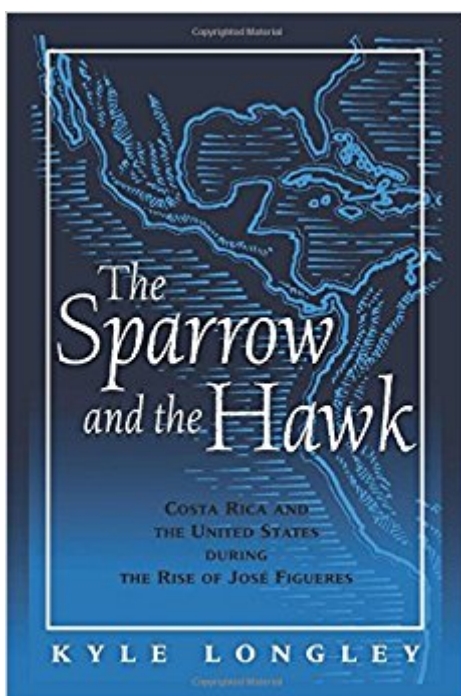


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Sparrow And The Hawk: Costa Rica And The United States During The Rise Of Jose Figueres



Synopsis

Using Costa Rica as an example, Longley carefully examines the development of the successful relationship between a nonindustrialized country and the United States, revealing the complex forces at work in resistance and accommodation. During World War II and the immediate postwar era, both the United States and Costa Rica experienced dramatic changes. The United States assumed world leadership and the accompanying responsibilities; Costa Rica encountered far-reaching difficulties that culminated in the Civil War of 1948 and the rise to power of José Figueres. Longley examines why the United States supported Figueres and emphasizes the history and role of Costa Ricans, primarily the figueristas, in maintaining good relations in such a difficult era. Figueres implemented economic and political nationalism, which produced domestic and international tensions, and in spite of its rejection of similar policies in Guatemala and Iran, the United States supported Figueres against domestic and foreign threats.

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Customer Reviews

"Longley makes a valuable contribution to the historiography of US-Central American relations. His utilisation of primary sources in both the USA and Costa Rica add credibility to the thesis that Washington did not always have its way south of the Rio Grande River and that small countries on the periphery are capable of pursuing independent foreign policies vis-a-vis Washington." *Journal of Latin American Studies* | this is an excellent book which deserves a wide readership and should be read by all students of Latin American and

interamerican affairs. "The Americas" Richly documented and effectively argued, Longley's study offers an adroit presentation of the complex processes of confrontation and accommodation that marked the metropole-oriented policies of José Figueres. The study makes a significant addition to the existent literature on U.S. relations with Costa Rica." — Richard V. Salisbury, Western Kentucky University

Using Costa Rica as an example, Longley carefully examines the development of the successful relationship between a nonindustrialized country and the United States, revealing the complex forces at work in resistance and accommodation. During World War II and the immediate postwar era, both the United States and Costa Rica experienced dramatic changes. The United States assumed world leadership and the accompanying responsibilities; Costa Rica encountered far-reaching difficulties that culminated in civil war in 1948 and the rise to power of José Figueres. Longley examines why the United States supported Figueres and emphasizes the history and role of Costa Ricans, primarily the *figueristas*, in maintaining good relations in such a difficult era.

Latin American Research Review/Inter-American Relations And Encounters: Recent Directions in the Literature June 22, 2000: Kyle Longley adopts the interaction between the two types of birds as a metaphor for the relationship between the United States and another small Central American country, Costa Rica. Like the sparrow, such countries rely on evasion and manipulation in their dealings with the hawkish powers of the world. Longley develops his thesis by using U.S.–Costa Rican relations during the period from 1942 to 1957 as a case study. Basing his arguments on voluminous printed and manuscript sources, including documents from Costa Rica's Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Longley begins by reviewing the relationship during the administration of President Rafael Calderón (1940-1944), who proved a cooperative ally during World War II. Calderón's close ties with the Communist Party (the *Vanguardia Popular*) aroused little concern during the war. But U.S. officials became alarmed when his successor, Teodoro Picado (1944-1948), although staunchly pro-United States, failed to distance himself from a connection that was viewed with increasing disfavor. As a result, when Picado attempted to impose Calderón as his successor in 1948 and ignited the revolution led by José Figueres, the U.S. government favored the rebels despite reservations about Figueres. With the triumph of the revolution, Figueres headed a junta that gave way in 1949 to the presidency of Otilio Ulate. In 1953 Figueres himself was elected president. Figueres and his associates (who formed the *Partido Liberación Nacional* in 1951) undertook policies displeasing to Washington, such as nationalizing the banking system and

negotiating a more favorable contract with the United Fruit Company. What most alarmed U.S. officials was Figueres's material and moral support for the Caribbean Legion, which was dedicated to the ouster of dictators in the region. Figueres did not waver, however, and criticized U.S. support for the dictators, going so far as to boycott the 1954 inter-American meeting because it was held in Caracas, where President Marcos Perez Jimenez held sway. Longley shows that Figueres pursued a nationalist agenda and at times defied Washington while retaining U.S. support when regimes that threatened U.S. hegemony (like those ruling Guatemala and Iran) faced extinction. Longley attributes Figueres's success to several factors, but above all to his anticommunist posture and to his preference for accommodation rather than confrontation. Figueres and the PLN also benefited from Costa Rica's favorable image in the United States and from a network of sympathizers, such as Adolf Berle and liberal members of the U.S. Congress. Longley might have undertaken a more extended comparison of the Costa Rican case with that of Guatemala, or better yet, with that of Bolivia, whose 1952 revolution also received benevolent treatment and substantial economic assistance from the United States. Cole Blasier's study of U.S. responses to twentieth-century revolutions in Latin America, *The Hovering Giant* (1985), pointed out the essential moderation of Victor Paz Estenssoro and other Bolivian leaders and their skill in cultivating advocates in Washington. In the conclusion to *The Sparrow and the Hawk*, Longley generalizes beyond the Costa Rican case to that of small countries in their dealings with major powers. Adapting the thesis of James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985), Longley argues that subordinate states, like peasants, can devise nonviolent strategies that enable them to shape their relations with the United States. Thus Longley, like Gambone, aligns himself firmly with those who assign agency to peripheral states.

The importance of history lies in the knowledge and the lessons that, we men, have learned through our existence. Certainly, El 48 and its aftermath is the turning point in Costa Rica's history. Longley is able to explain how Figueres's policies sought the well-being of the people, without employing extreme capitalistic or socialistic measures. Figueres, the man in the middle of socialism and capitalism was able to convince the ticos and the Americans that his policies were necessary for such a poor country as Costa Rica.

The Sparrow and the Hawk is one of the most beautiful books I ever read. It explains how Jose Figueres was able to flirt with socialism and capitalism, but at the same time he knew both extremes were bad. Figueres's tactics enabled him to calm the F.B.I and the C.I.A., in times were the common

enemy was communism. Above all this, Longley can be regarded as an authority on El 48. The people of Costa Rica than you (Longley) for contributing with such a work to our history. Certainly, the younger generations of ticos will not forget for what our ancestors fought.

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