

# Journal of Peace Research

Villagrán de León, Francisco (2021) *Soberanía y no intervención: orígenes y evolución*. Guatemala: F&G Editores. xxii + 248 pp.

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The principle of nonintervention in international law owes much to the countries of Latin America, thanks in part to their history as victims of US military intervention and occupation. This argument is elaborated in this fascinating study, whose title translates as 'Sovereignty and nonintervention: origins and evolution'. It is based on research in several libraries and archives and draws on the declarations and protocols of multinational meetings, with important texts provided in an appendix. The author, a distinguished Guatemalan diplomat, highlights the period, 1898 to 1945, when a series of inter-American conferences developed the concept that found its way into the Charter of the United Nations (as Article 2.4) and of the Organization of American States. The author describes the contributions of leading jurists of the turn of the twentieth century and the effect during World War II of the Dumbarton Oaks conference to prepare a future UN. The fact that participation there was limited to the United States, the United Kingdom, the USSR and China – the 'four policemen' of Franklin Roosevelt's vision – raised alarms among Latin American governments. They feared that the new system would allow for intervention in their region sanctioned by the proposed Security Council. A conference convened in Chapultepec, Mexico, in February–March 1945 contributed to the addition of Article 51 of the UN Charter, authorizing regional security pacts in support of the right of collective self-defense. The author describes how the development of international human-rights law and support for representative democracy (e.g., the Interamerican Democratic Charter) came to circumscribe the norm of nonintervention and provides a valuable comparison of Latin American and European approaches. Hopefully, an English-language edition will follow.

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