy reversal on the part of the United States is demonstrably indicative of the mutualistic nature of the Good Neighbor Policy, and the renditions that accompanied it, as a major component of the diplomatic relations between the United States and various Latin American countries. Given how wide-ranging and open-ended the dictates contained in the correspondence are, this evidence highlights the intense degree to which even limited Latin American resistance to United States desires could affect broader changes in United States policy toward Latin America.

It is additionally worth recalling that several Latin American countries elected not to participate in the Good Neighbor renditions at all, often in favor of maintaining their own domestic internment programs. Among such states were countries including Venezuela, Uruguay, Cuba, and allegedly Mexico.<sup>75</sup> Some states such as Chile and Argentina did not even

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<sup>74</sup> United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, vol. IX*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 301.

<sup>75</sup> Kashima, *Personal Justice Denied*, 307; United States Department of State, *The American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, vol. IX*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 297: In diplomatic correspondence from December 1945, Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs



maintain their own internment programs at any point during the period contemporary to the Good Neighbor renditions, despite respectively supporting the Allied war effort from 1943 and 1945 onward.<sup>76</sup> Meanwhile, while Brazil was an even more active participant in the Allied war effort than many of the other Latin American states aligned with the United States, it also did not opt to have a domestic internment program, despite engaging in efforts to monitor and resettle members of its extensive, and therefore nearly inextricable, Japanese community.<sup>77</sup> While the ability of Brazil, Chile and Argentina to remain aloof of United States pressure even accounting for the exigencies of wartime diplomacy is understandable, given their overall power relative to many of the other Latin American states *vis-à-vis* the United States, it still highlights a broader dynamic at play throughout Latin America in the time of the Good Neighbor Policy. That countries such as Cuba could also manage to retain a degree of independence in how they managed residents that were potentially perceived to be enemy aliens attests to a broader phenomenon that was not merely confined to the more powerful Latin American states.<sup>78</sup> Even though anomalies such as the internment of Japanese-Mexican Denkei Gushiken and his family at the Crystal City Internment Camp in the United States may have been present, the fact that such occurrences are considered to be anomalous, if even exceptionally rare, in the Mexican case is also a testament to the independence of Latin American countries such as Mexico in

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Spruille Braden relates to Secretary of States James F. Byrnes that “Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela did not deport enemy aliens for internment in the United States,” *cf.* Chew, *Uprooting Community*, 152-184: The Mexican-American borderlands scholar Selfa Chew has recently asserted that the case of a Japanese-Mexican family detained at the Crystal City internment camp in Texas problematizes the pre-standing viewpoint that Mexico was not a participant in the Good Neighbor renditions, but had solely maintained its own domestic internment program in cooperation with the United States.

<sup>76</sup> Daniel M. Masterson and Sayaka Funada-Classen, *The Japanese in Latin America* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 144-147.

<sup>77</sup> Masterson and Funada-Classen, *The Japanese in Latin America*, 132.

<sup>78</sup> “Cuba Chooses Alien Camp: Isle of Pines Is Selected for Concentration Purposes,” *New York Times*, April 8, 1942; Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 148: In the case of Cuba, United States officials had to work to persuade the Cuban government to intern German, Italian and Japanese prisoners at a prison facility on the Isle of Pines, ultimately pledging to fund the project.

determining the contours of their involvement in wartime efforts associated with the Good Neighbor Policy.

The ability of various Latin American countries in all regions to exercise control over their role in and engagement with the Good Neighbor renditions is telling inasmuch as it is highly reflective of the broader dynamic of the United States' relations with Latin America at large during the era of the Good Neighbor Policy. Even at a time when the United States may have found itself deeply motivated to attempt to consolidate its control over neighboring regions in light of wartime pressures, Latin American interests were not merely subordinated to those of the United States in spite of these potential strains on a coequal relationship. Rather than always deferring to its hegemonic instincts, the United States found it at least as necessary to appease Latin American interests as Latin Americans found it necessary to assuage United States concerns about the ostensive role of potentially Axis-aligned residents within its borders. As the varying cases demonstrate, these interests could be found in multiple forms, whether stemming from domestic prejudice, attempts to manipulate internal factional politics, maintaining positive diplomatic relationships with other countries, a desire to accrue material gains, or efforts to gain prestige with other countries such as the United States. However, the commonality shared amongst all of these Latin American interests that applied to their extension to the Good Neighbor renditions was an ability to keep abreast of the United States in determining the form that these policies took.

While the Latin American ability to affect the outcomes it desired as part of the Good Neighbor renditions is on full display in these foreign relations documents and other sources concerning intergovernmental relations, much information can also be discerned from the personal accounts of several of the internees and individuals involved in the Good Neighbour

renditions. As the *Nottebohm Case* represented a balance of both the diplomatic and personal aspects of the Good Neighbor renditions, and as the second chapter composed a fuller specific examination of these diplomatic aspects, the next section will concern personal accounts.

### **Chapter Three: Internees**

While the contents of materials related to diplomacy and policymaking yield substantial information on the content and character of the Good Neighbor renditions as concerns their mutual derivation from United States and Latin American interests, much information can also be inferred from other sources. Not least among such other sources are the personal correspondences, memoirs and other testaments from those internees held as part of the Good Neighbor renditions, which can often provide significant insight into the circumstances behind their deportation, internment and sometime repatriation. This is not least due to the role of these sources in documenting the unique circumstances of the individual internees throughout the duration of the Good Neighbor renditions, which provide researchers with specific information on their engagement with the national authorities of the involved states during their detention. From a set of such information, one can extrapolate patterns concerning the principal characteristics of the Good Neighbor renditions that can complement information gathered from other sources such as foreign relations documents.

Notable among memoirs concerning the Good Neighbor rendition program and its consequences is Seichi Higashide's book, *Adios to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps*, wherein Higashide relates his seizure by Peruvian authorities and forced deportation to United States internment at the Crystal City camp in Texas. The account is similarly revelatory in its treatment of Higashide's ultimate fate as an internee

that opted to remain in the United States due to the circumstances that he was presented with accounting for his internment away from his country of residence in Peru. Prior to these events, Higashide's background as a Japanese national is self-examined in depth, as well as his ultimate decision to move to Peru. Together, all of these details help to lend significant insight into the circumstances of an individual internee caught up in the policy furor that surrounded the Good Neighbor renditions and complicated conceptions of one's identity throughout its duration.

Seiichi Higashide discusses his family's relative initial prosperity and the decline thereof after moving to Hokkaido in Japan, before delving into his birth into these humble circumstances on January 18, 1909 in Otoe Village of the Sorachi District in central Hokkaido.<sup>79</sup> Higashide documents many of the harsh aspects that dogged his young existence in Hokkaido, such as his family's poverty as laborers and the bitter winter seasons that raised his ire as a child and into his young adulthood.<sup>80</sup> After nursing ambitions of becoming an architect, Higashide managed to attend Hozen Technical School in Tokyo and simultaneously become an apprentice architect, which increased his resolve to accumulate further prosperity abroad after reading various accounts of Japanese life in the United States, Peru and other foreign countries.<sup>81</sup> By 1929, Higashide had focused his attentions on immigrating to Peru, and to this end, he acquired a

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<sup>79</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 9-12: Seiichi Higashide relates that his family was originally from Torikoshi Village in the Ishikawa District of the eponymous prefecture in Japan, and traces his ancestry back to his paternal great-grandfather Shinyuemon Higashide, who lived at the time of Japan's opening to the outside world in the last decades of the Edo period and had one daughter named Riyo, who married a man named Shinzaemon who was adopted into the Higashide family bloodline. However, due to his grandfather Shinzaemon's spendthrift lifestyle and frequent engagement in money-lending to friends and acquaintances, there was a significant reversal in the family's financial fortunes, causing his son Iwamatsu and Iwamatsu's wife, Yonu, the respective father and mother of Seiichi, to seek to better their immediate and extended family's conditions by settling in Hokkaido. Subsequently, Seiichi was the fourth son in a family that included two deceased brothers, an older brother, an older sister, and a younger sister, causing Seiichi to grow up in the company of three siblings.

<sup>80</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 12-26: As Higashide's family took up farming in Hokkaido, he details the tribulations of their existence associated with laboring on the land and seeking other employment, and his growing dissatisfaction with these circumstances as he diligently pursued his education.

<sup>81</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 27-38.

passport and learned Spanish before boarding a ship to Peru in 1930, whereupon he arrived at Callao in May.<sup>82</sup>

Subsequently, Seiichi Higashide describes his incorporation into the Japanese community in Peru, where he details experiencing a rocky beginning for his fortunes there as he experienced a tenuous engagement with various professions.<sup>83</sup> Higashide details early observations of anti-Japanese sentiment during the Cerro Revolution in Peru, when several Japanese (and Chinese) shops were looted, before describing his experience with avoiding a return to Japan under forced conscription in the military based on the charge that he had moved to Peru to escape military service at the time of Japan's increasing engagement in Manchuria preceding the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>84</sup> However, by 1932, Higashide managed to find stable employment as the teacher at a Japanese elementary school in Canete, before being offered the opportunity to take over the Otani Company that was then run by Choichi Otani, the president of the parents association of the school, an opportunity that Higashide came to gladly accept after being guaranteed joint ownership alongside a Mr. Kato, who was an employee of Otani.<sup>85</sup> On March 7, 1935, Higashide

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<sup>82</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 38-44.

<sup>83</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 44-60: Higashide details moving to Canete and working in several non-engineering professions, despite his technical experience from the Hozen School in Japan. Seiichi Higashide relates much of his time working for the Araki Company in Canete, engaging in such professions as carpentry despite his engineering qualifications.

<sup>84</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 60-65: These details highlight early indications of the increased effect that larger political events were having on the lives of Seiichi Higashide and other Japanese residing in Peru. In Higashide's account regarding his near-conscription, Higashide attests that he managed to persuade the Consul General in Peru to allow him to stay by relating an emotional account of his former circumstances in Japan, though with the Consul General's added caveat that he might not be able to return to Japan in good legal standing in the future if he did not leave then.

<sup>85</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 68-74: The Otani Company was composed by a gift shop engaged in the sale of luxury items, a barber shop, and a liquor store with an affixed bar. While Higashide was initially reluctant to accept the responsibility of managing all three businesses, the prospect of shared ownership with Mr. Kato enticed him to accept Choichi Otani's deal, which Otani offered accounting for his desire to divest of his Peruvian properties and engage in business in the new frontier of Manchuria.

was wed to Angelica Shizuka, and the newlywed couple moved to Ica and opened his own shop after Higashide left the Otani Company and fulfilled his financial obligation to Mr. Otani.<sup>86</sup>

In Ica, Seiichi Higashide achieved significant business success as the independent proprietor of his own store, *Bazar Bienvenida*, which flourished and increased Higashide's prospects of achieving significant financial success.<sup>87</sup> However, he increasingly had to contend with the growing prevalence of anti-Japanese sentiments in Peru concomitant with the lead-up to the Second World War, which Higashide attributes both to a pre-standing fixation on the concentration of wealth and success in the hands of the recent Japanese immigrant community on the part of many Peruvians, who were displaced by the Japanese in some cases, and covert United States encouragement of these sentiments through the employment of agents of influence throughout Peru.<sup>88</sup> After the United States entered the Second World War following the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, Higashide made his first appearance on a blacklist of purported "dangerous Axis nationals" residing in Peru that was sourced from United States authorities, forcing him to transfer his properties to Angelica's name, since she was considered a Peruvian citizen by birth and a technicality meant that their marriage was only recognized in Japan.<sup>89</sup> Increased tribulations plagued Higashide's family in Peru, as the threat of being deported abroad to United States custody was heightened, ostensibly due to United States

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<sup>86</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 75-87.

<sup>87</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 88-102.

<sup>88</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 103-112: Increased anti-Japanese sentiments prompted a pogrom in 1940 that exclusively targeted Japanese-owned businesses, rather than the prejudiced but more indiscriminate riots of the past, which also targeted Chinese, Italians and other populations. Such tension was slightly alleviated by the mutual devastation subsequently incurred by the 1940 Peruvian earthquake, but a frisson of discrimination remained throughout the country.

<sup>89</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 113-117: Higashide attests that he found out about the revelation from a leak to local journalists from *El Comercio* and *La Prensa* by a United States agency, rather than from an agency or organization affiliated with the Peruvian government, which nevertheless managed to cause him consternation.

diplomatic pressures to that effect, but Higashide, his pregnant wife and at that time four children managed to remain in Peru up to January 6, 1944.<sup>90</sup>

On this date, Seiichi Higashide was arrested by members of the Lima Police Headquarters, who sought to deport major Japanese expatriate figures due to the arrival of a ship at Callao, and separated from his family.<sup>91</sup> Thereafter, Higashide was sent abroad to Panama on his birthday of January 18, where he was temporarily detained under United States custody, and eventually permitted to solicit his family to join him there alongside other internees, prompting his wife to close *Bazar Bienvenida* and move abroad to join her husband with her five children.<sup>92</sup> Simultaneously, Higashide was transferred to another temporary internment at Camp Kenedy in Texas via New Orleans while he awaited his family's arrival, after which time he was again transferred to Crystal City to reside with his family.<sup>93</sup> The Higashide family persisted in the Crystal City camp until August 1946 after the end of the war; since Peru only permitted seventy-nine of the internees to return to their country, 364 Peruvians remained in the United States, where they were ironically considered to be illegal aliens. This motivated Higashide to petition for his family's ability to remain in the United States to avoid being repatriated to Japan or elsewhere, which finally caused the United States to allow Higashide and his family to remain on the condition that a guarantor secured them a work contract, which occurred when Seabrook Farms of New Jersey permitted the Higashides to work at their food processing facilities.<sup>94</sup> Finally, in January 1949, the Higashides managed to end their employment at Seabrook Farms

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<sup>90</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 117-132.

<sup>91</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 133-140.

<sup>92</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 140-154.

<sup>93</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 155-165.

<sup>94</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 176-192.

and moved to Chicago, where Seiichi and Angelica would reside until 1973, when they moved to Hawaii.<sup>95</sup>

When examining the details of the internment of Seiichi Higashide and his family as part of the Good Neighbor renditions, one notes that Higashide makes frequent claims that appear to be to the effect that the United States was principally responsible for causing the Good Neighbor renditions. Notwithstanding Higashide's remarks on United States involvement in helping to compound resentment against Japanese residents in Peru, Higashide mentions the remarks of a Peruvian police officer that he encountered in the course of the proceedings over his blacklisted status: "It is truly unfortunate, but [your deportation] is the demand of the United States government. As you know, we are not in a position to take opposing measures. I ask that you understand that point."<sup>96</sup> These sentiments are reiterated by Ica's provincial governor, Commandant Juan Dongo, whom Higashide reports to assert that he is "truly sorry about [Higashide's] situation. Japan is not at war with Peru, yet you have been placed in such a situation. Peru, however, is in a weak position and cannot oppose the United States."<sup>97</sup> Both of the figures that are making these statements are presented in a rather sympathetic light by Higashide, which might predispose one to suppose that these statements represent an authentic appraisal of the situation in Peru at the time of the Good Neighbor renditions. However, the commentaries of Dongo and the police officer may instead be exceptional for the sympathy that they display toward Higashide's situation, rather than being characteristic of the general response of the Peruvian authorities and citizens to the Good Neighbor renditions. What appears more telling and convincing on the basis of the established evidence is the fact that Peru would not accept the readmission of a majority of those residents interned in the United States following

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<sup>95</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 193-244.

<sup>96</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 119.

<sup>97</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 121.



the end of the war. While such a consideration might prompt the perception of further complications to the narrative that Peru was equally as, if not more, complicit in manifesting the form of the Good Neighbor renditions, since Peru did demonstrably, if begrudgingly, acquiesce to allowing the readmission of seventy-nine internees by 1946, this consideration would likely be made in ignorance of the fact that Peru only readmitted certain internees considered to be Peruvian citizens by birth, as well as their family members.<sup>98</sup>

Recalling that in the *Nottebohm Case*, a perceived foreigner was not permitted to reacquire legal residency in Guatemala while his native-born nephews were following the end of the war, the Peruvian case as demonstrated by Seiichi Higashide does not seem inconsistent with the exclusion of residents perceived to retain foreign ties. This comparison casts doubt on the idea that Peru, alongside other Latin American states, was not an active agent in shaping the contours of the Good Neighbor renditions and their resulting consequences. Such a pattern is born out by several other case-studies that illustrate that Latin American countries, such as Peru, were active arbiters in the fates of their deported residents, and not merely pawns of United States wartime hegemony. This is potently highlighted by the case of Carmen Higa Mochizuki, a native-born Japanese-Peruvian whose family was interned at Crystal City and was subsequently consigned to immigrating to her parents' original homeland of Okinawa due to the Peruvian government's refusal to readmit the family in spite of her Peruvian pedigree.<sup>99</sup> Such cases as that of Mochizuki demonstrate that even native-born internees could be ineligible for consideration as

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<sup>98</sup> Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 177: Peru exploited laws passed in 1940 that prevented Japanese immigration to justify not readmitting most of the resident internees, and thereby initially rejected the United States' requests to resettle any of the internees in Peru, even pursuing the matter at the United Nations. Recalling *Ley 8526*, in addition to the laws of 1940, it is clear that there was an evident agenda to disenfranchise Japanese residents in Peru that the Good Neighbor renditions helped to facilitate.

<sup>99</sup> Jan Jarboe Russell, *The Train to Crystal City: FDR's Secret Prisoner Exchange Program and America's Only Family Internment Camp During World War II* (New York: Scribner, 2015), 260.

a readmitted resident of Peru, in addition to Higashide's account as a foreign-born resident of Peru.

Obviously, the prevalency of prejudicial anti-Japanese sentiments in Peru is quite apparent in the chronicles of Seiichi Higashide and others, and therefore appears very evident as a distinct motivation for the form of the Good Neighbor renditions. While the United States may have actively endorsed such sentiments, as discussed by Higashide, it is still clear that even if this was the case, the United States merely drew upon a pre-standing groundswell of opposition to Japanese inclusion in Peruvian society that the Peruvian state subsequently seized upon to help advance an agenda of overall ethnic cleansing (i.e. affecting the removal of Japanese residents from Peruvian society through the Good Neighbor renditions). However, elsewhere in Latin America, other motivations helped to underpin the form of the Good Neighbor renditions, and this is demonstrated by other cases that emphasize what often amounted to distinct but complementary motives on the part of the United States and Latin America for holding internees. One such case is that of the ethnically German Costa Rican, Heidi Gurcke Donald, whose family memoirs, entitled *We Were Not The Enemy: Remembering the United States' Latin American Civilian Internment Program of World War II*, are also quite revelatory in their contents.

Heidi Gurcke Donald was the product of a relationship between Werner Gurcke, an expatriate German residing with his brother Karl Oskar Gurcke in San José, Costa Rica, and Starr Pait, a United States citizen from San Jose, California, that commenced when the former was visiting relatives and the latter was undertaking postgraduate studies of Germanic languages simultaneously in Germany in 1934. Subsequently, the couple grew closer, prompting Starr Pait to move to Costa Rica after marrying Werner Gurcke in the United States in mid-January of

1936.<sup>100</sup> However, the couple was increasingly forced to contend with those German expatriates who sympathized with Nazism in Germany, but made themselves clear that they were opposed to the Third Reich and its policies by refusing to participate in an expatriate referendum supporting the *Anschluss*, while also repudiating an attempted Nazi Party takeover of the local German Club and embracing antifascist leadership of the club.<sup>101</sup> In 1940, Heidi was born to Werner and Starr in the midst of a period of mild financial uncertainty on the part of the couple, but the family's adverse circumstances were compounded further when the British blacklist of 1940 named Werner and his brother, alongside their business holdings in Costa Rica. This development prompted the Gurckes to further dissociate themselves from Nazi sympathizers in Costa Rica, while moving to a *finca* estate in rural San Juan de Tibás that included a coffee plantation and a garden.

However, Werner's position on the blacklist complicated his ability to conduct business in the traditional manner that he was used to, causing him to legally add Starr as a partner as a means for companies who owed him money to remit these finances to a United States citizen rather than himself.<sup>102</sup> Much like Friedrich Nottebohm, despite Werner Gurcke's cooperation in registering as a resident alien with the office of the secretary of state of Costa Rica, Gurcke was covertly labeled to be "one of the most dangerous German nationals in the country" in an internal memo by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The FBI would open a similar file on Starr Pait when it was discovered that she was the spouse and business partner of Werner, a fact which was hinted at by Werner's discovery that the Costa Rican press was now including

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<sup>100</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, xviii and 1-15: Werner and Karl Oscar were originally prompted to move to Costa Rica from their hometown of Hamburg, Germany due to experiencing the hardships associated with rising inflation rates following the First World War, which motivated a long-term disenchantment with Germany's economic state on their part later on, causing the brothers to immigrate to Costa Rica in 1929.

<sup>101</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 16-18.

<sup>102</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 20-25: This was the same British blacklist that prompted scrutiny over the Nottebohms and their business ventures in Central America, and which similarly prompted the surveillance of the Gurckes by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

his wife in published business blacklists. As the Gurckes became increasingly harassed by Costa Rican authorities, the situation was only worsened when a German submarine coincidentally torpedoed a ship near Limón, Costa Rica, which ultimately caused the arrest and detention of Werner and his brother Karl Oskar under conditions of domestic internment in July 1942. By early December, Starr, Heidi and her sister Ingrid were also held under detention at the repurposed German Club building.<sup>103</sup>

On January 26, a ship bearing the Gurcke family and other Costa Rican internees departed from Puntarenas *en route* to the port of San Pedro, California.<sup>104</sup> After being temporarily held at the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) facility in San Pedro for interrogation, the Gurcke family was transferred by train to the Crystal City family internment camp in Texas.<sup>105</sup> During their internment in Crystal City from 1943-1944, Werner and Starr maintained their vehement anti-Nazi attitudes, in contrast to some other prisoners, and ultimately even grew distant from Karl Oskar due to his increasing identification with the Third Reich while under internment in Crystal City.<sup>106</sup> While Karl Oskar eventually consented to being repatriated to Germany, along with his own family, Werner remained firmly opposed to repatriation to Germany and vouched for his innocence in spite of a series of spurious charges arrayed against him.<sup>107</sup> Finally, Werner, Starr and their children were released from Crystal City in May 1944 while remaining “internees at large,” after which time Werner found employment

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<sup>103</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 26-36: In the midst of this activity, Heidi’s sister Ingrid was born in 1941.

<sup>104</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 41-43.

<sup>105</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 45-50.

<sup>106</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 52-60.

<sup>107</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 62-66: These charges included Werner and Starr’s membership in the German Club and Werner’s prior position as a treasurer from 1934-1935; a small though likely unwitting donation he made to *Winterhilfe* (Winter Help), a charity benefitting those of German ethnicity who were in need that was occasionally exploited by operatives of the Third Reich to facilitate their activities in Latin America; his membership in a German mutual benefit society, the *Unterstützungsverein*, in the early 1920s; a list of the addresses of businesses and associates of Werner abroad that was probably intentionally tampered with to make Werner seem more suspect; and his distant relation to the family of C.W. Lohrengel and his son, for whose firm he originally worked.

in Santa Cruz, California, before the authorities once again demanded that he relocate further inland.<sup>108</sup>

After the war's end in August 1945, Werner and Starr considered returning to Costa Rica with their family, but were beset by difficulties, as the United States resolved to permit Latin American countries to either determine the fate of their own residents interned abroad or consent to the United States' discretion regarding the fate of the internees. In the absence of any consistent official position undertaken by the Costa Rican government, the United States threatened to deport Werner, Starr and their children to Germany in a possible forced repatriation due to their postwar illegal alien status. However, following hearings on the matter, United States authorities ultimately suspended the attempt at repatriation of the Gurcke family to Germany.<sup>109</sup> Eventually, the Gurcke family opted to remain in the United States due to cultivating business ties through Werner's cork-import business there, though Heidi asserts that her father often longed to return to his residency in Costa Rica.<sup>110</sup>

Heidi Gurcke Donald attributes her family's rendition and internment in the United States to three principal factors: the United States' concern with the potential security threat posed by residents with perceived ethnic affiliations to the Axis powers in the Western Hemisphere, the United States' desire to neutralize economic competition on the part of these residents, and the United States' aspiration to utilize the internees as bargaining chips to be traded with the Axis powers for other prisoners of war held by these states and their co-belligerents.<sup>111</sup> While the United States may have played a proactive role in motivating the Good Neighbor renditions on the basis of the latter two motivations, it cannot be held exclusively or even necessarily

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<sup>108</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 68-73.

<sup>109</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 75-81.

<sup>110</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 83-86.

<sup>111</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 93-99: Heidi Gurcke Donald cites several internal United States government documents, memorandums and resolutions to reinforce these conclusions.

responsible for cases such as those which confronted the Gurcke family. While interpretations of the bulk of the evidence collected on the Gurckes preceding their internment by United States authorities and collated by the United States military attaché Lieutenant Colonel E. Andino show an evident obsession with Werner and Starr Gurcke's economic activities, their treatment as a direct physical security threat is eschewed by the content of the evidence arrayed against them.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, the repatriation aspect of the case of the Gurcke family is not inconsistent with evidence from other cases such as the Nottebohms, except perhaps inasmuch as it incorporates Heidi Gurcke Donald more pointed implication that the repatriation process was potentially coercive rather than voluntary. The fact that the Gurckes were subjected to hearings much as other internees like the Nottebohms were, and had the opportunity to successfully defend their convictions that they should not be repatriated to a current or former Axis country, confirms the trend of evidence indicating that the United States only endorsed the repatriations and prisoner exchanges as a periphery measure, and took the internees' preferences into account.<sup>113</sup>

While the United States did find it prudent to render, intern and nearly repatriate the Gurcke family to their custody for their own demonstrable reasons, it was through the willing acquiescence of Costa Rica that this was permitted to occur. Recalling that Costa Rica specifically exempted Italian families from the same treatment that German Costa Ricans such as the Gurckes were often subjected to as part of the Good Neighbor renditions and associated policies and refused to place the Spanish minister ostensibly abetting Italian interests in Costa Rica under the substantive scrutiny that the United States desired, it is clear that Costa Rica was not merely subordinated to United States pressure in the Good Neighbor renditions, as Heidi Gurcke Donald often seems to imply. Indeed, Costa Rica, through inaction or unresponsiveness

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<sup>112</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 22 and 63.

<sup>113</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 79-80.

at a time when the United States had specifically resolved to defer to the interests of Latin American countries on the matter, effectively consigned the Gurckes to near-repatriation to Germany. It is probable that the Costa Ricans may have perceived Germans such as the Gurckes as a tangible security threat due to military actions in their vicinity, such as the ship sinking off of Limón that directly preceded the arrest of the Gurckes and others. Whatever is the case, it is baldly apparent that Costa Rica had agency in actively facilitating their own interests through the Good Neighbor renditions in a manner that was complementary to the United States' own interests in pursuing the program.

What the cases of Seiichi Higashide, the family of Heidi Gurcke Donald, and others most fundamentally illustrate is that the Good Neighbor renditions were mutually molded by the United States and their Latin American collaborators in Peru, Costa Rica and elsewhere. Such policies were pursued in the mutual interests of both the United States and Latin American countries. The extent to which one can analogize the specific case of the Good Neighbor renditions to the broader Good Neighbor Policy in inferring the character of relations between the United States and Latin American countries is quite significant. One might assume that Latin American countries were practically coerced into helping the United States facilitate the rendition and internment of residents that were ostensibly perceived to be potential security threats, and that the Good Neighbor Policy would thereby be at its most transparent stage as a seeming justification for United States hegemonic control over the workings of the Western Hemisphere. However, such assumptions are complicated by the evidence sourced from individual internees, in tandem with additional evidence. In these cases, internees were forcibly inducted as participants in the Good Neighbor renditions due to the selectively collaborative efforts of both the United States and Latin American states.

What the willing collaboration between the United States and Latin American countries in bringing about the Good Neighbor renditions as exemplified in these cases also highlights is that policies of mutual or coequal engagement between the United States and Latin American governments have not always benefited residents. Even in moments of eased tension between the United States and Latin America, as occurred during the Good Neighbor Policy, average citizens and residents may find themselves at the mercy of mutually capricious interests, rather than benefit from such a rapprochement as the Good Neighbor Policy constituted. This is especially applicable to those populations who were disenfranchised or fell into a legal grey area on society's fringes accounting for their perceived foreign status. Therefore, the Good Neighbor renditions are a poignant illustration of the effects that even seemingly well-intentioned ploys at diplomatic engagement can have on the average person.

## **Epilogue**

The totality of the evidence presented herein strongly suggests that the Good Neighbor renditions were ultimately a mutualistic enterprise that benefitted the United States and Latin American governments in complementary though divergent ways, if frequently to the detriment of civilians residing in Latin America. This nuanced understanding of the Good Neighbor renditions complicates many revisionist assumptions about the broader content of the Good Neighbor Policy. As a series of initiatives adopted under a fevered climate of ostensive wartime necessity understood to have been experienced in the United States, the renditions should seemingly epitomize the Good Neighbor Policy at its most coercive for Latin America, potentially exposing the Good Neighbor Policy as a thin veneer for United States hegemonic exploitation in the region. Nevertheless, the accumulated evidence on the Good Neighbor



renditions casts doubt on this narrative, which in turn complicates wider views about the diplomatic character of the Good Neighbor Policy as a platform to advance United States domination in general.

Within the historiography on the Good Neighbor Policy, a prominent source of debate is fixated upon whether the rhetorical assertion of an improvement in the United States' diplomatic relations with Latin American governments was an authentic aspiration of the Good Neighbor Policy, or whether the Good Neighbor Policy was merely another cover for the United States' exploitation of Latin America. This gets to the heart of an even broader discussion regarding whether the Good Neighbor Policy better embodied the more benevolent rhetorical characteristics of the Monroe Doctrine, or whether the Good Neighbor Policy was more emblematic of its Roosevelt Corollary.<sup>114</sup> Scholars such as Peter Smith have contended that the Good Neighbor Policy was a representation of the latter category, arguing that "within the context of the Imperial Era, the Good Neighbor policy can be seen not as a departure from past practices but as the culmination of trends in U.S. policy toward the region. In effect, FDR's stance reflected a hardheaded sense of realpolitik that promoted and protected the long-standing U.S. quest for hegemony throughout the hemisphere."<sup>115</sup> This viewpoint conflicts with the image that contemporaneous policymakers tended to articulate with respect to the Good Neighbor Policy, but has gained significant academic traction approximately within the last two decades, and it promotes the notion that the sociopolitical circumstances of Latin America are most

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<sup>114</sup> Robert J. Allison, *History in Dispute, Volume 3 - American Social and Political Movements, 1900-1945: Pursuit of Progress* (Detroit, MI: St. James Press, 2000), 45-53: In this context, the more benevolent rhetorical characteristics of the Monroe Doctrine represent the assertion that this policy initiative was applied by the United States as a genuine means of shielding the Western Hemisphere from foreign interference in a manner that enhanced the benevolent diplomatic closeness of the United States with countries in Latin America, as implied in the original language articulated as part of the Monroe Doctrine, whereas the Roosevelt Corollary emphasized the deployment of United States power or pressure to achieve political outcomes therein that were favorable to the United States, even if these may have arisen at the expense of its Latin American neighbors.

<sup>115</sup> Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 65-66.

fundamentally premised on the pressure and intervention of the United States concerning its regional affairs. Such an idea composes the embodiment of a “colonial matrix” perceived by the likes of Walter Mignolo, whose contention that the very moniker “Latin America” is a contrivance on the part of Western interests speaks to the maintenance of a strict imperialistic hierarchy wherein Latin elites and their subject peoples, such as Indians and Africans, have been necessarily consigned to a subordinate status in their relations with the United States and the Global North at large.<sup>116</sup>

Eminent scholars on the Good Neighbor renditions have often claimed that the Good Neighbor renditions represent either a reversal away from the reciprocal aspects of the Good Neighbor renditions or highlight that these reciprocal aspects were transparently inauthentic from the outset. This includes the researcher Max Paul Friedman, who alleges that

officials in Washington were able to prevail upon their Latin American counterparts to collaborate in the [rendition] program only by violating both the letter and spirit of the Good Neighbor policy. Although it has somehow escaped notice, the deportation program – which was the most direct manifestation of wartime anti-Axis policy in Latin America, and which heralded the return of [United States] interventionism – should be at the center of any history of the war and Latin America, and especially of U.S.-Latin American relations in this era.<sup>117</sup>

Likewise, historian Greg Robinson attributes the principal motivations for deporting internees in Latin America abroad under United States custody to US State Department pressures, especially following the purported release of several prisoners who were alleged to have bribed their domestic jailers in Latin America.<sup>118</sup> Such sentiments of principal United States culpability have also been shared by those who were personally affected by the Good Neighbor renditions

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<sup>116</sup> Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, x-xx: Specifically, Mignolo discusses the importance of “Latinidad” as an identity that functions to cause the traditional Creole elite of Iberian descent in the Americas to internalize attitudes that rank them as inferior to Anglo-Americans, but simultaneously erase and demote the identities of Indians, Afro-Americans and other subject peoples.

<sup>117</sup> Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 3.

<sup>118</sup> Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 149.

themselves, as Heidi Gurcke Donald attests in her commentaries that “the United States [was] pivotal in the creation and administration of the Latin-American program. U.S. policies were motivated by three concerns: national and hemispheric security, economic rivalry for Latin-American markets, and the third, least savory purpose—gathering captives to use for barter with Axis countries holding American prisoners.”<sup>119</sup> Similarly, the popular press is rife with misconceptions of the relationship dynamic between the United States and Latin America, such as an article from *The Guardian* which states that “larger countries like Mexico, Chile and Argentina resisted the demand to deport their citizens, but that was not an option for [a] small Central American nation.”<sup>120</sup> However, much of the evidence points to complications in the narrative that the United States was exclusively or even principally responsible for the shape that the Good Neighbor renditions ultimately took.

On the contrary, the assemblage of evidence presented herein suggests that Latin American governments and even the societies that they represented played an instrumental role in determining the form of the Good Neighbor renditions, alongside their United States counterparts. Even in one of the regions that has historically tended to be most vulnerable to the hegemonic impositions of the United States – Central America – the United States was confronted with various nation-states that indicated an ability to formulate their own policies and insist on their implementation within the context of the Good Neighbor renditions. Countries including Costa Rica and El Salvador were able to remain aloof of possible United States pressures that they found objectionable (such as attempts to secure certain finances or desires to retain certain internees independent of Latin American requests to secure their return). This demonstrated that, while Latin American countries often found United States interests to be

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<sup>119</sup> Donald, *We Were Not The Enemy*, 93.

<sup>120</sup> Zach Dyer, "Lost Story of German Latin Americans Interned During Second World War," *The Guardian*, December 5, 2014.

amenable to their own policy goals, they were not necessarily beholden to the United States and were even able to manipulate the implementation of the Good Neighbor renditions. Various Latin American countries, including those with less relative power such as Cuba, were able to maintain their own internment programs, rather than yielding to any alleged pressure to render United States civilians abroad.

A host of Latin American countries did not feel obligated to participate in the Good Neighbor renditions at all, and in some cases, this even extended to a lack of will to maintain their own internment programs, as was the case in Chile and Argentina. Latin American states that did participate had reasons that were distinct from United States pressure for doing so. While hemispheric security may have been a *raison d'être* for the Good Neighbor renditions as Heidi Gurcke Donald and others contend, this was not necessarily premised specifically on United States concerns about security. For example, the case of Costa Rica's detention of several German internees including members of the Gurcke family being preceded by the torpedoing of a maritime vessel by German forces is echoed in the case of the sinking of the SS *Potrero del Llano* and the SS *Faja de Oro* by German U-Boats in May 1942, which prompted Mexico to take measures to mobilize against perceived security threats associated with the Axis powers in a declaration of war. However, since Latin American countries did not tend to be dogged by the seeming presence of such security threats, many other motivations that did not align with purported United States objectives likely underpinned Latin American countries' involvement in the Good Neighbor renditions. In El Salvador and Costa Rica, there is evidence that the Good Neighbor renditions were co-opted for the purpose of asserting domestic political initiatives, often to enhance the powers of contemporaneous administrations such as that of President Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in El Salvador and President Rafael Calderón Guardia in

Costa Rica.<sup>121</sup> Other domestic agendas that the Good Neighbor renditions helped to advance included expropriation of assets and land reform, as illustrated in Guatemala. Where the incentive of prisoner exchanges was concerned, there is also evidence to indicate that Latin American states benefitted from prisoner exchanges alongside, if not more than, the United States. This is notable in the frequent conditionality that Latin American states attempted to cultivate with the United States in rendering internees for the purpose of repatriation in exchange for their desired nationals held abroad. Finally, some Latin American states such as Peru showed an inclination to deport internees to assuage sources of historic prejudice within their countries over those perceived to be of different ethnicities or nationalities.

However, a more coequal relationship between the United States and Latin American countries exhibited during the course of the Good Neighbor renditions did not necessarily signify circumstances that benefitted many Latin Americans. The cases of Friedrich Nottebohm, Seiichi Higashide and Heidi Gurcke Donald, among others, demonstrate that several residents of Latin America, including several who were citizens by birth, were collateral victims whose existences were often upended in the interest of certain agendas that were being advanced to justify the Good Neighbor renditions. Therefore, any quibbles should not be over whether many Latin American residents, particularly those of Japanese, German and Italian extraction, were adversely affected by the Good Neighbor renditions, but over whether or not these adverse effects were mutually generated by domestic and foreign agendas, an answer which herein is responded to in the affirmative. Resultantly, one can conclude that the Good Neighbor renditions, and by extension the diplomatic endeavors associated with the Good Neighbor Policy, were not always conducted to the benefit of every Latin American, but that this does not conversely imply that Latin American governments or other members of Latin American society

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<sup>121</sup> Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, 172.

were always the mutual recipients of victimization generated by the United States' relations therewith.

The extent to which this accounting of the Good Neighbor renditions emphasizes the agency of Latin Americans in diplomatic interactions with the United States and other foreigners counter to revisionist assumptions about ostensibly benevolent periods of contact with Latin America has utility in deconstructing assumptions about the overall character of United States relations with Latin America in many different contexts as well. While the United States' interventionism in Latin America has been prevalent in different periods of history, one should make an effort to suspend assumptions that Latin American countries have not demonstrated an ability to resist United States pressure even during times of heightened intervention in Latin American affairs consistent with the Monroe Doctrine. In this vein, even cases wherein the United States' interference in internal Latin American affairs is well-documented, complications to the notion that the United States necessarily predominates in these interactions of interference arise, as exemplified by the case of Chile, which retained nationalization of copper after 1973 despite the respondent economic boycott and manipulation of Chilean politics by the United States that ultimately resulted in General Augusto Pinochet's accession to power and the adoption of neoliberal policies favorable to the United States from that same year onward.<sup>122</sup> Using the Good Neighbor renditions as a template for perceiving the mutualistic characteristics of the United States' relations with Latin America, and vice-versa, can therefore be immensely helpful in examining the content and character of such relations up to the contemporary period.

Collectively, all of this information demonstrates the inherent value in discerning the mutualistic aspects of the Good Neighbor renditions, and how these aspects reflected on the

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<sup>122</sup> Fernando Coz Léniz, "Histories of Nationalization and Privatization: The Cases of the Chilean and Zambian Copper Industries"; Jack Devine, "What Really Happened in Chile: The CIA, the Coup Against Allende, and the Rise of Pinochet" in *Foreign Affairs* 93 (2014).

overall ability of Latin American countries to negotiate selective implementations of the renditions that benefitted their policy goals and outlooks in ways that were distinguished from the United States' desires and ambitions. By achieving this understanding of the Good Neighbor renditions, as an important part of the Good Neighbor Policy, one arrives at a more substantive apprehension of the factors that characterized the United States' relations with Latin America under the framework of the Good Neighbor Policy as well. By giving insight into this dynamic, one realizes the extent to which several Latin Americans have been able to actively articulate their distinct interests on a global stage, whereas other Latin Americans have suffered from these interactions partly as the sometime result of other Latin Americans' connivance with foreign interests, as occurred in several instances during the Good Neighbor renditions. Much of this context thereby helps to account for the United States' relations with Latin America in many other historical periods, which enhances the overall diplomatic historiography on the subject in several discernible ways.

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