

THE U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN NICARAGUA DURING SANDINISTA RULE

RABINDRA KUMAR SATAPATHY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DISSERTATION

*SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

To



NORTH EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
SHILLONG
1996



पूर्वोत्तर पर्वतीय विश्वविद्यालय

मयूरभंज परिसर, शिलांग-७६३०१४ (मेघालय)

Phone :
Grams : NEHU

North-Eastern Hill University

Mayurbhanj Complex, Nongthymmai, Shillong - 793014 (Meghalaya)

Professor R.L. Walli
Department of Political Science

CERTIFICATE

Mr. Rabindra Kumar Satapathy has pursued research under my supervision. His Ph.D. dissertation titled **The US Involvement in Nicaragua During Sandinista Rule**, is based on genuine research. To the best of my knowledge, no part of it has been incorporated in any thesis or published.

Date
9/9/96

(R.L.Walli)
Supervisor

PREFACE

U.S. intervention in Nicaragua since its independence from Spanish colonial rule is more frequent and more consistent than any other countries of Central America. At different points of time, the motive of U.S. intervention has been different, but the U.S. hegemonic attitude has remained unaltered. In 1980s, Washington viewed that its hegemony in Nicaragua in particular and in Central America in general was being challenged by the Sandinistas. Hence, the United States launched its unrelenting war of attrition against defenceless, tiny Nicaragua. No aspect of Nicaragua's life had escaped the ravages of U.S. aggression. Finally, Sandinistas were overthrown in U.S.-backed and U.S.-aided elections in 1990, thus satisfying Washington's hegemonic ambitions.

This study has attempted to highlight various policy formulations and implementations of the United States in relation to Nicaragua which has indicated the limited extent of freedom available to a tiny country for pursuing an autonomous development in the face of hostilities by the super power. Also, it has indicated how a small nation had to pay for functioning contrary to the wishes of that super power. This study is based primarily on historical analytical method.

This work contains six chapters. The first chapter deals with Crisis in Central America, U.S. approach towards the region and its policy options. The second chapter provides a

historical sketch of U.S.-Nicaraguan relation upto 1979. The third chapter contains U.S. policy towards the Sandinista government of Nicaragua upto 1990.. The fourth chapter has dealt with the reaction of various countries, international bodies and organisations. The fifth chapter discusses the 1990 Nicaraguan elections and the role played by the United States for the defeat of Sandinistas. The last chapter ends with summary of the thesis and concluding observations.

My interest in the subject of this research dates back to 1989 when the news reports regarding U.S. involvement in Nicaragua caught my attention. But the transformation of such a general interest into a subject of research would not have been possible without the guiding hand, Prof. R.L. Wali. To him I owe a special debt of gratitude.

Staying at the remotest corner of the country, I had to work on a topic like this with various limitations and constraints. Especially, the difficulty in procuring materials and divided loyalty between research and teaching were the factors responsible for delay in completion of this work. However, I register my deep gratitude to American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad which not only provided me most of the materials but also awarded me two study grants to work on the topic. Particularly, its former Director Glenn Johnson helped me

immensely in various ways for which he deserves special mention here. I am also grateful to the Indian Council of Social Science Research of North Eastern Region, Shillong for sanctioning me a library grant and providing accommodation to study for this purpose. Besides, I am indebted to National Library, Calcutta; Central Library of J.N.U.; Sapru House Library, New Delhi; American Centre Library, Calcutta; and Central Library of N.E.H.U. for giving me permission to use their facilities. I acknowledge the help of ^{Dr.}(Mrs.) Rupa Borgohain, Head, Department of Political Science who has extended her cooperation for the completion of this work.

Dr. Sumanyu Satpathy, Reader, Department of English, N.E.H.U. and Dr. J.K. Pattanayak, Lecturer in Finance, Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, deserve special thanks for their all out help to finish it successfully. I am also thankful to Dr. M.K. Das, Head, Centre for Applied Statistics, N.E.H.U. and Dr. S.N. Ramanujam, Head, Department of Zoology, Pachhunga University College, for their constant encouragement. Dr. N.P. Goel of Geography Department, N.E.H.U. has helped in designing and giving final shape to the thesis. So, I am immensely grateful to him. The advise of Mr. Hemant Kumar Parija, the State Informatics Officer, Mizoram, in this regard has made my task easy. I also owe to the administration of Pachhunga University College which, without any problem, has relieved me from my regular duty for this purpose whenever I have asked for.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge the contribution of my family members. My father, who is a perennial source of inspiration since my childhood for higher studies, has constantly pressured me to complete this work successfully. My wife, my youngest brother and my son who are staying with me, have shared my trouble and inconvenience during the period of research. They have also assisted me in preparing this thesis. Last but not the least, I thank all my well-wishers, for whose cooperation and goodwishes this work could be completed.

Rabindra Kumar Satapathy
(Rabindra Kumar Satapathy)

Dated :

CONTENTS

	Page Nos.
Preface	i - iv
Chapter - I : Introduction	1 - 35
Chapter - II : Historical Background of the U.S.- Nicaraguan Relation	36 - 85
Chapter - III : U.S. Policy Towards the Sandinista Government	86 - 144
Chapter - IV : International Reaction to U.S.' Nicaraguan Policy	145 - 184
Chapter - V : 1990 Nicaraguan Elections	185 - 217
Chapter - VI : Conclusion	218 - 227
Bibliography	228 - 254

CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

The United States has intervened in Nicaragua more consistently and more systematically than in any other country of Central America. During 1980s, Nicaragua occupied a critically significant place in the U.S. foreign policy. Under Reagan administration, the U.S. attack on it was thorough and multifaceted. President Reagan accorded it top priority in his foreign policy agenda on the ground that Nicaragua, governed by Sandinistas, was a security threat not only to Central America but also to the United States itself. The charges against Sandinista government were basically two-fold : their alleged association with the Soviet-Cuban block, and their challenge to the unquestionable U.S. supremacy in the region. The Reagan administration reasoned that the overthrow of Sandinistas was the only viable option as compromise with the "evil regime" was out of question. In the process, Washington's Nicaraguan policy revealed the dichotomy between U.S.' professed values - respect for democracy, freedom, human rights, sovereign equality of all states, etc. - and the actual behaviour.

U.S.' Nicaraguan policy in the eighties was a manifestation of the Reagan administration's world outlook. Globally, the rollback of communism was the goal set by the hardline policy of the administration. Central America, due to its geographical proximity to the United States, was given special attention by the policy makers. The "stability" of the region is not only a precondition to Washington's economic, political and military interests but also for its power projections. It implies that

there should not be the presence of any outside power in the region; there should be no threat from any local government; and there should not be any local instability which will attract outside powers to intervene here. In other words, the United States considers Central America as its exclusive zone which has to be insulated against any rival foreign influence and any internal change detrimental to U.S. imperial interests.

CRISIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

"Banana Republic", a term used for Central American countries, symbolises chronic political instability, corruption, violence and vulnerability to foreign manipulation. In order to understand the problems of this part of the world, one has to uncover its society and the external forces that are at work to perpetuate its misery. Exploitation, repression, instability and vulnerability to external intervention are inalienable symptoms of these countries. The mass degrading poverty and destitution that have engulfed the region are not new but the continuum of Spanish colonial practice.

Soon after its independence from the Spanish colonial rule in 1821, Central America could not find peace. It was annexed to the regime of Emperor Augustin de Iturbide of Mexico in January 1822. Following the annexation, Liberals all over the region revolted against the regime. In 1823 after breaking away from Mexico, five of six original provinces (Chiapas stayed with

Mexico) decided to form a federation and named it the "United Provinces of Central America". Again due to internecine warfare, the federation ended its ephemeral existence in 1838 and all the five provinces became independent states.

The crisis in Central America has three facets : extreme economic inequality and exploitation breeding mass poverty; political repression and instability that spawn violent popular upheavals; and its vulnerability to foreign interference and intervention.

Economic Inequality and Exploitation

Central America is mainly an agriculture-based society. More than half of the people work in this sector (Table 1) and nearly eighty percent of the extra-regional exports are agricultural products. Most of the industries that exist are related to agricultural exports. The dual structure of agriculture - export-oriented crops cultivated in the most fertile lands and basic foods for local consumption cultivated in the least fertile lands - defines the agricultural economy and is the main cause of crisis in Central America.

Table 1 : Distribution of Labour Force in Central America
(in percentage)

Country	Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	1960	1980	1960	1980	1960	1980
Honduras	70	63	11	15	19	23
El Salvador	62	50	17	22	21	27
Nicaragua	62	43	16	20	22	37
Guatemala	67	55	14	21	19	25
Costa Rica	51	29	19	23	30	48

Source : World Bank, World Development Report, 1983 (New York, 1983), pp. 188-189.

Since 19th century, the region's economy has been periodically dominated by the mono-crop or two-crop production and its export. Initially, cochineal and indigo were the important exporting agricultural products. Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador relied heavily on these for international exchange while Honduras depended on hides and shells. In mid-nineteenth century Costa Rica began to export coffee.

The development of synthetic dyes in Europe caused the collapse of cochineal and indigo trade. It was replaced by the coffee production. Already dominant in Costa Rica, coffee soon became the important product and export commodity in the rest of the countries. By World War I, it contributed over 60 percent of the value of total Central American exports.¹

In twentieth century, with the development of transport facility and improvement in tropical agriculture, banana began to

1. The data is taken from J.W. Wilkie and S. Haber, eds., *Statistical Abstract of Latin America*, Vol. 22 - Los Angeles, 1983.

challenge the dominance of coffee. Honduras solely depended on it for its foreign exchange earning. By 1960, both coffee and banana represented around 65 percent of the total export value of Central America. Only recently, the export has been diversified to some extent because of the production of a few agricultural and non-agricultural items like cotton, sugar, meat, fish etc. along with coffee and banana. One major problem is that these agricultural exports are externally vulnerable to boom and bust cycle, i.e., prices fluctuate widely depending on world demand over which these governments have no control.

Secondly, Central American economic growth is characterised by the unequal distribution of wealth and its concentration in the hands of privileged few. By 1950s a very small percentage of landholders owned large part of the land while the majority of land holders had access only to small plots of land throughout the region. For example, in Nicaragua according to 1963 data, 50.8 percent of land holders possessed less than 5 hectares each which amounts to only 3.5 percent of the total cultivable area whereas 5 per cent of owners controlled more than 100 hectares which is 58.8 per cent of the land.² The situation in Guatemala and El Salvador is still worse.

With the concentration of land holdings, the large number of uprooted and impoverished peasants became wage earners. Even after industrialisation their condition did not change. Big

2. *Ibid.*

landlords who were making profit from agro-exports diverted their resources for establishing industries which would yield more earning with less risk. These business elites got cheap labour and whenever they faced any labour problem replaced with machines. Thus, ever-growing ranks of lawless peasants was marginalised. Industrialisation made them more conscious about their misery which led to popular revolts.

Thirdly, concentration of wealth and sufferings of rural as well as urban labour were aggravated by rapid population growth which, in turn, posed serious economic problems in the region. Also these countries were characterised by dependent capitalism with its inevitable consequences such as growing unemployment and underemployment, land alienation, deprivation and destitution and lack of access for the masses to such basic needs as adequate food, housing, health care, school etc. Governments with their limitations could not generate enough jobs to meet the challenge. All these problems affected region's economy badly and accelerated the popular unrest.

Fourthly, though belated industrialisation helped diversification of these productions and increased the economic growth, the benefits continued to be restricted to the minority privileged class and further widened the economic gap. The Economic Commission for Latin America proposed and encouraged the idea of regional common market for an industrialised Central America during 1950s with the objective of abolition of tariffs

within the region; high barriers to extra-regional imports; and strict control on foreign capital. Its penetration into the region has overwhelmed local capital and resulted in the flight of profit to the extra-regional investors at the cost of increasing suffering of the masses. The intention of creating more employment opportunities as a consequence of industrialisation was belied.

Lastly, Central American economy has been dependent to a large extent on the United States. Local industries and agriculture are under U.S. control. Any slight twist in the latter's approach has profound repercussion on the former's economy, politics and society. It is far ahead of other foreign investors in the region and nearly eighty per cent of total regional trade is under the control of the U.S. Trade embargo is a common method of punishment to bring back a country to its fold as was the case with Nicaragua in 1980s. Further, heavy industries of Central America are established with U.S. assistance and depend totally on it for spare parts. Similarly, agriculture, especially banana production is dominated by Yankee entrepreneurs. Large growers like the United Fruit Company became a virtual state within a state. They not only bought vast tracts of fertile land throughout Central America but also owned railways, ports, power generation etc., for maximising profit and exercising tremendous political influence over the local ruling class. In fact, banana industries provided the base for the rapid expansion of U.S.' informal empire.

In order to recover from any economic crisis as well as to undertake any developmental activity, local governments always look towards the United States for grants and loans. Washington uses these as opportunities to have firm control and to transform the region into its dependency. Nationalists reacted to it in '50s and '60s and more vigorously in '70s and '80s. The consequences of this near total dependence on United States has been severe - the failure of the region to develop heavy industries of its own; reliance on U.S. imports and technology, lack of regional markets and regional transportation and communication.

Political Instability and Oppression

Oppression and consequent instability are the chronic features of Central American politics. The end of colonial rule was the beginning of uncertainty of their political future. Sometimes internal squabble among the elites, sometimes struggle for patronage, sometimes wretched economic condition, and sometimes foreign intervention have contributed to the political instability but taken together they have helped the ruling class to resort to repression. Violence is a time-honoured device for ruling over people.

After independence, whole of Central America was ravaged by factional rivalry. The ruling class in all the countries was divided into two antagonistic camps - conservatives and liberals. The mutual hatred between them was so acute that

they aided their respective groups across the border. The division was partly based on ideology and partly on the nature of society and relationship between church and state. Conservatives were in favour of a close relationship between the church and the state on the ground of the need for social order and stability which clerical authority helped to impose. Liberals are for rapid economic development, use of modern technology and individual initiative. These, they felt, were obstructed by church - one among corporate institutions of colonial past - which stifles individual freedom, initiative, reason and experimentation. Prior to 1840, one of the main causes of instability was inter-elite quarrels for governmental power and patronage.

When the elites were indulging in fighting, the condition of the masses deteriorated further. Except in Costa Rica, in all other countries democracy and its device (election) has been for namesake only. Dictatorship and ruthless oppression has always been the regular feature in Central America. For the last one hundred years, in four countries (excluding Costa Rica) reformers and revolutionaries have periodically attempted to overturn the system but to no avail.

The wealthy class wanted to capture state power in order to have better access to cheap labour and abundant natural resources and legalise exploitation. People were hoodwinked in the name of democracy. Increasing misery triggered protest move-

ments which were suppressed with brute force to stave off social change.

Farabundo Marti, Sandino and Arbenz are the hyphens that join Central American past with the present situation. Their attempts at reform, albeit frustrated, inspired revolutionaries and prepared the social forces for later struggles. Their failed attempts for reforms underlined the harsh reality that domestic oligarchy and the U. S. was impossible as they were the main obstacles to economic and political democratisation of Central America.

Another important aspect of Central American struggle for radical transformation was the crucial support which came from the progressive elements of the church. Ecclesiastical authorities reacted to the appalling conditions of the masses and to the non-compromising attitude of the government. Throughout the hemisphere, these progressive sections questioned the historic alliance of the church with the ruling elites in perpetuating their oppressive rule. Most of these sensitive clergymen decided to work among the poor to improve their conditions. In the face of opposition from the government, they were convinced that their support to the revolutionaries was essential for economic and political transformation. With increasing church activities, the brutality of the government to prevent them also increased. A large number of clergymen were

arrested, tortured, expelled or killed by the oligarchy in these countries.³

Apart from church, progressive elements from bourgeoisie also joined the mass in its struggle. Disaffected elites who were very much concerned about government atrocities lent their support to the revolutionaries. Thus, elements from all sections of society merged in the revolution and fought for their just rights. But with the mounting popular opposition, the ruling classes throughout the region responded with more repression rather than any concession.

External Subjugation

The formal empire Spain has ceased to exist in Central America but the latter is still under imperial bondage. It is merely replaced by an informal empire of the U.S. Only the form of domination is changed but the substance of subjugation has persisted over the centuries. Imperialist forces have not only conquered and ruled but also penetrated their cultures and religions into the occupied lands in the region. What-so-ever be the form, the region's destiny has been controlled by the foreign hands till now.

For nearly three centuries (1523-1821), Spaniards made the isthmus their colony. The discovery of the 'New World'

3. See Humberto Belli, *Breaking Faith : The Sandinista Revolution and Its Impact on Freedom and Christian Faith in Nicaragua*, Illinois : Crossing Books for Pueblo Institute, 1984.

(Central America only a part of it) gave them new opportunity for the exploitation of its natural resources. Slave trade was another feature of Spanish colonialism. The so-called civilisers destroyed their books and suppressed their cultures and histories. Christianity was imposed on them. There was near decimation of indigenous population through colonial wars, violence, harassment, deception, loot and dislocation.

After their independence from Spain, Central America again fell prey to Mexico's reactionary clericalist regime for about two years. When provinces declared formal independence, Britishers entered into the area for trade and commerce, also occupied some parts of Atlantic coast. With the rise of U.S. power, Britain gradually withdrew from the area. Colonialism left with the emergence of neo-colonialism.

The United States has intervened at least 55 times in Latin America before the World War II.⁴ During the first three decades of the present century alone, it has intervened 28 times in Central America and the Caribbean basin.⁵ Variegated interests - safeguarding of U.S. corporate interests, survival of its client regimes, preempting of revolutionary movements for economic justice and democratisation, construction of canal and

4. Thomas Bodenheimer and Robert Gould, *Rollback ! Right Wing Power in U.S. Foreign Policy*, Boston, M.A. : South East Press, 1989, p. 11.

5. William Appleton Williams, *Empire as a way of Life* New York : Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 136-142.

prevention of alternative waterways, etc. - have motivated U.S. interventions at various points of time.

During nineteenth century, the frequency of U.S. armed intervention was less because of its domestic problems and engagement in other areas though political and economic interference remained uninterrupted. The occupation of Mexican territories and the involvement in the Caribbean islands kept the U.S. forces away from Central America. But Washington supported the initiative of the private individuals from U.S. as in the case of William Walker who imposed himself as the President of Nicaragua through rigged election.

Twentieth century began with the U.S. effort to dig a transisthmian canal. Panama, a Colombian province, was seceded and made independent country at U.S. instigation. A treaty was signed for constructing a canal and having right over it. For foiling any attempt for a second possible canal, Nicaragua was placed under U.S. marine surveillance for nearly two decades.

All the five middle American states have experienced U.S. military presence on various pretexts. Most prominent among them were the occupation of Nicaragua from 1912 to 1925 and from 1927 upto 1933; intervention in El Salvador in 1932; Guatemala in 1954; and interference in the civil wars between forces of change and pro-U.S. governments in El Salvador and Guatemala in 1980s. While intervening, the United States has overlooked the

indigenous nature of the conflict and helped suppression of dissent against the pro-Washington political regimes.

The economic, political conflict in these countries was indigenous and autonomous and not the creation of Moscow or Havana. The struggle for reform emanated from within Central America. But the U.S. policy makers responded to it from the cold war perspective oversimplifying the complex realities.

The United States is deeply involved in Central American imbroglio. It was engaged in a tussle between reaction and revolution, between the forces who are determined to maintain status quo and the forces who are struggling to establish a new and just society. The crises in Central America - rooted in its economy, politics and society - has been aggravated by the U.S. intervention. The small strip of landscape between the Pacific and the Caribbean, riven apart by its own problems, was dragged into East-West conflict.

U.S. INTERESTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Though the United States got an opportunity to establish its domination in Central America in the wake of the end of Spanish rule, it was only in late nineteenth century, Washington developed means and stakes in the area. That is, only in last decades of the nineteenth century, the United States acquired industrial and military might to make its presence felt

throughout the region. Central America has been viewed as both an extension of U.S. notion of "manifest destiny" and as an area of vital interest. So the U.S. policy makers have always had special concern for the region.

The U.S. interests in Central America are multifaceted - economic, political, security and strategic. The economic interests of the United States in the region are to improve the general climate for U.S. investment and continued access to strategically important raw materials there. Essentially, these economic interests are confined to corporate investment and subcontracting; trade, private financial investment; and control of bilateral and multilateral aid. In every sphere of economic relationship, Central American countries have been made dependent on the United States and there is hardly any scope for their independent economic development.

The U.S. political interest in the area has long been based on Washington's assumption that the nations of Central America are its natural camp followers. A combination of similar struggle for independence, geographical proximity and above all, long unchallenged U.S. dominance have tended to reinforce this notion. So the United States takes their support for granted in regional and international matters. Besides, it exercises unbridled interference in their internal affairs. Any protest against its hegemony is viewed seriously and is suppressed ruthlessly. During cold war, Washington was very much concerned

with the possible spread of communism and feared its penetration into its sphere of dominance. Any movement of dissent was branded as a Marxist-Leninist conspiracy. In brief, its political interest centres round the maintenance of pro-U.S. status quo in these countries by propping up ruthless dictatorship, keeping hostile powers out of the region, maintaining its own outposts through local cronies and differing its stand on all important regional and international issues.

According to U.S. government, its security will be vulnerable if any hostile force comes to power in its Central American backyard. In cold war era, Washington claimed that the region was drifting towards Soviet/Cuban camp and was caught in the superpower contest. In such a situation, it could not ignore such a threat particularly in the face of its locational contiguity with the United States. The U.S. policy makers justify this position on three grounds : first, if Central America cannot be defended, U.S. will lose its "credibility" worldwide; second, if one country will fall into the hands of the communists other countries will fall like a row of "dominoes" ultimately threatening the United States itself; and third, the area being its "strategic rear" has to be a safe zone with 'a stable, predictable, supportive and low-cost environment' so that Washington can divert its attention to other priority areas.⁶

This interpretation of U.S. vital interests is highly

6. Viron Vaky, "Reagan's Central American Policy : An Isthmus Restored", in Robert S. Leiken, ed., *Central America : Anatomy of Conflict*, Washington D.C., Pergamon, 1984, p. 238.

exaggerated and is at variance with the region's aspirations for independence and nationalist policies. Never in history was U.S. national security threatened by any of these states.

Apart from economic, political and security interests, the U.S. dominance in Central America is viewed as a precondition to its global power projection. Its unchallenged presence in the region is essential to reinforce its image as a super power and to enhance its credibility to act effectively elsewhere. In pursuit of this goal, the United States has crushed every protest and dissent movement in alliance with the vested interests within these countries and paid scant attention to the genuine problems of the masses.

POSTULATES OF U.S. CENTRAL AMERICAN POLICY

The Central American policy of the United States are based on certain postulates which have changed from time to time in consonance with the change in regional and global politics. There had been three postulates which had guided the U.S. policy in Central America until the end of cold war, namely, Monroe Doctrine, hegemony and anti-communism.

Monroe Doctrine

The U.S. policy towards Central America is anchored in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. Even today, the essence of this Doctrine is still the single most important factor shaping the

U.S. policy in Central America in spite of change in the regional and global political environment. In 1895, President Grover Cleveland asserted that the Monroe Doctrine had been "intended to apply to every stage of our national existence."⁷

The main aim of the United States to keep extra-regional powers out of this hemisphere has paid rich dividends over these years. Not only it uprooted the European bases from America but also established its unequivocal hegemony in the region. Since then, it has taken unto itself the self-proclaimed 'paternalist' role in order to subjugate its small, weak and less developed neighbours. Implicitly, it was this intention - to have mastery over Latin America - which motivated U.S. policy makers to formulate the Doctrine. According to Karl Berman, "The United States would present itself in the guise of a shepherd protecting Latin Americans from the European wolves, the so called Monroe Doctrine its magical staff."⁸

However, the declaration has served different purposes of different administrations. Originally, it was a defensive document to prevent European colonisers from making any establishment in the New World. By the middle of the 19th century, it became an aggressive instrument to intervene unilaterally in the internal affairs of the countries in the region. After World War II, the Doctrine was used as an alibi to crush socio-economic

7. Quoted in Alejandro Alvarez, *The Monroe Doctrine*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1924, (Repr. 1976), p. 412.

8. K. Berman, *Under the Big Stick*, Boston : South End Press, 1986, p. 6.

movements for egalitarian distribution of wealth in the name of combating communism.

So far as evolutionary changes are concerned there have been three distinct Monroe Doctrines, in reality. The original one which lasted up to the end of 19th century was essentially "defensive" in nature pledging the United States not to indulge in European affairs and to defend Americas against any outside interference. The second phase started with the administration of Theodore Roosevelt which imparted an imperialist cast to the doctrine.⁹ In the third phase, beginning from Franklin D. Roosevelt, efforts were made to "multilateralise" the Monroe Doctrine which converted it into a collective principle of hemispheric defence.

Despite many ups and downs, the Monroe Doctrine continues to be one of the main pillars of U.S. policy dealing with Central America. It has been made adaptable to cater various needs of American policy makers and has been made the instrument of crisis management. After World War II, no doubt, attempts were made to multilateralise Monroe Doctrine. But there is serious doubt about its practicability keeping in view of U.S.'s past record in dealing with the countries of the region. Crabb remarked, "A reluctance to rationalise or legitimise America's

9. There is difference of opinions between Thomas A. Bailey and Karl Berman regarding the beginning of activist and aggressive phase of the Monroe Doctrine. Bailey says that it was used in this manner by Theodore Roosevelt first. But Berman traces its beginning with President James K. Polk who was an avowed expansionist.

actions by the terms of the Monroe Doctrine thus signifies no fundamental change in its role in the foreign policy of the United States."¹⁰ Xabier Gorostiaga commented, "the Monroe Doctrine far from being a relic of the past, appears stronger today than it has ever been."¹¹

Hegemony

Hegemony, in literal sense, means the preponderance of power of one state over others. The preponderance of power is not achieved through harnessing of vacuum. It is derived from economic and military resources. It is not mere possession but the ability to use these resources effectively which enhances the power configuration of a nation. Hence, hegemony must be accompanied by a vast resources and willingness to use them for dominating over others.

Since their independence from Spanish rule, the United States has dealt with the Central American countries as a hegemon. And this trend continues uninterrupted even today. Although U.S. hegemony started gradually in the initial period, it was not the major policy goal till the beginning of twentieth century. Because of its domestic compulsions like civil war and overwhelming power of European colonialists which had investments in the region, the United States could not nurture any hegemo-

10. Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy*, Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1982, p. 55.

11. George Irvin and Xabier Gorostiaga, *towards an alternative for Central America and the Caribbean*, London : George Allen and Unwin, 1985, p. 17.

nistic ambition. Also, its business and industries were not in a position to compete with that of the Europeans. In 1870s and '80s, it began to emerge as a strong state with a rapidly expanding industrial base which offered opportunities for leadership in the Hemisphere. The imbalance between U.S. growth of national power and semi-feudal system of underdevelopment in Central America helped to establish influence of the former over the latter. By the turn of the century, the U.S. policy in the region was characterised by active interventionism.

Though, initially there was controversy between the executive and Congress as to the proper U.S. role in the region, the unanimous premise was that Western Hemisphere was an official possession of an unofficial empire. Now the United States assumed the dual role of a protector and an imperialist. It gathered sufficient power to protect the region from external interference. And at the same time, it developed unchallenged authority to intervene in their internal affairs. One was used as the excuse for the other conveniently. However, both defence and control were dual aspects of the same hegemonic attitude.

Towards the end of nineteenth century, Cuba provided opportunity to the U.S. to assert its exclusive leadership role in the region by driving out Spain. The avowed policy that not only Europeans would be prevented from reestablishing colonies in the Americas but also foreign interests be expelled and replaced by the United States, took a formal shape. Thus the United States

asserted its hegemonic rights in Latin America in general and Central America in particular.

In the beginning of twentieth century, the main thrust of U.S. hegemony was more political than economic. Its investment in Central America was relatively insignificant. The main concern was to establish the system of control for meeting its hegemonic goals. The United States emerged as a world power in early twentieth century and Central America was the first to feel the pinch of this development.

After World War II, the policy of hegemony faced tough challenges from the local population in the form of uprisings. But every uprising was followed by prompt intervention - directly or indirectly. After Reagan's coming to power, hegemony became more aggressive and assertive in the region. In brief,, hegemony is one of the important postulates guiding U.S. policy towards the region.

Anti-Communism

The communist revolution in China and the establishment of communist government in Eastern Europe, and the appeal of communist ideology throughout the world alarmed the U.S. administrations. The communist challenge was taken seriously by the west and became the main focus of U.S. foreign policy after the World War II. The post-World War II leadership of the capitalist world preoccupied itself with a policy of containment and rollback of

communism. It sought to stamp out any mobilisation for removal of poverty, economic injustice and redistribution of wealth in the Third World including that of Central America in the name of fighting communist challenge. The U.S. policy in Central and South America became a virtual catalogue of direct and indirect intervention for perpetuating mass poverty, gross inequalities, exploitation and political repression. Thus, anti-communism was used as a pretext to maintain U.S. hegemony in Central America.

From Truman onwards all the presidents developed some new plans and doctrines to deal with communism. Initially, the main objective of the U.S. foreign policy was to contain the growing influence of communism. As a result of it, Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, Eisenhower Doctrine, Alliance for Progress, Johnson Doctrine and Jimmy Carter's focus on "human rights" issue came into existence. U.S. foreign policy became very aggressive vis-a-vis communism after Reagan became President. Reagan aimed not merely at containment but roll back of the "evil empire".

Central America was the victim of anti-communist drive. The U. S. considered it as its "fourth border" which is beyond any other's encroachment. Rio Treaty and the Organisation of American States (O.A.S.) were created to strengthen the security and it was believed that they will act as bulwark against the penetration of communism into the Americas. Any protest against

harsh dictatorship and U.S. imperialism in the region was dubbed as communist-inspired movement that needed quick suppression.

The three postulates discussed above guiding the United States' relations with Central America are interrelated and complementary to each other. They had preoccupied Central American policy sequentially also. U.S. relationship with the area after freedom from Spanish rule was governed by Monroe Doctrine. Since the turn of the century, it was mixed up with U.S. drive for hegemony in order to have a firm control in the isthmus. Again, after World War II its obsession with communism coupled with two other postulates gave an overview of factors conditioning U.S. policy for Central America.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF U.S. POLICY

The U.S. policy makers have paid scant attention to the local problems while formulating policies for Central America, though their policies are of crucial bearing for the countries of the region. As already mentioned in nineteenth century, the policy was confined to keep off the extra-regional powers, protect its citizens and their investments, promote trade and commerce and whenever necessary to interfere in the state's internal politics.

In the first half of twentieth century, U.S.' Central American policy became more assertive by redefining the expanded

interests there. After canal construction, the United States (psychologically) extended its border upto Panama and its national security was perceived to include stationing and stability of friendly governments in the isthmus. 'Manifest Destiny', 'gunboat diplomacy' and 'good neighbour policy' are some of the policy landmarks determining the U.S. relationship with Central American states. Also this period saw the most frequent U.S. armed intervention in the area.

In the post-world war II period, cold war consciousness guided American policy towards the region. This period can be divided into a number of distinct phases. The first phase marked the signing of the Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance Treaty (Rio Treaty) in 1947, in which the military and ideological dimensions of the cold war were institutionalised in the region. In the second phase, Cuban revolution (1959) followed by the missiles crisis forced President Kennedy to declare 'Alliance for Progress'.

Third phase was extended upto Nixon-Kissinger period. It saw the declaration of Johnson Doctrine under which a discrete U.S. military presence in Central America was felt imperative to prevent further Cuban-style revolutions. The U.S. intervention in Dominican Republic (1965) was a part of this policy. The fourth phase contained the years of Carter administration. The ideological dimension of global confrontation was reinterpreted through 'human rights' doctrine and the growing unrest in Central America

was dealt with contradictory strategies under the 'Doctrine of crisis management'. The accession of Sandinistas to power in Nicaragua was viewed as a major policy failure of the Carter administration.

The fifth and the last phase began with the reelection of Ronald Reagan to White House and continued upto the end of cold war. Reagan came to power by propagating that American power and prestige had declined sharply due to the faulty policies of his predecessors (particularly of the Carter administration) that needed to be set right. So he wanted to reassert the traditional American prerogatives, including undisputed military and ideological leadership of the 'free world'.

U.S. POLICY OPTIONS IN EIGHTIES

Within this mental frame Reagan and his team approached the Central American problem. The region got high priority in the administration's foreign policy programmes. Secretary of State Alexander Haig told a Congressional Committee, Central America is "an area of vital interest to the American people."¹² Reagan in his April 27, 1983 address to Congress explained : "If Central America were to fall, what would the consequences be for our position in Asia, Europe and for alliances such as NATO ? If the United States cannot respond to a threat near our own border, why should Europeans or Asians believe that we are seriously

12. "Excerpts from Testimony by Haig", The New York Times, March 3, 1982.

concerned about threats to them ? If the Soviets cannot assume that nothing short of an actual attack on the United States will provoke an American response, which ally, which friend will trust us then ?"¹³ So, the determination to eliminate movements which were against U.S. and its client regimes was the foremost goal of the Reagan administration.

Nicaragua, under Sandinista rule was branded as the extension of Soviet-Cuban axis and guerrilla activities in El Salvador and Guatemala were considered as communist-sponsored 'international terrorism'. While there was realisation of the actual causes of Central American problems (poverty, deprivation and repression), there was dilemma about its suggestion. It was confronted with a number of policy alternatives to deal with the region.

Like the policy goals, the administration was also faced with various alternative policy strategies. While there was near unanimity over policy goals, a lot of differences arose on policy strategies within the administration. Alternative policy strategies were mainly - support to allies, regionalisation of conflict, insurgency/counterinsurgency, negotiation, and direct intervention. These alternatives were not mutually exclusive options. Rather they were a set of strategies to be used according to the importance of the circumstances.

13. Ronald Reagan, "Central America : Defending Our Vital Interests", April 27, 1983, United States Department of State, Current Policy No. 482.

Support to Allies

Moral and material support to friendly governments can increase their capability in suppressing the insurgencies in their own countries and aiding the counterrevolutionaries to fight in hostile territories. It was a part of a broader strategy to bring back political stability by eradicating rebel forces without any direct military involvement. Reagan government pleaded with Congress for the sanction of massive aid to El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Honduras. While El Salvador and Guatemala were aided to face domestic challenges, Honduras and Costa Rica received aid to help contras fighting Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Besides, the Reagan administration announced on February 24, 1982, the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) - an aid package aimed at protecting the friendly right-wing authoritarian regimes against the spread of communism. Known as mini-Marshall Plan, CBI emphasised anti-communism, private investment, and the free trade among friendly countries. Actually, CBI was a medium through which aid were transferred to allied governments as allurements not to become communist.

Regionalisation of the Conflict

According to this option, American strategic view of the region was taken as a whole rather than collection of nation states. The involvement in El Salvador and Guatemala and confrontation with Nicaragua was to be linked together to bring about a

regionalisation of conflict at Central American level. Communism was identified as the linking agent and the remedy sought for was the mutual defence arrangement among friendly governments in the region.

In order to meet communist threat, CONDECA was revived and reconstituted. Nicaragua, the original member of the organisation was left out. Costa Rica declined the invitation on the ground that it did not have regular military force. In effect, a military triangle was formed consisting of the armed forces of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. It aimed at containing Nicaragua. Another aspect of regionalisation of conflict was the U.S. land and sea manoeuvres in the region.

The frequent visit of big dignitaries to the region, revival of CONDECA and multiple manoeuvres suggested that this option was given serious thought by the U.S. policy makers. For executing this option, Congress and public were constantly given the impression by the administration that Soviet Union was spreading its influence into the hemisphere that needed to be repulsed with combined actions.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

This strategic alternative aimed at achieving the objective (of removing Sandinistas from power through contras in Nicaragua and eliminating guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Guatemala) without much public debate. It was a sort of proxy war

to be fought through agents. Friendly governments and organizations of the United States were to fight with its weapons and aids under its supervision and primarily for its cause. Avoiding the risks of direct intervention, this option involved the United States deeply in Central American affairs. Knowing well about the public disapproval of this option, Reagan administration supplied men, money and materials to the region calmly accompanied with wide propaganda about 'Soviet threat'.

In pursuance of this strategy, the United States pumped millions of dollars and huge quantity of arms into El Salvador to eliminate revolutionary insurrections. Similarly, the U.S. onslaught on Sandinista government was unique in many respects and was an example of its kind. Honduras and Costa Rica were also very important agents in its proxy war in Central America. Their governments, military and territories were being used by the United States for spreading insurgency/counterinsurgency warfare in the region. However, the overall performance of insurgency/counterinsurgency as an option of U.S. policy strategy was very successful although at a great cost.

Negotiation

Diplomacy and negotiations were used by the United States to hide the real intention in the region. Everyone in Central America - if their words were to be believed - desired negotiated settlement of their crisis. Even the contras in Honduras, who openly declared their intention to overthrow the

Sandinistas, spoke to restore democracy in Nicaragua by negotiating with the Sandinistas. So also was the case with the Reagan administration. It utilised this option to legitimise its strategies in Central America and to show the world its noble desire for pacific settlement of the problems. In this regard, two approaches were followed : direct bilateral talks and multi-lateral negotiations participated by third parties. But "both processes were characterised by uncertain terms, shifting conditions, ideological rhetoric, and charges of bad faith and deceit."¹⁴

Negotiation as an option before the Reagan administration to deal with Central American crisis was never taken seriously. It was a mere strategy to achieve foreign policy objective without any genuine concern for regional peace. Because of this, the administration often used to put several conditions at the negotiation table, sabotaged the peace process or blocked any agreement.

Direct Intervention

Reagan administration, from the very beginning, considered seriously about military intervention in Central America, especially, in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The region was apprehensive of it more after the formulation of Reagan Doctrine. The invasion of Granada, further, heightened the apprehension of

14. Harold Molineu, *U.S. Policy towards Latin America : From Regionalism to Globalism*; Boulder, Colo : Westview Press, 1986, p. 191.

similar actions in the region. Department of Defence, National Security Council and CIA advocated for such a move. Top leaders of the administration, including Alexander Haig, hinted about it in their speeches. This possibility became strong when liberal and reformist elements in the administration were replaced by hardliners. As a whole, the Reagan administration created a war-prone environment in Central America through rhetorical statements and military preparations.

But direct intervention in the isthmus could not be materialised due to various factors. First, results of various opinion polls conducted by reputed organisations indicated strong disapproval of American public for such an intervention. Vietnam Syndrome was still fresh in the minds of Americans who would not allow their government to commit same error again. Second, Reagan administration could infer from the frequent Congressional cuts of Central American aids that it would be an uphill task to extract support from the Congress in the event of a direct U.S. military engagement there. Third, despite serious efforts, Reagan associates could not create congenial atmosphere by which international societies would support this move. Fourth, U.S. mining of Nicaraguan harbour and I.C.J. (International Court of Justice) indictment regarding it and Conragate scandal further weakened the argument in favour of this option. Last but not the least, regional peace initiatives, especially, Contadora efforts stood as an obstruction for direct intervention. However, the United States has not given up this option completely. Whenever

it feels necessary, it uses this option as we have seen in Panama invasion.

All the five options mentioned above, were used interchangeably by the Reagan administration according to need of the situation. But the Reagan administration heavily relied on insurgency/counterinsurgency option to achieve its objectives in the region.

CONCLUSION

However, Reagan's Central American policy was an example of extremist approach, not only in its statements and military tactics, but most fundamentally in its goals. The U.S. goals, during Reagan era, was to prevail over forces perceived as hostile, to defeat them, whatever the cost and using whatever means were necessary.

Reagan administration's objective in Nicaragua was to oust Sandinistas through contras. And its objective in El Salvador and Guatemala was to defeat the rebel forces by aiding military dictated governments.

In order to reassert its hegemony, the United States unleashed reign of terror in the region, strangulated their economy, defied norms of international law, lied to its people at home, and tried to frustrate regional peace initiatives. U.S.

military aid was poured into the region enormously and U.S. military presence was grown ominously. Still, they could not deliver the goods. The fate of Central America could not be determined in Washington. Even during second term of Reagan administration and after his departure from White House when right-wing groups came to power in some Central American states, they refused to act as U.S. proxies.

On the part of Central American states, centuries of foreign domination and exploitation have gradually made them aware of U.S. motive. Especially, Contadora peace process and Arias peace plan reminded of a possibility of collective action and foreign policy autonomy among dependent nations that traditionally had been subservient to the hegemony of the United States. They were encouraged more by the collective efforts due to the fact that none of them (except Nicaragua which resisted valiantly to U.S. pressure for over a decade) could effectively challenge U.S. policy unilaterally. In such situations, collective action is the most effective means for small states to withstand pressure of a great power and to minimise the risks of defiance.

In the light of the above discussions regarding realities in the region, U.S. interests postulates of Central American policy and U.S. policy options, Washington's relations with Nicaragua can be examined. It is needless to say that Nicaragua like other Central American states has been subjected

to frequent U.S. interventions, but the miseries caused by such interventions has far surpassed other countries of the region.

CHAPTER - II

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE U.S. -
NICARAGUAN RELATION**

The history of U.S. - Nicaraguan relationship is the relation between exploiter-exploited, dictator-dictated, and intervener-intervened. Ever since Nicaragua's emergence as a sovereign democratic republic, Washington has been looking at it from a high pedestal. The United States did not allow this tiny state to mould its own future independently. Nicaragua, the largest country of the region, is located at the heart of Central America bordering Honduras in the north and Costa Rica in the south.

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF U.S.-NICARAGUAN RELATION

As Nicaragua along with other Central American provinces was striving to form a federation after the end^{of} Spanish colonial rule and freedom from Mexican empire, the threat of the United States loomed large on the region. In 1840s the United States expanded its territory southward by annexing Texas, California, and the new Mexico Territory of Mexico (other Mexican territories were acquired during the Spanish rule) and increasing its national territory from 1.8 million to 3 million square miles.¹

At the time of expansion the news of the discovery of gold at Sutter's sawmill on the American river in California spread in the United States. In order to reach there, one was supposed to take the arduous and dangerous journey across the

1. V.G. Kiernan, *America : The New Imperialism*, London, 2ed Press, 1977, p. 20.

trackless plains, mountains and deserts. The costly and round about voyage through Cape Horn was still more troublesome. So, attention was focussed on narrow strip of Central America where possibility could be explored for smooth crossing of the land-mass. Nicaragua became the centre of attraction due to its natural gift of interoceanic water course except a small part of land travel. When Yankees wanted to utilise the route they found that the western coast of Nicaragua including the mouth of San Juan river was under British control. They protested vehemently to the British.

Secretary of State, Buchanan wrote a letter to Charge d' Affaires for Central America, Elijah Hise which contained the ritual condemnation of British control over the Miskito Coast but advised not to do any thing in this regard as "The Government of the United States has not yet determined what course it will pursue in regard to the encroachment of the British Government."² But Hise could hardly contain his enthusiasm for Central America. Ignoring the instructions, he proceeded forthwith to negotiate a "Special Convention" between the United States and Nicaragua.

2. William R. Manning, ed., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, Inter-American Affairs, 1831-1860*, Washington D.C. : Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1933, p. III . 35.

HISE - SELVA TREATY

The treaty was signed in June 1849 between Hise of U.S. and Selva of Nicaragua. According to the treaty provisions, the United States would have enjoyed the complete and absolute right for any kind of transit through the territory of Nicaragua. As Hise negotiated the treaty without any instruction from the State Department, it was disavowed by Washington and was never submitted to the Senate for ratification. In fact, the treaty proved to be something of an embarrassment. If accepted, it would have put the United States on a direct collision course with England for which she was not prepared at that time. While the Taylor administration repudiated Hise-Selva treaty, it increased the pressure on England to give up the claim over Miskito Coast and the mouth of San Juan River.

CLAYTON - BULWER TREATY

Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer presented his credential in Washington as special envoy of Great Britain to the United States on December 24 1849. Over the next several months, he and the Secretary of State John Middleton Clayton continued discussions with a view to resolve Nicaragua's transisthmian water route problem. The primary consideration of Clayton was to obtain an agreement that would remove British obstacle from an American

sponsored canal project. After a long negotiation, the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was signed on April 19, 1850.

The most important aspect of the treaty was that neither the United States nor Great Britain bothered to consult Nicaragua whose interests were to be vitally affected by their agreement. Throughout the negotiation, they manifested least concern for the sovereignty of Nicaragua and the life and property of its citizens. Nicaragua had been assured that U.S. would defend its sovereignty over the Miskito Coast. But the treaty did nothing to establish Nicaragua's sovereignty there.

U.S.-British tensions did not subside even after the treaty. Fanned by the excesses of the U.S. consul and agents of a U.S. owned transisthmian transit company, the Anglo-American dispute turned violent in 1850. Britain tolerated it because the Crimean War had drained its military strength. Britain eventually returned the Miskito Coast to Nicaragua in 1859 in the face of mounting U.S. pressure. The signing of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty gave the United States what it wanted - a green signal for a canal project by a much interested American Cornelius Vanderbilt.³

3. In the United States, a canal company was formed by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Daniel B. Allen, and Joseph L. White which influenced Congress to undertake a canal project across Central America for digging the canal. The name of the company was American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company. Vanderbilt also formed a company along with others for taking passengers from the United States to California via Nicaragua. Its name was Accessory Transit Company.

WEBSTER - CRAMPTON AGREEMENT

The prospect of a canal was still hindered by many factors. An old border dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica obstructed the canal plan. Besides, the difference between Britain and Nicaragua over the Miskito question still persisted. Secretary of State Daniel Webster continued negotiation in Washington with Britain with the participation of Costa Rica. This time also, Nicaragua (its Minister to the United States Jose de Marcoleta who was stationed in Washington itself) was not invited for the negotiation.

The negotiation resulted in the signing of "Webster-Crampton Agreement" between the United States and Great Britain on April 30, 1852. The Costa Rican representative, Felipe Molina, refused to sign. But his government later ratified the agreement under pressure. According to the provision of the accord, Nicaragua would recognise the separate existence of a "Mosquito Kingdom" comprising approximately one third of what it had always claimed as its national territory. San Juan would be returned to Nicaragua but they would have to buy it back. Besides, the agreement obligated Nicaragua to cede a part of its territory to Costa Rica.⁴

4. The full text of the treaty is in W.R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*, pp.18-19.

Nicaragua promptly rejected the treaty. Instead of ratifying it, Nicaragua's Legislative Assembly, through a decree, protested : "all foreign interference in matters of her administration, and against the use of force to restrain her will and rights".⁵ Also, it indicated a willingness to submit the matter for impartial arbitration.

Nicaraguan Minister Marcoleta, wrote a letter to acting Secretary of State Charles Conrad (Webster died in office) explaining his country's rejection. However, the treaty never came into force due to Nicaragua's vehement rejection.

WILLIAM WALKER AND NICARAGUA

By mid-nineteenth century, two trends emerged clearly in Nicaraguan political life - factional strife, and foreign interference. In spite of treaties and agreements, conflicting interests of the British and the Americans in the area had kept tension between the two countries at a high level. In the meantime, age-old Nicaraguan factional conflict was heating up again as Liberals were trying frantically to dislodge conservatives from power. In order to win over the opponent, each group solicited foreign help. Cornelius Venderbilt and his associates had obtained concessions from the conservative regime of Nicaragua in 1849 to establish a transit route across that country. When two of Venderbilt's associates - Cornelius Garrison

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

and Charles Morgan - tried to take over Accessory Transit Company for themselves, he foiled their attempt. Being humiliated, Garrison sought Nicaraguan help. Unsuccessful Liberals, in their struggle to unseat the conservatives, contacted Garrison who brought into the fray another San Francisco resident, William Walker.

Garrison met Walker, who convinced him that Nicaragua offered an irresistible opportunity to make a fortune. Under contract, Walker promised to help the Liberals defeat the Conservatives in exchange for land grants. He set sail from San Francisco on May 4, 1855 with fifty-seven other Americans to Nicaragua. Docking at Realejo on June 16, Walker, and his troupe were greeted by Liberal leader Francisco Castellon who christened them - "El Falange Americano", the American phalanx. In the war, initially, they were defeated and retreated to Leon. Finally, regrouping the Liberals and receiving reinforcement from California, Walker captured Granada, the heart of the conservative bastion on October 13, 1855 and held leading families as hostages.

After victory, he created a puppet government headed by Patricia Rivas and promoted himself to "General-in-Chief" of the Nicaraguan army. Practically, the real power in the government rested with Walker and his adventurers. The head filibuster soon sacrificed his democratic idealism at the alter of expediency, he quickly resorted to exiling and executing his conservative

opponents. He increased his military strength to twenty-five hundred by admitting pro-slavery southerners of the United States. In order to secure this support, Walker forsook his own past abolitionist ideology and advocated slavery and Nicaraguan annexation to the United States.⁶ In the beginning, Walker enjoyed the tacit support of the U.S. government. His involvement in the Nicaraguan Civil war met with no serious resistance from Washington, which was quick to recognise the puppet government of Nicaragua.

For strengthening his hold over the government, he arranged an election on June 29, 1856. Patricia Rivas, immediately after signing the election decree, fled to Chinandega along with his all but one cabinet colleagues from where he denounced Walker and his highhandedness.⁷ In a rigged election, Walker won with large margin and on July 11, 1856, he was inaugurated as the President of Nicaragua. But the Nicaraguan constitution explicitly prohibited all from holding that office who were not native-born. After becoming President, Walker strove desperately to consolidate his position and to retain American support for him. Shortly following inauguration, he proclaimed a series of decrees : offering of land grants, legalisation of slavery, declaration of English as the official language co-equal with Spanish and ensuring forced labour for land owners.

6. Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., *Central America - A Nation Divided*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1976.

7. David I. Folkman, Jr., *The Nicaraguan Route*, Salt Lake City : University of Utah Press, 1972, pp. 84-86.

Now, irrespective of party and group, Nicaraguans stood up against filibusters. They were backed by the allied armies of four other Central American republics who had agreed to send troops to help liberate Nicaragua from the clutches of North American usurpers. Britain still smarting over the Greytown incident, provided readily moral and material support to the liberators. So the combined force with British backing proceeded to free one after another city from the control of North American adventurers. Realising the seriousness of the situation, Walker fled from Granada on November 19, 1856 with instructions to destroy the 332-year-old city. When Central American force came to know about the looting and destruction of Granada, they launched a three-pronged attack on the filibusters. Walker retreated to La Virgen of Rivas from where he hoped to keep his supply line and escape route open.

The siege of Rivas began on March 27, 1857. Following an encounter, an exhausted Walker accepted a truce arranged by the U.S. Naval Commander Charles E. Davis of 'St. Mary', surrendered and escaped to the United States with his army under U.S. naval protection. Davis had been sent to San Juan del Sur to see to the protection and safe passage of U.S. citizens. But when asked by the Central American army to prevent the landing of the filibuster reinforcements at the port, he refused with the excuse that the United States recognised a state of civil war in Nicaragua and would not take any side.⁸

8. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

Returning to the United States, Walker pursued his dream of wealth and power through several unsuccessful attempts to return to Nicaragua. Finally, he landed with about seventy followers at Trujillo on the Atlantic Coast of Honduras in 1860. Ordered to surrender by the British marines, Walker and his men fled into jungle where they were chased by the Honduran troops. Ultimately British navy captured them and turned over to the Hondurans. Honduran troop quickly tried Walker and put him before a firing squad on September 12, 1860. So important was the war against Walker in Nicaraguan patriotic lore that the independence day that 'Nicas' celebrate on September 14 every year is a commemoration of a decisive battle at San Jacinto against Walker and his U.S. troops.

U.S. interest which was so destructively focussed on Nicaragua for a decade, waned due to civil war in the United States. Later on, for a number of years, the U.S. involvement in Nicaragua remained at a low ebb because North American Trans-Continental railway was completed in 1869 which greatly solved U.S. east-west transport needs. The completion of rail road opened high investment opportunities for U.S. capital in the American west. All such changes, to a large extent, reduced the economic importance of the war-ravaged Nicaragua to the United States.

CANAL DIPLOMACY

The post-civil war development that made Nicaragua passenger transit route obsolete, simultaneously gave rise increasing demand for the construction of an isthmian canal. And the growing preoccupation with a canal as the essential condition to elevate U.S. commerce insured that Nicaragua would once again become the prime object of North American interest. However, several serious obstacles obstructed the grand US design for the next thirty years, among these were Colombian and Nicaraguan nationalism and the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. The United States was still not strong enough to risk a direct challenge to British navy, which at that time truly ruled the waves. These problems required the United States to make a number of policy zig-zags before its own controlled and operated canal could become a reality.

After several surveys, two possible sites for canal construction emerged - in Colombia (at that time Panama was a part of it) and in Nicaragua. The Interoceanic Canal Commission, established by President Grant to compare the reports of various surveys prepared its recommendation on February 9, 1876. It claimed that "the route known as 'Nicaraguan Route'... possesses, both for the construction and the maintenance of a canal, greater advantage, and offers fewer difficulties from

engineering, commercial, and economic points of view, than any other routes".⁹

In order to implement its recommendations, Secretary Fish started negotiation with Adam Cardenas, special emissary of Nicaragua to the United States in late 1876. During final months of Grant administration, he presented a draft treaty to Cardenas for approval. Cardenas informed Secretary Fish that the draft was unacceptable on the ground of its incompatibility with the sovereign rights of Nicaragua as well as with the interests of world commerce. Nicaragua, he said, was ready to grant a company to construct and operate the canal but would not consent to any infringement of its sovereignty over the territory.¹⁰

The last decade of the century witnessed major political changes in the United States and in the world balance of power system. The U.S. victory in Spanish - American war of 1898 boosted its morale and reinforced its confidence. It took Puerto Rico outright and made Cuba its protectorate. U.S. industry, carefully nurtured by protective tariffs since the civil war, had outgrown its domestic markets. By the end of the century, it was ready to join the scramble for markets in the world. Britain, being diplomatically isolated after the costly Boer war and desired to cultivate friendship with the United

9. United States, Senate. *Report of the Interoceanic Canal Commission*, S. Ex. Doc. 15, 46 Cong., 1 Sess. (Serial - 1869), pp. 1-2. Cited in Miles Percy Duval, *Cardiz to Cathey, California* : Stanford University Press, 1940.

10. United States, Senate. *Report of the Interoceanic Canal Commission*, pp. 137-138.

States by recognising U.S. prerogatives in the Caribbean region. Now, Washington found it easy to persuade Britain to abrogate the problematic Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. In November 1901, Secretary of State John Hay and British Ambassador Sir Julian Pauncefote signed a treaty whose Article 1 specifically declared the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty superseded. Britain implicitly recognised the exclusive U.S. privilege for building and maintaining a canal across the isthmus.

Finally, the United States favoured a canal in Panama owing to several considerations. Thus, the dream of a Nicaraguan canal could not be transformed into a reality. The most remarkable aspect of the canal diplomacy was that for the promotion of commerce and exercise of exclusive control, the United States mutilated the sovereignty of the tiny, hapless countries of the region. The construction of Panama Canal spared Nicaragua of permanent servitude to the United States but kept Nicaragua under continuous surveillance of the U. S. to prevent the construction of a second canal there which would have brought competition and invited external powers to challenge its hegemony.

NICARAGUA UNDER ZELAYA

The oppressive rule of conservatives generated resentment among the people in Nicaragua. Even a section of conservatives opposed the manner of functioning of the government.

Liberals, out of power for a long time, joined hands with the disgruntled groups. In 1893, President Robert Sacasa's attempt to retain power for another term precipitated the crisis. In a final showdown in 1893, Sacasa was ousted and Jose Santos Zelaya, a Managuan Liberal, assumed presidency.

Under his leadership, Zelaya sought to strengthen the nation. But his conservative opponents and dissatisfied Liberals made several plots to dislodge him. Being unsuccessful in their attempts, they joined hands with certain British and U.S. elements by inviting intervention. Zelaya's image as a regional leader and champion of Central American unity posed threat to the unquestionable authority of the United States in the area. The United States was also unhappy over Zelaya's refusal to grant the canal-building right that would have included U.S. sovereignty over certain Nicaraguan territory. Again, few years later, the Americans became alarmed with rumours that Zelaya was negotiating with the Japanese and the Germans to build a second - and potentially competitive - canal through Nicaragua which would endanger U.S. canal monopoly. The consequences of these and other conflicts contributed to the ouster of Zelaya in 1909.

PERIOD OF TURBULENCE AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Zelaya's exit could not bring peace in Nicaragua. After his departure, another Leonese Liberal Jose Madriz succeeded as the next President. The U.S., however refused to recognise

Madriz government and fighting was resumed in early 1910. Once more Estrada's rebel forces suffered setback and retreated to Bluefields. But when the government forces launched a final land and sea assault on the insurgents' stronghold, the U.S. cruiser "Paducah" intercepted the ships and prevented them from either bombarding the town or cutting its supply lines. In the face of such mounting U.S. interference, Madriz found it difficult to win, much less to govern. On August 20, 1910, Madriz's government collapsed and was replaced by the puppet, pro-U.S. regime of General Estrada. Estrada requested the United States to help recover from the crisis. President Taft proceeded swiftly to make Estrada's takeover 'legal' and sent Thomas C. Dawson, the man who had a reputation as the leading U.S. trouble-shooter in Latin America, as a special agent to help organise Estrada government and its finance. As U.S.' recognition to Estrada government was linked with Dawson's proposals (in the form of "Dawson Pact"), there was no resistance from Nicaraguan government. Dawson dictated the terms in exchange U.S. recognition.

In order to put Nicaragua's financial affairs in order, the newly appointed U.S. minister, Elliot Northcott, arrived in Managua with proposals for agreement. The proposals were : a loan would be floated by New York bankers to clear up the country's existing obligations to British and other European creditors (the financial corollary to the Monroe Doctrine) and to provide working capital to the Nicaraguan government, the U.S. would appoint a collector of customs, who would be the controller of

Nicaragua's finance for all practical purposes. Estrada's cabinet reflected a precarious balance of forces, each a contender for presidency. They were common only in opposition to Zelaya. The coalition soon proved to be highly unstable. Due to Liberal partners' agitation and his conservative colleagues' conspiracies, Estrada resigned in 1911 in favour of the Vice-President Diaz before going into exile.

Diaz's government was also quickly recognised by the U.S. In spite of U.S. blessings, Diaz's government was shaky from the very beginning. General Mena persuaded the new Constituent Assembly to name him as the President in the next election due to be held in 1913. When Washington refused to recognise his election, Mena began to revolt against Diaz government in July 1912.

This abysmal situation with U.S. interference hurt the national pride of many Nicaraguans like Benjamin Zeledon. Zeledon, a young Zelayista Liberal, served in many capacities. When Mena revolted against the puppet government of Diaz, Zeledon and a group of Liberals joined in the uprising. Diaz, being scared of this two-pronged attack and bereft of any independent power base, sought for military assistance from the United States.

President Taft promptly responded by sending first U.S. marine contingent on August 4, 1912. The force soon ballooned

to twenty-seven hundred well-equipped persons. Mena, foreseeing his defeat, gave up fighting and abandoned the country. Zeledon, rejected the offer to surrender and sent Admiral Southerland in his energetic protest against the violation of Nicaragua's sovereignty. Badly outnumbered by the vastly superior combined U.S. and Nicaraguan government forces, Zeledon's troops were crushed and he was captured by government forces in November 1912. On the following day of his capture, the Nicaraguan government announced that Zeledon had died in the battle. His corpse was paraded and lashed on the back of a horse before the public as a lesson to others.

U.S. MARINES, GUARDIA NACIONAL AND SANDINO

U.S. marines first landed in 1909 and Nicaragua came under direct U.S. military control from 1912. U.S. marines and troops stationed there from 1912 to 1925 and after a brief interlude again from 1927 upto 1933. Americans sought to justify intervention under the old pretext of safeguarding "U.S. lives and property". There were three major objectives behind U.S. intervention in Nicaragua : installation of puppet regime; expansion of U.S. business interests; and securing the monopoly of the potential transisthmian canal and prevention of construction of another canal in Nicaragua. Under U.S. military occupation, conservatives ruled Nicaragua. The United States needed conservatives for the promotion of its interests and conservatives, who had neither military strength nor public

support, also needed the U. S. backing badly. The lessons of 1912 insurrection discouraged further Liberal uprisings until the withdrawal of marines in 1925. When Diaz's government was settled in power, the United States reduced the marine contingent to 100-men "Legation Guard", but this small force had the decisive hold over Nicaraguan administration.

Protection and promotion of U.S. business investment under "Dollar Diplomacy" was one of the important goals of the United States' intervention in Nicaragua. New York bankers, particularly Brown Brothers Bank provided loans to Nicaragua. But they became so rapacious that by way of recovering loans and making profits they destroyed the economic infrastructure. The Nicaraguan government found itself with a chronic shortfall of income, its major sources of revenue taken away by U.S. financiers. As a result, public service declined sharply and economic development stagnated. Economically Nicaragua became still more dependent on the United States. In brief, U.S. economic penetration reduced the power of the Nicaraguan state, interrupted development programmes and caused ever greater dependence of Nicaraguan economy on the United States.

The third U.S. objective was to prevent another canal in Nicaragua. After the construction of Panama Canal (Panama Canal was opened in 1914), the United States gave up its effort to dig canal in Nicaragua. Rather, it wished to maintain its monopoly over the Panamanian transit by preventing construction

of any other canal. Such a monopoly would assure U.S. dominance over the Caribbean region. It would checkmate a potential challenge to its naval superiority by Germans and Japanese. Also, canal monopoly would reinforce its economic hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. So, Washington felt it imperative not only to monopolise over Panama Canal but also to block construction of another competitive canal in Nicaragua.

Bryan Chamorro Treaty

During the first phase of U.S. occupation between 1912 and 1925, the most notable event was the signing of Bryan-Chamorro treaty in 1914 which was ratified in 1916. General Emiliano Chamorro Vargas, a conservative leader who returned from exile, was persuaded by U.S. envoy to Nicaragua George T. Weitzel to accept the ambassadorship of Nicaragua to the United States in 1912 in order to leave President Diaz safe and unopposed. Chamorro, accepting the offer, hardly represented Nicaragua's interests. Willingly, he helped in drafting the treaty with U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan which was most unfavourable to Nicaragua. Under this treaty, Nicaragua granted to the United States the exclusive rights in perpetuity in such land as was deemed necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance of an interoceanic canal; a renewable ninety-nine year lease on the Great and Little Corn islands; and a renewable ninety-nine year right to establish a naval base on the Gulf of Fonseca. In exchange, Nicaragua was to receive \$ 3 million in gold from the United States.

The consequence of the treaty was far-reaching. It caused an uproar in Central America. Costa Rica protested that Nicaragua could not dispose freely of the rights over San Juan river, which formed part of the boundary between the two nations. El Salvador also objected to the establishment of a naval base on the Gulf of Fonseca which, according to it, posed threat to its security. Both governments moved their case to Central American Court of Justice. The Court gave its verdict in favour of the complainants by saying that the rights of Costa Rica and El Salvador had been injured by the treaty. But the United States and Nicaragua refused to abide by the judgment. The Court that set an example for the Permanent Court of International Justice, got a blow from U.S. refusal from which it never recovered. The United States, which was instrumental in the establishment of Central American Court of Justice, contributed significantly for its collapse a few years later.

The Bryan-Chamorro treaty ensured that Nicaragua would not have a transoceanic canal, thus satisfying the U.S. hegemonic concerns. In return, the United States rewarded Chamorro in helping him elected as president in 1916. In order to overcome the constitutional ban on re-election, Chamorro manoeuvred his uncle, Diego Manuel Chamorro, into the presidency with U.S. support in 1920. So conservatives ruled Nicaragua upto 1923 with the help of U.S. occupation force. Another important effect of the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty was that it sabotaged an incipient Central American unification movement. Through Nicaragua, the

United States created division and mutual suspicion among the countries of the region.

The advent of the 1920s found U.S. policy in Nicaragua caught in a seemingly insoluble situation. In spite of the crushing of the 1912 rebellion and the continued presence of marines, no less than ten revolutionary upheavals occurred during 1913-1924, and the country was under martial law for virtually the entire period.¹¹ Fully conscious of his vulnerability as a leader of a shaky government, the new President Solorzano became distraught at the prospect of the marines' departure. Under pressure, Nicaragua agreed to create a national constabulary to replace the marines. Solorzano government made a contract with retired U.S. Army Major Calvin B. Carter in June 1925 to head the new National Guard and its training school. Carter arrived in July to take the responsibility and the marines left Nicaragua on August 3, 1925.¹²

Nicaragua was overtaken by political convulsions soon after the departure of U.S. marines. The first uprising took place in May, 1926 when a group of Liberal exiles landed at Bluefields and captured it. The U.S. marines promptly returned and declared the town a "neutral zone".

11. Quoted in K. Berman, *Under the Big Stick : Nicaragua and the United States Since 1848*, Boston : South End Press, 1986 p. 176.

12. The date of withdrawal mentioned in W.T. Perkins. *Constraint of Empire : The United States and Caribbean Interventions*, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1981, p. 108.

Undaunted by their defeat, Liberals staged the second uprising at various places on the Atlantic coast. When Liberal forces advanced after gaining foothold in Rio Grande, U.S. Marines reappeared and declared Bluefields neutral to halt their advance. Unfazed, the Liberals proceeded further towards Port Cabezas. Seeing gravity of the situation, the United States mediated the negotiations between the government and the rebels. But negotiations collapsed and fighting was renewed.

Following renewed fighting, the U.S. redispached a contingent of 160 marines to Managua at the request of the puppet President Diaz on January 6, 1927¹³ in the name of protecting U.S. lives and property. The return of marines signalled a fresh phase of direct U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua which continued for next six years. Senator Burton Wheeler who introduced a resolution in Senate calling for withdrawal of U.S. troops, told a rally sponsored by the Non-Intervention Citizens' Committee at New York's Lyric Theatre : "Protection of life and property' is the classic mask worn by dollar diplomacy when it turns its face toward the American people The State Department has literally gutted the sovereignty of Nicaragua."¹⁴

In the wake of stalemate between the Liberals and U.S.-backed conservatives, Washington imposed and negotiated settlement which involved disarming of two rival groups, U.S.

-
13. John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning : The Nicaraguan Revolution*, Boulder, Colo : Westview Press, 1982, p.40.
14. Cited in T.W. Walker, *Nicaragua : The Land of Sandino*, Boulder, Colo : Westview Press, 1982.

supervised election and ruling out of any socialist programmes of Liberals. One faction of the Liberal forces under Augusto César Sandino opted out of this whole process of negotiations which culminated in agreement on May 12, 1927.

The second phase of U.S. military intervention (1927-1933) was marked by the emergence of two personalities, Anastasio Somoza Garcia and Ce'sar Augusto Sandino and the creation of a fresh National Guard under U.S. supervision and control that were to have a powerful and paradoxical impact on Nicaragua for at least the next half-century. During these six years period, National Guard was shaped by American military officers which became a symbol of terror until 1979. Similarly, this was the time of germination of Somoza dictatorship which was to rule Nicaragua for over four decades under U.S. direction. Also significantly, during this period the rise of Sandino as a nationalist and anti-imperialist leader provided inspiration to all those forces which eventually overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979.

Sandino

When Liberals were advancing by capturing cities after cities, Moncada stunned all by agreeing for negotiation with Stimson. When Sandino hurried back to Moncada's headquarters to find out what had happened, he was astonished to discover that Liberal Commander-in-Chief had signed the Espino Negro peace pact with 'Yankee invaders' and asked the General to surrender. He

remembered that sarcastic voice of his friends in Tempico (Mexico) jeering at him that Nicaraguans would sell out their country to Americans. Denouncing Moncada's treason, Sandino declared before his troops that he would not abide by the peace accord and would continue to fight. This decision inevitably brought him into conflict with U.S. troops and soon turned his partisan crusade into a war of national liberation. He considered the occupation and domination of his country to be offensive and unacceptable. He said, "The sovereignty and liberty of people are not to be discussed, but rather, defended with weapons in hand".¹⁵

In his struggle against U.S. and government troops, Sandino developed an effective set of guerrilla tactics through a practice of trial and error. Operating from a cloud shrouded mountain camp known as El Chipote, his forces were divided into several columns and sent to sympathetic areas. In this process, he cultivated the support of the local population in the region. They served as an early warning communication network and as adhoc soldiers during specific guerrilla actions.

The guerrilla war continued upto 1933, waxing and waning, but the government had never been able to control the situation. Frustrated Guard and the marines, despite their increased capabilities, resorted more and more to the acts of terrorism against suspected guerrilla sympathisers. As a

15. Quoted in T. W. Walker, *Nicaragua - The land of Sandino*,
Boulder, Colo : Westview Press, 1982, p. 22.

consequence, people gradually became hostile towards the government and the United States.

In the United States, the long overstay of marines in Nicaragua aroused opposition. Congress was also tired of the long and costly intervention in Nicaragua. The legislators resented unilateral executive decisions to intervene in Nicaragua that snatched Congress's constitutional war power. The arguments for containing Mexican 'bolshevism' and conducting free elections in Nicaragua earned Congressional derision. Senator George Norris suggested that if the marines could guarantee honest elections they should be dispatched first to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.¹⁶ Above all these, the marines were just not proving effective in combating the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. The Congress tried to restrict funds for the occupation forces.

Confronted with such economic crisis, domestic pressure and new strategic worries (rise of Japan and Germany), President Hoover decided in 1931 to scale down the strength of the marine contingent from 1500 to 500 and to pull out completely after Nicaragua's presidential election in 1932. But Sandino relentlessly continued his guerrilla activities against the government and the United States.

Before the departure of marines, the U.S. Ambassador Mathew Hanna negotiated with two presidential candidates, Sacasa

16. Paterson, et al., *American Foreign Policy*, p. 355.

(Liberal) and Diaz (Conservative) to sign a pledge to maintain the National Guard as an apolitical, stabilising force and plans were made to hand over its command to a Nicaraguan. On January 1, 1933, just after Sacasa had been sworn in as president, General Somoza took over as first Nicaraguan 'Jefe Director' of the Guardia Nacional. Transferring the responsibility to the Guard, less than twenty-four hours later, the last American forces sailed away from the port of Corinto ending twenty frustrating years of occupation. Americans left the country in a greater state of disarray than that in which they had occupied before seven years.

The withdrawal of U.S. forces brought an end to the six-year war of Sandino. He immediately entered into peace negotiations with the government which culminated in signing of an agreement on February 2, 1933. 'El Jefe' Somoza was furious over the agreement as he was not given any role in the process.

He held that too many concessions had been granted to Sandinistas. Despite good gesture from Sacasa and Congress, the National Guard kept clashing with the rebels which obstructed the peace process. At the same time, Somoza was preparing secretly and carefully for his offensive against the Sandinistas. Sandino condemned activities of the National Guard and dubbed it as the unconstitutional organisation created by 'intervening power'.

Sandino met the President on February 21, 1934 in the presidential palace to mark out difficulties in the transition to peace. On this occasion, Sacasa hosted a dinner for Sandino and some of his supporters there. On their return, they were stopped by Guardsmen, taken to an empty field and shot. Their mutilated bodies were buried in a place which has not been identified till today. Their personal effects such as watches and rings were sold the next day in Managua.¹⁷ Though initially Somoza denied having anything to do with Sandino's murder, scarcely two months later he took public credit for it in his speech in Granada. He declared that he had done so "for the good of Nicaragua" and with the backing of the U.S. Ambassador.¹⁸

SOMOZA RULE

In the history Latin America, Somoza dictatorship was the longest-run dynastic rule which governed Nicaragua for more than forty-two years with full U.S. backing. The founder of the Somoza dynasty, Anastasio Somoza Garcia, known in close circle as 'Tacho', was a complex and maverick personality.

17. Eduardo Crawley, *Dictators Never Die*, London: C. Hurst, 1979, p. 78.

18. Sergio Ramirez (translated by Lyman Baker), "The Kid from Niquinohomo", *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Summer 1989, p. 80. Also Richard Millet, *Guardians of the Dynasty*, New York : Orbis, 1977, p.168.

When Stimson mission arrived in Nicaragua, Tacho was appointed as translator in negotiation by General Moncada because of his fluency in English. Later, when Moncada became president he was appointed a minister in the department of foreign affairs with special responsibility for acting as a go-between with the North Americans. Somoza remained close to the U.S. military personnel charged with setting up of the National Guard. He was the master-manipulator and expert in getting things done. Of course, the manipulation was not only one-sided. Somoza was made Guardia Jefe with unambiguous intention that he was friendly to American interest. Also the United States was not oblivious of the consequences of unscrupulous Somoza heading the National Guard.

Somoza knew that the United States would not react to the murder of Sandino. Because his death was to the advantage of the United States and so long as the radical rebel leader remained alive he presented a threat not only to Somoza but to the U.S. policy in Nicaragua.

After weathering all restraints and consolidating his position in National Guard, Somoza began to speak openly of his desire to run for the presidency in 1936 election. But the prevailing constitution was obstacle to his plan. He was not eligible to contest due to constitutional restrictions.

In the meantime, the incipient fascist movement, the *Camisas Azules* (Blueshirts), which sated Sandino's murder, enjoyed full backing of Somoza. They praised Somoza as Mussolini and Hitler of Nicaragua. Somoza instigated fascist gangs to create disturbance which would provide opportunity to the National Guard to intervene thereby increasing the role of this organisation vis-a-vis the civilian administration. Worried over Somoza's activities, President Sacasa sought U.S. permission to reorganise National Guard. But Washington refused to permit. Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles told Sacasa that "the continued maintenance of a Guardia Nacional organisation substantially as at present is important to the future peace and welfare of Nicaragua."¹⁹

Such equivocal reply only added to the disappointment of the president. His wife Maria, who commanded respect and obedience of most of the ministers and advisors, met Ambassador Lane to get the US consent for the government's plan to force Somoza to resign, relying on military assistance from El Salvador and Honduras in the event of Guardia resistance. Secretary Hull instructed Lane to make it clear that the United States would not tolerate any intervention by other Central American countries. A frustrated President Sacasa announced the immediate creation of a separate police force, which he would control himself through the interior ministry. But it was torpedoed by Somoza warning of serious consequences.

19. F.R. 1933, V : 850.

When the time for election approached, Liberals and Conservatives decided to unite behind a common candidate in order to thwart Somoza's political ambitions. But Washington tipped the scale in favour of Somoza. It had abandoned the policy of non-recognition of governments (Washington Accord) which came to power by violent means. It now declared that the governments would be recognised if they are in full control of the country. This served as a green signal to Somoza who captured power through rigged election.

Cornered from all sides President Sacasa fled the country in the wake of the disturbance created by Somoza's fascist gangs. Somoza nominally resigned the headship of National Guard in order to be eligible to contest the elections. He rigged the election to grab power. The U.S. Ambassador attended his inauguration as President. American press praised him as "pro-American".²⁰

Within 3 years of Somoza's coming to power, developments in world politics brought the United States and Somoza closer. The onset of World War II with growing threat from the German-Italian-Japanese axis necessitated for the United States to cultivate friendship in the region. Somoza shed his earlier fascist link and quickly became one of the foremost defenders of democracy in the hemisphere. He announced that he was not only

20. Articles praising Somoza appeared in *The New York Times*, July 19, 1937. Cited in Eduardo Crawley, *Dictators Never Die*, London : C. Hurst, 1979, p. 87.

"granting complete freedom to all free and democratic institutions" in Nicaragua, but defending the "democratic traditions of the Americas."²¹

When the United States declared war upon the Axis powers on December 7, 1941, Nicaragua promptly followed suit two days later. It was to prove a sound investment, especially in terms of the American military aid which would pour into the National Guard over the next years. Although not a single shot was fired and no Nicaraguan troop ever entered combat beyond its borders, Nicaragua was richer by an air force, a small navy and almost two million dollars of modern equipment. During the war, Nicaragua's war-time Price and Commerce Control Board was headed by an American officer, who helped integrate the Nicaraguan economy into the wartime inter-American economic plan. Also, long before the end of the World War II, he had managed to improve his personal fortune to millions of dollars.

In 1944, democratic movements, spawned in part by the allied pro-democratic propaganda effort, overthrew the dictators Maximiliano Martinez of El Salvador and Jorge Ubico of Guatemala. When such democratic aspirations appeared in Nicaragua in the form of opposition to Somoza's re-election bid in 1947, Somoza sought U.S. endorsement of his desire and more arms for the

21. *The New York Times*, Feb. 11, 1938. According to Millet and Time Reporter, William Krehm (*Democracies and Tyrannies of the Caribbean Westport, CT : Lawrence Hill and Co., 1984*) Somoza had portraits of Mussolini and Franco on his wall that replaced with Rosevelt's picture.

Guard. The United States reacted sharply to Somoza's pleas at the initial stage, but later on, it succumbed to his anti-communist tactics.

Somoza watched carefully the anti-communist change in U.S. policy and accordingly modified his style of functioning. His anti-communist rhetoric reached new height. In addition to outlawing the communist party and repressing the left Somoza helped the United States in its effort to dislodge Arbenz government in Guatemala. He had volunteered to send the National Guard to Korea to help the United States fight against communists although his offer was not accepted. As a reward, the United States poured more aid to Nicaragua and in the early fifties established military mission with major military assistance programme.

As *the New York Times* noted : "In the United Nations, the Organisation of American States and other international bodies, Nicaraguan delegates support United States policies so quickly and enthusiastically that they have given a new meaning to the phrase "me too."²²

The rule of Anastasio Somoza Garcia came to an abrupt and unexpected end with his assassination on September 21, 1956.

22. *New York Times*, May 9, 1950, p. 28.

In a letter written to his mother with instructions that it be opened only in the event of his death, Rigoberto Lopez Perez (who assassinated Somoza) explained, "What I have done is a duty that any Nicaraguan who loves his fatherland should have carried out long ago."²³ If Lopez thought his actions would rid his country of Somozan rule, he was grossly mistaken. While the doctors in Gorgas Hospital were labouring to save Somoza's life, Ambassador Whelan in Managua was helping to arrange the dynastic succession. The cogs in the dictatorial machinery had been rearranged to ensure a smooth, almost uninterrupted transfer of power to his eldest son Luis Somoza. Luis, President of the Chamber of Deputies (a house of Nicaraguan Congress) was designated by Congress in less than twenty-four hours to complete his father's term as President of Nicaragua. His more militarily inclined younger brother Anastasio, who is popularly called Tachito, had been head of the National Guard since 1955. Lopez was successful in ending the rule of Somoza Garcia, but the assassination instituted a dynasty and intensified rather than stopped the tyranny.

LUIS SOMOZA DEBAYLE

In February 1957, Somoza Garcia was succeeded by his son Luis. Luis was convinced that in order to preserve the system and protect the family interests, the Somozas would have to lower

23. Quoted in Crawley, *Nicaragua in Perspective*, New York : St. Martin's Press, p. 115.

their economic and political profile and rule indirectly through the party. To that end, he announced some "liberalisation" measures. Some of those jailed after his father's death were released and restrictions on *La Prensa* were minimised. One-term-only provision for the office of the president was reintroduced into the constitution. These efforts impressed U.S. administration but encouraged the opponents to revolt.

Further, the Cuban revolution of 1959 had serious implications for Nicaraguan dictatorship as well as for the U.S. hegemony in the area. The revolution increased the sense of insecurity among Somozas that followed the fall of Cuban dictator Batista.²⁴ Washington was determined not to lose another country in the hemisphere. Nicaragua provided all possible supports to U.S.-engineered abortive 'Bay of Pig' invasion plan.

Alarmed at the "fall of Cuba", President Kennedy announced his famous 'Alliance for Progress' package in March 1961. He declared that "economic progress and social justice can best be achieved by free man working within a framework of democratic institutions."²⁵ Paradoxically, the Somozas were conspicuously absent from Kennedy's short list of hemispheric

24. To begin with Castro, he was not a communist. He was fighting the corrupt Batista dictatorship. Indeed, Cuban communists shied away from helping Castro in his effort to overthrow the dictator. Castro was virtually pushed into the Soviet camp by attempted economic strangulation, political ostracism and hostility of the United States.

25. The text of Kennedy's speech in *Department of State Bulletin*, April 3, 1961, pp. 471-474.

enemies of freedom, even though he had criticised them at the time of his presidential campaign. Attempted economic reforms in Nicaragua as contained in the 'Alliance for Progress' merely benefited the Somozas.

Adolf A. Berle, a prominent New York Corporation lawyer and veteran of F.D. Roosevelt's Brain Trust was the head of Kennedy's 'Task force Latin America'. "Social revolution is inevitable", he advised Kennedy, "it must be dissociated from communism and its power politics."²⁶ 'Dying dictatorship' in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Paraguay were not to be supported.²⁷ Berle's reform plans were never realised. "The difficulty of this State Department is that it will always come down on the side of the status quo"²⁸, he lamented.

Since reforms like social security, education, agrarian reforms, etc. as envisaged by the 'Alliance for Progress' could not be implemented as they militated against the entrenched powerful oligarchies and U.S. economic interests, the emphasis was shifted to exclusive reliance of counterinsurgency and military solution to suppress the forces of radical economic transformation in Central and South America.

26. Beatrice Bishop Berle and Travis Beal Jacobs, eds., *Navigating the Rapids : From the papers of Adolf A. Berle*, (New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1973), pp. 725-726.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, p. 745.

Originating in a proposal by the U.S. army's Southern Command to combat "internal subversion" in the region, CONDECA (Consejo de Defensa Centro Americano) came into existence in 1964 which included all Central American nations except Costa Rica. Its objectives were to conduct anti-communist counterinsurgency training, mutual defence cooperation, joint manoeuvres and to secure regional supply and communication routes. Member states exchanged information on "subversives" and officers were sent to the U.S. Army School of the Americas in the Canal Zone, where counterinsurgency training replaced classic military tactics and anti-communist propaganda courses took as much as 20 percent of curriculum time.

The creation of CONDECA was of immense benefit to the Somozas. The counterinsurgency aid Nicaragua received through it was supplemented by direct military assistance from the United States. The U.S. military assistance to Nicaragua was disproportionately high compared to other recipients of the region. Somoza's National Guardsmen consistently accounted for the largest number of students in U.S. army school. Nicaragua became so close to the United States that in 1965 it sent a Guardia contingent to join the U.S. military intervention in the Dominican Republic. In 1967, Anastasio junior offered the U.S. to send the National Guard to Vietnam although, it was declined by Washington.

U.S. military aid and counterinsurgency training could not stop guerrilla activities in Nicaragua. Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) which was founded in 1961 by Carlos Fonseca Amador, Tomas Borge and Silvio Mayorga, organised series of attacks without success. But gradually, it gained foothold among the masses and in later period spearheaded the popular revolt that brought an end to the dynastic rule. Besides, other right-wing oppositions also revolted against Somozas.

In the meantime, Luis's tenure was over in 1963 and constitutionally he was ineligible to contest for the second term. Under U.S. pressure, he also persuaded his younger brother not to contest for the highest office. Somozas chose a puppet, Rene Schick Gutierrez to assume the presidency. But they held on to real power, elder heading the Nationalist Liberal Party and the younger heading the National Guard. In June 1967, after a brief interlude and in a thoroughly rigged election, Anastasio Somoza Debayle became the third member of his family to rule Nicaragua. Luis's death a few months earlier and the bloody suppression of a mass protest rally shortly before the election, symbolised the end of an era of cosmetic liberalisation and the return to a more crude and harsh type of dictatorship.

ANASTASIO SOMOZA DEBAYLE

Anastasio's tenure was marked by repression, corruption, inefficiency and closeness to U.S. diplomatic circle.

After Thomas Whelan (1951-61), there was another U.S. ambassador to Nicaragua Turner Shelton (1970-75), who was a crony and a family friend of Somoza. Appointed to the post by President Nixon, he became so close to Anastasio that he seemed more like the dictator's aide-de-camp than a foreign diplomat. Shelton was extremely careful not to send any critical remark on the dictator to Washington. He so badly blocked normal communication channels with the State Department that embassy subordinates had to smuggle to Washington information on the true state of Nicaraguan affairs. In 1975, columnist Jack Anderson dubbed him "the worst ambassador in the U.S. diplomatic service."²⁹ In 1972, Somoza Debayle had to step down from presidency and, on the advice of Shelton, had transferred power temporarily to a triumvirate. But the transfer of power was more apparent than real, as Somoza still retained control of the National Guard.

The 1972 earthquake in Managua again changed the political fortune of the dictator. Following earthquake, martial law was declared and as the head of the Guard, Somoza assumed full personal control once again by pushing aside the triumvirate. National Emergency Committee was formed to monitor relief work and Somoza proclaimed himself as its head. Millions of dollars which poured into Nicaragua to help quake victims, were distributed through this Committee. As there was no system of accounting, the large chunk of the incoming relief fund was pocketed by Somoza and his associates. Though there were many

29. *The Washington Post*, March 31, 1975.

were many high-sounding statements about the challenge and patriotic task of reconstruction, it soon became clear that his corrupt and incompetent government was actually a major obstacle to recovery.

The United States was the single largest donor for quack-related assistance. U.S. army medical team arrived in Managua to serve the victims. But the United States earned little credit from Nicaraguan people because of the way the aid was pilfered and because it was identified with the corrupt regime.

It was at this point of time, popular discontentment resurfaced in the form of a series of strikes and demonstrations as people became increasingly restive and politically mobilised. Even the economic elites, who had previously supported consistently the regime, resented the way they were taxed and deprived of the economic benefits. Many of them joined the ranks of FSLN and extended their financial support to it. Unperturbed, Somoza recontested in 1974 and was elected through a blatantly unfair and thoroughly manipulated election for another term of office that was formally scheduled to last until 1981. He became more oppressive after the elections and declared martial law in the face of increasing FSLN guerrilla activities.

Somoza's flagrant disregard for human rights became known to the world. Catholic missionaries sent the detailed information about these violations to their superiors. In June

1976, these excesses became the subject of hearings of the House of Representatives Sub-Committee on International Relations when a group of thirty-nine North American Capuchin missionaries working in Zelaya Department wrote them a letter documenting numerous tortures, rapes and disappearances among the peasants of the Atlantic coast region.³⁰ In August 1977, Amnesty International published a report on Nicaragua confirming earlier revelations.³¹ By the middle of the decade, Somoza stood out as one of the worst human rights violators in the Western Hemisphere. Many members of the Congress expressed concern over the United States' association with repressive dictatorships like that of Somoza.

In June 1976, when Congressional human rights hearings were pending, James Theberge the new Ambassador to Nicaragua, flew to Washington to meet Representative Edward Koch of New York, a key critic of Somoza aid. Ambassador tried to convince Koch that Somoza's human rights violations were not systematic and therefore, did not warrant a cut in assistance at this stage. *Times* correspondent Allan Riding aptly quoted an unnamed "foreign official" in Managua : "American ambassadors have always been seen here as sort of viceroys or proconsuls and both the

30. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International relations, Sub-Committee on International Organisations, *Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador : Implications for U.S. Policy*, hearings, June 8,9 1976 (Washington, D.C. : U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

31. Findings summarised in 'Amnesty International Report, 1977' London : Amnesty International Publications, 1977, pp. 150-153.

government and the opposition have always tried to win their support."³²

Throughout 1977, the Carter administration pressed Somoza to improve his human rights image. It is commonly argued that the Carter administration's foreign policies in general and towards Nicaragua in particular, were confused, incoherent and inconsistent.³³ Inconsistencies in Nicaraguan policies included termination of aid in 1977 followed by the release of 12 million dollars for military aid in 1978; criticism of human rights abuses by Somoza and the National Guard in 1977 but praise for the dictator's performance in that area in 1978 and his efforts to prevent the liquidation of the Guard; encouragement of democratic reform by ending the dictatorship but reluctance to push Somoza out when his days were clearly numbered. However, these incoherence and inconsistencies were predominantly about tactics rather than goals. Containment (of communism) was the consistent, central goal throughout the Carter years. No doubt, Carter administration emphasised on human rights but did never place it above U.S. hegemonic ambitions.

32. *New York Times* August 11, 1975, p. 3.

33. For example, see Richard Feinberg, "The recent rapid re-definition of U.S. interests and diplomacy in Central America" in Richard Feinberg ed., *Central America : International Dimensions of the Crisis* (New York : Holmes & Meier, 1982); John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 1982); Dennis Gilbert, "Nicaragua" in Morris Blachman, William LecGrande and Kenneth Sharpe, eds. *Confronting Revolution : Security Through Diplomacy in Central America*, New York : Pantheon Books, 1986); and Stanley Hoffman, *Dead Ends* (New York : Ballinger Press, 1982).

In practical terms, Carter administration's attitude towards Somoza appeared ludicrous to the rest of the world in a situation when Somoza was increasingly exposed for corruption, usurpation of power and repression. The Carter administration's dispatch of Airforce ambulance plane to bring heart-attacked Somoza to U.S. for treatment was seen as proof of Carter's support for Somoza. Unsure of Somoza's survival, his aids looted the treasury in Nicaragua and began plotting for succession. On his return to Nicaragua, Somoza had to grapple with this problem by purging some of his top aids. Despite his rhetorical championship of human rights, the Carter administration continued to give military aid to Somoza dictatorship.

In August 1977, U.S. Congress approved \$3.1 million in military sales credit for Somoza for the 1978 fiscal year after getting assurance from the State Department that the money would not be made available until human right situation improved in Nicaragua. But behind the scenes, the administration was striking a deal for the continuation of arms shipments. Fiscal 1977 military sales credit for Nicaragua worth \$2.5 million, which had not yet been released, was to expire on September 30. After several rounds of talks between U.S. and Nicaraguan officials on September 19, Somoza regime agreed to lift the state of siege and it became the justification for Carter administration to sign the \$2.5 million military assistance agreement. But at the same time, the administration announced the suspension of \$ 12 million in economic aid.

In the last quarter of 1977, FSLN launched a series of coordinated attacks in various parts of the country. Offensive was partly successful from military standpoint and the FSLN was recognised as the potential force for deciding the political future of Nicaragua. A group of prominent citizens - professionals, businessmen, and clergy who subsequently known as the 'The Twelve' - issued the "Document of the Twelve" from Costa Rica where they denounced the dictatorship and called for a national solution, which would include FSLN in any post-Somoza government. They rejected the proposal of any dialogue with Somoza as he was the principal obstacle to all rational understanding.

The assassination of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro - an internationally renowned journalist and persistent regime critic - paved the way for the final stage of Nicaraguan revolution. Somoza's hand in this murder was widely suspected though unproved. Angry crowds surged through the streets of Managua shouting anti-Somoza slogans and burning Somoza-owned buildings.³⁴

While the National Guard was responding to the demonstration with utmost repression, the State Department's annual -----
34. Shortly before murder, Chamorro exposed vividly the misdeeds of the dictator including his links with a blood-plasm exporting firm (Plasmaferesis de Nicaragua) run by Cuban exiles. As a result, the regime's popular image dropped to an all time low and Managua was alive with gossip and speculation regarding Somoza's impending fall. This enraged the regime and made Chamorro the main target of attack.

report which Congress had stipulated as a precondition to the grant of aid to Nicaragua, claimed an improvement in the human rights situation in that country. And on February 16, two weeks after the release of the report, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Sally Shelton, testifying before a House sub-committee characterised the Guard's actions in suppressing unrest as the fulfillment of "a duty to protect the population from terrorism and acts of violence."³⁵

The administration requested Congress a mere \$150,000 military training grant for Somoza for the fiscal year 1979. Closer examination by a House Sub-Committee revealed, however, that the figure was really \$600,000 - the similar amount of training funds as the previous year. The amount of U.S. aid was of little importance for Tachito as he had established alternative supply source from Israel and Argentina. The most important thing for him was the psychological effect of continued support from the United States. The Carter administration was also, on its part, trying to release enough aid to maintain support for and leverage over Somoza. Thus, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted on May 11, to eliminate military appropriations for Nicaragua for the fiscal year 1979, the State Department responded by releasing the \$12 million in economic aid that it had withheld since previous September.

35. United States, House, "Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Year 1979", hearings before the sub-committee on International Organisations, 95 Congress, 2 Sessions (Washington, DC. : U.S. GPO, 1978), pp. 126-127.

In February, 1978, the first mass insurrection occurred in Monimbo - an Indian neighbourhood in Masaya - when poorly armed civilians rose up against the dictatorship and declared Monimbo as a free territory. The regime sent a force of 600 heavily armed men which recaptured the neighbourhood after almost a week of ruthless suppression. On July 5, 'The Twelve' returned from exile, in defiance of Somoza's wishes. They were accorded warm welcome by huge crowds at the airport and throughout the country. On July 19, Broad Opposition Front (FAO) gave a call for one-day show-of-strength general strike which turned out to be a big success. And on July 21, Fernando Chamorro, an automobile sales executive, carried out a daring, one-man rocket attack on 'El Bunker' - Somoza's fortified, underground office and residence - where Somoza was holding a cabinet meeting.³⁶

The leakage of Carter's letter to Somoza congratulating the latter for "improvement" in human rights situation in Nicaragua further antagonised the FSLN who viewed it as the continued U.S. support for the discredited dictator. Exasperated by this news, FSLN planned its most spectacular guerrilla action, the seizure of the National Palace. Eden Pastora, "Commander Zero" who led the operation, reacted to Carter's letter in an interview: "How could he praise Somoza while our people were being massacred by the dictatorship? It was clear it meant support for Somoza, and we were determined to show Carter that

36. John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning : The Nicaraguan Revolution*, Boulder, Colo : Westview Press, 1982, p.40.

Nicaraguans are ready to fight Somoza, the cancer of our country. We decided, therefore, to launch the People's struggle."³⁷

The success of the National Palace operation triggered massive acts of defiance by Nicaraguans. On August 25, the FAO (composed, at that time, of most of Nicaragua's political parties and organisations) declared another 'nationwide' strike demanding Somoza's resignation which paralysed the country for almost a month. Simultaneously, spontaneous insurrections erupted in all major cities except Managua. To this, Somoza and the National Guard responded with unusual ferocity and vengeance destroying large sections of several cities and butchering thousands of people. However, Somoza began to realise that his dictatorial system might be doomed. So he and his associates started liquidating assets and transferring money abroad. At the same time, he displayed an outward determination to hold on and crush the opposition.

The September uprisings led the Carter administration to feel that Somoza might not be able to survive until 1981 and Nicaragua might turn into another Cuba. On October 6, Carter's special representative William Bowdler along with delegates from Dominican Republic and Guatemala arrived in Managua to start negotiations with Somoza and FAO but not with FSLN. They hoped to create a transitional government following Somoza's resignation

37. Tad Szule, "Rocking Nicaragua : The Rebels' Own Story",
Washington Post, September 3, 1978, p. C-1.

quickly enough to preclude a Sandinista victory or its major role in the post-Somoza government. But Somoza refused to resign.

In the meantime, the talks between Somoza and the Conservative opposition broke down in January 1979. The Carter administration reacted with anger by reducing its diplomatic personnel and cancelling its remaining aid programmes. Again in May, 1979, when the administration apparently felt that Somoza had weathered the storm, resumed the aid to the dictator.

Drawing upon some valuable lessons from the September, 1978 insurrection, Sandinistas worked hard to revitalise their strength by recruiting and training young men and women which increased from a few hundred to several thousands. Opposition leaders, particularly 'The Twelve', travelled throughout the world explaining the Sandinista cause and soliciting moral as well as material support. In March 1979, the FSLN, which was divided earlier into three factions, finally coalesced under one nine-man directorate and published a joint declaration of objectives. FSLN's final offensive began on May 29. A series of coordinated attacks by Sandinista columns sparked new insurrections throughout the country. Somoza and the National Guard were unable to control the situation. In mid-June a broad-based government-in-exile was announced by FSLN from Costa Rica.

Alarmed by the near certainty of a popular victory, the Carter administration tried various schemes to block such an

outcome. The first plan called for an intervention under the auspices of the OAS. The plan formulated by Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, comprised three parts : to get a consensus among Latin American countries that Somoza had to quit; to play up Cuban involvement in order to gain support for intervention, and to send an OAS peace keeping force to halt fighting while installing a new government.³⁸ This proposal for armed intervention was withdrawn when it was unanimously rejected by OAS members. As a substitute for Brzezinski plan, the OAS adopted a resolution calling for the complete replacement of the Somoza regime and banning any outside intervention. The United States had to vote for the measure. In June, in the event of continuous FSLN onslaughts, Somoza had lost control over the most part of the country except Managua.

Though Somoza expressed his willingness to stepdown unconditionally in the first week of July, he was told by the U.S. negotiators to delay it. Actually U.S. negotiators were working on a new strategy aimed at neutralising radical forces in the country. Washington also wanted to preserve the National Guard albeit in an altered form. But the Carter administration's efforts to manage things to its liking produced only widespread anger in Nicaragua.

The option of a non-Sandinist third force capable enough to dominate the transitional government by excluding the

38. *New York Times*, June 22, 1979, pp. A1, A8.

radicals, simply did not exist. When the FSLN rejected all the proposals, Washington finally had to accept the inevitable. U.S. Ambassador Lawrence Pezzullo arranged for the resignation and departure of Somoza to Miami. On July 16, Somoza resigned and left for Miami with his associates. Thus ended the forty-three years of dictatorship and dynastic rule.

The resignation of Somoza did not bring immediately junta to power. Congress elected Francisco Urcuyo Malianos (then President of the House of Deputies) as the next President who expressed his intention to finish out Somoza's term. The interim president named a new head of the National Guard, General Federico Mejia Gonzalez and called on the armed force to defend the government. But the National Guard, its command and ranks decimated, promptly collapsed after another night of heavy fighting with the FSLN forces. Thousands of soldiers and officers fled across the border to Honduras and many others took refuge in safe places. Thus besieged, Urcuyo helplessly resigned and fled into exile in Guatemala by boarding a Guatemalan air force planes. Urcuyo had been president for forty-three hours, one hour for every year that Somozas had ruled Nicaragua.

On July 19, the FSLN-led rebel forces made their triumphant entry into Managua and accepted the surrender of rump National Guard. In Managua, cheering crowds danced in joy and smashed symbols of the hated dynasty. Members of the junta

entered the capital on July 20 and appeared in the main plaza to receive the acclaim of a jubilant people.

The Carter administration, having failed in its efforts to influence the development in Nicaragua to its favour, had to adjust with the new reality. But the U.S. interference in Nicaragua did not cease even after the change in the government.

CHAPTER - III
U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE SANDINISTA
GOVERNMENT

The U.S. intervention in Nicaragua for over one hundred years has been the rule rather than the exception. Nicaragua's political destiny has been decided by the U.S. policy makers. The *raison d'etre* of U.S. policy towards Nicaragua is rooted in the strategy of perpetuating its hegemony and economic exploitation of the area. The relief experienced by the Nicaraguan masses in the wake of Sandinista's takeover of power proved to be short-lived and their hopes of establishing a just society were belied because the United States embarked on a multi-pronged policy of overthrowing the new government of this impoverished helpless nation on the pretext of its being inimical to U.S. interests.

During its more than a decade rule, the Sandinista government had to deal with three U.S. administrations, namely, Carter, Reagan and Bush. While Carter administration's dealings with the Sandinistas lasted for more than one year, Bush saw the fall of the post-revolutionary government around a year of entering into White House. So it was the Reagan administration which formulated and executed its programme for destabilisation of the Sandinista government. Having failed to prevent Sandinistas' accession to power, President Carter did not have the time to work out a Nicaraguan policy in the last one year of its existence. Bush, already a Vice-President under President Reagan in both the terms, was a party to the Reagan administration's Nicaraguan policy. So, he did not differ fundamentally with his predecessor, only shifted the focus on priorities.

CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARDS THE SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT

The Sandinista victory sparked off an intense debate in Washington over whether the United States should adopt a more aggressive posture towards Nicaragua. The Pentagon and members of the National Security Council pleaded in favour of a hardline towards the Sandinistas. However, a more cautious approach initially held sway. In stead of intervening directly, the Carter administration adopted a strategy of economic pressure, political manipulation and covert actions to depose Sandinistas. Although, the strategy had long-term implication, the ultimate objective was the removal of Sandinistas from power.

Carter's initial strategy was one of economic pressure and political manipulation along with covert operations. Due to the havoc wrought upon Nicaragua by Somocista plunder and a war of liberation, the new government required massive international aid for national reconstruction. This provided opportunity for the United States to engage in economic blackmail. Also, the administration tried to minimise the FSLN's influence on Nicaraguan political life and thus to transform the revolutionary project into a reformist one that would protect U.S. interests in Nicaragua. This was supplemented with the CIA's boasting of its covert assistance to Nicaraguan right-wing elements. In 1980 alone, the CIA channeled at least \$1 million in covert aid to these groups.¹

1. *The Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1985.

The Carter administration proposed \$75 million in aid for Nicaragua as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) foreign aid bill, which was submitted to Congress for approval in late 1979. Out of this \$75 million aid package, \$70 million was in credit to buy U.S. goods and \$5 million was direct grant. The primary objective of the United States in offering assistance was to strengthen the private sector and provide an inducement to the new government for adopting a moderate course of action. The Carter administration felt that the post-insurrectionary political situation in Nicaragua was extremely fluid. Accordingly, it endeavoured to strengthen the position of bourgeois moderates within the new governmental apparatus so that they would wrest power from Sandinistas in near future.

However, the actual political situation within Nicaragua was not as susceptible to outside manipulation as Washington assumed. Sandinistas were very suspicious about U.S. motive behind economic assistance. While maintaining safe distance, they tried to establish working relationship with the United States. The FSLN always viewed its struggle as one against the United States almost as much as against Somocismo.

While publicly the Carter administration was showing softness towards Sandinistas, covertly it was setting the stage against them. On July 19, U.S. operatives mounted a clandestine mission to evacuate commanders of the National Guard who had been unable to flee Nicaragua. Aboard a fighter plane, disguised as a

Red Cross plane, an American known as "Bill Furillo" airlifted dozens of Guardsmen and their families to Miami where they were reorganised to fight against the Sandinistas.² In late 1980, Carter authorised the CIA to pass funds to anti-Sandinista labour, press and political organisations. Also the final year of the Carter administration served as an important intelligence gathering period which later on became the foundation for destabilisation efforts of Ronald Reagan.

Publicly, the Carter administration created areas of tension on such issues as the presence of Cuban advisers, adoption of a pluralistic political system and a mixed economy, and the non-existence militarism of the Sandinistas and their alleged involvement in Salvadoran civil strife.

In fact, Cuban advisers were present in Nicaragua to help Sandinistas in the reconstruction of its war-torn society. In January 1980, U.S. intelligence operatives in Nicaragua had reported that although the Sandinistas were adopting a socialist system of Cuban model, it did not have the same type of penetrative security apparatus nor was it dependent on the Soviet Union like Cuba.³

-
2. For a description of this mission, see Christopher Dickey, *With the Contras : A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua*, New York : Simon and Schuster, 1985, p. 55.
 3. Stephen M. Gorman referred to classified State Department documents in this regard. See Stephen M. Gorman, "Nicaragua", in Gurtov Melvin and Ray Maghroori, eds., *Roots of Failure : The United States Policy in the Third World*, London : Greenwood Press, 1984, p. 141.

Similarly, contrary to U.S. suspension, the FSLN leadership had announced from the very beginning that as soon as reconstruction process would be completed, the party would seek popular mandate. It also committed to respect the existence of free political organisations, balanced representation and public discussions of government policies. Even in the five-member governing junta of National Reconstruction - the chief executive council of Nicaragua - members represented various sections of Nicaraguan society. In the same view, the revolutionary government adopted a policy of mixed economy and allowed private sector to function freely in the country.

The U.S. accusation of Nicaragua military build-up was equally wrong. In the midst of increasing contra terrorist activities and hostile neighbours especially Honduras, the Nicaraguan government had to increase its military strength. Nevertheless, its augmentation of military capabilities was essentially defensive in nature. Besides, Washington had never complained when Somozas were procuring sophisticated arms and were helping in toppling governments in the region. Rather, it was the largest supplier of those offensive weapons to Somoza regime.

Lastly, the alleged Nicaraguan involvement in Salvadoran civil war was highly exaggerated and based on misinformation. At no stage of Salvadoran civil war, Sandinista involvement went much beyond sympathy for the rebels and

permitting occasional transshipment of arms. Social upheaval in El Salvador predated the Sandinista victory. So Nicaraguans were not the source of trouble in that country.

After victory, Sandinista policy makers were very pragmatic on diplomatic front. They strove to maximise Nicaragua's independence in the international environment, recognising the vulnerability of their nation's export-dependent economy within the zone of preponderant economic influence of the United States. On the one hand, the objective of increasing independence, tempered by realism about the dominant economic environment, guided Nicaragua to seek continued healthy economic ties with the United States and to welcome U.S. aid if unencumbered by conditions limiting its independence. On the other hand, Nicaragua sought to open non-traditional markets and accepted aid from socialist and non-aligned nations in order to recover from the crisis. While trying to maintain good working relation with the United States, Nicaragua opened diplomatic doors to many nations from socialist bloc resisting U.S. pressures.

Also, this pragmatic approach led Nicaragua to abstain on two U.S.-engineered United Nations votes to condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, to send a delegation to the Moscow Olympics, and to join the organisation of Non-Aligned Movement. At the same time, it accepted various suggestions of U.S. Ambassador Lawrence Pezzullo relating to the role of private

entrepreneurs. In general, Sandinistas responded flexibly to U.S. concerns.

REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARDS NICARAGUA

Ronald Reagan's win in November 1980 presidential election heralded victory of hardline rightist forces amongst the U.S. political class. The Reagan administration was dominated by a powerful group of right-wing rollbackers. A policy of 'rollback' of communism, as against that of 'containment' became avowed policy of the U.S. government. Rollbackers saw the world as a simple, bipolar battle ground between the forces of "freedom" and "justice" led by the United States and the so-called "evil empire" headed by the Soviet Union. They believed that there was no room for negotiation and compromise as two social systems could not exist.

Reagan's foreign policy in fact, represented forces and interests deeply embedded in the power structure of the United States and behind the Right stood a major cross-section of monopoly capital. With only a few exceptions, Reagan's first cabinet comprised conservative millionaires who had an important stake in the formulation and implementation of Reagan Doctrine. In fact, the Reagan Doctrine is "Reagan" in name only.

Reagan Doctrine : A Part of Rollback Policy

The Committee of Santa Fe whose recommendations became blueprint for the Reagan administration's policy in the first term, stated : "Containment of the Soviet Union is not enough.... It is time to sound a clarion call for freedom, dignity and national self interest which will echo the spirit of the people of the United States. Either a Pax Sovietica or a worldwide counter-projection of American power is in the offing. The hour of decision can no longer be postponed."⁴

Soon after, the new administration launched its offensive to restore U.S. hegemony in the world by whatever means available - military, state terrorist, economic and political. Reagan administration's policy objectives included the rollback of communism, attainment of nuclear superiority over Soviet Union, transfer of wealth to the upper class and war machine through heavy tax cuts and drastic reduction in social spending and other welfare measure. But the hardliners' offensive needed an ideological mask capable of creating a conducive climate of public acceptance of its programme especially at a time when 'Vietnam syndrome' was still fresh in public mind.

"Freedom", "democracy" and "patriotism" became the ideological shields of the warhawks. They orchestrated mass media

4. Committee of Santa Fe. "A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties" Washington, D.C. : Council for Inter-American Security, 1980.

and public opinion in support of their fight against the "evil empire". Mobilising public support for its programmes during first two years, Reagan administration moved from planning to its implementation. In October, 1983, Grenada was invaded and occupied by the U.S. forces for overthrowing its radical nationalist government and installing subservient regime. In fact, it was no great feat for a super power to defeat a tiny Caribbean island-nation of some 100,000 inhabitants. The symbolic significance of the invasion of Grenada was meant to signal to the world the U.S. willingness to use force to impose its will anywhere in the world.

In the summer of 1984, the conservative Heritage Foundation released a report under the title "Mandate for Leadership II : Continuing the Conservative Revolution" (considered a blueprint for Reagan's second term) which mirrored intellectual and programmatic underpinnings of the Reagan Doctrine. Secretary Schultz outlined the essentials of the Reagan Doctrine in a speech to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco : (1) support for "peaceful democratic change" throughout the world; (2) support for "democratic government for providing economic and security assistance against a variety of threats"; (3) support for "the forces of freedom in communist totalitarian states"; and (4) support for "those struggling against the imposition of communist tyranny."⁵

5. George Schultz, "America and the Struggle for Freedom", address before the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, February 22, 1985, *State Department Current Policy*, No. 659.

There are other interpretations of the Reagan Doctrine also, but their essence remains more or less same. Deborah Barry and others outlined four basic principles : (1) to promote and support by overt and covert means, any military and political forces opposing revolutionary governments in Third World countries; (2) to intervene in potentially revolutionary situations so as to control change while preserving the essence of the regime in power; (3) to undertake an anti-terrorist campaign; (4) to reserve the threat of direct, massive intervention by U.S. forces for highly vulnerable revolutions, either incipient or already consummated."⁶

In the Reagan Doctrine's language, revolutionaries became "terrorists", terrorists became "freedom fighters", and counterrevolution became "revolution". Beyond the language, Washington attempted through the Doctrine to legitimise the U.S. counterrevolution as a form of self-defence sanctioned in international law. Reagan claimed, "Support for freedom fighters is self-defence, and totally consistent with the OAS and U.N. Charters."⁷

The Heritage Foundation recommended that the United States should "employ paramilitary assets to weaken those

6. Deborah Barry, Raul Vergava and Jose Rodolfo Castro, "Low Intensity Warfare : The Counter insurgency strategy for Central America" in Nora Hamilton, Jeffrey A. Frieden, Linda Fuller and Manuel Pastor, Jr., eds., *Crisis in Central America : Regional Dynamics and U.S. Policy in the 1980s*, (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1988), p. 79.

7. *The New York Times*, January 25, 1985.

communist and non-communist regimes that may already be facing the early stages of insurgency within their borders and which threaten U.S. interests."⁸ In short, while the destruction of a revolution was preeminently desired, any counterrevolutionary action in a larger strategic context would warn the forces trying to overthrow friendly governments.

In brief, the Reagan Doctrine legitimised U.S. destabilisation of Third World countries whose governments were not to its liking and made covert actions its official policy

Reagan Doctrine and Central America

When Reagan came to White House, Central America was riven apart by civil wars between forces of change and justice on one hand and pro-U.S. regimes hell bent on preserving exploitative, highly unequal and unjust social order on the other. While murderous generals in El Salvador and Guatemala were mercilessly slaughtering their countrymen in order to control the situation, Sandinistas in Nicaragua were riding high with rising popularity at home and respect abroad. The U.S. perceived the Sandinista government at the core of the challenge to U.S. hegemony in Central America.

In this circumstance, Reagan Doctrine was viewed as the panacea for Central America's growing problems. Nicaragua, in particular, was characterised not by its economic but by its geo-

8. Butler, et al., eds., *Mandate for Leadership II*, Washington D.C. : The Heritage Foundation, 1984, p. 268.

political importance to U.S. imperialism. Direct U.S. investment in this country was almost insignificant : Yet it enjoyed key importance in geo-political terms - a potential alternative inter-oceanic transit point. But the Sandinista triumph over Somoza dictatorship upset the U.S. imperial policy of the United States in Central America. The revolution in Nicaragua had far-reaching implications for the countries beyond its borders. This led the neighbouring super power to embark on a war of attrition against this small and defenceless nation.

The Reagan's Central American policy was extremist, not only in its militaristic tactics and obstinate rhetorics, but most fundamentally in its goals. Most important among those goals was the administration's determination to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua which formed a part of Reagan's broader goal of global rollback. In conformity with this worldview, Reagan officials rejected all compromises and negotiations (even if they apparently talked of these things), refused to permit the belligerent parties in Central America to work out compromise solutions, and in some cases outrightly sabotaged the negotiation processes.

Reagan officials held that Nicaragua met the Doctrine's optimum criteria : the geopolitical stakes were extremely high; organising the counterrevolution would be a low-cost project; and the chances of success were considerably fair. At that stage, Sandinista revolution was still undergoing consolidation and

faced with numerous obstacles. It was not very difficult for the administration to find project operators - the contras, who were earlier Somoza's National Guardsmen and had fled Nicaragua out of fear. CIA was only to organise them. For the Reagan administration, eliminating insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala and maintaining control over Honduras and Costa Rica, hinge on the destruction of Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

The Reagan Doctrine was first put to test in Central America and Nicaragua was chosen as the test ground.⁹

Low-Intensity Warfare

Reagan Doctrine was applied to Nicaragua as a counterrevolutionary strategy through "Low Intensity Warfare" (LIW) stridently during Reagan's second term. Experimented first in Indo-China without success, Low Intensity Warfare was reviewed, revised and readapted to Nicaraguan situation. Pentagon opted for Low Intensity Warfare to carry out Reagan's policy of overthrowing radical and left-wing governments without risking public outcry over high cost of conventional war and loss of lives of American soldiers.

LIW doctrine is an extension and refinement of the theory of counterinsurgency warfare that emerged in the early 1960s in Vietnam. Many of the instruments of counterinsurgency

9. Hans Petter Buvollen. "Low Intensity Warfare and the Peace Plan in Central America", *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 20, No. 3, September, 1989.

warfare - military civic action, inter-agency coordination, pacification, special operations (assassination/liquidation programmes like Operation Phoenix), internal civil defence, and military assistance and training, etc. - have been given fresh attention by LIW specialists. LIW doctrine is more than just a new name for counterinsurgency theory.

U.S. military analysts studied the theories of revolutionary warfare, such as those of Mao Ze Dong, General Vo Nguyen Giap and Che Guevara, and drew on the lessons of Bri French, and other colonial wars in the Third World.

The meaning of 'Low-Intensity Warfare' remains ambiguous, controversial and partisan. The American use of LIW against Sandinistas was nothing more than an euphemism for an aggressive covert military action involving subversion, economic destabilisation, plain sabotage and terrorism for overthrowing a government which enjoyed legitimacy and popularity.

The Sandinista Front of National Liberation took power in Nicaragua on July 19, 1979 in the face U.S. opposition. And Washington reluctantly accorded recognition to the new revolutionary government on July 24, 1979.

The U.S. policy towards the Sandinista government did not depart from its historical continuity. Rather, it assertively reaffirmed its hegemonic and intervenistic role in Nicaragua.

Throughout its existence, the Sandinistas, were faced with the incessant U.S. war of attrition against them. So the history of a decade-long (1979-1990) U.S. relations with the Sandinista-ruled Nicaragua is a story of a super power's harassment, malignity and strangulation of a defenceless, tiny nation which braved to come out of its control.

Within few months of Reagan's coming to power, State Department officially terminated the loans for Nicaragua that Carter had suspended, and blocked an additional \$9.6 million wheat sale.¹⁰ Both these actions were sought to be justified in the name of alleged Sandinista involvement of the Salvadoran civil war.

White Paper

The Reagan administration mounted a concerted campaign of disinformation to level unfounded allegations about Sandinistas' involvement in the Salvadoran civil war. These thinly veiled attempts sought to provide justification for U.S. acts of hostility and bellicosity towards the Sandinista government with a view to overthrow them. The United States started churning out documentary "proof" to substantiate these charges.

The first documented charges of Sandinista involvement in the civil war of El Salvador was published in a State Department "White Paper" on February 23, 1981. Provocatively titled -----
10. Department of State Bulletin, May 1981, p. 71.

"Communist Interference in El Salvador", the White Paper alleged that there were Soviet bloc plans to supply arms to rebels in El Salvador.

A few months later in an analysis of the White Paper, 'Wall Street Journal' reporter Jonathan Kwitny revealed that the captured documents really contained little to support U.S. charges. Kwitny wrote that the authors of the White Paper made a "determined effort to create a 'selling' document, no matter how slim the background material."¹¹ They succeeded in selling Reagan administration's contention to the mass media in the United States that Nicaragua was engaged in exporting revolution to other countries in the region.

On March 9, 1981, six weeks after taking office, Reagan endorsed CIA Director William Casey's proposal for a destabilisation programme and sent the first "Presidential Finding on Central America" to Congressional Intelligence Committee which stated that the United States needed to expand its intelligence capacity in the region. Between March and November 1981 the administration laid the logistical groundwork for covert operation. CIA operatives initiated contact with small anti-Sandinista groups in Florida and Central America. Despite warnings from Ambassador Pezzullo that Nicaraguan exile groups were "poison" and that U.S. support for them would only serve to

11. Jonathan Kwitny in *The Wall Street Journal* June 8, 1981, p.1.

discredit the legitimate opposition¹², by mid-1981 the CIA was providing aid indirectly to Miami-based exiles and to former Nicaraguan Guardsmen operating from Honduras.¹³

These anti-Sandinista forces were getting training at paramilitary camps in Florida, California and Texas. In the spring of 1981, journalists from 'Parade', 'The New York Times', and 'The Washington Post' visited these camps and witnessed former Green Berets and Vietnam veterans instructing would-be Nicaraguan insurgents in the techniques of parachute jumping, guerrilla warfare and sabotage. But their existence on U.S. territory violated the 1794 Neutrality Act which prohibits private parties from organising hostilities against any country with whom the United States is at peace.

THE CONTRAS

Under CIA direction, ragtag bands of Nicaraguan exiles were transformed into organised paramilitary forces equipped with U.S.-supplied trucks, planes, automatic weapons and artillery. The CIA campaign to build the contras into a fighting army was accompanied by a political campaign to obscure their origins and mislead their actual purpose. To garner Congressional support, the administration initially fostered the myth that contras were an "interdiction" force.

12. Kondracke and Kotz, "How to Avoid Another Bay of Pigs", *The New Republic*, June 22, 1981.

13. Edgar Chamorro, "Confessions of a Contra", *The New Republic*, August 5, 1985, p. 20.

FDN

On August 11, 1981, a meeting was held in Miami under the auspices of the CIA, in which the 15th of September Legion, the UDN-FARN, the ELN, and the ADREN joined together to form the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). On the same day, the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Thomas Enders, who visited Managua, was discussing a wide range of issues pertaining to bilateral relations with Sandinista leaders. He threatened Nicaragua with dire warnings. The timing of CIA-organised meeting and Enders' visit was no coincidence. The Enders method was the prototype of what would become a systematic tactic in the U.S. war : the coordination of diplomatic and military aggression, in which military pressure, and not just threat of it, was used as device to force Nicaragua to make concessions.

ARDE

A second contra coalition, the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE), came into existence in September 1982. This contra front was founded by two former members of the Sandinista government : Eden Pastora, known as "Comandante Cero" ("Commander Zero"), and Alfonso Robelo, a millionaire agri-businessman. Pastora held the post of Deputy Defence Minister and was in charge of MPS in the Sandinista government before his resignation in June 1981. He resigned being dissatisfied with his power. Robelo was a member of the ruling junta till April 1980, when he resigned over the issue of underrepresentation of the business

interests in the government. ARDE made San Jose, Costa Rica its headquarters and operated from the southern front.

In April 1982, Pastora was approached secretly by Duane Clarridge, head of the CIA's Directorate of Operations for Latin America. Clarridge offered to make him 'the star of the second revolution' as he had been 'the star' of the first. According to *The Wall Street Journal's* reporting, Pastora accepted the offer "on the condition that he have absolute deniability because his credentials as a nationalist would be weakened if his CIA ties were revealed. As a result, CIA guns and money were delivered to Pastora through an elaborate network of Latin American intermediaries - the funds sometimes in plain brown envelopes."¹⁴ The CIA officer impressed upon the Reagan administration that the United States should bolster Pastora's position because his anti-Somoza credentials and revolutionary nationalism could make him a more effective opponent of the Sandinistas than the National Guard-dominated FDN.

The problem started when Washington wanted Pastora's ARDE to forge a formal alliance with FDN. "A combination of Pastora's popular support in Nicaragua and the military strength of the FDN would increase the threat to the Sandinistas", mentioned a December 1982 CIA report on the contras. But Pastora demanded that former National Guard officials be purged from the FDN before he would consider any alliance. Unless the "criminal

14. *The Wall Street Journal*, March 4, 1985.

mummies and guerrillas of the National Guard" were dominated, announced Pastora, there could be no ARDE-FDN collaboration. "We are not prepared to reach alliances with the perpetrators of genocide who killed us for 45 years."¹⁵

In May 1984, the CIA issued an ultimatum to form an alliance with FDN within 30 days and threatened to cut off aid in case of noncompliance. The CIA's mounting pressure for coalition created a division within ARDE. While Pastora and his ardent followers rejected CIA's ultimatum flatly, Alfonso Robelo and the majority of ARDE's governing assembly voted on May 29 for joining the FDN. Being crippled without CIA support, his guerrilla operations were severely curtailed. By late 1984, his followers were forced to go door to door in Costa Rica begging for funds. Finally, in May 1986, CIA promises of military aid prompted the six remaining commanders and their supporters to defect to the FDN. Isolated, dejected and demoralised Pastora announced his withdrawal from the contra movement and return to his pre-revolutionary occupation as a fisherman.

MISURA

Another organised opposition to Sandinistas came from Miskito Indians inhabiting the Atlantic coast of the eastern region of the country. Shortly after the revolution, the Sandinista government was eager to promote the economic and

15. Quoted in Peter Kornbluh, *Nicaragua - The Price of Intervention : Reagan's War Against the Sandinistas*, Washington, D.C. : Institute for Policy Studies, 1987, p. 29.

political development of the indigenous population by introducing special economic development projects, ending discrimination and integrating them into the mainstream of the nation.¹⁶ For the purpose, an organisation called MISURASATA (Miskito, Sumu, Rama and Sandinista United) was created in 1979 and the provision for a representative in the Council of State (the Nicaraguan legislature) was made.

But the new and inexperienced government's revolutionary fervour, combined with cultural insensitivity, alienated the Miskitos. The FSLN government made several erroneous assumptions. It wanted to transplant the revolutionary development projects in the western part of the country on the Atlantic coast. But instead of welcoming such initiatives, people in this part of the country opposed which was met with widespread government force. Steadman Fagoth, the prominent Miskito leader who was elected to the Council of State, took lead in the revolt. Fagoth, who was later discovered to have been an informer for the Somoza regime, quickly proved more interested in strengthening his own power base in order to confront the revolutionary government in Managua than in representing legitimate Indian demands.

On being exposed as a former Somoza agent, he fled in May 1981 to Honduras where he was joined by some 3000 Miskitos and much of MISURASATA's leadership. In exile, the Indians

16. For a long time this region, where indigenous population predominantly live, remained neglected due to inaccessibility, political apathy and backwardness.

pledged to take up arms against the nascent revolutionary regime as the only way to achieve their goal. Miskito forces were divided due to a power struggle between two of MISURASATA's leaders. One faction led by Brooklyn Rivera, joined Pastora's ARDE in Costa Rica. The other using the name MISURA (Miskitos, Sumus and Ramas) under the leadership of Fagoth, aligned with the FDN in Honduras.

Fagoth was proved to be an asset in its war against Sandinistas. Conservative U.S. columnist having intelligence connection, Georgie Anne Geyer wrote in July 1981 that "Fagoth is beginning to represent to some important people a real chance to overthrow the Sandinista regime in his country."¹⁷ After aligning with FDN, Miskitos received funds and training from the CIA.

By late 1981, CIA organised Miskitos to launch an offensive dubbed as "Operation Red Christmas". According to the plan, Zelaya Norte and Puerto Cabezas were to be invaded and the Atlantic coast was to be declared "liberated" Miskito territory. The United States promised to support if the invaders could maintain control of the zone. During the three months long operation, at least eighty five people were killed in scattered clashes. Villagers were threatened, Kidnapped and murdered by the invading forces. In order to spark an uprising, Fagoth spread misinformation through broadcast that the Sandinista aircraft

17. Quoted in William Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, *David and Goliath*, p. 53.

were coming to bomb Miskito villagers and that the Sandinistas considered all Miskitos their enemies.

In response to these attacks, FSLN government decided to shift the people along the river Rio Coco into interior. This decision was taken both because the EPS could not guarantee the safety of the civilian population in the border area, and because confronting counterrevolution required militarisation of the border zone. As a consequence of Fagoth's call and Nicaraguan government's decision, large number of inhabitants from Rio Coco fled across the river and joined the refugee camps in Honduras. MISURA officials forced these refugees to join guerrilla force and got an excuse to receive large amount of international refugee aid which was used to finance both MISURA and FDN.

The remaining five thousand some inhabitants were relocated by the government at Tasba Pri to the west of Puerto Cabezas where modern houses, schools, and health clinics were built and electricity and running water facilities installed. The families were given farmland and adequate agricultural assistance. However, the relocation was extremely painful for Miskitos, who were forced to part with their beloved Rio Coco which had become synonymous with their historic identity. But accusations, made by Fagoth and echoed by Reagan officials were baseless and unfounded. The U.S. Ambassador Kirkpatrick boldly claimed that some 2,50,000 Mestizo Indians were badly repressed in Nicaragua and many of them were held in the concentration

camps built on the coast of Nicaragua. In fact, by no count the number of Miskitos in Nicaragua crossed 1,80,000 at that time and out of them only 20,000-25,000 lived near Rio Coco.

Reagan called Nicaragua, the worst human rights violator in the whole of Central America without substantiating his accusations. The Secretary of State Haig, with tearful eyes, displayed a photograph of burning bodies - purported to be that of Miskitos - before television cameras. A few days later, it was revealed that the photograph (which was obtained from the Paris Newspaper *Le Figaro*) had been taken by the Red Cross in Esteli in 1978 and showed bodies burning after a Somoza air bombardment.¹⁸

Americas Watch, a reputed human rights organisation, sent a high power delegation to Nicaragua in April 1982 to investigate the fact which reported that the Nicaraguan government's justification for the relocation was not unreasonable. It did not find any basis for press reports of a "widespread massacre". An International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) delegation also reached similar conclusion.¹⁹

Truth notwithstanding, much damage was inflicted on Sandinista government by the Reagan administration's disinformation campaign. The disinformation campaign was a part of the calculated application of the "Big Lie", and a "black propaganda"

18. *The New York Times*, March 3, 1982.

19. NACLA Report on the Americas, January/February 1982.

technique adopted by the Reagan administration in its war against Nicaragua.

CIA/CONTRA OPERATIONS

During the summer and fall of 1982, the CIA established contra camps in isolated mountain regions of Nicaragua and connected logistic supply lines from Honduran rear base.

Plan C

After thorough preparation and training, the contras got ready for a major operation under CIA direction and project was dubbed as "Plan C". The main objective of this plan was to occupy the Jalapa valley and to declare the formation of a provisional government there which would be recognised by the United States and its Central American allies.

Political legitimacy was necessary for such a provisional government and Somocista's past record was a hindrance to it. To provide the FDN with a new and politically more attractive public face and to garner international support, the CIA arranged a stage show. On December 8, 1982, "Anti-Somocista" contra leaders held a well-rehearsed press conference at Miami where the formation of an FDN "Political Directorate" was announced. The 'Directorate' consisted of seven prominent Nicaraguan exiles²⁰ who were brought together by the CIA. Edgar Chamorro, one of the seven civilian directors, confessed in

detail after nearly three years how the CIA had worked behind the scenes for weeks to make the conference a public relations success.²¹ The CIA put all these contra leaders on its payroll.

With the political groundwork laid, the Plan C was ready to be launched. In mid-December, around four thousand contras, organised in groups of about thirty men each with adequate weapons crossed the border and attacked Nicaraguan targets. Pedro Pablo Ortiz Centeno, a former National Guard sergeant, who went by the alias, "El Suicida", led the main attack force of about seven hundred guerrillas. To meet the situation, the Sandinista government had already declared a state of military emergency in the northern municipalities close to the border, giving greater authority to local EPS commanders in confronting the contras.

As urban component of Plan C, called "Bitter Christmas", contras were attempting to show terror among people in the cities. C-4 plastic explosives, packaged in flashlights and children's lunch boxes were kept for detonation. On December 23, Interior Minister Tomas Borge, presenting the confiscated materials and captured terrorists to journalists, said that the plan was uncovered by Nicaraguan State Security while still in the preparation stage. The explosives were supposed to be

20. The seven leaders were Adolfo Calero Portocarrero, Enrique Bermudez, Edgar Chamorro, Alfonso Callejas Deshon, Marco Zeledon, Lucia de Salazar and Indalecio Rodriguez.

21. Edgar Chamorro, "Confessions of a Contra", *The New Republic*, August 5, 1985. Chamorro defected in 1985.

detonated in supermarkets, cinema halls, and buses on Christmas Eve. In the north, Plan fared little better. However, despite several weeks of intense fighting the contras were pushed back before reaching the city of Jalapa. The contras suffered heavy casualties in the process. For Nicaraguans, Jalapa became the symbol of national resistance to contra aggression.

Plan Siembra

After the failure of Plan C, the CIA worked out a new strategy to capture Jalapa by reorganising the contras. FDN troops were regrouped into 'task forces', or flexible units of some two hundred to two hundred fifty men each. According to the plan, seven task forces were to penetrate deep into the interior of the country - into Jinotega province in the east and Madriz and Esteli in the west and south. The purpose of these attacks would be to distract Sandinista troops, for Jalapa would be the chief target. And this time, supplies would be airlifted from U.S. and Honduran military bases enabling contras to maintain a prolonged stay inside Nicaragua.

There was fierce fighting between the two sides in Jalapa. There was stiff resistance from the local people, who countered from trenches dug around its perimeter. Failing to sustain the counterattack, the contras began to retreat, finally withdrawing to Honduran bases. By May 1983, the second major FDN offensive was defeated with heavy casualties on both the sides.

The CIA still had not abandoned its plan of a contra military victory in Nicaragua. On June 3, a burst of artillery fire shattered the temporary peace of Jalapa. In the same month, three Honduran artillery battalions pounded the town of Teotecacinte in the border. The contras also threatened to disrupt the 19th July celebration. But each move of the contras strengthened the defence of Nicaragua, overflowing the ranks of the Sandinista People's Militia (MPS) by thousands of volunteers.

Black September

During December 1982 and July 1983, the contras had launched three large-scale offensives from Honduran territory, yet they had failed to capture any Nicaraguan territory. In Washington also, President Reagan was infuriated by the House vote to reject further contra funding and wanted some visible results by way of harassing Sandinistas.

While engaging FDN activists on the northern side, the CIA decided to escalate the war throughout Nicaragua. In the early hour of September 8, 1983, Managua residents were awakened by the sound of exploding bombs. A twin-engine light plane, flying over the south-western section of Managua, dropped two bombs near the residence of Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, and headed south towards Costa Rica. Moments later, a second plane - a Cessna 404 - approached the Sandino International Airport and exploded two powerful bombs killing one, injuring three and causing severe damage to the airport. Within

seconds, anti-aircraft batteries brought the plane crashing down. Identity documents and flight plans recovered from the wreckage indicated that the plane had taken off from a small airstrip of Costa Rica. On the same morning, ARDE in a communique from San Jose, claimed responsibility for the attack.

On September 9, two T-28 jet fighter bombers attempted to attack Nicaragua's principal commercial and petroleum port, Corinto. This was the first direct U.S. participation in the war on Nicaragua. Under heavy fire from Sandinista anti-aircraft units, the jets returned to the armada without hitting their targets.

Following this abortive attempt, there were a frequent air raids in different parts of the country. Raids were conducted by FDN, ARDE, Honduran Defense Force and the United States. There was far greater coordination among these forces than had previously existed. Ground attacks were supported by air assaults. Though Sandinista troops were thwarting these attempts to invade the country, the attackers were busy sabotaging the economic and communication systems thus paralysing an already war-torn nation. The DOD and CIA were taking greater control of the whole gamut of war operations.

Attack on Corinto

Heavy fighting continued into October which climaxed on October 10. At 11:30 P.M. when a U.S. aircraft flew over Corinto

to draw the attention of the city's defence forces, U.S. Navy, Sea Air and Land Units (SEALS) - the naval branch of the SOF - slipped into the harbour in a sophisticated, artillery-equipped speed boat, launching rockets and firing machine-guns at the oil and gasoline storage tanks. Within seconds, a tank containing 1.6 million gallons of diesel burst into flames. The fire's fury remained unabated for two days and literally shook the city. Dock workers, local militia and mass organisations went into action battling the blaze which spread to an adjacent fuel tank. Firefighters and volunteers from all over the country were pressed into service. While Nicaraguans were fighting the flames, U.S. television was telecasting the pictures of the 'city in flames' and newscasters were reading the communiques issued by the FDN claiming responsibility for terrorist attack.

Next evening, when the intense heat ignited the third tank, Cuban, Mexican and Colombian fire fighting experts were brought in. Local authorities ordered people to evacuate. Volunteers raised sand-bag walls to prevent further spread. The joint endeavour of the Nicaraguans and international experts brought the blaze under control on the third day. According to Nicaraguan authorities, over 100 people were injured, 25,000 inhabitants evacuated, essential commodities like food stuff and medical supplies destroyed and pipe line damaged.²²

22. *The Washington Post*, April 18, 1984.

For the second time in less than a month, another commando unit blew up the under-water pipelines at Puerto Sandino. On the Atlantic Coast, two oil storage tanks in Puerto Benjamin Zeledon were hit by mortar fire. This loss of oil profoundly affected the general life in Nicaragua. Mines and agro-industrial projects were forced to close down, smaller industries temporarily stopped production. The communication in the country was severely disrupted.

Shortly, after the Corinto attack, its real perpetrators were exposed. Emerson Uriel Navarrete, an FDN member who had been captured by Sandinistas in September narrated how he and nine others had been given intensive training by the CIA in speedboat operations and underwater sabotage to carry out the operations. Later, CIA felt that they were not competent enough for the purpose and proceeded to call in Pentagon detachments to execute the plan.

Besides these, several other "harassment" operations were conducted by DOD and CIA side by side with the contras damaging extensively the economic infrastructure of Nicaragua.

RESTRUCTURING THE POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATIONS

By the end of 1983, it seemed clear that military defeat of Sandinistas, through harassment strategy was almost impossible. The proponents of direct interventionist line found

it difficult to justify the direct intervention. The U.S. overthrow of the Sandinistas by direct military force could have been possible only in the event of direct Soviet strategic threat to the United States or Nicaraguan direct aggression against America's allies which were highly improbable. The United States tried to provoke Sandinistas to attack Nicaragua's neighbours for border disputes and giving shelter and support to the contras, but it did not materialise.

The U.S. strategists realised that direct military intervention would earn both stiff domestic opposition and adverse international reaction. According to the Center for Defence Information (CDI) estimate such an invasion would have resulted in upto 4000 U.S. dead and 20000 wounded over four years and a total cost of some \$10 billion.²³ General Wallace Nutting, retired commander of U.S. Readiness Command from which most of the combat units would have been drawn was of the opinion in late June 1985 that it would be a 'major operation' requiring multiple divisions and air support and sea support. There would be a big fight to dislodge them which would drain U.S. forces and distract attention from other parts of the world.²⁴ Certainly, U.S. public would not have consented to such an invasion.

23. Cited in Edward Best, *U.S. Policy and Regional Security in Central America*, New York : St. Martin's Press, 1987, p. 113.

24. Quoted in Richard Halloran, "U.S. General Opposes Nicaragua Invasion", *The International Herald Tribune*, July 1, 1985.

Besides, war on Nicaragua would have predictably, consolidated leftist forces in the region behind the Sandinistas. In the process, the U.S. army might have been drawn into direct conflict with the rebels of El Salvador, Guatemala and other left elements of Latin America. As a consequence, the fighting would have spilled over from Nicaragua into the whole region and there would have been a surge of terrorist activities against the U.S. throughout the hemisphere. Also, it would have provided a tremendous propaganda bonus for the Soviet Union. These possible negative consequences dissuaded the Reagan administration from launching direct invasion against Nicaragua.

The alternative of dispatching Honduran army to Nicaragua was not attractive because the former would be no match for the battle-hardened army of the latter. The second alternative was the U.S. attempt to assemble other proxy forces by reactivating the Central American Defense Council (CONDECA), which was in a moribund state following the three day "Soccer war" between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969. Carter had tried to rebuild the Council after Sandinista victory, and the Reagan administration reactivating it wanted to use against Nicaragua. CONDECA's involvement would have regionalised the conflict and other countries of the region would have been forced to take sides thereby harming U.S. interests in the hemisphere.

The third option was to invoke the Rio Treaty, the traditional mechanism for U.S. intervention. But it was also no

longer viable in the wake of the nationalist reaction to the U.S. role in the Malvinas conflict. Countries in the region found the United States as the unreliable ally. On its part, Managua launched a diplomatic "peace offensive", an attempt to reduce the international political terrain in which Washington could carry out an invasion. The Sandinista leaders conducted extensive tours to various countries of Western Europe and Latin America, and convoked emergency sessions of the U.N. Security Council and the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement. The objective of these diplomatic initiative was to alert the world to the consequences of U.S. aggression for international peace and security.

At a NSC meeting on July 8, 1985, a new policy against the Sandinista government was formulated.²⁵ In the Reagan administration, those who endorsed the low-intensity approach had never subscribed to the quick victory over Sandinistas. It would be a protracted war pervading every sphere of target nation and influencing domestic public opinion. Nevertheless, they considered the destabilisation programme a satisfactory beginning, and the contras a very useful pressure mechanism. Now emphasis was placed on a coherent, long-range approach thoroughly integrating military, economic, political, psychological and diplomatic activities. With an intention to implement the new strategy, President Reagan set up a bipartisan commission.

25. *The New York Times*, July 17, 1983; also *Time* August 8, 1983.

National Bipartisan Commission On Central America

The motive behind the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, or the Kissinger Commission as it is called in short (which was constituted on July 19, 1983), was to preempt the national debate on President's policy on Central America and to restore bipartisan support for the President.

The Kissinger Report acknowledged that violent upheavals in Central America were rooted in sheer poverty and repression. "Discontents are real, and for much of the population conditions of life are miserable; just as Nicaragua was ripe for revolution, so the conditions that invite revolution are present elsewhere in the region as well."²⁶ However, in spite of this acknowledgement, the Kissinger Commission looked at the crisis through Reagan administration's east-west prism. The Report alleged with an argument built on an assertion rather than evidence that Soviet Union was exploiting the indigenous revolutions for its own purpose and accused Cuba of fomenting the unrest.

New Role for the Contras

In the new strategy, the contras' role was redefined. They were to move beyond naked military force and transform itself into a contender in the Nicaraguan social and political equation in which military aggression was to be reduced to a

26. *The Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America*, New York : Mac Millan Publishing Co., 1984, p. 5.

means of achieving broader social and political goals. Washington assigned FDN and ARDE to carry out multi-dimensional operation which would undermine the defensive capacity of the revolution and build a support base for the counterrevolutionary project.

The Sandinista armed forces were no longer to be the target of contra aggression. The FDN and ARDE fighters were to avoid direct clashes with EPS troops. The new targets were health clinics, schools, peasant cooperative, agricultural and construction machinery, and any installation that symbolised the progress and development brought about by the revolution. "We have instructions from the U.S. government to attack the most important centres of production and then retreat into the mountains," said FDN leader Adolfo Calero.²⁷ Apart from disruption, the contras were to concentrate on political activities in areas where they had public sympathy by whittling down support for the revolution among the peasantry. At the same time, the zones of military conflict were to be expanded which, in turn, would force Nicaragua's intensified military mobilisation and greater diversion of resources from social and economic development to the defence effort.

The contras' new role was part of the specific Nicaraguan variant of low-intensity warfare, the war of attrition. Nicaragua's Deputy Interior Minister Luis Carrion Cruz stated, this new strategy "will seek to tire us, exasperate us,

27. Quoted in Reid Brodie, *Contra terror in Nicaragua*, Boston : South End Press, 1985, p. 36.

demoralise us with a prolonged war."²⁸ Nicaragua's civilian population was to be the ultimate target in the new strategy.

The attrition process was designed to breed discontent and to reduce support for the revolution, and this would obviously open the way for the counterrevolution to develop a social base and present itself as an alternative. The principal indicator for success would be the extent to which the counterrevolution was able to influence and win over the people and to discredit the revolution.

MINING NICARAGUA'S HARBOURS

The contras, under CIA direction, expanded their military activities by penetrating deep into Nicaraguan interiors. The CIA's uninterrupted logistic support sustained them in the confrontation. Washington's war reached a new height in the first quarter of 1984 when mines were sown in Nicaraguan harbours.

Between February and April 1984, U.S. forces placed at least six hundred aquatic mines in Nicaragua's major harbours, Corinto and Sandino on the Pacific coast and El Bluff on the Atlantic coast. First two Nicaraguan fishing boats hit the devices in February. Again in early March, a freighter flying the Panamanian flag hit a mine in Corinto causing moderate damage. By

28. Quoted in William I Robinson and Kent Norsworthy, *David and Goliath*, p. 95.

April, nine foreign vessels were damaged, including Japanese, British, Dutch, Panamanian and Soviet ships, and fifteen seamen of different nationalities were injured. More than two dozen Nicaraguan fishing boats were damaged or destroyed.

Deactivating the mines was a very costly process. Dozens of lobster fishermen joined Sandinista Coast Guard divers in deactivating them and in sweeping the ports. The mines, which were placed on the harbour floor and set off either by movement or by sonic waves, proved more risky and some thirty people were injured in the process. Nicaragua estimated losses of over \$10 million, including lost sea food export, delays in other exports, damage to Nicaraguan vessels, loss of merchandise, and increased insurance costs.

On March 1, Eden Pastora issued a communique attributing the mining to ARDE. The next day, Edgar Chamorro claimed FDN's responsibility in spreading the devices. After several weeks, the Congressional and administrative sources leaked the truth to U.S. press.²⁹ Chamorro recalled nearly two years later, "The [CIA] deputy station chief wrote our statement on the mining. He woke me up in the middle of the night and told me to issue it. It was the first I knew of it."³⁰

29. The first U.S. press account of U.S. involvement was published in *The Wall Street Journal*, April 6, 1984. The detailed account of this issue was published in *The Los Angeles Times*, March 3-5, 1985.

30. *The Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 1985.

He explained, "I was surprised to read that we - the contras - were taking credit for having mined several Nicaraguan harbours. George [the Deputy Chief of the CIA mission] told me to rush to our clandestine radio station and read this announcement before the Sandinistas broke the news. Of course, we played no role in the mining of the harbours."³¹

It was an NSC plan and was carried out under CIA supervision. Designed by the CIA Weapons Group in Langley - ammunition manufacturing division within the agency - with the assistance from The Naval Surface Weapons Centre in White Oaks, Maryland, the underwater charges deployed in Nicaragua consisted of large metal cylinders packed with 300 pounds of C-4 plastic explosives.³² The mines were sown by SEAL commando units "loaned" by the navy to the CIA. The SEAL units arrived in armoured speed boats from the U.S. frigate 'USS Gallery' anchored offshore to spread mines in the shipping channels of Nicaragua's harbours.

Significantly, the State Department's legal office sought to rationalise the aggressive act of mining Nicaragua's harbours. In a statement titled "Use of Naval Mines in the Exercise of Self-Defence", it claimed that the deployment of mines was aimed to disrupt the flow of military and other materials essential to the attackers' overall aggressive effort. U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Jeane Kirkpatrick advanced a peculiar

31. *The New Republic*, August 5, 1985.

32. *The New York Times*, June 28, 1986.

argument that unless all nations adhered to international law, no nation need to do so.³³

The U.S. mining of Nicaraguan harbours was intended to frighten foreign ships destined for Nicaragua, i.e., it was meant to create de facto naval blockade of that country. The Reagan administration's strategy was that once the first ship ran into a mine, no other ship would dare to enter. By preventing ships from entering and leaving Nicaraguan ports which resulted in paralysing its imports and exports, the Reagan administration achieved an important objective of asphyxiating Nicaragua's economy. The timing was also chosen carefully, as November to April is the harvest season for Nicaragua's principal export crops which need speedy shipments.

Suffering from the acts of U.S. military aggression, Nicaragua moved to the International Court of Justice on April, 1984 in order to seek justice. The World Court, in its ruling, condemned U.S. activities and ordered Washington to pay reparation to Nicaragua for its damages. But the United States withdrew from the middle of the court proceedings and declared that it would not abide by the Court decisions.

33. Cited in Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, *The Soft War : The Uses and Abuses of U.S. Economic Aid in Central America*, New York : Grover Press, 1988.

SURROGATE SUPPLY NETWORK FOR THE CONTRAS

CIA's mining of Nicaraguan harbours and World Court's ruling enraged the Congress members. The Reagan administration was charged with violating the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980, deceiving Congress about the nature of CIA operations and abusing the constitutional checks and balances. Consequently, Congress legislated on October 10, 1984 for a moratorium on contra aid.³⁴ The new legislation prohibited all direct or indirect support for contras from any U.S. intelligence organisation until the end of February 1985.

Yet, by the fall of 1984, it was clear that President Reagan had decided to circumvent the Congressional ban and to keep the war going by continuation of supplies to contras. Duane Claridge assured the FDN leaders, "don't worry, Congress has stopped the aid, but we will find a way,"³⁵ Between March and June, Claridge from CIA, Christopher Lehman from White House, and Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North from N.S.C. took secret trips to Honduras to reaffirm Washington's continued support for the contras.

From April 1984 to October 1986 the administration explored four alternative sources of support for the contras :

34. Cynthia J. Arnson, *Crossroad : Congress, The Reagan Administration and Central America*, New York : Pantheon Books, 1988.

35. Edgar Chamorro was quoted in *The New York Times*, September 12, 1985.

(1) a "Shadow CIA" - operating under the NSC supervision - which procured and distributed thousands of tons of war material to the contras; (2) friendly foreign governments which at Reagan administration's persuasion, provided millions of dollars to finance the war; (3) American right-wing groups which supplied "humanitarian" aid; and (4) U.S.-based paramilitary organisations which offered military men and training for the war effort. The surrogate supply network was carefully designed to provide "plausible denial" of administration's involvement.

Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, a member of the "Core Group" and an important White House bureaucrat to oversee contra policy, was assigned to coordinate the network.³⁶ Apart from North, numerous other senior administration officials like Robert McFarlane (Reagan's National Security Advisor), Admiral John Poindexter (McFarlane's successor), Elliott Abrams (Assistant Secretary of State), William Casey (C.I.A. Director), Allan Fierz (CIA Central America Task Force Director), Donald Gregg (National Security Assistant to Vice President Bush) and Nestor Sanchez (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State) participated in the project. Besides, Retired Major General John K. Singlaub and retired Air Force General Richard V. Second collaborated in the scheme.

By the time Congress halted further U.S. aid to the contras in October 1984, the project for sustaining them was -----
36. *Newsweek*, November 17, 1986, p. 52.

already in place. The resupply system relied upon a chain of dummy corporations, international bank accounts, arms brokers, shipping companies and secret transactions around the world.

As this supply network was being organised, the administration contrived to camouflage the assistance behind a fake contra donation campaign. Edgar Chamorro recalled that Adolfo Calero instructed the Miami FDN Office in June 1984 "with orders from the CIA" to run a series of Newspaper advertisements soliciting donations to a Panama-based organisation called the Humanitarian Development Foundation Inc.³⁷ Soon after, advertisements appeared in various newspapers and magazines which appealed "to the generosity of the American people" to aid "the victims of communist dominated Nicaragua." In fact, the CIA supplied both money and text, in Chamorro's versions, "to create the impression that private aid was going to the rebels and thus cloak CIA efforts to 'launder' funds for the FDN through foreign governments" and other different sources.³⁸

Friendly foreign governments, at the behest of the United States contributed substantially to the clandestine resupply system to sustain contra offensive. Saudi Arabia, Israel, Brunei, Taiwan, Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras played an important role in the covert war after Congress banned official U.S. support. These nations provided funds, weapons, logistics and advisers for the contras.

37. *The Miami Herald*, June 24, 1985.

38. *The Associated Press*, June 10, 1985.

Encouraged by President Reagan and his associates dozens of contra charities sprang up across the nation. Important right-wing organisations including the Christian Broadcasting Network, the Unification Church and Veterans of Foreign Wars; as well as newly founded ultra-right groups such as the Nicaraguan Patriotic Association, Friends of the Americas, Refugee Relief International, Nicaraguan Freedom Fund and the Americares Foundation, raised thousands of dollars in cash, medical supplies, clothing, food-stuffs and other materials. To avoid open violation of the Neutrality Act, these groups classified their assistance as "humanitarian aid" for Nicaraguan "refugees".

Paramilitary groups joined hands with the administration in contributing military aid and men to the contra cause. These groups included Soldiers of Fortune (SOF), Civilian Military Assistance (CMA), National Defence Council, American Security Council (ASC) and the Air Commando Association. Members of these organisations performed important functions as advisers, trainers, pilots, mechanics, and combatants. Civilian Military Assistance was the most notorious paramilitary group supporting the contras.

The Reagan administration's aid network salvaged the contras from political extinction, buying time for the president to mount propaganda campaign aimed at pressurising Congress to renew official assistance and restore the CIA's pre-eminent role in the covert war.

ELECTION IN NICARAGUA AND U.S. RESPONSE

As per earlier Sandinista commitment, elections were held in Nicaragua in November 1984. FSLN won the elections with a overwhelming majority. Various groups which were invited to observe the elections, expressed satisfaction over the conduct of elections.³⁹ But the Reagan administration tried to discredit the whole process⁴⁰ and refuse to recognise its outcome. It dubbed the elections as "sham" and "farce".⁴¹ Besides, the United States attempted to disrupt the process through increased contra terrorist activities on the eve of Nicaraguan elections.

IRAN-CONTRA SCANDAL

The Reagan administration created one of the biggest scandals in U.S. history in the process of creating alternative sources of supplies to the contra for keeping the clandestine war against Nicaragua going, namely, Iran-Contra scandal. Some striking features of Iran-Contra scandal were : (1) secret sale of arms to Iran which had been dubbed as a "terrorist state" by

39. The report of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Delegation to observe the Nicaraguan General Elections of November 4, 1984, Washington, D.C.; International Human Rights Law Group and Washington Office on Latin America, *A Political Opening in Nicaragua*, Washington, D.C.; *Report of a British Parliamentary Delegation to Nicaragua to Observe the Presidential and National Assembly Elections*, London.

40. Statement to the Press, reprinted in *The New York Times*, March 29, 1984.

41. Abraham Brumberg, "*Sham*" and "*Farce*" in *Nicaragua ?*", *Dissent*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Spring 1985, pp. 227-228.

President Reagan; (ii) a sustained attempt to trade arms for hostages held by pro-Iranian kidnappers in Lebanon against Reagan's public pledge that he would not negotiate or compromise with the hostage takers; (iii) diversion of funds from arms sales to Iran through secret Swiss Bank accounts to the contra rebels - at a time when this was barred by law; (iv) an effort by the administration officials to conduct a separate foreign policy beyond the scrutiny of Congress; (v) an attempted coverup of the role of the President by White House officials.⁴²

To protect the President, Poindexter and North were immediately sacrificed. On November 26, Reagan appointed a three member special review board to examine the role of NSC in the affair under the chairmanship of former Republican Senator John J. Tower (other two members were Edmond S. Muskie and Lt. General (ret'd.) Brent Scowcroft) which published its report on February 26, 1987.⁴³

In January 1987, the House and the Senate Select Committees were constituted under the chairmanship of Representative Lee H. Hamilton and Senator Daniel K. Inouye who conducted joint investigation into the affair. The "Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran - Contra Affair" was

42. Keesings Record of World Events, Vol. XXXIII, June 1987, p. 35182.

43. The Tower Commission Report, New York : Random House, 1987.

released in November containing 690 pages after a ten-month investigations.⁴⁴

The Contragate scandal did not stop aid for the contras. Almost no one during Contragate investigations challenged the policy of overthrowing the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The debate remained a narrow one that concerned with the legality and wisdom of the methods used.

CREATING INVASION SCARE FOR SANDINISTAS

With the objective of overthrowing the Sandinistas, Washington's multi-faceted low intensity warfare resorted to psychological invasion-scare tactic creating the spectre of a U. S. military intervention to intimidate the Nicaraguans. Combining a regional military buildup with periodic military manoeuvres, the United States wanted the Nicaraguan people to live in a state of permanent tension, fear and insecurity.

In order to create war-psychosis in the conflict environment, resources were mobilised to reinvigorate the on-going programmes of military exercises in Central America, principally in Honduras and Costa Rica. The United States had been conducting joint exercises with the Honduran armed forces since 1965, but two months after Reagan took office, the Joint

44. *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran - Contra Affair*, Washington D.C. : Government Printing Office, November 17, 1987.

Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approved a five-year programme to beef up the manoeuvres. Then in mid-1983, the administration decided to expand vastly the scope and duration of these manoeuvres to create an impression that the war against Nicaragua was imminent. Important among these exercises were *Halcon Vista*, *Big Pine II*, *Grenadero I*, *Ocean Venture*, *Big Pine III* and *Solid Shield*. The Reagan administration used the manoeuvres to achieve three objectives in its "total war" against the Sandinistas : to provide covert logistic support for CIA/contra operations; to wage psychological warfare against the Sandinistas; and to build the infrastructure for future overt military intervention.

ECONOMIC STRANGULATION

While CIA-backed contras were engaged in the war of vandalism and terror in the Nicaraguan countryside, the Reagan administration launched a less publicised, but equally ruthless campaign to shatter Nicaragua's economy. From offices to Treasury Department to boardrooms of international lending organisations, Reagan's men manoeuvred to stifle Nicaragua's economy by depriving it of commercial relations with the United States, by impeding its access to multilateral and private bank loans, and by constricting its economic relation with other nations.

By pushing Nicaragua into economic crisis, the U.S. hoped to pervert people's consciousness and to foment social unrest, systematise this unrest into opposition, and ultimately

delegitimise the revolution. The fragile and disarticulate Nicaraguan economy constituted the soft underbelly of the revolution.

The U.S. economic war started from the very beginning of the Reagan administration. Reagan's economic war on Nicaragua was bi-dimensional -- internal and external. Internally, the administration directed CIA/contra activists to sabotage economic installations, destroy production process and to damage communication facilities. Externally, the Reagan administration aimed at halting U.S. Nicaraguan trade, blocking multilateral loans and assistance and obstructing Nicaragua's economic relation with other countries particularly with the U.S. allies.

Curtailing Bilateral Trade

On April 1, 1981, the Reagan administration formally launched the economic war. Invoking a section of the Foreign Assistance Act, the President called for cutting off economic aid for the Sandinistas that were found to be supporting revolutionary violence in El Salvador⁴⁵ despite the State Department's admission that there was no hard evidence to support the president's assertion.

In 1981, Reagan ordered a cut in wheat exports to Nicaragua and cancellation of all bilateral U.S. aid. Also in the same year, Washington terminated export-import bank guarantees to -----
45. White House Press Release, April, 1981.

finance American exports to Nicaragua. Without these, Nicaraguan business community was unable to purchase expensive but much-needed American merchandise on credit. In 1982, the U.S. Commerce Department placed prohibition on exports of chemical feedstocks to Nicaragua. To heighten the pressure, the Department of Agriculture imposed on Nicaragua a highly unfavourable schedule for import of its sugar to the United States, forcing the Sandinistas to increase storage facilities, and to accept a six-month delay in payment.

Nicaragua was pointedly excluded from aid and trade benefits in the Reagan's scheme of the Caribbean Basin Initiative. Similarly it was sidelined in the Kissinger Commission's recommendations for the economic upliftment of Central America. In June 1983, Reagan ordered all Nicaragua consular and commercial offices to close down, an action that further obstructed trade and investment by U.S. business in Nicaragua.

In a clear breach of international trade law, President Reagan announced on May 10, 1983, the slashing of Nicaragua's sugar export quota by almost 90 percent - a measure that hurt both the state farms and several large private producers. The sugar quota cuts resulted in an immediate loss of \$18 million to Nicaragua's foreign exchange earnings. U.S. trade restrictions against Nicaragua was also violative of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) treaty.

The Total Trade Embargo

The incremental trade curb against Nicaragua since 1981 culminated in a complete embargo in May 1985. This action had major disastrous impact on the entire process of production and circulation in Nicaragua, given its historic dependence on U.S. market.

On May 1, 1985, in an Executive Order, President Reagan put a blanket ban on economic intercourse on Nicaragua.⁴⁶ The embargo prohibited the imports of Nicaraguan goods and services; blocked direct sea and air transport; and ended the export of U.S. goods to Nicaragua except contras.

The U.S. wrecked havoc on Nicaraguan economy. It caused a loss of \$58 million in agricultural exports to the U.S. and \$110 million worth of U.S. export to Nicaragua.⁴⁷ According to Nicaragua's ministry of foreign trade, embargo-related costs in 1985 alone totalled about \$50 million in lost export revenues, hired transportation costs, and production declines due to insufficient imports.⁴⁸ The impact of the embargo was lessened to some extent by Sandinista government's efforts to diversify its trade to minimise its dependence on U.S. Nicaragua was successful in finding new buyers and sellers in Western European nations, Canada, Libya, Japan, Latin America, and socialist countries.

46. White House Press Release, May 1, 1985.

47. *The Washington Post*, May 8, 1985.

Blocking Multilateral Financing

The United States began opposing all loans for Nicaraguan development projects from Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) particularly from the World Bank and the IDB - institutions in which the United States is the largest shareholder and it plays highly influential role. Washington held a veto on low interest loans; when a loan could not be vetoed, the U.S. representatives to the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) manipulated the bureaucratic process to prevent lending proposals from being brought to the executive board for final approval.

The administration officials used "technical economic rationales" to disguise their political motives. The United States blocked Nicaraguan loan proposals in formal votes and by delaying techniques. In June 1983, this practice of blocking all multilateral loans to Nicaragua became official U.S. policy.

The United States vetoed Nicaragua's loan proposals in the IDB and the World Bank seven times between 1982 and 1983. In 1984 when a Nicaraguan agricultural loan of \$58 million came up for approval in the IDB, Secretary of State George Schultz wrote a letter to the IDB directors expressing their "strong concern" over the project and threatening termination of U.S. funding to the IDB in case loan was passed.

48. Tony Jenkins "The U.S. Embargo Against Nicaragua : One Year Later", *Central America Report*, June 27, 1986.

The influence of the U.S. government also drastically reduced private lending to Nicaragua. When the Sandinistas came to power, they found themselves saddled with a \$1.6 billion foreign debt - about half of which was owed to private banks. In return for the government's promise to repay this debt, private banks pledged to sanction fresh loans. During the next three years, Nicaragua complied with the loan agreements promptly, but the new private loans were not forthcoming. Only a paltry \$1 million in new private bank loans reached Nicaragua between 1979 and 1983 - a period during which the government paid over \$575 million in debt service.⁴⁹

Influencing Other Countries to Isolate Nicaragua

The United States tried but failed in persuading other countries to join its trade embargo against Nicaragua. Western European nations such as France, West Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria and the Scandinavian countries enhanced their bilateral aid to Nicaragua despite Reagan administration's campaign to quarantine it. Secretary of State Schultz pressed these countries to cease financial support for the Sandinistas. In response, these nations announced to expand trade and aid relations with the Sandinist Nicaragua and strongly condemned U.S. action.

In order to stave off the effects of the Reagan administration's economic war, the Sandinista government

49. Sylvia Maxfield and Richard Stahler-Sholk, "External Constraints", in Thomas W. Walker, ed. *Nicaragua: The First Five Years*, New York: Praeger, 1985, p. 259.

approached the Soviet bloc nations. Although, Washington could not prevent these assistance from socialist countries, it got a propaganda plea that Nicaragua was a Soviet "satellite".

Despite bilateral assistance from a wide range of nations, Washington's economic assault severely disrupted Nicaragua's socio-economic programmes. In conformity with the principles of low-intensity warfare, Reagan's economic war, through fostering shortages, curtailing development projects, and undermining the private sector, had "made the economy scream" and destroyed the socio-economic potential of the revolution. Destabilisation dashed the Sandinistas' hopes for an economy that would have met the basic needs of all Nicaraguans in the near future.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH SANDINISTAS

Though the Reagan administration kept a pretence of dialogue with Sandinista government through on-again, off-again negotiations, its noncompromising hostility ruled out a negotiated settlement. In the early years of Reagan rule, agreement seemed possible. But intransigent attitude of the Reagan administration prevented a negotiated settlement to be arrived at. The Nicaraguan government, fearing that the Reagan administration's hostility threatened to destroy the revolution, was keen on a negotiated settlement which would block the U.S. government's efforts to overthrow it.

The Reagan administration was deadset with any agreement that would leave Sandinistas in power. Washington merely used the negotiations as a convenient smokescreen to hide its real agenda and deflect domestic and international criticism. Washington saw the bilateral talks as counterproductive because they offered the Sandinistas a high-profile public forum where they could appear reasonable and acceptable.

CRISIS IN THE COUNTERREVOLUTION

It is pertinent to point out that while publicly the Reagan administration was claiming that the contras had gained substantial foothold in the war and were capable of defeating the Sandinistas, the ground realities pointed to the contrary. The contra activities became mired in charges of misappropriated funds, rampant corruption, drug trafficking and gross mismanagement. By 1985, a profound demoralisation had set in within the counterrevolution, eroding its ability to stand as a political-military force.

Besides forcible recruitment of children and peasants, there was a chorus of charges against contra leaders who were busy swindling U.S. aid and were engaged in other seamy activities. Contra corruption had spilled into the realm of international narcotic dealings. In December 1985, the Associated

Press reported an elaborate contra network of continental drug trafficking.⁵⁰

As a whole, during eight years of Reagan's imperial rule, Nicaragua was cornered from every side. It was strangulated militarily, politically and economically by the vindictive policy of the United States. But despite multifaceted onslaughts, Nicaragua pursued democratic and rational policy which earned world-wide acclaim.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARDS NICARAGUA

George Bush, who acted as the Vice President under Ronald Reagan, in most respects, continued his predecessor's policy in Central America. While the rhetoric was toned down, policy in the region remained largely unchanged in the new presidency. At the same time, Bush understood the imperative of overcoming the weaknesses of Reagan's contra policy, its lack of support from Congress and from the American public. With these experiences, President Bush carefully avoided according high priority to Central America, although he kept a vigilant watch over the happenings in the region. Bush administration found it convenient to put aside the region which was a bone of contention between the White House and Congress and as a consequence, did not allow it to continue as a source of internal political conflict within Washington.

50. A.P. dispatch, (datelined Washington, D.C., December 6, 1985).

In October, 1986, Nicaragua was hit by a hurricane which caused severe economic damage resulting in a further decrease of 2 percent in the already sharply falling Gross Domestic Product. This not only dwindled the chances of economic victory but made economic collapse near certainty.

In February, the Central American presidents, under Tesoro Beach accord, fixed timeframe for holding elections in Nicaragua before February 25, 1990. They also called for a revision of electoral laws and provided for election campaign six months in advance of elections. The agreement also seemed to foreclose the contras' political future by committing to a policy in which their camps would be dismantled through demobilisation, repatriation or voluntary relocation.

In order to avoid confrontation with Congress over contra aid, the White House negotiated a bi-partisan agreement with the Congress. Congress agreed to provide non-military aid to the contras through the 1990 elections in Nicaragua in return for White House forgoing request for lethal aid. In April, 1989, Congress approved \$66 million in aid for the contras.

The contras were not the only issue in Washington's relation with Nicaragua. The U.S. economic embargo, the blocking of credits from multilateral financial institutions, allegations of CIA support for the opposition and ongoing disputes over visas for the U. S. and Nicaraguan diplomatic personnel further soured

the relation. There were no indications from Washington of a willingness to normalise the relation with the Sandinistas. The economic boycott was renewed by President Bush; and Congress approved substantial funding for a sector of Nicaraguan internal political opposition.

After receiving aid, the revitalised contras strengthened their forces and intensified attacks inside Nicaragua. When, in August, Central American presidents at Tela called for disbandment of the contras and fixed a target date of December 8, some contra commanders, in response, simply moved forces across the border. Washington pleaded its innocence by emphasising that the disbandment of the contras was a "voluntary" process.

The Bush administration dealt with the Sandinistas till their final days in power and played a major role in Nicaragua elections.

CONCLUSION

Throughout his eight years in office, Reagan was determined to reassert U.S. supremacy in the world and stamp out any challenge to U.S. hegemony in Central America in general and in Nicaragua in particular. He singlemindedly persuaded an indefensible and aggressive policy towards a weak and tiny country like Nicaragua. He spared no means howsoever illegal in

executing this policy. He subverted U.S. constitutional processes by circumventing Congressional prohibition and public scrutiny through such illegalities as Iran-Contra scandal, clandestine supplies to contras, manipulation of mass media and disinformation campaign. He set the stage for the final defeat of beleaguered Sandinista government.

CHAPTER - IV

INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO U.S.' NICARAGUAN
POLICY

Introduction

The U.S. policy of destabilisation of Nicaragua evoked strong reaction from the countries worldwide. Though the cold war divide still existed in 1980s, many of the U.S. allies in Western Europe and Latin America openly criticised U.S. policy towards Nicaragua. They came forward to help Nicaragua providing moral and material support. Similarly, in international forums, the U.S. manoeuvres and highhandedness were widely resented. When alarmed by the U.S. aggressive attitude towards Nicaragua some countries of Central America took initiative to ease the tension, Washington scuttled the move through pro-U.S. regimes in the area.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Though countries of Central America were dominated by military dictatorship and violent upheavals, some countries like Honduras and Costa Rica acted as U.S. satellites in Washington's undeclared war against Nicaragua.

Honduras

Honduras played the role of U.S. proxy and its territory was used as a springboard for U.S. subversion against the Sandinista government. The U.S. militarisation of Honduras began following the triumph of the Sandinista revolution. In the spring of 1980, Major General Robert L. Schweitzer visited Tegucigalpa to convey the Honduran military junta that the Carter

administration "expected [it] to assume the regional role played for years by Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza - to become a bulwark of anti-communism against the pressures of popular revolt."¹ After Somoza's fall in Nicaragua, the Carter administration impressed on General Paz Garcia the urgency of Honduras's becoming a democracy in order to get a propaganda plea in support of democratic values in Central America. So in January 1982, Honduras's first elected civilian president in eleven years took office.

Ronald Reagan extended Carter's policy of making Honduras as a new proxy in Central America, and utilising it as the linchpin for the administration's regional war strategy. Thus, under the Reagan administration, the process began to transform this once-classic "banana republic" into the epicentre of the regional counterrevolution. Although Honduras was having a civilian government headed by President Robert Suazo Cordova, the real power remained with the military under the control of General Gustavo Alvarez. The Reagan administration entrusted General Alvarez the task to oversee the implementation of its ambitious anti-Nicaraguan programmes in Honduras.

After Sandinista takeover in Nicaragua, many of the National Guardsmen took refuge in Honduras who were later joined by Miskito Indians. From Honduran rearbase, these Somocistamen launched frequent attacks on the border areas of Nicaragua.

1. *The Washington Post*, March 23, 1980.

Besides, there were regular incursions of Honduran armed forces into Nicaraguan territory which were repulsed by Sandinista troops.

Honduran aggression had two definite objectives in addition to bolstering the contra efforts. The first objective was to vilify Sandinistas as "aggressors" against their neighbours through diplomatic campaign.

The second objective was to provoke Nicaragua into launching a retaliatory attack on Honduras so that Washington would get the opportunity to intervene militarily in Nicaragua.

The U.S. strategy of military intervention under the smokescreen of a Honduran-Nicaraguan war was based on the assumption that Sandinistas 'lack maturity, behave impulsively, and have a guerrilla mentality.' So they would be easily provoked by Honduran actions. But the assumptions proved wrong when the FSLN leaders showed maturity and cautiousness in dealing with the situation.

Honduras was swiftly transformed into the image of the frontline state. It received enormous military and economic assistance from Washington, second only to El Salvador in Central America. Economic assistance increased from \$50.7 million in 1980 to \$139 million in 1984. U.S. military aid, "the fastest growing component of U.S. aid to Honduras", according to the facts of

Congressional Research service (CRS), skyrocketed from \$3.4 million in 1980 to \$79.7 million in 1986. By 1985, Honduras was the eighth leading recipient of U.S. military and economic assistance in the world.² However, in Honduras, the poorest country in Central America at that time, only the military profited from the pouring of massive U.S. assistance.

U.S. military training programmes in Honduras also expanded with the increase of the number of U.S. military advisers. The Pentagon started an extensive training programme to transform the Honduran armed services into a modern counter-insurgency force. American Mobile Training Teams trained soldiers in everything from communications to reconnaissance techniques. In June 1983, SOUTHCOM established a Regional Military Training Centre (CREM) in Puerto Castilla where U.S. Green Berets provided extensive training to Salvadoran and Honduran security forces. Besides, high-ranking Honduran military officials were sent to the United States for advanced military training.

Honduras performed strategic role in the Reagan administration's war against Nicaragua to serve as a sanctuary and logistical base for CIA/contra activities. Washington found Honduras as the most suitable among Central American nations to serve U.S. interests as Costa Rica was still a non-military state, El Salvador strife-torn and Guatemala highly unstable.

2. Congressional Research Service, "U.S. Assistance to Honduras, Foreign Aid Facts," June 12, 1985, pp. 3, 5.

In order to mount pressure on Nicaragua by creating scare situation, joint U.S.-Honduran military manoeuvres began in eastern Honduras in August 1981. During the exercises, new airfields were built twenty-five miles north of the border with Nicaragua, capable of accommodating full range of U.S. jet fighters and even the gigantic C-5 Galaxy transport planes. C-130 aircraft from the SOUTHCOM base in Panama Canal zone flew a battalion of Honduran troops and their equipment into Puerto Lempira, about fifteen miles north of the Nicaraguan border on the Atlantic Coast, for logistic supply to FDN and MISURA groups. The manoeuvres, which began in 1981, turned out to be nearly continuous and thus had the effect of permanently stationing 700 to 1000 U.S. military personnel in Honduras and thousands more on ships off the coast.

General Alvarez played important role in the U.S. effort to revive the moribund Central American Defence Council (CONDECA) in October 1983. Created in 1963 as part of Kennedy's 'Alliance for Progress' programme of counterinsurgency, CONDECA collapsed following the "soccer war" between Honduras and El Salvador in 1969. In order to regionalise war against Nicaragua, the United States made fresh attempt to promote "collective defensive action" against radical revolutions. Though Nicaragua was one of the three founding members, CONDECA's new incarnation excluded it. Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama were now joined with Honduras. According to official version, CONDECA was being reconstituted with the objective to "confront Marxist-Leninist

aggression" and to "employ the use of force in the defence of democracy."³ But CONDECA could not achieve anything due to historic rivalries among its members and a growing reluctance on the part of its members to do Washington's bidding.

The Honduran military and contra forces used threats, coercion and force to expel civilians from the border area of Honduras. Not only were by 1986 twenty thousand civilians forced to leave their agricultural lands and homes⁴; the mutual rivalry among different contra groups and their acts of banditry disrupted the agricultural production and civilian life in adjacent areas inside Honduras.

The acts of contra vandalism generated an anti-contra backlash among the Honduran population. Some Honduran military officers tried to shift the blame of contra crimes on "leftist armed movements," but many in the government as well as in the military were beginning to have reservation about Honduras' role as the principal contra rearguard. There was an apprehension that if the contras fail to overthrow the regime in Managua, they would cause serious problems by turning their crimes against Hondurans.

3. Quoted in Patricia Flynn, "At War in Central America", in Roger Burbach and Patricia Flynn (eds.), *The Politics of Intervention*, New York : Monthly review Press, 1984, p. 110.

4. *The New York Times*, November 27, 1985.

The Azcona government had multiplied its problems by succumbing to U.S. pressures. Nationalist minded military and civilian officials and the public in general openly condemned U.S. control of Honduran foreign policy.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica had maintained a neutralist foreign policy for a long time. In 1949, it abolished armed forces when President Jose Figueres took such a decision as "a gift of love of civility, democracy and institutional stability" to the region. However, it eschewed its longstanding neutral policy under U.S. pressure in 1980s.

Costa Rica was forced to be anti-Sandinista under U.S. pressure. With a stable civilian government and democratic parliamentary structure, Costa Rica's reputation gave Washington a lever in international forums in its military and diplomatic offensive against Nicaragua. But the United States faced difficulty in turning Costa Rica into an anti-Sandinista rearbase for the counterrevolution. In the absence of an indigenous military institution in Costa Rica, it was forced to start from scratch. Washington militarised Costa Rica by foisting military aid and training programme. The massive growth of military, paramilitary, and security units in Costa Rica since 1981 was the most visible aspect of the political, ideological, and economic changes brought about by militarisation.

Costa Rica had been a classic example of dependent capitalism. Its economy was more or less tied to dollar and dominated by U.S. capital. In order to meet its basic needs, it went for massive foreign borrowing from international lending agencies and from consortiums of commercial banks, many of them American. By 1981, President Rodrigo Carazo admitted that the country was on the brink of bankruptcy. The Reagan administration need this opportunity to economically blackmail Costa Rica to join Washington's anti-Nicaraguan campaign.

In June 1982, Luis Alberto Monge, the newly elected President of Costa Rica, made a well-publicised visit to the United States to seek additional U.S. aid and assistance and to renegotiate its outstanding debt. In his meeting with President Reagan and Secretary of State Haig, Monge was assured of assistance in exchange for adopting a firm anti-Sandinista position. Following the meeting, Monge began issuing anti-Sandinista statements with the hope of continuous aid-flow from Washington. In July, Costa Rica expelled three Nicaraguan diplomats for alleged involvement in a bombing incident in San Jose although it was not substantiated. The hitherto cordial relation between Costa Rica and Nicaragua deteriorated rapidly.

Costa Rica's pro-U.S. tilt against the Sandinistas paid dividend. Between 1981 and 1984, the United States provided nearly \$400 million in economic assistance to Costa Rica, making it the second largest recipient of U.S. economic aid in the

Western Hemisphere. By the beginning of 1985, about 35 percent of the San Jose government's operating budget came from U.S. aid. In return, Washington demanded Costa Rica to abandon its neutrality.

Between mid-1983 and mid-1985, the United States increased its embassy staff in San Jose from 35 to 150, some of them dedicated to covert and propaganda operations. To insure Costa Rican cooperation with the contras, the CIA put a number of key government officials on its payroll. Reports of CIA bribes to Costa Rican officials prompted former President Jose Figueres to joke that so many cheques were coming from the United States that the value of Costa Rica's currency rose and fell with the delivery of the mail.⁵ The CIA also recruited Costa Rican journalists and broadcasters and established pro-contra radio station - Radio Impacto - for anti-Sandinista propaganda.

In Contadora peace negotiations, Costa Rican representatives acted as spokespersons for the U.S. position. After initial willingness to approve the September 1984 draft treaty, President Monge rejected the accord after the Sandinistas agreed to sign it. Later, Costa Rica joined Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala to form "Tegucigalpa Group" whose objective was to design a new treaty at the behest of the United States.

President Monge also played important role in the Reagan administration's domestic campaign to renew aid to the

5. *The Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1984.

contras. On April 15, 1985 - eight days before the crucial vote in U.S. Congress on the White House request for \$14 million contra aid - Monge flew to Washington aboard a U.S. Air Force jet to lobby House and Senate leaders privately. While talking to reporters, he endorsed Reagan's "peace initiative" : "I support the proposal of President Reagan in the sense that it is a search for peace that will require a return to a framework in which there is a guarantee for human rights, for freedom and democracy throughout the area." If Congress were to turn down the aid request, Monge cautioned, the United States would "have no role in avoiding the expansion of a Socialist-Marxist regime in Central America."⁶

In spite of official denial about contra presence, Monge himself, in an interview with *Le Monde*, admitted that Costa Rica was "one of the CIA's platforms against Nicaragua" and commented that Eden Pastora was an unwelcome guest : "It would be better if he went away because he is going to draw us into the conflict."⁷ Demilitarised Costa Rica became the silent spectator when huge quantity of arms were being unloaded for the contras. Also, the San Jose government kept its mouth shut when Nicaraguan rebels were receiving training within Costa Rican territory.

Behind the facade of neutrality, Monge government cooperated with the contras and allowed Costa Rica to serve as a contra base. The government officials aided and abetted

6. Quoted in Peter Kornbluh, *The Price of Intervention*, p. 131.

7. FBIS, May 24, 1984, p. 2.

paramilitary activities directed against Sandinist Nicaragua. Steven Carr, an American mercenary who was arrested at a FDN camp in northern Costa Rica on April 24, 1985, stated to news-persons that Costa Rican authorities provided "100 percent cooperation" to anti-Sandinista forces.⁸ Members of the Rural and Civil Guard in uniform regularly visited the contra camps and provided them intelligence information for their attacks on Nicaragua.

In early 1986, the Civil Guard collaborated with American military engineers to construct a secret airfield in the north-western province of Guanacaste near the Nicaraguan border. This large landing strip was mostly used by Oliver North's "private" network for secret supply to contra forces.⁹ The U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Lewis Tamb made the airfield as his "pet project", according to CIA officials who worked with him.¹⁰ Curiously, his diplomatic orders came not from the State Department but from the Restricted Inter-agency Group (RIG) composed of Oliver North, Elliott Abrams, and Allan Fiers (the CIA's Central America Task Force Director).

Through contra activities, Costa Rica came directly in the Reagan administration's war against Nicaragua. After ARDE troops captured the border village of San Juan Del Norte in April 1984, Costa Rican and Nicaraguan forces exchanged gun fire across the border causing the first major diplomatic rift between the

8. *The New York Times*, July 8, 1985.

9. *The Miami Herald*, September 27, 1986.

10. *The Tower Commission Report*, p. C-12.

two countries since Sandinista revolution. One year later, during "operation sovereignty", a Sandinista military offensive on ARDE base camps near Las Crucitas, two Civil Guardsmen were killed and nine injured in crossfire.

While the Sandinistas placed responsibility for the incident on ARDE forces, the Costa Rican government recalled its ambassador from Managua, accused the Sandinistas of a willful "policy of aggression", and urged that the OAS condemn Nicaragua. However, the OAS Permanent Council's fact-finding committee declined to blame Sandinistas for the attack. Instead, it called upon both the countries to engage in talks and requested the Contadora nations to redouble their efforts to bring peace in the area.

As a nation without a standing army, and the only Central American country with a democratic tradition, Costa Rica generated substantial domestic opposition to the contra's presence along the border with Nicaragua as well as to Monge's effort to build a permanent military force.

In 1985, four former Costa Rican Presidents, including the revered three-time ex-President Jose Figueres, criticised the antagonism of the Monge government towards Nicaragua and called for a dialogue with it and the reassertion of Costa Rica's

traditional neutrality.¹¹ The chancellors of three prestigious universities and 22 Congressmen joined in this criticism while Figueres initiated a high-profile dialogue with the Nicaraguan government. Meanwhile, residents of northern Costa Rica formed citizen's groups to demand government protection from the lawlessness of roaming bands of contra guerrillas.¹²

Costa Rica began to distance itself, following the election of Oscar Arias Sanchez, from the United States policy towards Nicaragua, resulting in the improvement of relationship with the latter. President Arias spoke out against U.S. aid to the contras and closed down the U.S. air base used to resupply the contras in northern Costa Rica. With Costa Rica reasserting its own neutrality under Arias, the Tegucigalpa Group began to dissolve. In stead of Nicaragua's isolation, El Salvador and Honduras found themselves isolated in the region as Costa Rica and Guatemala came forward to play mediatory role in the search for a negotiated settlement, with the strong backing of the Contadora nations.

El Salvador

El Salvador's relation with Nicaragua became bitter following the Sandinista victory. The Salvadoran government apprehended that Sandinista triumph in Nicaragua would provide a moral boost for the Salvadoran guerrillas in the country who, in

11. "Support for Dialogue Grows", *Central America Report*, August 23, 1985, pp. 253-254.

12. "Turmoil in the North", *Central America Report*, November 1, 1985, p. 335.

turn, may be in a position to dislodge the government. The Salvadoran government also feared that after overthrowing Somoza in Nicaragua, the regional left's next target would be El Salvador. So from the outset, it tried to discredit the Sandinistas. In 1981, El Salvador accused Sandinistas of extending moral and material support to the revolutionaries in its country and of providing them training in guerrilla warfare. It also levelled unsubstantiated allegation that Sandinistas were allowing the rebels to have their headquarters in Managua.

Soon after his election, Reagan not only backed the Salvadoran government's oppression against the revolutionaries but also put blames on the Sandinistas for inciting them. The Reagan administration's first act in dealing with the Sandinistas was to stop assistance to Nicaragua on the pretext that they were aiding Salvadoran rebels. When Sandinistas announced that they were not supplying military hardware to Salvadorans (which was also admitted privately by the State Department), the Reagan administration accused that Managua government was still providing political support to the guerrillas in El Salvador. In short, the Reagan administration used the Salvadoran card in order to punish the Sandinistas.

El Salvador, playing into the hands of the United States, sabotaged the Contadora efforts which would have brought peace to Central America and legitimised the Sandinistas. When Nicaragua agreed to Contadora proposals, Washington's trusted

allies like El Salvador torpedoed the attempt. It also took active part in various anti-Nicaraguan organisations such as the CONDECA and the Tegucigalpa Group. President Duarte had to cooperate with the Arias plan for the fear of being isolated in the region. Yet, he did not desert the U.S. camp in its tirade against the Sandinistas till their defeat in 1990 elections.

MEXICO

Oil-rich Mexico sought to bring about peace in Central America in neighbouring Central America in 1980s. Mexico became concerned over President Reagan's policy of reasserting U.S. hegemony in the area. The two countries took differing stand on Central America which dominated their bilateral ties.

While the Carter administration was looking for a way to prevent Sandinistas coming to power before the fall of Somoza, Mexican policy was designed to ensure that the most politically and militarily powerful force in the broad national front against Somoza - the Sandinista Front - was not kept out of power by U.S. manoeuvres. Mexico broke diplomatic relation with Somoza's Nicaragua to the dislike of the United States. Mexico spearheaded the opposition within the OAS to an U.S. attempt to get an inter-American peace force to Nicaragua to forestall Sandinista victory. Symbolising the importance of Mexico's role, a Mexican helicopter flew the Sandinista leadership from Costa Rica to Managua when Somoza fled.

While the United States stopped assistance to the new regime in Managua, Mexico came forward to provide economic and technical assistance for rebuilding the war-torn country. President Lopez Portillo initiated these efforts, the most important being the 1980 San Jose Pact in which Mexico and Venezuela agreed to provide petroleum to Nicaragua on favourable terms. Despite Mexico's own economic crisis beginning in 1982, Portillo's successor de la Madrid renewed the pact in 1983 at terms that were less favourable but still below market rates. Mexico's debt problem accompanied by strong U.S. pressure forced a cut back in oil supply to Nicaragua. But when the Soviet Union announced in 1987 that it would reduce petroleum supplies to Nicaragua, de la Madrid's government began negotiations with other Latin American governments to compensate it.

Mexico was also active in the international defence of the Sandinistas. It realised that political stability in Nicaragua was possible only if the Sandinistas had effective control of the government. Mexico favoured a bilateral approach for reducing tension by attempting to broker direct talks between the United States and Nicaragua and between the United States and Cuba.

In 1983, Mexico helped generate a regional approach with other Latin American countries that became known as the Contadora initiative. In these multilateral negotiations, Mexico acted as Nicaragua's staunchest defender. When, after the failure

of Contadora efforts, the Costa Rican President, Arias Sanchez, initiated peace process with other Central American presidents, Mexico extended whole-hearted support to it.

But, the Reagan administration subverted these efforts by defining its security interests as requiring the elimination of the Sandinistas. Consequently, Mexico's efforts to reduce tension between the United States and Nicaragua failed.

EUROPE

European countries were sympathetic towards Sandinistas from the very beginning. Despite tremendous pressure from the United States to join in its war against Nicaragua, European nations, mostly U.S. allies, not only maintained neutrality but also criticised U.S. actions. In September 1981, France and Mexico issued joint communique in an attempt to reduce tension in the region. Almost all European allies condemned the U.S. mining of Nicaraguan harbours in 1984. When the United States announced economic embargo, European nations came forward to aid Nicaragua. They withstood U.S. pressure to join U.S. economic sanctions against Managua and openly criticised U.S. economic embargo. Many countries of Europe approved of the 1985 Nicaraguan elections even though Washington called it a "sham" and "farce".

In international bodies also European countries sympathised with Nicaragua. They supported the Nicaraguan cause during the debate of the U.N. Many of these countries welcomed the World Court's judgment against the United States in 1986 verdict. Besides, Europeans wholeheartedly supported regional peace efforts by the Contadora countries. They also favoured the Asquipulas treaty initiated by the Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez. Many of these countries sent observers to watch elections in Nicaragua which was held in 1990. In spite of all this, the European countries could not effect change in the U.S. policy towards Nicaragua.

SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union had traditionally viewed Central America as a U.S. sphere of influence. The U.S. had been seen as able to enforce a "hands off" policy against extra-hemispheric powers. Hence, Soviet Union desisted from pursuing an active policy of furthering its interests in Latin America for fear of provoking the United States. Moscow was also unwilling to export revolutions or even actively support revolutionary movements in Central America.¹³ However, it welcomed autonomous and indigenous revolutions in Latin America which brought to power progressive, anti-imperialist (but not necessarily Marxist, Leninist) regimes.

13. There is no evidence that the Soviet Union had any hand in bringing Fidel Castro in power. He was pushed into the Soviet camp by the overbearing attitude of the United States which, actually, turned him into a communist.

While the Soviet Union sought to exploit anti-American feelings in Central America, it avoided extensive and costly commitments. Kremlin only took advantage of the Central American search for national identity and independence from U.S. domination by providing alternatives and offering a new set of options which, it thought, would act as counterweight to U.S. influence.

Soviet policy towards Sandinista government was shaped within these parameters. The Sandinistas tried to extract security commitment from Moscow in the event of U.S. aggression which the latter refused to give. The Soviet relation with Nicaragua was confined to providing economic assistance, extending political support, and supplying limited conventional arms. Yet, these assistance fell far short Nicaraguan expectations.

However, even this modest level of Soviet support for Nicaragua waned and shortly dried up after Gorbachev's accession to power which marked the beginning of the demise of Soviet Union as superpower. His policy of "Perestroika" and "glasnost" paved the way for dismantling of Soviet economic system, reintroduction of capitalism and eventual disintegration of Soviet Union. Gorbachev was out to cultivate the United States at any cost by extending unilateral concessions in all vital sectors. As part of this policy, Gorbachev assured the United States that he would halt arms aid to Nicaragua. This shift in international

balance of power was a decisive setback to any prospect for Sandinista survival in the face of determined U.S. undeclared war.

CUBA

Havana contributed substantially for implementing social and economic programmes in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas received moral support from Cuba while they were fighting against the Somoza regime. After the Sandinista victory, Cuba sent doctors, engineers, teachers, etc. to Nicaragua to help in national reconstruction. Economic assistance came from Cuba to meet Nicaragua's immediate needs. The Sandinistas also got defensive military supplies from Cuba to face U.S. and U.S. based contra attacks. Cuban assistance was used by Washington in its propaganda to project the issue in cold war terms. Cuba gradually reduced aid to Nicaragua and withdrew its civilian and military personnel from there against the backdrop of sharply declining in the Soviet assistance to Cuba. Simultaneously, it subscribed to the idea of negotiated settlement in Nicaragua proposed by Contadora nations. However, despite Cuban withdrawal of personnel and reduction of aid, Washington did not stop its war against Nicaragua.

U.N.

The issue of the U.S.-Nicaraguan conflict also came before the United Nations. There were acrimonious accusations made by both the countries against each other in various organs of the world body. Though Nicaragua could muster support of a large number of nations in General Assembly, Washington frustrated any move in the Security Council by using its veto while some prominent members did not go beyond mouthing verbal support for Nicaragua. In spite of sophisticated propaganda mechanisms, the United States failed to convince the world in favour of its policy towards Nicaragua.

In May 1983, Nicaragua complained to the United Nations against U.S. support for the contras and in July, the Security Council took up the Nicaraguan complaint. The issue was debated hotly in the Council but no resolution could be adopted due to strong U.S. opposition.¹⁴ In November again Nicaragua complained that the United States was actively supporting the contras by providing economic and military assistance to be used against Nicaragua.¹⁵

On April 9, 1984, Nicaragua had filed a case against the United States in the International Court of Justice for

14. "Nicaragua and Namibia Dominate Council Schedule", *U.N. Chronicle*, Vol. XX, No. 7, July 1983, pp. 34-42.

15. "Nicaragua Complains of U.S. Support for Counter Revolution", *U.N. Chronicle*, Vol. XX, No. 11, November 1983, pp. 31-32.

mining of its harbours. It requested the Court to indicate "provisional measures of interim protection", pending the final decision of proceedings. On May 10, the Court had ruled, in its provisional order, that Nicaragua's right to sovereignty and political independence should not be jeopardised by any military or paramilitary activities, and that the United States should cease restricting access to and from Nicaragua's ports, particularly through the laying of mines.¹⁶ Though embarrassed by this ruling. The U.S. did not stop its tirade against Nicaragua.

In January 1985, the United States declared that it would not participate in further Court proceedings in the case, maintaining they were "a misuse of the Court for political purposes" and that the Court lacked jurisdiction and competence over such a case. But this U.S. argument was dismissed by the Court.

The historic event of the U.S.-Nicaraguan hostility in the United Nations was the final judgment of the ICJ delivered in June 1986. On June 27, the 15-member World Court decided that the United States by activities "in and against Nicaragua" had acted in breach of "customary international law" not to use force, not to violate the sovereignty of another state and not to intervene in the affairs of another state. It also rejected the "justification of collective self-defence" maintained by the

16. "Nicaraguan Sovereignty and Independence should not be Jeopardised by Military Activities, International Court of Justice Declares", *U.N. Chronicle* Vol. XXI, No. 4, 1984, p. 3.

United States in connection with "military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua." The Court mentioned such specific breaches as the "training, arming, equipping, financing and supplying (of) contra forces", overflights of Nicaraguan territory, specific attacks on naval bases and elsewhere, the laying of mines "in the internal and territorial waters" of Nicaragua, and imposition of a trade embargo.

The Court also decided that the United States was "under a duty immediately to cease and to refrain from all such acts as may constitute breaches" of its international obligations, and that it had an obligation to make reparations to Nicaragua "for all injury" caused. The Court's decision consisted of a series of 16 separate votes, mostly adopted by large majorities of 12 to 3 or 14 to 1. Judge Stephen M. Schwebel of the United States voted against 12 of the 16 provisions.

Nicaragua, after the Court decision, moved the Security Council requesting it to adopt resolution calling for full compliance with the ICJ ruling. The Security Council reviewed Nicaraguan request. On July 31, a draft resolution was prepared by which the Security Council would have made "an urgent and solemn call" for full compliance with the judgement of the International Court of Justice. But the resolution could not be adopted by the Council because of the negative vote cast by the United States. The vote in the Security Council was 11 in favour

to 1 against (United States), with 3 abstentions (France, Thailand, Great Britain).

Based on requests by Central American Presidents under Arias plan, the United Nations appointed observers to verify the Central American peace plan and asked them to report about the developments. When Sandinistas agreed to prepone Nicaraguan elections to February 1990, the United Nations sent a team of observers to monitor elections. In September 1989, the Secretary General reported to the Security Council and the General Assembly about the plans of U.N. observers in Central America.¹⁷ In March 1990, Central American presidents urged the United Nations for a larger role in Central America and asked to take necessary steps for the demobilisation of contras. And in September, \$2 million aid was sanctioned for Central American refugees.

The United States had scant respect for the U.N. criticism even though it was humiliated very often in this body. Every time the Nicaraguan issue came to the world body for discussion, the U.S. misdeeds were exposed before all. Even its allies Britain and France had abstained from voting rather than supported it in the Security Council. Undaunted by U.N. criticisms, the United States proceeded in its mission to oust Sandinistas from power in Nicaragua which was materialised in 1990.

17. U.N. Chronicle, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, p.13.

CONTADORA GROUP

On January 8 and 9, 1983, the Foreign Ministers of Mexico (Bernardo Sepuieweda Amor), Colombia (Rodrigo Lloreida Caicedo), Venezuela (Jose Alberto Zambrano), and Panama (Juan Jose Amado) met in the Panamanian island of Contadora to discuss, for the first time, a joint peace initiative for Central America.

All four members opposed U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua. They were also worried about the Reagan administration's depiction of Central America as one front in the global confrontation between East and West. And they were frightened by the degree to which their backyards had already been militarised. The Contadora countries felt that current U.S. policies were responsible for threatening their future.

The January 1983 communique called for an end to foreign involvement in the Central American crisis, a suspension of all outside military assistance to the region, a negotiated settlement of the war in El Salvador, and a halt to attacks against Nicaragua by Honduran-based contras.¹⁸

The Contadora group encountered first major problem when the Central American nations disagreed on the most basic procedural issues. The Nicaraguans wanted to negotiate non-aggression pacts bilaterally with its neighbours and with the

18. *The New York Times*, April 13, 1983.

United States. It also wanted to set up joint border patrols with Honduras and Costa Rica. On the other hand, Honduras, reflecting the position of the Reagan administration, opposed bilateral negotiations. It insisted that all regional issues should be negotiated simultaneously and multilaterally - a formula that was so complex and difficult that some observers viewed this demand as a veiled effort to block any negotiated settlement whatever.¹⁹

The initial attitude of the United States towards the Contadora initiative was ambivalent. Publicly, the Reagan administration kept a low profile, endorsing in principle the idea of negotiations. But behind the scene, the administration pressed for broad multi-issue, multilateral negotiations in which its regional allies, could block any agreement regarded by Washington as unfavourable. The Contadora nations understood from the outset that no regional peace plan could succeed unless the United States supported it. And they realised that the Reagan administration could exercise enormous influence over the Contadora process even though it had no formal participation in it.

The first major breakthrough in negotiations for a regional settlement came in July 1983 when, after a flurry of meetings in Cancun, Mexico, the presidents of Contadora countries presented a precisely defined negotiating agenda, known as the

19. Dial Torgerson, "Latin Officials End Central America Peace Tour", *The Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1983; and Alfonso Chardy, "Latin Ministers Fail to Find Peace Plan," *Miami Herald*, April 22, 1983.

"Declaration of Cancun". The basic concerns of Contadora were : (1) control of the arms race; (2) elimination of foreign advisers; (3) creation of demilitarised zones; (4) prohibition of political or military activities in any country intended to destabilise another country; (5) elimination of arms traffic; and (6) prohibition of aggressive or political intervention in the internal affairs of another country. These criteria served as the basis for subsequent Contadora documents. The Contadora heads of state also urged the United States and Cuba to support negotiations for a regional peace.

In response to the call by the Contadora heads of state, Fidel Castro announced his support for the Contadora process. The Reagan administration, while publicly supporting the move, tried to sabotage it through several ways.

The main reason for this was that its terms were not advantageous to the United States. Without U.S. assistance, it seemed likely that the guerrilla forces in El Salvador would defeat the government. Similarly, in Nicaragua the contra army was totally dependent upon the United States for its existence. A U.S. disengagement from these countries would have meant their eventual disappearance.

On September 9, 1983, the Contadora Group produced the first of its agreements when the Central American states signed a Document of Objectives, formalising the agenda for negotiations

towards a binding treaty. The document outlined 21 points which were divided into five categories : relations among states, peace and internal stability, national security, refugees and human rights, and cooperation among states for social and economic development.²⁰

In October 1983, Nicaragua presented to the Contadora nations and the United States four draft treaties for implementation of the Document of Objectives. The Nicaraguan proposal consisted of a multilateral treaty for all the Central American nations; a bilateral treaty between Nicaragua and the United States; a bilateral treaty between Nicaragua and Honduras; and a treaty regarding the civil war in El Salvador.²¹ Within 24 hours, Washington rejected the draft treaties, refusing to enter into any bilateral negotiations with Nicaragua.

Shortly after Nicaragua submitted the draft treaties, the crisis in Central America deepened with the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Sandinista leaders were worried by the administration's argument that the Grenada invasion was justified because the island nation had been transformed into a Soviet-Cuban base that threatened the security of its neighbours - exactly the accusation that the administration had been making against

20. The text of the Document of Objectives, as reprinted in *Inter-American Dialogue, The America's in 1984 : A Year of Decisions*, Washington, D.C. : Aspen Institute, 1984, pp. 76-82.

21. The text of the Nicaraguan draft treaties in Bagley and others, *Contadora and the Central American Peace Process : Selected Documents*, Boulder, Colo., : West-view Press, 1985, pp. 62-85.

Nicaragua for nearly two years. The administration, in turn, sought to exacerbate Nicaragua's fear of invasion by announcing a new series of military exercises with Honduras "Granadero".

Within the Contadora process, attention moved to drafting a regional treaty to implement the objectives agreed upon in September but the process faced repeated delays. Mexico had long been convinced that U.S. intransigence was the major obstacle to a regional accord and that Washington was using its allies in the region to hinder progress in the Contadora negotiations. On the eve of Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid's visit to the United States, a senior Mexican official blasted Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador for trying to "sabotage" the Contadora process. In his version, Mexico suspected that these countries were not acting on their own.²² De la Madrid lamented the nonexistence of bilateral negotiations between Nicaragua and the United States, pointing out that the Sandinistas had repeatedly indicated their willingness in such a dialogue. He also criticised other Central American nations for their "lack of political will" to reach an accord.²³

In June 1984, Contadora Group presented the Central American foreign ministries with a draft of the Act of Peace and Cooperation for Central America, setting July 15 as the deadline for comments and proposals for amendments. When nature of the

22. Robert J. McCartney, "Mexico Says U.S. Allies Sabotage Peace Efforts", *The Washington Post*, May 13, 1984.

23. *Ibid.*

proposed accord became known, the United States protested that its adoption would unfairly favour Nicaragua and it did not guarantee that the Sandinistas would abide by them. Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica, influenced largely by Washington, raised objection to the draft accord, proposed substantial changes and expressed doubts about Contadora's ability to guarantee fulfilment of the agreement and Nicaragua's compliance.

In September 1984, Contadora nations circulated another proposed peace treaty among the Central American nations. The treaty was a revision of an initial draft circulated in July. Its security provisions prohibited foreign military bases or training, banned international military manoeuvres, required the withdrawal of all foreign military advisers, prohibited support for insurgent movements against other countries in the region, and placed limits on the size of military forces and the quality of their weaponry.²⁴ The political provisions of the proposed treaty committed the five Central American nations to promoting representative pluralist democracy, ensuring free and fair periodic elections, and protecting human rights. The economic provisions were designed to protect refugees, strengthen regional integration, and promote development.

The Sandinistas, surprising everyone, agreed to sign it. Washington's reaction to Nicaragua's acceptance was

24. Text of the treaty in Bagley, Bruce Michael, et al., eds., *Contadora and the Central American Peace Process : Selected Documents*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1985.

immediately negative. The Reagan officials denounced the Sandinista pledge as a hypocritical publicity stunt. Some people in the administration went so far as to advocate that Nicaragua be punished for agreeing to the peace treaty.²⁵ The reason for the Reagan administration's frustration was that Managua caught it off guard. The U.S. officials had assumed that Nicaragua would not agree to sign the proposed treaty because of Nicaragua's earlier objections, especially to the language on internal political conditions. Therefore, Washington had not monitored the reactions of Honduras, Costa Rica, and El Salvador, who could always be relied upon to echo Washington's position. Before the Sandinistas agreed to sign the treaty, these three U.S. allies had all indicated their preliminary support of the text.

Washington was able to block acceptance of the treaty with concerted diplomatic pressure on El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and the Contadora countries themselves.²⁶ In late October, the foreign ministers of El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica met in Tegucigalpa to draft an alternative version of the September draft treaty, which the United States quickly endorsed. The 'Tegucigalpa draft' omitted the ban on foreign military exercises, reduced the potential limitations on U.S. aid to El Salvador, and made the foreign ministers of the Central American

-
25. Filip Taubman, "U.S. Reported to Fear Sandinista Publicity Coup", *The New York Times*, September 24, 1984.
26. Alma Guillermo Prieto and David Hoffman, "Document Describes How U.S. 'Blocked' a Contadora treaty", *The Washington Post*, November 6, 1984.

nations themselves the judges of alleged violation of the accord. As expected, Nicaragua rejected the Tegucigalpa draft.

The Contadora nations grew increasingly frustrated by U.S. opposition and their consequent inability to broker a compromise. Within each of the four Contadora countries, conservative political forces gradually increased their pressure to demand that the process be terminated rather than allowing it to strain bilateral relations with the United States, and the governments were vulnerable to pressure.

In an effort to counterbalance U.S. pressure, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay formed a Contadora Support Group (Grupo de Apoyo, also known as the Lima Group) in August 1985. The establishment of the Contadora Support Group formally involved the major South American democracies in the peace process in Central America, thereby lending substantial diplomatic weight to the Contadora countries.

The Contadora Group submitted a new draft of regional accord to the Central American governments in September, instructing that they reach a decision whether or not to sign the document within 45 days. Nicaragua refused to accept the draft without a formal U.S. pledge to stop aiding the contras, which the United States was not inclined to give. The Sandinistas rightly felt that the treaty would allow United States to continue its practice of conducting intimidating military

exercises in Honduras and that it was aimed at forcing the expulsion of Cuban civilian as well as military advisers.

In a letter to the presidents of the Contadora Group and the Support Group Countries, President Daniel Ortega wrote "The interventionist and aggressive policy of the U.S. government is playing the central role in the Central American Crisis." He explained, "given this, it is not possible to find a lasting or stable solution to the prevailing conflicts unless the U.S. government agrees to serious and detailed commitments to halt its illegal conduct."²⁷ Nicaragua's logic was that once it signed the agreement it would have to freeze the size of its military and eventually reduce it to mutually agreed upon levels. On the other hand, the United States, which was not formally bound by the Contadora accord, would be free to continue or even escalate its paramilitary pressure against the Sandinistas, and they would be unable to expand their defence to meet the threat.

The deadline for signing the treaty came and went with the negotiating process still deadlocked. Frustrated by the lack of progress, the Contadora nations accepted Nicaragua's suggestion to suspend negotiations for five months until after the election and inauguration of new presidents in Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica. The initiative for the revival of the

27. "Letter from the President of Nicaragua addressed to the Presidents of the countries of the Contadora Group and the Support Group, November 11, 1985", United Nations General Assembly document A/40/894, New York : United Nations, 1985.

Contadora process came unexpectedly from Marco Vinicio Cerezo, the newly elected President of Guatemala. He volunteered to assist in the search for regional peace.

Prompted by Cerezo's activism, the foreign ministers of the Contadora countries and the support countries met in January, 1986 in Caraballeda, Venezuela where they adopted a communique calling for the resumption of Contadora negotiations among the Central Americans and a resumption of bilateral talks between Nicaragua and the United States.

In February, the foreign ministers of Contadora and Support Groups assembled once again in Washington to urge the Reagan administration to resume talks with the Sandinista government and to halt aid to the contras. By the time they were making their appeal, Reagan was telling in an interview that he was "going to go all out" to convince Congress to approve military aid for the contras.²⁸ The Reagan administration outrightly rejected the appeal.

Again discussions resumed in May. The Sandinistas who had initially opposed the draft, altered their position to one of support for the treaty shortly before its June 6 deadline. However, the Tegucigalpa Group rejected this version of the treaty arguing that its provisions for democratisation, verification and enforcement were incomplete and imprecise. Thus,

28. *The New York Times*, February 11, 1986.

a third and final draft of the Contadora treaty collapsed in June 1986.

With the Contadora nations unwilling to see the process fail and the United States unwilling to allow it to succeed, the Contadora negotiations were destined to hang on without any definite output. The rollback objective of Reagan hardliners did not allow the United States to have positive approach towards Contadora process.

For Latin Americans, who actively participated in peace efforts, the policy of the United States in the 1980s was not only the principal obstacle to negotiated settlement in Central America but also the major source of conflict escalation in the region. In effect, the Reagan administration's militarist policy towards the region and its support for the contras in particular, catalysed Latin American nationalism and provoked unprecedented diplomatic opposition. The contrast between the willingness of the Latin Americans to follow the U.S. lead in isolating Cuba in 1960s and their defence of Nicaragua in the 1980s represented a fundamental transformation in hemispheric relations vis-a-vis the United States.

ARIAS PLAN

After the abortive Contadora effort, Central American states took their own initiative. The Central American allies of the United States had been convinced that the Reagan administration would not or could not commit sufficient resources to obtain its desired outcome within a time-frame acceptable to them. The United States decision to pursue low intensity warfare had very high social, economic and political costs in all the Central American countries. In May 1986, at an important meeting which was held in Esquipulas, Guatemala (Esquipulas I) the Central American presidents agreed to support Contadora peace process. Besides, they had agreed to continue regional negotiations, hold regular meetings among themselves, and move towards the establishment of a Central American parliament. Encouraged by the Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo, President Oscar Arias Sanchez initiated the fresh peace effort.

President Arias invited his counterparts of El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua to meet in San Jose in February 1987 to discuss the ways to bring an end to the conflict in the region, particularly the war in Nicaragua. Based on Contadora effort, Arias's initiative consisted of four main points : a cease-fire; an amnesty for the rebels or contras; a dialogue between the Sandinista government and the internal political opposition; and a time-table for holding of free

elections. The Arias initiative resulted in the signing of Esquipulas II accord in August 1987.

A summit meeting of the Central American presidents scheduled for June to discuss the Plan was cancelled when Salvadoran President Napoleon Duarte declined to participate apparently under U.S. pressure. Arias was strongly criticised by the Reagan administration during his June trip to Washington. However, he stood firm by his plan. In spite of pressure from Washington, Arias persevered and a peace treaty was signed on August 7, 1987 in Guatemala City by the presidents of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

The treaty explicitly recognised the legitimacy of the Sandinista regime, also obtained Nicaragua's recognition of the Salvadoran government. Consequently, it provided measures of protection for incumbent regimes throughout the region, thus eliciting cooperation of both Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The most notable fact of Esquipulas II was that it placed the Central American countries clearly in opposition to U.S. policy towards the region. The Reagan administration, apparently believing that Honduran President Jose Azcona would not agree to any of the provisions, was dealt a serious setback when Azcona yielded to the pressure and opted to sign the agreement.

Nicaragua found the Arias Plan as a political solution to many of its problems. U.S.' economic strangulation and military subversion pushed Nicaragua down as one of the most backward nations in Latin America. Although the Nicaraguan government inflicted serious military defeat on the contra army in 1985-86, thousands of contra guerrillas re-infiltrated Nicaragua moving into new areas of operation following the Congressionally - approved resumption of U.S. military assistance at the end of 1986. The spectre of chronic guerrilla insurgency, sustained by U.S. aid and Honduran sanctuaries, exerted further pressure on Sandinistas to seek a political solution.

With the Reagan administration losing control of its policy and less capable of directing the course of events in Central America, there was ample political space for Arias and other negotiators to manoeuvre and to craft an accord that was acceptable to Nicaragua as well as Honduras and El Salvador. In addition to this, the lingering doubts about the effectivity of the contras made it easier for El Salvador and Honduras to assert a measure of autonomy from U.S. policy and accept the Arias Plan.

Arias Plan set the ball rolling in the direction of regional peace. Subsequent summits assessed interim progress, adjusted timetables, invited third party participation and renegotiated agreements. The San Jose meeting in 1988 led to a Sandinista ceasefire and negotiations with the contras. There was another important meeting of Central American presidents which

took place in the Salvadoran Pacific resort on February 13 and 14, 1989. The presidents agreed that the contra army sheltering in Honduras would be disbanded in 90 days. In return, Ortega promised to move his country's elections forward by 9 months, to February 1990.

On August 7, 1989, all five Presidents signed a document at Tela, Honduras. They agreed for a demobilisation and repatriation plan for the contras and their families under the aegis of the United Nations. The Tela agreement also stipulated that the International Commission for Verification and Support would begin visiting the contra camps in Honduras with a view to implementing the repatriation plans as quickly as possible. The presidents met again in San Jose on December 10 and 11, stressed once more the importance of negotiation as the principal instrument in the peace process, and requested the U.N. to extend the mandate of the U.N. observer team, to participate in the dismantling of the contra camps in Honduras. After the Nicaraguan elections, the Montelimar Summit (1990) ratified and reinforced the new Nicaraguan transition and contra demobilisation agreements that guided both the transfer of power from the Sandinistas and contra disarmament.

CONCLUSION

There was worldwide reaction to U.S. harassment of Nicaragua. Countries across continents decried U.S. behaviour towards Sandinistas. Even the Central American allies of the United States like Honduras and El Salvador who had been following the Reagan administration's policy lead, could not back up till the end. European allies, such as Britain and France, also vehemently criticised U.S.' Nicaraguan policy both privately and in various international forums. Especially, mining of Nicaragua's harbours, disobedience to World Court rulings and Iran-contra scandals were criticised by the countries world over irrespective of their relationship with the United States. The propaganda machinery of the Reagan administration, highly sophisticated and specialised, had failed to cultivate support in foreign countries for the Nicaraguan policy.

CHAPTER - V

1990 NICARAGUAN ELECTIONS

Introduction

The 1990 elections in Nicaragua were significant in many ways. These elections were forced on Sandinistas by the United States and largely pro-U.S. regimes in the region. Sandinistas agreed to these elections from a position of great weaknesses. In these elections, Washington played pivotal role in the defeat of Sandinistas. The National Opposition Union (UNO) which was riven with factionalism, internal quarrel and corruption won the elections due to all-out support of the United States.

THE CONTEXT OF 1984 ELECTIONS

Although a brief mention of 1984 elections has been made in Chapter III, it is important to discuss here as a necessary background to the understanding of the 1990 elections. In an effort to destabilise the Sandinista government, the United States shifted its position several times since 1981. Initially, Sandinistas were accused of aiding Salvadoran guerrillas. At a later stage, The Reagan administration emphasised that the Sandinista government was highly undemocratic because they had not sought the mandate from Nicaraguans. And when Sandinistas won the free and fair elections in 1984, it dubbed them as "sham" or "farce".

In 1984, the Nicaraguan government advanced the date of elections from 1985 to November 1984 to rebut the charge that Sandinistas were averse to elections. Voter registration in Nicaragua was massive before the elections, with approximately 94 percent of eligible voters registering. Also approximately 75 percent of registered voters cast ballot on election day which compares quite favourably with elections in any democracy of the world.

The Sandinistas had tried their best to accommodate opposition demands as they viewed participation of the opposition parties was essential to make the elections meaningful. Between 1982 and 1984, the FSLN expressed its willingness to consider opposition demands regarding the electoral process. The proposed Political Parties Law and Electoral Law were the subject of intense debate and discussion on the floor of the legislature. At several junctures, parties of the Coordinadora Democratica Nicaraguense (CDN), the right-wing opposition alliance, withdrew from debate as a tactic to extract greater concessions from the FSLN. In the end, the proposed laws were modified to a considerable extent in response to the opposition's most significant demands.¹

Further, reflecting Sandinista willingness to accommodate the opposition, multiple extensions of the deadline for

1. Latin American Studies Association (LASA), *The Electoral Process in Nicaragua : Domestic and International Influences*, Austin, TX : LASA, 1984.

candidate registration were allowed while discussions were in progress with the Coordinadora concerning the conditions for its participation. As late as October, the Sandinistas were considering postponing the elections until January of following year so as to persuade the opposition alliance to enter the contest. When talks between Coordinadora presidential candidate Arturo Cruz and Sandinista representative Bayardo Arce broke down because of U.S. instigation of former, FSLN retained the original date for election. The United States, in order to sabotage the elections, put heavy pressure on Arturo Cruz to withdraw from the contest. Cruz withdrew two weeks before the elections. Later, he expressed regret that he did not participate.² Another presidential candidate Virgilio Godoy Reyes, the Leader of the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), was also persuaded by the U.S. ambassador to withdraw from the race.

During the campaign period, there was high level of citizen involvement, most voters were able to attend public rallies without fear of intimidation, and there was lively discussion of political issues both in the media and in public fora. Also important was the fact that the voters were presented with a wide range of political options. Six opposition parties contested the elections. While the range of choices would have

2. Robert Pastor's interview with Cruz, cited in Robert A. Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 250.

been even greater had the Coordinadora alliance participated, still the choices were meaningful given the opposition parties' opportunities to communicate their programmes to the electorate.

The nature of campaign was significant in that it afforded opposition parties adequate opportunity to appeal the voters through public rallies, advertisement and televised debates. The scope of public debate was fairly wide open with only minimal press censorship.³ The elections provided Nicaraguans with an additional avenue to take part in the national decision making process. Besides registering political preferences through the ballot box, the elections also enabled the people to communicate directly with the government and opposition candidates and activists who campaigned extensively throughout the country.

On November 4, 1984, approximately 1.2 million Nicaraguans cast with their votes to elect a President and a National Assembly. The Sandinistas won the elections with a convincing margin giving it both the presidency as well as a resounding majority in the Assembly. Presidential candidate Daniel Ortega polled 63 percent of the valid votes. In National Assembly, FSLN secured 61 of 96 seats and rest 35 seats went to opposition parties. The independent electoral observers who were invited from various countries and international organisations to -----
3. Only destructive and anti-national news items were censored to tackle the war situation in the midst of which Nicaraguan elections were held.

monitor the elections gave highly positive remarks on their conduct .⁴

The significance of the 1984 elections was that it represented a shift away from corporatist structures and the formal adoption of liberal democratic political institutions. Furthermore, the newly elected Assembly was entrusted with the task of drafting a constitution that would provide guarantees for fundamental civil liberties and democratic procedures, including regular elections.

The only key factor in preventing the 1984 elections from establishing liberal democratic rule was the hostile U.S. policy towards Nicaragua. As the primary objective of the Reagan administration was to overthrow the Sandinista government, the recognition of 1984 elections would have made it impossible to achieve its goal. When Washington found that the elections contradicted its interests, it tried to discredit the entire process by disrupting in various ways.

However, beyond a shared common interest of discrediting the elections, the ultimate objective of Coordinadora and the Reagan administration was quite different. Whereas the

4. See the Report of the Latin American Studies Association Delegation to Observe the Nicaraguan General Elections of November 4, 1984, Washington, D.C.; International Human Rights Law Group and Washington Office on Latin America A Political Opening in Nicaragua, Washington, D.C.; Report of the British Parliamentary Delegation to Nicaragua to Observe the Presidential and National Assembly Elections, London.

alliance leaders hoped to improve their bargaining position vis-a-vis the Sandinistas, administration officials wanted to bolster the contras by discrediting the elections. In other words, U.S. policy was not intended to benefit opposition parties but rather to justify the administration's military actions against the Sandinista government. The willingness of some opposition leaders to take their cue from Washington regarding the participation in the elections became a source of controversy within the opposition in the aftermath of elections.

The Reagan administration stepped up its efforts to destabilise the Sandinista government in the wake of the elections. As the date of elections was nearing, the contras were mounting attacks in many areas. The contra military activity prevented civilians in many zones from going to the polling station. Even as the votes were being counted, the United States precipitated the "artificial MIGs" crisis, in order to deflect attention from the Nicaraguan elections. Along with the military activities, the Reagan administration had been strangulating Nicaragua's already weakened economy. The intensification of U.S. military and economic aggression on the eve of the elections forced the Sandinistas to tighten the political space that had opened up during the electoral campaign.

The 1984 elections was a great leap forward in the direction of Sandinistas' commitment to popular democracy. It was comparatively better than any of the elections held during Somoza

regime which were approved by the United States. But the hardline Reagan administration stuck to its disinformation campaign and held that 1984 elections did not ensure democracy.

As per the new constitutional provisions, next round of elections were to be held in 1991. But after persuasions by other Central American presidents, the Sandinistas agreed to advance the date of elections to February 1990. If at all the Sandinista government had restricted democratic rights and freedoms it was due to the U.S. aggression only. The United States, responsible for economic plight, social and political disruption and forced militarisation, wanted to project the Sandinistas as authoritarian and enemy of the so-called American variant of democracy. Yet, undeterred by these pressures, the Sandinistas went ahead with their democratic experiment. And the consequence was the elections in 1990.

1990 ELECTIONS

In July 1979, Nicaraguans captured the headlines World over when they overthrew the dictatorial regime of Anastasio Somoza Debayle. A decade later, in February 1990, the country again attracted world attention when 2,500 foreign observers and 1,500 members of the international press descended on Nicaragua to watch one of the most extraordinary elections in recent history. With these elections, the Sandinista government became the world's first to come to power through a revolutionary

struggle and then relinquish power through a far from fair election in favour of its opposition.

In February 1989, President Ortega offered to prepone the elections scheduled for November 1991, in exchange for regional commitment for demobilisation of the U.S.-armed contras. When the date of elections was fixed for February 25 1990, he then invited the United Nations, the OAS, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and many others to observe the entire election process. The Sandinistas speculated that a certifiably clean electoral victory in Nicaragua might end U.S. support for contras and the trade embargo, result in a renewal of international aid and loans, and eventually lead to peace and economic recovery. FSLN'S clear assumption was that it would win in a fair contest. But the assumption proved wrong owing to several factors.

The decisive factor in the Sandinista debacle was the U.S. policy towards Nicaragua. In 1984, there was serious confusion and bitter disagreement within the Reagan administration as well as the Nicaraguan opposition over participation/abstention in the elections. But in 1990, the Bush administration had decided to support the Nicaraguan elections. The reasons for the Bush administration's support were : (a) growing domestic opposition in Honduras to the continued contra presence; (b) an erosion of support for the contra war in the U.S. Congress, particularly after the Iran-contra scandal; (c) ineffectiveness of contra attacks; and (d) hope of winning by a United opposition

in the face of the erosion of Sandinista popularity due to U.S. economic and military subversion.

In March 1989, the Bush administration worked out a bipartisan agreement with Congress on Central America which provided for \$49 million in "humanitarian" aid to contras and at the same time prohibited any further military assistance. The bipartisan compromise also apparently agreed to dismiss the contras with stoppage of all payments and concentrate on electoral strategy to overthrow the debilitated Sandinista government.

By mid-Summer, it had become clear to Washington's policy makers that the Sandinistas had far more popular support than they had imagined. Hastily, the administration revived the contras again, sending them back into Nicaragua with the dual mission of further undermining the Sandinista government and for spreading propaganda in favour of anti-Sandinista opposition parties. The National Opposition Union (UNO) was a coalition of 14 political parties cobbled together by U.S. advisers and fuelled by millions of U.S. dollars administered through the Washington-based National Endowment for Democracy (N.E.D).

With voting in Nicaragua scheduled for February 25, nine separate parties (counting the UNO coalition as one) fielded their candidates for the presidency, 103 National Assembly seats and municipal councils. The contest was seen as one between the

FSLN, led by the incumbent President Daniel Ortega and the UNO, led by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. Violeta Chamorro, the politically inexperienced widow of crusading *La Prensa* publisher Pedro Joaquin Chamorro who was murdered in 1978 by henchmen of the then dictator Anastasio Somoza, was pushed into the UNO presidential candidacy by the United States and was reluctantly accepted by the political professionals, many of whom agreed to support her only after they were paid large sums.⁵ She also had to embrace former members of Somoza's National Guard like Enrique Bermudez, who were her revered husband's worst enemies.

The political opposition in Nicaragua was morally and ideologically bankrupt. Corrupt, bickering and divided, tainted by years of complicity with the contras and the Reagan administration, the opposition, in fact, could not put a credible alternative to the electorate. The biggest problem with the opposition was its disunity. There were twenty-one legal parties before elections in Nicaragua, but in every party a number of tiny factions were busy trading insults.

Before the Sandinistas took power, the conservatives were united in the National Conservative Alliance. After 10 years, the Alliance had split into five different conservative parties, all jostling for the same political space. Almost every break had been accompanied by vitriolic personal attacks, litigation to determine who would control the party assets and

5. David MacMichael, "Nicaraguan Elections : The U.S. Plays the Contra Card", *The Nation*, Vol. 250, No.5, Feb. 5, 1990.

authority to give official name to new political party. For instance, Mario Rappaccioli, leader of the National Conservative Party went to the extent of commenting about the personal life of Mrs. Miriam Arguelo, who had just founded the Popular Conservative Alliance Party. But before the 1990 election, Rappaccioli and Arguelo became allies.⁶

The liberals were also split into four parties - two right-wing hangovers from Somoza's old Nicaraguan Liberal Party, a centre-left group close to the FSLN and the Independent Liberal Party. The Social Christians, too, were fragmented into four - two groups remained with UNO while two others became part of the more moderate centre block. The Social Democrats were no different, divided into two organisations. The communist parties were also divided into two groups although both of them were Trotskyite parties. Enrique Bolanos, a right-wing business leader, commenting on the state of political parties, observed " They all want to be able to tell their grand children that they were once a presidential candidates. They put personal interest ahead of national ones."⁷

The UNO coalition which was formed with monetary and alround backing of U.S., emerged out of this political mess. Still it was difficult to keep all the opposition parties under one umbrella and the coalition was beset with dissensions. The

6. Tony Jenkins, "Electoral Muddlings : The Unmaking of Dona Violeta", *The Nation*, Vol. 250, No. 8, February 26, 1990, p. 270.

7. Quoted in *ibid*.

largest party that was to have joined the alliance, the centrist Social Christian Party (P.S.C.), whose leadership was accused of massive corruption, pulled out of the alliance. The centre-left Popular Social Christian Party (P.P.S.C.), a participant in the 1984 elections also left the alliance.

The U.N.O. at the behest of U. S., admitted two communist parties to their alliance to give the impression of a broad national front against FSLN. The United States thought by bringing communists into the alliance, it would cut the support base of the Sandinistas. In a typical act of opportunism and expediency, the two communist parties joined the U.S.- created outfit for getting cabinet posts in the wake of UNO victory without which they would have fast disappeared. Luis Sanchez, the leader of one such group, the Nicaraguan Socialist Party, promptly pushed the organisation into the rightist line and formally renounced Marxism-Leninism. Sanchez's father, who had founded the party was so upset that he agreed to contest as the FSLN candidate, while other members joined other left-wing groups. The decision to admit the communists enraged the most conservative members of the coalition.

The selection of UNO candidates for president and vice-president almost tore apart the already fragile coalition. As Augustin Jarquin admitted in an interview, UNO did not have any leader of presidential calibre. The coalition leaders agonised for days and went through ten rounds of voting before succumbing

to pressure from the United States in choosing Violeta Chamorro as presidential candidate, with Virgilio Godoy as her running mate. Gilberto Cuadra, President of COSEP, (the Private business organisation that had led the anti-Sandinista opposition for ten years) was furious at the decision.

Chamorro was chosen for her symbolic value. She carried the appeal of her martyred husband's name. The United States calculated that by fielding her as presidential candidate would serve two purposes : first, the Somoza affiliation of the opposition would be blurred; and second, her political inexperience would be to Washington's advantage so that Washington would be in a position to dictate her. Dona Violeta, as she is commonly known, constantly referred to her late husband or to God to explain her actions. When asked, "What will you do to revive the economy if you win?", She replied, "God will guide my conscience."⁸

Within the UNO, Godoy had doggedly opposed Chamorro's nomination on the ground that she was "good-for-nothing". Godoy, a leader of the PLI, had been Minister of Labour in the first Sandinista government. As Labour Minister, Godoy was hated by business and labour groups, for their own reasons. He left ministry to run as the PLI presidential candidate in the 1984 elections. But he had to withdraw from contest under U.S.

8. Tony Jenkins, "Electoral Meddling : The Unmaking Dona Violeta", *The Nation*, Vol. 250, No. 8, February 26, 1990, p. 271.

pressure. His selection for the post of Vice-President was seriously resented by the members of the UNO. Indeed, four parties in the coalition refused to accept Godoy's nomination in the beginning. Eventually, after yet another chat with the U.S. embassy officials, the opposing parties withdrew their objections.

There was another negative point with Godoy. Before 1990 elections, he was accused by members of his own party of converting to his personal use, hundreds of thousands of dollars in party funds donated by the West German Friedrich Naumann Foundation. For this, he was facing criminal charges also. The evidence against Godoy was so compelling that only one member of the 96-strong National Assembly voted against a motion to withdraw his parliamentary immunity from prosecution.

Along with its internal divisions, UNO also could not provide a credible programme for solving the country's pressing economic crisis. It is believed that the UNO manifesto was a rewrite of the "Blue and White Plan", a document drafted by COSEP that aimed to strengthen the private sector and compensate private land owners whose farms were redistributed to landless peasants. UNO come out with populist slogans - raising salaries, spending more on welfare and health programmes, compensating farmers, reducing the foreign debt and revitalising the economy - without any concrete programme for realising them. They had hoped

that Washington would reward an UNO victory with large scale generous aid.

UNO's timid endorsement of President Bush's intervention in Panama; overthrow and arrest of Noriega; and his deportation to U.S. was out of step with the reaction of the rest of Central America. UNO's refusal to condemn U.S. raid of Nicaraguan ambassador's residence in Panama enraged many of its supporters.

U.S. ROLE

While taking all steps to ensure the defeat of the Sandinistas in the ensuing elections, the Bush administration refused to wind up its contra camps in Honduras (as requested by Central American leaders) to continue the contra war in the event of Sandinista electoral victory.

The Bush administration tried to influence the outcome of the elections in two ways : (i) by mounting military pressure on the Sandinista government through the armed contras; and (ii) by providing massive monetary, material, and electioneering support to the UNO. The latter action irretrievably damaged the fairness of the elections in the absence of a level-playing field between the beleaguered Sandinistas and U.S.-backed UNO. Deep divisions within the UNO and its lack of credible leadership

notwithstanding, the U.S. planners devised UNO's political strategies against the Sandinistas.

Owing to continued U.S. military and economic aggression and the resultant political setbacks, the Sandinistas were facing an apparently insoluble economic crisis. By 1988, Nicaragua's Gross Domestic Product declined alarmingly and inflation was at an all-time high. In 1989, the government managed to bring this hyper-inflation somewhat under control, but at great cost. Real wages which plummeted in 1988, continued to decline further dramatically. Given the bleak economic condition, opposition leaders were optimistic that the issue of a battered economy, combined with a general war weariness, would help them to win the elections. The United States found it essential to put together the broadest possible coalition to accomplish this task.

Observers from the United Nations and the Organisation of American States gave favourable reports on the progress of the election process, though the contras, in violation of pre-election understanding, strengthened their forces and continued attacks inside Nicaragua with U.S. backing. In the Tela accord, the Central American presidents reiterated their earlier appeals for an end to U.S. funding, humanitarian or other, for the contras and set a December 5, date for contra demobilisation. However, on October 29, Congressional leaders vowed to continue

U.S. assistance to Nicaraguan rebels until elections scheduled there in February 1990.⁹

The Bush administration kept contras active as a viable fighting force in defiance of international pressure to demobilise them before Nicaraguan elections. The administration hoped that the fresh contra attacks before the elections would intensify pressures on the Sandinistas to observe their election commitments. While the United States continued non-military aid to contras, the Secretary of State James Baker promised Congress that no funds would be used to support rebels engaged in "offensive military operations". "Witness for Peace", a religious organisation, severely criticised the Bush administration's policy holding it responsible for the fresh contra offensive. It documented fifty-one attacks by contras against civilians in Nicaragua.¹⁰

Since one of the Sandinistas' major claims was that they had restored peace in Nicaragua, the administration decided to renew the contra military offensive to show that only an UNO victory would truly bring peace in the country. To justify it, there was an upsurge in contra military and subversive activity in the countryside. Contra attacks on remote settlements and military outposts where military had slackened during the cease-fire were intended to challenge Sandinista claims of having restored peace. They were also designed to provoke government

9. *The New York Times*, October 30, 1989.

10. *The New York Times*, November 2, 1989.

response necessitating security measures involving conscription which would be unpopular and anti-democratic. In October, the contras massacred eighteen military reservists who were being transported home to register to vote.

Predictably, President Ortega announced that in view of the contra attacks he would cancel 19-month ceasefire with the contras and threatened to resume hostilities with the contras. The Bush administration officials and members of Congress from both parties condemned President Ortega for ending ceasefire. Congress, not only denounced Sandinistas for the violation of ceasefire but also rewarded the contras by honouring the "humanitarian" aid commitment. President Bush also told Congress that he would continue American trade embargo against Nicaragua, imposed by his predecessor, because that country represented "unusual and extraordinary threat" to U.S. national security and foreign policy.

U.S. Funding of U.N.O.

The Bush administration requested Congress to approve \$9 million aid through N.E.D. to finance the opposition election campaign in Nicaragua even though in the United States itself the Federal Election Campaign Act bans political contribution from any foreign national or organisation to finance any candidate in the election campaigning. While this aid bill was being debated, Democratic Senator Lloyd Bentson of Texas said that Congress had a special obligation to support the anti-Sandinista news media so

that opposition politicians could have a voice in Nicaraguan domestic affairs. Taking Bentson's lead, Congress allocated the amount for political activity inside Nicaragua.

The primary conduit for the funding was the National Endowment for Democracy, a quasi-governmental foundation created by the Reagan administration to foster its version of "democracy" around the world. This organisation mostly depends on the government contributions. Since 1984, the N.E.D. has channeled \$5.6 million to a variety of Nicaraguan opposition groups and another \$ 1 million to anti-Sandinista propaganda organisations elsewhere in Central America. The opposition had also received millions from the CIA, Oliver North's covert network and other private groups, many of which also funded the contras. A primary recipient was Violeta Chamorro's *La Prensa*. The N.E.D. which had been contributing \$ 100,000 a year to this Managua newspaper, increased the amount to \$ 220,000.

In October 1989, Congress approved \$ 9 million on the Nicaraguan elections and authorised the N.E.D. to spend it. Approximately, \$ 1.8 million of the appropriation was earmarked for the U.S.-backed UNO coalition. Those funds were subjected to the 50 percent withholding by the Nicaraguan Electoral Council as per the modified electoral law. Another \$2.2 million was directed to private Nicaraguan institutes that were legally independent but politically allied with UNO. Three election monitoring groups, including one headed by former President Jimmy Carter

also received altogether slightly more than \$1 million to observe and evaluate the February 1990 elections. The remainder was kept as discretionary grant and was to cover administrative costs.

In 1983, when then Secretary of State George Schultz went to Capitol Hill to defend the Administration's proposal for creating the N.E.D., he assured sceptical members of Congress that the new endowment was not intended to support any party in a given government or to threaten or unseat any existing government in another country. The enabling legislation that finally emerged from Congress prohibited the N.E.D. from spending money to finance the campaigns of candidates for public office.

In spite of these restrictions, when Congress approved \$ 9 million, administration and N.E.D. officials maintained that the endowment's expenditure in Nicaragua were legal and appropriate. They argued that none of the money was going to a specific candidate or campaign activities. Rather, they contended, the funding was intended to build UNO's "infrastructure" (to purchase vehicles and office equipment, but not to fund specific campaign activities, such as printing political propaganda) and to support voter registration, poll observation and political education by non-partisan groups.

However, N.E.D. funding was essentially partisan aid for the opposition coalition. "The line being drawn between support for the electoral process and direct campaign support

makes a distinction without a difference," reported the non-governmental organisation, Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA).¹¹ The supposedly non-partisan institutes funded by the N.E.D. were having overlapping leadership with UNO and share facilities, resources and the primary goal of defeating the Sandinistas. For instance, the NED treated *La Prensa* as a non-partisan recipient which was owned by UNO's presidential candidate Violeta Chamorro. Further, the U.S. dollars designated for non-campaign activities freed other UNO resources so that they could be used in partisan undertakings.

Observing the Nicaraguan elections, George Vickers, a Brooklyn College Professor, commented that the main source of conflict and power struggles within UNO was who would control the U.S. funds and how to capture it. He also observed that other traditionally strong opposition parties that were unable or unwilling to get U.S. funding had been considerably weakened by N.E.D. support of their competitor.

Finally, Nichols, a prominent journalist, commented, "unless N.E.D.'s ham-handed performance in the Nicaraguan elections forces a rethinking of this hypocritical and counter-productive policy, overt meddling in the domestic politics of other nations may eclipse covert action as the keystone of U.S. foreign policy in 1990s."¹²

11. Quoted in John Spicer Nichols, "Electoral Meddling : Get the N.E.D. Out of Nicaragua", *The Nation*, Vol. 250, No. 8, Feb. 26, 1990, p. 267.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 268

Besides its own contributions, the U.S. officials - toured friendly countries to arrange funds for the Nicaraguan opposition. Secretary of State James Baker approached the then ruling Liberal Democratic Party of Japan for contributions to anti-Sandinista opposition. However, the Japanese party turned down the request on the plea that it did not wish to take any side in Nicaraguan elections.¹³

After all these legislative exercises, the contras, with U.S. approval and at U.S. direction, became an active part of the U.S.-organised Sandinista political campaign. Their two methods of influencing the election results were armed attacks, which had largely been contained by government forces, and armed propaganda - political proselytising at gunpoint. In early November, contra Commander Bermudez expressed his organisation's unconditional support for UNO candidates. He also announced that FDN would block the Sandinista supporters from registering in order to guarantee a victory for the UNO.

ISSUES BEFORE THE VOTERS

Nicaraguan voters had to face two main questions before the elections. The first had to do with the responsibility for the war and the second, with the economic crisis which weighed heavily on the people. Whereas the Sandinistas accused the United States of having shattered the country's economy

13. *The New York Times*, September 29, 1989.

through military and economic aggression, UNO placed the blame squarely on Sandinistas holding them responsible for inviting wrath of the United States. During its campaign, the UNO played up by-then non-existing and already-stopped Soviet-Cuban special relationship with the Sandinistas as the main source of U.S. hostility towards Nicaragua.

While debate on the responsibility issue was important throughout the electioneering, voters were even more concerned with the promises and solutions offered by the two main contenders. In short, the voters were faced with the question, who stood the best chance of leading Nicaragua out of its economic crisis. The FSLN promised voters that its undisputed victory at the poll would bring a definitive end to the war and increase the level of international assistance. UNO, on the other hand, emphasised its special relationship with the United States, arguing that an UNO victory would not only bring peace but also bring a significant amount of U.S. assistance to the country.

Just before elections, President Bush announced that if Sandinistas win Nicaraguan elections, the United States would move to improve relations with them provided that the elections were judged free and fair. He claimed that the United States would go further in normalising relations if the Sandinista government met two conditions : ending military aid to leftist rebels in El Salvador and allowing democratic institutions to exist at home.

ELECTORAL OUTCOME

On February 25, 1990, 86 percent of registered Nicaragua voters turned out to elect new leaders in the presidential, legislative, municipal and autonomous region council elections. The UNO presidential and vice-presidential candidates - Violeta Chamorro and Virgilio Godoy - won with 54.7 percent of the vote, followed by the incumbent FSLN candidates - Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramirez - with 40.8 percent.

In legislative elections, UNO's alliance of 14 parties obtained a majority, with 51 of the 92 seats in the National Assembly, while the Sandinistas won 39 seats and two smaller parties got one seat each. UNO coalition also swept the municipal elections, gaining control of 102 of the 131 municipal councils. Results were mixed in elections for the new regional councils in the two autonomous regions along the Atlantic coast. In the Puerto Cabezas region the Miskito Indian movement - Yatama - won 22 seats, the FSLN and UNO secured 21 seats and 2 seats respectively. In the Bluefields region, UNO captured 23 seats, while FSLN and Yatama won 19 seats and 3 seats respectively.

UNO coalition of 14 parties won the elections, but the FSLN remained the largest single party. In addition, although UNO won a simple majority in the legislature, it failed to secure the 60 percent (55 seats) of the seats needed to propose amendments of the constitution.

TRANSITION AND TRANSFER OF POWER

The period between the elections and the inauguration of President-elect was full of apprehensions on both sides. UNO was apprehensive of continued Sandinista control of the army and police, and feared that the Sandinistas might be unwilling to transfer power to the newly elected government. The FSLN, on its part, apprehended a wave of vengeance by the still-mobilised contras against Sandinista supporters and a general rollback of its socio-economic reform programmes.

The FSLN hurriedly undertook a number of measures to protect its supporters from possible contra onslaughts. It began handing out arms to its civilian supporters for self-defence. It went in for a crash programme to give property titles to persons holding land and houses that had been given to them as part of government's egalitarian policy of institutional change, i.e., redistribution of assets and income in favour of the poor.

However, the two sides immediately began transition talks, mediated initially by former President Carter, the O.A.S. and the U.N. General Humberto Ortega Saavedra (the Defence Minister and brother of Daniel Ortega) and Antonio Lacayo Oyanguen (a business man and Violeta Chamorro's son-in-law), designated by the President and the President-elect to lead their respective transition teams, met for the first time on February 27, two days after the election. The transition meeting was held

in the Managua's office of Dr. Jennifer L. McCoy (Managua Director of Nicaraguan Election - Monitoring Project) at the Carter Centre of Emory University.

The talks encompassed a broad set of issues through the meetings of negotiating committees named by each side. But that broad participation was quickly abandoned, and the fundamental decisions about the nature of power transfer were made in private one-on-one meetings between General Ortega and Lacayo. The precise content of those talks has never been revealed. The transition talks continued till March. The issues of great concern centred round the demobilisation of the contras, the integrity of the armed forces and land reform and property rights.¹⁴

On March 27, the two teams announced agreement on a seven-page 'Protocol of Procedure for the Transfer of Executive Power of the Republic of Nicaragua' that would serve as the framework for the transition process. In the March 27 agreement, both sides decided that President Ortega and President-elect Chamorro would jointly call for an immediate demobilisation of the contras; Ortega would announce a ceasefire and Chamorro would endorse it. The integrity of the armed forces would be respected. The agreement also recognised Violeta Chamorro's constitutional role as the "Supreme Chief" of the armed forces, while it left

14. Though, it was agreed not to undo Sandinista agrarian reforms, later, these reforms were rolled back and property was returned to the its original holders.

open the possibility that General Humberto Ortega might remain as its head. Both the sides consented that the transfer of power on April 25 would be complete, including the right of President-elect Chamorro to name her own cabinet. They also decided that agrarian reforms would not be reversed, although disputes over other complex property issues could be adjudicated or negotiated.

The United States took prompt steps following the UNO victory. President Bush immediately called for a ceasefire, explaining "there is no reason at all for further military activity from any quarter."¹⁵ A high level U.S. emissary visited contra base camps in Honduras, and Vice President Dan Quayle met with contra leaders in Washington to urge the contras to disarm. President Bush lifted the five-year old United States economic sanction against Nicaragua before Ortega departed. Vice-President Quayle met with the outgoing Nicaraguan President several times while attending the inauguration of the Chilean President Patricio Alwin in mid-March, to discuss the future relationship between the two countries. President Bush requested a \$300 million aid package to assist the new Nicaraguan government in reconstruction which Congress approved.

Even if Bush administration initiated discussions with the contra leaders for dismantling base camps in Honduras, it was reluctant for the immediate demobilisation of contras. The Bush

15. Quoted in Cynthia J. Arnson and J.M. Forman, "United States Policy in Central America", *Current History*, Vol. 90, No. 554, March 1991, pp. 98-99.

administration feared of possible Sandinista revenge and was suspicious about their smooth transfer of power. When President Bush met with former President Ronald Reagan in California and discussed with him about the future of contras, Reagan expressed his unhappiness with Bush's stand. The former President did not want contras to disarm immediately.¹⁶

Before inauguration contra demobilisation proceeded in fits and starts. After several rounds of talks between representatives of the president elect and of the contras, two sides reached agreement in April, and disarmament and demobilisation process followed immediately. On April 25, Violeta Chamorro received the presidential sash from Daniel Ortega in the National Stadium in the presence of several heads of state and UNO and FSLN supporters. In the inaugural speech, President Chamorro described her government of National Salvation, saying one of her important task was to "instill in all our actions the spirit of reconciliation".

President Chamorro announced the appointment of General Humberto Ortega as chief of the armed forces, charging him with the tasks of designing a programme to reduce the armed forces, recovering weapons still in the hands of civilians and guaranteeing the subordination of the military to civilian authorities. Even though she named herself Minister of Defence, the retention of Ortega as army chief created the first crisis

16. *The New York times*, March 2, 1990.

for the new president; two of her cabinet ministers resigned in protest and the contras threatened to resist the demobilisation agreement of April 18.

Washington was also unhappy over Ortega's appointment and Chamorro's conciliatory policy towards the Sandinistas, viewing it as appeasement. The Bush administration put pressure on President Chamorro to abandon the World Court award of \$17 billion in reparations to Nicaragua¹⁷, though Nicaraguans viewed the judgment as their important moral victory. The United States made the grant of future economic aid conditional on Nicaragua complying with this U.S. demand.¹⁸

ELECTORAL DEBACLE

There is a difference of opinion regarding the reasons of electoral defeat of Sandinistas. Observers have come out with varying interpretations in consonance with their ideological predilections. The U.S. conservatives saw the election as vindication of President Reagan's unswerving support for contras, whereas opponents held that the elections proved merits of negotiations. The American press was agog with Nicaraguan post-election analysis. David K. Shipler said Nicaraguan elections proved that open and honourable support for democratic process is one of the most powerful foreign policy tools at Washington's

17. The case was filed by the Sandinista government following the CIA mining of Nicaraguan harbours in 1984.

18. *The New York Times*, September 30, 1990.

disposal. He maintained that Nicaraguan voters, in dislodging Sandinistas, had done it peacefully what U.S.-backed contras could not do violently. According to him, few million U.S. dollars which strengthened the UNO were better-spent than hundreds of millions that purchased weapons and cost thousands of lives.¹⁹

Another Columnist, William Saffire said that contras' long struggle made possible the victory of democratic political leaders.²⁰ Anthony Lewis wrote, Nicaragua's election was made possible by three presidents outside Nicaragua; Oscar Arias, Jimmy Carter and George Bush. In his view, George Bush took political risk of offending right-wing zealots by rejecting President Reagan's eight year long campaign of terror against Nicaragua. While Reagan's policy didn't succeed, experiment with peace and democracy did work nicely.²¹

Mark Uhlig attributed the Sandinistas' defeat to a vote for change, "Nicaraguans were demanding a change."²² But Ambler H. Moss, a former diplomat and a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, emphasised that the Nicaraguan elections was

19. *The New York Times*, March 1, 1990.

20. *The New York Times*, March 2, 1990.

21. *The New York Times*, March 2, 1990.

22. Mark A. Uhlig, "Nicaragua's Permanent Crisis : Ruling from Above and Below", *Survival*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 5, September/October 1991, pp. 410-423.

a triumph of Esquipulas.²³ Paul Wehr and John Paul Lederach held similar views, giving credit to negotiations.²⁴

FSLN convened an assembly of its members at El Crucero on June 17, 1990 for a self analysis of its electoral defeat. Though the Sandinistas identified their mistakes while in power and carried out an intense debate over how to democratise the party, they mainly attributed the electoral defeat to the military draft and the popular hope that a friendly U.S. government might improve the economic situation.

No doubt, the Sandinista mistakes were responsible for their defeat in elections. The Sandinistas took Nicaraguan voters for granted and hoped that people would bear with the government's problems and identify the real problem-makers, the United States and the contras. It was also true that due to faulty economic policies which aggravated that miseries of Nicaraguan masses, the FSLN's popular support base eroded fast and finally crumbled in the face of hyper-inflation. The Sandinistas' continuous unilateral concessions (under tremendous pressure) to internal and external adversaries were equally responsible for their poll debacle. And above all, military conscription alienated Sandinista government from their

23. Ambler H. Moss, Jr., "Peace in Central America ?", *Survival*, Vol. XXXII, No. 5, September/October, 1990, pp.421-436.

24. Paul Wehr and John Paul Lederach, "Mediating Conflict in Central America", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1991, pp. 85-98.

traditional support base which felt insecure under the governance of Sandinistas.

But the U.S. role overshadowed all other factors responsible for the poor performance of Sandinistas at the poll. The uncompromising decade long U.S. hostility towards Nicaragua involved terrorism, military subversion, economic sabotage, economic blockade and all forms of state terrorism against a small and a defenceless country. U.S. carried out this policy in flagrant violation of International Law, U.N. Charter and in defiance of the judgment of the World Court. The overt U.S. military intervention, economic subversion and political destabilisation wreaked havoc on Nicaragua. It created near economic collapse, diverted scarce resources from development to defence, disrupted reconstruction effort.

It forced the government to adopt highly unpopular measures like the military draft and created general sense of weariness and insecurity among the population. The withdrawal of limited Soviet/Cuban assistance further aggravated the problems of a besieged Sandinista government in the face of unremitting U.S. hostility. The government had no alternative but to give unilateral concessions to the U.S. and U.S.-backed internal enemies. In this situation, a war-weary and measurable population was forced to view the Sandinista government as a liability and was tempted to hope that a government acceptable to U.S. would not only bring peace to the war-ravaged country but also large-

scale economic assistance from the U.S. This, coupled with blatant U.S. intervention in the elections in favour of UNO, marked the success of decade-old policy of terror and strangulation of a government not to the liking of Washington.

James Petras, who wrote on Sandinistas' electoral defeats, aptly remarked, "The Nicaraguan elections were decided in the boardrooms of the banks and the strategy sessions in Washington, New York, London, Zurich and Bonn, even though the votes were cast in Nicaragua." For the committed nationalist Nicaraguans, the war and embargo solidified and deepened their opposition "to U.S. imperialism and its local clients". But for the less committed and unorganised poor, "U.S. violence and shortages were blamed on those who transformed Nicaraguan society and provoked the ire of the patron".²⁵

25. James Petras, "Electoral Defeat of the Sandinistas", *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 17, 1990 p. 543.

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

Intervention - military, economic or political - has been the most consistent feature of U.S. policy in Central America which was ostensibly justified as necessary for protection of American property and lives and warding off "communist threat". This is a mere euphemism for overthrowing non-subservient governments which may, otherwise, be nationalist and enjoying a considerable measure of domestic popularity. Indeed, the history of U.S. foreign policy in Central America is a history of long - succession of direct and indirect interventions to overthrow governments which were not to Washington's liking. Even as late as 1980s, Washington did not allow the Central Americans to manage their affairs independently. In 1983, President Reagan invaded tiny Grenada to overthrow its government and impose a puppet regime. In 1989, President Bush invaded Panama, overthrew its President General Noriega and took him as a prisoner to the United States.

Nicaragua has been the worst victim of U.S. intervention among Central American nations. Historically, the U.S. policy towards Nicaragua has ignored the socio-economic realities there, namely, abject mass poverty and highly exploitative social order. It has always controlled, manipulated and colluded with Managua's elites to maintain its imperial stranglehold.

Throughout its history, Nicaragua has been reeling under U.S. exacerbated internal divisions, dependent economy and repeated U.S. interventions. Barring a microscopic privileged class, Nicaraguans have been a deprived mass. The elites were indifferent to poverty-stricken masses but quite responsive to the dictates of Washington. Critically dependent on U.S. for their survival and protected against mass upheavals by constant U.S. military interventions, these elites stood at the apex of a highly exploitative feudal and repressive order. Apart from the share garnered by these elites, social surplus, extracted from the impoverished economy, went to various U.S. economic interests linked to Nicaragua.

Since the beginning of this century, Managua had been under U.S. tutelage and Washington had been treating Nicaragua as its permanent local outpost in the region. But contrary to U.S. expectations, the Sandinistas' accession to power ran counter to this U.S. hegemonic 'right'.

U.S. intervention in Nicaragua (like rest of Latin America) was rationalised on the basis of Monroe Doctrine and anti-communism. Among all the countries of Central America, Nicaragua remained under direct U.S. occupation for the longest period (from 1912 to 1925 and again from 1927 upto 1933).

The first organised reaction against U.S. interference in Nicaragua took place in late 1920s and early 1930s. Sandino, who led this protest movement, became the cult figure in his opposition to U.S. intervention. He was successful in forcing U.S. to withdraw marines from Nicaragua. His fight against U.S. interference in Nicaraguan affairs also catalysed new national awareness throughout Central America. However, Sandino's struggle remained unfinished and U.S. continued its interference even thereafter.

After the return of marines from Nicaragua, Washington replaced its policy of crude military intervention by a more subtle, accommodative and adjustive approach, but the hegemonic objective remained unaltered. It controlled Nicaraguan affairs through its puppet dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza Garcia and his two sons.

The popular reaction against U.S. stranglehold over Nicaragua started vigorously in early seventies and ended in the revolutionary victory in July 1979. This Sandinista victory was the culmination of the popular struggle initiated by Augusto César Sandino against the U.S. - controlled governance of Nicaragua. The United States' all out efforts to intervene militarily for preventing the revolution from succeeding could not be materialised. So,

Nicaraguans considered not only Somozas as anti-people but also the United States which backed the tyrannical dynastic rule.

The high-profile human rights programme of Carter administration was only a new mask under which the United States continued its hegemonic policy towards Nicaragua. There was general impression that the Carter administration was soft towards the Sandinistas. But later revelations belied this impression. While publicly exhibiting accommodative posture, Carter, in fact, had initiated a clandestine Sandinista destabilisation programme. When Reagan entered White House, secret war against Sandinista government had already been set into motion by Carter.

Intervention in Nicaragua in its most intensified form took place during the period of Sandinista rule. U.S. decade-long intervention in the eighties was all-pervasive, more rigorous and universally destructive for that small and poor country. No aspect of Nicaraguan life escaped ravages by U.S. military intervention and sabotage, economic blockade and economic subversion, and U.S. - created and sustained contra armed rebellion.

Washington's alibi for its undeclared and multi-faceted war of attrition against Nicaragua was that the

Sandinista government was a "Soviet-Cuban extension" in U.S. backyard which threatened its security. Actually, Sandinistas' rise to power was an authentic and popular revolution against the U.S. -installed and U.S. - sustained repressive Somoza dictatorship. Sandinistas aimed at a radical nationalist movement restructuring the political and economic life along egalitarian lines to ensure justice and equity. This was a far cry from the long-standing U.S. policy of imposing tyrannical, exploitative, and brutally oppressive pro-U.S. regimes on Latin American countries to subserve its imperialist goals.

Reagan's Nicaraguan policy was transparently hardline and imperialist, and bereft of Carter's duplicity. He fitted Nicaragua into the cold war frame and portrayed Sandinistas as promoters of communist cause in the region receiving orders from Moscow and Havana. A popular revolution was branded as "communist - prompted".

Reagan was uncompromising on his stand that Sandinistas were inimical to U.S. interests and had to be dislodged from power. He invoked the outdated domino theory that if FSLN was allowed to stay in power it would lead to the "fall" of more Latin American countries who would go the Cuban way.

Reagan Doctrine was enunciated to take care of "communist challenge" globally. Central America was chosen as the testing ground, and Sandinistas made target. Reagan Doctrine was not content with mere containment. It declared that communist gains ought to be reversed. Reagan administration's Nicaragua policy was operated within the general framework of this Doctrine.

Though there was agreement on the objective of Sandinista overthrow, the Reagan administration faced problem regarding the formulation of an acceptable strategy to rollback Sandinista revolution. As direct military invasion was not possible due to fear of loss of American lives and consequent adverse domestic repercussions, reminiscent of anti-Vietnam war demonstrations, other means short of invasion were considered. Low Intensity War was chosen as the most cost-effective way of pulling down the Sandinista government.

The Reagan Doctrine through its principal vehicle - LIW - has devastated Nicaragua. The Sandinista revolution was born at a moment of profound international crisis when imperialism was passing from the defensive to the offensive. The revolution's attempt to resolve the most fundamental issues of food, clothing, shelter and democracy for the impoverished majority had the sad fate of being singled out,

for historic and geopolitical reasons, as a test case for the Reagan administration's new global counter-offensive.

The accusation that Nicaragua was a Soviet proxy was fallacious and meant to justify U.S. aggression against that country. Nicaraguan revolution was an indigenous one with the objective of freeing the masses from exploitation, deprivation and abject poverty. While being sympathetic to the Sandinista government, Soviets and Cubans had no say in Nicaraguan policy. From its very inception, Nicaraguan government ruled out setting up of any Soviet or Cuban base on its territory. The small scale economic and defensive assistance from these two countries to Nicaragua followed rather than preceded the U.S. hostile actions against that country.

U.S.' undeclared war and its economic strangulation of Nicaragua was indefensible from the standpoint of OAS and U.N. Charters, international law and principles of non-interference in another country. Paradoxically, the United States refused to submit itself to the jurisdiction of the World Court which held it guilty of mining Nicaraguan harbours and ordered it to pay \$17 billion in reparations to that victim of U.S. aggression. This way, Washington was, in effect, admitting its lawlessness in dealing with Nicaragua.

It defied the majority of members in U.N. General Assembly who decried its hostility towards the Sandinista government.

None of U.S.' important supporters shared Reagan administration's notion of Central America in general and Nicaragua in particular as a cold war battlefield. Even its allies endorsed U.N. resolutions that called upon Washington to refrain from military activities against Nicaragua which were, of course, vetoed by the United States. The U.N., O.A.S. and the European Economic Community (EEC), among other international organisations, strongly criticised Reagan's trade embargo on Nicaragua, none of U.S.' European allies offered to join.

The Reagan administration also violated U.S. laws in pursuit of its unrelenting war against Nicaragua. One among many such violations was reflected in Iran-Contra scandal. While it had branded Iran as a "terrorist" state, it had no problem in selling arms to that country to use the sale proceeds for helping the contra armed bands in Nicaragua. Neither did the CIA have any hesitation in introducing the sale of drugs in the poor black localities of Los Angeles to supplement the financing of contra rebels. To ward off the illegitimacy of its policy, Reagan administration resorted to lies, public diplomacy propaganda and McCarthite red-baiting.

Reagan's real concern was that the mere existence of the Sandinista government in the region as a successful revolution against oppression and social injustice might be enough to inspire other revolutions in Central America. Thus, the main intention of the Reagan administration was to discredit the Sandinista government and turn it into an unbearable burden to the Nicaraguan people through the sustained economic and political strangulation so that no one would look to Nicaragua as an alternative role model in future.

Reagan's uncompromising attitude, low-intensity warfare, economic quarantine and destabilisation, and continuous flow of arms and aid to contras suffocated Nicaraguans. From the outset, the Reagan administration blocked the prospect of negotiated settlement and sabotaged regional peace efforts, thus closing the doors of all options except military one. George Bush also essentially followed his predecessor's policy of bellicosity towards Nicaragua. Exhausted Nicaraguans wanted a respite from this U.S. war of attrition.

Beleaguered Sandinistas were forced to hold elections amidst circumstances quite adverse to them. Far from allowing the holding of a fair poll, the United States blatantly interfered to vitiate the conduct of fair elections

through massive infusion of money, propaganda equipment and personnel via National Endowment for Democracy to load the dice decisively in favour of anti-Sandinista coalition. Sandinistas were denied a level playing field in the elections which, ironically, were certified 'fair' by observers.

Viewed thus, the said elections were merely the crowning success of a decade-old indefensible destabilisation effort to overthrow the Sandinista government. This has been in keeping with Washington's long historic tradition of maintaining its hegemony in its backyard by any means howsoever unjustified and barbarous.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCE

A. Records, Reports and Documents

American Foreign Policy : Current Documents.

Amnesty International. *The Republic of Nicaragua : An Amnesty International Report Including the Findings of a Mission to Nicaragua*, London : Amnesty International Publications, 1977.

CIA's Nicaragua Manual. "Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare", New York : Random House, 1985.

Congressional Monitor

Congressional Quarterly Report

Congressional Record

Congressional Research Service. "U.S. Assistance to Honduras, Foreign Aid Facts", June 12, 1985.

Document of Objectives (by Contadora Group). "The Americas in 1984 : A Year of Decisions", Reprinted in *Inter American Dialogue*, Washington, D.C. : Aspin Institute, 1984.

GATT, Report of the Panel. "United States - Imports of Sugar from Nicaragua", L/5607, March 2, 1984.

International Court of Justice. *Case Concerning Military and Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua, Nicaragua Vs United States*, The Hague : ICJ Publication, 1986.

Johnson, Kyle and Donald Russlang. "Tariff Duties as a Measure of the Effect of Tariff Elimination in the Caribbean Basin" (Report Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labour), Bureau of International Labour Affairs, April 27, 1982.

Keesings Record of World Events.

Kruzel, Joseph, ed. *American Defense Annual*, 1988, Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1988.

"Letter from the President of Nicaragua addressed to the Presidents of the Countries of the Contadora Group and the Support Group, November 11, 1985", United Nations General Assembly Document A/40/894, New York : United Nations, 1985.

National Endowment for Democracy. *Annual Report (1984-1989)*.

National Security Decision Directives.

National Security Strategy Documents.

Office of Assistant Secretary of Defence for Public Affairs.
"News Release, Speech of Fred C. Ikle, Under
Secretary of Defence for Policy", September 12,
1983.

Pelzman, Joseph and Donald Russlang, "Effects on US Trade and
Employment of Tariff Elimination Among the
Countries of North America and the Caribbean
Basin" (Report prepared for the US Department of
Labour), Bureau of International Labour Affairs,
January 1982.

Report of the Atlantic Council's Working Groups on the Caribbean
Basin. *Western Interests and U.S. Policy Options
as the Caribbean Basin*, Boston : Oelgeschlager,
Gunn and Haim Publishers, inc., 1984.

Report of a British Parliamentary Delegation to Nicaragua to
Observe the Presidential and National Assembly
Elections, London, 1984.

Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-
Contra Affair, Washington, D.C. : G.P.O., 1987.

Report of LASA. "The Electoral Process in Nicaragua : Domestic
and International Influences", Austin, Tx. : LASA,
1984.

Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on
Central America, New York : MacMillan Publishing
Co., 1984.

Report of the Tower Commission, New York : Random House, 1987.

Report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin
America and the Caribbean, "Damage Caused by
Hurricane Joan in Nicaragua : Its Effect on
Economic Development and Living Conditions and
Requirements for Rehabilitation and Recons-
truction", December 2, 1988.

Report of the Washington Office on Latin America. "A Political
Opening in Nicaragua", Washington, D.C. : WOLA,
1984.

Rockefeller, Nelson. *The Rockefeller Report on the Americas*,
Chicago : Quadrangle Press, 1969.

U.S. Congress. House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings.

U.S. Congress. House, Sub-Committee on International Relations, Sub-Committee on International Organisations, "Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador : Implications for U.S. Policy", Hearings, June 8, 9, 1976, Washington, D.C. : U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976.

U.S. Congress. House Sub-Committee on International Organisations, Hearings.

U.S. Congress. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings.

U. S. Department of State Bulletin.

U. S. Department of State. Current Policy.

U. S. Department of State. Dispatch.

U. S. Department of State. Newsletter.

U. S. Department of State. Special Reports.

U.S. Department of State. *The United States and Nicaragua : A Survey of the Relations from 1909-1932*, Washington, D.C. : GPO, 1932.

U.S. Department of State. *American Foreign Policy Basic Documents, 1977-1980*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983.

U.S. General Accounting Office. *Central America : Impact of U.S. Assistance in the 1980s*, Washington, D.C. : U.S. General Accounting Office, 1989.

U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee, "Turmoil in Central America" (from United States Senate Republican Policy Committee, Russel Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.), 1986.

United States, Senate. "Operation of the Naval Service in Nicaragua", S. Doc. 86.70 Cong. Isss (Serial 8871).

Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents.

White House Press Releases.

B. News Papers, Magazines and Press Dispatches

Associated Press Dispatches (U.S.)
Central America Report (U.S.)
The Hindu (India)
The Hindustan Times (India)
International Herald Tribune (France)
The Los Angeles Times (U.S.)
News Week (U.S.)
The Miami Herald (U.S.)
The New York Times (U.S.)
The Statesman (India)
The Tico Times (U.S.)
Times (England)
The Times of India (India)
U.N. Chronicle (New York)
U.N. News Letter (India)
U.S. News and World report (U.S.)
Wall Street Journal (U.S.)

C. Books

Arca, Emil and Gregory J. Pamel, ed. *The Triumph of American Spirit : The Presidential Speeches of Ronald Reagan*, Detroit : National Reproduction Corp., 1984.

Bagley, Bruce Michael, Roberto Alvarez and Katherine J. Hagedoren, eds. *Contadora and the Central American Peace Process: Selected Documents*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985.

Barry, Tom and Deb Preusch. *Central American Fact Book*, New York : Grove Press, 1986.

- Bender, David L. and Bruno Leone Sr., eds. *Central America : Opposing View Points*, Minnesota : Green Haven Press, 1984.
- Berle, Beatrice Bishop and Travis Beal Jacobs, eds. *Navigating the Rapids : From the Papers of Adolf A. Berle*, New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1973.
- Bevans, Charles I., (Comp.). *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776-1949*, Washington, D.C. : U.S. Department of State, 1974.
- Borge, Tomas et al. *The Sandinistas Speak : Speeches and Writings of Nicaragua's Leaders*, New York : Pathfinder Press, 1982.
- Boyer, Paul (ed. with commentary). *Reagan as President : Contemporary Views of the Man, His Politics, and His Policies*, Chicago : Ivan R. Dee Inc., 1990.
- Brown, Cynthia, ed. *With Friends Like These : The Americas Watch Report on Human Rights and U.S. Policy in Latin America*, New York : Pantheon Borks, 1985.
- Buchanan, James. *Mr. Buchanan's Administration on the Eve of the Rebellion*, New York : Books for Libraries, 1970. (Repr. of 1865, edition.).
- Butler, Stuart M., Michael Sennera, and W. Bruce Weinwood, eds. *Mandate for Leadership II : Continuing the Conservative Revolution*, Washington, D.C. : The Heritage Foundation, 1984.
- Commission on United States - Latin America Relations (Linowitz Commission). *The Americas in a Changing World*, New York : Halsted, 1974.
- Dickey Christopher. *With the Contras : A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua*, New York : Simon & Schuster, 1986.
- Eich, Dieter and Carlos Rincon. *The Contras : Interviews with Anti-Sandinistas*, San Francisco, C.A. : Synthesis Publications, 1984.
- Encyclopaedia of American Foreign Policy, (Vol. 1), New York : Charles Seribner's Sons, 1978.
- Etzold, T. and John L. Gaddis. *Containment : Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.
- Gantenbein, James W. (comp. and ed.). *The Evolution of Our Latin American Policy : A Documentary Record*, New York : Columbia University Press, 1950.

- Green, James R. & Brent Scowcroft (Co-Chairman). *Western Interests and U.S. Policy Options in the Caribbean Basin* (Report of the Atlantic Council's Working Group on the Caribbean Basin), Boston, Mass.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain Publishers, inc., 1984.
- Haig, Alexander M., Jr. *Caveat : Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy*, New York : MacMillan, 1984.
- Kirkpatrick, Jeane J. *The Reagan Phenomenon : And Other Speeches on Foreign Policy*, Washington : American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1983.
- Manning, William R., ed. *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of Latin American Nations*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1965. (Repr. of 1925 edition.)
- Manning, William R., ed. *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, Inter-American Affairs, 1831-1860*, Washington, D.C. : Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1933.
- Nicaragua's Military Build - up and Support for Central America Subversion, Washington D.C. : United States Department of State and Department of Defence; 1984.
- Political Handbook of the World - 1987*, New York : CSA Publication, 1987.
- Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States : John F. Kennedy, 1962, Washington, D.C. : Government Printing Office, 1963.
- Public Papers of the Presidents of United States : Ronald Reagan (15 Vols.), Washington, D.C. : G.P.O., 1990.
- Public Papers of the Presidents of United States : George Bush (6 Vols.), Washington, D.C. : G.P.O., 1992.
- Reagan, Ronald. *A Time for Choosing : The Speeches of Ronald Reagan, 1961-1982*, Chicago : Regnery Gateway, 1983.
- Richardson, James D. (comp.). *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1878-1904*, Washington, D.C.: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1974. (Repr. of 1904 ed.)
- Richardson, James D., ed. *Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, Washington, D.C. : GPO, 1972. (Repr. of 1897 ed.)

- Somoza, Anastasio and Jack Cox. *Nicaragua Betrayed*, Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1980.
- Stimson, Henry L. *American Policy in Nicaragua*, New York : Arno Press, 1970.
- Stimson, Henry L. *The Henry L. Stimson Diaries* (Microfilm edition), 1968.
- The Central American Crisis Monitoring Team. *In Contempt of Congress : The Reagan Record of Deceit and Illegality on Central America*, Washington, D.C. : Institute for Policy Studies, 1985.
- The Economic Development of Nicaragua. *A Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, Baltimore : John Hopkins Press, 1955.
- The Report of the Commission on the Organisation of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy 3, Opp. 1, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975.
- Turner, Robert F. *Nicaragua versus United States : A Look at the Facts*, Washington, D.C. : Perdamen, 1980.
- Washington Office on Latin America. *U.S. Electoral Assistance and Democratic Development : Chile, Nicaragua and Panama*, Washington, D.C. : Washington Office on Latin America, 1990.
- Wilkie, J.W. and S. Haber, eds. *Statistical Abstract of Latin America*, Vol. 22, Los Angeles, 1983.

D. Articles

- Chamorro, Edgar. "Confessions of a Contra", *The New Republic*, August 5, 1985.
- Elliott Abrams talks Adam Meyerson. "Foggy Bottom Freedom Fighter", *Policy Review*, No. 47, Winter, 1989.
- Pipes, Daniel. "Documentation : Breaking the Iran-Contra Story", *ORBIS*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Spring, 1987.
- Statement by Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick. U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N., in the Secretary Council, on the Complaint of Nicaragua, March 23, 1983, "Marxist Totalitarianism in Our Hemisphere : Nicaragua", *World Affairs*, Vol. 145, No. 4, Spring, 1983.

SECONDARY SOURCE

A. Books

- Allison, Graham A. *Essence of Decision : Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Boston : Little Brown and Company, 1971.
- Allman, T.D. *Unmanifest Destiny*, New York: The Dial Press, 1984.
- Alvarez, Alejandro. *The Monroe Doctrine : Its Importance in the International Life of the States of New World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1924, (Repr. 1976).
- Anderson, Thomas P. *Politics in Central America : Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua*, New York : Praeger, 1988
- Arnson, Cynthia J. *Crossroad : Congress, The Reagan Administration, and Central America*, New York : Pantheon Books, 1988.
- Bailey, Thomas A. *The Man in the Street : The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy*, New York : MacMillan, 1948.
- Bancroft, Hubert Howe. *History of Central America (3 Vols)*, San Francisco : A.L. Bancroft & Co.
- Barnet, Frank, Richard Shultz, and Hugh Toivas, eds. *Special Operations in U.S. Strategy*, Washington, D.C. : National Defence University Press, 1984.
- Barry, Tom, Beth Wood and Deb Preusch. *Dollars and Dictators : A Guide to Central America*, London : Zed Press, 1983.
- Barry, Tom and Deb Preusch. *The Soft War : The Uses and Abuses of U.S. Economic Aid in Central America*, New York : Grover Press, 1988.
- Bell, Belden, ed. *Nicaragua : An Ally Under Siege*, Washington : Council on American Affairs, 1978.
- Belli, Humberto. *Breaking Faith : The Sandinista Revolution and its impact on Freedom and Christian Faith in Nicaragua*, Westchester, Illinois : Crossing Books for the Pueblo Institute, 1984.
- Berman, Karl. *Under the Big Stick : Nicaragua and the United States Since 1948*, Boston : South End Press, 1986.

- Best, Edward. *U.S. Policy and Regional Security in Central America*, New York : St. Martin's Press, 1987.
- Black, George. *Triumph of the People : The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua*, London : Zed Press, 1983.
- Black, George. *The Good Neighbour : How The United States Wrote the History of Central America and the Caribbean*, New York : Panthen Books, 1988.
- Bocock, Robert. *Hegemony*, New York : Tavistock Publications, 1986.
- Bodenheimer, Thomas and Robert Gould. *Rollback ! Right Wing Power in U.S. Foreign Policy*, Boston, M.A. : South End Press, 1989.
- Booth, John A. *The End and the Beginning : The Nicaraguan Revolution*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1982.
- Booth, John, A. and Mitchell A. Seligson. *Elections and Democracy in Central America*, Chapel Hill : University of North Carolins, 1989.
- Brodie, Reid. *Contra Terror in Nicaragua*, Boston : South End Press, 1985.
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *Game Plan : How to Conduct the U.S.-Soviet Contest*, Boston : The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986.
- Burbach, Roger, Patricia Flynn, eds. *The Politics of Intervention: The United States in Central America*, New York : Monthly Review Press, 1984.
- Burns, E. Bradford. *At War in Nicaragua : The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia*, New York : Harper and Row, 1987.
- Calvert, Peter; ed. *The Central Amerian Security System : North-South or East-West*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Carothers, Thomas. *In the Name of Democracy : U.S. Policy Towards Latin America in the Reagan Years*, Berkeley : University of California Press, 1991.
- Castaneda, Jorge. *Utopia Unarmed : The Latin American Left after the Cold War*, New York : Knopf, 1993.
- Central America Crisis Monitoring Team, *In Contempt of Congress : The Reagan Record of Deceit and Illegality in Central America*, Washington, D.C. : Institute for Policy Studies, 1985.

- Chase, James. *Endless War : How we got Involved in Central America and What can be done*, New York : Vintage Books, 1984.
- Chillcote, Ronald, and Joel Edelstien eds. *Latin America : The Struggle with Dependency and Beyond*, New York : Halsted, 1974.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Deterring Democracy*, New York : Verso Publication, 1991.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Power and Ideology : The Managua Lectures*, Boston, M.A. : South End Press, 1987.
- Chomsky, Noam. *The Culture of Terrorism*, Boston, M.A. : South End Press, 1988.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Turning the Tide : U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Struggle for Peace*, Boston, M.A. : South End Press, 1985.
- Cockburn, Leslie. *Out of Control : The Story of the Reagan Administrations's Secret War in Nicaragua, the Illegal Arms Pipeline, and the Contra Drug Connection*, New York : Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987.
- Colburn, Forrest D. *Post Revolutionary Nicaragua : State, Class and the Dilemmas of Agrarian Policy*, Berkeley : University of California Press, 1986.
- Coleman, Kenneth M. and George C. Herring, ed. *The Central American Crisis : Sources of Conflict and the Failure of U.S. Policy*, Wilmington, Delaware : Scholarly Resources Inc., 1985.
- Colleoni, Angelo. *U.S. Interventions: A Brief History*, New Delhi: Sterling Publisher, 1984.
- Collins, Joseph. *What Difference Could a Revolution Make ? Food and Farming in the New Nicaragua*, San Francisco : Food First, 1982.
- Committee of Santa Fe. *A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties*, Washington, D.C. : Council for Inter-American Security, 1980.
- Cortada, James N. and James W. Cortada. *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Caribbean, Cuba and Central America*, New York: Praeger, 1985.
- Crabb, Cecil V., Jr. *The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy : Their Meaning, Role, and Future*, Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1982.

- Crawley, Eduardo. *Dictators Never Die : A Portrait of Nicaragua and the Somoza Dynasty*, London : C. Hurst, 1979.
- Crawley, Eduardo. *Nicaragua in Perspective*, New York : St. Martin's Press, 1984.
- Deibel, Terry L. & John Lewis Gaddis, eds. *Containing the Soviet Union : A Critique of U.S. Policy*, New York : Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1987.
- Diederich, Bernard. *Somoza and the Legacy of United States Involvement in Central America*, New York : Dutton, 1981.
- Dixon, Marlene, ed. *On Trial : Reagan's War Against Nicaragua*, San Francisco : Synthesis Publications, 1985.
- Dominguez, Jorge I. *U. S. Interests and Policies in the Caribbean and Central America*, Washington, D.C. : American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1982.
- Dulles, Eleanor L. *American Foreign Policy in the Making*, New York : Harper and Row, 1968.
- Dunkerley, James. *Power in the Isthmus : A Political History of Modern Central America*, New York : Verso Publications, 1988.
- Duval, Miles Percy. *Cardiz to Cathey*, Palo Alto California : Stanford University Press, 1940.
- Edmisten, Patricia Taylor. *Nicaragua Divided : La Prensa and Chomorro Legacy*, Pensacola : University of West Florida Press, 1990.
- Erisman, Michael and John Martz, eds. *Colussus Challenged : The Struggle for Caribbean Influence*, Boulder, Colo. : West View Press, 1982.
- Etchison, Don L. *The United States and Militarism in Central America*, New York : Praeger, 1975.
- Fagen, Richard R. *The Nicaraguan Revolution : A Personal Report*, Washington, D.C. : Institute for Policy Studies, 1981.
- Fagen, Richard R. and Olga Pellicer, eds. *The Future of Central America : Policy Choices for the U.S. and Mexico*, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 1983.

- Falcoff, Mark and Robert Royal, ed. *The Continuing Crisis : U.S. Policy in Central America and the Caribbean*, Boston : Ethics and Public Policy Centre, 1987.
- Farer, Tom J. *The Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America*, New Brunswick, New Jersey : Transaction Books; 1988.
- Feinberg, Richard E., ed. *Central America : International Dimensions of the Crisis*, New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982.
- Feinberg, Richard E. and Bruce M. Bagley. *Development Postpones : The Political Economy of Central America in the 1980's*, Boulder, Colo. : West View Press, 1986.
- Ferrel, Robert H., eds. *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, New York : Cooper Square Publishers, 1963.
- Findling, John E. *Close Neighbours, Distant Friends: United State-Central American Relations*, Connecticut : Greenwood Press, Inc., 1987.
- Folkman, David I., Jr. *The Nicaraguan Route*, Salt Lake City : University of Utah Press, 1972.
- Foroohar, Manzar. *The Catholic Church and Social Change in Nicaragua*, Albany, New York : State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Fossedal, Gregory. *The Democratic Imperative : Exporting the American Revolution*, New York : Basic Books, 1989.
- Frank, Andre Gunder. *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*, New York : Monthly Review Press, 1969.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *Strategies of Containment : A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Gilbert, Dennis. *Sandinistas*, New York : Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- Girling, John Lawrence Scott. *America and the Third World : Revolution and the Intervention*, London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Greenstein, Fred I., ed. *The Reagan Presidency : An Early Assessment*, Baltimore, Md. : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.
- Guevara, Ernesto che. *Guerrilla Warfare*, New York : Vintage Books, 1961.

- Gurtov, Melvin. *The United States against the Third World*, New York : Praeger, 1974.
- Gurtov, Melvin and Pay Maghroori, eds. *Roots of Failure : The United States Policy in the Third World*, London : Greenwood Press, 1984.
- Gutman, Roy. *Banana Diplomacy : Making of American Policy in Nicaragua, 1981-87*, New York : Simon & Schuster, 1988.
- Hahn, Walter F., ed. *Central America and the Reagan Doctrine*, Lanham, Md. : United States Strategic Institute, 1987.
- Hamilton, Nora, et. al., ed. *Crisis in Central America: Regional Dynamics and U.S. Policies in the 1980's*, Boulder, Colo. : West View Press, 1988.
- Hoffmann, Stanley. *Dead Ends*, New York : Ballinger Press, 1982.
- Holly, Sklar. *Washington's War on Nicaragua*, Boston : South End Press, 1988.
- Inter-American Dialogue. *The America's in 1984 : A Year for Decisions*, Washington, D.C. : Aspen Institute, 1984.
- Irvin, George and Xabier Gorostiaga. *Towards an Alternative for Central America and the Caribbean*, London : George Allen & Union, 1985.
- Kamman, William. *A Search for Stability : United States Diplomacy Towards Nicaragua, 1925-33*, Notre Dame, Ind. : University of Notre Dame Press, 1968.
- Karnes, Thomas L. *The Failure of Union: Central America, 1824-1975*, Tempe. : Arizona State University, 1976.
- Kiernan, V. G. *America : The New Imperialism*, London: Zed Press, 1978.
- Kirkpatrick, Jeane. "The Hobbes Problem : Order, Authority and Legitimacy in Central America", Washington, D.C. : American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1981.
- Kirkpatrick, J. *Dictatorship and Double Standards*, New York : Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Klare, Michael T. *Beyond "Vietnam Syndrome": U.S. Interventionism in the 1980s*, Washington, D.C. : Institute for Policy Studies, 1981.

- Kornbluh, Peter. *Nicaragua - The Price of Intervention : Reagan's War Against the Sandinistas*, Washington, D.C. : Institute for Policy Studies, 1987.
- Krehm, William. *Democracies and Tyrannies of the Caribbean*, Westport, C.T. : Lawrence Hill & Co., 1984.
- Kryzanek, Michael T. *U.S.-Latin American Relations*, New York : Praeger, 1985.
- Kyvig, David E., ed. *Reagan and the World*, New York : Praeger, 1990.
- La Faber, Walter. *Inevitable Revolutions*, New York: W. W. Nortons & Co., 1983.
- Lake, Anthony. *Somoza Falling*, Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1989.
- Lancaster, Roger N. *Thanks to God and the Revolution : Popular Religion and Class Consciousness in the New Nicaragua*, New York : Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Latin America Bureau. *Nicaragua : Dictatorship and Revolution*, London : Latin American Bureau, 1979.
- Leach, Jim, George Miller and Mark O. Halfield. *U.S. Aid to El Salvador : An Evaluation of the Past, A Proposal for the Future*, Washington, D.C. : Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, 1985.
- Lehman, John F., Jr. *Command of the Seas*, New York : Scribners, 1988.
- Leiken, Robert S., ed. *Central America : Anatomy of Conflict*, Washington : Pergamon, 1984.
- Lentiner, Howard H. *State Formation in Central America : The Struggle for Autonomy, Development, and Democracy*, Westport, C.T. : Greenwood, 1993.
- Lowenthal, Abraham F., ed. *Exporting Democracy : The United States and Latin America*, Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Macauley, Neil. *The Sandino Affair*, Chicago : Quadrangle Books, 1967.
- Marshall, Jonathan, Peter Dale Scott and Jame Hunter. *The Iran Contra Connection : Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era*, Boston : South End Press, 1987.

- Martin, John Bartlow. *U.S. Policy in the Caribbean*, Boulder, Colorado : Westview Press, 1978.
- Martz, John D., ed. *U.S. Policy Towards Latin America : Quarter-Century of Crisis and Challenge*, Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1988.
- Martz, John D. and Schoultz, Lars, eds. *Latin America, The United States and the Inter American System*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1980.
- May, Ernest R. *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*, Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1975.
- McNeil, Frank. *War and Peace in Central America*, New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988.
- Melrose, Dianna. *Nicaragua : The Threat of a Good Example ?* Oxford : Oxfam, 1985.
- Meyer, Harvey Kessler. *Historical Dictionary of Nicaragua*, Mithuchen, N.J. : Scarecrow Press, 1972.
- Millet, Richard. *Guardians of the Dynasty*, Marry Knoll, New York: Orbis, 1977.
- Millet, Richard. *The Death of the Dynasty : The End of Somoza Rule in Nicaragua*, Marry Knoll, New York : Orbis Books, 1977.
- Millet, Richard and W. Marvin Will, eds. *The Restless Caribbean: Changing Patterns of International Relations*, New York : Praeger, 1979.
- Molineu, Harold. *U.S. Policy Towards Latin America : From Regionalism to Globalism*, Boulder, Colo. : West-View Press, 1986.
- Munro, Dana G. *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean 1900-1921*, Princeton : Princeton University University Press, 1964.
- Munro, Dane G. *The United States and the Caribbean Republics (1921-1933)*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Muravchik, Joshua. *News Coverages of the Sandinista Revolutions*, Lanham : Md. University Press of America, 1988.
- Nalty, Bernard C. *The United States Marines in Nicaragua*, Washington, D.C. : Historical Branch, U.S. Marines Corps., 1962.

- Nearing, Scott. *Dollar Diplomacy*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966.
- NewFarmer, Richard, ed. *From Gunboat to Diplomacy : New U.S. Policies for Latin America*, Baltimore : John Hopkins University Press, 1984.
- Nolan, David. *The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution*, Coral Gables, Fl.:Institute of International Studies, Universities of Miami, 1984.
- Nuccio, Richard A. *What is Wrong, Who is Right in Central America ? : A Citizen's Guide*, New York : Facts on File Publications, 1986.
- PACCA (Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America) *Changing Course : Blue Print for Peace in Central America and the Caribbean*, Washington D.C.: Institute for Foreign Studies, 1984.
- Pan American Union. *Nicaragua (American Republics Series No. 15)*, Washington D.C. : Organisation of American States, 1967.
- Pastor, Robert A. *Condemned to Repetition : The United States and Nicaragua*, Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Pastor, Robert A. *Whirlpool : US Foreign Policy Toward Latin America And the Caribben*, Princeto, NJ. : Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Paterson, Thomas G., et al. *American Foreign Policy : A History*, Lexington, Mass. : D.C. Heath, 1977.
- Paul, Roland A. *American Military Commitments Abroad*, New Brunswick, New Jersey : Rutgers University Press, 1973.
- Perkins, Dexter. *A History of the Monroe Doctrine*, Boston : Little Brown and Co., 1963.
- Perkins, Whitney T. *Constraint of Empire : The United States and Caribbean Interventions*, Westport, Connecticut : Greenwood Press, 1981.
- Peterzell, Jay. *Reagan's Secret Wars*, Washington, D.C. : Centre for National Security Studies; 1984.
- Petras, James, ed. *Latin America : From Dependence to Revolution*, New York : John Wiley, 1973.
- Poitras, Guy E. *The Ordeal of Hegemony : The United States and Latin American*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1990.

- Robinson, William T. and Kent Norsworthy. *David and Goliath : Washington's War Against Nicaragua*, London : Zed Books, 1987.
- Rusdie Salman. *The Jaguar Smile : A Nicaraguan Journey*, New York: Viking, 1987.
- Schloultz, Lars. *Human Rights and US Policy Toward Latin America*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Schloultz, Lars. *National Security and United States Policy Toward Latin America*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Schraeder, Peter J., ed. *Intervention into the 1990s : US Foreign Policy in the Third World*, Boulder, Colo. : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992.
- Schultz, Donald E. and Douglas H. Graham. *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Central America and the Caribbean*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1984.
- Selser, Gregorio. *Sandinismo*, New York : Monthly Review Press; 1981.
- Sheehan, Edward R. F. *Agony in the Garden : A Stranger Central America*, Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1989.
- Smith, Gaddis. *Morality, Reason and Power : American Diplomacy in the Carter Years*, New York : Hill and Wang, 1986.
- Solarz, Stephen. *The Reagan Doctrine and Beyond*, Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1987.
- Speakes, Larry and Robert Pack. *Speaking Out : Inside the Reagan White House*, New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988.
- Stanford Central Action Network, ed. *Revolution in Central America*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1983.
- Tazewell, Judy, ed. *The Miskito Question and the Revolution in Nicaragua*, Hampton, VA. : Compita Publishing, 1984 (Passim).
- Thomas, Hugh. *Central America : Can Europe Play a Part ?*, London: Alliance Publishers Ltd., 1987.
- Tijerino, Doris. *Inside the Nicaraguan Revolution*, Vancouver : New Star Books, 1979.
- Tomasek, Robert D. *The Deterioration of Relations Between Costa Rica and the Sandinistas*, Washington D.C. : American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984.

- Torres-Rivas, Edelberto. *Repression and Resistance : The Struggle for Democracy in Central America*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1989.
- Triska, Jan F., ed. *Dominant Powers and Subordinate States : The United States in Latin America and the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe*, Durham : Duke University Press, 1986.
- Valenta, Jiri and Esperanza Dúran, eds. *Conflict in Nicaragua - A Multidimensional Perspective*, Boston : Allen and Unwin, 1987.
- Vanderlaan, Mary B. *Revolution and Foreign Policy in Nicaragua*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1986.
- Vandermeer, John & Peter Rosset. *The Nicaragua Reader: Documents of a Revolution Under Fire*, New York : Grove Press, 1983.
- Walker, Thomas W., ed. *Reagan Versus The Sandinistas: The Undeclared War on Nicaragua*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1987.
- Walker, Thomas W. *Nicaragua : The Land of Sandino*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1982.
- Walker, Thomas W., ed. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Nicaragua*, Boulder, Colo. : Westview Press, 1991.
- Weber, Henry. *Nicaragua : The Sandinista Revolution*, London : Verso, 1981.
- White, Richard Alan. *The Morass : United States Intervention in Central America*, New York : Harper & Row, 1984.
- Wiarda, Howard J., ed. *In Search of Policy-The United States and Latin America*, Washington D.C.:American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984.
- Wiarda, Howard J., ed. *Rift and Revolution : The Central American Imbroglia*, Washington, D.C. : American Enterprise Institute, 1984.
- Williams, William Appleman. *Empire as a Way of Life*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Wood, Bryce. *The Dismantling of the Good Neighbour Policy*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.
- Woodward, Ralph Lee Jr. *Central America : A Nation Divided*, New York : Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Woodward, Robert. *Veil : The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987*, New York : Pocket Books, 1987.

B. Articles

- Adams, Gordon and Stephen Alexis Cain. "Defense Dilemmas in the 1990s", *International Security*, Vol. II, Spring, 1989.
- Arson, Cynthia J. and Johanna Mendetson Forman. "United States Policy in Central America", *Current History*, Vol. 90, No. 554, March, 1991.
- Bendana, Alejandro. "Conflict Resolution in Central America : The Nicaraguan Experience", *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1991.
- Bendaña, Alejandro. "Peace, Transition and Transformation in Nicaragua", *Alternatives*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Spring 1994.
- Berman, Paul. "Why the Sandinistas Lost : Eleven Years of Nicaraguan Revolution", *Dissent*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer, 1990.
- Bermudez, Enrique. "The Nicaraguan Resistance at a Cross Roads", *Strategic Review*, Vol. XVII, No. 2, Spring, 1989.
- Best, Edward. "An Alternative American Policy for Nicaragua", *Survival*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2, March-April, 1987.
- Booth, John A. "War and the Nicaraguan Revolution", *Current History*, Vol. 85, No. 515, December, 1986.
- Brumberg, Abraham. "'Sham' and 'Farce' in Nicaragua ?", *Dissent*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Spring 1985.
- Brumberg, Abraham. "Nicaragua : The Inner Struggle - Is There Still a Chance for Political Pluralism", *Dissent*, Vol. 33, No. 3, Summer, 1986.
- Burbach, Roger. "Nicaragua : The Course of Revolution", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 31, No. 9, Feb, 1980.
- Buvollen, Hans Petter. "Low Intensity Warfare and the Peace Plan in Central America", *Bulletin of Peace Proposal*, Vol. 20, No. 3, September, 1989.
- Buvollen, Hans Petter. "Regional Autonomy in Nicaragua : A New Approach to the Indigenous Question in Latin America", *Alternatives*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, January, 1989.
- Cannon, Lou. "U.S. Said to Doubt Cuban Bid to End Latin Arms Aid", *The Washington Post*, August 14, 1983.

- Chardy, Alfonso. "Latin Ministers Fail to Find Peace Plan", *The Miami Herald*, April 22, 1983.
- Codevilla, Angello. "The Reagan Doctrine-(as yet) a Declaratory Policy", *Strategic Review*, Vol. 14, No. 3, Summer, 1986.
- Colburn, Forrest D. "Nicaragua Under Seige", *Current History*, Vol.84, No. 500, March, 1985.
- Corradi, Juan E. "Nicaragua : Can It Find its own Way ?", *Dissent*, Vol. 31, No. 3, Summer, 1984.
- Corradi, Juan E. "Reagan's Disasters in Central America", *Dissent*, Vol. 30, No. 2, Spring, 1983.
- Cottam, Martha L. "The Carter Administration's Policy Toward Nicaragua : Images, Goals and Tacticcs", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 107, No. 1, Spring, 1992.
- Cruz, Arturo J. "Nicaragua's Imperiled Revolution", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 5, Summer, 1983.
- Cypher, James M. "The Debt. Crisis as `Opportunity'", *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 60, Vol. 16, No. 1, Winter, 1989.
- Dash, Robert. "US Foreign Policy, National Security Doctrine and Central America", *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 63, Vol. 16, No. 4, Winter, 1989.
- Dickey, Christopher. "Central America:From Quagmire to Cauldron", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 3, (America and the World), 1983.
- Dominguez, Jorga I. and Juan Lindau. "The Primary of Politics : Comparing the Foreign Policies of Cuba and Mexico", *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1984.
- Eschbach, Cheryl L. "Explaining US Foreign Policy Toward Central America and the Caribbean", *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. XXV, No. 2, 1990.
- Fagen, Richard R. "The Nicaraguan Crisis", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 34, No. 6, Nov., 1982.
- Fauriol, Georges A. "The Shadow of Latin American Affairs", *Forest Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 1, (America and the World), 1990.
- Feinberg, Richard E. "Central America : No Easy Answers", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 5, Summer, 1981.pp.1121-1146.
- Garfinkle, Adam M. "Reflections on the Quarter : Salvadorians,

- Sandinistas and Super Powers", *ORBIS*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Spring, 1981.
- Giovanni, Cieto Di, Jr. "U.S. Policy and the Marxist Threat to Central America", *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, No. 128, October, 1980.
- Gleijeses, Piero. "The Reagan Doctrine and Central America", *Current History*, Vol. 85, No. 515, Dec., 1986. pp. 401-404, 435-437.
- Gleijeses, Piero. "Nicaragua: Resist Romanticism", *Foreign Policy*, No. 54, Spring, 1984. p. 122-138.
- Gorman, Stephen M. "Power and Consolidation in the Nicaraguan Revolution", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, No. 13, May, 1981.
- Guillermoprito, Alma and David Haffman. "Document Describes How U.S. 'Blocked' A Contadora Treaty", *The Washington Post*, November 6, 1984.
- Gutman, Roy. How the 1984 Vote was Sabotaged, *The Nation*, May 7, 1988.
- Gutman, Roy. "Nicaragua : America's Diplomatic Charade", *Foreign Policy*, No. 56, Fall, 1984.
- Halloran, Richard. "U.S. Said to Revise Strategy to Oppose Threats by Soviets", *New York Times*, 18 April, 1981.
- Halloran, Richard. "U.S. General Opposes Nicaragua Invasion", *The International Herald Tribune*, July 1, 1985.
- Harris, Richard L. "Revolutionary Transformation of Nicaragua", *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 66, Vol. 17, No. 3, Summer 1990.
- Herman, Edward S. and James Petras. "Resurgent Democracy in Latin America : Rhetoric and Reality", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XX, No. 27, July 6, 1985.
- Hoffman, David and Helen Dewar. "Central America : Not Looking for a Fight", *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, December 26, 1988.
- Holland, Edward. "Nicaragua After the Revolution", *Nation*, Sept. 6/13 1993.
- Howe, Irving. "Central America - Cry Halt !", *Dissent*, Vol. 30, No. 3, Summer, 1983.
- Jenkins, Tony. "Electoral Muddling : The Unmaking of Dora Violeta", *Nation*, Vol. 20, No. 8, Feb. 26, 1990.

pp. 268, 270-272.

- Jenkins, Tony. "The US Embargo Against Nicaragua : One Year later", *Central American Report*, June 27, 1986.
- Jonas, Susanne. "Central America in the Balance : Prospects for the 1990s", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 42, No. 2, June, 1990.
- Jones, Adams. "Beyond the Barricades : The Sandinista Press and Political Transition in Nicaragua", *New Political Science*, No. 23, Fall, 1992.
- Judson, Frid. "Sandinista Revolutionary Morale", *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 66, Vol. 17, No. 3, Summer, 1990.
- Kegley, Jr., Charles W. "On the Legal Control of Low Intensity Conflict", *Bulletin of Peace Proposal*, Vol. 21, No. 3, September, 1990.
- Kenworthy, Eldon. "Central America : Beyond the Credibility Trap", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall, 1983.
- Kenworthy, Eldon. "United States Policy in Central America", *Current History*, Vol. 86, No. 524, December, 1987.
- Kirkpatrick, Jeane. "Dictatorships and Double Standards", *Commentary*, Vol. 68, No. 5, November, 1979.
- Kissinger, Henry. "Reflections on Containment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 3, May/June, 1994.
- Kondracke, Morton and Nick Kotz. "How to Avoid Another Bay of Pigs", *The New Republic*, June 22, 1981.
- Kornbluh, Peter. "The Iran-Contra Scandal : A Postmortem", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. V, No. 1, Winter, 1987-88.
- Krauss, Clifford. "Revolution in Central America ?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 3, (America and The World), 1986.
- LASA. "The Electoral Process in Nicaragua : Domestic and International Influences", November 19, 1984.
- Lateber, Walter. "The Reagan Administration and Revolutions in Central America", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 99, No. 1, Spring, 1984.
- Leiken, Robert. "The Nicaragua Tangle", *New York Review of Books*, December 5, 1985.

- LeoGrande, William M. "The Revolution in Nicaragua : Another Cuba?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 1, Fall 1979.
- LeoGrande, William M. "Through the Looking Glass : The Kissinger Report on Central America", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter, 1983-84.
- LeoGrande, William M. "Roll-Back or Containment ? : The United States, Nicaragua and the Search for Peace in Central America", *International Security*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Fall, 1986.
- Levy, James R. "Background to the Crisis in Central America", *World Review*, Vol. 21, No. 4, October, 1982.
- Lobel, Jules. "The New Nicaragua Constitution : Uniting Participatory and Representative Dem.", *Monthly review*, Vol. 39, No. 7, December 1987.
- Lowenthal, Abraham F. "Rethinking US Interests in the Western Hemisphere", *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Spring, 1987.
- Mac Michael, David. "Nicaraguan Election : The U.S. Plays the Contra Card", *The Nation*, Vol. 250, No. 5, February 5, 1990.
- Marder, Murrey. "For Reagan, Tough Choices in Revising Policy on Soviets", *Washington Post*, 3 January, 1981.
- Mares, David R. "Mexico's Foreign Policy as a Middle Power : The Nicaragua Connections, 1984-86", *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. XXIII, No.3, 1988.
- Maslow, Jonathan Evans. "Honduras : Regional Pawn", *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 253, No. 6, June, 1984.
- McCarthy. "Mexico Says U.S. Allies Sabotage Peace Efforts", *The Washington Post*, May 13, 1984.
- McCoy, Jennifer. "Nicaragua in Transition", *Current History*, Vol. 90, No. 554, March, 1991.
- McDonald, Ronald H. "Technology and Armed Conflicts in Central America", *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Spring, 1987.
- McDougal, Myres. "Presentation Before the International Court of Justice : Nicaragua v. United States", *World Affairs*, Vol. 148, No. 1, Summer, 1985.

- Mcmohan, Bernard F. "Low Intensity Conflict : The Pentagon's Foible", *ORBIS*, Vol.34, No.1, Winter, 1990.
- Meislin, Richard J. "Shultz Rejects Resumption of Talks With Sandinistas", *The New York Times*, July 27, 1985.
- Mercado, Sergio Ramlrez. "On Nicaragua's Resolve", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring, 1984.
- Michael, David Mac. "Nicaraguan Elections : The US Plays the Contra Card", *Nation*, Vol. 250, No. 5, Feb. 5, 1990.
- Miles, Sara. *The Real War : Low Intensity Conflict in Central America*, *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. 20, No. 2, April-May, 1986.
- Millett, Richard L. "Central America's Enduring Conflicts", *Current History*, Vol. 93, No. 581, March, 1994.
- Millett, Richard L. "Nicaragua : A Glimmer of Hope ?", *Current History*, Vol. 89, No. 543, January, 1990.
- Mishra, Girish. "America's Undeclared War Against Nicaragua", *Commerce*, Vol. 153, No. 3931, Sept. 20, 1986.
- Montgomery, Tommie Sue. "Cross and Rifle : Revolution and the Church in El Salvador and Nicaragua", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 36, No. 2, fall/Winter, 1982/83.
- Moss, Jr. Ambler H. "Peace in Central America ?", *Survival*, Vol. XXXII, No. 5, Sept.-Oct., 1990.
- Mott, Gordo. "Honduras", *The New York Times Magazine*, October 14, 1984.
- Narayanan, R. "Sandinismo for the 1990s", *Mainstream*, Vol. XXIX, No. 40, July 27, 1991.
- Niblo, Steve. "Trouble in the Backyard : The US and latin America", *World Review*, Vol. 21, No. 4, October, 1982.
- "Nicaragua Blinks in Showdown with U.S.", *U.S. News and World Report*, March 23, 1981.
- Nichols, John Spicer. "Electoral Meddling : Get the N.E.D. Out of Nicaragua", *Nation*, Vol. 250, No. 8, Feb. 26, 1990.
- North, Liisa and Tim Draimin. "The Decay of the Security Regime in Central America", *International Journal*, Vol. XLX, No. 2, Spring, 1990.

- Parry, Robert and Peter Kornbluh. "Iran-Contra's Untold Story", *Foreign Policy*, No. 72, Fall, 1988.
- Pastor, Robert A. "Our Real Interests in Central America", *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 251, No. 7, July, 1982.
- Paterson, Thomas G. "Historical Memory and Illusive Victories : Vietnam and Central America", *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Winter, 1988.
- Payne, Douglas W. "How the Sandinistas Turned the Tide : A Chronicle of the 'Peace Process'", *Strategic Review*, Vol. XV, No. 4, Fall, 1987.
- Pérez, Andrés. "The FSLN After Debacle : The Struggle for the Definition of Sandinismo", *Journal of Inter American Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 34, No. 1, Spring 1992.
- Pètras, james. "Electoral Defeat of the Sandinistas", *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 17, 1990.
- Petras, james. "Whither the Nicaragua Revolution?", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 31, No. 5, October, 1979.
- Philip, George. "The Crisis in Northern Latin America", *Political Studies*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, June, 1990.
- Purcell, Susan Kaufman. "Carter, Reagan and Central America", *ORBIS*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer, 1982.
- Ralekin, Rhoda Pearl. "US - Soviet Rivalry in Central America and the Caribbean", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Fall/Winter, 1980/81.
- Ramerez, Sergio (Tr. by Lyman Baker). "The Kid From Niquinohomo", *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 62, Vol. 16, No. 3, Summer, 1989.
- Reding, Andrew. "Nicaragua's New Constitution", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. IV, No. 2, Spring, 1987.
- Roberts, Kenneth. "Bollying and Bargaining : The United States, Nicaragua and Conflict Resolution in Central America", *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Fall, 1990.
- Robinson, William I. and Kent Norsworthy. "Elections and US Intervention in Nicaragua", *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Spring, 1985.
- Robinson William I. and Kent Norsworthy. "Nicaragua : The Strategy of Counter Revolution", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 37, No. 7, Dec., 1985.

- Rosenberg, Mark B. "Honduran Scorecard : Military and Democrates in Central America", *Caribbean review*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Winter, 1983.
- Rosenberg, Mark B. "Honduras : The Reluctant Democracy", *Current History*, Vol. 85, No. 515, December, 1986.
- Ross, Peter. "Nicaragua's revolution : Contradictions and Ambiguities", *World Review*, Vol. 21, No. 4, October, 1982.
- Sandors, Jerry W. "Security and Choice", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Summer, 1984.
- Sen, Sudhir. "United States : Nicaragua Under Siege", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XVIII, No. 42, Oct. 15, 1983.
- Shugart, Mathew Soberg. "Thinking About the Next Revolution : Lessons From U.S. Policy in Nicaragua", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Spring, 1987.
- Sigmund, Paul E. "Conversations in Central America", *World View*, Vol. 25, No. 5, May, 1982.
- Simon, Marlise. "Mexico Warns Against Attack on Nicaragua", *The Washington Post*, November 25, 1981.
- Slater, Jerome. "Dominos in Central America : Will They fall ? Does It Matter", *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 2. Fall, 1987.
- Smith, Wayne S. "Lies About Nicaragua", *Foreign Policy*, No. 67, Summer, 1987.
- "Somoza Rules Out Early Departure", *Central America Report*, Vol. 5, No. 12, March 20, 1978. p. 95.
- Szule, Tad. "Rocking Nicaragua : The Rebels' Own Story", *Washington Post*, Sept. 3, 1978.
- Taubman, Philip. "U.S. Role in Nicaragua Disputed", *The New York Times*, October 21, 1984.
- Taubman, Philip. "U.S. Reported to Fear Sandinista Publicity", *The New York Times*, September 24, 1984.
- Torgerson, Dial. "Latin Officials End Central America Peace Tour", *The Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1983.
- Tsurumi, Y. "The Challanges of the pacific Age", *World Policy*

Journal, Vol. I, No. 3, Fall, 1984.

Uhlig, Mark A. "Nicaragua's Permanent Crisis", *Survival*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 5, Sept.-Oct., 1991.

Vanderlaan, Mary B. "Nicaragua in the New World (Dis)Order : Free Trade Liberalism, Security and the Crisis of Development", *New Political Science*, No. 26, Fall, 1993.

Waghelstein, John D. "Post-Vietnam Counterinsurgency Doctrine", *Military Review*, May, 1985.

Walker, Thomas W. "The Sandinist Victory in Nicaragua", *Current History*, Vol. 78, No. 454, February, 1980.

Wehr, Paul and John Paul Lederach. "Mediating Conflict in Central America", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1991.

Weinberger, Casper. "U.S. Defense Strategy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 64, Spring, 1984.

White, Nigel S.D. "The Legality of Intervention Following Nicaragua Case", *International relations*, Vol. IX, No. 6, November, 1989.

Williams, Philip J. "Elections and Democratisation in Nicaragua : The 1990 Elections in Perspectives", *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Winter, 1990.

Zakaria, Fareed. "The Reagan Strategy of Containment", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 3, Fall, 1990.