

St. John, Ronald Bruce. *Peruvian Foreign Policy in the Modern Era*. New York: Anthem Press, 2023. 126 pp. \$24.95 US paperback.

In the acknowledgments section of his latest book *Peruvian Foreign Policy in the Modern Era*, Ronald Bruce St. John states that “as Peru celebrates its bicentennial and I approach my 80th year, it seems the right time to conclude what has become a lifelong study of the foreign policy of Peru” (ix). Indeed, for over fifty years beginning with the 1970 publication of *Peruvian Foreign Policy, 1919-1939: The Delimitation of Frontiers*, St. John has contributed a long series of research monographs on the post-independence history of Peruvian foreign relations. This scholarship accompanies his extensive corpus of other work on the neighboring countries of Bolivia and Ecuador, as well as Libya and Southeast Asia. Overall, *Peruvian Foreign Policy in the Modern Era* serves as a worthy capstone to a distinguished career focused on the Andean republic’s geopolitics, in which St. John fittingly concerns himself with Peruvian foreign relations in the post-Cold War era from the presidency of Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000) to the incumbent administration of Dina Boluarte (2022-present). In this way, St. John is able to address circumstances and events in a roughly thirty-year timeframe that is mostly subsequent to the publication of his most comprehensive prior history on Peruvian foreign relations, *The Foreign Policy of Peru* (1992).

Briefly going into the background of post-independence Peruvian foreign policy from 1821-1990 in his introduction, St. John notes how successive governments “diversified arms transfers, expanded trade links, encouraged a radical reorientation of the inter-American system, and promoted enhanced regional and extra-regional cooperation” as part of a “pursuit of heightened Peruvian sovereignty” (5). According to St. John, Peruvian regimes prosecuted this policy course with particular vigor from the first civilian administration of Fernando Belaúnde Terry (1963-68) through the period of military governance (1968-80), and onward into the present era of Peruvian civil governments. By exploring these trends, St. John sets the stage for examining how they were consolidated during and following the 1990s. To this end, he utilizes a variety of sources ranging from Peruvian government publications to oral history interviews with Peruvian foreign ministers to newspaper articles.

The panoply of Peruvian presidencies that have come and gone coinciding with multiple bouts of domestic political indictments, intra-governmental intrigues, and civil disorder since 2016 makes this a complicated but important period to address, and St. John admirably rises to the challenge. He examines continuities among administrations in Peru’s geopolitical outreach within Latin America, such as its latter-day regional integration efforts

via participation in multilateral fora such as the Lima Group and the Pacific Alliance trade bloc (54-56). Additionally, he assesses Peru's relations with hegemonic powers such as the United States, China, and Russia (58-60). Merging discussion of both of these subjects, St. John notes how "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was a stabilizing force" even during Pedro Castillo's administration. However, he only fleetingly mentions how Castillo's government persisted in its coordination with the United States over the Venezuela crisis, despite being more leftist-inclined than its four predecessors (64-67). This underemphasis on exploring the Peruvian-US-Venezuelan diplomatic triangle during this period is unfortunate, given contemporaneous press coverage on the ambiguity of Peru's posture toward the Lima Group and its seeming non-recognition of either Nicolás Maduro or Juan Guaidó's competing governments in Venezuela during Castillo's administration.² It is also surprising in light of St. John's exploration of other interesting episodes in Peru-Venezuela relations, such as the fallout surrounding Hugo Chávez's

disparaging remarks regarding Alan García's 2006 candidacy and ensuing vacillations in the Chávez-García relationship (38).

Meanwhile, in his earlier chapter concerning the administrations of Alberto Fujimori and Valentín Paniagua, St. John devotes substantial attention to the Peru-US relationship during Fujimori's presidency (8-10). Despite this, he avoids commenting on major controversies of the Fujimori and Paniagua eras. These include alleged US Agency for International Development financial support for involuntary sterilizations of indigenous women under Peru's National Population Program as part of *Plan Verde*, documented Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) ties to Peruvian intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos tracing back to the military government era, and the fatal April 2001 shutdown of a civilian floatplane carrying US missionary Veronica "Roni" Bowers and her infant daughter by the Peruvian Air Force as part of the CIA-sponsored Air Bridge Denial Program for narcotics interdiction.³ Commendably, St. John also devotes space to examining how

² "Bellido: 'Formalmente no hemos tratado la posibilidad de salir del Grupo de Lima,'" *La República* (Lima), August 14, 2021, <https://larepublica.pe/politica/2021/08/14/guido-bellido-formalmente-no-hemos-tratado-la-posibilidad-de-salir-del-grupo-de-lima>; "Vicecanciller afirma que Perú no reconoce autoridades legítimas en Venezuela," *Radio Programas del Perú*, September 20, 2021, <https://rpp.pe/politica/gobierno/vicecanciller-afirma-que-peru-no-reconoce-autoridades-legitimas-en-venezuela-noticia-1358731>.

³ Tamara Feinstein, "'Fujimori's Rasputin': The Declassified Files on Peru's Former Intelligence Chief, Vladimiro Montesinos," *The National Security Archive at George Washington University*, November 22, 2000, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB37/>; Stephen P. Howard, "The War on Drugs: Two More Casualties," *Aerospace Power Journal* 15, no. 4 (2001): 91-95, and Ernesto Vasquez del Aguila, "Invisible Women: Forced Sterilization, Reproductive Rights, and Structural Inequalities in Peru of Fujimori and Toledo," *Estudios e Pesquisas em Psicologia* 6, no. 1 (2006): 109-124.

recent Peruvian governments have addressed intermestic concerns such as water rights, transnational crime, and migration through bilateral coordination with foreign governments in their Bolivian, Colombian, and Ecuadorian borderlands (56-58), following from earlier initiatives pursued by the Peruvian government (12-16). However, he notably omits any consideration of Peru's coordination with Brazil over these same issues, despite the shared border between the two and previous multilingual scholarship that has examined intermestic issues in areas such as the *Tres Fronteras* region.⁴ In general, though, St. John's *Peruvian Foreign Policy in the Modern Era* should be regarded as a valuable addition to the existing historiography on Peruvian foreign relations contributed by scholars such as Norberto Barreto Velázquez, Hal Brands, Lawrence A. Clayton, and Richard J. Walter.

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⁴ For example, see David S. Salisbury, et. al., "Transboundary Political Ecology in the Peru-Brazil Borderlands: Mapping Workshops, Geographic Information, and Socio-Environmental Impacts," *Revista Geográfica* 152 (2012): 105-115, and Luiz Felipe

de Vasconcelos Dias Balieiro and Izaura Rodrigues Nascimento, "Tríplice fronteira Brasil, Peru e Colômbia e as implicações com o narcotráfico," *Textos e Debates* 26 (2014): 85-98.