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CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES CYCLES OF CONTAINMENT AND RESPONSE (1)

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<<The Americans are under attack. Latin America, the traditional alliance partner of the United States, is being penetrated by Soviet power. The Caribbean rim and basin are being spotted with Soviet surrogates and ringed with socialist states.>>
The Committee of Santa Fe,(2) 1980

RESUMEN:

En los años 80 como resultado de los conflictos que se vivían Centroamérica, la región se daba a la tarea de buscar el camino correcto a la paz. Lo anterior, se convirtió en uno de los puntos más importantes en la agenda de los Estados Unidos, lo cual le fue posible de realizar durante el periodo de calma de Vietnam.

Palabras clave: Centroamérica; Estados Unidos; periodo de calma.

ABSTRACT:

In the 80s as a result of the conflicts that lived Central America, the region was facing the task of finding the right path to peace. This became one of the most important items on the agenda of the United States, which was able to make during the lull of Vietnam.

Keywords: Central America, United States.

Geopolitics and crisis have occasionally forced Central America to the center of U.S. interest but rarely so spectacularly as in the 1980s. In the lull following Vietnam and Watergate, revolution in the isthmus and shifting world views in Washington suddenly and unexpectedly catapulted Central America to and kept very near the top of three successive U.S. administrations' policy agendas. Rarely had debate over U.S. foreign policy making become as acrimonious or partisan as it did over Central America in the 1980's. Rarely had a U.S. administration encountered so much Congressional resistance to its foreign policy initiatives. Only rarely had so much U.S. energy short of outright and overt war making been expended to shape events in any world region. This abrupt transformation was remarkable because it seemed so disproportionate to the tiny size, population, and modest resource base of Central America. It was even more striking because during the two prior decades U.S. treatment of the region had often seemed nearly indifferent.

U.S. policy toward Central America is cyclical and in the 1980s it cycled through three quite different approaches to its central driving force, the containment of communism. In turn, the Central American states adapted rather quickly to these important shifts in U.S. foreign policy. Several years of intense U.S. efforts to contain leftist movements in Central America generated ever-growing strains within the isthmus. In response, once-divided Central America leaders eventually drew together against the United States in an unprecedented regional peacemaking effort. The resulting Central American peace process, gradually succeeded in diminishing conflicts within and among the nations of the region despite strong U.S. opposition.

Theoretical Considerations

To understand U.S.-Central-American interaction in the 1980s one must be aware of certain constant and variable factors. One constant of the interaction between Central America is inequality. Even should all five Central America republics presently combine and act in harmony (quite rare in its own right) with regard to the United States, they would still command less than ten percent of the population of the United States and only about one percent of its economy activity. (3) A second constant feature is that U.S. relations with Central American over nearly two centuries have been driven mainly by U.S. security interests. These have been shaped by the isthmus's critical proximity, its potential (in the nineteenth century) for the territorial expansion of the United States, and trans-isthmian transit routes. (4) For much of the twentieth century, and especially since World War II, these concerns have manifested themselves particularly as a desire to contain communism and Soviet bloc influence in the

region. U.S. administrations' styles of containment and levels of attention to Central America have varied over time, but the desire to contain communism has remained stable.

Among the variable factors in U.S.-Central American relations are policy making processes, policy makers, and the dimensions, rules, and players of the global playing field. The interaction of these variable features helps account for some of the volatility in Central American-U.S. bilateral relations in the 1980s.

The United States in the 1980s was a great power, the head of a broad alliance network, and (though bound by many obligations imposed by its superpower status) relatively rich in capacity and in the autonomy to act in the international arena. In contrast, the Central American nations were small, weak states and clients in the U.S. hegemonic system, which markedly constrained their behavior and potential for action. (5) Other things equal, the more tightly managed and more unified the hegemonic system within which weak states like those of Central America find themselves, the more militarized hegemonic relations, and the greater are the tensions between the great power and its rivals, the less autonomy and discretion weak states have. Weak states, however, are not powerless. Their autonomy *vis a vis* the great power may be enhanced by developing greater resource levels in their own, assistance from third parties (including a great power's rivals), cooperation with other states, or a weakening of the hegemon's capacity or resolve. Their policy and behavior, too, may be conditioned by the shifting makeup, perceptions, and alliances of subnational actors. They need not, thus, merely submit to the great power but may pursue their national interest, as Rosenau points out, various strategies, including acquiescent, promotive, intransigent, and preservative adaptation. (6) We may see examples of most of these strategies in Central America during the 1980s.

Despite a commonplace tendency to regard nation-states as unitary actors with relatively stable interests defined by presidents, other important elements within national governments, foreign policy bureaucracies, and larger civil societies may also affect policy in a particular and its implementation. Indeed, a dominant foreign policy in a particular moment may be the product of a coalition of state and non-state actors, and thus subject to change. Shifts in the relative importance and influence of non-state actors within both the United States and Central America altered U.S.-Central American interaction in the 1980s.

History and Context of U.S.-Central American Relations

Central America. The five modern Central American Republics -Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (7) - have shared much history and have developed economically along quite similar lines. All eventually specialized heavily in export agriculture, and all became importers of oil, manufactured goods, and technology. Their most important recent mutual effort was to form the Central American Common Market (CACM) in 1960, which operated until around 1980. By the early twentieth century U.S. investments and loans were a major factor in each Central American economy, and from then until the formation of the CACM the United States was usually the principal trading partner and major source of foreign investment of each isthmian nation. The United States has flexed its diplomatic, economic, and military muscles in the Caribbean basin to consolidate and maintain its hegemonic role. Indeed, between 1898 and 1933 the United States occupied Cuba, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti, established military bases in Panama, and sent troops into Mexico and Panama. As result, Central American governments have usually treated U.S. concerns and actions with considerable deference and followed generally acquiescent adaptive strategies. (8) Competing elites in Central America, in contrast, especially on the left, have criticized their nations' status as clients in this hegemonic system.

In the 1960s and early 1970s the five Central American nations almost simultaneously underwent socioeconomic transformations that first brought about the political mobilization and then revolutionary upheaval in the late 1970s and the 1980s. (9) High growth rates almost doubled their populations between 1960 and 1980. The CACM stimulated industrialization and agro-export boom in the 1960s and early 1970s that pushed peasants off the land and substantially increased both the number of people working in manufacturing and the industrial sector's share of gross domestic product (GDP) (Table 1)

The architects of the CACM successfully promoted rapid economic growth in the 1960s and much of the 1970s (Table 1). They also assumed that some of the new wealth and income created would make the isthmus' working classes less susceptible to political radicalism from the left that might be spurred on by the Cuban revolution. In truth, however, only Honduras and Costa Rica made successful efforts to redistribute wealth and income or to attenuate poverty. (10) Indeed, the CACM industrialization and agro-export booms actually worsened income inequalities and unemployment and eroded the living standards of the working classes -especially in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. Real working class wages eroded sharply in those three nations between 1970 and

1980. An ever more urban, literate, and organized – yet worse off– populace in each country (Table 1) mobilized and demanded reform, but the Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan governments resisted change and fiercely repressed such mobilization. By the late 1970s or early 1980s escalating regime violence and continued erosion of popular and middle class living conditions had greatly broadened the size and resources of once-tiny rebellions led by Marxist guerillas, and were winning them vital support from broad-front civilian opposition coalitions. (11)

Table 1. Selected Data by Country, Central America, 1960-1990

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
Population ^a					
1960	1,236	2,570	3,964	1,935	1,493
1980	2,284	4,525	6,917	3,662	2,771
1990	3,015	5,252	9,197	5,138	3,871
Mean annual population growth (percent)					
1961-70	3.4	3.4	2.8	3.1	3.2
1971-80	2.8	2.3	2.8	3.4	3.0
1971-90	2.8	1.5	2.9	3.4	3.4
Percent urban population					
1960	33.2	36.4	34.0	22.5	41.7
1990	47.1	44.1	39.4	43.7	59.8
Percent Literate					
1960	86.2	41.6	40.0	29.7	31.8
1980	89.8	69.8	47.3	59.5	50.6 ^b
1985	9.8	68.8	51.9	68.0	78.0
GDP per capita ^c					
1960	1332	772.0	1020.0	575.0	879.0
1970	1694	958.0	1373.0	725.0	1388.0
1980	2222	1044.0	1732.0	886.0	1065.0
1990	1910	845	1403.0	673.0	469.0
Real working class wage index (1973=100)					
1970	96	92.0	109.0	96d	121.0
1980	129	82.0	84.0	97.0	64.0
1990	121	57e	60.0	76f	2f

Percent ^g employed in					
Agriculture 1960	51.0	62.0	67.0	70.0	62.0
Agriculture 1980	29.0	50.0	55.0	63.0	39.0
Manufacturing c.- 1950	11.0	11.0	12.0	6.0	11.0
Manufacturing 1983	16.0	14.0	15.0	13.0	15.0
Percent GDP from manufacturing					
1960	14.0	15.0	13.0	12.0	16.0
1980	22.0	18.0	17.0	16.0	25.0
1990	20.9	17.7	14.9	13.7	17.2

^a Thousands.

^b From Ministerio de Educación (1979:140-141,147).

^c In 1986 U. S. dollars; 1990 figures estimated from GDP/capita growth rates.

^d 1972

^e 1984

^f 1988

^g Of economically active population.

Sources: Inter-American Development Bank (1988; Tables A-1, A-2, B-1, B-9; 1991, Tables A-1, A-2, B-2, B-10, and country profile tables); Torres Rivas (1992; Cuadro 4); Pérez Brignoli and Baires Martínez (1983: Table 9); Castillo Rivas (1983b:Cuadro I); United Nations Development Programme (1991: Tble 1).

The first of Central America's dictatorship to fall was that of the Somozas in Nicaragua, where the coalition led by the Sandinista National liberation Front (FSLN) assumed power on July 19, 1979. The revolutionary ousted a perennially well-supported, vociferously anticommunist, and presumably impregnable U.S. ally. The revolutionary policies while forging ties to Cuba and the Soviet bloc to counterbalance expected U.S. antagonism. This set off alarm bells in Washington and among conservative elites throughout Central America.

The Sandinista revolution profoundly altered U.S. policy toward Central America, especially toward the rising turmoil and growing insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala. In other Central American countries, Nicaragua's revolution made conservative forces anxious, encouraged both rebels and reformers, and raised the prospects of external intervention and increased intraregional conflict. Central America's other governments adopted two distinct strategies in response to the growing turmoil and leftist threat: Like Nicaragua's Somoza regime, Guatemalan and Salvadoran rulers adopted and intransigent strategy

-they escalated repression of popular forces and opposition, and rejected U.S. pressures to improve their human rights performance. In contrast, Honduras and Costa Rica remained acquiescent to the United States. Honduras even embarked upon gradual political reform. Within this context there began a decade long scramble among subnational actors throughout the isthmus for space, alliances, and resources both domestic and foreign, that would on several occasions produce dramatic shifts in adaptive strategies *vis a vis* the United States.

The United State. In the early twentieth century, the U.S. intervened politically, diplomatically, and military to consolidate its hegemonic role in the region and to pursue certain specific goals -to establish and maintain the U.S. monopoly of the trans-isthmian canal in Panama, contain German and other geopolitical and economic incursions into the isthmus, promote U.S. investment and trade, contain leftist regimes and movements, and promote political stability and constitutional rule. (12)

After 1945 there was an interlude of U.S. support for liberal democratic regimes, but that soon succumbed to the new geostrategic imperative to contain communism and Soviet influence. (13) World War II era U.S.-Latin American military and political cooperation schemes were update into the new inter-American security system under the Rio Pact and the OAS Treaty in the late 1940s, and Central America was incorporated into the system. The degree to which containment would dominate U.S. relations with Central America in coming decades was soon made clear by U.S. intervention to topple the constitutional government off Guatemala in 1954 under the pretext that it was communist influenced.

From 1959 on the Cuban revolution further energized U.S. efforts to contain communism in Central America. The defection of Cuba from the U.S. hegemonic system to the Soviet Union brought major U.S. efforts to solidify and consolidate its influence in the region. In the 1960s the United State sharply increased direct assistance to Central America (Tables 2 and 3), including beefed up regional military cooperation. Despite U.S. rhetoric about democracy during the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations, four of the five Central American governments receiving U.S. aid were military dictatorship. The flagship U.S. assistance program of the 1960s, the Alliance for Progress, assisted the CACM by using U.S. economic aid to promote rapid capitalist development. Annual average U.S. economic aid to Central America for 1962-1972 was doubles that for 1953-1961 (Table #). On the military side of containment, the average annual rate of U.S. military assistance programs for 1962-1972 grew twelvefold over the previous eight years. The United States mobilized Central American cooperation in the abortive 1961 Bay of Pigs exile invasion of Cuba,

and in the 1965 U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic. Although U.S. military assistance to Central America shrank somewhat during the Nixon and Ford administrations (Table 2) because of the war in Vietnam, economic assistance to the region grew in the early 1970s (Table 3).

Jimmy Carter's efforts to reform and improve U.S. relations with Latin America introduced some instability into this system. Carter completed previous administrations' reassessment of the strategic importance and vulnerability of the Panama Canal in the nuclear era, signed the Panama Canal Treaty, and secured its ratification. More importantly than the modest increase in U.S. aid levels to Central America (Tables 2 and 3), the Carter administration also refined the U.S. approach to containment of communism. The idea was that the United States should accept or even encourage gradual domestic reform in the Third World because <<social explosions leading to radical outcomes were less likely if tensions could be directed through open governments.>> (14) Congress in the mid-1970s had imposed certain human rights performance criteria on U.S. foreign assistance to curtail past abuses. (15) The Carter administration embraced and implemented these policies to facilitate controlled reform and improve long run Third World political stability. Although there was debate within the Carter administration and the foreign policy bureaucracy over whether and how to press for human rights reforms, (16) the United States quickly cut off military aid to chronic human rights abusers Guatemala and El Salvador in 1977. It also pressed Nicaragua's Somoza regime to improve its human rights performance. (17)

Table 2. Mean Annual U.S. Military Assistancea to Central America, 1946-1990^a

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Region ^b
1946-1952	-	-	-	-	-	-
1953-1961	0.01	0.03	0.19	0.14	0.24	0.62
1962-1972	0.16	0.72	3.31	0.90	2.36	7.45
1973-1976	0.03	2.08	0.83	2.23	0.28	5.45
1977-1980	1.25	1.60	1.25	3.13	0.85	6.98
1981-1984	3.95	98.80	5.00	41.48	0.00	144.28
1985-1988	3.93	112.78	5.20	57.73	0.00	179.64
1989-1990	0.20	81.20	6.35 ^c	31.20	0.00	115.95
Overall Mean	0.87	22.92	1.66 ^d	10.93	0.66	37.04
1946-1990						

^a Millions of U. S. dollars.

^b Includes only Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

^c The Bush administration cancelled Guatemala's 1990 military assistance of \$3.3 million for human rights reasons. That left the actual period average for 1989-90 at \$4.7 million.

^d Includes the 1990 \$3.3 million that was later cancelled.

Sources: Based upon Atkins

(1977: Tables D and E; 1989: Tables 10.2 and 10.4); OPB-USAID (1981, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1991).

As anticipated, the canal treaty and new human rights policy encouraged opposition groups and rebels to press harder for political change by signaling reduced U.S. willingness to intervene on behalf of Central America's repressive regimes. The expected short run improvements in human rights performance in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua proved illusory, however, because of elite intransigence. Meanwhile, raised opposition hopes and spiraling anger about the brutality of their rulers accelerated turmoil in the isthmus much faster than Washington had anticipated. (18)

Table 3. U.S. Economic Assistance to Central America, 1945-1990^a

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Region ^b
1946-1952	1.00	0.40	1.65	0.42	1.03	4.50
1953-1961	5.80	1.23	13.48	3.90	3.73	28.14
1962-1972	9.41	11.95	14.52	8.42	12.95	56.07
1973-1976	14.10	6.10	19.60	24.43	26.90	91.13
1977-1980	13.65	21.85	17.28	27.88	18.63	99.56
1981-1984	112.75	189.43	21.13	79.53	16.55	419.39
1985-1988	171.13	383.38	135.90	179.33	0.10	869.84
1989-1990	108.65	276.85	140.35	140.35	113.60	770.40
Overall Mean	35.54	68.74	36.07	36.07	13.50	183.14
1946-1990						

^a Millions of U. S. dollars.

^b Includes only Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Sources: Based upon Atkins (1977: Tables D and E; 1989: Tables 10.2 and 10.4);
OPB-USAID (1981,1984,1986,1988,1991)

The international environment. During the 1970s and 1980s the international geopolitical environment and U.S. foreign policy underwent remarkable transformations. Although the United States remained the world's strongest military power and its largest single economy, U.S. relative capacity and influence in the world community during the 1980s continued to decline while others' rose, particularly those of Japan and Europe. Moreover, by the 1980s U.S. influence within the Western Hemisphere had also eroded noticeably as other regional powers had gained in size, resources, self-confidence, and assertiveness. (19) Both European and Latin American nations eventually challenged U.S. policies in Central America during the 1980s. External actors provided new sources of support that partially reduced Central American nations' dependency upon the United States and encouraged them to follow promotive or preservative strategies of adaptation rather than the more traditional acquiescent strategy. <<The United States continued to play the leading role in the area, but other nations and groups were also prominent. Far from being an exclusive U.S. preserve, Central America became an internationalized arena. >> (20)

Central to the debate over Central America in the 1980s was Soviet interest and goals in Latin America. One side perceived dire security threats from the USSR and Central American revolutionary movements, (21) while the other saw relatively little of concern. (22) In the policy arena the darker view prevailed during the 1980s. Sharply intensified U.S. tensions with the Soviet Union and efforts to contain communist influence in the Americas marked the early years of the decade, (23) with Central America became a principal venues of the resultant geopolitical struggle. Soviet and Cuban assistance helped revolutionary Nicaragua maintain its path of promotive adaptation apart from the United States for several years. Yet as the decade ended, first the Soviet bloc and then the Soviet Union itself went into sharp decline, their aid to Nicaragua shrank, and East-West tensions diminished. The rapid evolution of U.S.-Soviet relations in the late 1980s would sharply alter the course of events in Central America again, largely unexpectedly.

The Eighties Begin: The Carter Administration after July 1979

Before Anastasio Somoza Devayle fell, the Carter administration pressed the Nicaragua's dictator to improve his human rights performance as civil resistance and the Sandinista guerrillas escalated their campaigns against the regime. By mid-1978 the United States had decided that Somoza should leave power and actively sought, along with Nicaragua's Catholic Church hierarchy, to arrange for a civil opposition coalition –without the Sandinistas– to assume power. Somoza refused to cooperate, and his National Guard waged a bloody campaign

against the growing insurrection in Nicaragua's cities. When the mediation effort collapsed in early 1979, the once-divided FSLN reunited and rallied the civil opposition into its corner. (24) Within the Carter administration, which badly underestimated the escalating strength of the Sandinistas, a debate raged over whether to employ U.S. force to oust Somoza or merely wait for events to overtake him. In early 1979 there was an abortive U.S. effort to persuade the Organization of American States (OAS) to intervene militarily to force Somoza out. While U.S. diplomats sought ineffectually to have the OAS remove Somoza and to negotiate some sort of post-Somoza government without the FSLN, the Sandinistas -benefitting from widespread popular support - rapidly prepared, launched, and successfully prosecuted their final offensive. (25) The National Guard effectively collapsed, and on July 19 the Sandinista-led rebel junta assumed power. Having failed to prevent the Sandinistas from taking power, the Carter administration sought to moderate their government while encouraging centrist and moderate reformers to make progressive, prophylactic changes in policy elsewhere in Central America. Testifying before Congress, Undersecretary of State for American Affairs Viron Vaky summarized the policy:

Our task therefore is how to work with our friends to guide and influence change, how to use our influence to promote justice, freedom and equity to manual benefits - and therefore avoid insurgency and communism. (26)

The FSLN quickly consolidated its hold on the revolutionary government and forged close ties to Soviet ally Cuba. The U.S. effort to moderate the Sandinistas, though at least partly successful, proved unsatisfactory to many inside and outside of Washington. Outside the White house, critics on the right including soon to be Republican president nominee Ronald Reagan and many of Somoza's former supporters in Congress, stridently attacked Carter for <<losing>> Nicaragua and Iran, where another revolution was underway. Congress delayed a \$75 million U.S. aid package for Nicaragua while the United States pressed the Sandinistas to desist from several policies it viewed as menacing, including support for Marxist rebels in Salvador.

As the Nicaraguan revolution began to unfold, political unrest and violent repression in neighboring El Salvador escalated rapidly. There appeared to be <<another Nicaragua>> in the making. When a coalition of opposition party reformers and military figures overthrew the Salvadoran regime on October 15, 1979, Washington quickly backed the new junta in hopes of quick social reforms and curtailed human rights abuse that might head off a second revolution in the isthmus. (27) The Carter White House lifted its prior aid suspension and sent a \$54.3 million aid package to El Salvador in late 1979 (including almost \$5 million in military assistance).

The Salvadoran junta proved unstable and became rapidly more conservative and military dominated. Most reformers and moderates pulled out in early 1980 when human rights abuses increased not diminished. Conservative forces that included the agrarian oligarchy and the armed forces sought to undermine the agrarian reform program that was a cornerstone of the U.S.-backed reform package. Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero was assassinated by rightist elements in 1980, as were four U.S. nuns and religious workers. Despite the Salvadoran junta's failure to attend to the reformist side of the Carter agenda, U.S. support and assistance continued through 1980, and additional military funding was found in the waning days of the Carter administration. Those in the administration who advocated human rights and reform as an antidote to revolution were quickly overwhelmed by supporters of more traditional containment policies. Thus in the last months of Jimmy Carter's administration, revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua and the rising neoconservative tide of election-year U.S. politics undermined many of his foreign policy innovations. (28)

Elsewhere in Central America, the Nicaraguan revolution and the growing Salvadoran insurrection began to elicit reaction. In Honduras where the armed forces had ruled since the early 1970s, the turbulence in neighboring Nicaragua and the formation in 1978 and 1979 of two Honduran Marxist guerilla groups prompted the military regime under Gen. Policarpo Paz García to begin political liberalization. A constituent assembly was elected in 1980 to write a new Constitution, Congressional and presidential elections were set for 1981, and certain populist programs were touted to mollify the impoverished Honduran public. (29) On the southern end of the region in democratic Costa Rica, both President Rodrigo Carazo—once a supporter of the anti-Somoza rebel coalition in Nicaragua—and the press became steadily more critical of the revolutionary government in Nicaragua.

The Guatemalan regime elected a policy of repression. Gen. Romeo Lucas García, who had come to power in 1978 via electoral fraud, faced a resurgent Marxist guerilla movement. Rebel elements that dated from the 1960s had rebuilt themselves and new guerilla groups rooted in Guatemala's majority indigenous population had also appeared. (30) Guatemalan security forces responded with escalated counterinsurgency in rural areas and increase state terror in the cities. Because of high coffee prices and a relatively strong economy, the Guatemalan regime felt free to ignore U.S. pressures to improve its human rights performance. Guatemala replaced U.S. military assistance with arms and advisers from Israel.

The Early Reagan Administration: 1981-1986.

Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency intending to adopt a much more vigorous and traditional style of containment of communism than Carter's. (31) Reagan speedily changed U.S. policy but, ironically, his very loose management style and lack of a coherent vision of policy for Central America first animated and then ultimately undermined many of his own policy references in the isthmus. Lax supervision of subordinates encouraged free-wheeling entrepreneurship in foreign affairs, and permitted arch-conservative ideologues to gain control of key foreign policy instruments affecting Central America. There followed a remarkable degree of partisan polarization of foreign policy.

The perception of Central America by candidate Reagan and many of his advisers was articulated in a report by the committee of Santa Fe, several of whose members took positions in the Reagan administration foreign policy apparatus. << The young Caribbean republics situated in our strategic back yard face... the dedicated, irrepressible activity of a Soviet-backed Cuba to win ultimately total hegemony over this region,...the 'soft underbelly of the United States. >> (32) The report continued with an extremist interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine of the early Cold War variant, (33) and interpreted Latin America as <<part of America's power base. Any United States power base... cannot be allowed to crumble... >> (34) After listing alleged Soviet surrogates or near-surrogates in the hemisphere in addition to Cuba (Nicaragua, Guyana, Jamaica, Grenada, and Panama), the report recommended that the United States should use its aid and other policy instruments to: a) rebuild eroded hemispheric security cooperation and restore cut military assistance programs; b) counter leftist propaganda and liberation theology; c) accept non-communist authoritarian regimes and cease misguided efforts to promote U.S.-style democracy and human rights in Latin America; d) increase the access of Latin American products to U.S. markets and promote private capitalist development schemes and <<free>> (that is, non-leftist) labor unions; and e) disseminate in the isthmus political values congruent with those predominant in the United States. Perhaps most to the point regarding Central America, the report advocated a new policy

To provide multi-faceted aid for all friendly countries under attack by armed minorities receiving assistance from hostile outsider forces... Concurrently the United States will reaffirm... [That] no hostile foreign power will be allowed bases or military and political allies in the region... (35)

The Reagan Doctrine, as it emerged in the early eighties, incorporated the worldview and many of the specific policy recommendations of the Santa Fe document. Reagan sharply escalated confrontation with the Soviet Union, and

strove to contain its perceived influence in Central America. There were three basic prongs to this highly escalated containment in Central America.

Nicaragua. The Reagan administration dedicated enormous energy, albeit not publicly admitted at the outset, to overthrow the Sandinista regime. U.S. policy largely eschewed diplomacy and quickly became confrontational and increasingly militarized. Within months of taking office, President Reagan suspended U.S. economic aid to Nicaragua, and mobilized and funded an anti-Sandinista contra army from remnants of the Nicaragua National Guard.

Among additional U.S. efforts to harass, contain, and overturn the Nicaraguan revolution from early 1981 through 1986 were diplomatic initiatives to discredit and isolate Nicaragua; a U.S. domestic, Central America, and worldwide pro-contra and anti-Sandinista propaganda campaign; securing cooperation from Honduras and Costa Rica for contra bases and operations on their soil; CIA attacks on Nicaragua harbors and oil storage facilities; harassing supersonic overflights of Nicaragua territory; heavy electronic and conventional intelligence collection in Nicaragua; financing anti-Sandinista domestic opposition and press; a massive forward basing and logistical operation in Honduras that could permit a direct U.S. invasion; continuous U.S. and Honduran joint troop maneuvers for a period of several years; an embargo U.S. trade with Nicaragua; an embargo of U.S. credit to Nicaragua and, over time, successful pressure upon other western and international lenders to cut off credit. (36) Although the administration harassed Nicaraguan diplomats and missions in the United States, formal diplomatic relations were never broken. (37)

President Reagan and his spokesman energetically argued that the Nicaraguan revolution and the Sandinistas constituted a vital and direct threat to the security of the United States. Many observers view the 1983 invasion of Grenada and removal of its Marxist government as a direct message to Managua that the same might happen to Nicaragua. Yet despite its denunciations, implicit threats, and preparations, the Reagan administration never resorted to direct, overt military intervention against Nicaragua. That the United States never directly attacked Nicaragua had several likely causes: First, the administration failed to win public support for its policies. Despite using domestic and external propaganda, presidential addresses, and even the Bipartisan National Commission on Central America (Kissinger Commission), a fairly consistent two to one majority of the U.S. public opposed Ronald Reagan's policy toward Nicaragua throughout the administration. (38) One possible reason for public skepticism about Reagan's policies in Nicaragua (and elsewhere in the region) was the availability of alternative interpretations of regional affairs in the U.S. press. The administration's view of the area was consistently countered by media

reports by professional journalist, academics, peace-oriented or anti-interventionist private, nongovernmental and religious organizations and activists, and ever former U.S. diplomats and public officials. Such forces labored assiduously throughout the 1980s to counter administration alarmism and court public and congressional opinion. (39)

Second, key parts of the U.S. government itself opposed military escalation. Elements within the State Department, at times including Secretary of State George Schultz, pressed for more diplomacy and less confrontation with Nicaragua. Still smarting from lack of public support in Vietnam, the U.S. military services also quietly but steadfastly opposed undertaking an unpopular adventure ground war abroad. (40)

The third reason was lack of reliable support in Congress. Many members, in particular Democrats, never agreed with the administration's perception of the threat in Nicaragua nor with the means being employed by the administration against the Sandinista regime. Pressure by Reagan's advisers and his allies on Capitol Hill badly antagonized many legislators and intensified partisan polarization on Central American issues. To some extent influenced by the forces of opposition to the administration's policies, Congress passed several different restrictions (known collectively as the Boland Amendments) upon the use of covert funds against Nicaragua, and was inconsistent in funding the contras. (41) In order to skirt and subvert these congressional obstacles, members of the president's national security staff developed an illegal covert operation to supply the contras. By the late 1980s, Reagan's lobbying and the Sandinistas' own policies (human rights problems, press censorship, and public relations gaffes) eventually eked out more support for the contras from Congressional Democrats. Ultimately, though, Reagan was never able to count consistently upon Congressional support for his efforts to topple the Nicaraguan government.

U.S. anti-Sandinista policies also met obstacles within Central America. The Sandinistas responded tenaciously, flexibly, and imaginatively (albeit making many mistakes along the way). They often shifted policies to cut losses or win vital resources with which to counter the United States; areas particularly affected included human rights and political space for their domestic opponents, and economic, agrarian, and foreign policy. They skillfully worked with U.S. domestic opponents of Reagan's policies, the press, the International Court of Justice, European governmental opposition to U.S. policy, European and other foreign assistance, and international political party organizations. The revolutionary government called elections (1984, 1990) and invited myriad international observers to witness their probity. It made unexpected deals with domestic enemies and with neighboring countries (most notably accepting two

draft Contadora accords, though these ultimately failed due to U.S. pressures on other Central American countries). Such maneuvering for resources helped keep the Sandinista revolution going despite the contra war and other pressures, and many of these policy shifts seemed to catch the Reagan administration unawares.

The Reagan administration never garnered the support it wanted for its anti-Sandinista enterprise from the international community. Although it convinced such nations as Saudi Arabia and Brunei to help fund and Costa Rica and Honduras to harbor the contras, there was little other support even from traditional U.S. alliance partners. Most Western European governments expressly opposed U.S. policy toward Nicaragua and continued various forms of assistance to Nicaragua well into the late 1980s. Spain and the Scandinavian nations remained particularly loyal to Nicaragua. Soviet bloc aid and technical cooperation (especially from the USSR and Cuba) supplanted Western assistance to Nicaragua by the mid-1980s and permitted the massive and largely successful military mobilization that kept the contras at bay. The external assistance that perhaps proved most valuable to Nicaragua involved peacemaking efforts by the Contadora countries (Panama, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela) and their allied Support Group. The Contadora peace process failed to achieve an accord largely due to U.S. opposition, but nevertheless helped constrain U.S. actions by expressing Latin American powers' disapproval of U.S. intervention in the isthmus.

El Salvador. Responding to increasing state terror and lack of progress on reforms, in 1980 the five Salvadoran guerrilla groups joined forces to form the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), several very large civic opposition coalitions joined together into the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), and the FDR and FMLN formed an alliance. In early 1981 the guerrilla war intensified sharply. Using these developments and the evolution of the Nicaraguan regime as evidence of a growing communist beachhead in the isthmus, Ronald Reagan won far more cooperation from Congress for his policy toward El Salvador than toward Nicaragua. However, the Reagan administration was also more pragmatic and flexible regarding El Salvador than Nicaragua.

Reagan built upon the foundation established by Jimmy Carter by sharply escalating U.S. military and economic assistance to El Salvador and its now openly rightist junta. U.S. economic assistance for 1981-1984 was over eight times greater than for 1977-1980, and military assistance was over sixty times greater (Tables 2, 3). The United States became deeply involved in shaping the Salvadoran regimen and armed forces. U.S. advisers and diplomats assisted with and reportedly even essentially directed many Salvadoran government agencies as they sought to forge a competent state.

The United States anointed Christian Democrat junta member José Napoleón Duarte as its best hope for building a political center in the highly polarized society. Human rights concerns were at first sharply deemphasized by the Reagan administration, and the Salvadoran military -despite massive amounts of U.S. advice and funding - continued its brutality albeit at somewhat reduced levels. (42) Human rights abuses, however, so aroused many members of the U.S. Congress that the administration came to fear that funding for El Salvador might be cut. The Reagan administration by 1982 thus reversed field and embraced both human rights and democratization (the holding of elections) as a means to help insure continued U.S. financing of the Salvadoran government and to calm rising U.S. domestic fears of possible direct U.S. military intervention. (43) Human rights abuses began gradually to diminish in response to U.S. pressures, and carefully managed elections -held in 1982 and 1984 in the midst of civil war- helped build legitimacy for the Duarte government both within El Salvador and in the U.S. Congress. (44)

The rest of the isthmus. U.S. policy toward other nations was largely a function of policies toward Nicaragua and El Salvador. The United States sought to turn Honduras into a forward base, avowedly to contain Sandinista support for El Salvador's rebels but also for possible U.S. military action in El Salvador or Nicaragua. Honduran good will and its transition to civilian rule were sought through Washington's massive foreign assistance. There was a thirteen fold increase in military assistance to Honduras during the first Reagan term, followed by another forty percent increase in the second. Economic assistance to Honduras for 1981-1984 doubles over the Carter period, then redoubles for 1985-1988 (Tables 2 and 3). Honduras engaged in continuous, cooperative military exercise with U.S. forces, let the U.S. build extensive military facilities around Honduras, permitted the contras to base, train, and operate along the Nicaragua. Honduran cooperation with El Salvador's armed forces proved more difficult for the United States to attain because of the lingering enmity between the two nations after the 1969 Honduras-El Salvador war.

Washington heavily pressured Costa Rica to support the U.S. and contra efforts against Nicaragua's revolutionary government. President Luis Alberto Monge (1982-1986) did cooperate, and average annual U.S. assistance levels to Costa Rica rose more than tenfold over the levels of the Carter administration. Traditionally unarmed Costa Rica, however, partly resisted U.S. efforts to build its military capability. In contrast, Guatemala's violent military regimes and atrocious human rights record curtailed the Reagan administration's relationship with that country for several years. Beset by hard times and having lost some of its powerful economic allies because of this, the Guatemalan military decided to return nominal power to civilians. This elicited enthusiastic U.S. support

Guatemala's 1985 elections, the restoration of military aid, and a six fold jump in U.S. economic assistance (Table 2 and 3) despite continuing massive human rights violations.

The later Reagan Administration: 1987-1989

The watershed of the Reagan administration's policies and performance in Central America was the revelation in later 1986 that National Security Council staff members had helped sell U.S. arms to Iran in an effort to secure the release of American hostages and had illegally diverted the proceeds to the Nicaraguan contras. (45) As investigations by the Attorney General, the Tower Commission, the press, and Congress unfolded the scandal, there were marked changes in the administration's capacity to continue its Central America policies. These changes also brought sudden and dramatic alterations in the behaviors of most of the actors within Central America.

The weak states of Central America, subjected for several years to direct and intense U.S. pressure, found themselves suddenly in a much altered world. They perceive instantly that the Iran-Contra scandal would sap the Reagan administration's ability to support the contras against the Sandinistas, prosecute the war in El Salvador and oppose regional peace efforts. Thus partly freed from U.S. pressure while confronted with the rapid political and economic deterioration of their societies, Central America's presidents seized the initiative to reduce the growing conflict and destruction within and among them. Presidents Oscar Arias of Costa Rica and Vinicio Cerezo of Guatemala -each a new actor with new allies and agendas - forged a historic regional accord that was signed by all five isthmian presidents in a summit meeting in Guatemala on August 7, 1987. The Central American Peace (Esquipulas) Accord recognized the legitimacy of all five regional governments, called for democracy, partly delegitimized rebel forces, and required each nation to seek reconciliation of its internal conflicts through negotiations with insurgent forces. (46)

In disarray over the Iran-Contras scandal and pulled momentarily off guard by its own maneuvering, the U.S. administration failed to prevent this agreement. Indeed, a sticking blunder left the White House in a position of actually publicly endorsing a pact to which it strenuously objected. In the days before the accord was signed in Guatemala, the White House had proposed its own draft peace proposal -one quite hostile toward Nicaragua. This constituted an attempt to co-opt then Speaker of the House of Representatives and critic of administration Central America policy, Jim Wright (D-Texas) behind the president's opposition. Speaker Wright, however, turned the tables on the White House

hardliners. He had agreed to endorse a joint Reagan-Wright peace proposals just days prior to the Guatemala summit -all the while knowing that a more balanced accord might eventuate there. When the Esquipulas accord was reached, Wright effectively trapped the administration into supporting the historic Central American presidents' peace agreement as if it were an extension of the Washington draft. (47) Subsequent White House efforts to undermine the Central American accord proved fruitless for four main reason: Support for the Esquipulas peace process in Europe, Latin America, and international organization counterbalanced U.S. opposition. Rightist forces in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala became uncertain of U.S. support and unsure that they would ultimately prevail, and thus gradually more prone to consider political rather than military solutions. The political and economic decline of the Soviet bloc and fading popular support curtailed the resources of and disheartened El Salvador's FMLN and Nicaragua's Sandinista leaders, making them also more amenable to negotiations. The accord thus ultimately prevailed because it offered Central Americans of all ideologies vehicles for seeking an end to dangerous regional tensions and bloody but stagnated civil wars.

Hardliners in the Reagan administration fought a failed rear guard action against Esquipulas. Their major successes were nevertheless confined to victories in Congress on funding for the Salvadoran regime and for the contras. Despite such U.S. obstacles, the Esquipulas accord eventually brought about a cease fire and peace negotiations in Nicaragua. There followed the 1990 election and eventual settlement of the contra war. Esquipulas also led to the first negotiations between regime and rebels in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The 1980s End: The Bush Administration

The election of George Bush to succeed Ronald Reagan signaled significant changes U.S. policy toward Central America. Through appointments and rhetoric the incoming Bush administration moderated its predecessor's stridency on Central America and adjusted its policies toward the isthmus to fit the perception of a generally declining Soviet threat. The new administration's management style curtailed the foreign policy entrepreneurship of the hard liners, in part because it wished to defuse the deleterious partisanship and tensions with Congress that pervaded Central American questions. It also wished to promote a new trade agreement with Mexico and worried that the United States had several potentially more serious problems in Latin America -Mexico, Peru, narcotics smuggling - than those lingering in Central America. (48)

These shifts in emphasis but the Bush administration may be seen on several fronts. While many observers viewed the December 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama as a portent of misplaced. Indeed, action against the Noriega regime may well have represented a sop to the U.S. far right that permitted a significant de-emphasis of the overall importance of Nicaragua and El Salvador to U.S. security. Outside Panama, Bush administration policy changes on Central America consisted of pragmatic adjustments to new geopolitical circumstances -despite maintaining some of the Reagan rhetoric and antagonism toward Nicaragua. In foreign aid, for instance, there was a roughly one third reduction in mean annual military aid to the isthmus for 1989 and 1990, and a one seventh cut in mean annual economic assistance (see Tables 2 and 3). Against the background of the weakening Soviet Bloc and the USSR's expressed desire to reduce confrontation in the Third World, the White House became somewhat more tolerant of the Central American left -that is, willing to accept negotiated settlements or electoral outcomes involving newly more pragmatic leftist. Given the course of events in Central America, such adjustment in U.S. policy permitted considerable change within the region.

Nicaragua. George Bush assumed office after a cease-fire with the contras had been reached and elections had been scheduled in Nicaragua. Avowedly to keep pressure on the Sandinistas, the administration successfully lobbied Congress for continued contra funding for the contras until after the early 1990 election. This was done against the explicit wish of the Esquipulas accord and even though Nicaragua's civil opposition had agreed with the Sandinista government on electoral rules and called for an end to contra funding. While much of the U.S. rhetoric on Nicaragua sounded quite the same under Bush as under Reagan, in one highly significant policy adjustment the administration indicate that it would accept even a Sandinista victory in 1990 if the election were open and fair. Not content, however, to remain on the sidelines the United States worked assiduously (both covertly and overtly) and spent several millions dollars to forget the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) coalition, to get UNO to nominate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro to run against Daniel Ortega, and to fund , shape and promote the campaign. (49)

The Sandinista government invited extensive external observation, (50) which caused an unprecedented effort by the United Nations, Organization of American States, the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government led by Jimmy Carter, and many nongovernmental organizations to monitor the campaign and February 1990 election. After the largely unexpected Sandinista electoral defeat and transfer of power to Mrs. Chamorro's UNO government, the United States supported the negotiations that ended the contra war, helped demobilize the rebel forces, and restored U.S. economic assistance to Nicaragua

at historically high levels (Table 3). The Bush Administration disliked the continued Sandinista domination of Nicaragua's armed forces, but accepted this arrangement as a short-run cost of political stabilization.

El Salvador. The stagnation of the Salvadoran civil war and increased signs that Congress might significantly curtail military assistance there led to another shift in U.S. policy -acceptance if the Esquipulas-mandated peace negotiations. Both United States and the Salvadoran government were shocked by the ferocity of the late 1989 urban campaign by the FMLN, which for its part was disheartened by the failure of the Salvadoran populace to rally behind the rebels. The United States and both Salvadoran right and left began to view the war as unwinnable. The Salvadoran litigants on both side also saw ahead new limits on their resource flows from abroad, which enhanced right and left's willingness to negotiate. These changes animated the previously halting Esquipulas negotiation process, which was aided by the good offices of the United Nations Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar. Rather than oppose and surreptitiously block peace talks as had his predecessor, President Bush accepted Pres. Alfredo Cristiani's negotiations with the FMLN. The efforts bore final fruit in January 1991 with the signing of the Salvadoran peace agreement which provide for military reform and force reductions, guerrilla demobilization, resumption of abandoned agrarian reform programs, and a mechanism for the inclusion of the FMLN in a new national police force. (51)

Conclusions

From the standpoint of the Central Americans themselves, there was much to lament about the 1980s, especially in the economic and social areas. In addition to some 250,000 deaths, well over 1 million external refugees, and at least as many internal refugees, the Central American region had lost decades of developmental progress. Foreign debt had risen, investment and services deteriorated, and the social and economic problems that helped start Central America's insurgencies had intensified. For example, real working class wages were from 6 to 30 percent lower in 1990 than in 1980 for four nations, and had fallen by 96 percent in Nicaragua. (52) Per capita GDP had fallen between 14 and 56 percent over the decade of the 1980s, and manufacturing's share of GDP had deteriorated between 2 and 31 percent (see Table 1). The prospects for U.S. aid to help address these problems were limited, in order to assist the newly non-Sandinista Nicaraguan government and to help repair the invasion's damage in Panama, the united States in 1990 did not increase aid but effectively reduced its economic assistance to the other nations of the area by the amount newly programmed for those two nations. The probability of substantially increased

European or U.S. assistance to Central America to accelerate economic recovery for the battered region seemed minimal in the early 1990s because of the collapse of the Eastern bloc and Soviet Union and the resultant massive, higher priority demands for aid from that region of the world.

On the positive side of the ledger, Central America's two worst wars had ended by late 1991 and negotiations were under way between Guatemala's government and rebels. Armed forces, military spending, and deaths were reduced in El Salvador and Nicaragua. However, civil peace in Nicaragua seemed over more fragile as the Chamorro government coalition split and violence between rightist and Sandinistas escalated. In the policy confusion and relaxation of U.S. pressure occasioned by the Iran-Contra scandal, Central American regimes of quite diverse ideologies had collectively developed an effective consultative process that contributed to intraregional and intra-national reconciliation. This shift in adaptive strategies by the Central American states somewhat mitigated the deleterious effects of prior U.S. intervention upon the isthmus nations' sovereignty and nominally increased their freedom of action. Both the diplomacy and the increased mutual respect and collaboration of the Central American states -aided by the good offices of the OAS and UN - held forth the prospect for continued regional cooperation and integration. (53)

A final positive factor for Central America was that by 1991 electoral, constitutional regimes in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Honduras had each survived through at least two national elections and through a change of ruling parties. This hardly meant the consolidation of electoral democracy in any of these nations because in each national the armed forces remained very powerful and politicized. Nevertheless, some progress had clearly been made. Electoral, constitutional rule, however, was generally encouraged and endorsed by popular preference within each nation, and by other nations of the hemisphere, Europe, the OAS and UN, and the Catholic Church, factors that could certainly assist in the consolidation of democracy. (54)

For the United States, despite its massive intervention in Central America during the 1980s its accomplishments remained modest by the early 1990s. Jimmy Carter had failed to promote local reform at a pace either sufficient to head off revolution or that would be acceptable to the United States. Ronald Reagan's attempts to defeat the FMLN and to roll back the Sandinista revolution failed. However, U.S. policy did create the conditions for the FSLN's electoral defeat in 1990. El Salvador's FMLN was held at bay but not defeated. Ultimately the Bush administration lowered its sights and pragmatically accepted the negotiated settlement of the Salvadoran conflict -thus quite paradoxically legitimizing both the FMLN and securing extensive reforms of the Salvadoran polity U.S.

pressures for political democratization and improved human rights in the region –implicit but fruitless under Carter, first deemphasized then embraced by Reagan as a tool of his hard-line containment posture– actually paid some dividends under the Bush’s pragmatic, lower-key policy in the new post-Soviet era.

Finally, the \$6.7 billion of U.S. economic assistance to Central America in the 1980s functioned largely as the handmaiden of U.S. security policy and the \$1.8 billion in security assistance. (55) This economic aid arrived while the region’s wars and recessions made it useful mainly to fend off economic catastrophe, but certainly unable to promote development. A continuation of the decline of political conflict underway in the early 1990s in the region could, of course, make appropriate levels of U.S. economic recovery for the benighted nations of the region in the 1990s. Yet in a cruel irony, the very diminution of world geopolitical tensions plus the erosion of the U.S. economy were rapidly shrinking American aid to Central America at just the moment when its continuation might have done the most good.

Does the cycling down of U.S. security concerns for Central America in the early 1990s presage a new era of inattention to the region? Does the disappearance of the Soviet bete noir lead to a nadir of U.S. interest in Central America? If so, it appears that the economic neglect of Central America by the United States would likely be anything but benign. While the region itself had emerged from the 1980s with new political and diplomatic resources with which to confront its difficulties, social and economic problems seemed in many ways to be equal to or worse than those that had spawned the prior decade of revolution and geopolitical conflict.

Notes

1. The original version of this article appeared in English in John D. Martz, ed., *United States Policy in Latin America: A Decade of Crisis and Opportunity 1981-1991*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.
2. The Committee of Santa Fe, *A New Inter-America Policy for the Eighties*, council for Inter-America Security, May 1980, reprinted in Bruce D. Larkin, ed., *Vital Interest: The Soviet Issue in U.S. Central America Policy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1988), p. 15.
3. Based upon data from United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report: 1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Table 1.

4. During the nineteenth century motives for direct U.S. intervention in the region included the U.S. desire to displace Britain as the preeminent military power in the Caribbean, conflict over trans-isthmian transit routes, and filibustering expeditions seeking new slave states.
5. Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: Frank Cass, 1990); James N. Rosenau, <<National (and Fictional) Adaptation in Central America: Options for the 1980's>> in Feinberg, pp. 239-269, and James R. Kurth, <<The United States and Central America: Hegemony in Historical and Comparative Perspective, >> both in Richard E. Feinberg, ed., *Central America: International Dimensions of the Crisis* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), pp. 39-41, 47-56. Other terms such as "sphere of influence" are often used to describe a hegemonic system, but mean basically the same thing.
6. Rosenau, "National (and Factional) Adaptation," pp. 244-247.
7. Though part of the Mesoamerican isthmus, Panama was a province of Colombia until 1903 and has not shared the numerous common historical experiences of the other five countries. It is therefore not normally treated as part of Central America. Belize, a British colony until the 1980s, is not only historically but culturally distinct.
8. So in thrall to U.S. political and special economic influence (especially the great fruit exporting companies) did some of the region's countries become during the heyday of the banana industry in the early twentieth century that earned the sobriquet "banana republic".
9. See for more detail John A. Booth and Thomas W. Walker, *Understanding Central America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), Chapters 3-4, 6-8.
10. John A. Booth. "Socioeconomic and Political Roots of National Revolts in Central America," *Latin American Research Review* 26 (1991), No. 1), pp. 33-37; Booth and Walker, *Understanding Central America*, Chapters 6-8; Charles D. Brockett, *Land Power and Poverty: Agrarian Transformation and Political Conflict in Central America* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990); James Dunkerley, *Power in the Isthmus* (London: Verso, 1988)
11. See, for instance, Booth, "socioeconomic and Political..." Dunkerley, *Power in the Isthmus*; and Booth and Walker *Understanding of Central America*.
12. The U.S. justified such political intervention in the name of democracy, but defined democracy in particularly narrow terms -constitutionalism and holding of elections within elite dominated polities. U.S. intervention on behalf of democracy in Latin America and Central America in this period was also often inconsistent or subservient to security or economic concerns. Woodrow Wilson used direct military intervention in Mexico and Nicaragua,

invoking democracy, while Franklin Roosevelt refused to intervene in Nicaragua in the 1930s to salvage constitutional rule. See, for instance, Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983), pp. 19-83; Thomas Carothers, *In the Name of Democracy: U.S. Policy Toward Latin America in the Reagan Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 1-11; James R. Kurth, "The United States and Central America," and Paul Drake, "From Good Men to Good Neighbors: 1912-1932," pp.3-40, in Abraham F.Lowenthal, ed., *Exporting Democracy: The United States and Latin America: Themes and Issues* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

13. See Carothers, *In the Name of Democracy*, pp. 1-11; James R. Kurth, "The United States and Central America," pp.39-57; Leslie Bethel, "From the Second World War to the Cold War: 1944-1954," pp. 41-70; and Laurence Whitehead, pp. 216-242; and "The Imposition of Democracy," both in Lowenthal, *Exporting Democracy: Themes and Issues*.
14. Richard Feinberg, "The Recent Rapid Redefinitions of U.S. Interests and Diplomacy in Central America," in Feinberg, ed., p. 61.
15. Congressional investigations in the early 1970s had revealed U.S. complicity in toppling the Allende regime in Chile and supporting the violation of human rights there and elsewhere (especially Latin America and Southeast Asia).
16. See, for instance, Anthony Lake, *Somoza Falling: A case Study of Washington at Work* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), Chapters 3 and 7, Robert A. Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); and Dario Moreno, *U.S. Policy in Central America: The Endless Debate* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990), Chapter 2.
17. Laurence Whitehead, "Explaining Washington's Central American Policies," in Larkin, ed., *Vital Interests*, pp. 201-204; lake, *Somoza Falling*; Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition*; Richard Feinberg, "The Recent Rapid Redefinitions of U.S. Interests," pp. 58-77; Barry Rubin, "Reagan Administration Policy-making and Central America," in Robert S. Leiken, ed. *Central America: Anatomy of Conflict* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace-Permamom Press, 1984), pp.300-302. Describing the same processes, Moreno (*U.S. Policy in Central America*, Chapter 2) interprets Carter's policies as an abandonment of containment; I would argue that it was merely containment of communism by more sophisticated, reformist means.
18. Lake, *Somoza Falling*; Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition*.
19. Michael J. Kryzanek, *U.S.-Latin American Relations* (New York: Praeger, 1990 ed.), pp. 213-224; Peter W. Schulze, "A West European View: Walking a

- Tightrope between Self-Assertion and Alliance Loyalty, "in Larkin, ed., *Vital Interest*, pp. 251-256; Abraham F. Lowenthal, "Ronald Reagan and Latin America: Coping with Hegemony in Decline," in Kenneth A. Oye, Robert J. Lieber, and Donald Rothchild, eds., *Eagle Defiant: United States Foreign Policy in the 1980s* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983), pp. 311-336; Nora Hamilton and Manuel Pastor Jr., "Introduction," in Nora Hamilton, et al., eds., *Crisis in Central America: Regional Dynamics and U.S. Policy in the 1980s* (Boulder: Westview, 1988), pp. 1-7; Atkins *Latin America in the International Political System* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 210-235, 320-326.
20. Atkins, p. 320.
 21. See, for instance, the Santa Fe committee report cited above and Jeane Kirkpatrick, "U.S. Security and Latin America," (pp. 49-72); David Ronfeldt, "Geopolitics, Security, and U.S. Strategy in the Caribbean Basin," (pp. 73-90); Ronald Reagan, "Central America and U.S. Security," (pp.113-121); and "Why Democracy Matters in Central America," (pp.121-130), all in reprinted in Larkin, ed., *Vital Interests*; Arturo Cruz Sequeira, "The Origins of Sandinista Foreign Policy," in Robert S. Leiken, ed., *Central America: Anatomy of Conflict* (New York: Pergamon, 1984), pp.95-110, and Bruce McCole, "The Cuban and Soviet Dimension," in Mark Falcoff and Robert Royal, *Crisis and Opportunity: U.S. Policy in Central America and the Caribbean* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1984), pp. 53-78.
 22. See, for instance, Narc Edelman, "Soviet-Cuban Involvement in Central America: A Critique of Recent Writings," (pp. 141-168); Laurence Whitehead, "Explaining Washington's Central American Policies," (pp. 199-242); George Philip, "The Nicaraguan Conflict: Politics and Propaganda," (pp.243-249); C.G. Jacobsen, "Soviet Attitudes Towards, Aid to and Contacts with Central American Revolutionaries," (pp.1890-320); and W. Raymond Duncan, "Soviet Interests in Latin America: New Opportunities and Old Constraints," (pp. 371-397), all in Larkin, ed., *Vital Interests*. See also G. Pope Atkins, *Latin America in the International Political System* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 97-103; Morris Rothenberg, "The Soviets and Central America," (pp. 131-149); and Joseph Cirincione and Leslie Hunter, "Military Threats, Actual and Potencial," (pp. 173-191), both in Leiken, ed., *Central America*.
 23. See for instance, Oye, et al., eds. *Eagle Defiant*.
 24. John A. Booth, *The End and tge Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder: Westview, 1985).
 25. *Ibid.*, and see also Moreno, *U.S. Policy in Central America*, Ch. 3, *Lake, Somoza Falling, Pastor, Condemned to Repetition*.

26. Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, 1979, quoted in Moreno, *U.S. Policy in Central America*, p. 61.
27. Tommie Sue Montgomery, *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), Ch. 1, John A. Booth, "The Evolution of U.S. Policy in El Salvador: The Politics of Repression," in H. Michael Erisman, ed., *The Caribbean Challenge: U.S. Policy in a Volatile Region* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984).
28. Moreno, *U.S. Policy in Central America*, pp. 75-82.
29. Richard Millett, "The Historical Setting," pp.48-51, and Steve C. Ropp, "National Security," pp. 241-246, both in James, D.C.: American University Foreign Area Studies-U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), Booth and Walker, *Understanding Central America*, Chapter 8.
30. Susanne Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels Death Squads and U.S. Power* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), Ch. 9, Booth and Walker, *Understanding Central America*, Ch. 7.
31. Much has been written about the Reagan Foreign policy team and Central America; see especially Roy Gutman. *Banana Diplomacy: the Making of American Policy in Nicaragua 1981-1987* (New York: Touchstone, 1988), Ch. 1-6; Feinberg, "The Recent Rapid Redefinitions. . .," Moreno, *U.S. Policy in Central America*, Ch. 4, Ruben, "Reagan Administration Policy Making. . .;" Atkins, *Latin America in the International Political System*, pp. 320-336; LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*, CH. 5; Whitehead, "Explaining Washington's Central America Policies," pp. 199-243; H. Michael Erisman, "Contemporary Challenges Confronting U.S. Caribbean Policy," in Erisman, ed. *The Caribbean Challenge*, pp. 3-30; Saul Landau, *The Dangerous Doctrine: National Security and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Westview Press-Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America, 1988, CH. 12-13.
32. Robert F. Docksai, "Forward," (p.11) in *A New Inter-American Policy For the Eighties*, Council for Inter-American Security, May 1980, reprinted in Larkin, ed., *Vital Interests*, pp. 11-48.
33. "The doctrine prohibited non-American powers from acquiring territory, introducing alien systems, or intervening in the Western Hemisphere." (*Ibid.* p. 16).
34. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
36. Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Reagan versus the Sandinistas: The Undeclared War on Nicaragua* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987; Moreno, *U.S. Policy*

- in Central America, chapter 4, William I Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, *David and Goliath: The U.S. War against Nicaragua* (New York: Monthly Review, 1987); Holly Sklar, *Washington's war on Nicaragua* (Boston: South End Press, 1988).
37. This was because the U.S. Embassy in Managua provided a valuable "intelligence platform" and easy contact with the internal opposition.
 38. This was true of U.S. policy toward El Salvador, as well.
 39. Perhaps the greatest success of the opponents of the administration's Central America policy involved the report of the Kissinger Commission. The anti-interventionist and peace forces successfully lobbied Commission members to alter so what the content of the report as it was evolving in late 1983. More importantly, mobilization of critical commentary in the press helped neutralize the administration's intended impact for the Commission's report by publicizing its ideological and interventionist biases.
 40. Author's conversation with members of the Kissinger Commission, 1983.
 41. John Tower, Edmund Muskie, and Brent Scowcroft (the Tower Commission), *Report of the President's Special Review Board* (New York: Bantam Books-Times Books, 1987).
 42. Some observers noted that Human rights violations in El Salvador after the early 1980s had instrumental character. That is, rights abuses tended to fall when key aid votes were pending in the U.S. Congress, and to rise in order to intimidate regime opposition prior to Salvadoran elections.
 43. Carothers, *In the Name of Democracy*, Chapter 1, Booth, "The Evolution of U.S. Policy Toward El Salvador," pp. 136-137; Kryzaneck, *U.S.-Latin American Relations*, pp. 172-186.
 44. Edwards S. Herman and Frank Brodhead, *Demonstration Elections: U.S.-Staged Elections in the Dominican Republic Vietnam and El Salvador* (Boston: South End Press, 1984); José García, "Recent and Mitchell A. Seligson, eds., *Elections and Democracy in Central America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 60-62.
 45. Tower, Muskie, and Scowcroft, *Report of the President's Special Review Board*.
 46. Latin American Studies Association (LASA), *Extraordinary Opportunities... and New Risks: Final Report of the LASA Commission on compliance with the Central America Peace Accord* (Pittsburgh: LASA, March 15, 1988).

47. Jim Wriugh, *Streams of Hope. Rivers of Blood: A personal narrative about Central America and the United States* (unpublished ms.-xerox, c. 1990), Moreno, *U.S. Policy in Central America*, pp. 128-132.
48. Authour's conversation with a high-ranking administration foreign policy official, Atlanta, September 1989.
49. Bill Robinson, *A Faustian Bargian: U.S. Involvement in Nicaraguan Elections* (Boulder: Westview Press, Forthcoming 1992); Latin American Studies Association (LASA), *Electoral Democracy Under International Pressure: The Report of the Latin American Studies Association Commission to Observe the 1990 Nicaraguan Election* (Pittsburgh; LASA, March 15, 1990).
50. The Sandinistas clearly expected to win, and hoped that external observation would confirm the honesty of the 1990 election and legitimize their victory. International organizations such as the U.N. and O.A.S. participated as monitors/observers to promote settlement of the Nicaraguan conflict and help curtail U.S. intervention.
51. "Peace," *Mesoamerica* 11, (no. 1, January 1992), pp. 1-2, Norberto Svarzman, "Salvadorans Achieve Peace," *Times of the Americas*, January 1992, pp. 1-6.
52. Available statistical data probably modestly exaggerate Nicaragua's plight by being shaped heavily by exchange rates in a period of currency hiperdevaluation. Though strikingly deteriorated, real working class living standars would not seem to have fallen quite so badly if one were to take into account bartered labor and food supplies and informal economic activity.
53. The Central American Parliament, to be composed of 20 popularly elected representatives of each nation, got of to a rocky start. Nicaragua's delegates were not elected, and Costa Rica had not even ratified the treat at this writing.
54. See Booth and Seligson, eds., *Elections and Democracy in Central America*; and John a. booth and Mitchell a. Seligson, "Political Culture and Democratization: Costa Rica, México and Nicaragua," in Larry Diamond, ed., *Political Culture and Democracy in the Third World* (Boulder: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 1992-forthcoming).
55. See Table 2 for sources. The military assistance program figure includes some \$300 million spent on the contras.

