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Sicker examines the role of the United States within the Western Hemisphere and the geopolitical and geostrategic factors that have helped shape its policies in the region. He demonstrates that such factors have contributed heavily to establishing the patterns of state development and interstate relations in the Western Hemisphere throughout its modern history. The prevailing geopolitical environment has been conditioned to a large extent by the emergence of the United States as the unquestionably dominant power in the extensive region. However, that status did not exist at the time it achieved its independence. It was brought about through almost incessant conflict with, and expansion at the expense of, other states, nations, and peoples over more than a century. As a result, the concerns and interests of the dominant power became and remain, of necessity, factors that states beyond the borders of the United States must take into consideration when pursuing their own national interests and policies. As Sicker amply demonstrates, failure to do so will often produce undesirable consequences for the offending state. As is clear, however, the states of the hemisphere have their own geopolitical interests and concerns independent of, and sometimes conflicting with, those of the United States. As Sicker shows throughout the volume, and especially in his analysis of inter-American conflicts, many of the nations of Latin America have unresolved territorial controversies with their neighbors that date to their origins as independent states. Because of this troubled geopolitical legacy, there have been numerous conflicts among the states of Latin America, some of which the United States has attempted to mediate or arbitrate, and some that seem impervious to a permanent negotiated settlement. This is a provocative analysis that will be of interest to scholars, students, researchers, and policymakers involved with inter-American relations and U.S. diplomacy.
