

# THE MONROE DOCTRINE

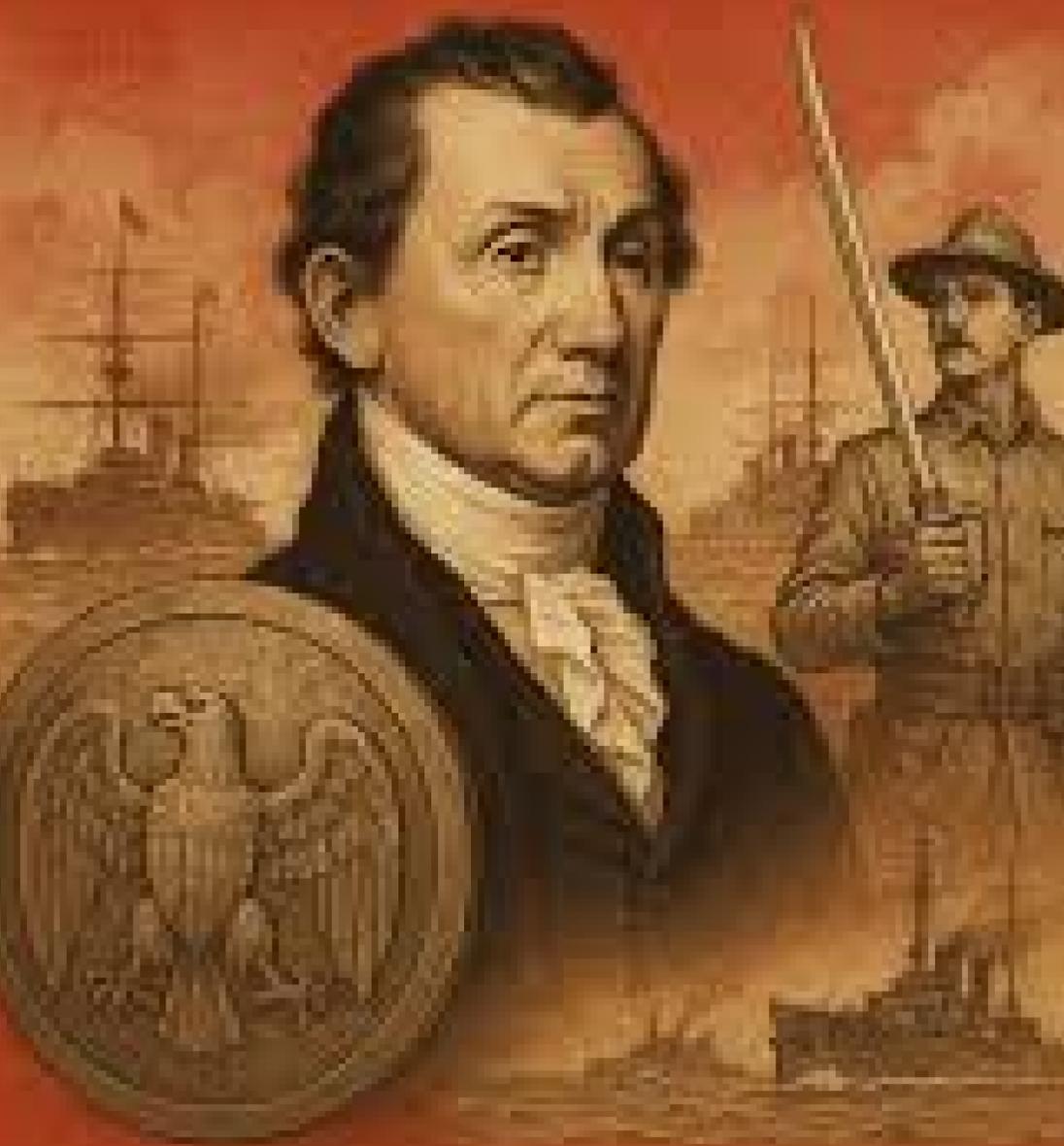
## FROM SHIELD TO SWORD



## Did the U.S. Monroe Doctrine Help Suppress Marxism?

How a 19th-century shield against European empires became a 20th-century weapon against Communist ideology — and what it cost.

# THE MONROE DOCTRINE FROM SHIELD TO SWORD



## The Monroe Doctrine: A Shield for Young Democracies

— The United States is still a young nation.

— Argentina, Chile, and Peru fighting for their independence from Spain.

— 'The American continents are no longer open for colonization.'

— Objective: to protect new democracies from European countries.



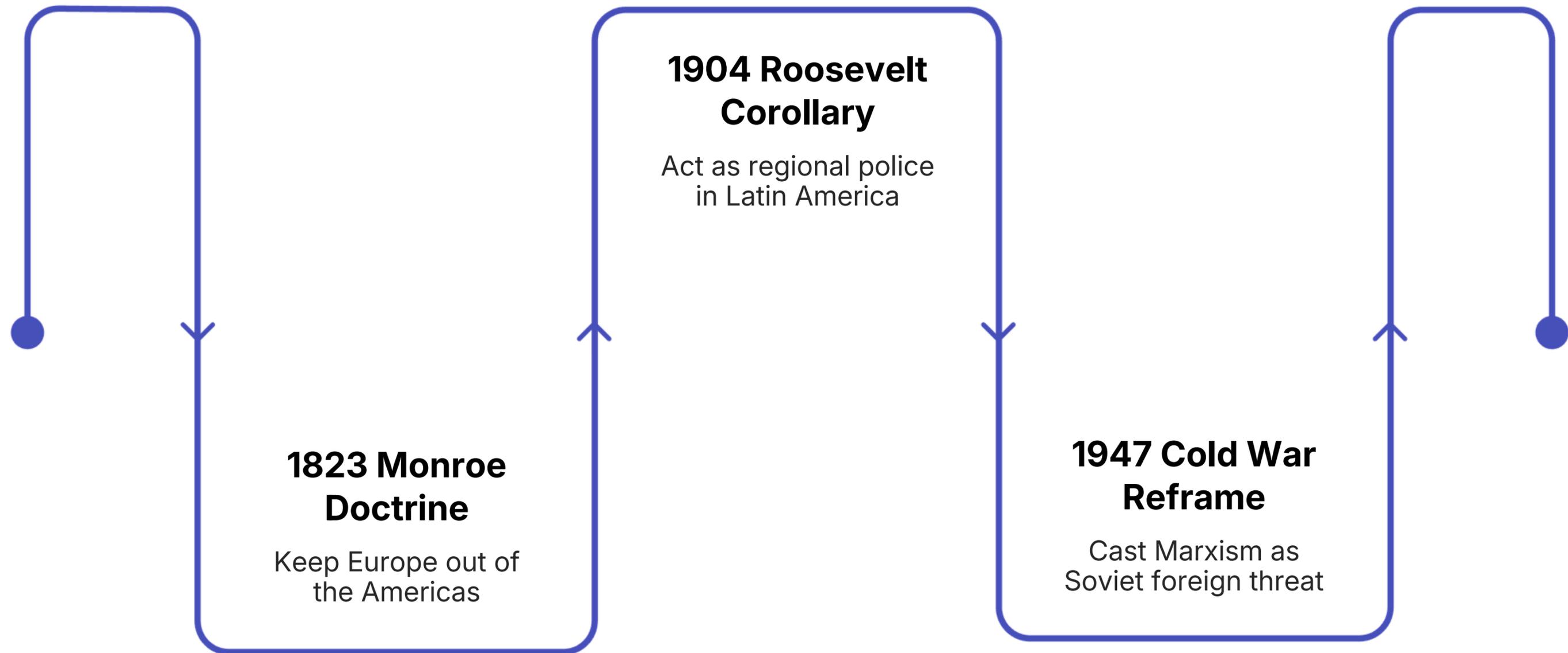
# From Shield to Sword: The Roosevelt Corollary

Under the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. claimed it had a legal and moral duty to stop Marxism.

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- In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt added the Roosevelt Corollary.
- 'If a country in Latin America is unstable or has "wrongdoing," the United States has the right to intervene as an international police power.'
- telling Latin American countries how to run their own houses.
- Fast forward to 1945, the U.S. feared that if a country in Central or South America became 'Marxist,'

# The Cold War Recycles an Old Doctrine



After World War II, the U.S. recast Marxism as a "foreign European ideology" — Soviet in origin, therefore subject to Monroe's prohibition. At the 1954 Pan-American Conference in Caracas, Washington pushed through a resolution declaring communism in the Americas a direct threat to hemispheric peace, formally merging the Monroe Doctrine with the Truman Doctrine of containment.

PB

THE CIA'S COVERT  
OPERATION TO OVERTHROW  
GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT  
**JACOBO ARBENZ**

JUNE-JULY 1954

SUCCESS



MARIO OVERALL &  
DAN HAGEDORN



# Guatemala, 1954: Operation PBSuccess

## The Trigger

- Legalized the communist party
- Launched land reform
- Expropriating unused United Fruit Company land for poor peasants.

## The CIA Response

- Trained a rebel army
- Deployed psychological warfare
- Forced Árbenz to resign.
- A pro-U.S. military dictatorship installed in his place.

## Consequence

Short-term: leftist government removed. Long-term: a devastating **36-year civil war** that killed hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans.

# Cuba: The Doctrine's Greatest Failure



## The Trigger

- Fidel Castro overthrew Fulgencio Batista in 1959
- Aligned with the Soviet Union and adopted a Marxist-Leninist state model

## USA Response

- Failed Bay of Pigs invasion,
- Numerous assassination attempts
- Crippling economic embargo

## Consequence

- Castro survived and led to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.
- Became the exact thing the Monroe Doctrine sought to prevent: a heavily armed, Soviet-aligned, Marxist state just 90 miles off the coast of Florida.



# Chile, 1973: "Make the Economy Scream"

In 1970, Chileans *democratically elected* Salvador Allende, a self-declared Marxist. Nixon's administration funded opposition strikes, spread propaganda, and organized economic sabotage. On September 11, 1973, General Augusto Pinochet seized power in a military coup. Allende died in the presidential palace.

## Tactical Result

Marxism was suppressed. U.S. copper interests were protected. A compliant government was installed.

## Human Cost

Pinochet's regime executed or "disappeared" thousands of political opponents over 17 years of dictatorship.

# Did It Work? The Complicated Verdict

## Physically — Yes

- By the 1980s, most Marxist governments had been toppled or neutralized.
  - The Soviet Union never secured a firm foothold beyond Cuba and Nicaragua.
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## Ideologically — Far More Complex

By removing leaders who championed land reform and workers' rights, U.S. made Marxism a **symbol of anti-imperialism**.



### **Governments Removed**

Guatemala, Chile, and others successfully neutralized



### **Resentment Grew**

Interventions fueled decades of anti-U.S. sentiment across the region



### **Democracy Undermined**

Elected leaders were replaced by military regimes backed by Washington



# Conclusion: Power Without Peace

The Monroe Doctrine was successful in keeping the Western Hemisphere under U.S. influence — but it came at a very high cost for the democracy and stability of its neighbors.

## → The Shield Became a Sword

A doctrine born to protect democracies was repurposed to dismantle them whenever they veered left.

## → Ideas Outlast Interventions

Marxist governments were removed, but the demand for land reform, equality, and sovereignty proved impossible to suppress by force.

## → A Legacy That Endures

Across the 21st century, Latin American leaders still invoke the Monroe Doctrine as shorthand for U.S. "bullying" — a testament to how deep those wounds run.

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