

Spring 3-2024

When the Dragon Joins the Club—Chinese Engagement in Regional Organizations and Forums in the Americas

Adam Ratzlaff
Diplomatic Courier

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/jgi_research

Recommended Citation

Ratzlaff, Adam, "When the Dragon Joins the Club—Chinese Engagement in Regional Organizations and Forums in the Americas" (2024). *Research Publications*. 62.
https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/jgi_research/62

This work is brought to you for free and open access by FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Research Publications by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dcc@fiu.edu.

WHEN THE DRAGON JOINS THE CLUB

CHINESE ENGAGEMENT IN REGIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS AND FORUMS IN
THE AMERICAS

AUTHOR
ADAM RATZLAFF

MARCH 2024

The Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy, part of FIU's Steven J. Green School for International & Public Affairs was founded in 1985 to establish, promote, and advance the study of public policy and national security studies. The Gordon Institute serves as the forefront of public policy discourse by leading, integrating, and delivering exceptional multidisciplinary education and research while improving the competitiveness and diversity of students and professionals entering the workforce. The Gordon Institute is centered on four pillars: Academics, Professional Education, Research, and Community Outreach, each serving the mission of shaping public policy and national security solutions in the 21st century.

Disclaimer: This product is part of the Florida International University—United States Southern Command Academic Partnership. United States Southern Command provides funding to support this series as part of its analytic outreach efforts. Analytic outreach is intended to support United States Southern Command with new ideas, outside perspectives, and spark candid discussions. The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Government, United States Southern Command, Florida International University, or any other affiliated institutions.

Permission Statement: No part of this work may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without the permission of the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy.

Requests for permission should include the following information:

- The title of the document for which permission to copy material is desired.
- A description of the material for which permission to copy is desired.
- The purpose for which the copied material will be used and the manner in which it will be used.
- Your name, title, company or organization name, telephone number, e-mail address and mailing address.

Please send all requests for permission to jgi@fiu.edu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Executive Summary
4	Introduction
5	Mapping Chinese Engagement
7	Case Studies <i>The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States</i> <i>The Inter-American Development Bank and Regional Development Banks</i>
12	Chinese Tactics <i>Boosting Chinese Economic Advantage</i> <i>Supporting the Fracturing of the Regional Institutional Framework</i> <i>Engaging Through Non-U.S. Venues</i> <i>Leveraging Committees and “Lower-Level” Forums</i> <i>Framing as South-South Partnership, Win-Win Agreements</i>
16	Recommendations for U.S. Policymakers <i>Limit Regional Organization Fragmentation</i> <i>Support U.S. Private Sector Engagement and Competition</i> <i>Bolster Organization Function Rather than Purely U.S. Interests</i> <i>Highlight Chinese Errors</i>
20	Recommendations for Latin American and Caribbean Policymakers <i>Leverage the U.S.-China Rivalry for Increased Resources and Influence</i> <i>Discourage Fragmentation While Leveraging Maximum Bodies in Negotiation</i> <i>Constrain the Worst Impulses of U.S. and Chinese Officials</i>
22	Conclusion
23	Annex. Chinese Engagement in Regional Organizations
25	End Notes
34	About the Author

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Chinese influence in the Americas expands, U.S. policymakers are increasingly concerned about their presence within regional organizations and bodies. While concerns over Chinese engagement in these organizations largely focus on their engagement within a select number, the region's long history of cooperation and integration efforts has led to a complex network of regional organizations and governance forums that China can and has engaged with. Given that the region remains one of the strongest supporters of Taiwan in the world—with approximately 20 percent of the countries still recognizing Taipei—China's efforts to engage the region through multilateral bodies allows it to work with countries it may otherwise have trouble engaging with. These concerns are all the greater given analyses suggesting China's efforts to rewrite global norms and rules through international organizations and the development of new international bodies. However, for the United States to engage with Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries regarding Chinese engagement through regional organizations, policymakers must understand the complex dynamics of regional governance in LAC and how China engages through these organizations.

The Americas are home to more than 30 regional organizations and forums. While the history of regional integration and cooperative efforts dates to the Congress of Panama in 1826, regional governance frameworks continue to evolve, with new configurations and organizations forming regularly. The landscape of regional organizations ranges from well-established multilateral forums like the Organization of American States to less formal networks, like the recently-created Alliance for Development in Democracy. While some organizations serve as forums for discussing various issues and resolving regional conflicts or providing regional development financing, others serve specific functions—such as the Pan American Health Organization. Still others are developed as ad hoc bodies to address a specific crisis—such as the Contadora Group during the Cold War or the more recent Lima Group through the Venezuelan crisis. Despite the veritable cornucopia of organizations, many of these bodies have overlapping memberships and mandates, allowing countries to forum shop for their preferred venue, undermining the many efforts to promote and enforce regional rules and norms.

China's engagement in regional bodies has a relatively long history, with China becoming a member of the Caribbean Development Bank as far back as 1998 and an observer of the Latin American Integration Association in 1994. However, as Chinese engagement in the region has expanded over the first two decades of the twenty-first century, so has Chinese engagement in regional bodies. China is a formal member of two regional bodies and an observer of six more. In addition to its formal participation, China engages with many regional organizations in different ways and through other channels—most notably with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) through the China-CELAC Forum.

Chinese engagement in different regional bodies varies widely based on the type of organization or forum, which allows China to structure its relations with the region toward a specific strategic vision. In others, China can maximize its economic footprint or shape regional norms and perspectives. While the dynamics of each regional body vary, and China's engagement through each body differs, some clear patterns emerge in China's engagement and tactics, which appear to follow these approaches:

- Boosting economic advantage;
- Supporting fracturing of the regional institutional framework;
- Engaging through non-U.S. venues;
- Leveraging committees and “lower-level” forums; and
- Framing as South-South partnership and win-win agreements.

While U.S. policymakers have started to express concern over Chinese engagement in regional bodies, much of their attention has focused on Chinese engagement through the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). However, some of the current approaches risk alienating Latin American and Caribbean leaders and could drive leaders to engage more deeply with China while turning away from effective regional governance bodies that include the United States as part of the hemispheric community. Instead, the United States should seek a more comprehensive approach when engaging with Western Hemispheric bodies to

create deeper ties between the United States and the region while strengthening regional governance practices. This would limit China's negative influence within these organizations.

This paper provides the following recommendations to address the growing Chinese influence in regional organizations:

- Limit regional organization fragmentation;
- Support U.S. private sector engagement and cooperation;
- Bolster organizational function rather than U.S. interest; and
- Allow Chinese engagement and error.

Chinese engagement in regional organizations and forums provides opportunities and challenges for Latin American and Caribbean policymakers. While LAC leaders should avoid becoming trapped within the growing U.S.-China regional rivalry, the existing regional framework and how and where the United States and China engage provide opportunities to strengthen regional governance and regional agency within the international system. The following recommendations are provided to maximize Latin American and Caribbean interests through regional bodies considering growing U.S.-China competition:

- Leverage U.S.-China rivalry for increased resources and influence;
- Discourage fragmentation while leveraging maximum bodies in negotiation; and
- Constrain the worst impulses of U.S. and Chinese officials.

INTRODUCTION

The Americas have a long history of regional governance and integration efforts. Since the earliest days of independence, Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) leaders have sought to develop mechanisms to increase cooperation between the nations of the Americas. These efforts date back to the 1826 Congress of Panama hosted by Simon Bolivar and continued over the past two centuries, leading to a veritable cornucopia of regional groups. These include broad regional organizations like the Organization of American States (OAS), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and functional organizations with more specific mandates like the Pan American Health Organization or Inter-American Court for Human Rights.

Regional organizations in the Americas have been developed for various reasons—including promoting cooperation, bolstering the image of various regional leaders, balancing against regional and extra-regional competitors, and addressing specific regional issues or challenges. While these organizations play a vital role in regional affairs, the multitude of organizations with overlapping mandates and memberships has created complex dynamics for regional governance. This has included enforcement challenges, differing rules within organizations, and competing visions of regional cooperation and integration.

One area that promoted regional cooperation and the early development of many regional organizations was ensuring the defense of the sovereignty of newly-formed states against the influence of extra-hemispheric actors. Despite concerns over extra-hemispheric influence in the Americas—as detailed by the United States in the Monroe Doctrine—and the potential return of imperial powers—a concern of the newly independent Latin American nations of the 1820s—countries from beyond the Americas have often taken part in regional organizations. In fact, Simon Bolivar invited the United Kingdom to participate in the Congress of Panama. At various points throughout the region's history, however, Latin American and U.S. leaders have engaged with regional organizations to limit extra-hemispheric influence and find collective "Pan-American" solutions to regional challenges.

As Chinese influence and engagement in the region has expanded in the twenty-first century, scholars and policymakers have expressed concern. However, much of the research and analysis on Chinese engagement in the Americas has focused on the relationship's economic and security dimensions. This is beginning to change as U.S. policymakers express growing concern with Chinese engagement in other domains. While China has engaged with regional organizations in the Americas since at least the 1990s, in recent years, some U.S. policy makers shown increased concern over China's involvement in key regional bodies—specifically within the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and through the China-CELAC Forum. This has also mirrored apprehension over other areas of Chinese engagement in the region but represents a new and growing issue among U.S. policy circles—particularly given Chinese lawfare and actions in various international and regional forums to reshape the global order.

For China, engagement in Latin American and Caribbean regional organizations may be particularly important since more than half the countries that recognize Taiwan are located in the Americas and represent 20 percent or seven of the 35 sovereign states in the hemisphere. Thus, China can use regional organizations to engage with Taiwan recognizers more effectively. In addition, LAC's history of regional integration and disagreement over the degree to which the United States should be incorporated into regional groupings provides China with ample opportunities to engage with the region on its terms and in ways not always favorable to the United States. While China rarely frames these actions as inherently hostile to U.S. regional interests, China's growing presence in Latin America and the Caribbean has led to increased U.S. wariness. While the United States has often been concerned about extra-hemispheric engagement in a region it considers its sphere of influence, the rise of China has made U.S. policymakers particularly agitated. Yet, while concerns over China's role in regional bodies has grown, understanding the dynamics and objectives of Chinese engagement in these groups is critical to developing a coherent U.S. strategy and understanding how countries in the region are responding to China's increased engagement—both within regional bodies and more broadly speaking.

This report explores where and how China engages with regional organizations in the Americas to better understand the strategies and tactics used by the People's Republic of China (PRC) relating to Latin America and the Caribbean. The report will first map Chinese engagement with the various organizations within the Americas and the different statuses China has within them. A deeper dive into Chinese engagement through two key regional organizations—CELAC and the IDB—will follow. Based on the experiences within these organizations and others, the report will examine China's different tactics and strategies in its engagement with regional organizations before providing recommendations for U.S. policymakers on how to best address Chinese engagement in regional organizations and improve the position of the United States. In addition to recommendations for U.S. officials, the report provides suggestions for Latin American and Caribbean policymakers for leveraging the existing regional infrastructure and growing rivalry between the United States and China to gain the most from regional bodies while constraining the worst impulses of U.S., Chinese, and other regional leaders.

MAPPING CHINESE ENGAGEMENT

The Americas are home to several regional organizations and established forums. Indeed, Latin American leaders pushed for Chapter VIII of the UN Charter—which provides the basis for regional organizations in international law. Furthermore, the Pan-American Union—the OAS's predecessor—is the oldest regional organization in the world. While regional cooperation and integration have been a defining element of Inter-American affairs since the independence period—with some notable exceptions—a singular unified regional organization akin to the European Union (EU) has not developed. Competing interests, differing definitions of regionalism, alternating leadership styles and ideologies, and efforts to limit U.S. influence or engage with the United States, have led to a proliferation of regional organizations and integration efforts as well as ad hoc groupings and informal forums. Consequently, there are over 30 regional bodies—a complex overlay that makes up regional governance in the Americas.

The overlapping nature of the organizations' mandates and memberships can create challenges and redundancies for implementing regional initiatives and adopting norms and rules. The sheer number of organizations creates “contested multilateralism”—or a space that allows for states to “forum shop” for the organization that best suits their needs or interests and to, therefore, claim multilateral legitimacy—which can undermine the ability of regional organizations to address different challenges and hinders reform efforts. This has been a trial in managing regional crises and posed challenges for the Inter-American system. For instance, multiple regional organizations have democracy promotion nominally as part of their mandates and follow elections to certify their results. However, there are key differences in the standards various regional bodies apply in their election monitoring or accompaniment missions. This gap in election monitoring standards has created space for Venezuelan leaders to certify the results of elections despite concerns from observers.

While regional organizations are typically designed to promote regional initiatives, many incorporate extra-regional actors as observers or even full members—particularly when they have regional interests. For example, in addition to the regional bodies in the Americas, Spain and Portugal developed organizations to address their shared hemispheric interests. As China's influence has risen globally, it has sought to engage to a greater extent within international and regional forums and organizations.

As China sought to expand trade as part of its economic reforms, it joined its first regional organization in the Americas in 1994—the Latin American Integration Association—when the country became an observer. In 1998, China's presence in the region expanded to include its membership in the Caribbean Development Bank. Since first entering regional governance bodies in the 1990s, China has deepened its engagement bilaterally and within regional organizations. In addition to being an important trade partner for every LAC country and having shifted recognition from Taiwan to Beijing in most countries in the region, China has become a full member of two regional bodies and a permanent observer of six additional groups (See Table 1).

While China is a member or observer in a small fraction of regional organizations, trade blocs, and forums within the Americas, Chinese officials engage with regional forums through various programs and agreements. For instance, while China is not a member of the Andean Community, it established ties and agreements for consultation mechanisms in 2000. Similarly, there is evidence of Chinese engagement in 19 regional bodies and forums—including those in which it is a member or observer—accounting for approximately 56 percent of the regional bodies considered in this report. Furthermore, in cases where China does not directly engage with specific regional organizations, many organizations engage through the China-CELAC Forum.

Table 1. Level of Chinese Engagement in Regional Organizations

Formal Member	Observer	Examples of Engagement Without Affiliation
Caribbean Development Bank	Latin American Integration Association	Association of Caribbean States Andean Community
Inter-American Development Bank	Central American Parliament	Andean Parliament
	Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
	Organization of American States	Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)
	Pacific Alliance	Caribbean Community or CARICOM
	Latin American Parliament or Parlatino	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
		Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean
		Inter-American Defense Board
		Mercosur
		Pan American Health Organization

Source: Created by author. Additional information on the status of individual organizations can be found in the Annex.

China's level of engagement within different organizations—even those with the same status—varies widely. Some of this concerns the varying roles of member or observer states within the organizations. For instance, while the PRC is a permanent observer in the OAS and Pacific Alliance, its role within each differs. At the OAS, China supports numerous initiatives. Between 2005 and 2019,

China provided approximately US\$4.76 million in financial contributions to OAS operations, with an additional US\$3.23 million in in-kind contributions. These included programs ranging from support for numerous lecture and outreach programs to electoral observation missions and specific social inclusion projects. These programs include climate change, women's and children's empowerment, and communications. While this represents a small portion of OAS contributions (approximately 1.87 percent of financial contributions between 2005 and 2019), it presents an important area of Chinese engagement with LAC through the region's dominant political forum—and one in which the United States is engaged and regularly viewed as calling the shots (even if it is not always the case).

Conversely, as a regional trade bloc, the Pacific Alliance is not engaged in the activities financed by China at the OAS. Therefore, China does not have the same kind or level of engagement within the organization. Instead, this serves as a space for China to engage with the trade bloc in discussions on trade and commerce rather than as a programmatic partner or financier.

While there are key differences in China's participation in various regional organizations, examining how it engages through these organizations and forums can shed light on Chinese intentions and tactics. The following section focuses on China's engagement with two regional groups, CELAC and the IDB.

CASE STUDIES

While China has engaged with the Latin American and Caribbean region through various regional organizations, its engagement with two regional organizations—CELAC and the IDB—has drawn greater concern. While Chinese engagement through these forums varies, the experiences illustrate different Chinese strategies and practices within Western Hemisphere organizations and provide examples of how the United States and other actors can respond to growing Chinese engagement in these organizations. Importantly, these two cases also represent different types of regional organizations that further highlight the strategies and tactics used by China in its Western Hemisphere engagement.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was established in 2011 and is often considered an emblematic example of “post-hegemonic regionalism” in the Americas—or part of a wave of regionalism starting in the 2000s that actively sought to promote hemispheric unity and serve as a counterweight to U.S. influence in the region. In addition to excluding Canada and the United States from its membership, CELAC notably incorporated Cuba, which was suspended from the OAS since the 1960s but remains a member—an area of contention between the United States and the region.

While seeking to serve as a counterweight to the OAS and other regional organizations viewed as “imperialist” or too pro-United States, CELAC is very different in function than the OAS. Most importantly, while the OAS has an established secretariat, headquarters, and staff, CELAC largely serves as a summit for regional leaders—making it more akin to the Summit of the Americas (initiated in 1994 and now housed within the OAS, albeit hosted by rotating countries) than the OAS itself. However, CELAC members have discussed establishing a permanent secretariat. Since its foundation, the body has seen its share of ups and downs due to shifting ideological lines within the region. In 2021, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador sought to revitalize the body and hosted its first meeting after a four-year hiatus—having previously held the summit annually. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines hosted the 8th CELAC Summit for heads of state in March 2024.

Despite already engaging with LAC through various regional forums, China and CELAC created the China-CELAC Forum in 2014. The main function of this forum is “promoting the development of the comprehensive cooperative partnership based on equality, mutual benefit and common development between China and LAC states.” This is accomplished primarily through semi-regular gatherings of LAC leaders alongside their Chinese counterparts. Given China's One China principle related to Taiwan, not all countries in the region have formal diplomatic relations with the PRC. Indeed, seven of the 12 countries worldwide that have full diplomatic

recognition of Taiwan are in Latin America and the Caribbean—Belize, Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Despite this, the PRC includes these countries in the China-CELAC Forum meetings. This provides a space to formalize aspects of the relationship with these countries, despite their continued recognition of Taiwan in a space where no other country—such as the United States—seeks to ensure these countries continue to recognize Taiwan. The number of countries that recognized Taiwan when the China-CELAC Forum was first created was even larger.

Since its formation, three gatherings of the China-CELAC Forum occurred in 2015, 2019, and 2021. These have served as an opportunity for China to provide sweeping announcements of plans for cooperation with the region and have ranged from announcements of large investment and trade programs and initiatives to educational exchange programs. Yet, many of the commitments China has announced at these gatherings have not been fully realized. For example, at the first Forum, China committed to investing US\$250 billion into the region by 2020, but estimates suggest that the amount was closer to US\$76 billion.

A principal objective of the first China-CELAC Summit was to establish rules for engagement through the Forum and its subcomponents. A strategic plan for the Forum was established at each gathering. China and CELAC member states initially laid out 13 areas for cooperation and engagement, including (1) politics and security, (2) international affairs, (3) trade, investment, and finance, (4) infrastructure and transportation, (5) energy and resources, (6) agriculture, (7) industry, science, and technology; aerospace and aviation; and education and training of human resources, (8) culture and sports, (9) press, media, and publications, (10) tourism, (11) environmental protection and disaster risk management and reduction, (12) poverty eradication and health, and (13) people-to-people friendship. These areas largely remained the same in subsequent gatherings.

While the large gatherings of the China-CELAC Forum attract more media coverage and attention on the regional and international stages, the Forum itself has a series of

different mechanisms that allow China to continue engaging with Latin America and the Caribbean on key issues. While many of these bodies existed before the creation of the China-CELAC Forum, they were brought under the Forum's umbrella when it first met in 2015. The initial subforums focused on agriculture, science and technology, business, and exchange programs, joint proclamations at the following forums expanded the number of subforums and included plans to continue developing additional subforums on issue areas including defense and further people-to-people exchanges. The subforums serve as a place for diplomats, ministers, and civil society to engage more directly on topics of mutual interest. Importantly, the development of these various forums under a single banner provides a tool to showcase the broad range of Chinese engagement with the hemisphere in a positive light. While U.S. engagement—and that of many other countries—appear disconnected, having multiple forums under one umbrella provides a clear channel to discuss China's work with the region and highlights its positive areas of engagement, making them more accessible. It also creates a single channel through which a wide range of actors—from government and civil society—can interact with China.

While one often thinks of foreign affairs as conducted by foreign ministries, the Chinese state is vast and multiple actors play critical roles in shaping the nation's foreign policy. The subforum provides a space through which LAC actors can engage with China and creates opportunities for various PRC actors to engage with regional counterparts. For instance, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade organized the China-LAC Business Summit, which created opportunities for Chinese state-owned enterprises and subnational governments to engage with Latin American and Caribbean companies and governments and other regional governance actors, such as IDB representatives. Likewise, the Ministerial Forum on Agriculture was established by the ministries of agriculture, and China's Ministry of Science and Technology and Ecuador's Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation hosted the first Scientific and Innovation Forum.

In addition to the role of the general and various subforums, the China-CELAC Forum website serves as an important space for information on Chinese-LAC engagement. While the website includes information about the China-CELAC Forum's work, it also provides news stories about the region emphasizing Sino-Latin American relations. It serves as a platform highlighting engagement between China and LAC that might not get full coverage in national or international news stories. For instance, stories include examples of Chinese programs and common diplomatic practices, such as congratulating presidents on electoral wins. While many of these would appear as press releases from the White House or the U.S. Department of State in the case of the United States, having an international forum and single space for these conversations supports China's regional engagement narrative.

China is not the only country primarily engaging with Latin America and the Caribbean through CELAC. The EU also predominantly uses this forum. While CELAC was developed to encourage engagement between Latin American and Caribbean countries that excludes the United States and Canada, it has become a useful platform for extra-hemispheric entities as well. As many countries opt to engage with the United States and Canada through alternative frameworks, CELAC provides a forum to engage with Latin America and the Caribbean without the United States in the same space. As with China, the EU and many European nations are permanent observers at the OAS (and other regional bodies) in addition to their CELAC engagement.

Chinese engagement with CELAC is not a unique tool of Chinese foreign policy. China uses dialogues like the China-CELAC Forum to engage with other regions as well. The China-CELAC Forum largely mirrors the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation established in 2000. Understanding the similarities and differences between Chinese engagement through these forums in varying regional contexts may provide greater insight into China's objectives and strategies not only in LAC, but also in its regional and global engagement.

As noted above, CELAC was first created to counterbalance U.S. influence in the region. Given U.S. concerns about China's position

in LAC, it should come as little surprise that the organization was a natural body for Latin American and Caribbean leaders to engage with China. In many ways, the China-CELAC Forum mirrors how the United States used the IX Summit of the Americas to announce large-scale U.S. initiatives and discuss topics it viewed as shared interests with the region. Likewise, while follow-up on many issues from the China-CELAC Forum takes place through the subforums, action items from the Summit of the Americas fall under the auspices of the OAS and its elements. In this sense, the China-CELAC Forum counterbalances U.S. influence through existing forums by engaging with China in a similar manner—an action in the interest of China but also of interest to countries in the region who view China as an opportunity rather than a threat.

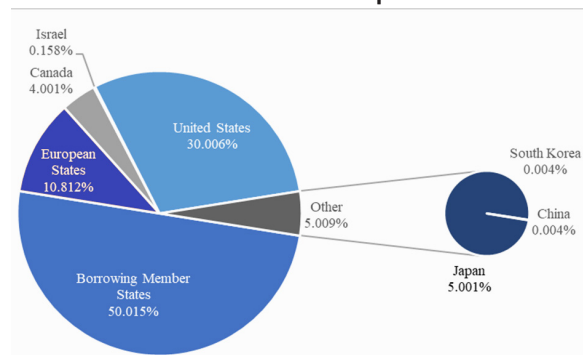
The Inter-American Development Bank and Regional Development Banks

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) was formed in 1959 at the request of Latin American leaders. These leaders saw the need for a “Marshall Plan” for the Americas as critical to the region's development. They highlighted the Bank as a bulwark against communist revolutions in LAC—a key point used to urge the United States to support its development. While other development banks already existed—most notably the World Bank—an important element of the IDB's founding was that borrowing member states were mandated to maintain over 50 percent of the Bank's allocation and voting power. This view of the Bank as an organization by and for the region was also marked by the norm of having a president from LAC lead it. This norm ended in 2020 when the United States nominated Mauricio Claver-Carone, a U.S. citizen, for the presidency (he held the position until 2022). With 26 borrowing member states, the IDB is a key provider of regional development loans and grants.

China joined the IDB in 2009 after 15 years of interest in doing so and after signing a memorandum of understanding of Chinese interest in becoming a member in 2007. China provided US\$350 million to the IDB group upon joining. Originally hosted by the Chinese government, the IDB has also worked closely with the Chinese government to host the “China-

LAC Business Summit” to boost business and government connections between Asia and the region. The China-LAC Business Summit is considered one of the subforums of the China-CELAC Forum, and the IDB still engages with it. In 2011, then-IDB President Luis Alberto Moreno visited China and called for closer ties between Latin America and the Caribbean and China. During the same visit, Moreno called for deeper links between the IDB and Chinese financial institutions, including the Bank of China and the Export-Import Bank of China.

Figure 1. Capital Allocation and Voting Shares at the Inter-American Development Bank



Source: Created with data from “Capital Stock and Voting Power” (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2023), <https://www.iadb.org/en/who-we-are/how-we-are-organized/board-governors/capital-stock-and-voting-power>.

Membership within the IDB has important implications. In addition to having votes based on shares held, membership allows Chinese companies to bid on projects and the IDB to hire Chinese nationals. China remains a minority stakeholder within the Bank (See Figure 1). Borrowing member states from the region account for over half the capital allocation and voting shares of the IDB, while the United States is the Bank’s largest shareholder at approximately 30 percent of capital allocation. While Asian countries make up over 5 percent of the total capital allocation of the Bank, China’s shares at the IDB account for less than .01 percent of the total.

Despite China having a minority stake, Chinese companies often bid on IDB projects—which has concerned U.S. policymakers. According to reporting from the *Financial Times*, Chinese firms won over US\$1.7 billion in IDB contracts between 2010 and 2020—compared to US\$249 million won by U.S. firms. Given the disparity between Chinese input and output, U.S. officials

have questioned the IDB’s procurement process and have proposed legislation to counter Chinese engagement with the Bank.

While Chinese engagement within the IDB is important, understanding what the presence of Chinese investment and loans in the region has meant for the Bank itself is critical. Starting in 2005, the Chinese policy banks (such as the Export-Import Bank of China and the Agricultural Development Bank of China) began providing large investments to the LAC region (See Figure 2). At its height, Chinese loans to the region were greater than those from the IDB, the World Bank, and the U.S. Export-Import Bank combined. This influx of financing was important for regional growth, but many within the United States expressed concern about how it would impact the region. There were also concerns surrounding the lack of conditionality applied to Chinese loans—particularly around environmental safeguards. While this may have been of interest to borrowing states, it limited the ability of the IDB and other multilateral lenders to leverage their position to support environmental and social safeguards. This is important given the role that conditionality from multilateral development banks can play in shaping regional norms and regulations. Still, the IDB worked to tighten its relationship with the Chinese policy banks and created mechanisms for cofinancing and conducting some transactions in Chinese renminbi. In cases of cofinancing, IDB safeguards—including environmental protections—should have been in place, thus eliminating some of the concerns around China’s lack of protections.

Figure 2. Chinese Policy Loans to Latin America and the Caribbean



Source: Created using data from the Chinese-Latin America Finance Database (Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue, 2023).

While ties between China and the IDB continued to flourish, growing U.S. apprehension over Chinese engagement in the region and the 2020 election of IDB President Claver-Carone put a spotlight on this relationship. Concerns over Chinese engagement in the Americas broadly and on the economic front have led U.S. policymakers to push back on growing Chinese engagement in LAC. Some of these actions were aimed at decreasing Chinese engagement with the IDB or partnering with the Bank to promote U.S. regional objectives. In 2019, the IDB was pressured to change the location of its annual meetings in Chengdu, China, due to U.S. concerns over Chinese influence at the Bank and China's refusal to recognize Juan Guaidó as the interim president of Venezuela. Furthermore, Claver-Carone made his concerns about China well-known during his time at the IDB and with the U.S. government.

In 2023, U.S. legislators took this a step further with the Senate's IDB Transparency Act. A similar act was introduced in the House. The Act would place requirements on the Treasury Department and the U.S. Representative to the IDB to report on Chinese activity at the IDB, develop a plan to counter Chinese influence at the IDB, facilitate greater transparency, vote against projects involving China that are deemed threats to the U.S. national interest, and block China from increasing its vote share. While the title of the act makes it appear as an effort to simply promote transparency at the IDB, the act itself and comments about the act from the Senators all specifically target the role of China at the IDB and note the role of Chinese firms in winning an outsized portion of IDB contracts. Critics of the act have said these actions may undermine the ability of the IDB to provide critical development financing to the region by politicizing the Bank and raising costs of loans and operations.

In addition to Congressional efforts to limit Chinese engagement within the IDB, the Biden administration has also leveraged its position in the Bank on steps to counter Chinese influence in the Americas. The Biden administration announced its Americas Economic Partnership (APEP) in the lead-up to the U.S.-hosted IX Summit of the Americas. While there were few details on how APEP would operate when first announced, additional information, action items, and participating countries were revealed at the

launch nearly a year later. As part of the initiative, the Biden administration convened an Americas Partnership Summit in November 2023. On the eve of the event, the IDB hosted APEP leaders and incorporated several U.S. policymakers as speakers. While the event largely centered on deeper trade ties and economic engagement across the Americas, several speakers noted the growing presence of China in the region and the need for regional cooperation and integration as a balance against supply chain interruptions. Likewise, reporting on the Biden administration's meeting with delegations and the Americas Partnership Summit noted its desire to counter growing Chinese influence in the region.

While U.S. officials attempt to limit Chinese influence at the IDB, its newest President, Ilan Goldfajn, has been clear he does not want the Bank involved in U.S.-China competition. Besides Goldfajn's efforts to prevent the Bank from engaging in questions of great power competition in the Americas, he has also stated that he views the Bank's role as a lender and purveyor of aid is non-ideological and promoted the idea of making the IDB less ideological and more technical in its engagement with borrowing member states. This latter point is particularly important given the politicization of the IDB that occurred throughout the Claver-Carone administration and because the IDB decided to follow the OAS in recognizing the interim presidency of Guaidó in Venezuela—a move that some leaders and ambassadors from the region viewed as an overstep and violation of Venezuelan sovereignty.

In addition to U.S. engagement with the region through the IDB, and despite Goldfajn's reluctance to engage in U.S.-China competition, the IDB continues to promote deeper integration between the United States and Latin America. In September 2023, the IDB launched its "BID for the Americas" initiative to deepen ties between the region and global partners, including the United States and Japan. Goldfajn met with business, local, and national-level officials in Miami as part of this initiative in November 2023. This included meetings with U.S. Southern Command, Miami-based venture capital firms, technology firms, and the Miami mayor's office on efforts to promote development and connectivity across the Americas. In these

meetings and discussions with U.S. companies and government, a large emphasis was placed on the IDB's private sector arm, IDB Invest, which provides financing to private sector firms for investments that would also promote economic development. Given the large number of U.S. firms involved in LAC and existing U.S. government efforts to advance “nearshoring” and “friendshoring,” the Biden administration has discussed efforts to accelerate IDB Invest activity and encourage greater engagement with the Bank from U.S. firms.

China has also engaged with the region through other regional financial institutions. In addition to the IDB, LAC has three regional financial institutions—the *Corporación Andina de Fomento* or Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). While more attention has been paid to the role of China within the IDB, Chinese engagement in the Caribbean Development Bank has been greater proportionally—with China both having been a member of the CDB longer (since 1998) and controlling more shares (5.58 percent). Additionally, China is engaged in project bids from the CDB. China also participates with the CAF through its Belt and Road Initiative. Despite China's engagement with the IDB, CDB, and CAF—and while most countries in Central America recognize China over Taiwan—CABEI includes Taiwan as a non-regional member while China is not. In November 2023, China announced its interest in becoming a non-regional member of the organization.

CHINESE TACTICS

The two case studies discussed above are emblematic of several different Chinese tactics used to engage with Latin America and the Caribbean through regional organizations. While there are key differences in Chinese engagement in some organizations versus these, they highlight key strategies China has used with regional organizations and forums in the Americas. Recognizing these different strategies is necessary to identify China's role and potential impacts in the region and develop strategies that mitigate negative outcomes from its engagement. In general, China employs five overarching strategies in the Americas:

- Boosting Chinese economic advantage;
- Supporting the fracturing of the regional institutional landscape;
- Engaging through non-U.S. venues;
- Leveraging committees and “lower-level” forums; and
- Framing as South-South partnerships, win-win agreements.

While some of these strategies are similar to those used by other countries—including the United States—it is important to understand the specific approaches China takes when engaging in regional gatherings in the Americas.

Boosting Chinese Economic Advantage

Chinese engagement in regional organizations focuses more on economic opportunities and bolstering people-to-people exchanges than traditional political maneuvering. Indeed, the regional organizations China has engaged with longest are related to economic integration and development—with Chinese formal engagement in the Latin American Integration Association and the Caribbean Development Bank dating back to the 1990s. While China is an observer at the OAS and conducts the China-CELAC Forum, actions in these regional political institutions remain highly focused on economic cooperation and outcomes. This is particularly clear when examining the work done by the various subforums of the China-CELAC Forum. Many of subforums are directly tied to Chinese economic interests related to agriculture, infrastructure, business, and technology and innovation.

Another area where China has sought to leverage its position within regional organizations for economic advantage is through the regional development banks. China is a formal member and has shown clear signs of engagement with all the regional development banks. Recent reports highlight that the only bank where China had not previously engaged—the Central American Bank for Economic Integration—is now one China seeks to join despite Taiwan's current membership. In addition to allowing China to compete for contracts within these organizations, membership means that China can work through these organizations to encourage the acceptance of particular development strategies and norms by supporting the adoption of specific laws or views at the regional level that conform with Chinese preferences. Given the important role regional organizations can play in shaping the incentive structure for different policies—coupled with concerns that some regional financial bodies are doing too little to counter authoritarian tendencies and corruption, China's role in these organizations is critical. For example, China has used its arrangements with regional organizations to expand the use of the renminbi (RMB) in international trade. In 2011, the Bank of China signed an agreement with the IDB's private sector arm to offer credit and trade financing in RMB.

In addition to these direct actions through regional organizations, China has sought to expand its trade presence by pursuing trade agreements bilaterally and through regional trade blocs. To date, China has free trade agreements with Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru. Moreover, China is an observer of two regional trade or integration blocs and has developed a consultation mechanism with the Andean Community. Further, China is actively seeking a trade agreement with Mercosur, a trade bloc consisting of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay—although reaching an agreement is unlikely given the position of some member states and particularly following the election of Argentine President Javier Milei. In addition to its engagement with regional trade blocs, China has sought to develop bilateral trade agreements with several countries. While China has engaged with Mercosur to foster an agreement, Uruguay has also pursued its own bilateral agreement with China, an action Mercosur has blocked due to the country's membership within the regional body.

These trade agreements provide China with easier market access for its exports while reducing costs on much-needed commodities and food imports. While Chinese growth has been a boon for Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of increased commodity prices, studies have suggested that these economic gains are not translating into industrialization and may instead encourage countries to remain dependent on commodity exports. Even where China is not a member of a regional grouping, there are concerns about it leveraging its relationship with member states to increase its economic advantage from the grouping. This is most clear in the case of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement in North America. While the free trade agreement has three members, there is increased reporting of China using factories in Mexico to take advantage of the free trade agreement to boost its access to U.S. and Canadian markets while taking advantage of the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act and lower tariffs by completing manufacturing there.

Supporting the Fracturing of the Regional Institutional Framework

As noted in the introduction, the Americas have a long history of regional cooperation and integration initiatives. While this long history has resulted in the development of a robust set of regional organizations, there have been some drawbacks and concerns over these organizations' effectiveness. Most notably, rather than reforming regional organizations to meet the changing needs of the region, regional leaders often opt to create new and competing bodies. While many of these organizations become "zombies" due to a lack of funding, declining political will, or loss of interest from regional leaders, they also create a framework in which leaders can pursue the institutional arrangement that meets their specific interests even when it may run counter to existing regional norms and agreements. This "contested multilateralism" makes using regional organizations in the Americas more difficult. However, as many of these organizations fall off due to a lack of political and financial commitment, Chinese involvement in regional bodies may change this. By providing financial support and heightened political interest in certain bodies, China can encourage the continued fragmentation of

regional governance mechanisms rather than see these organizations disappear. This, in turn, can make organizational reform within existing bodies more difficult.

While Chinese financing can provide regional organizations with the necessary funds to continue their engagement, China is not causing the fragmentation and increase of regional organizations. Prior to China's engagement in the region or within regional forums, the Americas already had a long history of proliferating regional organizations used to tackle specific issues—such as creating the Contadora Group to address the Central American civil wars—or to establish a different ideological or geographic configuration of states—as evident in the creation of CELAC as a counterweight to the OAS. But while many regional integration and cooperation schemes fail due to shifts in national leadership or lack of funding, Chinese financing may allow these groups to overcome some of these challenges. Thus, while China is not the cause of the regional proliferation of organizations, it plays a role in their continued existence.

By providing critical financing and legitimacy to different organizations, some that may have faded can flourish. Having several organizations with overlapping mandates and memberships limits the ability of existing institutions to enforce their norms and rules. It also provides legitimacy to actions that may be deemed inappropriate in other regional forums. This has led to particular challenges in the case of Venezuela, where the Nicolás Maduro government has leveraged various regional organizations to bolster its position on the international stage and retain legitimacy in different spaces. The creation of new venues and the ability of countries to evade the rules and norms of regional organizations by opting to participate in alternative forums is a test for regional governance and U.S. interests. This has presented a clear challenge for supporting democratic governance in the Americas and for the enforcement of norms in the region. At the same time, China may be able to benefit from the cornucopia of regional organizations by participating in forums more aligned with its interests or those limiting the influence of actors that do not perceive China as an ally.

Engaging Through Non-U.S. Venues

While China does engage with the Americas through the principal regional forums of the Inter-American System—in particular through the OAS and the IDB—most Chinese engagement in regional organizations is through forums that exclude the United States. The most noteworthy example is China's decision to engage deeply with the Caribbean Development Bank over the IDB. (The IDB includes the United States as a member and is headquartered in Washington, while the CDB does not count the United States as a member.) Likewise, while China is a permanent observer at the OAS and provides some financial and in-kind support for the organization, China's main engagement with the region in political regional forums is through CELAC.

This mirrors earlier assessments of Chinese financial and economic activity in the Americas, which showed that China was more likely to provide foreign aid and loans to countries where the United States was less engaged. This was often viewed as an effort not to challenge the United States directly in its region of traditional influence and highlights China's concerns over confronting the United States. As with aid and finance, as China's growth and influence in the region has grown, it has decided to take a more active role in engaging with groups and countries where the United States has traditionally been more engaged. While this can lead to confrontation within regional forums between China and the United States, as seen within the IDB, it also highlights China's increased willingness to take a more aggressive role as its position in LAC improves.

While the United States is a formal member of the seven organizations and forums examined in this report compared to two on the part of China—U.S. engagement as an observer in other regional organizations remains limited. Indeed, the United States is an observer in two regional bodies—the Pacific Alliance and the Central American Integration System—compared to the six groups in which China is an observer. While some of this is by design, with some regional groupings specifically intended to balance against U.S. influence in the region, it also highlights China's willingness to engage with the region across several platforms.

Leveraging Committees and “Lower-Level” Forums

While large summits are often the most newsworthy gatherings of regional organizations, China often focuses on the smaller China-CELAC Forum bodies to deepen its ties with the region and advance its interests. These forums allow for policy dialogue and agreements that are not as splashy but are important to the PRC. This is particularly clear in how China has set up the China-CELAC Forum’s subcommittees. These entities allow for more technical meetings that can help establish rules and regulations—or the lack thereof—favorable to China. The fractured nature of regional governance in the Americas, coupled with these subforums receiving less coverage, allows China to have greater influence while largely flying under the radar of U.S. concerns.

Some of the lower-level subforums duplicate other existing regional bodies that China is in, but where existing structures may not be preferred. For instance, while China has been a member of the Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura since 2018, it also engages the region on agriculture through the agriculture subforum of the China-CELAC Forum. While having multiple spaces for conversation on issues can be important, these become another area where China or countries in the region can exclude the United States from the conversation, which may undermine the ability of other regional organizations to establish and enforce norms and rules in their specific sector due to competing regional visions.

While many regional organizations have different directorates or entities that engage in specific topical areas, the decision to develop these mechanisms specifically within the framework of the China-CELAC Forum avoids U.S. engagement in the decision-making process and provides a space to deepen engagement not only with Latin American and Caribbean leadership, but with the private sector, civil society, and future regional leaders.

Framing as South-South Partnership, Win-Win Agreements

As China engages with LAC and other developing regions, it has taken great care to frame this as an example of South-South cooperation and always in line with seeking “win-win” agreements. This argument feeds into ideas

of cooperation and anti-imperialism—views already shared by many regional leaders. While this is clear in how China has generally approached the region, it is particularly true in how it has framed its relationship through regional bodies, such as the China-CELAC Forum. Many—in and out of the region—view CELAC as a counterweight to U.S. influence in the Americas. Thus, framing Chinese partnership as South-South cooperation and highlighting the win-win nature of the relationship fits within the organization’s ideological framework. China takes a similar approach with its relationships in Africa—but with a greater focus on countering hegemony. Recognizing how China frames its own and the U.S. relationship with the region is critical in developing counternarratives to Chinese communications efforts. Unfortunately, U.S. messaging can feed into existing Chinese narratives if care is not taken.

While there has been a great deal of concern about Chinese misinformation and propaganda campaigns in Latin America, Chinese engagement with regional organizations and forums provides it with a ready-to-use public relations platform. For instance, the China-CELAC Forum website includes recent stories about Chinese engagement with LAC. These stories show China in a positive light while presenting the United States negatively. Likewise, some regional organizations have publications featuring stories about China’s engagement in the region, similar to press releases from regional organizations and forums or foreign ministries and executive offices.

Figure 3. Screenshot of News Stories Featured by the China-CELAC Forum



Note: Image taken January 8, 2023.

While many organizations and groups issue press releases and have social media presences, this is an underexplored element of China's "charm offensive." By using trusted organizations to highlight the links between China and the region, the PRC can showcase the deep level of engagement it has with the region through non-Chinese sources and further demonstrate regional engagement—even when some of the news stories presented are common diplomatic practices (such as President Xi Jinping congratulating presidents on their recent elections). While the United States also conducts similar activities, it lacks a singular platform for sharing this information with a broader Latin American public through a credible third-party source and instead relies on government sources or local reporters.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. POLICYMAKERS

There are several strategies U.S. policymakers could implement to reduce Chinese influence in the region and bolster U.S. standing. Improving the perception of the United States within regional organizations can support U.S. interests without directly countering Chinese actions. U.S. officials should consider several overlapping elements and approaches when approaching regional bodies that would limit the impact of Chinese influence through them. These include:

- Limiting regional organization fragmentation;
- Supporting U.S. private sector engagement and cooperation;
- Bolstering organizational function rather than U.S. interest; and
- Allowing Chinese engagement and error.

Limit Regional Organization Fragmentation

The fragmentation of regional governance mechanisms creates numerous challenges for U.S. engagement and efforts to strengthen regional governance. The United States should bolster the regional system's core institutions and limit further fragmentation. This requires ensuring all members of the hemispheric community are incorporated into these organizations, and that their voices matter. Indeed, as former OAS Secretary General José

Miguel Insulza noted at the 2022 Hemispheric Security conference:

I don't believe exclusion is a good way with dealing with these matters. I think that we have try to keep, as long as we can, the dialogue among all the countries of the Americas. The good thing about the Inter-American System, about the Organization of American States, is that everybody is a member. The moment that we... do things that will make members go out, we will have same the problem that we have had in several Latin American countries. The government changes and the international system falls. In Latin America, we have had about 100 organizations in the past 100 years and they have all been dissolved because the government, or governments, that created them are not there anymore. The big thing about the Inter-American system is that it's still an institution that includes everyone, or at least tries to include everyone.

There are several ways the United States can approach this. The first is to limit attempts to create ad hoc regional organizations to address specific challenges. This is particularly important given that the United States has a history of supporting these initiatives when efforts to build hemispheric consensus fail. For instance, the United States supported the creation of the Lima Group to address the Venezuela crisis and the creation of multiple multilateral trade agreements when the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas fell through.

Instead, the United States should work through the core regional organizations of the Inter-American system, including the OAS, IDB, and topical organizations. When specific issues arise, rather than creating ad hoc groups or new organizations, the United States should form working groups within these bodies equipped to tackle particular matters as was done in 2023 through the creation of a working group at the OAS to address the situation in Haiti.

Additionally, the United States must seek to strengthen the role of these organizations by ensuring they have sufficient funding. One of the challenges facing many regional organizations and forums in the Americas is their lack of funding—a void China can fill. While many regional bodies have failed due to insufficient

funding, the core institutions the United States is a part of, including the OAS, continue to operate and exist—albeit with limited budgets. Supporting these organizations by ensuring their budgets are sufficient to meet their mandates is critical to ensuring they remain functional. While the recent increase of capital for the IDB's private sector arm was important, the United States should also provide additional financial support for the OAS, particularly in democracy promotion and human rights, as these are areas where the United States and OAS have a clear comparative advantage over China.

To limit regional fragmentation, the United States should encourage engagement from countries that may not share U.S. interests within these organizations, including China. When the United States excludes China from forums that include the United States, it incentivizes China and other countries to create alternative spaces that may not share the same norms and values as existing regional structures.

It is vital to hear voices across the region even when not aligned with U.S. interests. The Biden administration's decision not to invite countries it viewed as undemocratic to the IX Summit of the Americas fell into this trap and created the opportunity for critics of the United States to highlight the exclusionary nature of some elements of the Inter-American system. Making sure all countries in the region are represented at these gatherings, except in rare special occasions, and using existing forums rather than supporting the creation of ad hoc bodies—like the Lima Group to address the crisis in Venezuela—can strengthen regional governance systems.

Similarly, the United States should encourage all countries in the region to join the IDB, which counted 26 LAC countries as borrowing member states at the beginning of 2024. Ensuring that the Inter-American system is strong and non-exclusionary can safeguard its position as the key channel through which nations of the Americas engage, and extra-hemispheric actors like China feel compelled to engage, thus limiting the incentives for creating new organizations and further atomizing regional governance mechanisms.

Support U.S. Private Sector Engagement and Competition

In discussions over Chinese economic and investment competition with the United States in Latin America, conversations often focus on how China can better compete due to state ownership of companies and less concern over corruption. While these may present challenges to competing with China, they should not be considered insurmountable hurdles for regional organization engagement. Most regional organizations have strong anti-corruption measures that should benefit U.S. competition. However, despite U.S. concerns over China's advance in the region, the United States does little to incentivize the private sector to support U.S. objectives or even deepen economic integration. Engaging the U.S. private sector through regional organizations can be a powerful tool to counter Chinese influence in regional bodies.

While U.S. companies win 61 percent of the IDB contracts they compete for, they are less likely to bid for programs. Additionally, U.S. companies are more likely to compete for smaller operations than companies in many other countries. When U.S. companies do not enter bids, they are ceding the space to other firms—including those from China. While it is common to hear that U.S. companies face challenges competing with Chinese companies due to corrupt practices and that PRC subsidization makes Chinese firms more competitive, there are key actions the U.S. government can take to make its companies more competitive.

These can include leveraging different channels to provide information and support on IDB and other regional projects to the U.S. private sector. While also boosting transparency and accountability, the U.S. government could provide additional support to companies that engage in regional business through regional organizations by creating grant and funding opportunities through the Development Finance Corporation and preferential access to U.S. government contracts, and reducing risk for U.S. companies by providing detailed information on anti-corruption and best practices that are country-specific with key tools for engaging in LAC and with regional bodies. This can not only illuminate opportunities for U.S. companies but also help minimize the risk of potential litigation

for these companies. In addition to these actions, the United States can promote and build upon the BID for the Americas Initiative at the IDB. The U.S. government and the IDB could also deepen their partnerships with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with private sector members—such as the Americas Council/Society of the Americas or the Business Council for International Understanding—to provide information about deepening ties with the region and engaging with the IDB in the bidding process.

These activities can make U.S. private sector engagement with regional organizations more appealing and encourage U.S. companies to enter bids. Given that U.S. companies already outperform their Chinese counterparts in winning bids, rather than limiting the number of bids made by Chinese companies, the United States and regional governments should provide additional support and incentives that would encourage not only greater interest but also limit the number of bids won by Chinese companies relative to U.S. and Latin American and Caribbean companies. However, while assisting U.S. companies in winning contracts, U.S. policymakers should ensure that the benefits of international financing do not shift from supporting other countries to simply supporting U.S. companies. A common critique of Chinese aid has been that Chinese companies receive most of the benefits as China frequently hires Chinese labor and uses Chinese inputs. This, in turn, limits the positive spillover of Chinese investment. The United States should ensure that, as a requirement of its aid, U.S. companies use local labor and inputs to further increase the benefits of these investments and bolster the perception of the United States vis-à-vis China.

Bolster Organization Function Rather than Purely U.S. Interests

One of the challenges facing the United States as it engages with countries on issues—particularly those related to China—is that the intentions of the United States are often questioned, limiting the ability of U.S. policymakers to counter Chinese narratives and actions. When the United States enters the region with a message more directly linked to U.S. national interests than to the interests of other countries, or the United States cannot provide an alternative to China, regional leaders

are more likely to turn toward China. The same holds true within international forums. While many regional organizations are designed to represent the interests of their member states, voting rights or historical perspectives of different regional organizations may lead to some bodies being viewed as tools of U.S. foreign policy. This is particularly true with the OAS and IDB. To combat this perspective and ensure that regional organizations that include the United States remain the predominant and preferred bodies in the Americas, the United States must work to bolster the function of these organizations rather than purely leveraging them in the pursuit of national interests.

The United States has created this problem for itself in the past. Pushing for the election of the IDB's Claver-Carone is a case in point. Not only did the election of a U.S. president buck institutional precedent, but Claver-Carone's ties to the U.S. national security establishment, efforts to block Chinese engagement, and use of similar programs as those implemented during his time in the U.S. government left the impression that the IDB was not a fair arbiter of development. This pushed Latin American countries toward China as the Bank was viewed as too close to the United States. As others have noted, the perception that the IDB is too closely linked to U.S. interests runs the risk of the Bank being unable to serve its mandate of promoting development in LAC and using its influence to push for meaningful policy shifts that support development.

Likewise, U.S. efforts to foster democracy at the OAS are important. However, countries in the region perceive and highlight inconsistencies in U.S. support for democracy and its use of the OAS to pressure compliance. When the OAS does not apply the defense of democracy equally for countries across the political and ideological spectrum, it risks weakening these mechanisms and trust in the organization. This is particularly true when it is perceived that the United States is limiting the organization's response to crises.

To avoid these issues, the United States should work toward strengthening the function of regional bodies even when the specifics of a case may not align directly with U.S. interests—such as when a candidate unaligned with U.S. interests faces democratic challenges or when regional actors engage with extra-hemispheric actors

through existing forums. One clear example is ensuring consistency in support of the OAS's mission to defend democracy and continuing to allow OAS election monitors to observe U.S. elections. These actions showcase U.S. support and consistency on issues within the system.

Rather than seeking to ban Chinese engagement at the IDB, the United States should support countries in finding the best vendors for projects and complement IDB loans and grants with U.S. investment and aid in areas of interest. It would also strengthen the system if the United States were to sign on to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to highlight its respect for international and regional law. Working through regional organizations and accepting their rulings can demonstrate to LAC countries the benefits of engaging in these forums rather than turning toward Chinese-led groups or forums that exclude the United States.

The United States must not retreat from regional organizations when they pressure it toward different paths. This is particularly important given the common perspective that some regional organizations are U.S.-dominated and have shifted U.S. policy on key issues such as pushing for the IDB's creation. Indeed, the United States should embrace ideas from LAC through these bodies as it shows U.S. commitment to partnering with the region on issues of importance to the region rather than just itself. Two areas where the United States could "lead from behind" are by supporting initiatives from organizations like IDB's "BID for the Americas Initiative" and through more full-throated support for defending democracy through the OAS. In both cases, the actions that the regional organization would conduct are in the U.S. interest—boosting trade and nearshoring in the case of the IDB and supporting democracy in the case of the OAS. In addition to strengthening the perception of the United States, these actions will strengthen regional organizations and help limit their further fragmentation.

Highlight Chinese Errors

History is one of the greatest challenges the United States faces in its relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. While the United States has a long history of engagement and intervention in the region, China is a relatively unknown actor with a limited history. While China has sought to frame its engagement as

win-win and about South-South cooperation, negative interactions with China in various contexts have begun to steer countries to question Chinese motives and recognize the drawbacks of engaging with China. Already, Chinese engagement is being questioned. There is growing concern about the degree to which China's economic interests drive Chinese regional engagement. In particular, LAC countries have seen how trade agreements with China have not always benefitted countries as much as hoped and have growing concerns about the quality of Chinese projects that have taken place, as well as corruption and environmental degradation.

In China's engagement through regional organizations, the United States and LAC countries can highlight where Chinese actions are not benefitting member states. For example, the United States can support the IDB in developing mechanisms that provide additional information about the quality of different companies' work and highlight the spillover benefits of various companies and projects rather than directly seeking to ban companies. Supplying this information and working to incorporate it into bid processes for operations and programs can create a more equitable bidding process that benefits member states while highlighting problematic companies and practices. In doing so, the United States must note these practices are applied equally to all vendors, which emphasizes the United States is concerned about the practice rather than just countering Chinese engagement.

Rather than trying to discourage Latin American and Caribbean countries from engaging with China, the United States should compete with China in the areas where it can outperform the PRC and highlight cases where Chinese practices harm the countries they are engaging with. This could be accomplished by providing trainings and resources for local reporters to report on Chinese actions, information to Latin American and Caribbean counterparts on Chinese activities that run counter to their national interests, and ensuring that U.S. engagement remains at the highest possible standards. Many groups already engage in this space. For instance, the Jack D. Gordon Institute's dashboard on Chinese operations in the region highlights some of the challenges

facing specific Chinese companies, while groups like the Andrés Bello Foundation, *Expediente Público*, and the Caribbean Investigative Journalism Network provide valuable trainings for journalists covering issues related to China. The U.S. government should expand its engagement with these and other similar organizations.

As Chinese engagement is considered more transactional with negative consequences for recipient countries, countries could choose not to engage with China of their own volition. Regional organizations and forums could achieve this by ensuring that U.S. engagement respects human rights and the sovereignty of regional partners while promoting shared interests and addressing common challenges. Given that the United States has deeper engagement in most regional organizations than China, showcasing that the United States wants to engage with the region through these collective forums could go a long way.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN POLICYMAKERS

China's engagement with regional organizations and bodies provides various opportunities and challenges for Latin American and Caribbean policymakers. While there are areas where Chinese intentions and actions should be questioned, China's activity in LAC and its growing rivalry with the United States provide the space for Latin American and Caribbean leaders to find greater agency within the regional and international system and to make important gains. Historically, regional leaders have been able to leverage regional bodies to pursue key interests—including when the United States has been concerned about the growing influence of extra-regional actors. Notable examples have included leveraging the second Pan American Conference to receive invitations to a conference of European powers at The Hague, which would result in the acceptance of a treaty banning intervention due to defaulting on sovereign debt, and leveraging U.S. concerns over communism to encourage the development of the IDB. To make the most of the current governance infrastructure and rivalry between the United States and China, regional officials should:

- Leverage U.S.-China rivalry for increased resources and influence;
- Discourage fragmentation while leveraging maximum bodies in negotiation; and
- Constrain the worst impulses of U.S. and Chinese officials.

Leverage the U.S.-China Rivalry for Increased Resources and Influence

While Latin American and Caribbean leaders and leaders from some regional organizations have made it clear they do not want to be drawn into a new "Cold War" between China and the United States, the rivalry between the two countries could provide opportunities. In leveraging the rivalry, Latin American and Caribbean leaders could lean into regional bodies to pursue their interests. For example, the increased interest of the United States in light of its rivalry with China creates opportunities to pressure the United States to adopt new policies and actions that may not be available otherwise—as Latin American leaders did to push for the creation of the IDB in light of fears of communism. Regional organizations and speaking in a shared voice can increase the leverage of individual states in pressing for regional policies from the United States. Similarly, regional leaders could urge regional governance reforms that benefit them, particularly if framed in a way that supports the U.S. effort to constrain China. For instance, regional leaders can lean on U.S. concerns over Chinese contracts from the IDB to develop mechanisms that maximize the positive spillover benefits of IDB operations by increasing local input and hiring requirements on all IDB operations. While this aligns with U.S. interests to combat Chinese influence, it also maximizes the impact of financing on regional development outcomes.

At the same time, Latin American and Caribbean officials should not simply turn away from China in favor of engaging with the United States. Given that studies have suggested that Chinese engagement in the region includes efforts to counter U.S. influence in the region, regional leaders should encourage this competition and use it to their own advantage. By using regional organizations, regional leaders can develop shared positions and regulations for their engagement with China that maximize regional interests rather than China's. This

can be particularly important in generating influence in extra-regional forums—as regional leaders did in the early twentieth century—and increasing awareness around issues of critical importance to the region, including climate change and development.

Discourage Fragmentation While Leveraging Maximum Bodies in Negotiation

Regional leaders should avoid the continued fragmentation of regional governance mechanisms to make the most of the existing framework. While there are advantages for some leaders to “forum shop” between the numerous existing organizations and potential opportunities to boost the prestige of specific leaders by spearheading new regional initiatives, the continued atomization of regional governance limits the ability of LAC leaders to maximize the effectiveness of regional bodies or ensure they take the most advantage of the U.S.-China rivalry. There are benefits in maintaining the China-CELAC Forum as a space for engagement directly with China, in the same way the OAS and Summit of the Americas provide a useful platform for regional engagement with the United States and Canada. For issues outside of the relationship with China specifically, the region should return to the core Inter-American institutions that incorporate the maximum number of actors and do not have a particular ideological lens. By focusing on the core institutions, regional governments can strengthen regional norms and ensure that regional governance functions most effectively. By maximizing the number of members within key institutions, governments not only develop shared norms but also place themselves in a position to negotiate common solutions to shared problems.

Regional governments should also expand this pressure by increasing membership in existing bodies. For example, raising the number of countries involved in different trade blocks can allow these bodies to negotiate better trade agreements with China, the United States, and others—an opportunity lost when only negotiating bilateral trade with larger economies.

The region should work to increase membership at the IDB, which only has 26 borrowing member states and excludes several Caribbean countries. Leaning into U.S. concerns over China’s role in the regional development finance

space, interested countries should seek to join while member states work to increase IDB capital and encourage new membership. Given that many states that are not members engage with the CDB—where China has more sway—the United States should, as recommended above, support incorporating these countries into the IDB.

Constrain the Worst Impulses of U.S. and Chinese Officials

Regional organizations are important for establishing governance norms and constraining the behavior of states. This is particularly important for states that are not great powers within the international system, like those in Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, regional organizations have historically been used by governments not only to engage with the United States but also to constrain the worst excesses of the regional hegemon and to leverage the position of the United States to limit the excesses of European powers. Leveraging regional organizations to limit Chinese and U.S. policymakers from engaging in practices detrimental to Latin American and Caribbean countries is as important to the region as ensuring positive gains from their relationships with these countries.

Regional organizations can serve as a tool for balancing against U.S. or Chinese influence by creating greater coordination and the ability to condemn the actions of either country. Leaning into regional groupings to negotiate new practices and condemn bad behavior is more effective than an action taken by an individual country. This can also include the development of multilateral monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Developing tools through regional bodies—including in collaboration with NGOs—to monitor foreign economic practices in corruption, environmental crime, and tariff evasion can allow governments to better enforce existing policies and limit harmful actions. This is particularly important given growing concerns about corrupt practices and environmental damage caused by economic relations with China.

CONCLUSION

The Western Hemisphere's long history with regional organizations and complex systems of regional governance create opportunities and challenges for engaging with the region. The PRC has shown the ability and willingness to engage countries in the Americas on a bilateral basis and through various regional organizations and forums, which is particularly important given that not all countries recognize Beijing, and LAC remains an important source of support for Taiwan. How China has opted to engage through these different regional bodies mirrors China's approach to the region and highlights important elements of China's strategy.

As U.S. policymakers grow increasingly concerned about China's engagement with LAC and through regional bodies, they should focus less on blocking Chinese engagement and more on highlighting the benefits of working with the United States. Given the country's history and location, the United States has deeper engagement in most regional bodies and can leverage them to promote better outcomes for the United States and the region. However, the United States must be cautious not to position these organizations in a new "Cold War" with China, as it would likely limit the ability of these organizations to fulfill their missions and open the door to further Chinese engagement with the region. This will also play into some regional leaders' concerns about U.S. engagement with LAC—particularly given its history with the United States. Instead, the United States should expose errors by Chinese projects in the region, increase competition with China in the public and private sectors, and strengthen regional governance institutions. These actions could promote U.S. interest in countering Chinese influence while improving the image of the United States and ensuring that regional bodies promote shared interests and address the common challenges facing nations across the Americas.

At the same time, regional leaders must understand the risks and opportunities of China's growing presence in regional bodies. While there are areas of concern for these leaders, the growing rivalry between the United States and China within the regional organizational infrastructure can provide

opportunities for Latin American and Caribbean leaders to strengthen regional bodies and improve their position on the global stage. Given the tensions and sensitivities between the United States and China, doing so will be challenging. Still, Latin American and Caribbean leaders have long proved adept at leveraging regional organizations and the existing international infrastructure to ensure their agency, sovereignty, and voice on global issues. Returning to the historical lessons of leveraging regional organizations could provide an important opportunity for Latin American and Caribbean leaders.

ANNEX. CHINESE ENGAGEMENT IN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

	Year Affiliated	Status
Association of Caribbean States (ACS)	n/a	Not a member but has had diplomatic meetings with ACS Secretary Generals.
Alliance for Development in Democracy (ADD)	n/a	Not a member.
Latin American Integration Association (ALADI)	1994	Observer State.
Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our Americas (ALBA)	n/a	Not a member.
Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)	n/a	Not a member.
Andean Community	n/a	Neither a member nor observer. However, it established a consultation mechanism in 2000.
Andean Parliament	n/a	Not a member, but engages with Andean Parliament on various issues.
Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity (APEP)	n/a	U.S.-led partnership, China excluded.
Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)	n/a	Not a member; Taiwan, however, is a non-regional member.
Central American Common Market (CACM)	n/a	Not a member.
Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)	n/a	Not a shareholder, but engages with CAF through the BRI.
Central America–Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR)	n/a	Not a member.
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	n/a	Not a member, but China regularly meets with CARICOM at the China–CELAC Forum and on the sidelines of other international conferences (including on climate change and finance).
Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)	1998	Non-borrowing member state; has 5.58 percent of shares as of 2018.
Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)	2015	Not a formal member, but regular meets with CELAC through the China–CELAC Forum and affiliate mechanisms established in 2015.
Central American Parliament	2023	Permanent Observer. Voted in August 2023 to shift recognition of permanent observer from Taiwan to China.

Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean	n/a	Not a member, but there are multiple reports on China and its engagement through forum and various publications.
Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA)	2018	Observer.
Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR)	n/a	Not a member.
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	2009	Non-borrowing member state.
Inter-American Defense Board	n/a	Not a member but has sent at least one student to participate in courses.
Lima Group	n/a	Not a member. Largely defunct.
Mercosur	n/a	In initial stages of negotiations for an FTA with this trade bloc but facing resistance from members.
Organization of American States (OAS)	2004	Permanent Observer. Engaged in various projects and provides financial contributions.
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)	n/a	Not a member.
Pacific Alliance	2013	Observer.
Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)	n/a	Not a member, but PAHO sent its first delegation to China to explore potential partnerships and lessons learned in 2018.
Latin American Parliament (Parlatino)	2017	Observer.
PetroCaribe	n/a	Not a member.
ProSur	n/a	Not a member.
Latin American Economic System (SELA)	n/a	Not a member.
Central American Integration System (SICA)	n/a	Not a member.
South American Union (UNASUR)	n/a	Not a member.
U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)	n/a	Not a member. However, there are growing concerns over China using this trade bloc to evade tariffs on Chinese goods by assembling them in Mexico.

END NOTES

1. Karina Pasquariello Mariano, Regiane Nitsch Bressan, and Bruno Theodoro Luciano, "Liquid Regionalism: a typology for regionalism in the Americas," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, vol. 64(2) (October 22, 2021); and Diana Tussie, "Latin America: contrasting motivations for regional projects," *Review of International Studies*, vol. 35 (2009): 169-188.
2. Andrés Malamud and Gian Luca Gardini, "Has Regionalism Peaked? The Latin American Quagmire and its Lessons," *The International Spectator*, vol. 47(1) (April 4, 2012): 116-133; Adam Ratzlaff, "El Mercado Institucional: Multilateral Forum Shopping in Latin America," *Charged Affairs*, 2019, <https://chargedaffairs.org/el-mercado-institucional-multilateral-forum-shopping-in-latin-america/>; Christopher Sabatini, "Latin America Is Paying the Cost of Its Zombie Regionalism," *World Politics Review*, 2022, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30594/the-summit-of-the-americas-2022-is-more-zombie-regionalism>; and Christopher Sabatini, "Meaningless Multilateralism: In International Diplomacy, South America Chooses Quantity Over Quality," *Foreign Affairs* (2014), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/south-america/2014-08-08/meaningless-multilateralism>.
3. Kevin Casas-Zamora, "Venezuela's Questionable Election Observers," *Project Syndicate*, 2015, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/venezuela-election-observers-by-kevin-casas-zamora-2015-10>; and Daniel Lansberg-Rodríguez, "For Venezuela, Election Monitoring with a Wink and a Nod," *Foreign Policy* (2015), <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/10/for-venezuela-election-monitoring-with-a-wink-and-a-nod/>.
4. "A Comparison of UNASUR and OAS Election Observation Standards," *Latin America and the Liberal World Order: Will Political Shifts Change Global Engagement?* (New York: Global Americans, 2016), <https://theglobalamericans.org/reports/unasur-oas-election-observation-standards-comparison/>.
5. Jose Briceño-Ruiz and Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann, "Posthegemonic regionalism, UNASUR, and the reconfiguration of regional cooperation in South America," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, vol. 40(1) (2015): 48-62; Pia Riggirozzi, "Region, Regionness and Regionalism in Latin America: Towards a New Synthesis," *New Political Economy*, vol. 17(4) (2012): 421-443; Arturo Santa-Cruz, "Regionalism in Latin American Thought and Practice," in *Latin America in Global International Relations*, eds. Amitav Acharya, Melissa Deciancio, and Diana Tussie (New York: Routledge, 2022); and Tussie, "Latin America: contrasting motivations for regional projects."
6. James Monroe, "Monroe Doctrine," December 2, 1823, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/monroe-doctrine>.
7. Enrique Dussel Peters, *China's Evolving Role in Latin America: Can It Be A Win-Win?* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2015); Kevin P. Gallagher, *The China Triangle: Latin America's China Boom and the Fate of the Washington Consensus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Inter-American Dialogue, *Chinese-Latin America Finance Database* (Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue), accessed October 30, 2023; Tom Lum, *China's Assistance and Government-Sponsored Investment Activities in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009); Monica Nunez Salas, *China's Investments and Land Use in Latin America* (Miami: Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy, Florida International University, 2022); Francisco Urdinez, Fernando Mouron, Luis L. Schenoni, and Amândo J. de Oliveira, "Chinese Economic Statecraft and U.S. Hegemony in Latin America: An Empirical Analysis, 2003-2014," *Latin American Politics and Society* Vol. 58, No. 4 (2016): 3-30; Rachel Will, "China's Stadium Diplomacy," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2012): 36-43; and Charles Wolf, Jr., Xiao Wang, and Eric Warner, *China's Foreign Aid and Government Sponsored Investment Activities: Scale, Content, Destinations, and Implications* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2013).
8. R. Evan Ellis, "Understanding PRC Political and Security Engagement in the Caribbean," *Global Americans*, February 21, 2023, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2023/02/understanding-prc-political-and-security-engagement-in-the-caribbean/>; R. Evan Ellis, "US Department of Defense Role in Addressing Extra-Hemispheric State Rivals in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Diálogo*

- Américas, February 24, 2022, <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/us-department-of-defense-role-in-addressing-extra-hemispheric-state-rivals-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>; R. Evan Ellis, "Should the U.S. be worried about Chinese arms sales in the region?," *Global Americans*, May 11, 2015, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2015/05/should-u-s-be-worried-about-chinese-arms-sales-in-the-region/>; Matthew A. Hughes, "Lessons in the Dragon's Lair: The People's Liberation Army's Military Professional Education Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean," *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* Vol. 6, No. 7 (2023): 48-67; Livia Peres Milani, "U.S. Hegemony in Latin America during an Age of Challenges: The Perception of Threats by the U.S. Southern Command," *Latin American Perspectives* (2022); and Robert Morgus, Brian Fonseca, Kieran Green, and Alexander Crowther, *Are China and Russia on the Cyber Offensive in Latin America and the Caribbean?* (Washington, DC: New America, 2019), <https://www.newamerica.org/cybersecurity-initiative/reports/russia-china-cyber-offensive-latam-caribbean/>.
9. R. Evan Ellis, "Forums and Influence: Chinese Competitive Strategy and Multilateral Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean," West Point, Modern War Institute (June 14, 2022), <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/forums-and-influence-chinese-competitive-strategy-and-multilateral-organizations-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>; and Javier Vadell, "China's bilateral and minilateral relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean: the case of China-CELAC Forum," *Area Development and Policy* Vol. 7, No. 2 (2022): 187-203, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23792949.2021.1974907>.
 10. Kelly Piazza, Max Lasco, Jacqueline Kelly, Harvey Regin, and Joncarl Vera, "China-Latin America Alignment and Democratic Backsliding: Gaining Traction for a Chinese-Led World Order," *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* Vol. 6, No. 7 (2023): 26-47.
 11. Tom Long, "Historical Antecedents and Post-World War II Regionalism in the Americas," *World Politics* Vol. 72, No. 2 (2020): 214-53; and Tom Long, "Latin America and the liberal international order: An agenda for research," *International Affairs* Vol. 94, No. 6 (2018): 1,371-1,390.
 12. Malamud and Gardini, "Has Regionalism Peaked? The Latin American Quagmire and its Lessons."
 13. Mariano, Bressan and Luciano, "Liquid Regionalism: a typology for regionalism in the Americas;" and Tussie, "Latin America: contrasting motivations for regional projects."
 14. Riggirozzi, "Region, Regionness and Regionalism in Latin America;" Alfredo Toro Hardy, *Understanding Latin America: A Decoding Guide* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2018); and Tussie, "Latin America: contrasting motivations for regional projects."
 15. Thomas Legler, "Post-Hegemonic Regionalism and Sovereignty in Latin America: Optimists, Skeptics, and an Emerging Research Agenda," *Contexto Internacional* Vol. 35, No. 2 (2013): 325-352; and Andrés Malamud, "A Leader Without Followers? The Growing Divergence Between the Regional and Global Performance of Brazilian Foreign Policy," *Latin American Politics and Society* Vol. 53, No. 3 (2011): 1-24.
 16. Max Paul Friedman and Tom Long, "Soft Balancing in the Americas: Latin American Opposition to US Intervention, 1898-1936," *International Security* Vol. 40, no. 1 (2015): 120-56; Laura Levick and Carsten-Andres Schulz, "Soft Balancing, Binding or Bandwagoning? Understanding Institutional Responses to Power Disparities in the Americas," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 53 (2020): 521-539.
 17. Julia C. Morse and Robert O. Keohane, "Contested Multilateralism," *Review of International Organizations*, Vol. 9 (2014): 385-412.
 18. Marc L. Busch, "Overlapping Institutions, Forum Shopping, and Dispute Settlement in International Trade," *International Organization* Vol. 61, No. 4 (2007): 735-761; and Ratzlaff, "El Mercado Institucional: Multilateral Forum Shopping in Latin America."
 19. For example, Thomas Legler, "A story within a story: Venezuela's crisis, regional actors, and Western hemispheric order upheaval," *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, No. 109 (2020): 135-156; and Adam Ratzlaff, *Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Organizations in Addressing the Venezuela Crisis and Beyond* (Washington, DC: Global Americans, 2023).

20. Latin America and the Liberal World Order: Will Political Shifts Change Global Engagement? Global Americans.
21. Casas-Zamora, "Venezuela's Questionable Election Observers;" and Lansberg-Rodríguez, "For Venezuela, Election Monitoring with a Wink and a Nod."
22. Organizations developed by Spain and Portugal include the Organization of Ibero-American States, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture, the International Youth Organization for Ibero-America, the Ibero-American Social Security Organization, and the Conference of Ministers of Justice of the Ibero-American Countries. These institutions, which incorporate regional and extra-regional actors as part of their foundational premise, are not assessed in this report.
23. Please refer to the annex for further details on the level of Chinese engagement within various bodies.
24. Many of the organizations that China does not engage with are largely "zombie" organizations with little activity (Julia Gray, "Life, Death, or Zombie? The Vitality of International Organizations," *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 62, No. 1 (2018): 1-13; Sabatini, "Latin America Is Paying the Cost of Its Zombie Regionalism"), bodies that retain larger numbers of members that recognize Taiwan (like the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States), are largely U.S.-led initiatives, trade blocs, or functional bodies that fall outside of China's scope. This may partly explain China's lack of interest in engaging with some organizations. In other cases, China may engage with these groups to a lesser extent through the CELAC-China Forum, discussed in more detail in the "Case Studies" section.
25. China did not engage with CABEL until recently. In November 2023, there were reports of China's interest in joining the organization.
26. While China does not have a formal affiliation with CELAC, it holds the CHINA-CELAC Forum. Additional information on this relationship is discussed in the paper's "Case Studies" section.
27. "China Profile," Organization of American States, Washington, DC, 2023, https://www.oas.org/en/ser/dia/perm_observers/Documents/Profiles/Profile%20China.doc.
28. "China Profile," OAS.
29. "China Profile," OAS.
30. John F. Maisto, "The View from the North: The United States and the OAS: What Frustrates the Americans?," in Richard L. Millet, Jennifer S Holmes, and Orlando J Pérez (eds.), *Latin American Democracy: Emerging Reality or Endangered Species?* 2nd Edition (New York, NY: Routledge 2015): 44-49.
31. Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann, "Posthegemonic regionalism, UNASUR, and the reconfiguration of regional cooperation in South America;" and Legler, "Post-hegemonic Regionalism and Sovereignty in Latin America."
32. "Basic Information," China-CELAC Forum, April 2016, http://www.chinacelacforum.org/eng/ltjj_1/201612/P020210828094665781093.pdf.
33. The other countries are Eswatini, Holy See, Marshall Islands, Palau, and Tuvalu.
34. Ellis, "Forums and Influence: Chinese Competitive Strategy and Multilateral Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean."
35. Catherine Osborn, "Latin America Could Profit From U.S.-China Competition," *Foreign Policy*, December 10, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/12/10/latin-america-china-celac-democracy-summit-active-nonalignment/>.
36. Shannon Tiezzi, "Despite US-Cuba Detente, China Forges Ahead in Latin America," *The Diplomat*, January 9, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/despite-us-cuba-detente-china-forges-ahead-in-latin-america/>.

37. "Basic Information," China-CELAC Forum.
38. "Basic Information," China-CELAC Forum.
39. "Basic Information," China-CELAC Forum.
40. R. Evan Ellis and Leland Lazarus, "China's New Year Ambitions for Latin America and the Caribbean," *The Diplomat*, January 12, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/chinas-new-year-ambitions-for-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>.
41. "Basic Information," China-CELAC Forum.
42. "Permanent Observers," Organization of American States, https://www.oas.org/en/ser/dia/perm_observers/countries.asp, accessed October 30, 2023.
43. Paul Nantulya and Leland Lazarus, "Lessons from China's Forum Diplomacy in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean," Africa Center for Strategic Studies, January 22, 2024, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/lessons-from-chinas-forum-diplomacy-in-africa-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>.
44. Richard E. Feinberg, "IX Summit of the Americas: Creative Diplomacy for a Fractured World," *Global Americans*, June 14, 2022, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2022/06/summit-creative-diplomacy/>; Adam Ratzlaff, *IX Summit of the Americas*, Diplomatic Courier, 2022.
45. For example: Pablo Baltadano, "China's Soft Power Diplomacy in the Caribbean," *E-IR*, December 6, 2023, <https://www.e-ir.info/2023/12/06/opinion-chinas-soft-power-diplomacy-in-the-caribbean/>.
46. Tom Long, *Latin America Confronts the United States: Asymmetry and Influence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
47. Diana Roy, "What Does the Inter-American Development Bank Do?" Council on Foreign Relations, October 31, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-does-inter-american-development-bank-do>.
48. "China joins IDB in ceremony at Bank headquarters," Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, January 12, 2009, <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/china-joins-idb-ceremony-bank-headquarters>.
49. "People's Republic of China and Inter-American Development Bank sign Memorandum of Understanding for possible admission to membership into the IDB," Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, March 18, 2007, <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/peoples-republic-china-and-inter-american-development-bank-sign-memorandum-understanding>.
50. Of the US\$350 million, US\$125 million went to the IDB's Fund for Special Operations, US\$75 million to IDB grants, US\$75 million to the Inter-American Investment Corporation, and US\$75 million to the Multilateral Investment Fund. See "China to join the Inter-American Development Bank," Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, 2008, <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/china-join-inter-american-development-bank>.
51. "China-LAC Business Summit," accessed December 16, 2023; "IDB and Chinese government to host China-LAC Business Summit in Hangzhou Oct 17-18," Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, October 11, 2012, <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/idb-and-chinese-government-host-china-lac-business-summit-hangzhou-oct-17-18>; and "China-LAC Business Summit," Inter-American Development Bank, Events, <https://events.iadb.org/calendar/event/15088?lang=en>, accessed December 16, 2023.
52. "IDB's Moreno calls for Closer Ties with China and launches new programs with Chinese financial institutions," Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, September 16, 2011, <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/idbs-moreno-calls-closer-ties-china-and-launches-new-programs-chinese-financial-institutions>.
53. Roy, "What Does the Inter-American Development Bank Do?"
54. "Capital Stock and Voting Power," Inter-American Development Bank, <https://www.iadb.org/en/who-we-are/how-we-are-organized/board-governors/capital-stock-and-voting-power>, accessed October 30, 2023.

55. Roy, "What Does the Inter-American Development Bank Do?"
56. Government of the United States. "H.R.4865 - IDB Transparency Act," U.S. House of Representatives, Congress.gov, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/4865?s=1&r=34>, accessed December 16, 2023; and Government of the United States, "Menendez, Hagerty, Rubio, Kaine Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Increase Transparency on PRC Activity at IDB," Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Press Release, July 25, 2023, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/dem/release/menendez-hagerty-rubio-kaine-introduce-bipartisan-bill-to-increase-transparency-on-prc-activity-at-idb>.
57. Kevin P. Gallagher, Amos Irwin, and Katherine Koleski, *The New Banks in Town: Chinese Finance in Latin America* (Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue, 2012).
58. Gallagher, Irwin, and Koleski, *The New Banks in Town*.
59. "IDB's Moreno calls for Closer Ties with China and launches new programs with Chinese financial institutions," Inter-American Development Bank; and "China Eximbank and IDB Expand Trade Activity," Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, October 22, 2010, <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/china-eximbank-and-idb-expand-trade-activity>.
60. "The Inter-American Development Bank cancels its big bash in China," *The Economist*, March 28, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2019/03/28/the-inter-american-development-bank-cancels-its-big-bash-in-china>; and Liu Zhen, "Why China missed out on hosting the Inter-American Development Bank meeting in Chengdu," *South China Morning Post*, March 23, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3003007/why-china-missed-out-hosting-inter-american-development-bank>.
61. Miguel Jiménez, "Ilan Goldfajn, new president of IADB: 'My tenure will be one of dialogue, bridge-building and coalitions,'" *El País*, January 13, 2023, <https://english.elpais.com/economy-and-business/2023-01-13/new-president-of-inter-american-development-bank-my-tenure-will-be-one-of-dialogue-bridge-building-and-coalitions.html>.
62. "Menendez, Hagerty, Rubio, Kaine Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Increase Transparency on PRC Activity at IDB," SFRC, Press Release.
63. "H.R.4865 - IDB Transparency Act," U.S. House of Representatives.
64. "IDB Transparency Act," SFRC.
65. "IDB Transparency Act, SFRC;" and "Menendez, Hagerty, Rubio, Kaine Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Increase Transparency on PRC Activity at IDB," SFRC.
66. Kevin P. Gallagher and Jorge Heine, "A proposal to guard against China would hurt Latin America instead," *The Hill*, October 9, 2023, <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/4143426-a-proposal-to-guard-against-china-would-hurt-latin-america-instead/>.
67. Richard E. Feinberg, "A Path Forward for the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity," *Global Americans*, January 31, 2023, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2023/01/a-path-forward-for-the-americas-partnership-for-economic-prosperity/>; and Feinberg, "IX Summit of the Americas: Creative Diplomacy for a Fractured World."
68. For example: Ari Hawkins, "Biden confronts deep skepticism of U.S. agenda in Latin America," *Politico*, November 3, 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/11/03/immigration-overshadows-biden-visit-with-latin-american-leaders-00125136>; Fatima Hussein and Josh Boak, "The Biden administration pushes for more US-Latin America trade, seeking to lessen Chinese influence," *Associated Press*, November 2, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/yellen-latin-america-interamerican-development-bank-china-e32078c94b6e71ffb3b4f50f222ef4f3>.
69. Jiménez, "Ilan Goldfajn, new president of IADB;" and Eric Martin, "IDB Chief Shields LatAm's Development Bank Against US-China Feud," *Bloomberg Línea*, May 22, 2023, <https://www.bloomberglinea.com/english/idb-chief-shields-latams-development-bank-against-us-china-feud/>.
70. Isabel Bernhard, "Will the IDB's Politicization Pull China and Latin America Closer?: U.S. and Chinese

- attempts to shape Latin American governments' lending options raise issues of sovereignty and choice," *The Diplomat*, November 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/will-the-idbs-politicization-pull-china-and-latin-america-closer/>.
71. For Example: Marc Becker, "The Imperialist Agenda of the Organization of American States (OAS)," *Common Dreams*, December 9, 2021, <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2021/12/09/imperialist-agenda-organization-american-states-oas>.
 72. "IDB Launches BID FOR THE AMERICAS to Boost U.S. Business Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean," Inter-American Development Bank, Press Release, September 6, 2023, <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/idb-launches-bid-americas-boost-us-business-opportunities-latin-america-and-caribbean>.
 73. Jack D. Gordon Institute, Florida International University, "Hemispheric Security Conference: Fireside Chat with Special Assistant to the President and NSC Senior Director Juan Gonzalez," YouTube, May 10, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zllprC7i6c>.
 74. "Non Borrowing Members: China," Caribbean Development Bank, <https://www.caribank.org/countries-and-members/non-borrowing-members/china>, accessed November 10, 2023.
 75. MercoPress, "Closer ties between China and the Development Bank of Latin America," *Mercopress*, April 25, 2019, <https://en.mercopress.com/2019/04/25/closer-ties-between-china-and-the-development-bank-of-latin-america>.
 76. Luis Rodríguez, "China puede convertirse en nuevo socio del Banco Centroamericano," *El Heraldo*, November 1, 2023, <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/china-puede-convertirse-nuevo-socio-banco-centroamericano-ID16043812?utm>.
 77. Rodríguez, "China puede convertirse en nuevo socio del Banco Centroamericano."
 78. For example: Ryan C. Berg, "The Banker to Dictators: A Call to Elect Accountable Leadership at CABEL," *Global Americans*, May 8, 2023, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2023/05/the-banker-to-dictators-a-call-to-elect-accountable-leadership-at-cabei/>; and Ryan C. Berg, "Why Is CABEL Funding Nicaragua's Dictatorship and What Can the United States Do about It?" *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, February 6, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-cabei-funding-nicaraguas-dictatorship-and-what-can-united-states-do-about-it>.
 79. "IDB's Moreno calls for Closer Ties with China and launches new programs with Chinese financial institutions," IDB.
 80. The two regional trade or integration blocs China belongs to are the Pacific Alliance and Latin American Integration Association.
 81. Editorial, "Mercosur: South America's Fractious Trade Bloc," *Council on Foreign Relations*, December 18, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/mercosur-south-americas-fractious-trade-bloc>.
 82. Afonso Damares Lopes, Suzana Quinet de Andrade Bastos, and Fernando Salgueiro Perobelli, "Latin America and China: mutual benefit or dependency?" *CEPAL Review*, no. 135 (2021), <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f57b749c-78d5-4e7f-ab05-859fd20db144/content>.
 83. "Why Chinese companies are flocking to Mexico," *The Economist*, November 23, 2023, <https://www.economist.com/business/2023/11/23/why-chinese-companies-are-flocking-to-mexico>.
 84. Ratzlaff, "El Mercado Institucional;" and Sabatini, "Latin America Is Paying the Cost of Its Zombie Regionalism."
 85. Julia Gray, "Life, Death, or Zombie? The Vitality of International Organizations," *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 62, No. 1 (2018): 1-13; and Sabatini, "Latin America Is Paying the Cost of Its Zombie Regionalism."
 86. Morse and Keohane, "Contested Multilateralism."
 87. Legler, "A story within a story: Venezuela's crisis, regional actors, and Western hemispheric order upheaval."

88. Ellis, "Forums and Influence"
89. Adam Ratzlaff and Jennifer Zavala, "Building Bridges and Burning Ties: Potential Futures of Chinese Foreign Aid, Government-Sponsored Investment Activity and Inter-Governmental Loans in Latin America," *Journal of International Policy Solutions* Vol. 19 (2017): 26-37; and Urdinez, Mouron, Schenoni, and de Oliveira, "Chinese Economic Statecraft and U.S. Hegemony in Latin America."
90. Briceño-Ruiz and Ribeiro Hoffmann, "Posthegemonic regionalism, UNASUR, and the reconfiguration of regional cooperation in South America;" Legler, "Post-hegemonic Regionalism and Sovereignty in Latin America;" Levick and Schulz, "Soft Balancing, Binding or Bandwagoning?;" and Tussie, "Latin America: contrasting motivations for regional projects."
91. Ellis, "Forums and Influence."
92. Ellis, "Forums and Influence."
93. For example: Pablo Baisotti, *China's Charm Offensive in Latin America and the Caribbean: A comprehensive Analysis of China's Strategic Communication Strategy Across the Region [Part I: Propaganda and Politics]* (Miami: Florida International University, 2023); Baltadano, "China's Soft Power Diplomacy in the Caribbean;" and Raúl Rodríguez Rodríguez, "Alternative Regionalism, competing models in the United States and China approach to Latin America and the Caribbean," *The International System of Power*, City-University of London, March 11, 2022, <https://blogs.city.ac.uk/internationalsystemofpower/2022/03/11/alternative-regionalism-competing-models-in-the-united-states-and-china-approach-to-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>.
94. Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy, Florida International University, "Africa-Americas Forum on China- Session 2: Security," YouTube, October 19, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1LNiBSp_4w.
95. For example: Adam Ratzlaff and Emma Woods, "The Battle for the Hearts and Minds of Latin America?," *Global Americans*, April 7, 2022, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2022/04/the-battle-for-the-hearts-and-minds-of-latin-america/>; Adam Ratzlaff and Emma Woods, "The First Rule of Countering Influence: Don't Talk About Countering Influence," *Global Security Review*, July 2, 2021, <https://globalsecurityreview.com/the-first-rule-of-countering-influence-dont-talk-about-it/>; and Adam Ratzlaff, Emma Woods, and Jeffery Tobin, "Partnership and Opportunity: How SOUTHCOM's Posture Statement Can Advance US Interests in the Region," *Modern War Institute at West Point*, November 28, 2023, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/partnership-and-opportunity-how-southcoms-posture-statement-can-advance-us-interests-in-the-region/>.
96. For example: Vera Bergengruen, "'The Long Game:' China's Online Influence Campaign in Latin America," *Time*, July 11, 2023, <https://time.com/6293423/china-online-influence-campaign-latin-america/>; *Measuring the Impact of Misinformation, Disinformation, and Propaganda in Latin America* (Washington, DC: Global Americans, 2021); Julieta Pelcastre, "China Seeks to Increase International Disinformation," *Diálogo Américas*, November 16, 2023, <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/china-seeks-to-increase-international-disinformation/>; and Didi Tang, "The US warns of a Chinese global disinformation campaign that could undermine peace and stability," *Associated Press*, October 4, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/disinformation-china-us-xinjiang-global-opinion-c9e033f22622841935a2b1bc1060c01b>.
97. For example: Andean Parliament, "China apoyará a comunidades de la region," *El Cóndor*, edition: 22, April 2017, https://issuu.com/elcondor/docs/revista_el_co_ndor_abril_web/22.
98. Baisotti, *China's Charm Offensive in Latin America and the Caribbean [Part I: Propaganda and Politics]*.
99. Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy, Florida International University, "Reexamination of the 2003 Declaration on Security in the Americas," YouTube, May 20, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHTaijzGZhM>.
100. There may be cases where repeated failures to address a specific issue or the perspectives of core regional organizations necessitate the creation of an ad hoc organization to address the crisis. For

- further information and the author's recommendations regarding the Venezuela crisis, see Ratzlaff, *Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Organizations in Addressing the Venezuela Crisis and Beyond*.
101. "CP/RES. 1214 (2414/23): Renewed Support for Security and Humanitarian Assistance, Inclusive, Free, Fair, and Credible Elections. And Democratic Transition in the Republic of Haiti" (Washington, DC: OAS, 2023).
 102. "Statement on Capital Increase for IDB Invest," Inter-American Development Bank, Announcements, June 10, 2022, <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/statement-capital-increase-idb-invest>.
 103. Ratzlaff, "IX Summit of the Americas."
 104. Eduardo Gamarra and Valeriia Popova, "How China uses 'geostrategic corruption' to exert its influence in Latin America," *The Conversation*, May 17, 2023, <https://theconversation.com/how-china-uses-geostrategic-corruption-to-exert-its-influence-in-latin-america-201119>; Guillermo Saavedra, "Corruption, China's Weapon of Choice to Snatch Lithium in Latin America," *Diálogo Américas*, August 11, 2023, <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/corruption-chinas-weapon-of-choice-to-s snatch-lithium-in-latin-america/>; and Francisco Urdinez, "Economic Displacement: China's Growing Influence in Latin America," *The Wilson Center*, June 16, 2023, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/economic-displacement-chinas-growing-influence-latin-america>.
 105. IDB, "IDB Launches BID FOR THE AMERICAS to Boost U.S. Business Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean."
 106. IDB, "IDB Launches BID FOR THE AMERICAS to Boost U.S. Business Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean."
 107. Urdinez, "Economic Displacement: China's Growing Influence in Latin America."
 108. For example: Government of the United States, *China's Foreign Policy and "Soft Power" in South America, Asia, and Africa* (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2008); Gallagher, Irwin, and Koleski, *The New Banks in Town: Chinese Finance in Latin America*; Lum, *China's Assistance and Government-Sponsored Investment Activities in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia*; and Ken Miller, "Coping With China's Financial Power: Beijing's Financial Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* Vol 89, No. 4 (2010): 96-109.
 109. Gallagher, Irwin, and Koleski, *The New Banks in Town*.
 110. Hawkins, "Biden confronts deep skepticism of U.S. agenda in Latin America;" Ratzlaff and Woods, "The Battle for the Hearts and Minds of Latin America;" and Ratzlaff and Woods, "The First Rule of Countering Influence."
 111. Maisto, "The View from the North: The United States and the OAS."
 112. The United States maintains a 30 percent vote share at the IDB.
 113. Bernhard, "Will the IDB's Politicization Pull China and Latin America Closer?"
 114. Gallagher and Heine, "A proposal to guard against China would hurt Latin America instead."
 115. Adam Ratzlaff, "Losing Legitimacy?: The Organization of American States and its inconsistent defense of democracy," *Global Americans*, June 27, 2019, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2019/06/losing-legitimacy-the-organization-of-american-states-and-its-inconsistent-defense-of-democracy/>.
 116. Michael Shifter, "Obama's Honduras Problem: The United States and Latin America After the Coup," *Foreign Affairs*, August 24, 2009, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/americas/2009-08-24/obamas-honduras-problem>.
 117. Long, *Latin America Confronts the United States*.
 118. Lopes Alfonso, Quinet de Andrade Bastos, and Salgueiro Perobelli, "Latin America and China: mutual benefit or dependency?"
 119. Julieta Pelcastre, "Chinese Tales in Latin America," *Diálogo Américas*, October 10, 2023, <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/chinese-tales-in-latin-america/>.

120. Leland Lazarus and R. Evan Ellis "Can Latin America and the Caribbean Trust China as a Business Partner?" *The Diplomat*, December 29, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/can-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-trust-china-as-a-business-partner/>.
121. China's Activities in Latin America (Miami: Florida International University, Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy), <https://fiugis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/58ace2b67a37433b90ce46fd62318b8e>, accessed January 8, 2024.
122. Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).
123. Long, *Latin America Confronts the United States: Asymmetry and Influence*.
124. Jiménez, "Ilan Goldfajn, new president of IADB;" and Martin, "IDB Chief Shields LatAm's Development Bank Against US-China Feud."
125. Matthew Duss, "Latin America Doesn't Want to Be Forced Into Cold War 2.0: A new U.S. approach can redress past errors," *Foreign Policy*, September 1, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/09/01/latin-america-aoc-us-congress-trip-chile-brazil-colombia-progressive/>; and Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "Latin America Doesn't Want a New Cold War," *Americas Quarterly*, April 28, 2022, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/latin-america-doesnt-want-a-new-cold-war/>.
126. Gallagher, *The China Triangle: Latin America's China Boom and the Fate of the Washington Consensus*; and Osborn, "Latin America Could Profit from U.S.-China Competition."
127. Long, *Latin America Confronts the United States: Asymmetry and Influence*.
128. Francisco Urdinez, Fernando Mouron, Luis L. Schenoni, and Amândo J. de Oliveira, "Chinese Economic Statecraft and U.S. Hegemony in Latin America: An Empirical Analysis, 2003–2014," *Latin American Politics and Society* Vol. 58, No. 4 (2016): 3–30
129. Friedman and Long, "Soft Balancing in the Americas: Latin American Opposition to US Intervention, 1898–1936;" and Levick and Schulz, "Soft Balancing, Binding or Bandwagoning? Understanding Institutional Responses to Power Disparities in the Americas."
130. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ADAM RATZLAFF

Adam Ratzlaff is a correspondent with *Diplomatic Courier* focused on the Americas. In addition, he is a specialist and consultant in Inter-American affairs as well as a PhD candidate in International Relations at Florida International University. Ratzlaff has over a decade of experience conducting research on regional affairs and has consulted for the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the U.S. Department of State. Ratzlaff's work has been featured in *Global Americans*, *Diplomatic Courier*, *The National Interest*, and West Point's Modern War Institute, among other sites. Adam's research has largely focused on analyses of different Inter-American organizations, U.S.-Latin American foreign policy, the regional defense of democracy, inclusive development in the Americas, and Sino-Latin American relations. Ratzlaff holds an MA from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies (University of Denver) and a BA from Tulane University, where he triple-majored in international relations, economics, and Latin American studies. Ratzlaff holds an MA from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies (University of Denver) and a BA from Tulane University, where he triple-majored in international relations, economics, and Latin American studies.

