In October 1965, President Lyndon Johnson urged United Nations Ambassador Arthur Goldberg to “[t]ell these Latin Americans, every damned one you see, every day” that the President “wants to make the roses bloom. He wants every child to be free of disease, and to be educated to have a good job and to live in a fine home.” Referring to the new USAID budget proposal, Johnson said “we got 600 million [dollars] more this year. Now, I want to put it in. I’m ready to put it in. I’m ANXIOUS to put it in! But I’ll be damned if I’m going to have it said of me that I was just a numbskull here for four years, and pissed off this money and got nothing in return, because my momma didn’t raise me that way!” Complaining that Latin American leaders had been slow to implement redistributive reforms, President Johnson mused that “it has to be a two-way street. You can’t just marry a woman and let her run off and stay drunk all the time...Now if they’re not going to do their land reform and they’re not going to do their tax reform...they’re not going to get one lousy goddamned dime.” Ambassador Goldberg, a longtime supporter of John F. Kennedy, replied warmly, “Amen, amen. I’m all for that.”

In this bold and insightful article, Thomas Tunstall Allcock undermines established narratives regarding the twilight of Washington’s Alliance for Progress development program for Latin America. By centering his analysis on the long career of President Johnson’s controversial Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, Thomas C. Mann,
Allcock demonstrates that a moderated version of the Alliance survived President Kennedy’s death, ultimately resulting in twice the level of economic growth than was achieved during the early 1960s (1044). By redeeming Mann’s reputation as a “hard-working and talented Foreign Service Officer” (1018) Allcock corrects a historical record that has long been under the shadow of an anti-Mann scapegoating campaign by Kennedy aides Arthur Schlesinger, Richard Goodwin, and Teodoro Moscoso. As President Johnson put it, “[Schlesinger] just cuts our peter[s] off every day in this town.”

As Allcock points out, there is little doubt that Mann’s “blunt and forthright manner saw him clash” with Kennedy liberals “who were most committed to the tenets of Modernization Theory,” but Mann also had a history of standing up to “the more conservative of Eisenhower’s economic advisers” (1019). Most strikingly, Mann had opposed Central Intelligence Agency operations to overthrow leftist governments in both Guatemala (1954) and Cuba (1961), and he asked to be reassigned after failing to convince the Eisenhower administration to implement “an economic grant program” for Latin America “comparable to that for the rest of the world” (quoted on 1022). During field postings in Athens (1953-54), Guatemala City (1954-55), and as Ambassador in San Salvador (1955-57), Mann consistently advocated for grants (rather than loans) to help Latin American countries diversify their economies. Upon returning to Washington as Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs in 1957, Mann spearheaded price stabilization agreements and the creation of the Inter-American Development Bank. To be sure, none of these programs were aimed at transforming Latin American society along the lines of the emergent modernization theorists who would soon staff the Kennedy White House. For Mann, that was the point. According to Allcock, Mann was guided by the hands-off Good Neighbor Policy, leading him to prefer grants for “rapid industrialization” to the loan-based “liberal internationalism” of the Kennedy era (1034). Days after his opposition to the Bay of Pigs had proved prescient, Mann was sent to head the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, from which he planned to retire after successfully negotiating an end to the El Chamizal border dispute.

In the second half of this article, Allcock deftly describes the impact of Mann’s appointment as Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America in late 1963. Despite decades of historiography disparaging Mann as a Texas crony of President Johnson, Allcock demonstrates that “the two men barely knew each other” (1030). This did not stop Schlesinger and Goodwin from using Mann as “an extension of their feelings for Lyndon Johnson,” seeing his appointment “almost as a declaration of war” and launching a concerted smear campaign in the US press to depict Mann as, in the words of Drew Pearson of The Washington Post, a “Texas brand” diplomat who would coddle Latin American dictators (1031-33, 1038). Mann was livid when another Schlesinger ally, Tad Szulc of The New York Times, twisted Mann’s 18 March 1964 speech into an anti-democracy “Mann Doctrine.” Mann’s chief sin was honesty. He had merely admitted

\[\text{\textit{Ibid.}}\]
what everyone already knew about US policy in Latin America: that even the Kennedy administration maintained “relations with every dictator in the hemisphere.” As Allcock describes it, this represented the return of the “professional State Department wing of policymaking” and the decline of the flighty rhetoric of Kennedy’s aides (1038).

Despite my enjoyment of Allcock’s piece, the article does contain Whiggish moments. On the one hand, Mann is exalted at the end as “that guy” who, in Johnson’s words, “gets the job done” while still achieving “fair and honest treatment of Latin Americans” (1044-45). On the other hand, his refreshing bout of candor is described as a “significant misstep” that made him an “easy scapegoat” for his enemies (1035, 1042). Rather than concentrating so much on Washington’s internal squabbles, it would have been interesting to find out the ground-level effects of Mann’s Alliance for Progress. Broadly speaking, was there any paradoxical connection between higher Latin American growth rates and President Johnson’s stingier (and ultimately less meddlesome) approach to the region’s ‘development’?

Building on his previous article in the Journal of Cold War Studies, Allcock joins a chorus of revisionists who have spent the past two decades questioning the alleged novelty of Kennedy’s approach to Latin America.3 At the same time, Allcock introduces Johnson revisionism to a region that has heretofore been subject to its own historiographical Monroe Doctrine.4 Returning to President Johnson’s colorful telephone recordings:

Milton Eisenhower, who was a wild radical with his Republican colleagues [ironic tone]… was going to have land reform and he was going to have tax reform… And they started out and we came along and kind of stole it, and changed its name. Called it the Alliance for Progress. So then we talked a bunch a do-good[ing] about how they had to change… And Dick Goodwin and Arthur Schlesinger and Moscoso, a few dreamers, about six of them had balls in the air, going opposite directions. And these Latins got together and about ten or twelve of them passed land reform and passed tax reform, and then proceeded to do not one damn thing about it… They have not put into effect one single land reform or one single tax reform!… So we pour in 600 million more [dollars] and it winds up in the same place! 5

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4 I borrow the concept of historiographical Monroe Doctrines from Tanya Harmer’s remarks at the “Latin America in a Global Context” conference at the University of Bern on 6 December 2014. Regarding Johnson revisionism, Allcock cites books by Thomas Alan Schwartz, Michael Lumbers, and an edited volume by Mitchell Lerner.

5 Johnson and Goldberg, October 22, 1965. See full citation above.
Considered alongside Allcock’s findings, these angry words take on new and more complex meanings. Students and scholars of U.S.-Latin American relations would do well to follow the path blazed here by Allcock, laying aside their preconceptions of Johnson (and Texans?) to engage in similarly nuanced reappraisals of his foreign policy toward Latin America.

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