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## **PRINCIPLES IN POWER**

Latin America and the Politics of U.S. Human Rights Diplomacy

Vanessa Walker

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Cover photographs: *Top*, on August 30, 1977, President Jimmy Carter met with civic leaders from Georgia and Florida at the White House to explain his new Panama Canal treaty. On August 12, 2015, Carter announced he had cancer and would undergo treatment at an Atlanta hospital. (AP Photo/Harvey Georges); *bottom*, Demonstrators protest the killing of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier during a rally in Washington, DC, September 26, 1976. Letelier and Ronni Karpen Moffitt were killed in a car bombing. (AP Photo/John Duricka)



If human rights is to be a central factor in the policy debate, the significance of non-governmental bodies is absolutely essential. I think the important thing to say about states and about human rights is that the action of states should neither be underestimated or overestimated. They should not be underestimated; you cannot ignore them in the struggle for human rights, what they do will count for good or ill. But the significance of states should not be overestimated. Our faith in the State is always tenuous, and rightly so. Our faith in the modern bureaucratic state should be fragilely placed. They need to be contained, restrained, pressured, shaped and directed from the outside. . . . What we try to do when we attempt to impose human rights criteria on other forms of power—political, economic, military—in the foreign policy equation, is we seek to use the very fragile instrument of moral suasion, the fabric of moral sinew, to control and contain the power of the modern state.

—Father J. Bryan Hehir, Seventh Annual Letelier-Moffitt Memorial Human Rights Award Ceremony, September 20, 1983