

REFLECTIONS ON LATIN AMERICA AND CUBA

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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PRE-EUROPEAN MAIN CULTURES

- **Aztec - Mexico**
- **Mayan - Yucatan and Central America**
- **Incas- The Andean region**
- **Factors in their defeat:**
 - **Their indigenous religions - many gods**
 - **The religion of the conquerors - one God**
 - **Of less importance, the conquerors had:**
Horses, steel, powder and germs
 - Ruthlessness - “the end justifies the means”**





CONTRASTING ORIGINS

- **US vs Latin America-Colonization vs conquest**
 - **Anglo-Saxons vs Latins**
 - **Families vs men (soldiers, priests and adventurers); no women**
 - **Tradition of democracy vs tradition of autocracy**
 - **Land to work and settle vs land to exploit and abandon**
 - **Farming (hard work) vs gold and silver (dug by natives)**
 - **Freedom of religion vs imposition of Catholicism**



THE GREAT SPANISH COMPLEX - DON QUIXOTE

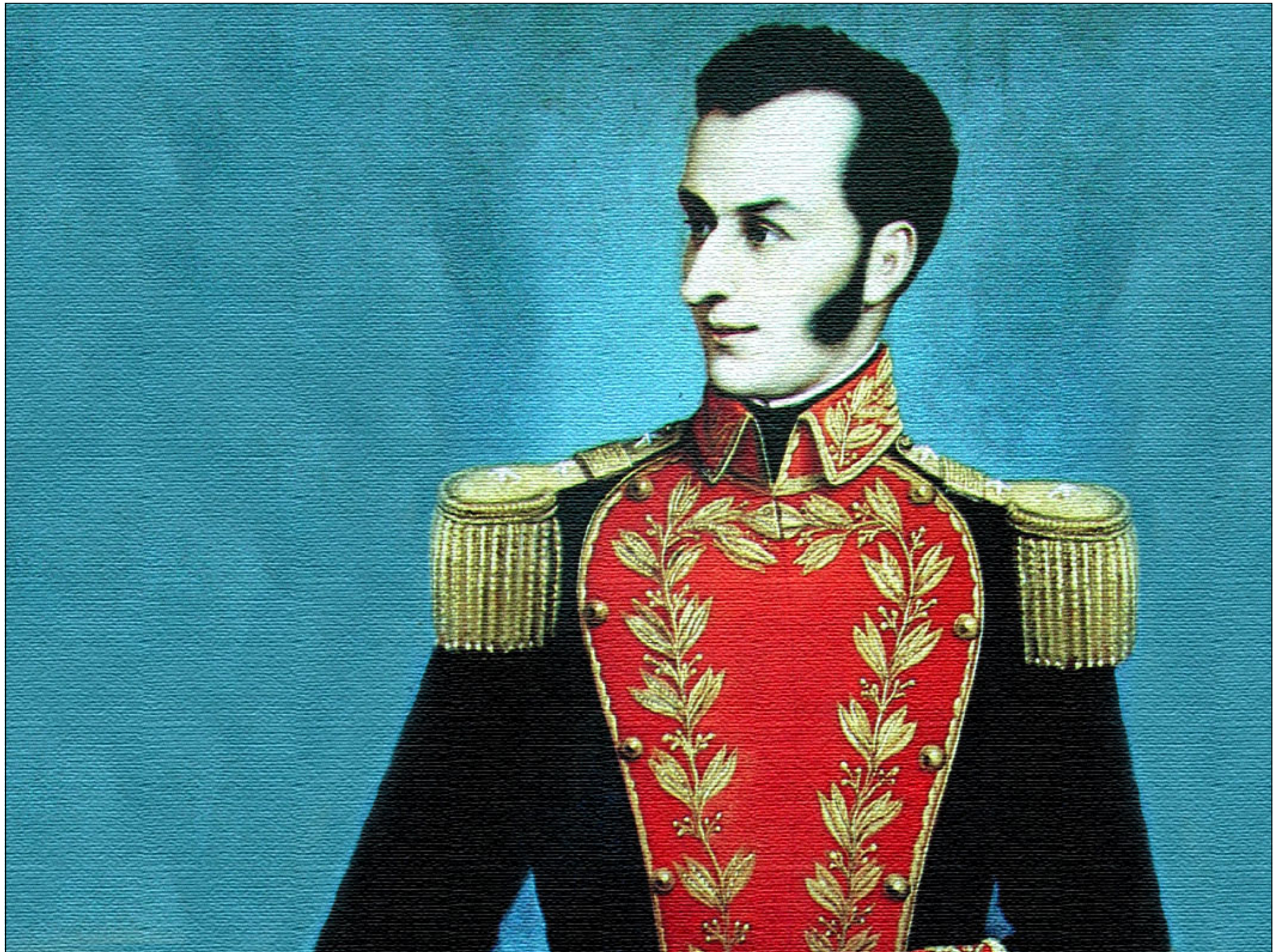
- **Coronel Vara del Rey at San Juan Hill:**
“They are only five thousand Americans; we are four hundred Spaniards”
- **Phillip II on launching The Great Armada:**
“Our admirals don’t fear the weather; they fear only God”
- **The Spanish Admiral on thrusting his fleet against Callao:**
“Spanish ships are not afraid of cannons”
- **Admiral Cervera at Santiago Bay:**
“It is better to have honor without ships than ships without honor”

THE GREAT SPANISH COMPLEX - DON QUIXOTE - 2

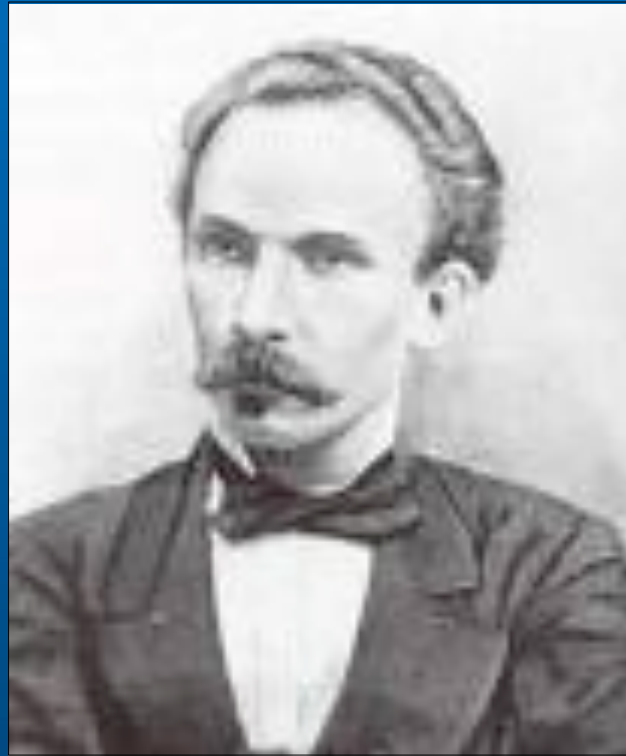
- **Solano-Lopez, dictator of Paraguay after sacrificing 2/3 of Paraguay's men in the war he started with Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil:**
“ I die with my country” ... and he did!
- **Coronel Moscardo at Toledo to his son:**
“Son, look up to the sky, scream: ‘Long live Spain’, and die like a man”







Jose Marti



END OF THE XX CENTURY

- **The triumph of Democracy and free market policies**
 - **1980 - Only four or five true democracies in South America and Central America.**
 - **2000 - Only one non-democratic country in the region (Cuba).**

END OF THE XX CENTURY - 2

- **Important factors in the triumph of Democracy:**
 - **The failure of socialism as a socio-economic doctrine.**
 - **The collapse of the Soviet Union.**
 - **The example of Cuba as living proof of how Marxist totalitarianism can ruin a country.**

END OF THE XX CENTURY - 3

- **Important factors in the triumph of democracy (con't.)**
 - **The maturation of American foreign policy and diplomacy:**
 - **Kennedy's Alliance for Progress and formation of the OAS (1961)**
 - **Creation in 1990 of PAECA (plan for economic action in Central America).**
 - **President GW Bush's "Initiative for the Americas" and the Brady Plan to reduce debt.**
 - **Approval in 1992 of NAFTA (USA, Canada, Mexico common market treaty)**

END OF THE XX CENTURY - 4

- **Other important factors in the triumph of democracy:**
 - **The emergence of the global economy and the responsible but directive economic policies of international financial organizations.**
 - **Brief American military interventions in Panama to apprehend Noriega and re-establish democracy (1989), in Grenada to prevent a Marxist/Cuban takeover (1983), and later in Haiti to restore Aristide.**
 - **Dollarization of some economies to deal with inflation (Argentina first; more successful in Ecuador).**

THREATS IN THE XXI CENTURY

- **Neo-liberal socio-economic policies initially accentuate disparity between rich and poor as wealth is created.**
- **Corruption persists and is rampant in many of the most important countries - Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador and Mexico**
- **Staggering foreign debt in many countries**
- **Lack of a strong independent judiciary system and stable bureaucracy**
- **Threat to USA influence: the emerging giant economies (China, India and Brazil)**

THREATS IN THE XXI CENTURY - 2

- **The marriage of ideological insurgency with narco-traffic: Colombia; could spread. Mexican narco problem currently is worse and, for better or for worse, devoid of ideology**
- **Local urban terrorism; kidnapping: started in Colombia(now largely controlled thanks to Uribe) but quickly spread to Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru and lately Argentina.**
- **International terrorism and particularly islamic extremism. Latin America would be easy target but so far spared because it is not seen as the “Enemy” (not prosperous enough to be envied!)**
- **The Panama Canal: Colombian guerillas less then 50 miles away, perfect target for international terrorism. One “suicide” small plane attack on the parent dam would close it for 7 years**
- **Loose alliance of the “maras” (violent gangs) in Central America with Colombian and now mostly Mexican narco-terrorism**
- **Perhaps the most dangerous threat is the incongrous alliance of Iran with Venezuela and Cuba. Eventual nuclear threat?**

FINAL COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC COUNTRIES

- **Brazil - the colossus of the South. From manufacturing jet planes to shrinking heads. President Lula was a populist, anti-American, socialist labor leader who was an admirer of Fidel Castro and a supporter of Chavez; however, he was sensible enough to not abandon free market policies and was unexpectedly pragmatic and moderate. The Country is doing remarkably well macroeconomically but poorly controlled violence and abject poverty in many areas persist. Hopefully the new President Dilma Rousseff will continue pragmatic policies**
- **Chile - the closest to 1st world status. The most professional army in South America. Shining icon of neo-liberalism. Its policy of privatizing all pension plans has been extraordinarily successful and popular**
- **Argentina - Corruption and left-overs from Peronism resulted in severe economic downturn in spite of a well educated middle class and incredible natural resources; however, because greater exports of raw materials to China and India the economy has improved. The past President, Kirchner, a leftist peronist straddled the line between populism and free market policies; his wife, Cristina Fernandez, is the new President**

FINAL COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC COUNTRIES - 2

- **Colombia - Narco-terrorism is a fading threat. Education and democratic tradition are prevailing. Uribe was a god-gift to the country and things improved very much under him. Bogota has gone ,from one of the most violent, to one of the safest big cities in SA. Uribe had the support of 82% of the people of Columbia on recent survey. The current President, Santos, has taken a more “independent” course with the USA but the long-due approval of the free trade treaty should help bring Columbia, again, closer to USA**
- **Venezuela - Potential for catastrophe (Chavez). Strength of democratic institutions, oil and an educated middle class may save the country but poverty and a poorly educated military are major problems that are being demagogically exploited by Chavez with a great deal of help from Castro’s Cuba. Petro-populism is responsible for Chavez popularity at home. If oil prices come down there will be a real economic collapse. Recent polls indicate that there are limits to Chavez support at home. Chavez has cancer; prognosis?**
- **Bolivia - Very poor country and tenuous democracy. Rise to power of Ivo Morales, a radical demagogue, on a campaign to reinstitute coca production and give power to the indigenous population threatens civil war between regions (“Sierra” vs the Plains), between social classes and between races.**

Alvaro Uribe - Colombia



Felipe Calderon - Mexico



Hugo Chavez - Venezuela



Evo Morales - Bolivia



Rafael Correa - Ecuador



Daniel Ortega - Nicaragua







