arrangement for the Caribbean and Central America - the NAFTA parity measure - to help protect these weaker economies from diversion of trade and investment to Mexico as a result of the NAFTA accord.

The United States was not entirely to blame for these problems. The collapse of the Mexico peso in 1994 triggered a broader economic crisis that necessitated U.S. organization of a $50 billion rescue package. The Mexican economic crisis, which had a drastic impact on the Mexican middle class as well as the poorer segments of society, combined with high levels of unemployment throughout the hemisphere, undermined the confidence of Latin American countries to pursue the neo-liberal agenda at such a rapid pace without risk of creating economic and political instability. In the late 1980s it was noted that the larger countries- including Argentina and Brazil - only belatedly demonstrated a "deeper" commitment to the establishment of any real economic interdependence between their economies.[6] Some governments continue to advocate a slower approach to liberalization and integration as a result of these and other concerns, among them Brazil, and with major nations such as Brazil taking such a stance, it is unlikely that smaller nations will adopt more aggressive positions.[7]

U.S. policy remains problematic. The hard line taken in the Helms-Burton legislation, designed to further isolate Cuba, was universally condemned in the hemisphere, including most vigorously by the U.S.'s two NAFTA partners. A second area of friction has been the U.S. anti narcotics policy, including the decertification of Colombia for a) its failure to pursue the issue with sufficient vigour, b) the alleged involvement of President Samper with the Cali cocaine cartel and c) violations of human rights.

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[6] Eduardo Gana and Augusto Bermudez, "Options for regional integration," *CEPAL Review*, no. 37 (April 1989).

[7] Inter-American Dialogue, *The Americas in 1997.*