

Reaction to Afghanistan: Latin America

Most of Latin America--with the exceptions of Nicaragua and Grenada--opposed the Soviet invasion and supported the US response. However, the US olympic boycott effort is viewed by most as part of a superpower rivalry either irrelevant to their interests, potentially damaging to their Third World credentials, or running counter to their independent foreign policy lines. In the more sophisticated states, a perception of US foreign policy as weak, inconsistent and frequently ineffective--and a view of the boycott as tied to domestic election politics--reinforces their tendency to maintain distance between themselves and initiatives that are clearly of US origin.

Subsequent US efforts have consequently not had a substantial impact on the policies of states in the area. Major regional actors such as Mexico have refrained from any official response beyond support of the UN resolution condemning the invasion. Brasilia's dependence on Middle East oil and Buenos Aires' interest in improving economic relations with Moscow strongly incline them toward Olympic participation. Others such as Panama and Costa Rica, which condemned the Soviet action, have nonetheless initially indicated they plan to send teams to Moscow. These states and others leaning against a boycott heavily outweigh the rightist regimes and Caribbean ministates that have supported the boycott.

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