Carlos Escude

Abstract
Carlos Escude (1948-), Argentine political scientist and government adviser, obtained his doctorate with the support of a Fulbright Fellowship at Yale University in 1981 and won a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1984. During the 1990s, he served as special adviser to Argentina's foreign minister, Guido de Tella, under the presidency of Carlos Menem (1989-1999). Escude is therefore not only the explicator but also the agent of a notable transformation of Argentina's foreign policy in its relations with the world's more powerful nations, especially the United States.

Disciplines
International Relations | Latin American History | Military History | Political History

Comments
This is an encyclopedia entry from Encyclopedia of United States-Latin American Relations 1 (2012): 325. Posted with permission.
Escobar spent significant time away from Colombia between 1983 and 1985, searching but failing to find more secure places to live, including Panama and Nicaragua. On his return, he began a long, highly public process of negotiation with the Colombian government, in which he offered to turn himself in and provide various financial incentives to the state in exchange for immunity from extradition. To apply pressure on the government, the cartel launched massive bombing and assassination campaigns. This culminated in 1989 with the killing of presidential candidate and outspoken opponent of Escobar, Luis Gálán, and the attempted assassination of his successor, César Gaviria Trujillo. The latter failed, but drug traffickers succeeded in blowing up an Avianca airplane, killing 110 people on board.

President Reagan’s successor in the White House, George H. W. Bush, was more concerned about the drugs issue than his predecessor. He had been instrumental in the war on drugs as vice president under Reagan and now consciously sought to shift the focus from enforcing border security to dealing with the production of cocaine at the source. Hostility to the Medellín cartel thus appeared to be growing in both the U.S. and Colombian governments. Between 1989 and 1991, the Colombian police and army conducted a massive manhunt for Escobar, supported by U.S. funds and personnel. Dozens of senior associates in the Medellín cartel were extradited, arrested, or summarily executed by the army. In response, Escobar and the other “extraditables” began kidnapping senior government officers and their families.

Ultimately, the new president of Colombia, César Gaviria, was more concerned about narco-terrorism than narco-trafficking. As such, he struck a deal with Escobar for his surrender in exchange for immunity from extradition to the United States. Once the Colombian congress passed a law in June 1991 prohibiting extradition, Escobar surrendered, taking up residence in a prison he had built himself on land he owned in Antioquia. The decision to end extraditions generated great frustration in the United States and contributed to the decision to decertify Colombia during the Clinton administration.

This led to the curtailment of some U.S. economic aid to Colombia, although the impact was more symbolic than material.

Escobar used his enforced residence to rebuild his cocaine business, but within a year, he fled the prison when he came to believe he was to be transferred and potentially assassinated. The public humiliation associated with Escobar’s escape forced the Gaviria government to intensify its efforts and accede to the deployment of U.S. Special Forces and advanced surveillance technology in Colombian territory. Despite the anger this decision caused in the press and congress, in the end, it was a joint U.S.-Colombian effort that tracked down Escobar in late 1993 and killed him.

Despite his involvement in the deaths of thousands of people, Escobar’s funeral was attended by masses of local citizens. Many in Colombian society resented the role the United States had played in the manhunt and considered cocaine to be a gringo problem. Meanwhile, Escobar’s death badly damaged the Medellín cartel but had no appreciable effect on the volume of cocaine being exported to the United States. In the end, the hunt for Escobar had become a punitive exercise rather than a strategy of supply reduction, and his enemies were satisfied with the exemplary role his death offered to others.

See also Bush, George H. W.; Colombia, U.S. Relations with; Drugs, U.S. War on; Drug Trafficking; Gaviria Trujillo, César; Leider, Carlos; Reagan, Ronald W.; Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Escudé, Carlos

Carlos Escudé (1948–), Argentine political scientist and government adviser, obtained his doctorate with the support of a Fulbright Fellowship at Yale University in 1981 and won a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1984. During the 1990s, he served as special adviser to Argentina’s foreign minister, Guido de Tella, under the presidency of Carlos Menem (1989–1999). Escudé is therefore not only the explicator but also the agent of a notable transformation of Argentina’s foreign policy in its relations with the world’s more powerful nations, especially the United States.

Escudé is most noted for his theory of peripheral realism, which is the pragmatic philosophy that advocates adaptation to the restrictive conditions experienced by the more vulnerable members of the interstate system. Promoting a “realism of the weak states,” Escudé classifies international actors into three types: rule makers, rule takers, and the rogue nations; in other words, states that command, obey, or push back. In the case of Argentina, taking a realistic approach has meant leaving behind previous regimes’ policies of territorial nationalism vis-à-vis the country’s neighbors and confrontationalism vis-à-vis the United States and Great Britain in favor of improved relations with these two nations. Guided by his theory, the Menem government moved to deprioritize military might and state security, align diplomatically with the United States and the Euro-zone nations, and accept measures prescribed by the International Monetary Fund.

Escudé’s historical analysis of the foundations of peripheral realism serves to explain his theory on Argentina’s post–World War II economic decline. After a previous period of advantageous if neocolonial trade relations with Great Britain, Argentina, he writes, experienced the “miracle of Argentine underdevelopment,” a period of less than satisfactory commercial relations with the United States as the new hegemonic power. The international factor in this miracle, argues Escudé, must be accounted for in a complete analysis of the
restrictions on the national economy and its consequent stagnation. Argentina learned the hard lesson, during the 1940s, of North American boycotts, pushed into practice by U.S. liberals and imposed to punish Argentina for its stance of neutrality during World War II and to discourage Anglo-Argentine trade relations, especially with regard to the building of railroads and the sale of meat. Within this framework of strained triangular relations, a policy of industrialization under Juan Perón (President 1946–1955; 1973–1974), linked with import substitution, succeeded in developing the economy. Heavy protectionism and a small internal demand, together with a strong syndicalism and an independent anti-Peronist middle class, hampered economic growth and provoked the regime to intensify its authoritarian methods, thus heating up the cycle of political instability.

Escude has traced the diplomatic history of an Argentina that challenged U.S. hegemony, as occurred during the Falklands/Malvinas crisis in 1982, bringing on negative consequences for the citizenry. The crisis of hyperinflation in 1989 and 1990 reoriented thinking in the Argentine government of Raúl Alfonsín (President 1983–1989) toward a search for monetary stability, economic development, and a pro-Western foreign policy that would not lead the country into conflict with the major world powers. During the Menem government, Argentina thus became aligned with the United States, raised its visibility in international forums, abandoned the Condor II missile project, and strengthened its political ties with Chile and economic ties with Brazil.

Realism of the periphery holds out the possibility of building international as well as domestic peace through participation in UN missions. Such participation, argues Escude, could also steer military endeavors in the direction of conflict resolution as an alternative to answering perceived or potential threats from other countries. For Argentina, alliance building has meant withdrawing from the nonaligned movement and imposed to punish Argentina for its stance of neutrality during World War II and to discourage Anglo-Argentine trade relations, especially with regard to the building of railroads and the sale of meat. Within this framework of strained triangular relations, a policy of industrialization under Juan Perón (President 1946–1955; 1973–1974), linked with import substitution, succeeded in developing the economy. Heavy protectionism and a small internal demand, together with a strong syndicalism and an independent anti-Peronist middle class, hampered economic growth and provoked the regime to intensify its authoritarian methods, thus heating up the cycle of political instability.


Estrada Cabrera, Manuel
Born to Francisco and Imelda Cabrera in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, Manuel Estrada Cabrera (1857–1924) rose to become the country’s longest-serving president (February 8, 1898–April 15, 1920). He received his early education from the Roman Catholic Church, then studied to become a lawyer. After passing his bar exam, Estrada Cabrera practiced law in Quetzaltenango and Retalhuleu, western Guatemala’s two major metropolises. As his reputation grew, Estrada Cabrera increased his involvement with Guatemala’s Liberal Party, rising within its ranks.

Estrada Cabrera was not an especially charismatic individual. Nevertheless, his administrative skills won him an appointment to the cabinet of José María Reyna Barrios (President 1891–1898). When Reyna Barrios ran for reelection in 1896, he tapped Estrada Cabrera as his vice president. On February 8, 1898, President Reyna Barrios was assassinated, elevating Estrada Cabrera to the presidency. Being the first civilian to assume Guatemala’s leadership, he professed support for students and teachers during the early years of his reign.

Although his regime was increasingly despotic, Estrada Cabrera did bring order and stability to Guatemala. In addition, he brought improvements in Guatemala’s infrastructure, such as carriage roads and a railroad that linked Guatemala City with the country’s main Caribbean port, Puerto Barrios. He also negotiated land ownership contracts with U.S.-based banana producer United Fruit Company, making Guatemala a major supplier of the yellow fruit to North America. Public education was also a major interest of Estrada Cabrera’s, and he professed support for students and teachers during the early years of his reign.

Two other issues were also important to Estrada Cabrera: internal security and foreign affairs. In a sense, the two issues were inexorably linked, especially in relation to Guatemala’s relations with its neighbors. Internal security was of utmost importance to Estrada Cabrera, for he saw plots against him in every corner and used a network of paid informants to uncover them. Those who dared speak out against his tyranny either rotted in his jail or left the country.