

THE REAGAN DOCTRINE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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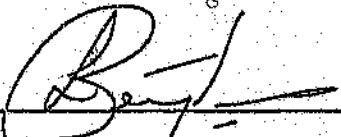
Degree awarded with distinction on 8 Dec 1993.

JOHANNESBURG 1993

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DECLARATION :

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.


Larry Richard Benjamin

13th day of August 1993

DEDICATION

TO MY PARENTS ...WITH LOVE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to offer sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr Garth Shelton for his wise advice and strong encouragement.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation begins with an examination of the salient principles and doctrines that have shaped American foreign policy. Since the end of the Second World War, the doctrines of American foreign policy have all been manifestations of the concept of containment that constituted the bedrock of U.S. policy towards its principal adversary the Soviet Union.

The Reagan Doctrine exhibited many of the traditional characteristics of its predecessors but, in reflecting shifting global realities, the Reagan Doctrine was also innovative and represented a new policy direction.

Through the two selected case studies (Nicaragua and Afghanistan) the application of the Reagan Doctrine is evaluated with a view to determining its objectives, successes and failures.

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CHAPTER ONE

FROM MONROE
TO TRUMAN:

THE PRINCIPLES AND
DOCTRINES OF AMERICAN
FOREIGN POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The word "doctrine" used in its widest sense may be defined simply as a "principle of belief". According to Cecil Crabb doctrines are, by definition, statements of general principles.¹ Originally used in a religious context indicating and literally meaning something that was taught, the term "doctrine" subsequently became used more extensively in a political sense and "denotes any attempt to give system or coherence to political ideals and practice."² In his memoirs George Kennan³ writes about the American inclination to seek "universal formulae or doctrines" in the course of conducting its foreign policy. The diplomatic history of the United States has indeed been punctuated by Presidential proclamations/pronouncements that have subsequently been accorded the venerable status of doctrines.⁴

¹ Crabb, C : The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy : Their Meaning, Role and Future. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1982.) p 11. Crabb also points out that in the case of the doctrines of American foreign policy, virtually all such doctrines have been issued or enunciated in response to a specific set of international circumstances or as a response to a foreign crisis.

² Scruton, R : A Dictionary of Political Thought. (London, Pan Books, 1982). p 133. The term "doctrine" is also used in a military context and is defined by the American defense establishment as the "fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives". See U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, (Washington D.C, JSC Publishers, 1984). p 119.

³ Kennan, G : Memoirs. (Boston, Little Brown, 1967). p 322.

⁴ Not all the doctrines of American foreign policy bear the name of an American president. For example, the Stimson Doctrine which expounded the central principle of the so-called "open door" policy towards China. In more recent times there has been the doctrine bearing the name of the Reagan Administration's envoy to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick. The Kirkpatrick

Most of the seminal or landmark developments in American diplomatic history have been encapsulated in such foreign policy doctrines. Indeed, the very direction or orientation of the foreign policy of the United States has invariably been articulated in the leading doctrines of American diplomatic history.⁵ This proclivity towards the formulation and operationalization of foreign policy doctrines is somewhat paradoxical because, in a society that has consistently eschewed rigid doctrinal prescriptions in favour of eclectic pragmatism, in addressing domestic political issues, policy makers have, for various reasons, been less reluctant to formulate and concretize set principles to guide the nation's foreign policy.⁶

In order to assist in placing the Reagan Doctrine, the focus of this work, in a historical context, the initial chapter of this thesis will examine some of the salient characteristics of the diplomatic doctrines of the United States. A rudimentary examination of American foreign policy doctrines reveals that they have characteristically exhibited both the moral idealism,

Doctrine essentially contended that, in contrast to totalitarian regimes, right wing authoritarian systems had the inherent proclivity to become more open and democratic.

⁵ For example, the Monroe Doctrine reaffirmed the policy of non-entanglement and essentially signposted the largely isolationist orientation of American foreign policy in the nineteenth century.

⁶ This paradox is referred to and discussed in Crabb, C : *Doctrines of American Foreign Policy...* pp 1-2. Kennan : *Memoirs...* also refers to this apparent paradox "...I have been struck by the congenital aversion of Americans to taking specific decisions on specific problems, and by their persistent urge to seek universal formulae or doctrines in which to clothe and justify particular actions." p 353.

as well as the realpolitik-based national self-interests, of the United States.⁷

MORAL IDEALISM AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY.⁸

Writers on traditions in American foreign policy have frequently alluded to the fact that in most other states those responsible for making foreign policy have been motivated by one overriding consideration, that of furthering the national self-interest.⁹ The United States, so it is claimed, has been less inclined to formulate its foreign policy objectives purely in terms of narrow

⁷ Scholars have tended to examine American foreign policy in terms of the great debate which revolves around the degree to which American foreign policy is conditioned by moral idealism on the one hand and realpolitik or national self-interest on the other. See for example Brown, S : *The Faces of Power : Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Reagan* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1983). Also see Schlesinger, A : *The Cycles of American History*. (London, Andre Deutsch, 1987). See especially chapter 4, pp 69-86.

⁸ The liberal tradition in American foreign policy has also been described as "idealism", "moralism" and "utopianism". The fons et origo of the moral idealism "school" can be traced back to the writings of John Locke who placed much faith in the emergence of a harmonious international society governed by the laws of nature. Thomas Jefferson more than any of the founding fathers essentially adapted Locke's philosophy into what became known as "American Idealism". In the twentieth century, Woodrow Wilson, perhaps more so than any other President, subscribed to the liberal-idealist world view. The central tenets of the Weltanschauung of those who have adhered to this school of thought during the post World War II era is support for, inter alia, liberal internationalism, human rights, international organizations (principally The United Nations) and a policy of detente with the Soviet Union. The idealists believed that the intrinsic virtuosity and superiority of the American concept of freedom including the system of a free market would ultimately be so persuasive as to induce the end of Marxist-Leninist alternatives.

⁹ See for example Jones, H : *The Course of American Diplomacy : From the Revolution to the Present*. 2nd Edn. (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1988) p 1.

self-interest. The origins of the moral imperatives that have propelled American foreign policy can be traced back to the idea of uniqueness, a theme that is linked to the very idea of America itself.¹⁰ The American experiment was, in essence, simultaneously a reaction to, and a repudiation of, the prevailing political order of eighteenth century Europe. Whereas the old European order was one replete with conflict, war and the despotism of dynastic rule, America stood for peace, democracy and freedom.¹¹ In the words of John Stoessinger, America was to

¹⁰ Geir Lundestad has argued that Americans have generally regarded the United States as being special in its defence of general values and moral principles. In contrast to other states, American foreign policy is not only the manifestation of American interests but is, instead, predicated upon a sense of responsibility towards other peoples. However, as he points out, this view is regarded with deep suspicion by European scholars who have tended to refute this claim to uniqueness arguing that all that was/is unique about America is "its uncanny ability to make the most inspiring idealism coincide almost perfectly with rather ordinary national objectives." See Lundestad, G : "Uniqueness and Pendulum Swings in U.S. Foreign Policy" International Affairs Vol 62, No 3, Summer, 1986. Cecil Crabb . points out that the idea of the uniqueness of the "new world" and that the United States "has a special destiny" is one of the most "prominent and enduring themes" of American history. Crabb, C : Doctrines of American Foreign Policy p 378

¹¹ In his much celebrated pamphlet "Common Sense", Thomas Paine eloquently differentiates between the European (especially British) order and that which the United States aspired to. For Paine the new world was "the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty." In England "a corrupt and faithless court" desecrated liberty. For more detailed discussion on Paine's "Common Sense" see Foner, P (ed) Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, (New York, 1945). Also see Hunt, M : Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1987) especially pp 19-21. The idea of the United States as constituting the antithesis of the corrupt Old World has been forcefully asserted by Herman Melville who wrote that "we Americans are the peculiar, chosen people - the Israel of our times; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world....Long enough have we been sceptics with regard to ourselves and doubted whether, indeed, the political Messiah had come. But he has come in us". quoted in Schelsinger The Cycles of American History.... p 15.

be "a "new democracy that, by its example, would show the possibilities of human freedom."¹² The United States' self-perception of its *raison d'être* in international politics is predicated upon the conviction that the values that constitute the American creed¹³ should serve as an inspiration to humankind. At certain junctures these values were actively marketed abroad but even when the United States was following an essentially isolationist and introverted foreign policy, the universalization of the American creed remained a desirable and enduring diplomatic objective.

"Idealism [has often been] equated with America's preoccupation with what ought to prevail in international affairs."¹⁴ America's sense of moral superiority, uniqueness and exceptionalism has stimulated the belief that the United States has a special destiny or mission to not only safeguard and uphold liberal and democratic values, but to also assist others aspiring to emulate the American way of life.¹⁵ Indeed implicit in some

¹² See Stoessinger, J : *Crusaders and Pragmatists : Movers of Modern American Foreign Policy*. (New York : W.W. Norton and Company, 1979). p 3

¹³ The term "American Creed" was first used by Gunnar Myrdal. According to Samuel P Huntington the political values that collectively constitute the "American Creed" include liberal, democratic, individualistic and egalitarian values. These values have, so it is argued, "provided the core of American national identity since the eighteenth century." Huntington, S: *American Ideals versus American Institutions*.", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 97, No 1, Spring 1982.

¹⁴ See Kegley, C and Wittkopf, E : *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process*. (Basingstoke : Macmillan, 1987)

¹⁵ This sense of "mission" was a theme that was taken up by several of the founding fathers including Thomas Jefferson who called the United States "the last best hope of mankind".

of the doctrines of American foreign policy is the notion that the United States is a chosen nation "anointed by Providence to redeem the fallen world."¹⁶ Since independence, the United States has demonstrated its concern about the well-being of other nations and peoples. However, as Seyom Brown¹⁷ points out, since the end of the Second World War this concern has been conditioned specifically by the perception that the primary threat to the liberty and freedom of other nations was the totalitarian ideology of Communism and the expansionist designs of its principle adherent and practitioner, the Soviet Union.

It is also evident that many of the doctrines of American foreign policy have been framed according to, or infused with, generally recognised principles of international law, principles which also lie at the cornerstone of the American creed.¹⁸ These include the right of self-determination and a respect for human rights. Furthermore, certain doctrines have been formulated in such a way

Benjamin Franklin believed that the creation of America with its unique political system would not only serve the happiness of Americans but would also in a non-interventionist way "have some effect in diminishing the misery of those, who in other parts of the world groan under despotism, by rendering it more circumspect, and inducing it to govern with a lighter hand". Quoted in Papp, D: Contemporary International Relations : Frameworks for Understanding. (New York, MacMillan, 1988). p 169. The concept of a special mission propelling American foreign policy has been analysed by a variety of scholars for example see Hunt, M : Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy. Also see Crabb, C : Doctrines of American Foreign Policy....pp 382-383.

¹⁶Schlesinger, A : The Cycles of American History....p 51. This view is reflected in images of the United States as being "a shining city on the hill" or the "Israel of our time."

¹⁷ See Brown, S : The Faces of Power...especially Chapter 2

¹⁸ See for example Crabb,C: The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy... pp 374-75

that the content therein reflects a consecrated or inviolable set of beliefs which, in turn, reaffirm what Frank Tannenbaum has termed "America's commitment to the juridical equality and moral integrity of states."¹⁹

POLITICAL REALISM, NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE DOCTRINES OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY.

Virtually all U.S foreign policy doctrines, although invariably rationalised as moral imperatives, have been predicated upon realpolitik and balance of power considerations. Although often couched in altruistic verbiage those foreign policy pronouncements that have attained the status of doctrines evince the incumbent administration's perception of the national self-interest.²⁰ Notwithstanding the American "experiment" which was essentially a response to the "the power struggles" of the

¹⁹See Tannebaum, F : The American Tradition in Foreign Relations, Foreign Affairs, reprinted in Goldwin, R and Clor, H (eds): Readings in American Foreign Policy. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971). p 665. Tannenbaum contends that this "commitment to...juridical equality and moral integrity of states" was reflected, inter alia, in th Monroe Doctrine which underlay what he describes as a "Pan-American system of equal states." The notion of juridical equality is also evident in the words of President Woodrow Wilson belief that ".....every people should be left free to determine its own polityk, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and the powerful."

²⁰ According to Robert Osgood, "national self-interest" means "a state of affairs valued solely for its benefit to the nation." This contrasts with the idea of national idelaism which he describes as "the disposition to concern oneslef with moral values that transcend the nation's self-interests..." see Osgood, R : Ideals and Self Interest in America's Foreign Relations. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953). p 4

corrupt European world, the United States has also defined its national interests in terms of power and has historically displayed a concern for the logic of geopolitics, the politics of spheres of influence and of balance of power. George Washington, in cautioning against the folly of becoming embroiled in the power struggles of the corrupt European world, nonetheless acknowledged that "no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interests".²¹ Indeed throughout much of its history, but especially in this century, the United States has endeavoured to ensure the maintenance of a global power balance and has actively intervened to prevent any one power or group of powers from achieving a position of global hegemony.²²

The concept of national interest, although subject to differing interpretations, contains certain constants or irreducible features.²³ The primary national interest of any state is that of self-preservation or physical survival. John Lewis Gaddis contends that definitions of "national interest" in international

²¹ Quoted in Schlesinger, A : The Cycles of American History.....p 52. Schlesinger also points out P67 that the Founding Fathers of the United States did not uphold the view that moral values should play the leading role in directing foreign policy. Indeed they were more inclined to see international affairs as "the function of the balance of power."

²² This concern for the establishment and maintenance of power equilibrium was based upon the realization that a balance of power in Europe would help safeguard American independence. If a hegemonic power controlled Europe that state, could mobilise European resources and spread its influence and power into the new world thereby threatening the United States.

²³ On the concept of national interest see Frankel, J : National Interest. (London : MacMillan, 1970). Also see Johansen, R : The National Interest and the Human Interest : An Analysis of U.S. Foreign Policy. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980.)

affairs tend toward the bland and unexceptional. "They all seem to boil down, in one form or another, to the need to create an international environment conducive to the survival and prospering of a nation's domestic institutions".²⁴ Hans Morgenthau's contention that states define their interests in terms of power and the maximization of power is, notwithstanding the moral idealism of American foreign policy, an enduring characteristic of American diplomacy.²⁵

Moral considerations and geopolitical/security imperatives therefore constitute the twin pillars of American foreign policy. In general, U.S. foreign policy has been largely devoid of tensions manifested by a disjunction between the two. Indeed, since the Second World War, American foreign policy has, in the main, been formulated with due, if not always equal, consideration being given to the respective imperatives of moral idealism and realpolitik. However at those junctures where a discernible tension has occurred between what is morally right and what is deemed to be the national self-interest, the latter

²⁴ See Gaddis, J L : *Strategies of Containment : A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982). p 27.

²⁵ Hans Morgenthau in his *magnum opus* "Politics Among Nations" argues that "the main signpost that helps political realism find its way through the landscape of international power is the concept of interest defined in terms of power.....We assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power, and the evidence of history bears that assumption out. See Morgenthau, H : *Politics Among Nations : The Struggle for Power and Peace*. (New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1978) p 5.

has usually prevailed.²⁶ President John Kennedy himself conceded that in the final analysis "national interest is more important than ideology."²⁷

CYCLICAL PATTERNS AND THE DOCTRINES OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY.

A central theme that has infused many of the debates revolving around the purposes of American power and the role that the United States should play in the international arena has been whether the United States should simply be an exemplar, serving as an example to be emulated or whether the United States should play the role of a crusader, actively assisting those fighting for the same ideals which constitute the bedrock of the American creed.²⁸ This dilemma partially explains the oscillations or

²⁶ An exception to this general predominance of realpolitik considerations over moral imperatives occurred during the first two years of the Carter Administration (1977-1978). The administration's preoccupation with human rights fleetingly resulted in the subordination of what Carter had described as America's "inordinate fear of Communism". By 1979, and especially following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the containment of the Soviet Union, which had for more than three decades constituted the cornerstone of American national security policy, was again elevated to its former position of centrality.

²⁷ Quoted in Brown, S : The Faces of Power.... p 7

²⁸ The role of the United States as a crusader and a saviour, actively engaged in the struggle for liberty, democracy and egalitarianism is clearly a central philosophical underpinning of several of the post war doctrines of American foreign policy including the Reagan Doctrine. Indeed from an initial self-perception as a passive exemplary experiment the United States has increasingly seen its mission as a active agent of history. Woodrow Wilson alluded to this in 1919 when he commented that "...I believe that [the United States] has a spiritual energy in her which no other nation can contribute to the liberation of mankind....[In the great war] America had the infinite privilege of fulfilling her destiny and saving the world" quoted in Schlesinger, A : The Cycles of American History..... p 16. Virtually all the post-war Presidents have

pendulum swings that have characterised American diplomatic history. Kegley and Wittkopf have suggested that American diplomatic history up until the second world war can "largely be written in terms of a debate between two opposing traditions in foreign affairs: isolationism and internationalism."²⁹ Frank Klingberg in an article on alternating moods in American foreign policy identified cyclical fluctuations between what he termed "extroversion" and "introversion".³⁰ Writing in 1966, Dexter Perkins pointed out that in "the first hundred years and more of the history of American foreign policy the distinctive feature ... is the crystallization of the tradition of what has come to be called isolationism".³¹ The American penchant for isolationism is clearly linked to the self-perception of uniqueness and a feeling of moral superiority. Louis Halle has contended that "the American dream of isolation had deeper and more ramified roots than those of ordinary human inclination. It

described America's global role in similar terms. In 1965 Lyndon Johnson rationalising the growing American involvement in South East Asia observed that "...history and our own achievements have thrust on us the principal responsibility for protection of freedom on earth". See Johnson, L : Public Papers, (Washington, 1965) p 180.

²⁹ Kegley, C and Wittkopf, E : American Foreign Policy.... p 36

³⁰ See Klingberg, F : "The Historical Alternation of Moods in American Foreign Policy", in World Politics Vol 4, No 1, January, 1952, pp 239-273. The term "extroversion" is defined by Klingberg as "a nation's willingness to bring its influence to bear upon other nations, to exert positive pressure (economic, diplomatic or military) outside its borders. The term "introversion" is used to reflect a mood when the United States was disinclined to "exert much positive pressure upon other nations".

³¹ Perkins, D: The Evolution of American Foreign Policy. (New York : Oxford University Press, 1966). p 27

had special cultural, historical, and even religious roots as well."³² However, although it may generally be accepted that isolationism (or what one may term "internationalism in one hemisphere") was the dominant strain, it is equally apparent that there were periods in which the penchant for involvement in extra-continental affairs was preponderant.³³

THE MONROE DOCTRINE : A BRIEF EVALUATION

The Monroe Doctrine is generally regarded as the progenitor of the diplomatic doctrines of the United States. The Doctrine reaffirmed the United States' determination to remain aloof from the "balance of power politics of Europe" but insisted that:-

"the American continents.... are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power"

³² See Halle, L : Dream and Reality : Aspects of American Foreign Policy. (Westport : Greenwood Press, 1959). p 13. The special character of the isolationist tradition is also alluded to by Crabb who observed that "...from the earliest days of the republic, the United States has conceived itself as a new and unique nation whose appointed mission required it to stand aloof from the quarrels and vicissitudes of the Old World". See Crabb C : Doctrines of American Foreign Policy..... p 359

³³ The impulse to periodically adopt interventionist policies rather than unequivocal isolationism was usually based upon realpolitik considerations. Indeed since the birth of the American republic and notwithstanding the oft repeated denunciations of those who played the game of power politics it is evident that many of the foreign policy decisions, including the option of isolationism was determined by balance of power considerations. See for example Serfaty, S : American Foreign Policy in a Hostile World. (New York : Praeger Publishers, 1984). See chapter 1 .

This effectively amounted to a trade off and signalled that in return for an American policy of non-involvement in Europe, the Western Hemisphere was to be regarded as an American sphere of influence. Thus the United States was eschewing a policy of absolute isolationism but remained unwilling or perhaps, given its relatively weak power status, unable to become involved in extra-hemispheric international politics.

The foreign policy principles enunciated in President James Monroe's seventh annual address to Congress in 1823 represented the first such declaration that was to subsequently be delineated as a fundamental doctrine of American foreign policy. The Monroe Doctrine and its various corollaries, may be said to embody the most enduring principles of American foreign policy. In his address President Monroe went on to declare that

".....We owe it, therefore, to candour and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those [European] powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety."²⁴

²⁴ The essential text of what later became known as the Monroe Doctrine was encompassed in just two pages of the President's thirteen page address to the Congress. For a full copy of the text of the doctrine see Monroe's Seventh Annual Message to Congress in Richardson, D (ed): A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897. (Washington DC, Government Printing Office, 1896 (II) pp 207-220

The doctrine thus reflected a continuity in American foreign policy regarding the traditional aversion to involvement in extra hemispheric affairs.³⁵ This reaffirmation of a policy of non-entanglement in, or isolation from, the machinations of European power politics was a response to an evolving set of circumstances in Europe rather than to any domestic crisis.³⁶

More significantly, by declaring that the Americas' were off limits to outside powers, the United States consciously began to accept the geopolitical logic of "spheres of influence".³⁷ Thus, "the new idea contained in the Monroe Doctrine was that the United States [intended to] assume the guardianship of the

³⁵ The antecedents of this antipathy towards Europe were, inter alia, contained in Paine's "Common Sense" and in a number of Presidential and other official U.S. government statements. For example, in Thomas Jefferson's inaugural address similarly isolationist strains were evident when he declared that "Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."

³⁶ The pronouncement of the principles contained in the Monroe Doctrine were precipitated by the events leading to the de facto dissolution of the European Congress system. The widening chasm and policy differences between Britain on the one hand and the conservative dynasties of Austria, Prussia and Russia on the other forms the backdrop against which the Monroe Doctrine evolved. More specifically, the revisionist historian V.G. Kiernan, has contended that the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine was a result of pressure brought to bear on the Monroe Administration by British foreign secretary George Canning who feared that the Holy Alliance would act to "restore Spanish authority beyond the Atlantic". See Kiernan, V.G. : *America : The New Imperialism*, (London, Zed Press, 1980). For a more general discussion of events in Europe that impacted upon the thinking behind the Monroe Doctrine see Jones, H : *The Course of American Diplomacy*.....pp 108-113. Also see Ferrel, R : *American Diplomacy : A History*. (New York, W.W. Norton and Company Inc, 1959) pp 71-85.

³⁷ This view is shared, among others, by Kegley and Wittkopf who suggest that "with the Monroe doctrine the United States effectively engaged in sphere of influence politics". Kegley C and Wittkopf, E : *American Foreign Policy*.....p 38

Americas".³⁸ This view is echoed by Rainey who argued that the de facto goal of the Monroe Doctrine was hegemonic control over a region - a goal that remains and still does a part of American diplomacy.³⁹

On a rhetorical level the Monroe Doctrine struck a careful balance between the moral idealist and national self-interest impulses in American foreign policy. The impression created by President Monroe was one of virulent opposition to the imperialism of the European powers. However, in reality, the restrictions on European intrusion into the America's did not preclude the United States from involving itself in the affairs of the states of the Western hemisphere.⁴⁰ Indeed, in the final analysis, the Monroe Doctrine represented what was believed to be a policy in the best interests of a relatively weak state. Continental expansion from the Atlantic to the Pacific seabords could be maximised under the conditions that the Monroe Doctrine sought to operationalize.

³⁸ Jones, H : The Course of American Diplomacy.....p 108

³⁹ See Rainey, G : Patterns of American Foreign Policy. (Boston, Allyn and Bacon Inc, 1975). pp 22-23.

⁴⁰ In his "Politics among Nations", Hans Morgenthau discusses the nature of American expansion in the Western Hemisphere in terms of what he calls continental imperialism. He points out that throughout the nineteenth century the United States was preoccupied with gradually expanding its authority and influence over much of the North American continent. He suggests that the Monroe Doctrine " by postulating for the Western Hemisphere a policy of the status quo with regard to non-American powers, erected a protective shield behind which the United States could establish its predominance within that geographic region." see Morgenthau, H : Politics Among Nations..... pp 60-61.

THE POST WAR DOCTRINES OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

With the exception of the Monroe doctrine (1823), the main doctrines bearing the names of United States' Presidents have all emerged in the period after 1945. This suggests that as an instrument of diplomacy, foreign policy doctrines have proliferated during a period in American diplomatic history that has been characterized by unprecedented internationalism and involvement in global affairs. Whereas the Monroe doctrine signalled American hegemony in the Western hemisphere but non-involvement outside of the Americas, the Truman doctrine, as the progenitor of subsequent post World War II doctrines, clearly intimated the end of isolationism and demarcated the start of an interventionist policy predicated, at least in theory, on moral considerations.

The second World War was a seminal event inasmuch as it indelibly impacted upon and shaped the role that the United States would henceforth play in world politics. The collapse of an international system with Europe at its epicentre, and the concomitant emergence of the United States as the most powerful state on the planet, in and of itself, ensured that a reversion to isolationism was no longer feasible. However, juxtaposed alongside emergent American superpowerdom was the rise of the Soviet Union.⁴¹ The onset of the cold war⁴² and the perception

⁴¹ By early 1947 the United States was faced with two fundamental challenges. On the one hand European economic devastation on the other the Soviet determination to expand its influence, through the presence of the Red Army, into eastern and central Europe. In formulating the Truman Doctrine, American

of an expansionist and ideologically motivated, and hostile, rival power compelled the United States to assume, not just extra-hemispheric, but ultimately global responsibilities and to embark upon what Republican Senate leader Arthur Vandenburg described as a "course from which we can never hereafter retreat".⁴³

Notwithstanding Vandenburg's words, Paul Kennedy ⁴⁴ and others have intuitively divided the post 1945 epoch into two distinct periods. The first two decades of the post-war epoch were characterised by unprecedented American involvement in international relations and hence may be termed the golden age of American diplomatic history⁴⁵. As a chapter in American history this period has alternatively been verbalized by Simon Serfaty as the "rise to globalism". However, in the years of the

policy makers were acutely aware of the weakened ability of European states to withstand Soviet advances. Thus the decision to supply massive economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey as enunciated in Truman's 12 March address indicated that the Truman Administration believed that economic recovery and stability was a prerequisite for deterring the advance of Communism into Western Europe or the so-called rimland countries.

⁴⁷ For perhaps the most detailed and insightful account of the breakdown of the war time alliance and the onset of the cold war see Thomas, H ; *Armed Truce : The Beginnings of the Cold War 1945-46*, (Great Britain, Stoughton and Hodder Paperbacks, 1988)>

⁴⁸ Vandenberg, H Jnr, ed, *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1952). p 10.

⁴⁴ See Kennedy P, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York, Random House, 1987)

⁴⁵ See Benjamin, L : *Fundamental Trends in American Foreign Policy: An Overview of the Post-1945 Era*, Occasional Paper, The South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 1988 p 2.

first Nixon Administration a series of related developments⁴⁶ led to the eclipse of this era and initiated a new period marked by the United States' "descent from globalism". In a reworked and updated version of his earlier writings, Frank Klingberg described the period from 1967-1986 as one of relative introversion as compared to the period 1940-1966 which was characterised by a mood of extroversion.⁴⁷

THE STRATEGY OF CONTAINMENT

The pivotal concept that was to form the theoretical foundation for American national security policy in the post-1945 period was that of containment. The American perception of the nature and the extent of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, and how the United States should respond to that threat, differed from one administration to the next. However the issue of how to manage the relationship with Moscow unwaveringly occupied a position of centrality in American foreign policy and constituted the cornerstone of all post-war American diplomatic doctrines.

⁴⁶ These developments included, inter alia, America's increasingly debilitating entanglement in Vietnam, the attainment of rough nuclear parity by the Soviet Union, the yielding of the rigid bi-polar structure of the international system to a looser bi-polar and eventually multi-polar system due to the emerging economic power of Japan and Western Europe. Following Watergate and the withdrawal from Vietnam, the United States was pervaded by a sense of self-doubt and paralysis that, in turn, shattered the bi-partisan consensus upon which America's national security strategy had been crafted. This accelerated America's "strategic retreat" and facilitated the growth of neo-isolationism.

⁴⁷ See Klingberg, F : Cyclical Trends in American Foreign Policy Moods : The Unfolding of America's World Role. (Lanham, University Press of America, 1983).

Alternate strategies, ranging from what John Lewis Gaddis has termed symmetrical and asymmetrical containment, have been employed.⁴⁸ In addition, the geographical scope, the allocation of resources and the instrumentalities of the containment policy have also varied.⁴⁹ The formulation of what became foreign policy "doctrines" were one among a range of mechanisms used to articulate, explain and define the national interests and security concerns of the United States and, more especially, to guide the foreign policy actions of specific administrations.

⁴⁸According to Gaddis, *symmetrical response* "simply means reacting to threats to the balance of power at the same location, time, and level of the original provocation.... Asymmetrical response involves shifting the location or nature of one's reaction onto terrain better suited to the application of one's strengths against adversary weaknesses. See Gaddis, J L : Containment: Past and Future, in International Security, Vol 5, No 4, 1981, p 80. In this article Gaddis elaborates on the respective merits and demerits of these two "responses" or approaches and gives insightful examples of the application of each type of response.

⁴⁹Colin Gray, a leading writer on geopolitics has identified five national security concepts which he terms containment; dynamic containment; rollback; devolution; and fortress America. He comments that with the exception of the fortress America which really connotes a policy of isolationism, the other four concepts all rest on the assumption that "the United States has a vital interest in the containment of Soviet power roughly within its current Eurasian perimeter. Strategies may differ, but the principal purpose of U.S. national security policy should be to prevent the Soviet Union from achieving effective hegemony over Eurasia". Gray, C : *The Geopolitics of Superpower*. (Lexington, University Press Of Kentucky, 1988). p 115. It is also evident that whereas some have seen containment as a policy that was indivisible and that should be applied globally others have argued for a limited containment, that is to say limited either in its geographical scope and/or in the resources to be allocated towards the pursuit of containment.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE⁵⁰

President Harry S Truman's address to a joint session of Congress on 12 March 1947 was perhaps the most significant foreign policy pronouncement since James Monroe inaugurated his doctrine more than one hundred and twenty years earlier.⁵¹ The Truman Doctrine declared that the United States was ready to:-

".....help free peoples maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose to impose on them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes, imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace, and hence the security of the United States. I believe that it should be the policy of the United States to support free peoples that are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures....." ⁵²

⁵⁰ The full text of President Truman's address to Congress of 12 March 1947 is printed in the Department of State Bulletin, Vol XVI, March 23, 1947, pp 534-537.

⁵¹ For an detailed and insightful analysis of the events and factors that impacted upon the rethinking and search for a national security strategy which led to the containment policy as encapsulated in, inter alia, the Truman Doctrine see Gaddis, J, L : in *Strategies of Containment*.

⁵² The sweeping language used by President Truman created the impression that United States interests were indivisible and that America would embark on a global containment strategy. Walter Lippmann criticised Truman and also Kennan and cautioned that "the United States should not undertake commitments in areas

By committing the United States to a enduring and active involvement in global politics the Truman Doctrine effectively constituted the culmination of a process of increasingly greater participation in international relations. The Truman Doctrine thus marked the end of a journey that had begun with a commitment to avoid "entangling alliances" to one which now that held out that very prospect. The foreign policy posture of the United States had shifted inexorably from one characterised by relative isolationism, or only ephemeral and occasional involvement in world politics, to one of permanent and extensive involvement. According to Cecil Crabb the "Truman Doctrine" expressed and epitomized America's internationalist or globalist approach to foreign relations since World War II, particularly its preoccupation with the Soviet challenge".⁵³ The fundamental ideas encapsulated in the Truman Doctrine, which are elaborated upon below, formed the cornerstone of most of the subsequent doctrines of American foreign policy. The doctrines of Presidents' Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon, Carter and Reagan, all of which were concerned with the containment of Soviet power and expansion, were to a considerable degree modifications or

where it could not exert real control, that is the Middle East and Asia". Lippmann's views are discussed in Combs, J : American Diplomatic History : Two Centuries of Changing Interpretations. (Berkley, University of California Press, 1983). pp 236-237.

⁵³ See Crabb, C : Doctrines of American Foreign Policy.....p 108. Crabb also suggests that the together with the Monroe Doctrine, the Truman Doctrine was perhaps the most influential and enduring foreign policy pronouncement in American diplomatic history. It ought to be noted that few policy makers of the time believed that the doctrine would become an almost permanent or perennially invoked canon of American foreign policy.

adaptations of the Truman Doctrine. President Truman's address was ostensibly intended to win Congressional approval for the aid to be dispensed to Greece and Turkey to prevent Communist takeovers in those countries.⁵⁴ However the real import of the President's words transcended the future political dispensation of these two Mediterranean states.⁵⁵ In the first instance, the Truman Doctrine served as a signal both to the American electorate and the international community that the United States had finally eschewed isolationism and would henceforth commit itself to a durable and permanent involvement in world politics. This commitment revealed an underlying scepticism of the ability of the United Nations to play its designated role of preserving peace and ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its member states. More pointedly, it illuminated a perennial concern of United States foreign policy namely that the preservation of a balance of power in Europe was essential to

⁵⁴ For a discussion on the background to the specific dangers that these two countries faced see Spanier, J : American Foreign Policy since World War II. (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980). pp 15-31. Also see McLellan, D : Who Fathered Containment ? A Discussion in International Studies Quarterly, Vol 17, No 2, June 1973, pp 205-226

⁵⁵ It ought to be noted that much of the initial criticism levelled against the Truman Doctrine when it was enunciated revolved around the fact that although the Truman administration had now committed itself to aid those resisting the forces of totalitarian tyranny, Greece and Turkey were themselves undemocratic, authoritarian states. It was unclear how aid to such regimes would be advancing the cause of democracy. This argument strengthens the contention that ,although couched in the rhetoric of a moral crusade, the Truman Doctrine was formulated with geopolitical and balance of power considerations being the central determinants. See Ferrel, R : American Diplomacy..... p 446-447

preserve world peace and indeed the international states system.⁵⁶ Whereas Britain had previously played the pivotal role of balancer, thwarting the ambitions of a state threatening the states system, it was no longer in a position to fulfil this traditional function. Indeed only the United States was capable of fulfilling such a role against a potential hegemonic drive by the Soviet Union.

Secondly, the doctrine gave concrete form to the theoretical construct of containment. The origins of the concept of containment were propounded by George Kennan in his 8000 word telegram that he dispatched from Moscow in February 1946.⁵⁷ The premises upon which containment was predicated may be summarized as follows:-

1. The Soviet Union was an expansionist power, driven by

⁵⁶ There have been many theories explaining the causes of the Cold War and, more especially, the reasons why the United States became embroiled in that conflict. These are admirably surveyed by Arthur Schlesinger who, after dismissing the arguments of revisionist historians such as William Appleman Williams, contends that "the irreducible factor accounting for American involvement in the Cold War was undoubtedly the Jeffersonian concern about the balance of power". see Schlesinger, A : The Cycles of American History.....pp 163-218.

⁵⁷ In his famous Mr X article published in Foreign Affairs in 1947, George Kennan commented that "...the main element of any United States policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies." The article which was entitled "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" is reproduced in Graebner (ed) : The Cold War : A Conflict of Ideology and Power. (Lexington, D.C Heath and Company, 1976). pp 59-76

an expansionist ideology⁵⁸

2. The Soviet Union had determined to maximize its power and influence through military conquest and the export of revolution.
3. The ultimate objective of Soviet foreign policy was global domination and that its commitment to achieve this was permanent and unalterable.⁵⁹
4. Soviet expansionism could only be arrested by a tenacious counteractive strategy and that the United States was the only state with the wherewithal to effectuate such a strategy.
5. The preeminent purposes of containment were to ward off Soviet aggression and maintain the balance of power.

The third attribute of the Truman Doctrine was that it was cast

⁵⁸ Seyom Brown has contended that, from the Truman to the Reagan Administrations, a fairly solid consensus has existed regarding the perceived foreign policy objectives of the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. was generally seen to be motivated by a desire to become the globally dominant power and to universalize the ideology of Marxism-Leninism of which it was the leading exponent. See Brown, S : The Faces of Power.....p 9.

⁵⁹ George Kennan in the X article did however indicate his belief that Soviet behaviour could ultimately be modified and that ideology's impact on the Soviet world view could be attenuated. See footnote 58.

in terms of a moral crusade against the evils of a totalitarian dogma that threatened the well being and freedom of people. In addition the doctrine also reflected traditional international legal principles. The right of self-determination and other related principles contained in the United Nations Charter were central concerns that were integral to the Truman Doctrine. President Truman's rhetoric indicated that the United States was ready to be more than an exemplar and would, henceforth, actively assist as an agent of history to protect democracy and assist those fighting for democratic ideals.

The fourth distinctive feature of the Truman doctrine was that it reflected the essentially defensive and, indeed, reactive posture that the United states (or at least the Truman Administration) was to adopt in its "management" of the Soviet threat. From the outset it was axiomatic that the Truman doctrine was never meant to be a doctrine of liberation. At no stage was a reversal or rolling back of Soviet influence/power in Eastern Europe contemplated.

Fifthly, notwithstanding the universalistic and indiscriminate language used by the President, the doctrine, in its operationalised form, was not intended to be unlimited, either in its geographical purview or in terms of the resources to be allocated to achieve specific ends.⁴⁰ Kennan acknowledged that

⁴⁰ This view of the limited scope of the Truman Doctrine and the containment strategy is also taken by Simon Serfaty who argues that the doctrine was "realistic in its motivation, restricted in its application, and moderate in its requirements". See Serfaty, S : American Foreign Policy in a Hostile

there were essentially five centres of military and industrial power in the world that were of vital importance to the national interest of the United States. These he identified as being the United States itself, Great Britain, Germany and Central Europe, Japan and the Soviet Union. Of these five centres only one was in the possession of an enemy power, namely the Soviet Union. Thus the primary geopolitical task facing the United States was to prevent any of the other four from falling under Soviet control. Such a calibration of the geostrategic importance of different regions of the world suggested that containment was initially aimed at preventing Soviet expansion into central and Western Europe and Japan.⁶¹

World....., p 13. George Kennan, who has been termed the founding father and architect of containment, wrote of the "danger that the sweeping language of [President Truman's] message might be subject to misinterpretation. Dean Ascheson, the under secretary of state and a key figure in the formulation of the Truman Doctrine testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 24 March 1947. In his testimony Ascheson stated that "...Any requests of foreign countries for aid will have to be considered according to the circumstances in each individual case. In another case we would have to study whether the country in question really needs assistance, whether its request is consistent with American foreign policy, whether the request for assistance is sincere and whether the assistance by the United States would be effective in meeting the problems of that country....." Quoted in Kennan, G : Memoirs.....p 322.

⁶¹ The Marshall Plan, the formation of NATO, Germany's subsequent membership of NATO, the American-led economic reconstruction of Japan that country's integration into the Western defence structure all support the view that containment in its initially operationalised form was primarily aimed at strengthening Western Europe and Japan. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were in President Truman's words "two halves of the same walnut". In November 1947 the then Secretary of State, George Marshall, commented that "...The objective of our policy from this point on [will] be the restoration of [a] balance of power in both Europe and Asia and ...all actions would be viewed in the light of this objective". Quoted in Gaddis, J L : Strategies of Containment....p 57. According to Stephen Ambrose the "emphasis in Greece and Turkey was military whilst initially in West Europe it was economic, but both were designed

In their formulation of the concept of containment, American policy makers were clearly influenced by the works of Halford Mackinder, Nicholas Spykman and other geopoliticians.⁶² Writing in 1942, Spykman envisioned a post-war international system in which American national interest would only be served by a continuation and preservation of a balance of power both in Europe and Eurasia.⁶³

However by the early 1950's, following the Berlin Crisis, the communist revolution in China and the invasion of South Korea by North Korea, the focal point of America's containment policy was extended to encompass that area which Spykman had called the

to contain the Soviets". See Ambrose, S : Rise to Globalism : American Foreign Policy Since 1938. (New York, Penguin Books, 1983). p 137.

⁶² The central tenets of the geopolitical arguments of Sir Halford Mackinder are covered succinctly in Parker, G : Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century, (London, Croom Helm, 1985). Chapters 2 and 3. Also see Gray, C : The Geopolitics of Superpower..... esp Chapter 2. The fundamental tenet of Mackinder's geopolitical thought was that the major contestation in world politics had traditionally been one between the major maritime power and the power that controlled the "heartland" of the Eurasian land mass. In his later writings Mackinder introduced the concept of the "world-island" which encompassed Europe, Asia and Africa which constituted the largest and most populated landmass and the principal stage of world history. In his famous formulation Mackinder argued that "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; Who controls the Heartland commands the World Island; Who controls the World Island commands the World. Thus, in applying Mackinder's analysis, American policy makers extrapolated the argument that the United States, as the world's foremost maritime power was obliged to prevent any state from achieving the domination of the heartland (the Eurasian land mass).

⁶³ See Spykman, N : America's Strategy in World Politics. (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1942). p 461.

"rimlands" of Eurasia.⁶⁴ The United States' "ascendency to globalism" was well underway.

⁶⁴ Spykman's "rimland" was, more or less, synonymous with what Mackinder had earlier described as the "Inner or Marginal Crescent". The strategy of containment as it was initially conceived was aimed at preventing the Heartland power (the Soviet Union) from expanding into the Rimland. This, if achieved, (as of course it was) would enable the Soviet Union to effectively break out of its continental shell and to begin to project its power beyond the Heartland eventually challenging the maritime power for control over the "World Island".

CHAPTER TWO

FROM EISENHOWER
TO JOHNSON :

CONTAINMENT AND THE
POST-WAR DOCTRINES OF
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The rationale for the magnification, and ultimately the globalization, of the containment doctrine was encapsulated in a review of American foreign and defence policy undertaken in response to a series of developments which included the communist takeover in China and the detonation of an atomic device by the Soviets in late August 1949.¹ This review, which is better known as National Security Council memorandum number 68 (N.S.C.-68), was described by Senator Henry Jackson as "the first comprehensive statement of national strategy".² In essence, N.S.C.-68 amounted to an extension, rather than a revision, of the Truman Doctrine. Although it had been unlimited in its implications, the Truman doctrine had hitherto only been implemented in Europe. N.S.C.-68, in calling for a massive defense build up on both the nuclear and conventional level,³ argued for the need to retain and even enhance America's military superiority. This would enable the United States to have the wherewithal to meet the challenge of Soviet expansion everywhere

¹This greatly alarmed American defense planners and strategists who had previously believed that the Soviets were still three to four years away from testing such a weapon. This marked the effective beginning of the end of the United States' monopoly of weapons of such mass destruction and stimulated a major reappraisal of America's defence requirements.

² Quoted in Ambrose, S : Rise to Globalism : American Foreign Policy Since 1938. (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1983). p 164.

³ NSC-68 recommended the augmentation of American conventional forces and the annual expenditure of \$50 billion on defense, a rise of 300%. See Schulzinger, R : American Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990). p 214.

and, in meeting that challenge, to possess a wide range of qualitatively and quantitatively superior weapons systems.⁴

Thus it may be argued that NSC-68, in proposing a massive defense build-up, was designed to enable the United States to expand its capabilities for containing the Soviet Union.

From 1950 the containment policies of the Truman Administration were based largely on the precepts of symmetrical response. The major issue that preoccupied the United States at that time was the Korean War. The United States' involvement in that war marked the extension of containment to now encompass, not just Western Europe and Japan, but also the rimlands of the Far East.

THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION : EXTENDING CONTAINMENT

During the 1952 Presidential election campaign the policy of containment was fiercely attacked by the Republicans.⁵ The Republican platform had pledged that under a Republican administration the policy of containment would be discarded as

⁴ Stephen Ambrose has suggested that NSC-68 "provided the justification for America's assuming the role of world policeman..." See Ambrose, S : American Foreign Policy Since 1938.....p 165. Revisionist historian William Appleman Williams went even further denouncing NSC 68 as a "classic expression of late 20th century American imperialism". quoted in Schlesinger, A : The Cycles of American History. (London, Andre Deutsch, 1987). p 200

⁵ John Foster Dulles' the Republican's chief spokesman on foreign affairs led the charge vilifying containment which he condemned as being "negative, futile and immoral". See Spanier, J ; American Foreign Policy since World War II. (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980) p 72.

"an example of non-moral diplomacy".⁶ Throughout the campaign, the rhetoric invoked the prospect of not merely thwarting further Soviet expansionism but of "rolling back" Soviet gains. The doctrine of "liberation", espoused most vociferously by John Foster Dulles⁷, who was to become Secretary of State, became one of the bywords of the Eisenhower ticket.⁸ Shortly after his election victory the new President, in his first State of the

⁶ Serfaty, S : American Foreign Policy in a Hostile World. (New York, Praeger, 1984) p 142. The Republicans' contention that containment was essentially an immoral policy rested on the belief that under the Truman Administration 800 million people had fallen prey to the forces of Communism and that the United States had done nothing to alleviate their plight or assist these people. The policy of containment was thus regarded as being too passive in reactive in nature.

⁷ Dulles' view on what he believed should be the fundamental precepts of American foreign policy were articulated in an essay which he wrote in May 1952. The central pillars in America's foreign policy edifice would be the themes of liberation and retaliation. In the paper, Dulles contended that American military strategy should be principally established on American air superiority and its nuclear weapons. Dulles' thinking reflected a belief in asymmetrical response in so far as Soviet aggrandizement was to be countered not only by means similar to those employed by the U.S.S.R., but by those military capabilities in which the United States enjoyed a clear advantage. In other words the quantitative superiority that the Soviet Union had in terms of conventional forces would be negated by U.S. technological advantage. The origins of the doctrine of massive retaliation may also be traced back to this essay as Dulles' advocated a defence posture that elevated the utility of weapons and technologies that had the capacity to inflict mass destruction. For a general discussion on the doctrine of liberation see Spanier, J : United States Foreign Policy Since World War II.....p 71-74. Also see Burnham, J : The Policy of Liberation. in Goldwin, R and Clor, H : Readings in American Foreign Policy..... p 356-365.

⁸ Some writers have argued that Eisenhower's rhetoric of "roll back" and "liberation" was merely an expedient tactic during the election campaign. His support for the idea of "liberation" was limited to achieving this goal through peaceful means. In this way the candidate was able to appeal to the hardliners in the Republican party. See Dougherty, J and Pfaltzgraff, R : American Foreign Policy : FDR to Reagan, (New York, Harper and Row, 1956) p 95

Union address, stated that he had "begun the definition of a new positive foreign policy".⁹

The expansion of containment, begun under the Truman administration, was accelerated and "the wall of security alliances that had been devised for Europe was rapidly expanded to Asia".¹⁰ The United States through a series of bilateral and multilateral treaties formally multiplied its international commitments. The signing of the Rio pact, the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)¹¹, an alliance intended to be analogous to NATO, and the conclusion of the ANZUS pact¹² indicated that the United States was about to abandon a limited and carefully calibrated containment in favour of playing the role of global policeman. The policy of containment which, inter alia, involved the creation of a network of alliances designed to prevent the Soviet Union from expanding into the Eurasian rimlands was taken a step further in 1955 with

⁹Quoted in Stebbins, R, ed., : The U.S. in World Affairs, (New York: Harper and Row, 1955) p18.

¹⁰ Serfaty, S : American Foreign Policy in a Hostile World.....p 133-134.

¹¹ The creation of SEATO in 1954 was effectuated by a commitment on the part of the United States, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Pakistan and Thailand in "promising mutual support to combat aggression in that vast region", See Kennedy, P : The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. (New York, Random House, 1987) p 389. However, as Robert Divine has pointed out, SEATO was, from the outset, weakened by the absence of influential Asian powers such as India, Indonesia and Burma. The "alliance" was further debilitated by the absence of automatic provisions for collective action against aggression. See Divine, R : Eisenhower and the Cold War, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1981) p 54.

¹²The ANZUS pact was concluded between the United States, New Zealand and Australia .

the signing of the Baghdad Pact which was a precursor to the establishment of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).¹³

Notwithstanding the earlier denunciations of containment and the concomitant sabre-rattling declaratory statements that Soviet expansionism would be subject to "massive retaliation"¹⁴ and that Soviet gains would be "rolled back", the Eisenhower administration, whilst presiding over a massive increase in defence spending, essentially committed itself to a national security policy of containing the Soviet Union.¹⁵ In contradistinction to the overall thrust of the Truman Administration's containment policies, the Eisenhower Administration shunned a strategy of symmetrical response in favour of a national security policy predicated upon asymmetrical

¹³The regional grouping that was formalised by the creation of CENTO was sponsored by the United States and brought Britain, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan together in an "alliance" to withstand "subversion".

¹⁴ The doctrine of massive retaliation was regarded by John Foster Dulles as part of a strategy of asymmetry. He believed that the capacity to retaliate in a decisive and overwhelming way would act as a deterrent and would preclude the Soviets from believing that they could define the conditions of competition. This thinking was not dissimilar to that which would later inform the Reagan Administration who believed even more strongly that the Soviets would be restrained and more inclined to negotiate (or compromise) if the United States operated from a position of strength.

¹⁵ Coral Bell has argued that there invariably exists a difference between the operational and declaratory policies, between what a government actually does and what it says it intends to do. This extent of this divergence differs from one Administration to the next. Bell suggests that Reagan's first term of office was characterised by a similar degree of divergence between rhetoric and operational policy to that which characterised the first Eisenhower Administration. See Bell, C : From Carter to Reagan in Foreign Affairs Vol 63, No 3, Spring 1985.

response as evinced, for example, by the doctrine of massive retaliation.¹⁶ The disjunction between rhetoric and operational policy was most clearly demonstrated in the Administration's response to the Soviet invasion of Hungary following the 1956 October uprising. The doctrine of "liberation" was revealed to be a delusion and the administration effectively acknowledged the reality of a Europe that had been divided into "spheres of influence".

THE EISENHOWER DOCTRINE:

The Eisenhower Doctrine was not a response to a direct or specific expansionist move on the part of the Soviet Union. It was, instead, a response to a series of events in the Middle East and was intended to signal that the United States was unwilling to allow that region to be transformed into a Soviet sphere of influence.¹⁷ By the second half of the 1950's it had become clear that the encircling alliances that had been constructed by the West to contain Soviet expansion into the Eurasian rimlands had failed in its objective. A new geopolitical equation had crystallized. "The great battleground of the Cold War had shifted away from Europe and Korea...where the situation was relatively stable, to Africa, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent,

¹⁶ See footnote 7.

¹⁷ The most important event that precipitated the formulation of the Eisenhower Doctrine was the abrupt decline of Western influence in the Middle East following the Suez Crisis of 1956.

where the situation was in active ferment".¹⁸ Under its new leader, Nikita Krushchev, the Soviet Union had signalled its intention to expand its influence in the Third World and to assist those fighting wars of national liberation.

In 1952 the young officers coup spearheaded by Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser had overthrown the pro-Western monarchy in Egypt. During 1954-55 Nasser's socialist-inclined government moved towards a closer relationship with Moscow and concluded a major arms deal with the Soviet Union.¹⁹ Nasser's growing anti-Westernism coupled with his pan Arabic vision, through which he, inter alia, committed himself to the overthrow of pro-Western Arab regimes, was regarded by the Eisenhower administration as posing a major threat to Western interests in that part of the world.²⁰ In addition the evolving closer relationship between

¹⁸See Ambrose, S : Eisenhower: The President Volume II, (New York, Simon and Schuster, Inc, 1984) p 376. The stabilization of the European conflict theatre was achieved through a balance of terror that existed following the formalization of Nato and the Warsaw Pact. Any attempt by either the United States or the Soviet Union to make unilateral gains in Europe was likely, especially given the prevailing NATO defence posture, to escalate and cross the nuclear threshold. As such, the cold war shifted to those areas of the globe where the risks of all out war were negligible.

¹⁹ This evolving relationship between Moscow and Cairo was accelerated following the Suez Crisis of October 1956. Bown and Mooney have contended that this crisis "seriously damaged Anglo-French Western prestige in the Middle East [and that] the leading Arab opponents of continued Western dominance in the area, Egypt and Syria, turned increasingly to the Soviet Union for the arms and aid they needed which the West was reluctant to apply". See Bown, C and Mooney, P : Cold War to Detente, (London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1976) p 65.

²⁰ Gabriel Kolko has argued that the United States "new approach" to the Middle East which led to the formulation of the Eisenhower Doctrine and increased direct involvement in the region was not due to any imminent Soviet penetration into the

the Soviet Union and Syria was seen as further evidence that the Soviet Union had ambitions that posed a threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East.

Against the backdrop of these events Eisenhower and Dulles believed that unless the United States moved to fill the vacuum that was created by Britain and France's humiliation during the Suez Crisis,²¹ Moscow would endeavour to transform the region into a Soviet sphere of influence.²² From the viewpoint of Eisenhower and Dulles, a Soviet move to fill that vacuum could only be forestalled by a new approach to the Middle East, an approach which inevitably meant an expanded, direct and active involvement on the part of the United States. The American response, which was to become known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, was encapsulated in the President's appeal to the Congress that was made on 5 January 1957.

Middle East. Kolko argues that the decline of British power facilitated the Eisenhower Doctrine. He contends that "Nasser and Arab nationalism, the Administration's principal concerns, were the real objectives of the new doctrine". See Kolko, G : *Confronting the Third World : United States Foreign Policy 1945-1980*. (New York, Pantheon Books, 1988). Kolko, who is a leading historian of the revisionist school, views the United States as an imperialist power. He refutes the notion that U.S. involvement on a global scale was essentially a reaction to Soviet expansionism.

²¹ On the Suez Crisis see Calvocoressi, P (ed) : *Suez: Ten Years After* (New York: Random House, 1967).

²² Western interests in the Middle East were deemed vital by American strategic thinkers. The central concern centred around access to raw materials which, in the context of the Middle East, meant oil. The importance that Eisenhower attached to these considerations was demonstrated by the fact that the President made the stockpiling of strategic raw materials, principally oil, one of his pet projects.

In the first instance the Administration requested military aid and \$200 million in economic aid to sustain and underpin the independence of countries in the Middle East region. More importantly, the Congress, after protracted debate, responded favourably to a request for the authorization of U.S. military power "in the event that the Soviet Union or its clients posed a direct threat of aggression to any country of the Middle East".²³ The Eisenhower Doctrine thus effectively formalised the extension of containment to the Middle East. The Monroe Doctrine announced the United States' "rights" over the Western Hemisphere and the Truman Doctrine, coupled with the Marshall plan and the formation of NATO, created an enduring commitment not just to Greece and Turkey but also to Western Europe. The Eisenhower Doctrine, which in essence was a formal declaration of American willingness to defend its interests in the Middle East constituted another milestone in America's ascendancy to becoming a global power.

In contradistinction to the Truman Doctrine, there existed, especially in the Senate, considerable opposition to the new approach to the Middle East as expressed in the Eisenhower Doctrine.²⁴ Notwithstanding the less than universal support,

²³Dougherty, J and Pfaltzgraff, R : American Foreign Policy From FDR to Reagan.....p 110

²⁴In the first instance, some senators believed that the administration was exaggerating the extent of the Soviet threat to the Middle East. Secondly it was argued that the administration had bypassed Democratic party leaders in formulating the doctrine and had simply solicited their support. Thus a degree of discord existed between the Administration and the Congress. Such a discord was, of course to manifest itself more frequently during from the 1960's onward. Other political

the Congress ultimately gave its backing to the Eisenhower Doctrine. Indeed, as Cecil Crabb notes, the "role of Congress in the formulation and promulgation of the Eisenhower Doctrine was highly influential...[and] the mode of legislative participation in the doctrine established a significant precedent in the conduct of American diplomacy."²⁵

The Eisenhower doctrine was activated on just two occasions. In the first instance the administration extended aid to Jordan which had been subjected to a series of internal political crises stemming, in the main, from Palestinian opposition to the Jordanian monarchy. This opposition was partially encouraged by the more radical Arab states who perceived King Hussein as being too moderate on the Arab-Israeli conflict.²⁶ The American decision to support King Hussein was rationalised and explained as a move to counter a threat posed to Jordan by "international communism." This implied that the Arab governments in Cairo, Damascus and elsewhere who had sought to destabilise the

leaders were concerned that the United States would become increasingly enmeshed in the vortex of inter-Arab rivalries. Indeed I would argue that the most destabilizing problem confronting the Middle East was the Arab-Israeli conflict, a conflict to which, the Eisenhower administration was paying considerably less attention.

²⁵ Crabb, C : The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy.....p 167. On the pages following Crabb also discusses the extent to which Administration officials "actively solicited" legislative participation in the drafting of U.S.policy towards the Middle East.

²⁶The decision, by the Eisenhower administration to invoke the doctrine and supply Jordan with economic and military aid was prompted by the urging of the Lebanese President Chamoun. Lebanon feared that if the Jordanian monarchy collapsed, Lebanon who had desisted from becoming a player in the Arab-Israeli conflict would be subject to similar pressures.

Jordanian monarchy were controlled by or were agents of the Soviet Union. Although Adam Wlam has suggested that in explaining its policies in the Middle East the Eisenhower Administration could only achieve popular support by invoking anti-Communist rhetoric, it may also be argued that the United States' understanding of the complex dynamics of the Arab world was far too simple. Indeed the proclivity to view events mainly through an East-West prism and to interpret developments in the Third World often exclusively in terms of a Cold War zero-sum game, was to become an enduring and unfortunate legacy of American diplomacy.²⁷

Actuating the doctrine for the first time, President Eisenhower dispatched units of the U.S. sixth fleet to the Eastern Mediterranean and followed up this action by extending \$10 million in economic aid to Jordan to help stabilise the country. Although successful in its immediate objectives the outcry on the part of much of the Arab world and the concomitant charge of United States "interference" and "gunboat diplomacy" signalled that, contrary to the administration's expectations, the Arab

²⁷ John Lewis Gaddis in discussing the response of the Eisenhower Administration to developments in the Third World in general, and the Middle East in particular, comments upon the failure to appreciate the pervasive and enduring force of nationalism. The Administration "in a backhanded tribute to the organizational abilities of the international communist movement...fretted constantly that newly independent states, if not securely aligned with Washington would eventually fall prey to the subtle but pervasive wiles of Moscow and Peking." Gaddis, J L : *Strategies of Containment : A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982) p 181.

states, even the more moderate ones, rejected the doctrine.²⁸

During the course of 1957 there was an expectation that the United States would implement the doctrine in Syria in response to developments in that country.²⁹ However, it was the crisis in Lebanon that was to constitute the "major test of the meaning and utility of the Eisenhower doctrine for the United States".³⁰

The decision to reactivate the Eisenhower Doctrine was precipitated by a series of insurrections in Lebanon following the decision by pro-Western President Chamoun to stand for

²⁸ It is instructive to take note of the fact that in the light of the wide-spread aversion to the Eisenhower Doctrine that existed on the part of the Arab world, even King Hussein who received American aid under the auspices of the doctrine felt compelled to deny that his country was being assisted in terms of, or protected under the Eisenhower doctrine. See Crabb, C : *Doctrines of American Foreign Policy*..... p 177. David Gilmour contends that the Eisenhower Doctrine was a failure because "all the Arab countries with the exception of Lebanon rejected it" and most of them "ended up closer to the Soviet Union than they had been before". See Gilmour, D : *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* (London, Sphere Books, 1987) p 31.

²⁹ The crisis in Syria 1957-1958 almost resulted in the operationalization of the Eisenhower Doctrine. The growth of marxist political organizations and the close ties that had evolved between Damascus and Moscow led Eisenhower to the conclusion that Syria was moving inexorably to becoming a Communist state. The existing tension in American-Syrian relations was exacerbated following the expulsion of American officials in mid -1957. Throughout the year the United States contemplated invoking the doctrine but, following the establishment of the United Arab Republic (a union between Egypt and Syria) in February 1958, a development which weakened the influence of Communism in Syria, the *raison d'etre* for applying the doctrine receded.

³⁰ Crabb, C : *Doctrines of American Foreign Policy*.....p 181

reelection.³¹ In addition, the formation of the United Arab Republic was regarded, principally by the Maronites, as the precursor to an enlarged Arab state that would incorporate Lebanon.³² Chamoun asserted that Egypt and Syria were actively working to effectuate the overthrow of his government urged the United States to intervene under the auspices of the Eisenhower Doctrine.

Despite various efforts to normalise the situation in Lebanon, the political upheaval continued. On July 14, 1958 American reticence to invoke the doctrine and intervene in the Lebanon was influenced by the unanticipated coup d'etat in Iraq that toppled the monarchy and brought to power the anti-Western General Kassim. This development was interpreted by Eisenhower in the starkest terms. The Administration, influenced by the domino theory, now feared that the Middle East was about to be transformed into a Soviet sphere of influence.³³ President Chamoun, equally traumatised by the events in Iraq, renewed his

³¹ The spirit of the unwritten national pact which had distributed political power in this multi-ethnic and multi-religious country according to the then existing demographic realities was perceived by many Lebanese to have been violated by Chamoun's decision to stand for reelection. The army, because it too reflected these "divisions", was unable to reimpose order without taking sides and risking the permanent fracturing of the existing political order as defined by the national pact.

³² Syria has repeatedly contended that Lebanon is part of a greater Syria. Indeed Syrian maps, even today, show no border between the two countries.

³³ In his memoirs Eisenhower states that following the revolution that brought about the collapse of the Iraqi monarchy he feared the complete erosion of Western influence in the Middle East. This trend towards regional chaos could only be arrested by the use of American power. See Eisenhower, D : Waging Peace, 1956-1961. (New York, Doubleday, 1965). pp 269-270.

appeal for American intervention. Within the U.S. foreign policy establishment a growing consensus, supportive of American intervention in the Lebanon, convinced the President that decisive action had become imperative. On July 15, 1958 the Eisenhower doctrine was again operationalised when over nine thousand American marines landed on the Lebanese coastline. The presence of American marines helped to restore stability and, following intensive diplomatic efforts on the part of the United States, a resolution to the Lebanese "problem" was achieved.³⁴

Although subsequent American involvement in the Middle East was never explicitly rationalised in terms of the Eisenhower doctrine, the region remained a central conflict theatre in the context of the cold war. More than twenty years following the enunciation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, a new American foreign policy doctrine, bearing the name of incumbent President Jimmy Carter, reflected the enduring concerns of American policy towards the region.

THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION: RESPONDING TO THE SOVIET CHALLENGE IN THE THIRD WORLD.

The victory of John Kennedy in the 1960 Presidential election adumbrated a major reevaluation of the purposes and orientation of American foreign policy. The new President's reservations

³⁴The resolution was essentially predicated upon (a) a decision by President Chamoun not to stand for reelection, (b) the reaffirmation of the national pact and (c) the reaffirmation of Lebanese neutrality vis a vis its foreign policy orientation.

about, and criticisms of, Eisenhower's approach to global problems and especially of how the United States should respond to a rapidly changing international system were not merely the manifestations of campaign rhetoric or political expediency.³⁵

In his inaugural address President Kennedy reaffirmed America's commitment to liberty and democratic ideals. In the most memorable passage of that address the President declared:-

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foes, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty. This much we pledge-and more."

Kennedy's sweeping rhetoric foreshadowed a major expansion of America's global commitments.³⁶ More importantly, Kennedy cast himself in the role of a crusader who was determined to invoke American leadership to improve the lot of mankind and to increase

³⁵ Kennedy and his closest advisers believed that the Eisenhower Administration had been too ready to compromise and that Eisenhower had operated from the assumption that there were limits to American power and capabilities. This notion was rejected by the incoming administration who contended that in contrast to the relatively passive and cautious foreign policy of its predecessor, a new active and bold approach was required to restore American preeminence in global affairs.

³⁶ Kennedy's rhetoric was cast in similarly universalistic verbiage to that which Truman had used in enunciating the Truman Doctrine. Kennedy frequently operated from the assumption that American resources were infinite and that the United States possessed the wherewithal to play the role of global policeman and to fundamentally reshape life on planet earth.

global prosperity.³⁷ Kennedy promised a more self-assured foreign policy as opposed to the largely reactive pattern of policy making that had characterised both the Truman and Eisenhower administration's approach to critical cold war issues. From the perspective of the new administration "Truman's containment policy seemed too defensive, Secretary of State Dulles's "brinkmanship too blustery...."³⁸

More than any other single issue, Kennedy was determined to refashion America's approach to the Third World. Although the Eisenhower Administration had tentatively begun the process of expanding American influence in the Third World it had focused most of its energies on containment in Europe and, during its second term of office, the Middle East. From the perspective of the incoming administration the central deficiency of the Eisenhower/Dulles containment strategy was the reliance on asymmetrical response and, in particular, on the doctrine of "massive retaliation" which sought to deter Communist expansionism by holding out the prospect of the early use of nuclear weapons in a situation of limited war. Massive retaliation was clearly an inappropriate doctrine given the fact that the arena of cold war rivalry had now shifted decisively, away from the central conflict theatre, Europe, to the

³⁷For Kennedy a policy of containing the Soviet Union did not mean devoting American resources to ensure the preservation of the status quo. Unlike Eisenhower who tended to be disinclined to depart from conventionalities, Kennedy sought to fundamentally reconstruct the international system and America's role in that system.

³⁸Schulzinger, R : American Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century.....p 259.

"peripheral" regions of the Third World. Thus whilst the likelihood of nuclear war had diminished, and though the prospects for peaceful coexistence at the strategic level may have been enhanced, the competition between the superpowers had not receded but had merely shifted both in terms of its geographical location and patterns of competition.³⁹ The Third World was destined to become the centrepiece of Kennedy's foreign policy.⁴⁰

Kruschev's speech of January 1961, in which he explicitly offered Soviet support to "wars of national liberation", had an abiding and profound influence on the overall thrust of the Kennedy Administration's evolving approach to the Soviet Union. The administration regarded Kruschev's offer as "evidence of a new Communist campaign to seize control of anti-colonial and other revolutionary movements in the Third World."⁴¹

In the course of expressly favouring a foreign policy that would be more pragmatic, and less ideological, than that followed by

³⁹In his inaugural address Kennedy sought to place the United States on the side of the newly formed states of the Third World. He simultaneously sent a signal to the Soviet Union by declaring "To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny..." Quoted in Dougherty, J and Pfaltzgraff, R : American Foreign Policy..... p 145.

⁴⁰ Kennedy, in a sense, epitomized both the archetypal cold war warrior as well as the moral crusader. Whilst wishing to assert American leadership in world affairs and whilst favouring a policy of global containment he simultaneously was anti-colonial and sympathetic towards what Eugene Rostow had termed the "revolution of rising expectations" in the Third World.

⁴¹Gaddis, J L : Strategies of Containment.....p 208.

the Republicans, Kennedy and most of his close advisers had cautioned against confusing Third World nationalism with the machinations of international communism. Indeed the process of decolonization was largely acclaimed by the United States.⁴² In a speech to the nation in June 1961 the President stated that it was too easy to "dismiss as Communist-inspired every anti-government or anti-American riot, every overthrow of a corrupt regime, or every mass protest against misery and despair."⁴³

Notwithstanding the realization that the Soviet Union was often not behind many of the political upheavals raging through the Third World, the Administration ultimately came to the conclusion that developments in the "periphery" would impact decisively on the overall global power balance. Thus if the Soviet Union's sponsorship of wars of national liberation went unchallenged, or if the United States did not seek to influence the outcome of political and military contestations in the Third World, the result would be an unacceptable shift in the balance of power or what the Soviet's preferred to call the international

⁴² Revisionist historians such as Saul Landau have contended that United States' policy towards the Third World which aimed at resisting /combating Soviet influence has "actually meant preventing indigenous independence movements from taking their countries out of the U.S. orbit." see Landau, S : The Dangerous Doctrine ; National Security and U.S. Foreign Policy. (Boulder, Westview Press, 1988). p 36. This view implies that the United States was effectively applying its own version, mutatis mutandis, of the Brezhnev Doctrine which constituted the cornerstone of Soviet Policy towards other socialist (principally East European) states after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

⁴³Gaddis, J L : The Strategies of Containment.....p 208

"correlation of forces".⁴⁴ This did not mean that the United States should necessarily play the role of defender of the status quo. When and where possible the United States would ally itself with the newly emergent progressive forces. However, in cases where a revolutionary movement was unequivocally Marxist in its orientation, and especially in cases where the Soviet Union and/or its allies were supporting such a movement, the United States was compelled to act.⁴⁵

A strategy of containment predicated upon asymmetrical response, with "massive retaliation" at its cornerstone, was clearly unsuited to thwarting Soviet intervention and expansion of influence in the Third World. In its place, a new strategy which would enable the United States to calibrate its response and to react on a level commensurate with the original provocation was required. This meant a return to symmetrical response. However, in order to achieve a capability of responding in kind, the United States required a less rigid strategic doctrine than that of "massive retaliation". What was required was a strategy that would afford the United States a range of options and the ability

⁴⁴The Kennedy Administration, like its predecessors, was generally inclined to regard superpower competition in terms of a zero-sum game. Thus although Third World nationalism, frequently assumed an anti-Western bias this did not necessarily translate into a pro-Soviet position. The United States nonetheless believed that such "neutralism" would ultimately result in a drift towards the International Communist movement or would at least facilitate the augmentation of Soviet influence in the country concerned.

⁴⁵Kennedy believed that poverty provided a fecund breeding ground for Communism and that the United States was compelled both for geopolitical and moral reasons to increase economic assistance to the developing countries. By doing so the conditions in which Communist forces thrived could be eradicated.

to respond flexibly.

The strategy of flexible response which became the hallmark of the Kennedy and Johnson Administration's national security policies effectively meant equipping the United States with the military hardware and operational doctrines necessary to fight not just a nuclear war or a conventional war, but to fight those types of wars that were manifest in the Third World.⁴⁵

During the Kennedy presidency the United States was confronted by a series of crises in the Third World but the two events that overshadowed all else were the Cuban missile crisis and the growing Communist insurgency in South East Asia which paved the way for the expanding American involvement in Vietnam.

THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA

For decades U.S. policy towards Latin America had been characterised largely by neglect. This neglect was punctuated by periodic intervention when U.S. interests were perceived to be in jeopardy. The involvement of the CIA in overthrowing the wildly socialist Arbenz regime in Guatemala in 1954 demonstrated that Washington would not condone any government who posed any threat to American interests, whether they be geopolitical or economic.

The Monroe Doctrine had defined America's approach to the Western

⁴⁵ This, inter alia, meant wars of counter insurgency.

Hemisphere. The doctrine, as demonstrated by the overthrow of Arbenz, was still in force and the United States would not hesitate to invoke it. Notwithstanding the Guatemalan episode, Latin America was unlikely to become a focal point of the cold war. The Soviets had operated largely from the assumption the region was so inextricably tied to the capitalist international economic system and that the United States would never countenance any anti-Western revolutions in the region.⁴⁷ In addition, the prevailing conditions and level of development of the countries of the Western Hemisphere were simply not conducive to revolution.

THE CUBAN CHALLENGE AND THE U.S. RESPONSE:

The seizure of power by Fidel Castro's 26th July Movement on New Year's day 1959 was not initially regarded as a Marxist revolution or perceived as a threat to U.S. interests in the region. This view rested on the fact that Castro had not received support from the Soviet Union in carrying out his revolution and had himself publicly disavowed communism.⁴⁸ The steady

⁴⁷The catch phrase that described the Soviet Union's reticence to seek advantage in Latin America on the basis that this would never be tolerated by the United States was that of "geographic fatalism".

⁴⁸Tad Szulc in his widely acclaimed biography of the Cuban leader observes that although Castro had, from the outset, made it clear that the United States would no longer be allowed to impose its will in Cuba - "The Platt Amendment is finished" - during his visit to Washington some months after taking power, he was at pains to point out that "we are not Communists" and that if there happened to be communists in his government "there influence is nothing." (sic) See Szulc, T : Fidel : A Critical Portrait. (London : Hutchinson, 1986). pp 389-391.

deterioration of relations between Havana and Washington and the concomitant fraternal relationship that was evolving between the Cuban leader and the Kremlin was, in the prevailing cold war climate, regarded as a challenge to United States influence. As early as January 1960 plans to overthrow Castro were being drawn up by the CIA. On 13 August 1960, Eisenhower approved a \$13 million budget for an operation that was eventually to be taken over by his successor.⁴⁹

The first real indicators of Kennedy's approach to Latin America in general, and Cuba in particular, emerged during the 1960 Presidential election television debates. In the early days of the campaign Kennedy accused the Republicans as being responsible for "losing Cuba". On the eve of the final television debate Kennedy released a statement that was to set the tone for his subsequent policy. In that statement the future President declared that " We must attempt to strengthen the non-Batista Democratic anti-Castro forces....Thus far these freedom fighters have had virtually no support from our government."⁵⁰ The significance of this statement is clear. Kennedy explicitly gave his support to a policy of roll-back rather than of containment

⁴⁹ The plan which was masterminded by the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division and most enthusiastically advocated by Richard Bissell the CIA's Deputy Director for Plans called for (a) the establishing of a "responsible and unified" government in exile; (b) "a powerful propaganda offensive" (c) "a covert intelligence and action organization" in Cuba that would be supportive of the opposition in exile and (d) "a paramilitary force outside Cuba for future guerrilla action". The setting up of such a force was of course the first step in what ultimately was to become the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Parmet, H : JFK : The Presidency of John F Kennedy, (New York : Penguin Books, 1984). pp 46-47.

and, in so doing, demonstrated that at least in America's own backyard he would, as President, move beyond a purely reactive strategy of containment.

Notwithstanding the failure of the subsequent Bay of Pigs invasion the United States insisted that it would not tolerate any more Cuba's and that the Monroe Doctrine remained in force. This was validated during the Cuban missile crisis.⁵¹ and additionally in the Johnson Doctrine which sanctioned the American invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965.

THE FIRST JOHNSON DOCTRINE :

The Johnson Doctrine effectively reaffirmed the intention of the United States to apply the doctrine of containment to Latin America and more especially to Central America and the Caribbean. The crisis that led to the enunciation of the doctrine occurred in the Dominican Republic in 1965.⁵² President Johnson believing

⁵¹ The Kennedy Administration did however offer assurances that it would not actively seek the overthrow of Castro's government. The survival of Castro's revolution effectively refuted the notion of geographic fatalism and stimulated the emergence of a number of Foco guerrilla movements throughout Latin America which sought to emulate the victory of the revolutionary left in Cuba. The Soviet Union remained sceptical about the prospects for armed struggle a scepticism that was finally dispelled only in the early 1980's following the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.

⁵² The crisis that erupted in the Dominican Republic can be traced back to the assassination of Rafael Trujillo the dictator who had ruled the country since 1940. Following his death the country elected Juan Bosch a democrat but within ten months he was overthrown by a military coup d'etat. His replacement Donald Reid Cabral was a member of the country's oligarchy but soon proved incapable of retaining the support of the military. By
(continued...)

that the increasingly anarchical situation in the capital, Santa Domingo, was part of a communist conspiracy, reacted by sending U.S. marines ostensibly to protect the lives of American citizens. His real reasons were revealed when he charged that "revolution in any country is a matter for that country to deal with ...but.. it becomes a matter calling for hemispheric action only - repeat only - when the object is the establishment of a Communist dictatorship."⁵³

The Johnson Doctrine was encapsulated in the President Johnson's address to the American people on 2 May 1965 a few days after he had ordered U.S. marines to intervene and restore order in the Dominican Republic. The President in a post de facto rationalisation to the American people contended that "The American nations cannot, must not, and will not permit the establishment of another Communist government in the Western Hemisphere."⁵⁴

⁵³(...continued)

April 1965 the Republic appeared to be on the verge of anarchy and on April 24 the young "Boschist" officers in the army led a coup that led to Cabral's overthrow. However the new leaders also proved incapable of restoring order and the masses poured onto the streets. At this point a junta of the regular military took power. Civil War loomed as the Boschist faction began to arm thousands of civilians and fighting began in the streets of the capital. At this juncture the American ambassador W Tapley Bennet sounded the alarm that a Communist takeover was a likely possibility. This, in turn, elicited a decisive response from Lyndon Johnson who immediately viewed the events in the Dominican Republic as part of a larger conspiracy masterminded by Fidel Castro.

⁵³ From the President's statement of 2 May 1965 reprinted in The Department of State Bulletin May 17, 1965. pp 230-231.

⁵⁴Liberal critics of the Johnson administration questioned the President's judgement as to whether there was any real
(continued...)

The doctrine, in essence, contained an explicit message. In the first instance the Johnson administration signalled its absolute determination to contain Soviet or Cuban inspired expansion in the hemisphere. The containment doctrine would be rigorously invoked in America's own backyard. In this sense the enduring applicability of the Monroe doctrine was emphasized. The United States would not permit another "Cuba".

CONTAINMENT IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

By the mid 1960's the policy of containment had shifted from its initial limited focus to assume almost global dimensions.

The escalating war in Vietnam led to the issuance of another diplomatic doctrine which some have described as the Johnson Doctrine for Southeast Asia. The doctrine which was encapsulated in a series of presidential statements was most clearly and forcefully articulated in the so-called "Gulf of Tonkin Resolution" which was passed by the U.S. Congress on 7 August 1964.⁵⁴

⁵⁴(...continued)

possibility of a communist takeover in the Dominican Republic. The New York Times in particular expressed doubt and contended that "Little awareness has been shown by the United States that the Dominican people - not just a handful of Communists - were fighting and dying for social justice and constitutionalism."

⁵⁵ The text of Johnson's speech which led to the passing of the "Gulf of Tonkin Resolution" are reproduced in the Public Papers of the Presidents of The United States : Lyndon B Johnson 1963-1964 , (Washington D.C. Government Printing Office, 1965), II, pp 927-932.

The event that led to the passing of this resolution was the two attacks by the North Vietnamese on American naval units in the Gulf of Tonkin. In his reaction President Johnson asserted that the United States would "take all necessary measures in support of freedom and in defense of peace in Southeast Asia."⁵⁵ Johnson requested Congress to support this position and to join him in attesting that "all such attacks will be met."

In these and subsequent statements and actions the United States indicated that the doctrine of containment would also be implemented to check the expansion of Communism.

By the latter half of the 1970's U.S. containment policy was predicated upon the assumption that the United States was able to play the role of global gendarme checking and counteracting any threat posed by Moscow and/or its surrogates. However as events in Vietnam and elsewhere, including within the United States itself, would soon demonstrate, U.S. power was not indivisible, clear limitations did exist and were becoming all too apparent.

⁵⁵ See footnote 55.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM NIXON TO CARTER :

AMERICA'S DESCENT FROM GLOBALISM

CHANGING GLOBAL REALITIES AND THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN POWER

From 1945 until the late 1960's a high degree of consensus existed within the American political establishment on the purposes of American power. The policy of containment had hitherto enjoyed a high degree of bipartisan support. By the time Richard Nixon took office this consensus had begun to dissipate. The new administration faced a completely different world to that which Truman or Eisenhower had to deal with.

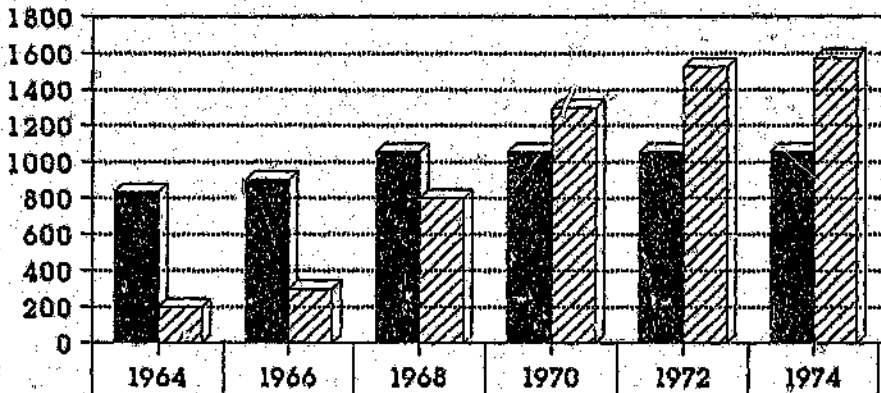
One of the most dramatic changes that had occurred by the late 1960's was the enormous growth of Soviet military power on both the conventional and nuclear level.¹ The achievement by the Soviet Union of virtual nuclear parity with the United States, coupled with Moscow's ability to project its power on a global scale, coincided with the imbroglio in Vietnam that had raised questions about both the efficacy and moral purposes of American power.² Henceforth the United States would have to face the

¹ A useful overview of Soviet defence policy during the 1960's and 1970's is provided by Ken Booth in Baylis, J et al in "Contemporary Strategy : Theories and Policies : (New York, Homes and Meier Publishers Inc, 1976) Chapter 11 pp 218-241. In his chapter Booth argues that "the dominating feature of the strategic policy of the Brezhnev and Kosygin regime in the second half of the 1960's was the progress towards what is generally regarded as more or less "parity" in strategic offensive power." p 224.

² On the U.S. involvement in Vietnam and more especially on the questions that it raised about the moral purposes of American power see Kolko, G : Confronting the Third World : United States Foreign Policy 1945-1980. (New York, Pantheon Books, 1988). Kolko, a revisionist historian, observes that "the [Vietnam] war shattered the postwar domestic political consensus on foreign policy, undermining the very health of the American

challenge of managing its rivalry with the Soviet Union under a newly emergent condition of military parity (see table).

THE NUCLEAR BALANCE 1964-1974 (ICBM'S)



United States	834	904	1054	1054	1054	1054
Soviet Union	200	300	800	1300	1527	1575

United States Soviet Union

Source: Brown, C and Mooney, P: Gold
War to Defeat: Heinemann, London, 1976
p 161.

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economy on behalf of an increasingly symbolic and wholly futile campaign in only one intrinsically quite marginal country." see p 205.

The war in Vietnam had shattered the consensus that had previously rested at the bedrock of U.S. national security policy. The psychological impact of the Tet offensive of January 1968 and the Johnson administration's seemingly directionless policies helped to sweep Richard Nixon to power.³ Nixon had promised to achieve "peace with honour" and extricate the United States from the most protracted war in its history. The price of America's commitment to the war in Vietnam was obvious. The United States' involvement necessitated a diverting of American resources from other conflict theatres and impacted upon America's ability to influence events elsewhere. The escalating costs of prosecuting the war in Vietnam also meant that at the very time when the Soviet Union was making a bid to achieve nuclear parity, U.S. defence spending on weapons systems had declined in real terms.

However, even without the deteriorating situation in Vietnam, the limits to American power had become all too apparent. The international system of the late 1960's and America's role within it was very different from that of the 1940's or 1950's. The economic and military recovery of Western Europe ,

³ The British historian, Paul Johnson has argued that the Tet offensive adumbrated the collapse of American political will to continue and expand the war in Vietnam. He contends that it was not the American people who "lost its stomach" but Lyndon Johnson who after losing the New Hampshire Primary in March 1968 announced that he would not stand for reelection. See Johnson, P : A History of the Modern World: From 1917 to the 1990's. (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991) p 637.

coupled with the emergence of Japan as a major economic power and competitor, heralded the disintegration of the rigid bipolar structure of international power.⁴

Thus, for the incoming administration, the strategy of containment and the scope of the containment doctrine required rethinking. The United States was no longer able to follow a strategy of containment predicated upon symmetrical response which presupposed unlimited resources and a capability to contain the Soviet Union on a global scale. A new approach was needed. Indeed, in the words of John Lewis Gaddis, the "world confronting the new administration in January 1969 was one ripe with possibilities for new approaches."⁵

Perhaps the clearest recognition of changing realities, and more especially of the limits of American power, was expressed by President Nixon in a report to the U.S. Congress in February 1971. In his report the President proclaimed :-

⁴ In the first of a series of annual reports to the U.S. Congress, President Nixon referred to the changing world order asserting that "The Postwar period in international relations has ended." The new world order and the emergence of new actors, the military balance between Moscow and Washington and the vitality of Communism were also referred to by the President. See Brown, S : *The Faces of Power, Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Reagan*. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1983) pp 324-325.

⁵ Gaddis, John Lewis : *Strategies of Containment ; A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* : (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982) p 274.

"...We are at the end of an era. The postwar order of international relations, the configuration of power that emerged from the Second World War, is gone. With it are gone the conditions which have determined the assumptions and practice of United States foreign policy since 1945."

Although this report was written more than two years after the Nixon administration took office it reflected a basic approach to changing global realities that had been recognised earlier and that had been articulated in the Nixon Doctrine of August 1969.

THE NIXON DOCTRINE

The Nixon Doctrine, like preceding post 1945 U.S. foreign policy doctrines was concerned with containing Soviet expansionism. However the doctrine, enunciated by President Nixon during a press briefing session on the Pacific island of Guam in August 1969, marked a fundamental departure from the Eisenhower and Johnson doctrines which had widened the scope of containment. In contradistinction, the Nixon doctrine, whilst affirming that the United States would remain a global power, indicated that the implementation of containment in any or every situation in which the Soviet Union or its proxies may be involved was neither

* Nixon, R : U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's : Building For Peace. A Report to the Congress. (Washington, D.C. : U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971) p 10.

possible nor desirable.

The philosophical underpinnings of what was to become the Nixon Doctrine were elucidated in a White House background briefing by Henry Kissinger dated July 18, 1969. In that briefing, Kissinger, who at the time was National Security Adviser, outlined what he believed should be the mainspring of America's policy towards Asia in a post-Vietnam era. He concluded that:-

"We [the United States] remain willing to participate, but we cannot supply all the conceptions and all the resources. The initiative has to move increasingly into that region."

He added that:-

"the future of Asia, Southeast Asia....will have to depend not on prescriptions made in Washington, but on the dynamism and creativity and cooperation of the region"

In his memoirs President Nixon referred to the statements that he made in Guam and which constituted the essence of what later became known as the Nixon Doctrine:-

"I began with the proposition that we would keep all

⁷ See Kissinger, H : The White House Years, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson and Michael Joseph, 1979) p 223.

our existing treaty commitments, [in Asia] but that we would not make any more commitments unless they were required by our own vital interests."⁹

"In the past our policy had been to furnish the arms men and materiel to help other nations defend themselves against aggression. That was what we had done in Korea and that was how we had started out in Vietnam. But from now on, I said, we would furnish only the materiel and military and economic assistance to those nations willing to accept the responsibility of supplying the manpower to defend themselves." ¹⁰

Thus the Nixon Doctrine essentially concluded that the cost of protecting and assuring international security could not, and would not, be borne by the United States alone. These costs would have to be shared.¹⁰

⁹Nixon, R : The Memoirs of Richard Nixon : (London, Arrow Books, 1978) p 395

⁹Nixon R : Memoirs.....p 395

¹⁰ Although the Nixon Doctrine constituted a general statement of intent regarding the role that American allies facing a threat would themselves have to play (especially in furnishing the manpower) the impact of this statement on the situation in Vietnam was especially significant. In his book, "No More Vietnams", Nixon writes thus about the concept of Vietnamization that quickly became the keystone of his administration's policy - " Since 1965, the United States had furnished most of the money, most of the arms and a substantial proportion of the men to help the South Vietnamese defend their freedom... but as a result of this.. The South Vietnamese had developed an unhealthy, and unsustainable, dependence on the United States. Now we decided to train and equip South Vietnam's army so that it would have the capability of defending the country itself." see Nixon, R : No More Vietnams (London, Comet, 1986) pp 104-105

The essential meaning of the Nixon Doctrine was somewhat ambiguous and subject to varying interpretations. For some "the key concept of the Nixon Doctrine was retrenchment in America's overseas obligations."¹¹ However whilst envisaging a more limited set of commitments, the Nixon Doctrine also articulated the need to retain certain commitments but to do so "more effectively and at lower cost."¹²

A central feature or maxim of the Nixon doctrine was the reliance that would henceforth be placed on American allies to supply the manpower for their defence. The doctrine, enunciated against the background of the Vietnam war, was predicated upon the realisation that the U.S. public would no longer tolerate or support the use of American troops abroad. As such, the doctrine envisaged an enhanced role for surrogate regional powers who would receive military and economic support from the United States and who, in return, would act to protect Western interests in the region concerned.¹³

The Nixon administration clearly rejected the notion that

¹¹ See Crabb, C : The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy : Their Meaning, Role and Future. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1982) p 280.

¹² Crabb, C : Doctrines of American Foreign Policy.... p 280.

¹³ In his interpretation of the Nixon Doctrine Jerald Combs contended that the doctrine sent a clear message that the United States "might supply rhetoric, money or materiel but not men. Thus, there would be no more Vietnams". See Combs, J : American Diplomatic History : Two Centuries of Changing Interpretations, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983) p 307.

containment ought to be operationalised on a global scale. Indeed, notwithstanding his impeccable credentials as a cold war warrior, Richard Nixon's views on how to check Soviet expansionism were more complex and less visceral than those of earlier presidents. Nixon's more sophisticated approach led Paul Kattenburg to conclude that President Nixon, through the enunciation of the Nixon doctrine, intentionally or unwittingly, changed one of the most fundamental premises of U.S. foreign policy namely the coequation, in the view of the American people, that American security could only be assured with the defeat of Communism everywhere.¹⁴ In the view of Lloyd Gardner, the Nixon Doctrine came close to being "an admission that the original basis for American participation [was] at the very least [an] overdrawn response to a localized conflict."¹⁵

Raymond Garthoff, among others, whilst acknowledging that the Nixon Doctrine was not merely rhetoric pointed out that the doctrine "marked a less far-reaching change that appeared at first glance."¹⁶

Thus the Nixon Doctrine seemed to indicate a return to asymmetrical containment and a more carefully calibrated process

¹⁴ Kattenburg, P : The Vietnam Trauma in American Foreign Policy 1945-75. (New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1980) p 227.

¹⁵ Gardner, L : A Covenant with Power : America and World Order from Wilson to Reagan. (London, Macmillan Press, 1984) p 182

¹⁶ Garthoff, R : Detente and Confrontation : American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan. (Washington, Brookings Institution, 1985) p 74.

of determining when or when not to intervene in the face of a real or perceived Soviet advance. However, Nixon whilst recognising the need to modify U.S. containment strategy, was also determined to seek a new *modus vivendi* with Moscow, one characterised by a reduction of tensions between the two superpowers.

U.S. - SOVIET DETENTE

The intellectual foundations of both the Nixon Doctrine and the policy of detente were firmly embedded in the concept of balance of power and more specifically in the belief that international peace and security could best be assured by an international equilibrium.¹⁷ Henry Kissinger who had written his doctoral thesis on the post-Napoleonic world order, the global system that emerged in the years immediately following the Congress of Vienna, believed that the world was shifting gradually from one

¹⁷ The roots of the detente of the 1970's did not however originate with the Nixon administration but can, in fact, be traced back to the Kennedy Administration. The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 had starkly demonstrated how easily a full-blown nuclear war could be precipitated. The need to manage their rivalry and to limit the possibility of nuclear armageddon was to lead President Kennedy into what may be termed a rudimentary and limited detente. In June 1963 the American President "put out feelers" for relaxing superpower tensions. His overtures subsequently facilitated the Test Ban Treaty (July 1963) the setting up of the hotline between Washington and Moscow and also paved the way for the first ever sale of American grain to the Soviet Union. On this limited version of detente, a precursor to the more ambitious detente that was to evolve during the Nixon-Kissinger years see Draper, T : *Present History : On Nuclear War, Detente and other Controversies*. (New York, Vintage Books, 1984) p 251-252

structured around rigid bipolarity to a more polycentric global order which in turn would lead to a multipolar international system. More particularly the Nixon Administration visualized an international system in which Japan, China and Western Europe would also become principal actors. The emerging pentapolar system would :-

"provide the focus for an American foreign policy whose strength was based not only on military power but also on partnership, or at least more mature relationships, with other states, especially Japan and Western Europe, that were capable of assuming greater responsibility for their own security; and on negotiations with adversaries, notably the Soviet Union, designed to transform a condition of confrontation to one of detente." ¹⁸

In 1968 Kissinger argued that a bipolar system encouraged rigidity and insisted that the evolving shift towards a multipolar world was in the best interests of, and presented opportunities for, the United States.¹⁹

¹⁸ Dougherty, J and Pfaltzgraff, R Jnr. : American Foreign Policy : FDR to Reagan. (New York, Harper and Row, 1986) p 242.

¹⁹ Kissinger wrote in 1968 that "A bipolar world loses the perspective for nuance; a gain for one side appears as a loss for the other. Every issues seems to involve a question of survival. The smaller countries are torn between a desire for protection and a wish to escape big-power dominance. Each of the superpowers is beset by the desire to maintain its preeminence among its allies, to increase its influence among the uncommitted, and to enhance its security vis a vis its opponent." quoted in Gaddis, John Lewis, Strategies of Containment..... p 281.

Although the policy of detente is most closely associated with the Nixon administration, the usage of the term had sometimes been invoked by preceding administrations. However, by the early 1970's, detente became the controlling concept of U.S. diplomacy. The architects of the detente policy focused less on how to contain the predacity of Soviet power and instead sought ways of reaching "understandings" and forging universally acceptable ground rules that would regulate international competition and rivalry.

The central factors that motivated the search for a new *modus vivendi* were essentially two-fold. On the one hand the policy of detente was essentially a response to the growing realization that American power was finite and that the United States, embroiled in the jungles of Southeast Asia, had lost the political and moral will required to ensure a successful policy of containment. On the other hand, both Nixon and Kissinger believed that the Soviet Union could be persuaded to moderate their foreign policy behaviour and enter into a process of

²⁰ Harry Gelman in an illuminating article briefly discussed both American and Soviet motivations for and expectations of a policy of detente. In assessing American motivations he observed that "the impulse to expand relations with the U.S.S.R. was channelled by a specific set of circumstances.... The most important of these conditioning factors was the Vietnam War which had envenomed American society, destroyed the American foreign policy consensus, increasingly hemmed in the presidency, created growing constraints on all US military programs, and offered the Soviet Union an irresistible opportunity to seize on negative worldwide reaction to promote the erosion of American influence and the advance of Soviet influence with a multitude of audiences." See Gelman, H : "The Rise and fall of Detente", in Problems of Communism, March-April 1985, pp 52-53

negotiations the ultimate objective of which would be to build a more cooperative and stable relationship between the two superpowers.

Although hoping to forge a new *modus vivendi* with Moscow, both Nixon and Kissinger were political realists and, as such, detente with the Soviet Union was not predicated upon a benign or favourable interpretation of Soviet power. Instead as Stephen Artner has trenchantly observed:-

"The [Nixon] administration proceeded from the assumption that the two superpowers could, through closer consultations and a greater willingness to negotiate, defuse potential areas of conflict and, above all, reduce the danger of an atomic exchange."²¹

Underpinning the policy of detente was the concept of linkage. Through "linkage" Nixon and Kissinger intended to achieve nothing less than a modification of Soviet foreign policy behaviour by rewarding those Soviet actions that demonstrated a disposition to accept the world as it was and by discouraging, through the application of pressures and constraints, those that challenged the existing order.

Soviet motives for embarking upon the road to detente were, in

²¹ Artner, S : "Detente Policy Before and After Afghanistan" *Aussenpolitik* Vol 31, Second Quarter, 1980, p 138.

the final analysis, very different from those propelling American policy. The Soviets believed that a relaxation of superpower tensions would, *inter alia*, facilitate the formalization of European boundaries that had not been ratified following the Second World War.²² In addition, the Soviet economy desperately needed to import more Western technology as well as capital and the Soviet leadership believed that these could best be procured in a climate of improved relations. The Soviets also believed that a "military detente" which would involve strategic arms agreements would serve to constrain US deployment in areas in which the United States enjoyed a clear technological advantage.²³

The policy of detente essentially amounted to a new strategy of containment and ought not to be seen as a substitute for containment or a signal that containment was no longer necessary or operational. The Nixon-Kissinger *weltanschauung* carefully calibrated American interests and determined that those interests were divisible. In addition, the administration also differentiated, to a much larger degree than preceding administrations, between the nature and extent of threats or

²² More pointedly the Soviet saw a process of detente with Washington as well as with Europe as a means by which the long-term Soviet objective of a European security conference that would legitimize Soviet territorial gains made during the war could be secured.

²³ Another central factor that induced Moscow to seek detente was the widening Sino-Soviet rift and the bifurcation of the Communist bloc. In 1969 there had been a series of border clashes between Soviet and Chinese troops. As the United States also began to make overtures to Beijing culminating in Nixon's historic visit of 1972 Soviet leaders began to fear the possible consequences that could flow from Sino-American detente.

perceived threats to American interests.

In looking back it is evident that detente was destined to ultimately end in failure and disappointment for both superpowers. This was inevitable given the widely differing expectations of what detente would produce. The Kissinger/Nixon grand design was predicated upon flawed assumptions. The Americans believed that Soviet foreign policy was no longer being animated by ideological considerations and that Soviet leadership was ultimately comprised of realists and pragmatists who, given sufficient inducements, would be willing to moderate Soviet foreign policy behaviour and eventually abandon their revolutionary global vision. Whilst Americans believed that detente would mean an end to Soviet expansionism and the growth of Soviet military power "to the Soviets it [detente] meant an elimination of war between the superpowers - military detente - but the continuation of ideologically-based conflict as expressed in anti-Western propaganda and aid to anti-Western movements and states."²⁴ Indeed, in retrospect, the tangible gains of detente were, in essence, limited to the realm of arms control negotiations and a tacit understanding that Europe would, for all intents and purposes, cease to be an arena of active cold war rivalry between the superpowers.

By the time the Watergate scandal had destroyed Nixon's presidency disillusion with the detente process had already

²⁴ Ryavec, K: United States-Soviet Relations, (New York, Longman, 1989) p 50.

become evident. The election of the democratic presidential candidate, James Earl Carter, in November 1976, was to have even wider implications. The detente process whilst essentially continued was to be further undermined (albeit inadvertently) by the liberal internationalism that was infused in the new Administration's world view. More particularly, the realism and even the Machiavellian expedience of Kissinger's detente was to be overlaid with a dose of idealism and moralism in the form of an active and global human rights policy.

THE WELTANSCHAUUNG OF JIMMY CARTER AND ITS IMPACT ON AMERICAN-SOVIET RELATIONS.

During the 1976 presidential election campaign Jimmy Carter had railed unrelentingly against the moral bankruptcy of the Nixon-Kissinger diplomacy.²⁵ In its place he proposed a new foreign policy, one that would, in the first instance, be based upon moral considerations. In his memoirs the president recalled that

[I] was familiar with the widely accepted arguments that we had to choose between idealism

²⁵ Carter's allegation that American foreign policy was no longer rooted in moral purposes was a response to the secret wheeling and dealing style of diplomacy practised by Henry Kissinger. For the new president a policy predicated only upon realpolitik was bound to fail. The United States should judge its friends according not only to their anti-Communist credentials but also on whether the country concerned adhered to the same liberal and democratic ideal;s which lay at the bedrock of the American Republic.

and realism, or ~~between morality~~ and the exertion of power; but I rejected those claims. To me, the demonstration of American idealism was a practical and realistic approach to foreign affairs, and moral principles were the best foundation for the exertion of American power and influence."²⁶

Although it has been common practice for every American administration to wish to distance itself from the policies of its predecessors, or at least to carve out a distinctive approach to global issues, continuity, rather than change, has been an enduring feature of post-Second World War American foreign policy. The Carter Administration was, however, far more determined than any of its recent predecessors to emblazon its own imprint on American foreign policy.²⁷

With respect to relations with its principal adversary, the policy of containment although it had been differently applied had constituted the cornerstone of United States' policy since it was first formulated and operationalized in 1947. In contradistinction to preceding presidents and foreign policy

²⁶ See Carter, J : Keeping Faith : Memoirs of a President, (London, Collins, 1982) p 143.

²⁷ Simon Serfaty for example refers to this and comments that "...it is not unusual for a new president to want to assert an identity of his own in foreign policy....this time [ie under the Carter administration] the attempt was made with a thoroughness that had not been seen since the Eisenhower years at least." See Serfaty, S : American Foreign Policy in a Hostile World : Dangerous Years. (New York, Praeger, 1984) p 327.

makers, Jimmy Carter questioned the very need for a policy of containment. In the words of John Lewis Gaddis:-

Jimmy Carter, upon taking office early in 1977, appeared determined to reverse the preoccupation with containment that had dominated American foreign policy for the [previous] three decades."²⁸

In particular Carter believed that the United States had defined national security too narrowly and had tended to refract all its foreign policy actions through the prism of East-West relations. In his first major foreign policy speech, delivered at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana on 22 May 1977, the newly elected president outlined some of the sea-changes that would animate his foreign policy. Foremost among these was his belief that:-

"It is a new world that calls for a new American foreign policy - a policy based upon constant decency in its values and an optimism in our historical vision.....I believe that we can have a foreign policy that is democratic, that is based on fundamental values, and that uses power and influence, which we have, for humane purposes"²⁹

²⁸ See Gaddis, J, L : Strategies of Containment.....p 345.

²⁹ This speech is reproduced in Department of State Bulletin, Vol LXXVI, No 1981, 13 June 1977 p 622.

In future the United States would not choose its friends or allies on the sole criteria of whether a particular government was strongly anti-communist or not. The human rights record of a particular regime would become the new litmus test. In this regard Carter asserted that:-

"....Because we know that democracy works, we can reject the arguments of those rulers who deny human rights to their own people.....Being confident of our own future we are now free of that *inordinate fear of communism* which once led us to embrace any dictator that joined us in that fear....." (my italics)

In a speech made at the Southern Legislative Conference at Charleston, South Carolina, in July 1977, the President again alluded to the preoccupation of containing the Soviet Union, a preoccupation that had characterised the foreign policies of preceding administrations:-

" Our national security was often defined almost exclusively in terms of military competition with the Soviet Union. This competition is still critical because it does involve issues which could lead to war. But however important this relationship of military balance, it cannot be our sole preoccupation, to the exclusion of other world issues which also

concern us both."³⁰

Thus the Carter administration came into office determined to fashion a foreign policy that would be less single-minded in its focus and that would emphasize and address a series of problems that had little, if anything, to do with containing Soviet expansionism. The liberal internationalism of the Carter administration was concerned with issues such as economic interdependence, international trade and investment, overpopulation, environmental damage, and perhaps foremost, the need to ensure the protection of human rights. In many respects Carter's foreign policy was far more complex and forward-looking than that of his predecessors.³¹ There also existed a clear disjunction between the Carter Administration's declaratory and operational policies. In this regard, the distance that was placed between Carter's foreign policy and that of the preceding Republican administrations was more pronounced on a rhetorical level rather than on the level of actualized policy. However, notwithstanding the fact that a strong thread of continuity was readily identifiable in operational foreign policy, the Carter approach to world politics was, in the final analysis, predicated

³⁰ See Moore, R : The Carter Presidency and Foreign Policy, chapter in Abernathy, M et al (eds): The Carter Years : The President and Policy Making, (London, Frances Pinter Publishers, 1984) p 58.

³¹ Leslie Gelb has commented that "...The carter approach to foreign policy [rested] on a belief that not only is the world far too complex to be reduced to a doctrine , but that there is something inherently wrong with having a doctrine at all." The doctrine that Gelb is referring to is the doctrine of national security (read containment). See Gelb, L , "National Security and the New Foreign Policy", Parameters, November 8, 1978, p 10.

upon a false assumption - an assumption that the Soviet Union had begun to evolve into a status-quo oriented power.

The Carter administration, imbued with a more benign view of the Soviet Union, thus embraced detente with more vigour than Nixon, Ford and Kissinger had done. However the Carter administration was largely disinclined to base a policy of detente (or what the Soviets termed "peaceful coexistence") on the concept of linkage.³² The negotiation of arms control agreements with the Soviet's (which essentially remained the centrepiece of the detente process) were moral imperatives and the game of carrot and stick was seen largely to be a technique of realpolitik diplomacy.³³

From the Soviet perspective it appeared as if the United States had embarked upon a geopolitical sabbatical. The American preoccupation with other "global issues" and its apparent decision to eschew the following of an active containment policy

³² There is, however, a school of thought led most persuasively by John Lewis Gaddis who argue that the Carter administration was even more willing than preceding administrations to use linkage as an integral part of American detente policy. This view is, in my opinion, contestable especially in light of the somewhat one-sided focus of the administration's human rights policy. Although Carter criticized the lack of human rights in the Soviet Union and China this did not really impede the efforts to foster detente or promote normalization of these relationships.

³³ Cecil Crabb has observed that although the Nixon and Ford administrations had pursued a policy of detente before Jimmy Carter became president, "no administration since World War II had emphasized its necessity as strongly or as frequently as the Carter foreign policy team." See Crabb, C : The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy..... p 331.

was regarded by the Kremlin leadership as a indisputable affirmation that the correlation of forces had moved decisively in favour of the Soviet Union and that, in the aftermath of the debilitating humiliation in Vietnam and the self-doubt engendered by the Watergate crisis, United States foreign policy was now in a state of paralysis.³⁴ This opened up new opportunities for the Soviet Union to make unilateral gains/advances especially in the Third. World

SOVIET EXPANSION IN THE THIRD WORLD

By the 1970's the growth of Soviet strategic and conventional forces and particularly the Soviet navy meant the Moscow had now achieved an ability to project its power to all corners of the globe. During the second half of the 1970's the Soviet Union made great strides in extending its influence to various regions of the Third World.³⁵

³⁴ The American aversion to becoming embroiled in another Vietnam-type conflict, rationalised in terms of the need to contain Soviet expansionism has become encapsulated in the term "the Vietnam Syndrome". Fred Bergsten a former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs observed as early as 1973 that "...the thought of military intervention seems remote after the domestic divisiveness of Vietnam.... Neither gunboat nor dollar diplomacy will work very well for the United States in the 1970's." See Bergsten, F : "The Threat From the Third World" in Foreign Policy, Summer 1973, pp 102-124.

³⁵ The view that the Soviet Union "stage-managed" event. and acted as an imperialist power in the Third World during the second half of the 1970's is strongly refuted by Fred Halliday who, whilst acknowledging that Moscow took advantage of developments, lays much of the blame at the doorstep of the United States contending that in Iran and Ethiopia, for example, the revolutions and popular uprisings "owed their ferocity to long years of repression for which the United States bears much responsibility." See Halliday, F : Threat From the East : Soviet Policy from Afghanistan and Iran to the Horn of Africa."

SOUTHERN AFRICA

A new phase of decolonization precipitated by the collapse of the dictatorship in Portugal's and Lisbon's subsequent withdrawal from its territories in Southern and Western Africa afforded the Soviet Union new opportunities to project its power and promote its influence in the region. The Soviets, together with their Cuban proxies, intervened decisively in Angola and also in the Horn of Africa.³⁶ In Angola, the Soviets had been giving support to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) since the early 1960's. With the imminent collapse of Portugal's colonial empire Moscow now escalated that support. In contradistinction to the levels of support that the Soviets could provide a decade earlier, Moscow now had the capability to intervene massively and decisively.³⁷ By far the single most decisive move was the introduction of Cuban military advisers followed by some 20 000 Cuban troops. The direct involvement of the Cubans was made possible only as a result of the logistical and material support provided by Moscow. With Cuban involvement the battle for control of Angola (which was being waged by three

(Harmondsworth, Pelican Books, 1982)

³⁶ The background to the Angolan conflict and more specifically the application of the Reagan Doctrine to Angola is discussed more fully in the chapter on the Reagan Doctrine in Southern Africa. For a useful overview of Soviet involvement in Southern Africa during the 1970's see Gutteridge, W : Africa : in London, K (ed) : The Soviet Union in World Politics. (London, Croom Helm, 1980) pp 127-145.

³⁷ In 1975-76 an estimated 4 300 million in military aid including Mig-21 fighters, tanks, and 122-mm rocket launchers were provided by the Soviet Union to the MPLA. See Nogee, J and Donaldson, R : Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II. (New York, Pergamon Press, 1983) p 182.

liberation movements all of whom aspired to replace the Portuguese) tipped the scales in favour of the MPLA.

Elsewhere in Southern Africa the Soviets began to put out feelers to FRELIMO in Mozambique, The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) in what was then called South West Africa and increased support to Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwean African Peoples Union (ZAPU) which was one of the two major liberation movements fighting to end white minority rule in Rhodesia.

THE HORN OF AFRICA

Soviet involvement in the Horn of Africa increased following the military-led revolution which led to the deposition of Emperor Haile Selassie on 12 September 1974.³⁸ The new regime (the Dergue) gradually consolidated its hold over the country and the new leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, subsequently proclaimed Ethiopia to be a Marxist state. The United States which had previously enjoyed a close relationship with Ethiopia suspended arms shipments in February 1977.³⁹ The Carter Administration explained that this action was, at least in part, a response to the appalling human rights record of the Mengistu regime. Shortly

³⁸ For a useful overview of both Soviet and American involvement in the Horn of Africa especially since the mid 1970's see Ottoway, M : Soviet and American influence in the Horn of Africa, (New York, Praeger, 1982)

³⁹ The closeness of the United States-Ethiopian relationship prior to Selassie's overthrow was demonstrated by the fact that America had military bases in Ethiopia had supplied the Selassie regime with military hardware over a sustained time period.

thereafter Mengistu visited Moscow and concluded treaties of friendship with the Soviet Union and other Marxist states.

For the Mengistu regime the cementing of ties with Moscow was especially important because of Ethiopia's need for Soviet military hardware. This need arose from conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden desert.⁴⁰ The Soviets, who had earlier established fraternal ties with the Siad Barre regime in Somalia was now forced to choose sides in the rapidly escalating war. In the end the Soviets, sensitive to the fact that Ethiopia was the richer and larger of their two allies, chose to back Mengistu. By the second half of 1977 huge quantities of Soviet and Eastern Bloc arms were pouring into Ethiopia. In November 1977 the Soviet's re-equipped new armoured divisions and facilitated the arrival of some 17000 Cuban forces. Thus, as was the case in Angola, the Soviet Union, again with the direct assistance of the Cubans, capitalised on an opportunity to gain a stronghold and eclipse American influence in the Horn of Africa. Soviet support for Mengistu's forces proved decisive and the balance of power swung in favour of Addis Ababa. By March 1978 the Somali forces had been driven out of the Ogaden and Siad Barre's military ambitions lay in ruins. The large-scale Soviet-Cuban support, had been a decisive factor and Mengistu was now able to shift his attention to ending the protracted war being waged by secessionist Eritrean movements.

⁴⁰ In July 1977 the Somali leader Siad Barre had initiated a full-scale invasion of Ethiopia committing more than 50 000 troops to the war.

Moscow's intervention in Ethiopia demonstrated, as did the Soviet-Cuban involvement in Angola that from the Soviet perspective the process of superpower detente did not preclude the Soviet Union from acting decisively to influence the outcome of revolutionary "struggle" in Third World conflict theatres.

CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN

Notwithstanding the presence of the Castro regime in Cuba, the Soviet Union's involvement in Central America and the Caribbean had been negligible.⁴¹ Moscow had operated from the assumption that the Monroe Doctrine and its subsequent corollaries demonstrated America's determination not to tolerate the involvement of external powers in the Western Hemisphere. The Soviet's also believed in the doctrine of geographic fatalism which, inter alia, held that the United States as the traditional hegemon would not permit Marxist revolutions (or for that matter any anti-American revolutions) to succeed in Central America and the Caribbean.⁴²

⁴¹ Prior to the 1970's the involvement of the Soviet Union in Central America had been extremely limited. Moscow had helped to establish Communist parties in the Central American Republics during the 1920's and 1930's. However until the Cuban Revolution of 1959 that brought Fidel Castro to power, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's (CPSU) contacts with its Central American and indeed, South American counterparts tended to be sporadic.

⁴² Although the overthrow of the Batista regime in Cuba and Castro's subsequent consolidation of his revolution succeeded (despite the bay of Pigs invasion and other efforts to destabilize that regime) there was little evidence before 1959/1960 that Castro was heading a Marxist or anti-American revolution. The determination on the part of the United States to uphold the status quo in the region had been demonstrated in

Soviet apprehension about the possibilities of Marxist revolutions succeeding through protracted conflict led Moscow (especially after Salvador Allende had won the election in Chile in 1970) to encourage Marxist parties in central and Latin America to pursue a "peaceful path" towards power. In contradistinction, Castro favoured armed struggle as the best way to bring about the socialist revolution in the region.⁴³

It was only after the coup that brought the New Jewel Movement to power in Grenada⁴⁴ and the subsequent triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua that Moscow (almost grudgingly) sanctioned the strategy preferred by Castro. As such, it was Castro, and not the Kremlin, who played a pivotal role in helping topple the Somoza "dynasty" in Managua.⁴⁵ The Soviet's

Guatemala in 1954 when with CIA assistance the mildly leftist regime of Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown. The American intervention in the Dominican Republic, which occurred in 1965, (some six years after Castro had come to power in Cuba) marked a determined resolve on the part of the United States to invoke the Monroe Doctrine and to send a message to both the Moscow and Havana that the doctrine of geographic fatalism remained firmly in place.

⁴³ For an excellent analysis of Soviet policy towards Latin America generally and more particularly on Moscow's changing "strategies" in the region see Ramet, P and Lopez-Alves, F : "Moscow and the Revolutionary Left in Latin America", in *Orbis*, Vol 28, No 2, Summer, 1984, pp 341-365. Also see Cole Blasier, "The Soviet Union" (chapter 10) in Blachman, M et al : *Confronting Revolution : Security Through Diplomacy in Central America*, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1986).

⁴⁴ On the Soviet and Cuban role in Grenada both before and following the coming to power of the New Jewel Movement see Valenta, J and Valenta, V : "Leninism in Grenada." in *Problems of Communism*, Vol 23, July-August, 1984, pp 1-23.

⁴⁵ The human rights record of the Somoza regime had been severely criticised by the Carter administration who pressurised the Nicaraguan dictator into improving that record. Indeed such pressure, it may be argued, accelerated Somoza's downfall.

had played virtually no role but once it had become clear that the Sandinista's were inherently anti-American and were setting about transforming their country along Leninist/Castroist lines, Moscow moved quickly to cement ties on both a party-party and a state-state level.⁴⁶ In addition the Soviet Union also began to increase its support for other revolutionary movements in the region including the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador.

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

The overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran in February 1979 and the coming to power of a revolutionary Shi'ite fundamentalist regime constituted a major setback for the United States.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁶ After the triumph of the Sandinista revolution the Carter administration sought to establish good relations with the new government in Managua and promptly increased economic aid. Many at this juncture argued that the revolution was not socialist or pro-Soviet or pro-Cuba in its orientation. It was contended that the revolution was "a revolution of national liberations...that [sought]...to transform Nicaragua into a modern nation-state that is politically, economically and culturally independent of foreign domination." See Harris, R and Vilas, C, eds, Nicaragua. A Revolution under Siege. (London, Verso, 1985) p 19. However such arguments were essentially destroyed by Sandinista leaders who readily acknowledged the input of Marxism-Leninism in the revolution. For example, Humberto Ortega who became Defence Minister contended two years after the revolution (in August 1981) that "We [the Sandinistas] cannot be Marxist-Leninists without Sandinismo. Without Marxism-Leninism Sandinismo cannot be revolutionary. Thus, they are indissolubly linked....Our political strength is sandanismo and our doctrine is Marxism-Leninism."

⁴⁷ It must be pointed out that the Soviet Union was perhaps just as surprised by the Iranian revolution as the United States was. Moscow played no role in toppling the Shah and although the new regime adopted a verbally hostile posture towards Moscow the even more hostile attitude towards the United States delighted the Soviet leadership.

Shah had dutifully played the role of America's gendarme and had acted as the guardian of Western strategic interests in the Arabian Gulf.⁴⁸ His fall from power, followed by the ousting of Somoza's regime in Nicaragua, led many critics of the Carter administration to conclude that, in pressurizing authoritarian regimes to improve their human rights record, Washington was succeeding only in weakening the legitimacy of such regimes and hastening their downfall. This in turn had led to creating opportunities for Moscow to increase its influence at the expense of the United States or, in Iran, the replacement of an ally by a hostile anti-Western government.

AFGHANISTAN

Ever since the early 1920's the Soviet Union had sought to influence political developments in neighbouring Afghanistan.⁴⁹ In April 1978 a marxist coup led by that country's Communist Party (PDPA) overthrew the incumbent leader Mohammed Daoud. However once in power the historical splits between the Khalqi and Parcham factions of the PDPA became manifest. The ascendancy, by mid 1978, of the Khalqi faction coincided with a determined effort to implement radical economic and social changes. These

⁴⁸ Ever since the enunciation of the Nixon Doctrine the Shah of Iran had been seen as an integral part of America's containment policy in the Persian Gulf region. A pro-western Iran was viewed as a bulwark against Soviet efforts to increase its presence in the Arabian Gulf.

⁴⁹ On the origins and subsequent development of the relationship between Moscow and Kabul see Rubinstein, A : Soviet Policy towards Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan : The Dynamics of Influence. (New York, Praeger, 1982) See Chapter's 5 and 6.

efforts, in turn, precipitated a backlash from alienated rural communities and tribes and, more especially, from fundamentalist Islamic forces. By late 1979 the possibility of the communists being overthrown by the so-called mujaheddin had become a reality. It was at this juncture that the Soviet Union, in what amounted to an extension of the Brezhnev doctrine decided to invade the country and to thereby ensure that a communist pro-Moscow regime retained power. The decision to actually intervene in such a brutal and direct way indicated that, for the Soviet Union, the continuation of detente was not an imperative and that detente if necessary could be sacrificed.

Thus, Soviet involvement in the Third World, both directly and indirectly, increased dramatically during the second half of the 1970's. The invasion of Afghanistan proved however to indeed be the final nail in the coffin of detente. The Carter administration who had sought to be less preoccupied with containing Soviet expansion now resuscitated the containment doctrine. The liberal internationalists in the administration who included Cyrus Vance the Secretary of State, Andrew Young, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and Vice President Walter Mondale henceforth ceased to influence the overall thrust of American foreign policy. Instead the "realists" and "geopoliticians" spearheaded by national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski began to play a more influential role.

On 3 January 1980 President Carter, referring to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, recorded in his personal diary that:-

"This is the most serious international development that has occurred since I have been President, and unless the Soviets recognize that it has been counterproductive for them, we will face additional serious problems with invasions or subversions in the future."⁵⁰

The following day, in an address to the nation, President Carter declared that:-

A Soviet-occupied Afghanistan threatens both Iran and Pakistan and is a stepping stone to possible control over much of the world's oil supplies.....If the Soviets are encouraged in this invasion by eventual success, and if they maintain their dominance over Afghanistan and then extend their control to adjacent countries - the stable, strategic and peaceful balance of the entire world will be changed."⁵¹

In a frank admission, that adumbrated both the end of detente and a revitalization of containment, President Carter told ABC-TV reporter Frank Reynolds that:-

⁵⁰ Insertion in President Carter's diary dated January, 3 1980 and quoted in Carter, J : Keeping Faith....p 473.

⁵¹ See President Carter's address to the nation which is reproduced in Department of State Bulletin, Vol 80, No 2034, January 1980. (See Special Section)

"My [Carter's] opinion of the Russians has changed more drastically in the last week than even the previous two and a half years before that. It's only now dawning on the world the magnitude of the action that the Soviet's undertook in invading Afghanistan."⁵²

THE CARTER DOCTRINE

The enunciation of what was to become known as the Carter Doctrine was encapsulated in President Carter's State of the Union address of 23 January 1980. In an address that was devoted mainly to the Soviet invasion,⁵³ the president forcefully declared:-

"Let our position be absolutely clear : An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital

⁵²Extract from the President's interview with Frank Reynolds of ABC-TV quoted in Crabb, C : The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy.....p 332

⁵³ The president also devoted part of his address to the American hostages crisis in Iran. The seizure of the American embassy by radical fundamentalists (On 4 November 1979 mainly by students), and the apparent inability of the Carter administration to secure their release, was to haunt the president until the day he left office. The hostage crisis was seen as another example of America in decline or America as a stumbling disorientated giant a growing perception that contributed to carter's defeat in the 1980 election. For a useful discussion of the American hostages crisis see Hiro, D ; Iran under the Ayatollahs, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985) chapter 5 pp 136-165.

interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary including military force."

The enunciation of the Carter Doctrine was, in several respects, a seminal event in post-world war II American diplomacy. In the first instance, the doctrine marked the reemergence of the policy of containment which had constituted the essence of national security policy ever since the formulation of the Truman doctrine. The marginalization of containment, and the efforts to recast the basic tenets of American foreign policy, which the Carter administration had sought to achieve, thus proved to be a parenthetical anomaly. The basic consistency of American foreign policy since 1945 was also reasserted. The Carter Doctrine was essentially a reaffirmation, and perhaps even a strengthening, of the Eisenhower doctrine which had extended the operation of containment to the Middle East.⁵⁴ Now, the Carter Doctrine went beyond restating the enduring validity of Eisenhower's commitment and spelt out more explicitly the nature of, and indeed the permanence of, American interests in that part

⁵⁴ Cecil Crabb has argued that the "Carter Doctrine called attention to the fact that the United States had emerged as a Middle Eastern power and had acquired permanent diplomatic and security interests in the region.....Before 1980 (with the possible exception of America's long-standing ties with the State of Israel), the involvement of the United States in the affairs of the Middle East had largely been episodic and fragmentary. See Crabb, C : Doctrines of American Foreign Policy..... p 330.

of the world.⁵⁵

The Carter doctrine was more than a restatement of the Eisenhower Doctrine in that it also revalidated the principles and tenets underpinning the Truman Doctrine and the Truman Administration's approach containing Soviet expansionism. Dwight Tays has observed that:-

"Marking a re-embrace of power politics, Carter's declaration [ie Doctrine] was reminiscent of Dean Acheson's comments before the National Press Club in January 1950.....In a revised version of containment [Carter] outlined areas thought to be vital to U.S. interest and resolved to defend those areas."⁵⁶

However, if the Carter doctrine heralded the return of containment it also sounded the death-knell of detente. The belief that the superpowers could work together or could resolve their differences through consultation was now seen to be an illusion. Detente, which the Americans believed would induce more responsible behaviour from the Kremlin leadership, especially in terms of controlling superpower rivalry in the Third World, was now acknowledged to have failed.

⁵⁵ The region had become increasingly important to the United States but also to western Europe. Reliance by the developed countries on Middle eastern oil had increased dramatically following the June 1967 Six-Day War.

⁵⁶ See Tays, D : The Carter Doctrine (Ph.D Thesis, University of Mississippi, 1982) p 79. This theses is available on University Microfilms International.

The Carter doctrine was also, at least to a certain degree, a repudiation of the Nixon Doctrine. In light of the collapse of United States influence in Iran, the possibility of relying on a regional ally to safeguard Western interests in the Persian Gulf was no longer tenable. The United States would have to resume the role of the gendarme of the region itself and, if necessary, intervene directly and militarily, if and when this became necessary.

On a more general level, in proclaiming his doctrine, President Carter was responding to the charges that the United States was in a state of terminal decline and no longer had the resolve, or the capacity, to protect its traditional interests. The general public support coupled with the support forthcoming from foreign governments (including a number of Middle Eastern governments suggested that both the American public and America's allies expected decisive leadership from Washington.⁵⁷

The Carter Doctrine although enjoying wide support was also subject to much criticism from both the liberal left and from the conservative wing of the Republican party. Those critics on the left regarded Carter's response as an overreaction. The kernel of their argument was that the Soviet Union had intervened in Afghanistan for defensive, and not for offensive, reasons. These critics charged that the Soviet Union, alarmed by the rise of Muslim fundamentalism that had swept away the Shah in Iran, would

⁵⁷ See Brzezinski, Z : Power and Principle : Memoirs of the National Security Adviser 1977-1981. (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983) p 445.

now succeed in toppling Communism in Afghanistan. The "contamination effect" of Islamic resurgence would, in turn, "spread to the millions of Muslims within the Soviet Union."⁵⁸

The criticism from the Republican right, including those who were to play an instrumental role in Ronald Reagan's 1980 Presidential election campaign, were more telling. The essence of their argument was that whilst they supported the Carter Doctrine the announcement of that doctrine, in and of itself, was meaningless. The Carter Doctrine, as verbally articulated, amounted to a paper tiger. The need to give teeth to the doctrine and to operationalize the doctrine was essential. The Carter Doctrine, so it was argued, "was not backed up by sufficient force and it had not been preceded by adequate interagency consultations."⁵⁹

By 1980 the foreign policy of the Carter administration had clearly shifted from one predicated upon liberal idealism to one of political realism. This mutation has been succinctly described by Jerel Rosati who argued that:-

"Three fundamental patterns occurred in the Carter image of the international system. Originally... [the] Administration's policy makers perceived a very complex international system made up of a multitude of

⁵⁸ This argument is discussed in Ambrose, S : Rise to Globalism : American Foreign Policy since 1938. (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1983) p 397

⁵⁹ See Brzezinski, Z : Power and Principle....p 445.

important issues and actors. The Carter team attempted to maximize international peace and cooperation in an effort to build a global community. In the second and third years as the Carter Administration's image of the international system was subject to increasing challenges, its perception of a complex world was modified and intra-administration differences became greater. By 1980 the Carter Administration's image of the international system had completely altered. The original image of a complex global system was disavowed and supplanted with an image of a fragmented international system in which the pursuit of global security became dominant."⁶⁰

The resurrection of containment and the start of what some have termed the second cold war⁶¹ failed however to dispel an image that had taken hold both within the United States and the international community at large that the United States was a declining power less able to influence events around the globe than at any time since the second world war. During his last year in office President Carter was plagued by the protracted American

⁶⁰ See Rosati, J : The Carter Administration's Image of the International System : The Development and Application of a Belief System Framework (unpublished Phd Dissertation, American University, 1983) p 36. Quoted in Abernathy, G et al : The Carter Years p 66.

⁶¹ See for example Halliday, F : The Making of the Second Cold War. (London, Verso, 1983)

hostages crisis in Iran.⁶² The pursuit of detente and the Administration's earlier preoccupation with global human rights were viewed by the American people as having been misguided and unrealistic. Against a backdrop of what President Carter himself termed a "domestic malaise" - an economy in recession - the stage was set for Ronald Reagan's victory in the Presidential elections of November 1980.

⁶²The hostages were eventually released on the day that Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President. The hostages had spent a total of 444 days in captivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

REAGAN'S WORLD VIEW AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE REAGAN DOCTRINE

THE WORLD VIEW OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

*Ronald Reagan is "the most ideologically oriented president to have occupied the White House in the post-World War II era."*¹

THE REAGAN WELTANSCHAUUNG

The fundamental premise underlying Reagan's world view and his foreign policy orientation was his enduring belief that the single most important mission that the United States must perform is to defend the cause of freedom around the globe. This theme was evident in Reagan's televised nation-wide address in support of Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater in October 1964 and it has resonated in virtually all of Reagan's subsequent foreign policy pronouncements.²

In a speech delivered at the Conservative Political Action

¹Kegley, C and Wittkopf, E : American Foreign Policy : Pattern and Process. Third Edition (London, MacMillan, 1987) p 574.

² This speech catapulted Reagan onto the "national stage" for the first time. In this speech Reagan's deep-seated anti-Communism was also readily apparent. Railing against those who would advocate a policy of appeasement vis a vis the Soviet Union Reagan invoked the words of Alexander Hamilton who once stated that "A nation which can prefer disgrace to danger is prepared for a master and deserves one !" See Reagan, R : Speaking My Mind : Selected Speeches (Simon and Schuster, New York; 1989) p 35.

Conference Banquet held in Washington in March 1978, in which he reviewed the foreign policies of the Carter Administration, Ronald Reagan asserted that "it [The Carter Administration] shows a woeful uncertainty as to America's purpose in the world." He subsequently denounced the administration's human rights policy focusing on the fact that, in its operationalized form, the policy amounted to one of "scolding authoritarian governments of countries that are friendly [to the United States] and ignoring totalitarian countries that are not."³

In the same speech, Reagan also alluded to the pervasive grip of the so-called Vietnam syndrome charging that the Carter Administration was staffed by officials who were trapped in the tragic, but still fresh, memory of a lost war. The future president also railed against Carter's general disposition towards the Soviet Union and reminded his audience that "...every American President since World War II has known or quickly learned that the Soviet Union...is not benign in its intentions.....To the Soviet Union detente is an opportunity to expand its sphere of influence around the world."⁴

From the outset Reagan rejected the view that the relative decline in the power and global influence of the United States' was unavoidable. From the late 1960's onwards most leading figures in the American foreign policy establishment had

³ See Vital Speeches of the Day Vol XLIV, No 14, May 1 1978 : Reagan, R : Foreign Affairs : The Need for Leadership. p 422

⁴ See Vital Speeches of the Day Vol XLIV, No 14, May 1 1978 : Reagan, R : Foreign Affairs : The Need for Leadership. p 423

recognised that the reconfiguring of the international system, epitomised by the reemergence of Europe and the economic awakening of Japan, impacted upon the relative power of the United States.⁵ However, whilst Nixon, Ford and Carter acknowledged this fact and began, albeit reluctantly, to differentiate between vital and non-vital national interests, Reagan repudiated this assumption arguing that there was nothing inevitable about America's relative decline.⁶

The Reagan administration was thus determined to reverse what it viewed as the gradual but undeniable decline of American strength and influence on the global stage. This decline had been set in motion by both the Vietnam war and Watergate but was also due to what was perceived to be the neglect of America's defence.⁷ In

⁵ Kenneth Oye elaborating upon these developments observed that "....since the end of the Second World War, American military and economic preeminence has clearly faded. Western Europe, Japan and the upper tier of the developing world grew more rapidly than the United States, and American comparative weight in the international economic system declined. The Soviet Union's military capabilities grew more rapidly than American military capabilities, and the United States' comparative weight in the international security system declined." See Oye, K, Lieber, R and Rothchild, D (eds) : *Eagle Defiant : United States Foreign Policy in the 1980's* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1983) The above quote comes from Chapter 1- "International Systems Structure and American Foreign Policy" by Kenneth Oye see p 7.

⁶ Indeed it has been argued that the "initial predisposition of the Carter administration had been that overseas commitments must be brought into balance with constrained capabilities" Dougherty, J and Pfaltzgraff, R (Jnr): *American Foreign Policy : FDR to Reagan*, (Harper and Row, New York, 1986) p 340.

⁷ These were the most often recited causes of America's relative decline but there were others too. These included the growth of the Soviet military (juxtaposed against the apparent neglect of America's military strength), the United States' energy vulnerability and also the diminishing capability of the United States to politically dominate an increasingly complicated

order to reverse this decline, the administration resolved to massively increase defence spending.⁹ This would, so it was believed, send an unmistakable message to the Soviet leadership that President Reagan had resolved to confront Soviet imperialist expansionism. However a sustained increase in military spending was to be coupled with a resolute and unyielding posture on a variety of issues including opposition to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and Soviet meddling in Central America.

During both the 1976 and 1980 Presidential campaigns Reagan had outlined what would collectively constitute the major elements of his foreign policy agenda. In essence, Reagan's approach was predicated upon his long-held conviction that the Soviet Union was an imperialistic power bent on achieving global domination. The United States, as the "arsenal of democracy", was obliged to resist this Soviet drive towards global hegemony with whatever means possible.

The guidelines of the new administration's foreign policy were

and diverse international system. For more detailed discussion on these and other sources of America's relative decline see Nye, J Jnr : "U.S. Power and Reagan Policy", Orbis Vol 26, No 2, Summer 1982 PP 391-412

⁹ Following discussions with the three services in early 1981, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger recommended to Congress that it approve increases totalling \$32.6 billion in Defense appropriations (over that which had been requested by President Carter) for the two fiscal years 1981-82. On this and for a general overview of the incoming Reagan Administration's defense policies and priorities see Weinberger, C : Fighting For Peace : Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon. (Warner Books, New York, 1990) see especially chapter II : "Reagan's First Defense Budgets" pp 39-80

encapsulated in the Republican Party's National Platform of 1980 which inter alia, alluded to the need to "achieve overall military and technological superiority over the Soviet Union" and..."to pursue positive non-military means to roll back the growth of communism."

THE FOREIGN POLICY APPROACH OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

Although the incoming administration did not produce a specific document spelling out the postulates and policy implications of the Reagan foreign policy programme, the words and deeds of the administration's key foreign policy makers reflected a fairly coherent and largely consistent approach and strategy.

Whilst it is usual for an incoming president to play down positions staked out on the campaign trail, President Reagan seemed instead to dramatise and amplify his assumptions about Soviet objectives. Some analysts had presumed that Reagan's virulent anti-Communist rhetoric had been specifically designed to win votes and that, once in office, the new President would adopt a less hostile, or more accommodating, posture towards the Soviet leadership. Such views were soon proved incorrect - especially in light of the subsequent rhetoric of the President. At his first press conference the new president charged that:-

* Recited in Brown, S : The Faces of Power : Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Reagan, New York, Columbia University Press, 1983. (intro to Part VII (no page number))

".....the only morality they [the Soviet leadership] recognise is what will further their cause, meaning they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat, in order to obtain that [ie a global communist revolution]."

Hansen contends that the overriding, indeed singular, purpose of the incoming Reagan administration's foreign policy was to "restore and revitalize a strategy of global containment of the Soviet Union."¹⁰ Reagan's containment policy was predicated upon three main assumptions:-

(1) The United States had undifferentiated national interests

(2) the availability of limitless means to resist the direct and indirect augmentation of Soviet power and influence and ;

(3) the imprudence of negotiating with Moscow until the United States was revitalised and able to enter such negotiations from a position of strength.

Notwithstanding compelling evidence to the contrary, especially with regard to the first two assumptions, it was against this background, and within this mind-set, that what eventually became

¹⁰See Hansen, R : The Reagan Doctrine and Global Containment: Revival or Recessional. SAIS Review, Vol 7 No 1, Winter-Spring, 1987. p 39

known as the Reagan Doctrine began to materialise.

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTIONS OF THE REAGAN DOCTRINE (1981-1984)

The origins of what later became the Reagan Doctrine can be traced back to Reagan's presidential election campaign (1980). As has already been suggested, Reagan's electoral victory owed a good deal to the foreign policy setbacks experienced by the Carter administration. In particular the widespread feeling that American weakness and apparent lack of resolve had opened the way for Soviet adventurism in the Third World had been a significant factor.

The threat that was posed by Soviet advances in far-flung regions of the Third World reverberated through much of Reagan's campaign speeches and also through the preparatory documents of President Reagan's transition team. Furthermore, the alarm bells were also sounded by influential political commentators such as Norman Podhoretz who supported the Republican victory.¹¹

Most of the guerrilla wars being fought in the 1980's were being waged against Soviet or Soviet proxy forces.¹² This fact did not

¹¹ For example see Podhoretz, N : "The Present Danger" in Commentary, Mar. 1980. pp 27-40. In this much praised- and much vilified- article Podhoretz surveyed the history of post-World War II superpower relations and implicitly argued that misguided policies and a lack of political resolve on the part of both the Nixon and Carter administrations had served to embolden the Soviet leadership to push for advantages.

¹² This was in marked contrast to the "wars of national liberation" of the 1950's and 1960's which were, in the main, anti-Western in character.

escape Reagan administration officials who from the early 1980's onwards referred to this frequently.

In June 1982 Reagan addressed the Members of the British Parliament at the Palace of Westminster in what he himself termed "one of the most important speeches I gave as president". This speech, which, in sweeping terms, examined the West's ideas of democracy and the challenge posed by Communism, also contained the seeds of what later matured into the Reagan Doctrine. In his speech Reagan made the case for a more assertive policy in support of democratic movements and concluded that:-

"....the march of freedom and democracy....will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history."¹³ The President also contended that "the renewed strength of the democratic movement, complemented by a global campaign for freedom, will strengthen the prospects for arms control and a world at peace."¹⁴

During Reagan's 1984 re-election campaign, Administration spokesmen alluded to the increasing number of nascent anti-Marxist insurgencies to support their view that under the first Reagan administration the correlation of forces/balance of power had begun to move against the Soviet Union. The existence of anti-Marxist insurgencies was also heralded as evidence that the

¹³ Reagan, R : Speaking My Mind : Selected Speeches (Address to members of the British parliament, Palace of Westminster, 8 June 1982), (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1989) p 118.

¹⁴ Reagan, R : Speaking My Mind ... p 118.

American brand of democracy had once again caught the imagination and represented the wave of the future all over the globe. By 1985 Reagan and his foreign policy coterie spoke increasingly about anti-Communist resistances and the question of supporting these groups began to crystallise into a major policy debate in Washington.¹⁵

Although the prevalence of anti-Marxist insurgencies had not been geographically limited, some analysts contended that the perceived threat to U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere, principally in Central America, was the single most important propellant that influenced the emergence of the Doctrine.¹⁶

An important development that also gave impetus to the development of the doctrine was the successful invasion of Grenada and the overthrow of the regime led by The New Jewel Movement in that country.¹⁷ This constituted the first opportunity to actually reverse a Soviet gain and, in so doing,

¹⁵ See Codevilla, A : "The Reagan Doctrine (As yet) Only a Declaratory Policy". Strategic Review, Vol xiv, No 3, Summer 1986 p 34

¹⁶ See for example Copson, R and Cronin, R : "The Reagan Doctrine and its Prospects". Survival Vol XXIX, No 1, Jan/Feb 1987.

¹⁷ For a critical analysis of the U.S. led invasion of Grenada see Fraser, P : "Revolutionary Suicide and Commonwealth Disarray : Grenada, October 1983." The Round Table, Issue 289, January 1984 pp 24-30. For a broader spectrum of views see Valenta, J and Ellison, H (Eds): Grenada and Soviet/Cuban Policy : Internal Crisis and U.S./OECS Intervention (Westview Press, Boulder, 1986).

demonstrate the fallibility of the Brezhnev Doctrine.¹⁸ However this event although it was the first in a series of efforts to weaken or topple pro-Soviet third world clients was to differ from subsequent "efforts" in so far as in the case of Grenada the United States intervention involved the direct use of American troops and was purely a military operation. As such, the invasion of Grenada differed from subsequent support given to efforts by indigenous guerrilla movements to topple pro-Soviet regimes.

The term "Reagan Doctrine" was first applied during Reagan's first term but it was a broad term that referred to several features of the administration's foreign policy which had as their common denominator the notion of the United States "prevailing" in military and political competition with the Soviet Union.

However it was only towards the end of the first term and then more explicitly at the outset of the second Reagan Administration that the idea of supporting anti-Marxist insurgencies began to be articulated as a desired and coherent strategy (as opposed to an ad hoc policy).

Initially discussions about the doctrine were confined to

¹⁸ The impact of the operation in Grenada was important because for the first time communism had been shown to be reversible. The fact that the chances of failure in effectuating the end of a pro-Soviet regime, the New Jewel Movement, were negligible and the dubious, indeed almost unbelievable, assertion, that tiny Grenada could ever pose a threat to United States interests in the Caribbean. The October 1983 invasion further encouraged those who had articulated a policy of forceful action to reverse Soviet gains in the Third World.

academic discourse usually played out on the editorial pages of various American newspapers and in some political journals and think tank position papers. Early and strong support for the policy of that was to later be encapsulated under the banner of the "Reagan Doctrine" doctrine was voiced by Charles Krauthammer of the New Republic and also by the conservative pro-Reagan Heritage Foundation.

Although she extended the scope of what she personally understood to constitute the Reagan doctrine the administration's former ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick also lent her voice in support of the doctrine. On the other side of the political divide were scholars such as Robert W Tucker of Johns Hopkins who contended that America's overseas interests did not merit supporting such insurgency groups.

Another factor that also probably impacted upon the evolving Reagan Doctrine was the fact that private organizations committed to supporting anti-Marxist insurgencies had become organised and were increasing in number. Some of these groups (eg the United States Council for World Freedom) were reported to been successful in raising funds for various guerrilla movements.

By the end of Reagan's first term it had become evident that a disjunction existed between the administration's rhetoric and its actualised policies. Indeed, notwithstanding the strident assertive rhetoric, the Reagan administration had demonstrated a fairly high degree of pragmatism, indeed even caution, in

conducting foreign policy. Clearly those who had originally argued the case for reviving a policy of global containment had been shown to have enjoyed little real influence on the principal policy-makers. As Roger Hansen correctly points out, by the end of the first Reagan Administration's term of office it was abundantly clear that the attempt to rejuvenate a policy of global containment had completely failed.¹⁹

By the start of 1985, against the background of this apparent inability to pursue a strategy of global containment, the Reagan Doctrine began to assume coherent form. The irony of this was clear. At the very time that many had finally acknowledged the impossibility of pursuing a policy of global containment, the Reagan doctrine became a key element in what many saw as a continuing effort to revive global containment.²⁰

Towards the end of his first term of office Reagan gradually began to gravitate towards a posture of cautious readiness for greater accommodation with the Soviet Union in the realm of

¹⁹. It could thus be argued that although Reagan had prior to becoming president refused to acknowledge that there were definite and growing limits to America's global influence had, by 1984 come to acknowledge this fact and this was in turn reflected in the pragmatism that pervaded most aspects of U.S. foreign policy

²⁰. This view was held by those who believed that the support of anti-Communist insurgencies would be automatic and would be substantial in nature. As subsequent developments revealed, such a universalistic implementation of the Reagan Doctrine (which may have been expected if one based one's assessment purely on the sweeping rhetoric used by President Reagan himself) was never really contemplated and both in the amount of assistance actually rendered and in its geographical scope the implementation of the doctrine was clearly carefully calibrated and by no means automatic.

nuclear matters/arms control. However this greater willingness to compromise (and tone down the rhetoric) did not extend to superpower competition in the Third World regional disputes. Indeed as Stephen Rosenfeld suggested, Reagan's willingness to contemplate a relaxation of relations with Moscow over arms control may have inspired a compensating or counterbalancing need for heightened ideologically propelled involvement in the Third World. In so doing Reagan effectively protected both political flanks. To conservative critics who charged that a more accommodating posture on arms control amounted to embracing a new detente, Reagan could point to U.S. support for anti-Communist forces in the Third World as a way of reaffirming that he had not deserted the conservative faith.

THE ENUNCIATION OF THE REAGAN DOCTRINE

A week before Reagan's 1985 State of the Union Address, the Secretary of State George Shultz, appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and argued that:-

".....experience shows that we cannot deter or undo Soviet geopolitical encroachment except by helping in one way or another, those resisting directly on the ground."²¹

²¹ Secretary of State, George Shultz, "The Future of American Foreign Policy : New Realities and New Ways of Thinking," Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 31, 1985, State Department Current Policy, No 650.

The enunciation of what was to become known as the Reagan Doctrine was contained in the President's State of the Union address of 6 February 1985 when Reagan declared that :—

"Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few, it is the universal right of all God's children. Look to where peace and prosperity flourish today. It is in homes that freedom built. ... Our [The United States'] mission is to nourish and defend freedom and democracy and to communicate these ideals everywhere we can. We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua, to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth."

As had often been the case in earlier diplomatic doctrines of the United States, Reagan's pronouncement was sweeping and his rhetoric was universal. The right of freedom in Reagan's view was a universal right. This taken to its logical conclusion lead to the belief that the U.S. should therefore work towards promoting and achieving this end in all corners of the globe. However in its operational form the Reagan doctrine was geographically limited to a handful of states in the Third World where Marxist, pro-Soviet regimes were being challenged by an anti-Communist

movement.²²

A few weeks later, George Shultz emerged as perhaps the leading advocate of the evolving Reagan Doctrine. In a speech delivered at the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco he referred to a 200 year-old history of U.S. support for "those around the world struggling for freedom and independence." He argued that the United States had a moral responsibility to support "people who have made their own decision to stand and fight rather than see their cultures and freedoms erased."²³

Reagan's 1985 State of the Union Address followed five years of reported American military support for the Mujahedeen (the armed resistance in Afghanistan)²⁴. Furthermore, the United States had in the preceding four years provided some non-military aid to the anti-Communist resistance movements in Cambodia. With regard to the Contras insurgency in Nicaragua reports had been circulating that the United States had given military support to this resistance movement and had been instrumental in helping to set up and operationalise this insurgency. In other words the

²² Furthermore the Reagan administration, not unlike its predecessors, seemed more concerned with preserving the status quo than in actively promoting the democratic ethic in the countries located in the strategically vital Arabian Peninsula.

²³ George Shultz : "America and the Struggle for Freedom" address before the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, February 22, 1985. Reprinted in State Department Current Policy No 659.

²⁴ This assistance had actually begun under the Carter Administration.

declaration of a new doctrine reflected a policy that, to some degree already existed, rather than adumbrating a shift or new policy direction. Indeed as Coral Bell convincingly argues the Reagan Doctrine was essentially "a banner under which established operational policies (the existing supply of arms and funds by covert means) to assorted Third World insurgencies, as in Afghanistan and Angola) were hyped by some journalists, bureaucrats and ideologists into an ambitious declaratory policy which could be endowed with the President's name."²⁵ In other words, the contention advanced by this scholar was that the term the "Reagan Doctrine" was invented to describe an existing policy and to simultaneously use that declaratory construct as the basis of a broadened and coherent policy.²⁶

DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS ON THE MEANING AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REAGAN DOCTRINE

Those who supported the Reagan doctrine did so for a variety of reasons and because they believed that the implementation of the doctrine would achieve specific objectives. There was however no one overriding objective.

²⁵ Bell, C : The Reagan Paradox : U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1980's. (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1989) pp 118-119.

²⁶ Bell also questioned the extent to which the doctrine actually bore Reagan's imprint and she suggests that the doctrine and its successes and failures had more to do with policy makers up to and below the level of Assistant Secretaries and Under-Secretaries than the more senior policy makers within the administration.

The President's 1985 State of the Union address, in which he for the first time indicated that support for anti-Marxist guerrillas had become an entrenched policy of the United States, touched off a debate over what the real objectives of the doctrine were. In essence this debate revolved around three major contentions:-

One school of thought contended that the Reagan Doctrine was merely a policy aimed not at containing the Soviet Union but was an offensive strategy of rolling back or reversing Soviet influence in the Third World. In other words the support that was extended to movements such as the Contras in Nicaragua and the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan was intended to enable those movements to overthrow incumbent regimes and take over power. In certain circles the enunciation of the doctrine was interpreted as conclusive evidence of the end of the so-called Vietnam syndrome. However it also simultaneously reflected the frustrations that had come to a head during the Vietnam war. Aid to anti-Marxist insurgencies was thus seen by some supporters of the doctrine as a way to reverse U.S. failures that occurred during and after the Vietnam era.

The second school argued that the Reagan Doctrine was a new strategy of containment. According to this argument, by giving support for those fighting against pro-Soviet or Soviet-backed regimes, the United States would, at relatively little expense to itself, raise the costs for Moscow. For example, by

supporting the Contras fighting against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, the United States compelled the Soviets to massively increase both economic and military aid to Managua in order to protect that regime against the possibility of falling prey to the guerrilla insurgency.²⁷ In turn, the Soviet Union would be dissuaded from seeking to expand elsewhere in the region (In the case of Central America the perceived next target was El Salvador). In this way Soviet expansionist strategies would supposedly be thwarted. A variation on this argument was offered by Saul Landau who contended that the intention behind the Reagan Doctrine was "to prevent new territory from leaving the sphere of freedom and falling into the communist world."²⁸

The third school of thought essentially argued that support for putatively pro-democratic insurgencies would pressurize the incumbent marxist regimes to hold free and fair elections in their respective countries. In this way the Reagan Doctrine would be supporting a process towards political liberalization and

²⁷ A further argument that was made in this case was that by forcing the Sandinistas to concentrate their resources and energies on neutralizing, or minimizing, the threat from the Contras, the Sandinistas were prevented from carrying out their threat to assist other like-minded revolutionary movements (especially the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador) and to promote region-wide revolutions.

²⁸ See Landau, S : The Dangerous Doctrine : National Security and U.S. Foreign Policy (Boulder, Westview Press, 1988) p 138. It is worth noting that Landau virulently opposed the Reagan Doctrine contending that "...the Reagan Doctrine encompasses a variety of foreign policy elements loosely tied together by militant and ideologically intense rhetoric (p 136). However he also acknowledged (in line with the arguments advanced by Coral Bell) that Reagan's tough rhetoric belied a more prudent and pragmatic set of actualised policies.

democratic process.

One of the most influential and strongest supporters of the emerging Reagan Doctrine was the political commentator Charles Krauthammer. He identified closely with those who viewed the doctrine as a roll-back strategy. Writing in the New Republic Krauthammer stated :-

"Rolling back Soviet acquisitions (albeit only at the periphery, where there is no threat of general war) is the innovation of the Reagan Doctrine. But it is part of a larger neo-internationalist vision of America's role in the world. The elements are simple: anticommunist revolution as a tactic. Containment as the strategy. And freedom as the rationale."²⁹

The assumption that the Reagan Doctrine was intended to roll-back Soviet gains and influence was repudiated by Alvin Bernstein. Writing in the journal "Policy Review" he criticized those whom he regarded as the Reagan Doctrine's "romantic proponents" who, according to him, conjured up visions of a roll-back of the Soviet Empire.³⁰ This "school" argued that the balance of power had begun shifting and that "the logic of revolution is now on

²⁹ Krauthammer, C : "The Poverty of Realism.", The New Republic, 12 February 1986 p 16.

³⁰ See Bernstein, A : "Insurgents Against Moscow". Policy Review, Number 41, Summer 1987 p23

the side of freedom and democracy, and the days of Bolshevism are numbered." The subsequent collapse of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe and then of the Soviet Union's internal empire have at least to some extent proved this view to have been correct. However, writing in 1987, Bernstein derided this view and instead advanced the contention that the Reagan Doctrine was not a doctrine envisaging the rolling-back of Soviet gains but was instead a defensive strategy designed to thwart the Soviet Union from taking full advantage of its territorial gains made during the 1970's.

In other words, the doctrine was designed to keep the Soviets busy if not bogged down in the Third World as a means to ensure that the Soviets could not push for new advantages in more pivotal conflict theatres such as Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Christopher Lane writing in the New Republic perceived the Reagan Doctrine to be "a low cost way in which to reconcile America's noble wish for democratic development in the Third World with its muscular desire to overcome the Vietnam syndrome."³¹

Roger Hansen also railed against those whom he referred to as to the neo-conservative architects and supporters of the Reagan Doctrine who, in his opinion, saw the doctrine ultimately in terms of not only resisting new Soviet or Soviet supported

³¹ Lane, C : "Pack it in ", The New Republic, April 5, 1987 p 17.

aggression but also as a means to subvert Soviet power and influence through support given to anti-Marxist insurgency movements throughout the Third World. For these supporters the Reagan Doctrine effectively called into question the legitimacy of all non-democratic, but especially communist, governments.

The adoption of the Reagan Doctrine was, in the eyes of these neo-conservatives, a demonstration that in a titanic clash between the forces of totalitarianism and democracy, democracy was exerting itself and pursuing this struggle with new vitality.

Statements and remarks by Reagan Administration officials revealed that the Reagan Doctrine was, in the view of William Bode, "more than an expression of moral and diplomatic support for freedom fighters resisting Soviet military power" and repression exercised directly or through Soviet surrogates. According to Bode the Reagan Doctrine represented:

- (1) A clear endorsement of the victory of democratic values worldwide;

- (2) Support, in different ways for the "forces of freedom fighters striving to shake off Marxist rule"

- (3) A determination to lift the mask of subversive aggression in order to identify the nation behind violent attacks and to hold it to account for aggression

(4) and finally an assertion of American rights under international law to use force unilaterally in self-defense."³²

In retrospect it would appear that those who saw the Reagan Doctrine as a sweeping all-embracing doctrine of roll-back tended to be influenced more by the rhetoric than the actual policies of the administration. This was evidenced by the fact that despite Reagan's enthusiastic rhetorical favouring of aid for "freedom fighters" the Administration was reluctant to define an "explicit" doctrine. In this regard, it may be suggested that The administration's disinclination stemmed from a desire to be flexible and to calibrate which insurgencies should be given aid and how much aid should be given.

OPPONENTS OF THE DOCTRINE

In addition to those who differed over their interpretation of the meaning and objectives of the Reagan Doctrine, many political figures and political commentators opposed the doctrine outright. These opponents refuted the view that American interests, especially those in Central America, were being endangered by pro-Soviet regimes. One of the key arguments advanced with respect to the Reagan administration's policies towards this region was that the magnitude of American wealth and the

³² Bode, W : "The Reagan Doctrine" in Strategic Review, Vol xiv, No 1, Winter, 1986. See pp 21-23

pervasiveness of American culture guaranteed that the hegemonic role of the United States would endure. As such support for anti-Marxist insurgencies was deemed to be both unnecessary and imperialistic.

A different concern expressed by opponents of the Reagan Doctrine was that the assistance (especially military hardware) given to various guerilla forces would compel the Soviet Union to provide additional help (including more sophisticated military hardware) to their "client" regimes to help those governments consolidate their hold on power.

Many of those who did not support the Reagan Doctrine based their apprehension on the possibility that the Reagan Doctrine would develop into a moral crusade that would ultimately lure the United States into costly and unnecessary entanglements. Those who argued along these lines were obviously influenced in their thinking by the imbroglio in Vietnam and feared that military and other assistance given to anti-marxist insurgencies would be the first step which ultimately would lead to the direct deployment of American troops.

THE REAGAN DOCTRINE : MORAL VERSUS GEOPOLITICAL IMPERATIVES.

A common characteristic of virtually all the doctrines of American foreign policy has been their subjection to two fundamental interpretations. The first of these may be termed the realpolitik interpretation which has tended to emphasize that

notwithstanding the employment of supportive moral arguments the architects of the various doctrines were in actuality motivated by questions of national security, national interests and "balance of power" politics.

The other competing interpretation has revolved around the assertion that the doctrines of American foreign policy have been fashioned according to the ideals and traditions of the American Republic and more specifically by a desire to play the role of "custodian of the future of humanity."³³

Cecil Crabb has observed that "every major foreign policy doctrine promulgated by the United States beginning in 1823 can perhaps be described as an "exercise in..... American moralizing and sermonising in its relations with other countries."³⁴

The doctrines of American policy have also generally reflected what Crabb termed a religious tenet or dogma. The Reagan doctrine also contained this characteristic. In justifying the giving of support to anti-Marxist insurgencies, the Reagan Administration invoked the language of a crusader coming to assist those resisting the tyranny of an alien anti-religious political philosophy. In the same way as the Truman Doctrine was described by John Spanier as a "modern day application of the principle that a society could not exist "half-slave and half free" so to

³³This phrase was coined by the American poet Walt Whitman)

³⁴ See Crabb, C : The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy : Their Meaning, Role and Future. (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1982) p 422.

did the Reagan Doctrine divide the world into the free and unfree.³⁵ In similarly defining a global mission to assist those who were unfree to achieve their freedom, the Reagan Doctrine strongly resonated the sentiments that lay at the bedrock of the Truman Doctrine.

In enunciating the Reagan Doctrine during the 1985 State of the Union address President Reagan unambiguously couched the policies that constituted the doctrine in moral terms. Clearly the need to frequently assert the moral case in support of the doctrine was most important both to President Reagan and others both within and outside of the administration who supported the Doctrine.³⁶ In this regard it is worthwhile quoting the former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliot Abrams who once commented that the fight of the Contras in Nicaragua "certainly matters... for moral reasons." He also contended that the United States had a "moral right to help people free themselves from oppressive rule." He even suggested that this constituted a central underpinning of American foreign policy.

Perhaps the most trenchant criticism concerning the Reagan administration's efforts to rationalise the doctrine as a moral

³⁵ See Spanier, J : "Choices We Did Not Have". in Gati, C (ed) : Caging The Bear : Containment and the Cold War (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1974) p 134.

³⁶ This was deemed to be essential if the doctrine and the policies that it produced was to enjoy the support of the American public. It was also deemed necessary to invoke the moral case for the doctrine to build various coalitions within congress and also within various arms of the bureaucracy.

imperative can be attributed to Robert Johnson.³⁷ He questioned the moral purpose of the Reagan Doctrine in particular and, more generally, Reagan's broader foreign policy.

Johnson pointed out that the underlying and explicit moral purpose of the Reagan Doctrine was to advance the cause of democracy, freedom and independence. However Johnson's criticism is levelled at what he observed to be a tendency on the part of the administration (and it would seem that this was especially pronounced in the case of the President himself) to conflate the notions of "democracy", "independence" and freedom. By conflating these principles the administration created the impression that the insurgency movements in Afghanistan and Cambodia whilst clearly fighting for national independence were also veritable democrats fighting to install democratic institutions. This of course is subject to much questioning and in certain cases even derision. The democratic credentials of the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan, The Contras in Nicaragua and even Jonas Savimbi's UNITA movement in Angola were hardly well established. By suggesting that these various insurgencies were fighting both for freedom and independence on the one hand and democracy on the other, gave these struggles a greater moral content that was in fact warranted.

Indeed it can even be argued that with the clear exception of the struggle waged by the Mujahedeen (which was directed both against

³⁷ See Johnson, R : "Misguided Morality : Ethics and the Reagan Doctrine" in Political Science Quarterly, Vol 103, NO 3, Fall, 1988 pp 509-530.

the occupying Soviet forces as well as the pro-Soviet government in Kabul) the other anti-Marxist insurgencies could not easily be characterised as struggles for national independence. Thus efforts by the Reagan Doctrine to justify assistance to "freedom fighters" who were engaged in a morally justifiable struggle to rid their country of foreign domination were somewhat tenuous. This was especially so in the case of Nicaragua where the overthrow of the Somoza regime and the coming to power of the Sandinistas had been the result of a popular widely-supported revolution. The Soviet Union had indeed played no role in the Sandinista victory.

Bearing the preceding observations in mind, one may conclude that national security concerns were paramount in the eyes of those who framed and articulated the Reagan Doctrine and that moral considerations or a belief that the cause of democracy was being advanced was at best a secondary consideration and at worst invoked as a cynical manouever designed to mobilize domestic political support.

However it would probably be misguided to suggest that the Reagan administration, in appealing to moral principles and by articulating the moral rectitude of the policies envisaged in term of the Reagan Doctrine, was merely employing a cynical tactic. Many in the administration really believed that principles were at stake. The argument being advanced is simply that moral principles served to buttress the primary considerations which were, in the final analysis, geostrategic

in nature.

THE REAGAN DOCTRINE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The policies that were pursued in terms of the Reagan Doctrine gave rise to the contention that the Reagan administration was disregarding international legal norms. Several international legal scholars contended that under the Reagan administration the influence of public international law and institutions on American foreign policy declined.³⁰ More specifically critics pointed to the administration's apparent flouting of article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter which forbids the use of force as a means to bring about international change. The Reagan Doctrine was singled out as a clear violation of this norm.³¹ In this regard the assistance provided to the insurgency movements in Nicaragua, Angola, Afghanistan and Cambodia was regarded in some circles as evidence of the Administration's disrespect for international law.

In contradistinction to those who argued that the implementation of the Reagan Doctrine undermined international law and amounted to flagrantly violating internationally accepted legal rules the

³⁰ This view was for example voiced by Keith Highet the then President of the American Society of International Law.

³¹ Other examples of the Reagan Administration's alleged indifference to this provision of the United Nations Charter would include the 1983 deployment of American marines to Beirut, the U.S. led invasion of Grenada in October 1983 and the mining of Nicaraguan harbours which the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled to be unlawful.

Reagan doctrine does not represent that fundamental a departure from traditional American values and conduct. Furthermore, because the administration insisted that its actions were designed to uphold international law, the assertion that the Reagan doctrine was *prima facie* unlawful is highly contentious.

At this juncture it is worth recalling that numerous principles of modern international law especially those concerning non-intervention and self-determination trace their roots to doctrines espoused by American Presidents and policy-makers.⁴⁰ The question as to whether the Reagan Doctrine continues or violates this tradition depends fundamentally on how one interprets the doctrine.

According to Robert Turner, the Reagan Doctrine "if seen as a claimed general right to use armed force [albeit indirectly] to destabilize or overthrow foreign governments with which the United States is at odds - whether because they embrace Marxist-Leninist principles, deny their people fundamental human rights, or for other reasons not involving the unlawful use of armed force - the so-called Reagan Doctrine would clearly be contrary to international law."⁴¹

Turner then suggests that although it is conceivable that some

⁴⁰ In its earliest form the Monroe Doctrine provided the basis for the subsequent evolution of the modern principles of self-determination and nonintervention.

⁴¹ Turner, R : "International Law, The Reagan Doctrine, and World Peace : Going Back to the Future", The Washington Quarterly, Vol 11, No 4, Autumn 1988. p 126.

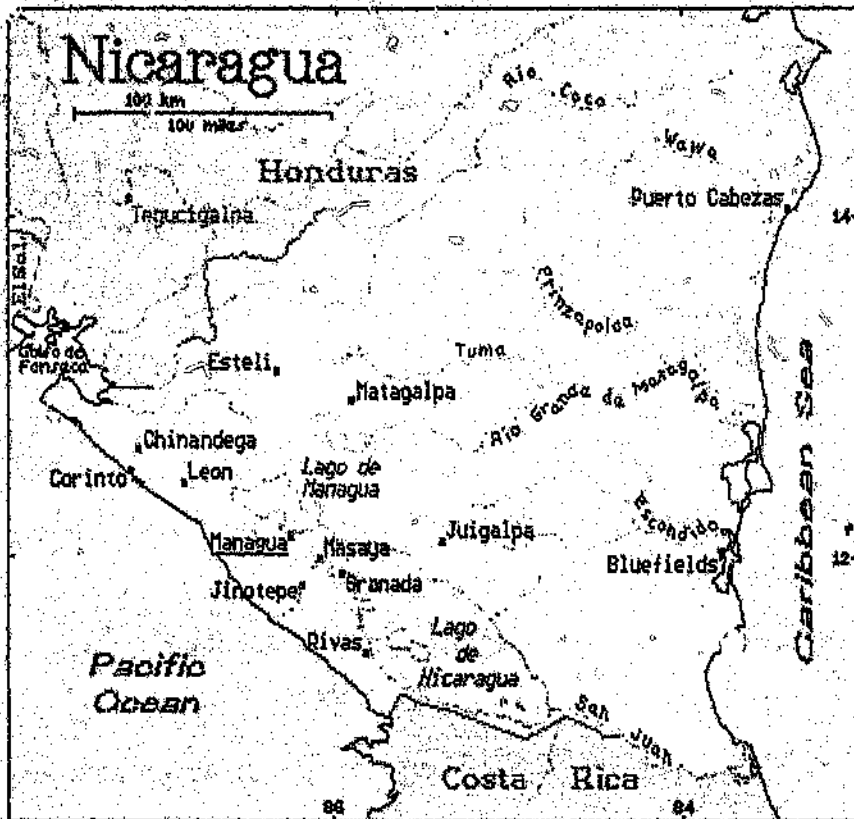
Reagan Administration officials may have embraced such a maximalist view of the doctrine in its operational form the doctrine appeared instead to be more consistent with a considerably more restrictive hypothesis. According to this more restrictive view the Reagan Doctrine does not amount to a critical deviation from the more traditional American approach to international law. Indeed with regard to assistance rendered to so-called "freedom fighters" in Nicaragua, Angola, Cambodia and Afghanistan the regime in power had come to power with the assistance of Soviet or Cuban supplied arms. If this is accepted to be the case then the Reagan Doctrine should in Turner's view not be seen as "an aggressive substitute for diplomacy, but a defensive response to prior aggression and violations of international law."⁴²

Many of the features and attributes of the Reagan Doctrine (and indeed of American foreign policy in general) that have been discussed will be illuminated and expanded upon in the two case studies that follow. These focus respectively on (1) the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua (2) The Reagan Doctrine in Afghanistan.

⁴² Turner, R : "International Law, The Reagan Doctrine...".....p 126.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY 1: THE REAGAN DOCTRINE AND THE CONFLICT IN NICARAGUA



CASE STUDY : THE REAGAN DOCTRINE AND NICARAGUA - SUPPORT FOR THE CONTRAS

THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION

The Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) came to power in July 1979, after overthrowing the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle. Three generations of the Somoza family had ruled Nicaragua - all three generations had been willing for Nicaragua to act as a close ally of the United States.¹

The rule of the Somoza family had been characterised by uncontrolled corruption and a poorly managed economy. Their human rights record was abysmal and it was therefore no surprise that the Sandinista victory was widely acclaimed both domestically and internationally. The overthrow of the Somoza regime (which was welcomed by the Carter Administration) was seen as a positive event that would lead to a new democratic era in Nicaragua.²

¹ On the period of Somocista rule among the best analyses is Christian S : Nicaragua : Revolution in the Family (New York, Random House, 1985). For a modern history of Nicaragua situated in the larger context of the history of the central American region see Dunkerley, J : Power in the Isthmus : A Political History of Modern Central America (London, Verso, 1988) esp chapters 5 and 6.

² The pressure exerted by the Carter administration on Antonio Somoza Debayle to liberalize Nicaraguan politics and improve human rights in that country was viewed by some analysts especially those on the right of the American political spectrum as a folly that facilitated the collapse of the Somoza dynasty and its replacement by a regime that eventually adopted a strong anti-Americanism as its political leitmotif.

This impression was shared by many in the United States, and both the Carter and Reagan Administrations were prepared to aid the new government after the successful completion of the revolution.

The initial prospects for a relationship predicated upon mutual respect soon dissipated. The sometimes virulent anti-American rhetoric, and the close ties that were cemented between the Sandinistas and Cuba, became a source of friction between Managua and Washington. Perhaps even more important was the belief on the part of several officials of the incoming Reagan administration that the Sandinistas were dedicated to promoting region-wide revolution in Central America (with El Salvador the supposed next domino).

The conflict in Nicaragua was to receive a disproportionate amount of attention from an Administration that, in contradistinction to its predecessor, was determined not be soft on communism. The support that was subsequently given to the nascent anti-Sandinista insurgents in Nicaragua- the so-called Contras - was regarded as something of key test case of American resolve to resist Soviet expansionism in the Third World.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF SANDINISTA RULE

Although the Sandinistas had not been in full control of the insurrection that overthrew Somoza they quickly set about

consolidating their hold on power.³ The original rebel coalition was soon to fragment as groups such as the Social Christian Party and the Social Democratic Party became increasingly disillusioned with the policies followed by the Sandinistas.

The Sandinistas who had cultivated an image of being nationalists initially enjoyed widespread support in virtually all sectors or groups in Nicaraguan society.⁴ However this support quickly eroded as the implementation of the Sandinista programme alienated specific groups and most especially the Nicaraguan peasantry.

³ The Sandinistas consolidation of power was facilitated by their superior organisation and relatively small membership totalling an estimated 4,000 members. A revealing insight into the structure and organisation of the FSLN and more interestingly the period of political consolidation of Sandinista rule see Valenta J and Valenta V : "Sandinistas in Power" in Problems of Communism, Vol 34, Sep-Oct 1985 pp 1-28. The disjunction between the Sandinistas apparently moderate public agenda and its clearly Leninist secret agenda was encapsulated in the infamous "Seventy Two Hours Document" which is reproduced as an appendix in Falcoff, M and Royal R (Eds): The Continuing Crisis : U.S. Policy in Central America and the Caribbean (New York, Ethics and Public Policy Centre, 1987)

⁴ For many years following the founding of the FSLN the movement was beset by internal squabbling and failed to attract widespread support. Although the FSLN contained many self-avowed Marxists, the often Marxist-Leninist dogma that characterised Sandinista rhetoric was, after 1975, deliberately dropped. This may be seen as a true conversion but more likely constituted a tactical expedient. The rise of the Tercerista or Third Way faction as the dominant formation in the FSLN and its strategy of the United Front led to the FSLN portraying itself as "an authentic nationalist movement dedicated to the overthrow of an authoritarian order and its replacement by a pluralistic, open society based upon liberal norms and fundamental human freedoms." See Benjamin, L : "The Conflict in Nicaragua and the Prospects for Peace" in UNISA Latin American Report, Vol 4, No 2, 1988 pp 26-35

By January of 1981 (the year that the Reagan Administration assumed office) emergency relief and recovery aid from the United States to Nicaragua totalled \$117 million - more than provided by any other developed country.⁵ Indeed, as President Reagan himself was to later point out, in the first two years of Sandinista rule the United States sent five times more aid (directly or indirectly) to Nicaragua than it had done in the two years prior to the collapse of the Somoza regime.⁶ However, years of support for the Somozas, by the United States, soured the new relationship from the start with the Sandinistas being inherently distrustful of American overtures.

A HISTORY OF INTERVENTION

The United States had intervened directly in Nicaragua on a number of occasions during the first half of the twentieth century. Indeed U.S. intervention in Nicaragua dates back to 1909 with the overthrow of President Jose Santos Zelaya. American marines occupied the country almost constantly between 1912 and 1933, helping to lay the foundation of what was to become the mainstay of the Somozas - the National Guard.⁷ This fact of

6. See Grunwald, H "Foreign Policy under Reagan II", Foreign Affairs, Vol 63, No 2, Winter, 1984/5. p.235.

⁶ Reagan, R "The Problems in Central America - the national security of all the Americas", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol.XLIX, No.15, May 15, 1983, p.451.

⁷ See Valenta, J & Duran, E, (editors), "Conflict in Nicaragua - A Multidimensional Perspective", Allen & Unwin, United States, 1987, p.4. Also see Dunkerley, J : Power in the Isthmus... pp 68-72

direct American intervention, grounded as it was in Nicaraguan history, became an important factor in Sandinista thinking and demonology.⁶

MARKIST ASPIRATIONS

Within a few weeks following the triumph of the Sandanista revolution, the disjunction between the FSLN's public policy programme and its private agenda began to surface. An essentially Leninist blueprint, laid out in the so-called 72 hours document, aimed at consolidating Sandinista control and the transformation of Nicaraguan society. (See Appendix 1) This agenda was systematically implemented.⁷

⁶ In the words of Richard Ullman "...Nicaraguans are convinced that the Reagan Administration would like nothing more than to provoke a full-scale war between themselves and the Hondurans, one that Nicaragua would appear to have started, as a pretext for taking direct military action." Ullman, R. "At War with Nicaragua", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 62, No. 1, Fall 1983, p. 40. More generally the Sandinistas could not forget that the United States had consistently backed the Somoza regime for over four decades, and even in the final days of Somocista rule it was clear that the Somoza regime would fall from power it was evident that the United States sought a "centrist alternative" and was not supportive of a Sandinista victory. Indeed U.S. intelligence had reportedly begun to draw up plans of support for exiled members of what was formerly Somoza's national guard whilst Jimmy Carter was still President.

⁷ The key aspects of the "72 Hours Document" are analysed in Benjamin, L : The Conflict in Nicaragua... pp 27-30. Also see Valenta, J and Valenta V : "the FSLN in Power" in Valenta, J and Duran E : Nicaragua In Perspective... pp 3-40. For a more favourable analysis of the Sandinista programme and their record in power see Prevost, G : "The FSLN as Ruling Party" in Walker, T (Ed) : Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua (Boulder, Westview, 1991).

In 1981, The Nicaraguan Minister of Defence, Humberto Ortega, declared that :-

"Marxism-Leninism is the scientific doctrine which guides our revolution, the instrument of analysis of our vanguard to understand the historical process and to create the revolution.... without Sandinismo we cannot be Marxist Leninist and Sandinismo without Marxism-Leninism cannot be revolutionary and because of that they are indissolubly united and because of that our doctrine is Marxism-Leninism."¹⁰

Such statements were by no means exceptional. Indeed many FSLN officials of which the interior minister Tomas Borge was perhaps the most voluble, proclaimed the Marxist-Leninist programme of the FSLN.¹¹

The avowedly Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of the fledgling regime

¹⁰ Quoted in Weinrod, W "Thirty Myths About Nicaragua - United States Policy", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol.LII, No.15, May 15, 1986, p.455.

¹¹ For further examples see Muravchik, J "The Slow Road to Communism", in The Continuing Crisis - U.S. Policy in Central America and the Caribbean, Falcoff, M & Royal, R (editors), Ethics and Public Policy Center, U.S.A., 1987, p.342. He traces the policies of the "tercerista" faction's triumph which were classically Leninist. There could be no doubt that the Sandinistas saw themselves as a Leninist vanguard party: "We must be aware that those who are not incorporated into the vanguard structure, although they may feel part of it, do not take on the responsibilities, duties, rights, etc. of actual vanguard militants. In time, the people will begin to understand the difference between the vanguard and the masses." (at page 343). For further analysis on the vanguard party as defined by the FSLN see Colburn, F : "Embattled Nicaragua", Current History, Vol.86, No.524, December 1987, see especially pp 405-406.

coincided with its increasing isolation both domestically and internationally.¹² However the deterioration of relations between Nicaragua and the United States, and also between Nicaragua and its Central and Latin American neighbours, was juxtaposed with a cementing of closer ties between Managua and the socialist states, most notably the Soviet Union.¹³ According to Robert Gates, then deputy director of the CIA, by 1986 the Sandinistas had reportedly received \$2.5 billion from the Soviet Union in the form of economic and military assistance since 1979.¹⁴ Indeed by the early 1980's Soviet aid had become

¹² On the Sandinista's policies and programme to change Nicaragua see Ahmar, M "The politics of revolution and counter-revolution in Nicaragua", Pakistan Horizon, Vol.37, No.2, 1984, pp.102-21; Corragio, J.L & Irvin, G "Revolution and pluralism in Nicaragua", Millennium: Journal of International Studies, Vol. 13, No.2. Also see "Nicaragua: the Sandinista regime at a watershed", Strategic Review, Vol XII, No 2, Spring 1984, p.11. "Inside communist Nicaragua: the Miguel Bolanos transcripts", Backgrounders, The Heritage Foundation, September 30, 1983. Payne, DW "The 'Mantos' of Sandinista Deception", Strategic Review, Vol XIII, No 2, Spring 1985, p.9. The above present a fairly or very critical view. For a more favourable view see

¹³ Arturo Cruz, a former Nicaragua Ambassador to the United States (and appointed by the Sandinistas) remarked in 1983 that, "I am unable to understand how the Revolutionary Government, which in July 1979 enjoyed the almost unanimous support of the Nicaraguan people and the respect and admiration of other peoples and governments throughout the world, has suffered, in less than four years, a tremendous erosion in international solidarity and has become isolated from its neighbours and important sections of the nation. The insurgency it faces is all the more painful in so far as it is launched both by the true enemies of the Revolution and by many of its own children, who wish to rescue it from the present course which they consider an error." Cruz, A "Nicaragua's Imperilled Revolution", Foreign Affairs, Vol 61, No 5, Summer 1983, p.1031. Cruz later became an influential voice in the Contras movement

¹⁴ See Johns, M : "Nicaragua - a military victory over the Sandinistas", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol.LIII, No.1, October 15, 1986, p.6. Johns estimates that over \$350 million per year was given by the Soviet Union in the form of military assistance.

crucial in sustaining the Sandinistas.¹⁵

Despite this, the Sandinistas at times continued to demonstrate a capacity for pragmatism that allowed Marxist principles to be adjusted to suit Sandinista aims. This pragmatism was usually couched in populist and nationalist terms. By successfully creating an image of Nicaragua being "bullied" by the United States the Sandinistas were, at least for the first three or so years of their rule, able to consolidate domestic support whilst mobilising international sympathy in some circles.¹⁶ Although the specific nature and character of the Sandinista government gave rise to a contentious debate, the regime's rhetorical commitment to human rights was undeniably contradicted by its implemented policies. Indeed, although the fear of an American invasion was often invoked to explain the anti-democratic inclinations of the FSLN, its own history and its political programmes before the triumph of the revolution, including its self-perception as a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, revealed its essentially totalitarian character. Thus although the Sandinista Constitution described Nicaragua as a "participatory and representative democratic Republic", the reality was a society with a fairly closed political system and a leadership

¹⁵ For a discussion of FSLN ties with the Soviet Union see Smith, P "The origins of crisis", in Blachman, M, LeoGrande, W and Sharpe, K (eds) : *Confronting Revolution : Security through Diplomacy in Central America*, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1986) pp. 261-268.

¹⁶ In addition to establishing close "fraternal" ties with many socialist states the Sandinistas also won many friends in the Third World. However the sympathy of most OECD countries, and most notably Spain soon began to erode.

elite that grew increasingly intolerant of dissent or opposing power centres.¹⁷

On a more specific level The Sandinistas were responsible for a number of human rights abuses which included detention without trial, torture, executions, forced relocations, harassment of the Catholic church and the press.¹⁸

It became increasingly clear that the revolution had merely facilitated the displacement of an authoritarian ruling class for one which had totalitarian proclivities. Opposition to the Sandinistas began to grow at first slowly then more perceptibly. In this regard Constantine Menges commented that "as more and more of the Nicaraguan people experienced Sandinista repression, militarization and Communist indoctrination, popular opposition grew more widespread. Many Nicaraguans resisted passively; some resisted through civic, political and religious institutions; and some decided that only armed resistance could bring about the

¹⁷ "The Sandinista Constitution", Title II, Chapter I, Article 7, Department of State Bulletin, Vol 87, No 2111, August 1987.

¹⁸ See Cruz, AJ "Nicaragua's imperilled revolution", Foreign Affairs, Vol.61, No.5, Summer 1983. Another interesting account is Radosh, R. "Darkening Nicaragua", The New Republic, October 24, 1983, p.7. For a damning indictment of the Sandinistas commitments to human rights and political liberalization which reflected the position of the pro-Reagan conservative intellectuals see "The Sandinista War on Human Rights", Background (The Heritage Foundation), July 19, 1983. Perhaps the most insightful and objective criticism came from Miguel Obando y Bravo, the archbishop of Managua who had been in the forefront of the opposition to Somoza and had been supportive of the sandinista revolution see for example Obando y Bravo, M : "Nicaragua: the Sandinistas have 'bound and gagged ' us", Atlantic Community Quarterly, Vol.24, No.2, Summer 1986, p.103.

democratic Nicaragua they had hoped for in 1979." ¹⁹

The opposition was most noticeable among the urban middle class which had seen nationalisation of property, the rural peasantry who opposed Sandinista land seizures and Sandinista attacks on the Catholic church, and the Atlantic coast Indians, who were faced with growing persecution and relocation.²⁰

INCREASING ECONOMIC PRESSURE

Against the background of the growth of totalitarianism in Nicaragua, the United States started using economic pressure against the Sandinistas.²¹ All United States economic aid was suspended in April 1981 as Cuban influence and alleged Sandinista arms shipments to the guerillas in El Salvador grew. By 1985 a full trade embargo was in place. The Reagan Administration was able to deny Nicaragua access to U.S. funds as well as to the funds of various international organisations such as the

¹⁹ See Menges, C : *The Twilight Struggle : The Soviet Union v The United States Today* (Washington, AEI Press, 1990) p 267.

²⁰ Kondracke, M "Into the Jungle", *New Republic*, April 6, 1987, p.15. For an account of the social composition of the Contras whose forces were drawn from disaffected sectors of society see Benjamin, L : "The Conflict in Nicaragua".... pp 30-32.

²¹ The Reagan Administration's growing perception of the "Sandinista problem" cannot be attributed solely to the Sandinista's domestic political agenda. Instead, given the Reagan administration's desire to take a tough line vis a vis Soviet policy in the Third World, coupled with the Sandinistas ideological orientation and the close ties that evolved between Moscow and Managua, Nicaragua became a test case of American resolve.

International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In 1982 Washington reduced the Nicaraguan quota for sugar exports into the United States by 90%.²² Other exports and U.S. investment were affected by the increasingly acerbic and hostile relationship between the two countries. Economic warfare was soon be supplemented by support for the anti-Sandinista insurgency that was waged by the then still nascent Contras movement.²³

A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE - THE COMMUNIST THREAT AS PERCEIVED BY THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

By 1981 it had become apparent that the Reagan Administration, unlike its predecessor, did not view Central America as a secondary or subordinated issue of overall U.S. foreign policy. Indeed its growing concern with Sandinista rule, the civil war in El Salvador, the role of Cuba as a regional power broker and ultimately of Soviet intrusion into America's "backyard" pushed Central America onto the political front burner. Reagan's increasing personal preoccupation with "doing something about the Sandinistas" also elevated Nicaragua to a hitherto unprecedented level of attention.²⁴

²² See Ullman, R : "At war with Nicaragua"....p 49.

²³ Such hostility on the part of the United States did however provide some benefit to the Sandinistas since they were able to blame the country's economic woes on the attitude of the United States, together with its support for the Contras. The Sandinista's suspicions thus became self fulfilling.

²⁴ On the perceived threat that the Sandinistas posed to Nicaragua's neighbours see Enders, T "Nicaragua: threat to peace in Central America", Department of State Bulletin, Vol 83, No

Although administration officials and the media were only too ready to level criticism at the Sandinista's anti-democratic inclinations it was, from the outset, geopolitical imperatives that moulded the administration's evolving policy towards the Sandinista regime. Nicaragua, partly because of its geographic proximity, had always been considered of strategic importance.²⁵

In a speech in 1982 that heralded the launch of Reagan's Caribbean Basin initiative, the President stated that :-

"What happens anywhere in the Americas affects us in this country. In a very real sense, we share a common destiny. We, the peoples of the Americas, have much more in common than geographical proximity".²⁶

Reagan pursued this theme in a 1983 address to a joint session of Congress in which he declared that :-

"....Central America's problems do directly affect the

2075, June 1983, pp.76-79. Eiders was at the time an Under Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere

²⁵ Reagan sought to dramatise this point to a domestic audience in a speech delivered as early as April 1983. "El Salvador is nearer to Texas than Texas is to Massachusetts. Nicaragua is just as close to Miami, San Antonio, San Diego and Tucson as those cities are to Washington." See Reagan, R, "The Problems in Central America - the National Security of all the Americas".....1983, p 450.

²⁶ See Reagan, R "Aid to the Caribbean Basin - freedom is our common destiny", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol. XLVII, No.11, March 15, 1982, p.322.

security and the well being of our own people." He added that, "nearness on the map does not even begin to tell the strategic importance of Central America, bordering as it does on the Caribbean - our lifeline to the outside world. Two-thirds of all our foreign trade and petroleum pass through the Panama Canal and the Caribbean. In a European crisis, at least half of our supplies for NATO would go through these areas by sea."²⁷

There was, therefore, a belief on the behalf of the Administration that the Soviets were attempting to bog down the United States in its own "backyard" so that it would be less capable, and perhaps less willing, to act in other parts of the world.

More generally, it was argued by many in the Administration that America's credibility with its allies would be called into question if the United States was unwilling to address the strategic concerns so close to its own borders. There was a

²⁷ See Reagan, R. "The Problems in Central America - the national security of all the Americas"..... p.450. In an address a month earlier the President who in my view clearly overstated the importance of the Central American/Caribbean region also claimed that "... the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact have grasped the great stakes involved, the strategic importance of Nicaragua. The Soviets have made their decision - to support the communists. Fidel Castro has made his decision - to support the communists. Arafat, Qadaffi, and the Ayatollah have made their decision - to support the communists." Reagan, R. "Nicaragua - Aiding the Contras", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol.LII, No.13, April 15, 1986, p.388. It could be argued that the President hyperbolic rhetoric was inter alia designed to galvanise support for his policy both in the Congress and among the American people.

concomitant and pervading belief within the Administration that the importance of Central America transcended regional concerns. A stand had to be taken here in order to achieve credibility for U.S. policy in a global context. However, to some extent, a deliberate effort was made to elevate Central America's importance in order to cajole Congress into acceding to the administration's request for increased aid/funds.

Reagan thus consistently attempted to internationalise the conflicts in Central America in order to mobilise support, rather than accept that internal dynamics were also at work. The all too frequent tendency on the part of the administration to refract regional conflicts, or even civil wars, through an East-West or cold war prism led to an oversimplification of specific problems or disputes. In the context of Central America in general and Nicaragua in particular, through its rather reductionist approach the Reagan administration transformed the "problem" from an important one to a vital one.

Reagan sought to persuade the American people, the Congress and, indeed, America's allies that the existence of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, its putative support for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, and its close ties with Fidel Castro was part of a expansionist drive masterminded by the Soviet Union to promote Communist revolution throughout the region, including Mexico.²⁶ Similar geostrategic

²⁶ A clear rejoinder to Reagan's predilection to view the crisis in Central America purely in East-West terms was provided by Clifford Krauss who observed that [Reagan's] new version of

imperatives were echoed by Secretary of State George Shultz. In his testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance in late February 1983, Shultz pointed out that:-

"El Salvador is critically located; it is connected right up through Mexico with whom we have a long border. So the emergence of another country added to Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua another country and then perhaps others to Soviet-Cuban influence, is bad news for this country [The United States]".²⁹

Demonising the Sandinistas, was, as I have already contended, both convenient and necessary in order to mobilise public and Congressional support for the Contras.

Although the administration tended to overplay its hand regarding the importance of the Central American isthmus to the United States, the reason for doing so was not entirely misplaced. Both the public and certain members of Congress were unable, or perhaps unwilling, to appreciate the strategic importance of the

the domino theory fails to take into consideration two vital points: that the Sandinista revolution was a peculiar event not easily repeated, and that the region's other major leftist groups have blundered their way to marginality." See Krauss, C : "Revolution in Central America?", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 65, No. 3, 1986 p. 571.

²⁹ Shultz, G : *Turmoil and Triumph : My Years as Secretary of State* (New York, Scribners, 1993) p 291.

region.³⁰ The Reagan Administration despite its often strenuous efforts, never succeeded in convincing the electorate at large, or for that matter the media, that the stakes in Central America were vital and that America's national interests were involved.³¹ It is undeniable that a threat did exist. In contradistinction to Cuba, Nicaragua could, at least conceivably, provide a mainland base for subversion within the American sub-continent. It was this threat that posed a direct challenge to the traditional supremacy that the United States had always enjoyed in the region.

NO MORE CUBAS

The Reagan administration's policy towards the Sandinistas was influenced to a large degree by the role that Cuba had played ever since becoming the first pro-Soviet Marxist country in the

³⁰ On this see Falcoff, M "Nicaragua and its neighbours", in : Duran, E and Valenta, J (eds) : "Conflict in Nicaragua".....p.169-170. Falcoff also points out the residual impact of the Vietnam syndrome and commented that " In a sense, the Sandinista regime is perhaps the final beneficiary of what is called the Vietnam syndrome, which while in evident remission, still pervades the majority party [The Democratic Party], the literary-intellectual community, the universities, the press, the mainstream protestant denominations, and important segments of the Roman Catholic Church. Though these parties publicly favour a negotiated settlement in Central America, their real purpose is to achieve a dignified withdrawal of the United States from the region altogether...." p 170

³¹ In his autobiography Reagan remarks, "For eight years the press called me the 'great communicator'. Well, one of my greatest frustrations during those eight years was my inability to communicate to the American people and to Congress the seriousness of the threat we faced in Central America." Reagan, R, "An American Life - Ronald Reagan" (London, Hutchinson, 1990) p 471.

Americas. For those policy makers that had two decades earlier witnessed the overthrow of the authoritarian and corrupt (but pro-American) regime headed by Fulgencia Batista, by Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement, the Cuban denouement was being replayed in Nicaragua. In much the same way as the relationship between Havana and Washington deteriorated in the early 1960's so the increasingly socialist orientation of Sandinista regime seemed to be adumbrate a similar development in the U.S.-Nicaraguan relationship. The consolidation of the Nicaraguan revolution as the putative second Soviet beachhead on America's southern flank could not, in the Reagan scheme of things, go unchallenged. For the Reagan Administration the possibility existed that Nicaragua, as a country on the American mainland country, would play a similarly subversive, or even more disruptive, role than its Cuban counterpart.³²

Reagan was thus determined that there would be no more Cubas in the American backyard and Nicaragua became the acid test for the Reagan Doctrine.³³ According to Gordon Connell-Smith, Reagan,

³² The administration as well as Pentagon analysts in an inflated worst-case scenario spoke of military bases being established all over Nicaragua: at Punta Norta in the north west, Rancho San Martin in the south west, Puerta Cabezas in the north east, and Colonia-Agricola in the south east. Their fear was that these could be used as a spring-board for revolution throughout the region. See Jordan, D "U.S. Options - and Illusions - in Central America", Strategic Review, Vol.X, No.2, Spring 1982, p.56.

³³ Reagan's preoccupation and ,indeed obsession, with Cuba was reflected in a number of the President's speeches: In 1982, referring to the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front in EL Salvador, Reagan declared that, "Suddenly the freedom fighters in the hills were exposed for what they really are: Cuban-backed guerillas who want power for themselves and their backers, not democracy for the people. See Reagan, R : "A Crusade for Freedom -

"like his predecessors, [believed] that the Central American - Caribbean region is Washington's backyard and must be kept secure; and that Fidel Castro's Cuba represents a threat which must be resisted."³⁴ Reagan regretted that the Kennedy Administration had abandoned the anti-Castro forces at the Bay of Pigs: as he states in his autobiography, "I've always thought it was a tragic error for President Kennedy to abandon the Cuban freedom fighters during the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion."³⁵ In the case of the Contras, Reagan was determined that such a "mistake" would not be repeated.

In seeking to convince the American public that Nicaragua constituted another Cuba the Reagan administration pointed to the growing presence of Cuban advisers in Nicaragua as evidence of some kind of conspiracy. (See Chart 1). In addition, the administration also pointed to incontestable evidence of long standing ties between Sandinista leaders and Fidel Castro.

Military Strength is a Prerequisite for Peace", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol. XLVIII, no. 18, July 1982, p. 548. In similar vein the President in announcing his Caribbean Basin initiative which inter alia was intended to alleviate the conditions that would give rise to possible revolutions in the region contended that "If we [the United States] do not act promptly and decisively in defense of freedom, new Cubas will arise from the ruins of today's conflicts. We will face more totalitarian regimes, tied militarily to the Soviet Union; more regimes exporting subversion, more regimes so incompetent yet so totalitarian that their citizens' only hope becomes that one day migrating to other American nations, as in recent years they have come to the United States." See Reagan, R. "Aid to the Caribbean Basin - Freedom is our Common Destiny"..... p. 325.

³⁴ Connell-Smith, G. "The crisis in Central America: President Reagan's options", The World Today, Vol 39, No 10, October 1983, p. 392.

³⁵ Reagan, R. "Ronald Reagan - An American Life".....p. 472.

THE CUBAN PRESENCE IN NICARAGUA

1979-1984

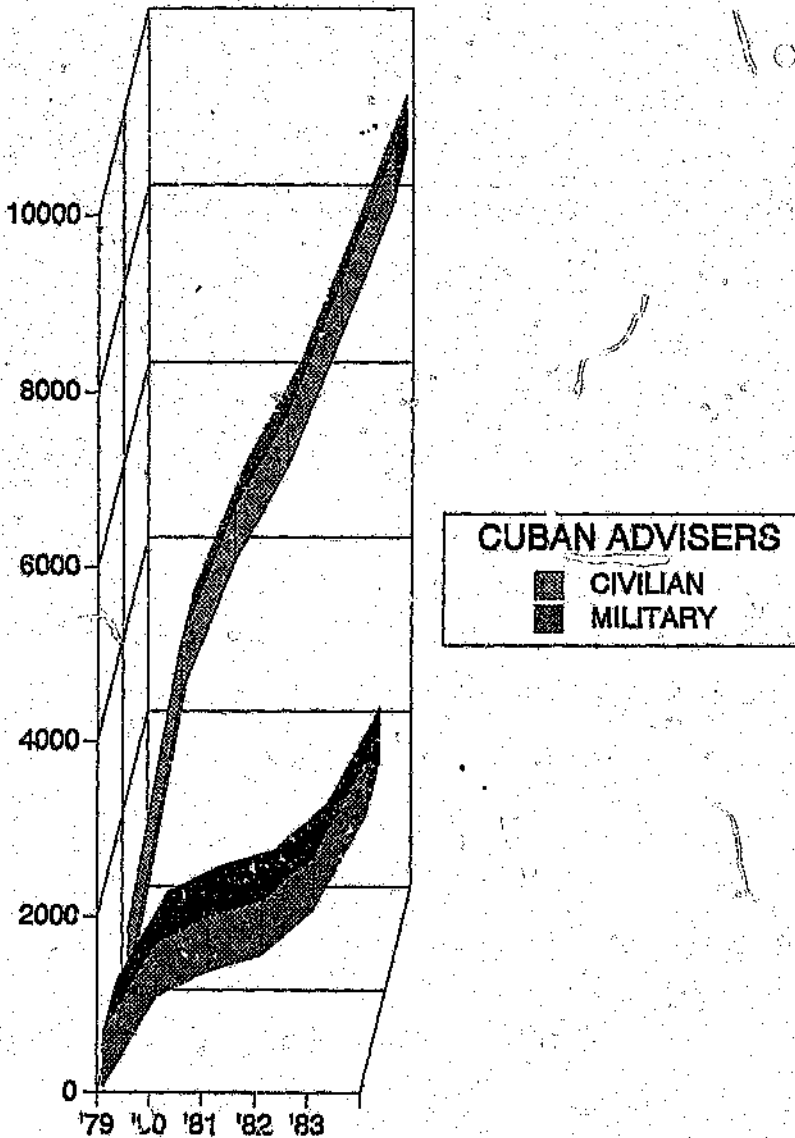


CHART NUMBER 2

Source : Chart compiled for statistics in Menges, C : *The Twilight Struggle : The Soviet Union v The United States Today* (Washington, AEI Press, 1990)

The Sandinistas had received support from Cuba and the Cubans had provided ideological and political training for the FSLN.³⁶

Whilst it was difficult to estimate the exact Cuban presence in Nicaragua the number was closer to a few thousand than the few hundred acknowledged by the Sandinista regime. There was also evidence that after coming to power all of the key members of the FSLN had visited Cuba and Cuba had provided \$5 million in relief aid in 1979 to the Sandinistas. Cuba however had provided little in way of supplies to the FSLN in the final eighteen months of fighting.³⁷

The lines of conflict began to crystallize further as Sandinista support, both rhetorical and actual, for the avowedly Marxist insurgents of the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front in El Salvador increased.³⁸ The Reagan Administration responded by

³⁶ Both Tomas Borge and Carlos Fonseca, both pivotal of whom played a pivotal role: both the founding and operation of the FSLN, visited Cuba in 1959. As recently as 1986 Daniel Ortega the Nicaraguan President attended the Third Party Congress of the Cuban Communist Party. For more on the Cuban-Nicaraguan Relationship see Leiken, R & Rubin, B (Eds) *The Central American Crisis Reader* : (New York, Summit Books, 1987) p 135.

³⁷ See Goodsell, J "Nicaragua", in Wesson, R (Ed) : *Communism in Central America and the Caribbean*. (Boulder, Westview 1982) p.58-59.

³⁸ Reagan pointed to this support as being further testimony to his contention that the Sandinistas would play a similar role that Cuba had in fermenting revolution and upheaval in the Americas:- "The role that Cuba has long performed for the Soviet Union is now being played by the Sandinistas. They have become Cuba's Cubans. Weapons, supplies and funds are shipped from the Soviet bloc to Cuba, from Cuba to Nicaragua, from Nicaragua to the Salvadoran guerillas." He continues, "There were 165 Cuban personnel in Nicaragua in 1979. Today that force has grown to 10,000." See Reagan, R "Central American Policy - no communist colonies in America", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol.L, No.16,

undertaking to augment its support for the government of El Salvador.³⁹ According to Mark Falcoff, "by the mid-1980 the Sandinistas had developed an apparatus to sustain region wide guerilla operations and give them political as well as military support."⁴⁰

The Reagan Administration increasingly begun to justify its policies towards the Sandinistas, including its support for the nascent Contra movement, as a retaliation for the Sandinistas growing support for the FMLN. Richard Ullman trenchantly observed that "The real issue of course, is not the political or military threat that Nicaragua poses to the United States, or even its potential military threat to its neighbours, but the political threat represented by its revolutionary ideology and its willingness to support insurgent movements elsewhere in Central America, most notably in El Salvador."⁴¹ Although the Reagan

June 1, 1984, p.484. It is also worth noting that the support that the Sandinista government was willing to give to the FMLN can be traced back to a meeting between Sandinista leaders and FMLN strategists that took place in Nicaragua on 21 July 1979 - just two days after the Sandinistas took power. On this see Menges, C : The Twilight Struggle..... p 246.

³⁹ For more on Sandinista support for the FMLN see Crawley, E "Nicaragua: key to regional peace", Conflict Studies, No.166, p.12.

⁴⁰ See Falcoff, M "Nicaragua and its neighbours", in Duran, E & Valenta, J : Conflict in Nicaragua, U Multidimensional Perspective (Boston, Allen & 1987) p.161. For an illuminating account of Sandinista support for the FMLN in El Salvador, including Managua's provision of financial support, training of FMLN guerrillas and the supplying of arms and equipment see Turner, R : Nicaragua V United States : A Look at the Facts (Washington, Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987) See Especially Chapter 3 pp 46-97

⁴¹ Ullman, R "At War with Nicaragua", Foreign Affairs, Vol.62, No.1, Fall 1983, p.53.

administration clearly saw the "Sandinista threat" in these terms, the White House also proceeded from the realisation that in order to procure votes in Congress the Reagan administration needed to internationalise the "crisis in Central America" characterising it, in the final analysis, as a direct threat to the United States.⁴²

The Sandinstas countered American criticism of Nicaragua's arms build-up by stating that they expected a full-scale American invasion. However this argument ignored the fact that the rapid growth of Nicaragua's armed forces and the purchasing of military hardware began before a direct American threat was evident, or before the Contras had emerged as a source of military opposition to continued Sandinista rule. Yet the critics of American foreign policy still used the same argument against Reagan's policy as they had against American policy towards Castro - it was the Americans that were pushing the Sandinistas towards the Soviet Union and its revolutionary cohorts, not the Sandinistas that were unilaterally moving in that direction.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE CONTRAS

The emergence of an armed opposition to FSLN rule began to

⁴² The Administration was able to do this by pointing to the alarming increase in the military capability of the Sandinista forces, and the threat that this would pose to neighbouring states. By 1980 the Sandinista army was twice the size that the National Guard had been at the height of the conflict in 1978-79. By 1984 the Sandinistas military capability had reached 61,800, with another 50,000 paramilitary or reserve troops.

germinate within five months of the overthrow of the Somoza regime. Over the following three or four years the ranks of the so-called Contras (counter-revolutionaries) swelled considerably as more and more Nicaraguans became disaffected with Sandinista rule. The composition of the Contras included former National Guardsmen, businessmen, ethnic Indians who had been persecuted by the Sandinistas, and, perhaps most significantly, many individuals who had once enthusiastically supported the Sandinistas and who now charged the FSLN with having betrayed the revolution.

Although the formation of a nascent anti-Sandinista insurgency can be traced back to as early as November 1979, the struggle of the Contras was said to have begun in earnest on March 14, 1982, with the destruction of a bridge in Nicaragua.⁴³ However, major guerilla operations inside Nicaragua only began in 1983.⁴⁴

From the outset accusations were levelled that the formation of the Contras was due almost entirely to the efforts of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Peter Kornbluh is one among a number of Nicaraguan analysts who argued that this was the case. In 1991 Kornbluh commented that :-

"... according to documentation now available, U.S. national security agencies, including the CIA, NSC and

⁴³ See Sager, P. "Nicaragua: Who are the Contras really?", Swiss Press Review and News Report, Vol. XXV, No. 14, July 14, 1986, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Booth, J. : "War and the Nicaraguan Revolution", Current History, Vol 85, No 515, December 1986, p. 406.

Department of State, governed every facet of the contras' political and military operations. The same 'control mentality' that dictated broader U.S. policy in the region manifested itself in the micromanagement of the contra war".⁴⁵

However the suggestion that the Contras would not have emerged without the active assistance of the CIA is clearly questionable. In the view of Michael Radu "the Nicaraguan insurgency can be defined as a spontaneous uprising hijacked by U.S. interests beginning in 1982 that has remained...dependent on the United States ever since."⁴⁶

Although the degree of the CIA's role in helping to form and sustain the Contras is open to debate it remains axiomatic that it was the Sandinistas implementation of their private political agenda that caused sufficient dissatisfaction to stimulate an authentic contra movement. In other words, it was the Sandinistas and not the CIA that created the dissention that caused the initial formation of the rebel movement.⁴⁷ Yet, in spite of this, the Contras were never to lose the tag of being a CIA creation.

⁴⁵ See Kornbluh, P : "The U.S. Role in the Counterrevolution" in Walker, T (ed) : Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua (Boulder, Westview, 1991) p 333

⁴⁶ See Radu, M : Nicaragua in Radu, M (ed) : The New Insurgencies : Anticomunist Guerrillas in the Third World." (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1990) See p 268.

⁴⁷ On this also see Kriele, M : Nicaragua - America's Bleeding Heart", (West Germany, Hase & Koehler Verlag Mainz, 1985) p.115.

THE POLITICAL BATTLEFIELD

The growing conflict between the Contras and the Sandinista regime was as much political as it was military. However whilst the military battlefield was confined to Nicaragua the political battles were fought both in Nicaragua and in the United States.

The struggle for Nicaragua was characterised above all by a contestation aimed at swaying public opinion. In Nicaragua itself the Sandinistas sought to portray the Contras as a group of Somocistas - supporters of the previous regime- who were backed by the "imperialist Yankees." Within the United States the debate, although less polemical, tended to be just as fierce. Whilst President Reagan and his closest foreign policy advisers sought to convince Congress, the media and the American people of the need to give aid to the Contras an equally, if not more, vociferous alliance, opposed to such a policy, challenged the administration. This anti-Contra alliance consisted, inter alia, of Democratic congressmen, Church leaders and political activists on the left of the American political spectrum."

Although the Reagan Administration's efforts to aid the Contras led a charmed life in Congress with some failures and some

" Whilst most US Democrats opposed support for the Contras it would be incorrect to say that they did so per se; rather, many were more concerned with opposing what they viewed as a Republican strategy that was in reaction to the "softness" of the Carter years. They thus opposed the Republican Central American in principle. United States support for the Contras became to be increasingly identified with Reagan, not American interests at large.

limited successes the Reagan Administration was never able to convince the American public that supporting the Contras was a policy that was unambiguously in the national interest.⁴⁹

The propaganda battle within Nicaragua also never resulted in a conclusive victory for either the Sandinistas or the Contras. Whilst the Sandinistas support base continually eroded the Contras failed to dramatically diversify their support. The key weakness of the Contras movement was always its dependency on U.S. support and the perception (although not the reality) that it was a movement spearheaded by those who had supported the Somoza dynasty.

Another factor that hampered the Contras efforts to win widespread support was the inconsistency and the wildly fluctuating amounts of aid granted to the Contras by the United States. The Reagan Administration, despite its personal commitment to the Contras was unable to consistently mobilise sufficient and sustained support in Congress in order to secure the required funds that their activities required. The critics of the policy were not prepared to support a policy whose

⁴⁹ The Congressional opposition to Reagan's policies on Central America in general and his policy towards the Nicaragua conflict in particular were multifaceted and was based on a broad conviction that the President's policies endangered rather than protected the national interest. Congressional critics contended that by intensifying the level of military conflict in Nicaragua the administration risked enveloping the entire region in war - a development which would inevitably draw the United States into direct combat involvement. It was further argued that the administration's interference in Nicaragua would also jeopardise good relations between the United States and Latin American states who, so it was argued, harboured deep suspicions about the United States imperialistic objectives vis a vis central America

objectives remained somewhat unclear.⁵⁰

Critics believed that it would be cheaper (and probably safer) for the United States to eliminate factors such as poverty that provided a successful breeding ground for communism.⁵¹ This perception was consistently used by Congressional Democrats to attack the Administration's policies. "If Central America were not racked with poverty, there would be no revolution. If Central America were not racked with hunger, there would be no revolution. If Central America were not racked with injustice, there would be no revolution. In short, there would be nothing for the Soviets to exploit. But unless those oppressive conditions change, the region will continue to seethe with revolution - with or without the Soviets."⁵² This treating of

⁵⁰ The debate revolved over what were the real intentions of the Reagan administration's policy of supporting the Contras. Was this support ultimately intended to lead to the deposition of the Sandinistas as a result of a military defeat. Or was it intended to contain the Sandinistas activities in the region by forcing them to quell an internal "rebellion". Another alternative that was also postulated was that the support for the Contras was a policy aimed at influencing Soviet behaviour in the Third World. According to this argument support for the Contras and other anti-Marxist movements would dissuade the Soviet's from supporting client regimes or seeking to further spread their influence.

⁵¹ Yet the critics of the Administration failed (or did not wish to see) that the Administration's Caribbean initiative was an attempt to do just this. Reagan had said at the launching of the initiative "We will not, however follow Cuba's lead in attempting to resolve human problems by brute force. Our economic assistance, including the additions that are part of the program I've just outlined, is at more than five times the amount of our security assistance." See Reagan, R. "Aid to the Caribbean Basin - freedom is our common destiny".....p 325.

⁵² See Dodd, C "Democrat's Response to Speech on Central America -No Hunger, No Revolution", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol.XLIX, No.15, May 15, 1983, p.454. It is also worth noting

the cause, not the effect, argument was also a morally sound argument and one that, *a fortiori*, appealed to many Americans because it was a policy that entailed "building up", not tearing down.

Consequently the Contras were never given sufficient aid to win on the battlefield. However to pin the blame for this on indecision or inconsistency on the part of Congress alone would be incorrect. In fact, the Reagan Administration was at least partially to blame for this since it was unable to sufficiently coordinate the Contra war effort. Furthermore it was incapable of coordinating the vital public support that would have been necessary for the Contras to achieve notable military successes. It could ultimately be argued that Congress was consistently prepared to challenge the Administration's policy because it realised that public opinion was, by and large, against the Administration's policies on Central America. However even when presented with evidence that the Sandinista regime was not content to consolidate its revolution but was determined to spread subversion and support similar revolutionary movements beyond Nicaragua's borders, Congress refused to wholeheartedly sign onto the Reagan Doctrine and its policy of supporting the

that even Jeanne Kirkpatrick, then United States Ambassador to the United Nations, stated in 1983 that "the government headed by Ronald Reagan has not the slightest tendency to imagine that the political turmoil in Central America has no roots in social and economic problems." See Kirkpatrick, J : "U.S. Foreign Policy - the Difference Between the Superpowers", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol.L, No.15, May 15, 1984, p.455.

anti-Sandinista insurgents.⁵³

In the international arena support for the Administration's policies was even more attenuated. No European government was prepared to back the American stance and none joined in with the US trade boycott. A similar attitude was adopted by the majority of nations in Latin America.

AID TO THE CONTRAS : THE BATTLE IN CONGRESS

United States financial support of the Contras reportedly began officially in December 1981, (Congress approved \$19 million) but by some accounts, covert support began as early as 1980. Ironically the domestic struggle within the United States frequently made greater headlines than the military efforts of the Contras operating within Nicaragua. The struggle for public opinion clearly dominated the battle between the Sandinistas and

⁵³ In a 1982 address Elliot Abrams, a United States Assistant Secretary of State, commented, "Cuba and Nicaragua have for some time been fomenting guerilla activity in Central America. their goal is not reform nor is it democracy, as is evident." See Abrams, E "The Situation We Face in Central America - Reporting by the Press and Human Rights Movement", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol. XLIX, No.4, December 1, 1982, p.104. In 1982 Reagan stated that "For almost two years, Nicaragua has served as a platform for covert military actions. Through Nicaragua, arms are being smuggled to guerillas in El Salvador and Guatemala. The Nicaraguan government even admits the forced relocation of about 8,500 Mosquito Indians, and we have clear evidence that since late 1981 many Indian communities have been burned to the ground and men, women and children killed." See Reagan, R "Aid to the Caribbean Basin - Freedom is our Common Destiny".....p 325.

the counter-revolutionaries.⁵⁴

In August 1982 the Reagan Administration suffered its first major setback with the passage through Congress of the Boland Amendment. This amendment was legislated by the Democratically controlled House of Representatives and it prohibited aid aimed specifically at overthrowing the Nicaraguan government. Henceforth any appropriations of aid would be contingent on that aid being used solely in order to arrest the flow of supplies from Nicaragua to the communist insurgents, the FMLN, in El Salvador.⁵⁵ The Reagan Administration although it obviously opposed the constraints explicitly articulated in the Boland amendment was, nevertheless, prepared to accept such limitations in order to avert a total cutting off of aid to the Contras.

In 1983 the House of Representatives voted to totally prohibit aid to the Contras.⁵⁶ The Senate voted to continue the programme and the result was a compromise. Although \$24 million was publicly authorised by Congress the compromise specified that the President would have to obtain congressional approval if he wished to supply the Contras by the use of the discretionary

⁵⁴ Colburn, F "Embattled Nicaragua".....p 406.

⁵⁵ Joshua Muravchik argued that this objective was not realistic since the Contra rebels were not able to directly block Sandinista aid to the insurgents in El Salvador - all they could do was to apply military pressure upon the Sandinistas in the hope that this would convince them not to continue their support for such groups. See Muravchik, J "The Nicaragua debate", Foreign Affairs, Vol.65, No.2, Winter, 1986/7, p.368.

⁵⁶ This vote passed by a margin of 33 votes and represented a major setback for Reagan's policy on Nicaragua.

funds that were used for covert action once the \$24 million had run out.

By April 1984, with the revelations of CIA complicity in the laying of mines in Nicaraguan harbours, support in Congress for further aid to the Contras disintegrated further. Reagan's request for a continuation of aid to the Contras was denied.⁵⁷ Thus by June 1984, Congress had ended aid to the Contras. Thereafter those supporting the Contra effort had to rely on private funding to tide the Contras over. However, as was revealed in the Irangate scandal some years later, the Reagan administration had also engaged in the covert illegal diversion of funds to the Nicaraguan counter-insurgency.

In 1985 Reagan renewed his request for aid. His efforts were initially rebuffed. However, coinciding with the growing authoritarianism of the Sandinista regime (and a successful visit to Moscow by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega),⁵⁸ limited support for the Contras was secured in 1985 when \$27 million in non-lethal "humanitarian" aid was granted for the financial year 1986. However neither the Department of Defense nor the CIA were allowed any part in disbursing the aid. This apparent volte face on the part of Congress was due, at least in part, to the now growing perception of Nicaragua's anti-American stance and the lack of any true alternatives to the President's policies

⁵⁷ See Rogers, W "The United States and Latin America", Foreign Affairs, Vol.63, no.3, 1985, p.564.

⁵⁸ See Muravchik, J "The Nicaragua debate" p.371.

except those that involved doing nothing. Congress did not wish to be blamed for failure in Central America because they opposed the one concrete policy that existed.⁵⁹ Whilst hostility to the Administration's policies had grown, so had the realisation amongst many congressmen and senators that the Sandinistas were not necessarily a desirable group with which to be tacitly associated.

Despite the renewed aid, polls repeatedly showed that large majorities of the American electorate remained fervently opposed to granting aid to the Nicaraguan rebels. If Reagan had been able to directly appeal successfully to the American public as he attempted in various addresses the capability of Congress to resist his wishes would have been largely diminished. However his strategic and moral arguments were not believed by the American public.

After another initial defeat in 1986 in the House of Representatives, a major victory for the administration was achieved in June when \$100 million was granted by Congress for use up until 30 September 1987.⁶⁰ Of the sum total of \$1000

⁵⁹ In his 1983 speech delivered to Congress Reagan had stated, "Who among us would wish to bear responsibility for failing to meet our shared obligation?" - an obvious reference to Congress having to take the blame in the event of the failure of Reagan's Central American policy. See Reagan, R "The problems in Central America - The National Security of all the Americas".....p 454.

⁶⁰ The vote in the House of Representatives was eventually carried by a majority of 12. The Senate passed the same measure with a majority of six. For more on this vote see Pardo-Maurer, R "The Contras, 1980-1989 - A special kind of politics", The Washington Papers/147, (New York, Praeger, 1990) p 60.

million, \$70 million was provided for military aid and the remaining \$30 million was set aside for what was termed "non-lethal aid." Furthermore the Defense Department and the CIA were now allowed to play a role in the disbursement of such aid.

The resumption of military aid to the Contras was widely regarded as an important victory for the Reagan administration. "To win this victory the President had to overcome misgivings about the conduct of the rebels and the CIA, scepticism about the rebels' prospects, anxiety about the Reagan Doctrine, and public opinion polls showing that most Americans opposed his policies." ⁶¹ The President was determined to maintain his support for the Contras since not only did his credibility rest upon it, but so did the credibility of the Reagan doctrine.

The Economist noted that by March of 1988 the Congress had voted on the Contra issue on no less than 16 occasions since January of 1987.⁶² However by February 1988 the Contras were back to square one when the House voted against a Reagan proposed package of \$60 million. The Irangate hearings with their concomitant disclosure and revelations of illegal funding for the Contras was sufficient to ensure the outcome of the vote. Indeed, from this moment onward it may be argued that the possibility of future U.S. aid to the Contras had become mortally wounded.

⁶¹ See Muravchik, J "The Nicaragua debate"... p.366.

⁶² "Carry a Big Stick", The Economist, March 26, 1988, p.16.

COMPOSITION OF THE CONTRAS⁶³

The Contra insurrection against the Sandinistas was orchestrated by two main Nicaraguan groups: The Frente Democratico Nacional (Nicaraguan Democratic Forces - FDN), led by individuals such as Adolfo Calero and Enrique Bermudez and the Alianza Revolucionaria Democratica (Revolutionary Democratic Alliance - ARDE) led by guerilla commanders such as Eden Pastora, a former Sandinista. In 1984 the FDN had an estimated force of 10,000 whilst the smaller ARDE had approximately 4,000 men under arms.⁶⁴ Figures published in 1987 estimated that Contra strength was of a similar number - in the region of 15,000 - 20000.⁶⁵ The FDN operated in the North near the Honduran border and ARDE was based on the southern border near Costa Rica. By 1985 ARDE (the more moderate of the two factions) had been effectively defeated by the Sandinistas.

In June 1985, the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), which was a political umbrella group, was founded in order to bring some direction and coordination to the Nicaraguan opposition.⁶⁶ This

⁶³ See Evans-Pritchard, A "Fascist Sandinistas and Marxist Contras", The Spectator, 13 February 1988, p.9.

⁶⁴ On this see "The battle for democracy in Nicaragua", Backgrounders, The Heritage Foundation, March 14, 1984.

⁶⁵ Kondracke, M "Into the Jungle", New Republic, April 6, 1987, p.14.

⁶⁶ The political programme of the UNO was constituted by four key points. 1) National reconciliation and the demilitarisation of Nicaraguan society 2) The introduction of democracy 3) Elections for a constituent assembly, to be followed by a transitional government 4) Economic recovery by way of a "social contract".

development was clearly aimed at giving greater coherency to the Contras struggle, as well as to subject the Contra's military structure to some type of civilian control. The three original leaders of the UNO were Arturo Cruz, Alfonso Robelo and Adolfo Calero.⁶⁷ All three were former opponents of the Somoza regime.

Although the top three leaders of the United Nicaraguan Opposition had all been fierce critics of the Somoza regime, many of the rank and file of the Contras did consist of former members of Somoza's national guard, a fact frequently pointed out by those in the U.S. Congress who opposed aid to the Contras.⁶⁸ In addition Enriquez Bermudez, a former national guardsman, headed

⁶⁷ Arturo Cruz was a former opponent of Somoza and former member of the Sandinistas (he served them in his capacity as central bank president and as ambassador to Washington). Alfonso Robelo was also a former member of the Sandinistas, he was a businessman. For his perspective on the betrayal of the revolution by the Sandinistas and his justification for joining the Contras see Robelo, A "The Nicaraguan Democratic struggle: our unfinished revolution", Atlantic Community Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 3, Fall 1985, p 269. Adolfo Calero was political leader of the FDN. He was a businessman and member of the Conservative party. He was jailed under Somoza and opposed the Sandinistas from the start.

⁶⁸ "The insurgents we have supported are the remnants of the old Somoza regime - a regime whose corruption, graft, torture, and despotism made it universally despised in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas may not be winners, but right now we are backing sure losers. We are doing for the Sandinista Marxists what they could not do for themselves. We are weakening the very groups inside Nicaragua which believe in a free and democratic society. And that is the sad irony of this Administration's policy." See Dodd, C: "Democrats Response to Speech on Central America - No Hunger, No Revolution".....p 455. Also Kondracke, M "Guerilla diplomacy in Nicaragua - path to disaster?", New Republic, April 25, 1983, p. 8.

the military structure of the FDN.⁶⁹

The fact that within the Contra movement there existed both a substantial component of groupings and individuals who had earlier opposed the Somoza regime, as well as disillusioned former Sandinistas, failed to carry much weight with many of the Reagan Administration's critics.⁷⁰ Men such as Adolfo Calero and Arturo Cruz were prominent Contras who had opposed the Somoza regime. It was estimated that when speaking of the military leadership 48% were former Sandinistas, whilst only 23% were former national guardsmen. Furthermore it was claimed that former guardsmen made up only 2% of the total military Contra force.⁷¹ The Contras also attracted support from the indigenous Indian

⁶⁹ Bermudez's military and political strategy is outlined in Bermudez, E. "The Nicaraguan resistance at a crossroads", Strategic Review, Vol XVII, No 2, Spring 1989, p 9. Pro-Contra supporters pointed out that Bermudez was not in the country during the worst excesses of the Somoza regime - he was in Washington.

⁷⁰ President Reagan in trying to persuade Congressmen and Senators opposed to aiding the Contras had equated the Contras as being the moral equivalents of the Founding Fathers. This hyperbolic rhetoric aside, Reagan did point out that "Contrary to popular propaganda, the opponents of the Sandinistas are not die-hard supporters of the previous Somoza regime. In fact, many are anti-Somoza heroes who fought beside the Sandinistas to bring down the Somoza government." He continued, "Others are Indians fighting for their homes, their lands and their lives." See Reagan, R. "The Problems in Central America - the national security of all the Americas".....p 452.

⁷¹ Weinrod, B. "Thirty Myths About Nicaragua - United States Policy".....p.460. See also Kriele, M. "Nicaragua - America's bleeding heart", ...p.116. Sager, P. "Nicaragua: Who are the Contras really?", ... p.4. Sager argued that in 1985 the Contras had 56 commandantes of which 27 were former Sandinistas, 18 were former Somoza national guards, 12 were peasants, 2 were students, one was a doctor and one a priest.

communities who, during the Somoza years, had lived in relative isolation. The Sandinistas had initially made the mistake of interfering with the lives of the, Miskito, Sumu, and Rama Indians of the Atlantic coast in an attempt to "integrate" them into Nicaraguan society. In particular, the infiltration of many Cuban teachers and other advisers into the Indian communities to "politicize and educate" the local populations prompted a fierce backlash. The alienation that this and other Sandinista policies caused led many Indians to join or support the Contra cause.⁷²

MORALITY AND THE REAGAN DOCTRINE IN NICARAGUA

In applying the Reagan Doctrine to Nicaragua the Reagan administration had been primarily influenced by the strategic position of Nicaragua and the strategic threats that the Sandinistas could pose to neighbouring countries led by pro-American regimes. However the administration realised that strategic imperatives would not, in and of themselves, convince the American public of the need to support the war that the Contras were waging against the Sandinistas. This realization led the Administration to consistently couch its appeals for support

⁷² See Booth, J "War and the Nicaraguan Revolution", Current History, December, 1986, p 434. Also see my article in Latin American Report in which I make the observation that resistance among local Indian communities was triggered by "Sandinista efforts to impose Marxist indoctrination, agricultural collectives and other ideas that were totally alien to the customs and traditions of these people." Benjamin, L : The Conflict In Nicaragua and the Prospects for Peace p 30. Another useful analysis on the position of the Nicaraguan Indians is to be found in Christian S : Revolution in the Family....pp 254-266.

for the Contras in moral terms."⁷³ There are numerous statements by administration officials/spokespersons that attempt to justify support for the Contras on moral grounds. For example, in 1984 Jeane Kirkpatrick stated that "we do not think it is moral to leave small countries and helpless people defenceless against conquest by violent minorities who are armed and trained by remote dictatorships."⁷⁴

Others outside the Administration were also quick to invoke moral

⁷³ In this regard President Reagan commented in his speech of 15 May 1984 that "We can and we must help Central America. It's in our national interest to do so, and morally, it's the only right thing to do." See Reagan, R. "Central American Policy - no communist colonies in America", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol. L, No. 16, June 1, 1984, p. 483. Reagan had earlier stated that "We have a vital interest, a moral duty and a solemn responsibility. This is not a partisan issue. It is a question of our meeting our moral responsibility to ourselves, our friends and our posterity. It is a duty that falls to all of us - the President, the Congress, and the people. We must perform it together. Who among us would wish to bear the responsibility for failing to meet our shared obligation?" Reagan, R. "The Problems in Central America - the National Security of all the Americas....." p. 454. Reagan again referred to the freedom fighters in his 1986 address. "You see, when the Sandinistas betrayed the revolution, many who had fought the old Somoza dictatorship literally took to the hills, and like the French resistance that fought the Nazis, began fighting the Soviet bloc communists and the Nicaraguan collaborators. These few have now been joined by thousands. With their blood and courage, the freedom fighters of Nicaragua have pinned down the Sandinista army and bought the people of Central America precious time. We Americans owe them a debt of gratitude. In helping to thwart the Sandinistas and their Soviet mentors, the resistance has contributed directly to the security of the United States." See Reagan, R. "Nicaragua - Aiding the Contras"..... p. 388.

⁷⁴ Kirkpatrick, J. "U.S. Foreign Policy - The Difference Between Superpowers"..... p. 455.

support for the Contras.⁷⁵ However those opposed to supporting the Contras also postulated moral reasons in support of their positions. The moral reasons against supporting the Contras came from various quarters and reflected the depth and diversity of the opposition. Clifford Krauss writing in Foreign Affairs argued that supporting the Contras "raises a moral dilemma for the United States: is it fair to give the Contras just enough to keep them alive, yet not enough to give them a chance to win?"⁷⁶ In similar vein Christopher Lane commented that "some policies have so little chance of reaching their objectives that it becomes morally wrong to pursue them. The administration's effort to achieve democracy in Nicaragua by means of the Contras insurgency is one such policy."⁷⁷ Other critics contended that the Contras were not committed to either democracy or to respect for human rights. These critics pointed to the Contras violation of human rights and reports that the Contras had been guilty of plundering the countryside and raping Nicaraguan peasant women.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Johns, M. "Nicaragua - a military victory over the Sandinistas", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol. LIII, No. 1, October 15, 1986, pp. 5-8. Johns spoke of a historical obligation "to those brave men and women who are clearly the modern equivalent of our founding fathers." He continued, "we must realise our moral obligation in seeing that the Nicaraguan freedom fighters - much like the freedom fighters in America 200 years ago - are successful in ousting the external forces that in reality rule Nicaragua today."

⁷⁶ See Krauss, C. "Revolution in Central America"..... p 568.

⁷⁷ See Lane, C. "Pack it in", New Republic, April, 6 1987, p. 19.

⁷⁸ Human rights abuses did occur, especially in the early years of the Contra insurgency, but the situation appeared to improve as the Contra's public image became vital in securing

However for the Reagan Administration it was clearly easier to appeal to the American public's sense of right and wrong than to attempt to explain to them the strategic benefits of countering communism in a state that many had never heard of and that was far removed from their concerns.⁷⁹ For this reason Reagan referred to the Contras as "freedom fighters", giving them a distinctly moral dimension.⁸⁰

There were two levels of morality in operation: on the one hand

public support. Due to the susceptibility of the Contras to media and Administration criticism the contras established their own human rights commission in order to investigate alleged excesses. One should also realise that it was in the interests of the Sandinistas to discredit the Contra movement. A prime method of doing this was to link the Contras with various human rights abuses. The Economist noted in 1987 that the leadership of the Contras was not always successful at stamping out alleged abuses, and there were also persistent allegations of Contra involvement in drug trafficking and accusations that the Contras directly targeted agricultural resources for destruction. The extent of abuses was thus subject to debate and one's view was often influenced by greater concerns than that of the Contras human rights record.

⁷⁹ Reagan placed pressure on the Congress by directly appealing to the people of the United States. For example in April 1983 Reagan appealed for popular support by dramatising the choice that faced the United States - "The question the Congress of the United States will now answer is a simple one: will we give the Nicaraguan's democratic resistance the means to recapture their betrayed revolution, or will we turn our backs and ignore the malignancy in Managua until it spreads and becomes a moral threat to the entire New World." Reagan, R "Nicaragua - Aiding the Contras".....p 387. Similarly in 1986 the President stated "Now comes the crucial test for the Congress of the United States. Will they provide the assistance the freedom fighters need to deal with Russian tanks and gunships - or will they abandon the democratic resistance to its Communist enemy?" Reagan, R "Nicaragua - Aiding the Contras".....p 388.

⁸⁰ "Thousands who fought with the Sandinistas have taken up arms against them and are now called the Contras. They are freedom fighters." Reagan, R "Central American Policy - no communist colonies in America", Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol. L, No. 16, June 1, 1984, p. 484.

there was the morality of what the Contras were hoping to achieve (not forgetting their alleged human rights abuses); on the other hand there was a broader morality at stake - that of whether it was moral for the United States to be supporting a group that was attempting to overthrow a sovereign government. In this latter case the question of the legality of the Reagan Doctrine, in terms of international law resurfaced.

Many felt uncomfortable with the fact that a democracy such as the United States had to resort to methods of sponsoring insurgents just as the Soviets had done successfully in the past. It was also noted that the United States had a moral responsibility for the cause of Nicaragua's problems in that it had offered support to the Somoza regime. Therefore it was argued that the United States should not intervene but should instead deal with the Sandinistas with more understanding.⁸¹

This was countered by those that maintained that support for the Contras was perhaps immoral, but that this immorality had to be weighed against the greater evil of the communist threat - it was better to support an imperfect government or band of "freedom fighters" than to allow a country to fall into the clutches of communist totalitarianism. This argument was applied to Central

⁸¹ This argument was countered by Weinrod who argued that on the level of a moral analysis the argument of the critics failed: "For example, at the time the U.S. fought the Nazis during World War II, the U.S. had a morally objectionable system of racial segregation in place. Did that make us morally unqualified to take on the Nazis? Of course not, Nazism, as is communism, is a greater evil than the imperfections of U.S. policy. See Weinrod, B "Thirty myths about Nicaragua - United States policy"....., p 465.

America as a whole - to Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. In referring to El Salvador Reagan stated, "it is true there were extreme right-wing outlaw elements in that country, including members of the government security forces, who were guilty of flagrant and grave human-rights abuses, sometimes against innocent Salvadorans. But the brutal pro-Marxist rebels who were slaughtering innocent peasants, burning and pillaging their crops, destroying electrical power lines, and blowing up dams in their campaigns to wrest control of the country were infinitely more barbaric."⁸²

This mode of thinking was extended to the Contras. Whilst many conceded that the Contras were not, in reality, a Nicaraguan counterpart to the American founding fathers, in comparison to the Sandinistas they were a desirable force to support. However this very argument was contentious and was one of the core weaknesses of the Contra cause. As those who criticised the application of the Reagan Doctrine to Nicaragua pointed out, calling someone more immoral than those you support does not, in and of itself, make your favoured cause moral.

THE SPECTRE OF DIRECT INTERVENTION

The moral dimension that the Reagan administration had espoused to back its policy in support of the Contras was turned against the President by those who argued that backing for the Contras

⁸² Reagan, R "An American Life - Ronald Reagan". p.478.

would lead to a moral obligation towards them that, in turn, could conceivably lead to a need for American troops to intervene on their behalf, or perhaps on behalf of countries such as Honduras who offered sanctuary to the Contras. The Administration's opposing argument was that failure to support the Contras would create a greater possibility of direct intervention at a later stage. Supporters of the Reagan Doctrine also emphasised that the doctrine was specifically designed to avoid direct military involvement by the U.S. military. It was difficult, if not impossible, to refute either of these arguments.⁴³

SHIFTING OBJECTIVES

Perhaps the major shortcoming of the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua was the fact that the goals or objectives that lay at the cornerstone of supporting the Contras were never unambiguously articulated. Instead the *raison d'être* for the policy of supporting the Contras became obfuscated amidst contradictory

⁴³ As early as 1982 Reagan had made a commitment to nations in the region, "I believe free and peaceful development of our hemisphere requires us to help governments confronted with aggression from outside their borders to defend themselves. For this reason, I will ask the Congress to provide increased security assistance to help friendly countries hold off those who would destroy their chances for economic and social progress and political democracy." See Reagan, R "Aid to the Caribbean Basin - freedom is our common destiny".....p.345. Clifford Krauss also noted that, "The current limited war could easily escalate and spread in the region until the use of U.S. forces becomes unavoidable - either to defend Honduras from Sandinista counterattacks on Contra positions there or to rescue a lagging Contra movement on the verge of military defeat." Krauss also blames support for the Contras as destabilising other countries in the region. See Krauss, C "Revolution in Central America?"..... pp 567 and 57..

statements by administration officials, congressmen and others supportive of the policy in general.

In this regard the Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Lee Hamilton, lamented that "the rationale [for aiding the Contras] has shifted from the need to interdict alleged arms shipments to El Salvador, to pressurising the Sandinistas to hold elections, to giving the Contras a bargaining chip in dealing with the Sandinistas, to forcing the Sandinistas to restructure their government, to forcing the Sandinistas to negotiate with the Contras." " He correctly identified what was a core problem: changing goals and a commensurable inability to justify the mutations in these goals.

There appeared to be two preeminent, but inherently contradictory, objectives. The first, and less ambitious goal, was to contain the Sandinistas. This essentially meant dissuading the Sandinistas from attempting to export their revolution to other states in the isthmus. In his memoirs Secretary of States George Shultz singled out this objective when he observed that " from our [the administration's] perspective, trouble at home for Ortega [the Nicaraguan President] would decrease his ability to disrupt El Salvador and increase his willingness to negotiate a regional peace plan." " The second, and more controversial,

" On the shifting goals/objectives of Reagan's Nicaragua policy see Muravcnik, J "The Nicaragua Debate", Foreign Affairs, ... p.374. See also Crawley, E "Nicaragua: key to regional peace"..... p.15.

"See Shultz, G : Turmoil and Triumph : My Years as Secretary of States.....p 291.

goal envisaged the ultimate overthrow of the Sandinista regime and its replacement by a pro-American government! Confusingly, the latter goal was pursued by certain members of the Administration who found it necessary to cloak or hide this goal and outwardly favour the former goal, since to do otherwise would be to further jeopardise the possibility of Congressional support.⁹⁶ This is a primary reason for the confusion over what the Reagan administration was trying to achieve: to state the maximalist objective or primary goal would be to endanger its chances of success.

Another view that gained some currency was that which contended that the primary gain that would derive from a policy of supporting the Contras was that it would dissuade the Soviet Union from expanding its influence in the Third World. According to this line of thinking, the Reagan Doctrine would demonstrate U.S. resolve to increase the costs for Moscow of sustaining the Sandinistas in power. The logic behind this was that the cost of funding an insurgency movement was negligible compared to what it would cost the Soviets to uphold a client regime. Once this basic lesson had been driven home to the Soviet leadership, Moscow, so it was argued, would be less inclined to seek to expand its influence in the Third World through supporting pro-Marxist or leftist client states.

⁹⁶ Whilst some Congressmen could be persuaded of the need to contain the Sandinistas few could be easily persuaded of the desirability of actually deposing the Sandinistas through the use of force.

As early as 1983 Reagan had stated that the aim of supporting the Contras was to prevent the flow of arms from Nicaragua to neighbouring countries. However, critics argued, if this was the true goal, was it correct to use the Nicaraguan Contras to protect neighbouring states when it was clear that their own aim was the overthrow of the Sandinista regime? It was also noted that even if such policy was intended to make the Sandinistas change course, it was not certain that they would do so unless force ousted them from power. In the same speech Reagan had set out four basic goals for Central America:

- 1) The Administration would support democracy, reform, and human freedom.
- 2) It would support economic development.
- 3) It would support the security of the region's threatened nations, in response to Cuban and Nicaraguan activities.
- 4) It would support dialogue and negotiations.

THE INABILITY TO ACHIEVE DESIRED GOALS

The articulated official policy thus lacked credibility and this only served to increase Congressional hostility. In light of these contradictions the real intentions of the administration

became increasingly blurred.⁸⁷

Even if the goal was the deposition of the Sandinista regime (and this was certainly the goal of many in the Administration and also that of the Contras) it became increasingly clear that the Contras were incapable of achieving such an objective and even if they did they would surely be faced with a Sandinista-led counter insurgency.

The possibility of the Contras actually overthrowing the Sandinistas remained at best a distant and doubtful prospect. Al Gorman, a retired army general, stated before the Senate Armed Forces Services Committee in 1987 that "I don't think [the Sandinistas] regard the Contras as a serious threat. I think they've got the situation under control."⁸⁸ In the final analysis, the Contras hampered by internal divisions and the

⁸⁷ In 1983 Reagan stated "But let us be clear as to the American attitude toward the Government of Nicaragua. We do not seek its overthrow. Our interest is to ensure that it does not infect its neighbours through the export of subversion and violence. Our purpose, in conformity with American and international law, is to prevent the flow of arms to El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica. We have attempted to have a dialogue with the government of Nicaragua but it persists in its efforts to spread violence. We should not - and we will not - protect the Nicaraguan Government from the anger of its own people. But we should, through diplomacy, offer an alternative. And, as Nicaragua ponders its options, we can and will - with all the resources of diplomacy - protect each country of Central America from the danger of war." See Reagan, R "The Problems of Central America - the national security of all the Americas", ... p.452. U.S ambassador to the U.N, Jeane Kirkpatrick contended that the political goal of the Administration was "a more democratic and stable hemisphere." See Kirkpatrick, J "U.S. Foreign Policy - The Difference Between the Superpowers", ... p 455.

⁸⁸ See Kondracke, M "Into the Jungle", ... p 14

inconsistency of American aid waged an insurgency that was primarily based in the rural areas. The Contras were demonstrably incapable of mobilising mass support in the urban areas. This failure to attract meaningful support forced the Contras to rely mainly on acts of sabotage. Thus, while they could raise the costs for the Sandinistas, they were incapable of defeating them militarily. However in deflecting the Sandinistas attentions away from meddling in the region, the Contra insurgency did serve at least that specific goal of the Reagan Administration.

However, in addition to diverting the attention of the Sandinistas away from spreading their revolution to neighbouring states, the Contras insurgency also increased pressure on the Sandinistas to seek a negotiated settlement. The eventual process leading to the holding of a free and fair election, which in fact led to the Sandinistas political defeat was at least to some extent as a result of the deadlock that existed in the military contestation between the Sandinistas and the Contras. In this sense it could well be argued that the application of the Reagan Doctrine to Nicaragua did, ultimately, pay considerable dividends.

However I would argue that in evaluating the reasons for the Sandinistas agreement to hold a genuinely free election, one needs to carefully calibrate the extent to which the Sandinistas responded to the threat posed by the Contras and weigh this against other factors such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, coupled with Moscow's willingness by the late 1980's to put

pressure on its client regimes to pursue diplomatic, rather than military solutions, to existing conflicts.⁸⁹ In addition the economic pressures that the United States brought to bear on Nicaragua also needs to be factored into such an analysis.

THE FAILURE TO EXPLORE OTHER OPTIONS

Critics persistently stated that the Reagan Administration had failed to fully explore other avenues alleging that the administration had been too hasty in relying on a policy that was primarily of a military orientation.

Although there had been initial, albeit unenthusiastic, attempts to negotiate with the Sandinistas, and whilst Reagan had himself acknowledged that economic aid to the region was necessary, these became secondary issues for the administration.⁹⁰ As a result, many in Congress questioned how could they support the "military option" when other non-military options had not fully been explored? A greater balance was necessary in the approach of the Administration - if not in reality then at least in perception. Only this would have consistently helped to stimulate Congressional support.

⁸⁹ Another factor to consider here is the extent to which U.S. economic sanctions also impacted upon the Sandinista's eventual willingness to submit to a free and fair election. It could also be argued that the Sandinistas agreed to this exercise in the arrogant belief that they could never lose an election.

⁹⁰ For a useful analysis on the efficacy of economic aid as an instrument of American foreign policy see Barret, J. "Preventative Foreign Policy in Latin America: How to Avoid More Nicaraguas", Washington Quarterly, Vol 11, No 4, Autumn 1988, p.171

FAILURE TO CONSTRUCT AN ALTERNATIVE POLICY

Whilst criticism of the Administration's policies was widespread the critics were unable to construct a coherent policy of their own and it was for this reason that the Reagan administration was often given the benefit of the doubt.

Congressman Solarz argued that the United States should have attempted to come to some understanding with the Sandinistas whereby the Sandinistas would recognise the legitimate security concerns of the United States and, in return, the United States would end support for the Contras, thereby effectively recognising the internal status quo within Nicaragua.⁹¹

This approach was rejected by the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America on the basis that one could not decouple the political domestic context from the security aspect. In its report the Kissinger Commission contended that "the consolidation of a Marxist-Leninist regime in Managua would be seen by its neighbours as constituting a permanent security threat".⁹² The Commission advocated a regional negotiating effort on the basis of the Contadora 21 point agreement of September 1983 which sought to solve the problems that had resulted due to the

⁹¹ Muravchik, J "The Nicaraguan Debate".....p 377.

⁹² See The Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on central America (New York, MacMillan, 1984) p 135

Nicaraguan revolution."⁹³ The Commission also favoured an increase in aid to El Salvador and Honduras. If necessary it envisaged the direct use of U.S military force, and notwithstanding its imprimatur of bipartisanship it significantly, albeit hesitantly, endorsed the struggle being waged by the Contras. In this regard, the Commission reported that the "majority of members of the Commission, in their respective individual judgements, believe the efforts of the Nicaraguan insurgents represent one of the incentives working in favour of a negotiated settlement and that the future role of the United States in those efforts must therefore be considered in the context of the negotiating process."⁹⁴

TURF BATTLES : DIVISIONS WITHIN THE AMERICAN POLITICAL

⁹³ The Contadora process that began in 1983 was constituted by the countries of Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela who hoped to find a diplomatic solution to the problem in order to prevent an escalation of the conflict. The Administration was however wary of the Contadora peace process since it feared that a diplomatic solution might ensure that the Sandinista threat would remain intact. The process attempted to regionalise the problems rather than allow the Reagan Administration to "ideologize" them. For further analysis on the Contadora process and the subsequent peace plan that was postulated by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias see Benjamin, B : "The Arias Peace Accord : Breakthrough For Peace or a Myopic Illusion in Journal Of Contemporary History Vol 13, No 1, 1988. Also see Purcell, S : "Demistifying Contadora" in Falcoff, M et al, "The Continuing Crisis...pp 151-174.

⁹⁴ See The Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America..... p 138

ESTABLISHMENT AND THE CONTRA MOVEMENT⁹⁵

Differences over the goals of the policy of supporting the Contras were manifest both within the administration and within the U.S. Congress. However turf battles also extended to other political institutions and were also evident within the Contras leadership.

The CIA and the Department of Defense, argued that any flexibility that had been displayed by the Sandinistas (and there had not been much) was as a result of the military pressure exerted by the Contras. These agencies essentially opposed any attempts at negotiations since this would, so it was postulated, necessitate the abandonment of the Contras. If this occurred it would be difficult, if not impossible, to resurrect the insurgency movement.⁹⁶ Members of the State Department were not convinced by this argument and favoured an approach that would

⁹⁵ The competition between government agencies and the roles played by William Casey, Oliver North, Jeane Kirkpatrick, as well as the roles played by the Reagan Administration's three principal Latin American spokesmen, Thomas Enders, Elliot Abrams and Tony Motley are discussed at length by Roy Gutman in his scathing critique of the Reagan Administration's Nicaragua policy. See Gutman, R : Banana Diplomacy : The making of American Policy in Nicaragua 1981-1987 (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1988).

⁹⁶ This argument was put forward by Clifford Krauss who contended that "Given that the anti-Sandinista forces have not been able to hold a single town or attract meaningful popular support to date, there is cause for scepticism about future progress." See Krauss, C "Revolution in Central America" p 568.

lead to some form of a negotiated settlement.⁹⁷

As a result it was reported that the State Department favoured Cruz and Robelo (who were seen as being more moderate and more likely to favour a negotiated settlement) in their power struggle with Calero. Cruz later resigned because of disillusionment with the rebel movement, and because of his failure to wrest control of the CIA-backed FDN from Calero. This was a set back to the State Department who would have preferred for Cruz to continue to give the Contras a "moderate" image.⁹⁸ Cruz claimed that he could not be sure that the Contra leadership would respect civilian authority. Failure to fully establish civilian control over the Contras served to further undermine the democratic credentials that the Administration had attempted to instill.

The truth of the matter was that the so called "moderate" Contras were unable to appropriate control of the Nicaraguan Democratic Front (the most important component of the anti-Sandinista movement) from the hardliners despite support from the State Department. The structure of the resistance did also not help matters since there were approximately 40 regional commanders, all of whom displayed a tendency for individualism.

⁹⁷ A possible dissenter to this view from within the State Department was Elliot Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America.

⁹⁸ See "The Contra's Power Struggle, Foreign Report (published by The Economist), No.1959, March 12, 1987, Cruz also quit at perhaps the worst possible moment - hours before a House vote on releasing the final instalment of \$40 million of Contra funding for the year.

The Contras also suffered from a lack of charismatic leadership. The leadership was often divided and infighting was rife and the Contras were incapable of securing a sufficient degree of internal cohesion.⁹⁹ This helped to compound the lack of tangible success that the Contras experienced. Furthermore, the Contra leadership was not widely respected within Nicaragua. Pardo-Maure called the failure of the Contras "a study in the failure of leadership."¹⁰⁰

In the final analysis, the Reagan Administration was never able to overcome the contradiction between supporting a movement with authoritarian tendencies which was supposed to be striving for the triumph of democracy in Nicaragua. It was difficult to convince critics of the merit of support for the Contras when they were unable to fulfil one of the tenants of democracy within their own organisation - civilian control of the armed forces. Morton Kondracke argued that "far more prominent in the minds of Nicaraguan politicians, Sandinista and Contra alike, is the notion of political power as indivisible and unshareable."¹⁰¹ The Reagan Administration was unable to convince Congress otherwise and was not aided by the internal power struggles of the Contras.

⁹⁹ It often appeared that Calero was more interested in ousting Cruz than he was in ousting the Sandinistas.

¹⁰⁰ Pardo-Maurer, R "The Contras, 1980-1989 - A special kind of politics".....p 129.

¹⁰¹ Kondracke, M : "Pack it In"..... p 19.

THE SHADOW OF VIETNAM

The residual shadow of America's trauma in Vietnam was the primary factor that motivated Congress to consistently display doubts about giving greater support to the Contras.¹⁰² The "no more Vietnam's" argument was negative and offered little guidance for US policy. Many of those who remained viscerally opposed to the policy of aiding the Contras based their opposition on the belief that such support would ultimately lead the United States into becoming directly involved in that conflict. The Sandinista regime was therefore a beneficiary of this Vietnam syndrome.¹⁰³ The Reagan Doctrine, as it applied to the unfolding drama in Nicaragua sought to address this fear by arguing that support for the Contras was a policy that would avoid direct intervention but that would, simultaneously, prevent the proliferation of "more Cubas" in America's backyard. In other words, the administration, through the Reagan Doctrine, sought to implement a policy that opposed the entrenchment of a second Marxist regime in the Americas, but which at the same time demonstrated an unwillingness to risk another war which would divide the

¹⁰² Echoes of Vietnam could be seen in a 1983 speech by Christopher Dodd in which he declared:- "If we continue to ally ourselves with repression, we will not only deny our own most basic values, we will also find ourselves once again on the losing side [an obvious reference to Vietnam]. It is folly, pure and simple, to pursue a course which is wrong in principle - in order to wage a conflict which cannot be won." See Dodd, C "A Democrat's Response to Speech on Central America -No Hunger, No Revolution".....p 455.

¹⁰³ See Falcoff, M "Nicaragua and its neighbours" p.170.

nation."¹⁰⁴

Yet the shadow of Vietnam would not disappear, "Again and again on the floor of the House and Senate the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was invoked, and dozens of legislators spoke of the parallels they saw between US involvement in Indochina and the course the President was steering on Central America."¹⁰⁵ It was argued that if the Reagan Administration thought that Nicaragua was of such vital importance to the United States then surely the deployment of US troops would be logical if the Contras were not able to achieve the goals of the Administration.¹⁰⁶ Such sentiments were encouraged by hard line statements made by Administration officials. Reagan's first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, had even called for direct military action against Nicaragua and Cuba.¹⁰⁷ Reagan himself however stated later that "I never considered sending U.S. troops to fight in Latin America."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ See Rogers, W "The United States and Latin America", Foreign Affairs, Vol.63, no.3, 1985, p.566.

¹⁰⁵ On this see Muravchik, J "The Nicaragua Debate"..... p.374.

¹⁰⁶ Such an argument was made by people such as Edward Kennedy. See Muravchik, J "The Nicaragua Debate".....p 375.

¹⁰⁷ See Bennet et al (editors), "Grappling with Central America: From Carter to Reagan" in Confronting Revolution: Security through Diplomacy in Central America,....p 314. See also the memoirs of the Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger - Weinberger, C "Fighting for Peace - seven critical years in the Pentagon", (USA, Warner Books, 1990) p 31.

¹⁰⁸ Reagan, R "An American Life - Ronald Reagan"....p.475.

In 1983 Reagan had given an assurance that the United States did not intend becoming directly embroiled in any of the conflicts wracking the Central American isthmus. In a speech made in May 1983 President Reagan alluded to the Vietnam syndrome when he declared :-

"Let me say to those who invoke the memory of Vietnam: there is no thought of sending American combat troops to Central America. They are not needed -indeed, they have not been requested there. All our neighbours ask of us is assistance in training and arms to protect themselves while they build a better, freer life."¹⁰⁹

Three years later Reagan echoed those earlier sentiments when he stated :-

"....let me make one thing plain, I am not talking about American troops. They are not needed; they have not been requested. The democratic resistance fighting in Nicaragua is only asking America for the supplies and support to save their own country from communism."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ See Reagan, R "The Problems in Central America - the national security of all the Americas".....p 453.

¹¹⁰ Reagan, R "Nicaragua - Aiding the Contras".....p.306.

However such assurances were undermined by other policy moves by the administration. In particular, joint manoeuvres (such as those in 1983) of American troops with their Honduran counterparts, together with a massive U.S.-financed build up of the Honduran armed forces, created consternation.¹¹¹ Most alarmingly it was feared that such a build up would provide the infrastructural spring-board that would be necessary in the event of direct military intervention.

IRAN-GATE - ILLEGAL SUPPORT FOR THE CONTRAS

The Congressional halting of aid to the Contras by 1985, was to lead to even greater problems for the Administration in the future. The National Security Council (NSC) efforts to illegally continue aid to the Contras despite Congressional ignorance was to undercut not only the effort of the Contras but more importantly was to undercut those of Reagan Administration. The illegal transferring of profits to the Contras from arms sales to Iran displayed the commitment felt by parts of the Administration. It later transpired out that between \$10 and \$30 million had been diverted to the Contras in this way. The first revelations were made in November 1986 by the then Attorney General, Edwin Meese III.

In March of 1987 the House voted to suspend \$40 million in Contra aid until past expenditures were accounted for. This was a major setback for both the Contras and the Administration - one from

¹¹¹ See Ullman, R "At war with Nicaragua".....p 40.

which they were never to recover.

A MOVE TOWARDS PEACE

In November 1987, Daniel Ortega, the Nicaraguan President announced that he would attempt to negotiate a cease fire with the Contras through an intermediary. Reagan agreed to resume direct talks with the Sandinistas (suspended in 1984) if serious negotiations between the Sandinistas and the Contras got under way. The reason for the new attitude on the part of the Sandinistas was caused by rampant economic problems on the domestic front compounded by continued Contra activity within Nicaragua.¹¹² In 1985 it was estimated that GDP per capita was 37 percent below the figure attained in 1975.¹¹³

A cease fire was concluded between the Sandinistas and the Contras in March 1988 on the basis of the peace plan proposed by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica. The American Congress had by this stage cut off the Contra's military aid. In February 1989 the Sandinistas agreed to hold elections within twelve months.

¹¹² Whilst the Contra insurgency contributed to the problems of the Nicaraguan economy, it was not the primary cause of the problems. Despite this it has been estimated that the direct losses due to the Contra insurgency totalled \$521.3 million for the period 1980-84. If indirect losses were to be added to this total one would arrive at a figure in the region of between \$1 and \$1.5 billion for the period 1980-86.

¹¹³ See Colburn, F "Embattled Nicaragua".....p 407.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS : THE REAGAN DOCTRINE IN NICARAGUA- AN
ATTEMPT TO REDEFINE AMERICA'S ROLE

The critics of the Reagan Doctrine were unable to appreciate that the Doctrine represented an attempt to forge a new policy of containment in response to the discrediting of traditional containment policies as a result of the Vietnam debacle. America wished to achieve national goals but without the corresponding use of direct American force. The question that Reagan was attempting to answer, perhaps unwittingly, was how to stop communist expansion in the absence of a coherent strategy of containment and without risking any more Vietnam scenarios.

This reluctance on the part of United States policy makers (specifically those in Congress) to involve the United States in the Third world after the Vietnam embroglio remained strong despite the Reagan Doctrine which attempted a form of "positive containment" without the need to commit American troops on the ground. Nevertheless the possibility that support for the Contras might have resulted in the United States having to directly intervene on their behalf, together with the necessity to sometimes support a movement whose democratic credentials remained tarnished was sufficient to sustain opposition to the Administration's Nicaragua policies.

It was instructive that during the 1984 debate on aid to the Contras Congressman James Shannon, a Democrat from Massachussettes, remarked that the issue revolved around "not

what we think about the Nicaraguans, but rather what we think about the United States and the role that we are going to play in the world." The debate over the Contras therefore was not solely restricted to the intricacies of American involvement in Central America but was rather a part of the post-Vietnam assessment of the role that America should play in the world. For this reason the importance of the debate transcended the question of support for the Contras.

Vietnam had also proved that the domino theory was not correct, and for this reason many believed that the Central American region as a whole would not become a communist monolith.

However Nicaragua was not Vietnam. In Nicaragua the Administration was trying to dislodge a regime that had installed itself in a region that, as had been pointed out in the first chapter, had been a sensitive one for American foreign policy makers ever since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823.

Monroe's Doctrine had specifically stated that the United States would not tolerate the intrusion of external powers into the Western Hemisphere. Now, some 160 years later, the challenge to that basic principle existed in the form of Soviet-backed client states (Cuba and Nicaragua) who avowedly sought to promote Marxist-Leninist revolution in the region. The United States through the invocation of the Reagan Doctrine sought, in the first instance, to contain the Sandinistas (and by extension the Soviet Union) and to prevent the coming to power of other anti-

American and/or Pro-Soviet regimes. However in the sense that the Reagan Doctrine may have been intended as a strategy of roll-back the objective (at least for some of the more ardent supporters of the Reagan Doctrine) sought to topple the Sandinistas and return Nicaragua to a position of being an ally of, rather than a threat to, the United States.

The Reagan Doctrine as "an offensive" strategy of containment (as one of "rollback") was no longer prepared to accept the type of containment policy that had been discredited in the case of Vietnam. Instead President Reagan, endeavoured to redefine containment so that a communist regime would suffer a "reversal of power", something that the original policy of containment was incapable of and indeed, did not aim to, achieve. All this could be done without the loss of American lives, but it did require American money and it was on this issue that the Administration fought its toughest battles.

The Contras had been a tool of the Reagan Doctrine, but had been a flawed tool due to the contradiction between what Reagan's foreign policy attempted to do and the moral questions that such a policy engendered. The Contras were unable to be moulded into the democratic freedom fighting force that was necessary in order to achieve Congressional, and more importantly, public support.

However in terms of geopolitical imperatives the policy of supporting the Contras and, more broadly, of applying the Reagan Doctrine to Nicaragua produced ultimate success. The process that

eventually led to the "rolling back" of a Soviet client regime, the Sandinistas, was legal, democratic and peaceful. The electoral defeat of the Sandinistas would have been unlikely in the absence of the Contras insurgency as the pressures to hold such an election would have been minimized. Thus in Nicaragua, the Reagan Doctrine, which John Gaddis described as a latter day effort to roll back Soviet influence did in the words of that analyst "produce impressive results at minimum cost and risk to the United States."¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴See Gaddis, J : The United States and the End of the Cold war : Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations (New York, Oxford, 1992) p 124.

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY 2 : THE REAGAN DOCTRINE AND THE CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN



US POLICY BEFORE THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

Prior to the Soviet invasion of December 1979 Afghanistan had never been of direct strategic interest to the United States. It had not been an important trading partner. It was not an important access route for American trade. Neither was Afghanistan a source of oil or strategic minerals. Indeed, the interests of the United States had never really gone beyond expressions of support for the preservation of Afghan independence and territorial integrity.

Notwithstanding the verbal rejection of "spheres of influence", a policy position that had resonated in Washington from the earliest days of the cold war, there had, in the past, also been a tacit American recognition that the Soviet Union had a legitimate interest in Afghanistan. There was a concomitant concern that US aid to Afghanistan might induce some sort of retaliation or action by the Soviet Union towards Afghanistan. Indeed even before the Marxist coup of April 1978 a strong Soviet influence already existed in Afghanistan.¹

¹ The Soviet Union had been the first government to enter into diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. Moscow recognised Afghanistan as an independent state in May 1919 and concluded a treaty of friendship with Afghanistan on 28 February 1921. For an excellent overview of Soviet-Afghanistan relations during this century see Rubenstein, A : Soviet Policy Towards Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan : The Dynamics of Influence (New York, Praeger, 1982). Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser in the Carter, Administration later observed that there was nothing the US could have done with regard to the coup of April 1978 that brought the Afghan communists to power. According to Brzezinski this coup was, to all intents and purposes, an internal coup and there was no overt sign of Soviet involvement. The view adopted by Brzezinski was not shared by all commentators. Former Ambassador Neumann at the time of the

The role played by the Soviet Union in helping to bring the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to power is subject to dispute. Mark Urban, for example, argued that whilst Soviet support for the PDPA was important it had not been a vital factor in bringing the PDPA to power.² This view is strongly contested by Klass who claimed that the military coup in Afghanistan was "carried out by its [ie the Soviet Union's] agents in the Afghan air force and tanks corps under the guidance of the Soviet embassy in Kabul".³ For its part, the Carter Administration accepted the coup with equanimity, and together with many other Western states, recognised the new government in Kabul.

In the months following the April 1978 coup there was widespread opposition to the new government. This opposition was, at least in part, stimulated by the growing presence of Soviet "advisers"

coup argued for the cessation of American aid on the basis that the new leaders were communist and taking orders from Moscow. Neumann also argued that the failure of the United States to respond more forcefully to the coup led the USSR to believe that the United States would not do much when they invaded in 1979. Secretary of State Vance also argued that the United States reacted too mildly to the coup.

² See Urban, M : War in Afghanistan (London, MacMillan, 1988) p 15. Urban also points out that Moscow had traditionally kept the PDPA at arms length and in contradistinction to other "fraternal parties" the PDPA had "never been invited to send a delegation to the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in Moscow." also p 15.

³ See Klass, R : "Afghanistan : The Accords: in Foreign Affairs Vol 66 No 5, Summer 1988 p 925.

that had been sent by Moscow to help the new regime.' This opposition was especially pronounced in the countryside as people resisted Kabul's efforts to implement its Marxist agenda. In particular, devout Afghans regarded the new regime's policies as constituting an attack on traditional lifestyles and religious beliefs. Following the assassination of Mohammed Nur Taraki in September 1979, Hafizullah Amin became the Prime Minister. Amin had earlier led the efforts to quell dissident uprisings in the countryside. His failure to achieve success in this regard raised the possibility that the Communist regime in Afghanistan could be toppled by a popular revolt. Faced with this prospect the Soviet Union launched a massive invasion of Afghanistan in late December 1979.

Before the Soviet invasion, and subsequent occupation, of Afghanistan, there were differences of opinion over the general thrust of U.S.-Soviet relations between key figures in the Carter Administration. On the one hand, Secretary of State Vance and Marshall Shulman (Vance's chief Soviet expert) strongly favoured détente and felt that serious efforts at improving relations between the superpowers should be attempted as there was a genuine chance of achieving this goal. They argued that if the United States was patient and reasonable, successes would follow, but if the U.S. was unremittingly hostile, détente would fail and the prospects for lasting peace would diminish.

* Rosanne Klass estimates that in the months following the 1978 coup between 15 000 and 20 000 Soviet advisers were sent to Afghanistan. Most of these advisers were in fact military troops. See Klass, R : "Afghanistan: The Accords" p 925.

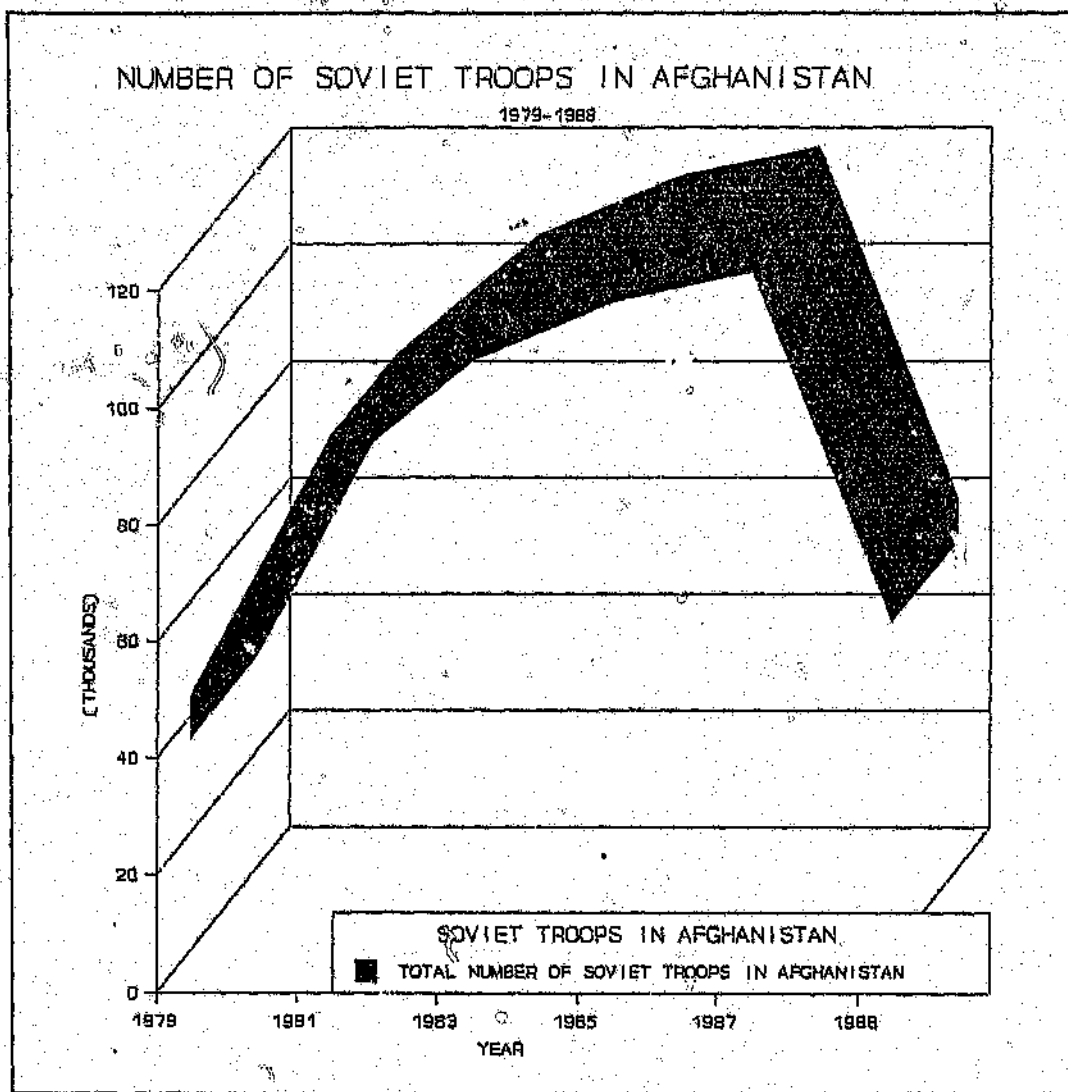


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Source : Compiled from statistics in Hammond, T : *Red Flag Over Afghanistan : The Communist Coup, The Soviet Invasion and the Consequences*. (Colorado, Westview press, 1984)

On the other hand, National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, also favoured détente but was less optimistic that it would achieve results. He argued that the relationship between the

amount of agreements would change the Soviet Union's determination to undermine the United States. He believed that the Soviet Union's embrace of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence was a tactical imperative and that Moscow could not be trusted.⁵

During the spring and summer of 1979, Brzezinski became increasingly disturbed about the increased Soviet involvement in Afghanistan and argued in favour of a more uncompromising stand by the Carter Administration.⁶ Although a private warning was issued to Moscow by President Carter on 23 March, during the months before the invasion, no substantial statements were made in public by the President, Vice President or Secretary of State.⁷ The messages that Carter approved for others to send to Moscow warned against Soviet "intervention" not Soviet "invasion". There was also considerable uncertainty regarding the purpose of the Soviet military preparations. Some believed that the Soviets were only preparing to protect Soviet military advisers in Afghanistan. Hammond argues that because of the conflicting reports, Carter and Vance could have adopted any view

⁵ See Hammond, T : Red Flag Over Afghanistan : The Communist Coup, The Soviet Invasion and the Consequences (Colorado, Westview Press, 1984) p 106.

⁶ On 23 July 1979, Brzezinski warned President Carter that the Soviet Union would "probably unseat the[Afghan] Prime Minister Amin. see Brzezinski, Z : Power and Principle : Memoirs of the National Security Adviser 1977-1981 (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983) p 427. Brzezinski also contends that "by September, the situation [in Afghanistan] had become sufficiently grave for the President to ask me [Brzezinski] to prepare contingency plans in the event of an overt Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan." p 427

⁷ Hammond, T : Red Flag Over Afghanistan...p 108

they wished to believe. Thus because they wished Soviet-US relations to improve, they believed that the Soviet Union would not jeopardize such relations by invading Afghanistan. As such, there was no prior warning by Carter or Secretary of State Vance that the Soviet Union was about to invade. Consequently, there were no warnings of the dire consequences that would follow if the Soviet Union invaded. Hammond therefore argues that Carter and other top officials failed to realize, until the last moment, that the Soviet Union was about to invade despite evidence of this began as early as October and November 1979.⁹ Arnold also argues that it is doubtful whether any US warning would have deterred Moscow from launching the invasion.⁹

Afghanistan had in the past always been regarded as a relatively insignificant country in terms of US strategic interests and consequently Washington had paid little attention to that country.¹⁰ However, Afghanistan's importance had grown following the fall of the Shah of Iran, a staunch ally of the United States. The Carter Administration failed however to reevaluate the increased importance of Afghanistan now that Iran had adopted a hostile posture, and given that US access to the Gulf was now less secure. The hostage crisis in Iran had also diverted

⁹ Arnold, A : Afghanistan : The Soviet Invasion in Perspective (Stanford University, Hoover Press, 1985) p 91

⁹ Arnold, A : Afghanistan : The Soviet Invasion in Perspective...p 94

¹⁰ A former United States diplomat, Leon Poullada once characterised American policy towards Afghanistan as "ignorance, incoherence, inconstancy and appeasement." See Poullada, L : "The Road to Crisis 1919-1980" in Klass, R (Ed): Afghanistan The Great Game Revisited (New York, Freedom House, 1987) p 63

attention away from the unfolding drama in Afghanistan.

Against the background of all these developments there existed a belief that the Soviet Union had taken cognisance of the "lessons of Vietnam". This, in turn, led to a belief on the part of many in the U.S. political establishment that the Soviet Union would assiduously avoid being dragged into a Vietnam-type war in Afghanistan. Moreover, given the fact that Hafizullah Amin, the Afghan leader, had never publicly criticized the Soviet Union, or threatened to reverse Kabul's pro-Soviet orientation, Afghanistan did not appear to be another Czechoslovakia or Hungary.

The possibilities of the United States influencing events in Afghanistan thus diminished following the coup of April 1978 and the growing Soviet commitment became difficult to reverse.¹¹ In this regard very little is known about the foreign assistance provided to the Afghan resistance before the Soviet invasion in 1979. What is clear is that during 1979 and prior to the Soviet invasion the CIA, operating out of Pakistan, covertly began supplying communications equipment and field hospitals to the nascent Afghan resistance.¹² However, Raymond Garthoff argued that while Afghan and Soviet claims that the United States had been actively and directly supporting the insurgents must be

¹¹ Arnold, A : Afghanistan : The Soviet Invasion in Perspective...p 131

¹² Szulc, T : "Putting Back the Bite in the CIA", New York Times Magazine, 6 April, 1990, p 28.

heavily discounted, they are not without some foundation.¹³ Nonetheless, it is highly improbable that the U.S. provided any direct assistance to the Afghan resistance before the Soviet invasion. Initial aid to the so-called Mujahedeen was provided by China, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan.¹⁴

THE AMERICAN REACTION TO THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN IN 1979:

By most accounts it would appear that the United States was caught off guard by the Soviet invasion.¹⁵ On 28 December 1979, President Carter told a meeting of the National Security Council that the invasion was a seminal event that constituted a major turning point in US-Soviet relations. In a message to Soviet Leader Leonid Brezhnev he demanded that the Soviet Union withdraw or face "serious consequences". Carter said that Brezhnev's reply to his message was "completely inadequate and completely misleading."¹⁶ In a speech on 31 December 1979, Carter said that:-

".....the Soviets have seriously misjudged our own nation's [ie The United States'] strength and resolve

¹³ See Garthoff, R : Detente and Confrontation (Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1985) p 921

¹⁴ It should of course be noted that Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were all firm allies of the United States and the support given by these states to the Afghan resistance probably received tacit endorsement from the U.S.

¹⁵ Newell, N and Newell, R : The Struggle for Afghanistan...p 131.

¹⁶ See Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Durham, Duke University Press, 1985) p 189.

and unity and determination and the condemnation that has accrued to them by the world community ... They underestimated the courage and tenacity of freedom fighters in that country and they did not anticipate the world's quick and forceful response to their aggression.¹⁷.

The differences of opinion that had previously existed between Vance and Brzezinski dissipated after the invasion and Brzezinski's voice became increasingly predominant.

The invasion of Afghanistan took place at the same time that anti-American sentiments escalated in Iran. It was therefore possible that Afghanistan might be used by the Soviets as a stepping stone to the Gulf, thereby threatening oil supplies and also access via Pakistan to the warm water ports in the Straits of Hormuz.

It can also be argued that the strength of the American response to the invasion was not attributable solely to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Moscow's move was more of a last straw that persuaded the U.S. president of the need to take a stronger stand against the Soviet Union. Carter later argued in his memoirs that the United State's security was directly threatened by the Soviet invasion. If not resisted, the Soviet action would have led to the temptation to move again until they

¹⁷ Quoted in Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.....pp 190-191.

had reached the warm water ports or controlled a major portion of the world's oil supplies. The Soviet Union had changed the strategic balance in this part of the world.¹⁵

At the time of the invasion, American influence in the region had declined considerably. The United States had concentrated on solving the Arab-Israeli conflict through the Camp David accords. This had alienated many of the other Arab nations. In addition the Islamic revolution in Iran had been a seismic geopolitical setback for the United States.

The actual steps taken by the United States in response to the Soviet invasion included inter alia :

(a) an embargo on the export of grain from the US to the Soviet Union above the eight million tons formerly agreed upon by treaty;

(b) an embargo on the export of high-technology goods to the Soviet Union;

(c) a prohibition on Soviet fishing in US territorial waters.

(d) a moratorium on the opening of new US and Soviet consular offices;

¹⁵ See Amstutz, J : Afghanistan : The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation. (Washington, National Defense University, 1986) p 207

(e) the suspension of further official cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union;

(f) the refusal by the United States to participate in the Olympic games to be held in Moscow.

Many of the allied nations refused to enforce the US-initiated embargoes especially the US embargo on grain. Certain European countries claimed that the United States had overreacted to the invasion. They expressed the belief that the invasion was not enough to interfere with East-West detente. Newell argues that this response was prompted, at least in part, by the need to preserve access to Middle Eastern oil.¹⁹

Notwithstanding its professions of outrage, the response on the part of the Carter administration lacked conviction. It has been observed that "the measures taken by the United States may have irritated and certainly have alienated the Soviet Union but they ... produced no substantial effect on the situation created by the invasion. In fact, their superficiality doomed them to failure from the beginning. The American response was superficial because it was not rooted in the realities triggered by the invasion."²⁰ It can thus be argued that the primary inadequacy of US policy lay in the fact that the United States immediately conceded Afghanistan despite Carter's strong denunciation of the

¹⁹ Newell, N and Newell, R : The Struggle for Afghanistan (London, Cornell University Press, 1981) p 201

²⁰ Newell, N and Newell, R : The Struggle for Afghanistan....p 194.

invasion.

THE CARTER DOCTRINE :

The Carter Doctrine was enunciated in President Carter's State of the Union Address on 23 January 1980. The essence of the newly proclaimed doctrine was encapsulated in Carter's assertion that:-

"An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."²¹

Despite the rhetoric, Carter made it clear in his State of the Union Address that the United States would not take any direct action to dislodge or rollback the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. Instead, Carter drew a line at the Persian Gulf.²²

In his address the President also maintained that "... Verbal

²¹ See Crabb, C : The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy : Their Meaning, Role and Future (Baton Rouge, Louisiana University press, 1982) p 329. Crabb's analysis of the formulation and connotations of the Carter Doctrine are most insightful. He argued that the significance of the Carter Doctrine lay inter alia in the reaffirmation of the basic continuity of American postwar foreign policy and the fact that through the doctrine the United States publicly declared its strategic, military and economic interests in the Persian Gulf region p 330.

²² Although Carter did not define what he meant by "the Persian Gulf region", it was clear that he did not include Afghanistan.

condemnation is not enough. The Soviet Union must pay a concrete price for their aggression."²³ Indeed from the outset it was also evident that Carter believed that the United States had a "moral obligation" to aid the resistance.²⁴

The invasion brought about a solemn reappraisal of US policy toward the Soviet Union. There was a inversion in the trend towards neo-isolationism in the United States. The doctrine of containment which had been subordinated to the margins in Carter's celebrated Notre Dame speech of April 1977 was revived as the centrepiece of U.S. national strategy. There was a reawakened recognition of Soviet expansionist ambitions and a stronger resolve to stop this.²⁵ Not surprisingly national defence became a key concern in the 1980 presidential elections.

Following the Soviet invasion, US policy towards Afghanistan was fundamentally transformed. A country that had long been of little interest to the United States now became a focal point of U.S. foreign policy. Afghanistan, and more particularly the Soviet invasion of that country, now became the most contested conflict

²³ Quoted in Hammond, T: Red Flag over Afghanistan .p122

²⁴ Further steps were taken by the United States in the days and weeks following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In the following months. One of the first casualties was the SALT II Treaty. In January 1980, Secretary of Defence, Harold Brown visited China. Although the US was not ready to form an alliance with China, certain areas of cooperation were identified.

²⁵ I would argue that this "stronger resolve" was reflected more in the declaratory policy of the Carter Administration than in its actualised policies

of what Fred Halliday termed the Second Cold War.²⁶ For the Carter administration, and more pointedly for the United States Congress, the issue was no longer whether, but how, to aid the Afghan Mujahedeen. This dilemma had added significance because although Iran's Islamic leaders were sympathetic towards their fellow Muslim's in the Afghan resistance, Teheran (previously the West's gendarme in the Persian Gulf region) was not about to assist the United States for any purpose.²⁷

In January 1980, a United Nations General Assembly resolution was passed condemning the Soviet invasion and calling for an immediate withdrawal of foreign troops.²⁸ However, the Soviet Union vetoed the subsequent Security Council Resolution which condemned the invasion. Thus, the Security Council was unable to agree on a ceasefire resolution or on any guidelines for a peace agreement.

In the concluding months of the Carter administration the aid given to the Afghan resistance remained inconsequential. National Security Adviser Brezezinski remained the strongest advocate of

²⁶ See Halliday, F : The Making of the Second Cold War (London, Verso, 1983)

²⁷ Arnold, A : Afghanistan : The Soviet Invasion in Perspective p 136

²⁸ The resolution was carried by 104 votes for and 18 votes against.

American support for the resistance.²⁹ The fact that aid was initially severely limited was reflected in the attitude of the Reagan Administration in early 1981 that more should be done to assist the Mujahedeen.³⁰

THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE

At this juncture it is worth recalling that the resistance of the Mujahedeen against the rule of the Marxist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) began shortly after the coup that brought the PDPA to power in April 1978. In other words, the emergence of the Afghan resistance preceded the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.³¹

The first of the regional groups to manifest its opposition to PDPA rule were the Nuristanis. Historically, they had always had grievances against the central government. Although the struggle for Nuristan was relatively limited in its scope it quickly

²⁹ See Klass, R : The Afghan Accords p928-929

³⁰ Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and th Soviet Union p 224

³¹ The fact that this is sometimes overlooked is raised by Mohammed Es'haq who in writing on the Afghan resistance commented that "...Contrary to what some people think it [the resistance] is not new; it has its roots in the history of Afghanistan. Brave Afghans have always fought dictatorship, backwardness, foreign influence and corruption. The resistance is not just a reaction against the Soviet invasion and it will not die with the end of this situation." See Es'haq, M : The Afghan Resistance : Achievements and Problems in Huldt, B and Jansson, E : The Tragedy of Afghanistan: The Social, Cultural and Political Impact of the Soviet Invasion." (London, Croom Helm, 1988) p 155.

became the archetype for regional uprisings elsewhere.³²

In March 1979, Afghan soldiers joined with rebels in Herat (a major city) in killing many government officials, loyal government troops and Soviet advisers and their families. The government only managed to extinguish the uprising after sustaining many casualties. As the resistance continued, many Afghan soldiers deserted, often joining the rebels and taking their weapons with them. Frequent breakdowns in discipline and wholesale opposition to the regime occurred in many army units.

In August 1979, soldiers in the Bala Hissar barracks in Kabul mutinied. Because so many soldiers were deserting the government needed more troops. The draft quotas were therefore increased by the government which only fuelled the rebellion. The government adopted a policy of burning crops in order to break the resistance and starve the people into submission. The purpose of the scorched earth policy adopted by the Soviet Union was to abolish the rural-based support for the Mujahedeen and to drive the population to the urban centres where the resistance could be more easily controlled. The Soviets also followed a carrot-and-stick policy offering monetary inducements and other rewards to Afghans while threatening reprisals for those who refused to cooperate.³³

³² See Newell, N and Newell, R : The Struggle for Afghanistan..... p 100

³³ See Amstutz, J : Afghanistan : The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation (Washington, National Defence University, 1986) p 376.

The Afghan insurgency quickly unfurled and spread to all twenty-nine provinces of Afghanistan. The resistance also encompassed every ethnic group. The reasons for this diversity and depth of popular resistance were mainly twofold. In the first instance Muslim leaders had declared a holy war (*jihad*) against the godless communists. The resistance fighters therefore styled themselves the "Mujahedeen" or "holy warriors." Secondly, the people were protesting against the encroachment of the tradition of autonomy; of self-rule by the people themselves and their customary local leaders. A pattern soon emerged. Generally the strongholds of the resistance existed in the remote arid countryside and villages while the government controlled the cities especially the capital, Kabul.

The Afghan people have a long history of despising the Soviets and fearing their power.³⁴ The Afghan enmity for the Soviets was transferred to the Afghan communist regime which was widely regarded to be a puppet of the Kremlin. As the resistance grew, the communist regime became increasingly unable to cope with it.³⁵

In the aftermath of the Soviet invasion in December 1979, the

³⁴ For example, there had already been Soviet aggression in Afghanistan in 1925, 1929 and 1930.

³⁵ It is probable that the Soviet Union disapproved of many of the government's policies and encouraged it to broaden its popular base of support.

civil war between the Afghan resistance and the regime in Kabul evolved, in essence, into a national liberation struggle by most Afghans against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union seriously miscalculated the amount of force that would be necessary to pacify Afghanistan.³⁶ They also underrated the effectiveness and the tenacity of the resistance. The Soviets had not expected to participate directly in the pacification process.³⁷ However, because of the disintegration within the army as well as the resistance to the Soviet Union amongst the units left, the Afghan army was unable to accomplish this. In July 1980, there was a shift in Soviet military strategy away from armored divisions to units specially trained in counterinsurgency and equipped to deal with the rugged and remote terrain.³⁸ In 1982 a substantial pacification effort was undertaken by the Soviets in an attempt to reestablish government authority in the Panjshir Valley. The campaign proved to be unsuccessful.³⁹ The Soviets tried subversion as well as orthodox counterinsurgency methods. They also exploited the constant bickering between the various resistance groups.

³⁶ see Newell, N and Newell, R : The Struggle For Afghanistan...p 109

³⁷ The Soviet military leadership in Afghanistan had hoped that this would be accomplished by the Afghan army itself.

³⁸ Newell, N and Newell, R : The Struggle for Afghanistan.....p 140. For more on the shift in Soviet military strategy and tactics in 1980 see Urban, M : The War in Afghanistan Chapter 3 pp 51-74

³⁹ This attempt marked the largest Soviet offensive to that date and involved between 12 000 and 15 000 troops (Soviet and Afghan). The campaign lasted for six weeks and the combined Soviet-Afghan force suffered an estimated 3000 casualties and up to 1000 defections to the resistance . See Amstutz, J : Afghanistan : Five Years of Occupation....p 132

The initial uprisings commonly took the form of guerilla attacks against officials and police attachments in the smaller towns and the disruption of traffic on the country roads. This served to weaken government control. Although they did not affect the prosperous sectors of the community, these uprisings did set a pattern of resistance that would later spread. The resistance greatly increased in the fall and winter of 1978-1979 when the government tried to introduce its agrarian, social and educational reforms. This led to opposition even among the Pushtans.⁴⁰ From late 1978, the isolated campaigns spread until they involved all sections of the population. In January 1979, a government campaign against religious leaders was introduced. The repression of religious institutions increased the fervour of the resistance.⁴¹

The tactics of the Mujahideen conformed with the classic requirements of guerilla warfare : the attacks were carried out by small groups at night; the resistance was concentrated in remote areas away from the centres of power; there was a supporting population; the enemy had greater military resources; there was a use of ambushes; such tactics could be extended to

⁴⁰ According to Newell and Newell no government in Afghanistan has ever survived without strong Pushtan support. Newell, N and Newell R : The Struggle for Afghanistan....p 103

⁴¹ The growing appeal of Islamic fundamentalist parties had begun "after the coup d'etat, when the interference in local affairs and the increasing repression by the new regime had created a growing opposition in the countryside." See Christensen, A : "When Muslim Identity has Different meanings : Religion and Politics in Contemporary Afghanistan" in Huldt, B and Jansson, E : The Tragedy of Afghanistan....p 7. This resistance occurred in spite of efforts on the part of the PDPA to present itself as a "Muslim" government.

include fomenting strikes in the cities and the encouragement of Afghan military units to desert and mutiny. The resistance also used terror as a tactic for example the assassination of government officials.

The Soviets were seen by the resistance as the infidel intruders and therefore not entitled to mercy. For this reason as well as logistical problems, the resistance tried to avoid ~~taking~~ prisoners.⁴²

The resistance movement was abetted by the open borders with Iran and Pakistan.⁴³ The resistance could therefore flee over the border eluding Soviet attacks, regroup, resettle their families and organise further incursions. They also received support from family members and friends amongst the Pushtans living on the other side of the border in the Pushtunistan area in Pakistan. The increasing numbers of Afghans who fled across international borders into either Pakistan or Iran provided the externally based resistance groups with a constant flow of new recruits. The chart on the following page indicates the growing number of Afghan refugees in these two neighbouring states during the period 1978-1984.

⁴² However, this uncompromising policy contributed to a perception in international opinion of the mujahedeens being barbourous, even rabidly fanatic in their methods.

⁴³ The topography here is so rugged that it made it almost impossible for the Soviet troops to impede the Mujahedeens' manouverability.

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

1978-1984

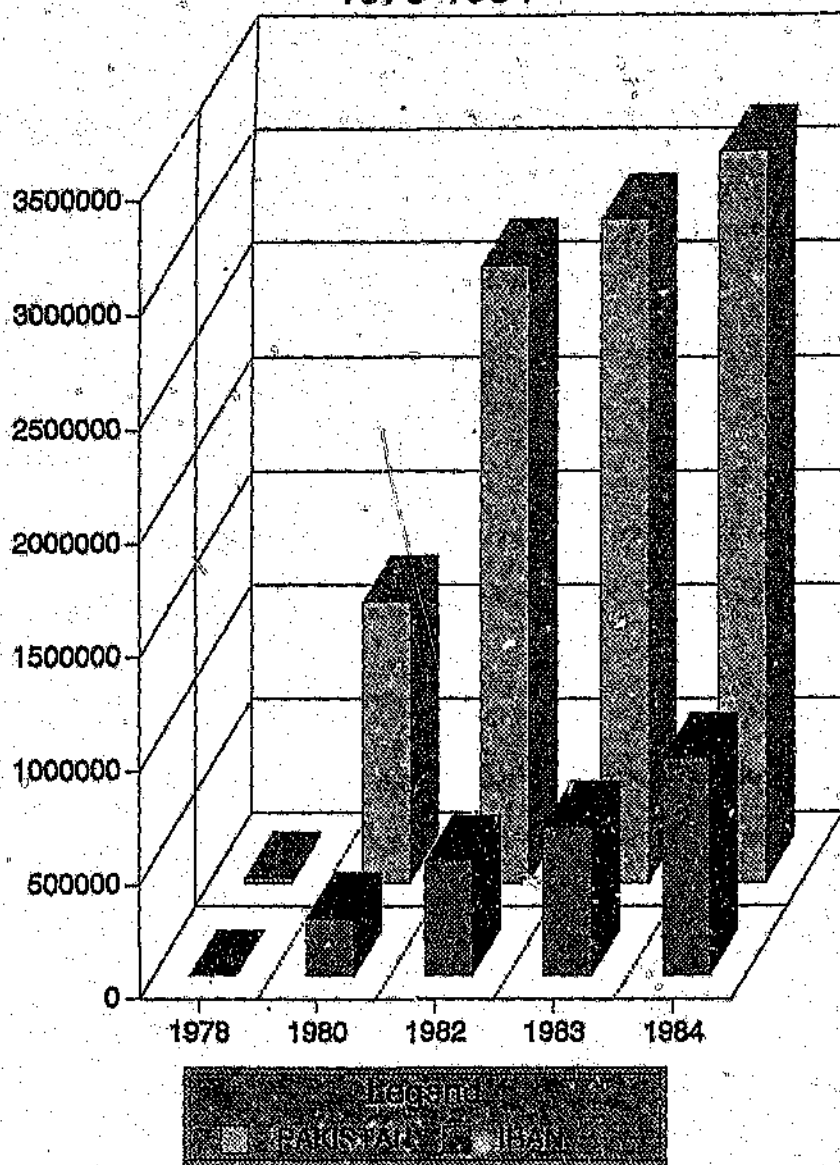


CHART NUMBER 4

Source : Compiled from statistics from Klass, R (Ed): Afghanistan
: The Great Game Revisted (New York, Freedom House, 1987

The rebels evidenced a fanatical determination to fight the Soviets to death. There were various reasons for this." These included :-

- (i) The mullahs had declared the struggle a jihad
- (ii) The rebels were influenced by the tradition of badal ("blood for blood")
- (iii) They wanted to protect their right to self rule.
- (iv) The Afghan people have always fought against outside invaders (for example the British).
- (v) Resistance by the rebels was also in response to the various brutal Soviet measures adopted for example the chemical warfare conducted by the Soviets. The rebels were also opposed to the policies of the government especially the political repression in the form of torture, arrests and killings by the government.
- (vi) The rebels were opposed to the government's ideology of communism and the programme of "Sovietization".

The attitude of the Mujahedeen towards the Soviet enemy troops

" See Hammond, T : Red Flag Over Afghanistan....p 159

rebels was perhaps most clearly illuminated by the words of a unnamed rebel leader who was quoted in the New York Times as saying that :-

" To us killing a Russian or dying in battle represents an equal victory. If a Muslim kills an enemy in battle, he is a ghazi, an Islamic warrior, and if he is killed, he is a shaheed, a martyr for Islam, and the rewards are in paradise." ⁴⁵

This messianism was also reflected in the words of a spokesman for one of the leading factions, the Mezb-i Islami, who commented that "Karmal [The Afghan President] may have the Russians behind him but we have God." ⁴⁶

Clearly then the motivation for the Mujahedeen was a amalgamation of allegiance and fatalism unique to Islam. Not only did this encourage a willingness to die but also a willingness to accept cold, hunger and untreated wounds. ⁴⁷

The historically fractious nature of Afghan society and politics both assisted and hindered the efforts of the Mujahedeen. The resistance was aided by the split between the Khalq and Parchami factions in the ruling party the PDPA. However the Mujahedeen

⁴⁵ Quoted in The New York Times July 20, 1980 p 12.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Amstutz, B : Afghanistan : The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation.....p 87.

⁴⁷ Newell, N and Newell, R : The Struggle For Afghanistan p 149.

were also divided and, prior to 1985, a myriad of insurgency groups lacking central coordination were sometimes as concerned with internecine quarrelling as they were with fighting the common enemy the Soviet invaders.

According to Thomas Hammond, the Afghan resistance received assistance and arms from the United States, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iran and the other Gulf states.⁴⁸ More specifically The Economist reported in November 1986 that American assistance to the Mujahedeen had increased from around \$ 75 million in 1983 to over \$ 470 million in 1986.⁴⁹ It was later estimated that Saudi Arabia's contribution amounted to around \$ 250 million annually although this money was often dispersed to those factions favoured by the Saudi's rather than to the Mujahedeen's joint alliance which had by then come into force.⁵⁰

The morale of the resistance generally sustained a high level. There were protests from several Mujahedeen leaders within Afghanistan about the shortage of weapons. They argued that if there was aid from countries such as China and the United States, they had received very little of it. This however probably

⁴⁸ Hammond, T : Red Flag over Afghanistan.....p 157. It is also worth noting that the aid from Iran to the resistance was moral as well as material. Among the Arab nations, Egypt under President Sadat was the most candid about the aid that the country had given.

⁴⁹ Foreign Report (Published by The Economist), London, 13 November, 1986

⁵⁰ See The Washington Post, 21 December, 1987.

reflected the fact that certain factions or resistance groups received a disproportionate amount of aid. This grievance was coupled with certain allegations of serious mismanagement of the funding received through the aid programmes. There were also allegations of corruption among the resistance groups in Peshawar.⁵¹

As the resistance continued, there was a greater need, and eventually a greater readiness, to coordinate guerilla activities. By 1985, there were reports that the Mujahedeen were better trained and armed than before and therefore more effective. It is unclear how much of this was attributable to foreign assistance and how much was attributable to the guerillas' own experiences and their successes in obtaining weapons from combat, defectors or deals with corrupt Afghan army outposts.⁵²

The rebels controlled most of the countryside. The Soviets soon discovered that although it might be very easy to drive the rebels out of a valley temporarily, it was impossible to prevent

⁵¹ For more on this see Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.....p 278.

⁵² The resistance generally suffered from the lack of weapons. The mujahedeen had no artillery, no air power and only a few captured armoured vehicles. [Amstutz, p.192]. Foreign aid provided the larger, more sophisticated weaponry such as machine guns, mortars and land mines. [Amstutz, p.192]. The most pressing need was for portable anti-aircraft guns effective against the Soviet MI-24 Hind helicopter. There was also a great shortage of ammunition. at times See Amstutz, B : Afghanistan : The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation p.194.

them from returning unless a large-scale occupying force remained. Villagers disappeared into the hills when faced with superior numbers. The abandonment of their (few) possessions was not a problem. Local resources were not enough to feed the invading army. The army therefore needed to be resupplied through hostile territory and finally retreated. Once the army retreated, the villagers returned.⁵³ The resistance was also helped by sympathizers in the Afghan army and bureaucracy who gave the rebels warnings of impending Soviet actions. The resistance also began to set up local political structures in certain resistance areas. These included judicial systems, schools and medical facilities.

Rebel groups were divided along linguistic, cultural, tribal, ideological and political lines and efforts to coordinate their activities had limited success. This disunity made large-scale operations impossible (although even a united front would have been defeated in a conventional contestation with Soviets troops.) As a result of this, Mujahedeen field commanders from the outset enjoyed considerable independence and although almost every commander was supposedly under the nominal supervision of one or other of the exiled groups in either Iran or Pakistan the nature of the war meant that in reality they were able to operate on the basis of their own respective initiatives.

A fundamental attribute of the revolt was its scattered and

⁵³ see Arnold, A : Afghanistan : The Soviet Invasion in Perspective p 98.

isolated character. The social basis of the resistance was the primordial group namely the family, tribe or village. Thus these groups were able to rely on their established internal structure of authority and discipline. The resistance was therefore often led by traditionally respected and powerful members of the group. The resistance was dominated by the people in the countryside and was essentially a rural war.⁵⁴ The resistance were overwhelmingly rightist; leftist Mujahedeen were virtually non-existent. No one resistance party or coalition dominated. Instead the resistance consisted of 150 to 200 independent bands, each usually operating within a clearly defined territory.

Seven major resistance groups were formed all competing for foreign financial, humanitarian and military aid. All of these groups were strongly anti-communist and anti-Soviet.⁵⁵ These seven groups were divided into two main groups namely the fundamentalists and the moderates.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Newell, N and newell, R : The Struggle For Afghanistan....p 91-92

⁵⁵ For a useful overview of the emergence of these main groupings see Arnold, A : Afghanistan in Radu, M (ed): The New Insurgencies : Anticommunist Guerillas in the Third World (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1990) pp 239-242.

⁵⁶ They both fell victim to traditional Afghan fractiousness. [Arnold, p.117]. The four groups associated with the "fundamentalist" Unity-of-Seven coalition were those headed by Syed Burhanuddin Rabbani, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Yunis Khalis and Rasoul Sayaf. The three groups associated with the "moderate" Unity-of-Three coalition were those led by Ahmed Gailani, Nabi Mohammadi and Sibghatullah Mojadidi. For more on the objectives and political orientation of these seven groups see Kushkaki, S : An Assessment of the New Mujahedeen Alliance in Huldt, B and Jansson, E : The Tragedy of Afghanistan.....pp 164-174.

The resistance groups were essentially aggregations of followers of one or other opposition figures. Few organizations offered a clear political programme. While some groups openly championed democracy in a post-Soviet Afghanistan, the fundamentalists aspired to a Khomeini-type revolutionary Islamic Republic. The latter group were opposed to any role by former royal family members in the settlement of peace. Some fundamentalists were openly anti-West. In contradistinction, the moderates wanted a democratically elected government, were willing that ex-King Zahir Shah play a leading resistance role and welcomed contacts and aid from the West.⁵⁷

The resistance's leadership was based in Peshawar, Pakistan. Thus while essentially independent, most internal resistance groups found that it was expedient to establish an affiliation to one of the groups based in Peshawar in order to obtain access to arms and other support. In most instances, the Peshawar parties did not really control the guerilla groups affiliated to them. Three Afghan resistance groups had offices in Iran. The resistance was weakened by tensions between the Pakistani-based factions and the local field commanders inside Afghanistan. These tensions were the same ethnic and tribal divisions that had prevented the development of a coherent Afghan nationalism since the seventeenth century.⁵⁸ The internecine strife had also been

⁵⁷ For a more detailed analysis on the political programmes and goals also see Amstutz, B : *Afghanistan : The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation*.....pp 87-121.

⁵⁸ See Harrison, S : "Afghanistan : Soviet Intervention, Afghan Resistance and the American Role." in Klare, M and Kornbluh, P (Eds) : *Low Intensity Warfare*. (New York, Pantheon

exacerbated by the rise of Islamic fundamentalism thus creating a division between the Islamic fundamentalist resistance factions and the resistance factions led by traditional Afghan tribal leaders. The function of the resistance leaders in Peshawar was to act as conduits for foreign assistance, channelling aid to the local commanders who gave them allegiance. The fundamentalist leaders received most of the aid. The fundamentalists' goal of the war was the complete destruction of all Soviet and Communist influence in Afghanistan and its replacement with Islamic fundamentalism. By contrast, most of the field commanders within Afghanistan (who were mostly non-fundamentalist) were more willing to compromise provided that this would lead to a Soviet withdrawal.⁵⁹

On 16 May 1985, a new alliance between the exile groups in Peshawar, Pakistan was formed namely the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahedeen.⁶⁰ The alliance's aim was to present a unified stance to the world, particularly to the United Nations and the Islamic Conference Organization. The seven parties agreed to respect continued differences about the future of Afghanistan.⁶¹

Books, 1987) p 195.

⁵⁹ Harrison S : Afghanistan : Soviet Intervention, Afghan Resistance....p.198.

⁶⁰ The merger of the two then-existing alliances in Peshawar was announced by Malvi Yunus Khalis, a leader of one of the major resistance parties. The alliance kept the same name - the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahedeen - previously used by both coalitions. See Department of State Bulletin, Feb 1986, p.16

⁶¹ This was by no means the original attempt to bring together all the resistance groups. In the spring of 1978, an attempt at unity was made under the leadership of Sibghatullah Mojaddedi in the form of the Afghan National Liberation Front.

REAGAN AND AFGHANISTAN

Under President Reagan, US policy towards Afghanistan was, at least on a declaratory level, characterised by a high degree of continuity with that fashioned by the Carter Administration following the Soviet invasion. The policy was however slightly reformulated in order to bring it into closer conformity with the four principles repeatedly outlined in the UN General Assembly Resolutions.⁶² However as Amstutz points out, although the two Administrations' policies were essentially the same, their implementation differed somewhat.⁶³

One clear modification related to sanctions. Reagan lifted the partial embargo on grain sales to the Soviet Union on the basis that the embargo was hurting American farmers while doing little damage to the Soviets. However in order to counterbalance this

This coalition was based on a consensus on the goals of national liberation. Its manifesto promised material and social progress consistent with Islamic socialism, a prominent role for religious leaders. The manifesto stated that the Afghan nation be founded on Islamic teachings, opposition to a one party dictatorship; opposition to any form of imperialism; support for Afghan neutrality and the rejection of any form of atheism. See Newell N and Newell, R : The Struggle For Afghanistan..... pp 103-104.

⁶² These four principles were:- (a) the preservation of the territorial integrity, political independence, and non-aligned character of Afghanistan; (b) the right of the Afghan people to inter alia self determination; (c) the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan; (d) the safe and honourable return of Afghan refugees.

⁶³ Amstutz, J : Afghanistan : The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation.....p 350.

conspicuous weakening of pressure, the Reagan Administration sought to link an overall improvement of Soviet-American relations to a Soviet troop withdrawal. Perhaps the most significant new element in US policy under the Reagan Administration was the strong support for UN-negotiated settlement talks which were started in 1981.

The United States government never publicly admitted giving aid to the resistance. The US State Department consistently declined to comment on questions about any aid (or how much aid) provided by the United States. However President Carter in his memoirs acknowledged that he had arranged for Soviet-made weapons to be sent to the rebels.⁶⁴ Bradsher alleges that the United States sent some medical supplies and communication equipment to the Mujahedeen groups before the invasion.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding the disinclination to initially reveal the extent and nature of the assistance being given to the Mujahedeen, on 9 March 1981, President Reagan said, at a press conference that if the rebels asked for assistance, he would seriously consider it. The President explained his willingness to assist on the grounds that, " These [Mujahedeen] are freedom fighters. These are people fighting for their own country and not wanting to become a satellite state of the Soviet Union."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Carter, J : Keeping Faith : Memoirs of a President (New York, Bantam Books, 1982) pp 473-475.

⁶⁵ Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and the Soviet Union p 223.

⁶⁶ Quoted in The New York Times, 10 March, 1980.

The first explicit account of alleged American aid to the rebels appeared in an article in The New Republic by Carl Bernstein in July 1981. In the article, Bernstein wrote,

" [Today] the US Central Intelligence Agency is coordinating a complex, far-flung programme, involving five countries and more than \$100 million, to provide the Afghan resistance with the weaponry of modern guerilla warfare ... Planning for the operation was personally ordered by [former] President Carter ... [T]he President told the National Security Council that the United States had a "moral obligation" to help the armed resistance.....The Reagan Administration has since reviewed the clandestine operation and ordered it expanded."⁵⁷

AID TO THE MUJAHEDDEEN : CONTENDING ARGUMENTS

The argument in favour of US aid to the Afghan resistances centred on the belief that as long as a major part of Afghanistan was controlled by the Mujahedeen, Afghanistan could not be used as a staging area for Soviet moves towards the Arabian Gulf.⁵⁸ Indeed as Thomas Hammond has succinctly argued:-

⁵⁷ Bernstein, C : "Arms for Afghanistan." , The New Republic, 18 July, 1981 pp 8-10.

⁵⁸ The quest for a warm water port in the Arabian peninsula had been a goal of Moscow's foreign policy since Czarist times.

"The longer the Soviets have to fight in Afghanistan, the harder it will be for them to cause trouble elsewhere - in Pakistan, Iran, the Gulf or other areas."⁶⁹

US aid to the rebels would also increase the price that the Soviet Union would have to pay for the invasion and in doing so would discourage the Soviet Union from similar action in the future.⁷⁰ US aid would also demonstrate to the other Gulf states that the United States could be relied upon.⁷¹

The objectives of then Secretary of State Alexander Haig were perhaps most clearly articulated in a statement on 30 June 1981

" The continuing occupation and conflict in [Afghanistan and Kampuchea] ... represent a major threat to security in key regions ... Let there be no doubt about where we stand. The Afghan and Kampuchean people must control their own destiny. The purpose of negotiation is not to impose a solution from the outside as the Vietnamese and Soviets have attempted to do by force of arms. Rather we seek to achieve the full withdrawal of Soviet and Vietnamese forces, to

⁶⁹ See Hammond, T : Red Flag Over Afghanistan p 215.

⁷⁰ In this sense this reflected the argument used by some of those who advocated supporting the Contras in Nicaragua. Once again assistance to the anti-Marxist insurgency was seen as a way of deterring Moscow from intervening in Third World conflicts.

⁷¹ See Hammond, T : Red Flag over Afghanistan....p 215

eliminate outside intervention, and to restore the nonaligned and neutral status of these two countries."⁷²

However, others argued that it was hopeless to send arms to the rebels. More arms would only result in more Afghans being killed.⁷³ The counter-argument to this was that the Afghans were going to fight anyway with or without American arms. As one Afghan fighter argued, "It is not up to Washington whether we fight or not; it is up to Washington whether we fight with reasonably good weapons or with stones."⁷⁴

Some argued that increasing aid to the resistance would lead to a deterioration in Soviet-American relations and increase world tensions. The indisputable rejoinder was that if the Soviet Union were interested in improving relations, it would never have invaded Afghanistan in the first place.

Another argument against aid to the resistance was that it would jeopardize UN-sponsored peace talks. The usual rebuttal to this was that limiting the effectiveness of the resistance only strengthened the hand of the Soviets. Moreover, it was argued that the conditions imposed by the Soviets for the withdrawal of

⁷² Reprinted in Department of State Bulletin, Vol 81, No 2053, August 1981, p 39.

⁷³ Interestingly similar arguments have been invoked by those who oppose lifting the arms embargo and sending weapons to the Muslims in war-torn Bosnia

⁷⁴ See U.S. News and World Report, 7 July, 1980 p 27.

their troops were totally unrealistic. The Babrak regime (and later the Najibullah regime) could not remain in power without a Soviet occupying force. The Soviet Union had demanded that the United States and Pakistan, among others, guarantee the end of the resistance. This however was always an impossible request because unlike the Contras in Nicaragua the indigenous roots and independence of the Afghan insurgency was never in question.

From the beginning, the US government was broadly divided into two camps with regard to the purpose of the aid programme to Afghanistan. The first camp viewed aid as part of a two-track policy in which the United States simultaneously pursued the withdrawal of the Soviet forces through a negotiated settlement. The second camp consisted of those who believed that the Soviets would not withdraw but that aid would increase the costs of remaining in Afghanistan for the Soviets. The latter camp were also known as the "bleeders".

Cabinet members of the Reagan Administration frequently issued statements that clearly showed sympathy with the Afghan resistance. This included President Reagan who declared on the second anniversary of the Soviet invasion that

... Efforts by the Soviets to establish a puppet government in the Soviet image, which could govern a conquered land, have failed ... So while we express our admiration for those who fight for the freedom we

all cherish, we must also express our deep sympathy for those innocent victims of Soviet imperialism who, because of the love of freedom of their countrymen, have been forced to flee for their lives ... As long as the Soviet Union occupies Afghanistan in defiance of the international community, the heroic Afghan resistance will continue, and the United States will support the cause of a free Afghanistan."⁷⁵

Such declarations of unwavering American support for the Afghan resistance remained constant. In December 1985, on the sixth anniversary of the Soviet invasion, President Reagan delivered a similar message:-

" The Soviets and their Afghan surrogates have resorted to barbaric methods of waging war in their effort to crush this war of national liberation ... The Afghan people, however, are unswerving in their determination to resist the invader ... Since 1980, the United States has strongly advocated a negotiated political settlement, the only reasonable alternative to the bleak prospect of an open-ended military struggle. Seven UN resolutions passed by growing and overwhelming margins since that year show that the United States is not alone in this view We also indicated that the continued Soviet occupation of

⁷⁵ Reprinted in Department of State Bulletin, Vol 82, no 2060, March 1982, p 17.

Afghanistan remains an obstacle to overall improvement in our relationship ... The United States has played, and will continue to play, a major role in the humanitarian efforts to alleviate the suffering of the 2-3 million Afghan refugees now living in Pakistan. Since 1980 we have spent over \$430 million in aid. In the face of deteriorating conditions inside Afghanistan caused largely by the increasingly widespread Soviet reprisals against civilians suspected of opposing the regime, we have allocated, in the current 2-year time frame, almost \$25 million in assistance to the brave people who remain inside Afghanistan ... [T]he United States stands squarely on the side of the people of Afghanistan and will continue its support of their historical struggle in the cause of liberty."⁷⁶

Assistance to Afghanistan took the form of either covert or overt aid. Open support for the resistance took two forms. The first of these was material support for the refugees outside Afghanistan or to the people in resistance-held areas inside Afghanistan. Secondly, open support included an on-going public relations campaign designed to keep Afghanistan in the world's headlines.⁷⁷ President Reagan's enthusiasm for the insurgency in Afghanistan was however tempered by pragmatic considerations

⁷⁶ Department of State Bulletin, Vol 86, No 2107, February 1986, "President's Statement" p 22.

⁷⁷ See Amstutz, B : Afghanistan : The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation p 200

which, inter alia, led to his decision not to recognise the Peshawar based Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahedeen (the group of seven resistance movements that had "united" in a coalition in 1985) as the Afghan government-in-exile.⁷⁸

Official U.S. support coexisted alongside other channels of assistance. For example a substantial amount of humanitarian aid came from France, especially in the form of medical teams and supplies. There were also assorted private groups within the United States active in support of anti-Marxist guerillas.⁷⁹ After the Soviet invasion, the amount of financial aid received from the Arab countries also increased and was usually made contingent on the unification of the Peshawar-based groups.

In contrast to other countries where the Reagan Doctrine was applied, in the Afghan conflict, the American-backed resistance fighters fought not only a local Marxist regime but also Soviet forces. Some analysts argued that the Afghan conflict underlined

⁷⁸ In June 1986, leaders of the Pakistani-based coalition of the seven resistance groups, the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahedeen, visited Washington. While there, they asked President Reagan to recognize the alliance as the government in exile. President Reagan refused to do so on the grounds that the United States would not consider such a step until the alliance had won recognition from "a large section of the international community." The alternative view is that President Reagan refused to grant the recognition requested on the grounds that recognition of the government in Kabul was important for intelligence-gathering purposes. See Codevilla, A : "The Reagan Doctrine (as yet) a Declaratory Policy" Strategic Review, Vol XIV, No 3, Summer 1986..... p 24.

⁷⁹ The most visible of these included the Committee for a Free Afghanistan based in Washington; American Aid for Afghans (based in Portland) and two organisations Freedom House and the Afghan Relief Committee both of whom were based in New York.

an in-built danger in the Reagan Doctrine - namely that the pursuit of the Doctrine could have led to a direct Soviet-American confrontation. However the likelihood of a direct confrontation ever emanating from the Afghan conflict was probably negligible.

SUPPORT BY CONGRESS:

In contrast to its shifting but generally lukewarm attitude towards giving aid to the Contras in Nicaragua, the U.S. Congress was even more determined in its support for the Afghan freedom fighters than was the Reagan Administration.⁸⁰ Thus it has been argued that in the case of Afghanistan, the Reagan Administration was faced with Congressional supporters of the Reagan Doctrine who were demanding tougher action than the Administration

⁸⁰ Congressional support for the resistance came from both the conservatives and the liberals and had equal support from the Democratic and Republican parties. Among the strongest Congressional supporters of the Afghan resistance were Representative Charles Wilson (D-Texas) and conservative Senator Gordon J. Humphrey (R-N.H). Senator Humphrey's views were supported by liberal Democrats : Claiborne Pell, Ernest Hollings and Paul Simon. See The Economist, 19 January 1985, p.33. However, there was severe criticism of US policy expressed notably by Carnegie Endowment Senior Associate Selig S. Harrison. He argued that any amount of arms was likely to be insufficient in order to overcome the superior Soviet forces and would instead result in the annihilation of the Afghan nation. He also argued that the United States had not done enough to further UN mediation attempts. See Amstutz, B : Afghanistan : The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation....p 351.

obviously thought prudent.⁸¹ In 1985, Representative Stephen Solarz (D-NY), a liberal, took the lead in supporting U.S. military assistance to the resistance in Afghanistan.

Congressional supporters of the Afghan resistance argued that the United States was giving "just enough aid to the Afghans to fight and die but not enough to win".⁸² They therefore initiated a campaign in late 1983 for a larger and more direct role for the United States in the war. This resulted in the introduction of the joint House-Senate (Tsongas-Ritter) resolution 237 calling for whatever "material assistance, the United States considers appropriate, to help the Afghan people to fight effectively for their freedom."⁸³ CIA and State Department witnesses testifying before Congress, contended that Pakistan's willingness to serve as a conduit for covert aid would be undermined by such an overt confirmation of the CIA's role.⁸⁴

⁸¹ See Copson, R and Cronin, R : "The Reagan Doctrine and its Prospects", Survival, Vol 29, No 1, January-February 1987, p 43. The authors also observed that aid to Afghan guerillas always enjoyed widespread support from Congress. In the Administration's second term, there was a response to critics who said that the Administration had been diffident and inconsistent in aiding the "freedom fighters". Thus during the second term there was stronger rhetoric and more effective lobbying on behalf of guerilla aid. The authors surmise that this change might have been prompted by the confidence of the Reagan Administration of its mandate for a second term and its desire to bequeath a legacy of decisive action in foreign policy.

⁸² Harrison, S : Afghanistan : Soviet Intervention, Afghan Resistance, and the American Role.....p 201

⁸³ See Harrison, S : Afghanistan : Soviet Intervention, Afghan Resistance, and the American Role.....p 201

⁸⁴ Codevilla points out that each year since the Soviet invasion and since the CIA began to channel funds to the resistance, the support for such action in Congress had actually increased. Codevilla, A : "The Reagan Doctrine (As yet) A

The enduring fears of the United States somehow being inadvertently sucked into another Vietnam was evident when former Senator Charles Mathias of Maryland, a liberal Republican, warned that the Tsongas resolution could become another Bay of Tonkin resolution opening the way to an escalation of American involvement.⁵⁵ The State Department also opposed the original Tsongas resolution as too provocative in its call for material assistance.⁵⁶ The Tsongas resolution was also opposed by the then CIA Deputy Director John MacMahon.⁵⁷ In October 1984, a watered-down version of the resolution was adopted by a borderline vote. It included an endorsement of a negotiated settlement. Thereafter, a series of congressional initiatives attempted to provide the resistance with better weaponry from more varied sources. In late 1984 the Administration continued to oppose demands that the resistance be provided with the Stinger missile and other American weaponry.

It has been argued that although U.S aid to the Mujahedeen had started as early as 1979, the Reagan Doctrine was only overtly applied to Afghanistan in 1984 in response to Congressional pressure.⁵⁸ A strong Afghan lobby had been organised in Congress

Declaratory Policy..... p.24

⁵⁵ Mathias waged a successful holding action in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for nearly a year.

⁵⁶ The Economist, 19 January, 1985, p 33.

⁵⁷ The Economist, 19 January 1985, p.33. Also See Codevilla, A : "The Reagan Doctrine (As yet) A Declaratory Policy".....p 24.

⁵⁸ See Roy, O : "The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War" , Adelphi Papers2, No 259, Summer 1991, p 34.

and was particularly effectual from 1984 onwards. Afghanistan was an ideal bipartisan issue for conservatives and liberals in both parties.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND AID TO THE MUJAHEDDEEN

Despite the large majority in both houses of Congress supporting the Resolution in favour of aid to the Mujahedeen, the State Department often appeared to be less rhapsodic about increasing the amount and the effectiveness of the assistance provided to the Mujahedeen.⁸⁹ It has even been argued that the whole Afghan effort was seriously handicapped by the State Department's obsession with keeping US support for the resistance secret for fear of antagonizing Moscow.⁹⁰ However it should be pointed out that although Secretary of State George Shultz made have harboured initial reservations about upgrading American assistance for the Mujahedeen by 1986 his position had changed considerably. In his memoirs Shultz argued that in 1986 the State Department had come to the conclusion that the Reagan Administration "should do all we could to strengthen the Afghan resistance."⁹¹

⁸⁹ See The National Security Record "Implementing the Reagan Doctrine" No 82, August 1985, p 2.

⁹⁰ The National Security Record "Implementing the Reagan Doctrine"....p 3.

⁹¹ Shultz, G : Turmoil and Triumph : My Years as Secretary of State (New York, Scribners, 1993) p 692. Especially significant was Shultz's belief that the United States should provide the Afghan resistance with anti-aircraft "Stinger" missiles.

Hardliners in the Defence Department generally favoured the liberation of countries under Soviet-backed communist regimes. They thus regularly advocated increased aid to the Mujahedeen. However, as I have observed elsewhere, senior officials in the CIA were reluctant to provide the Mujahedeen with the requisite aid.⁹²

WEAPONS FOR THE MUJAHEDDEEN

Initially the US aid programme to the Afghan resistance only provided Soviet-model equipment as part of the "plausible deniability" theory which was advocated by the then Deputy Director of the CIA, John MacMahon. He argued that it would be counterproductive to provide the resistance with sophisticated American equipment as this would only provoke Soviet retaliation and escalation. He therefore argued that the provision of weapons should be just enough to raise the costs of occupation and force the Soviets to the negotiating table without provoking the Soviets into attacking Pakistan.⁹³ Moreover, the supply of Soviet-model weapons would allow the United States to deny all involvement in the supply of weapons as the resistance often captured weapons from the Soviets within Afghanistan itself.⁹⁴

⁹² See Benjamin, L : "The Reagan Doctrine : New Wine in Old Bottles or the Transcendence of Containment", International Affairs Bulletin, Vol 11, No 1, 1989.....p 47.

⁹³ See Harrison, S :Afghanistan : Soviet Intervention, Afghan Resistance, and the American Role.....p 201

⁹⁴ The United States supplied AK-47 Kalashnikovs and RPG-7 antitank guns, heavy anti-aircraft machine guns, ground-to-air missile launchers, sophisticated landmines and portable heat-seeking Sam-7 missiles.

An additional reason for the American supply of Soviet-made weapons was that Pakistan could not be blamed for being used as a conduit pipe for arms to the rebels but instead could claim that the resistance had captured the weapons from the Soviets in Afghanistan. Pakistan was in a somewhat intractable position. The Pakistan leader General Zia ul Haq perceived the advantage that clearly accrued from the Soviet Union not being able to consolidate its grip on Afghanistan and thereby pose a greater threat to Pakistan.⁹⁵ However, Pakistan was also disinclined to allow weapons through because it feared Soviet reprisals. It therefore agreed to allow the weapons through on condition that the number of weapons was severely limited and that the weapons were moved swiftly into Afghanistan.⁹⁶

Both President Carter and President Reagan instructed the CIA to arm the Mujahedeen covertly. CIA policy was cautious and based on certain consistent principles:-

- a) to avoid any direct interference in weapons distribution or Mujahedeen domestic policy instead

⁹⁵ See Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.....p 221.

⁹⁶ See Hammond, T : Red Flag Over Afghanistan....p 158. Pakistan was also concerned about the political pressures that the Soviets could exert if they wished to do so. For example, Soviet support for Afghan claims to Pushtunistan; Soviet endorsement of Baluch demands for independence or Soviet aid to General Zia's political opponents as well as Soviet support for Pakistan's rival India. See Hammond T : Red Flag Over Afghanistan....p 216.

allowing the Mujahedeen leadership in Pakistan to identify aid beneficiaries.

b) to continue with the theory of "plausible deniability"

c) not to supply weapons which might trigger Soviet action against Pakistan"

THE AMOUNT OF AID:

By early 1983, the Reagan Administration had expanded the Carter programme of aid to the resistance. In June 1981, a programme of assistance between the United States and Pakistan was initiated. The United States agreed to provide Pakistan with US \$ 3 billion (half in economic aid and half in military aid) which would help toward the support of the refugees that had fled to Pakistan."

Arnold estimates that by 1983, aid to the Afghan rebels totalled approximately \$30-\$40 million per year with the United States

" See Roy, O : "The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War".....pp 35-36. The CIA only changed the latter two principles under Congressional pressure in 1986 with the supply of Stinger missiles for the first time.

" See Hammond, T : Red Flag Over Afghanistan....p 219. For this grant of aid to Pakistan, President Reagan had to persuade Congress to grant the money as well as to exempt Pakistan from the Symington Amendment which prohibits the sale of arms to any country trying to develop nuclear weapons.

contributing approximately half that amount."⁹⁹

In a news report in The New York Times in May 1983, it was reported that:-

"The United States has stepped up the quantity and quality of covert military support for Afghan insurgents ... according to Administration officials ... President Reagan made the decision [in 1982] ... with the purpose of forcing Moscow to pay a higher price for its ... effort to assert control over Afghanistan ... The total cost of the operation is estimated to have been between \$30 million and \$50 million a year for the last three years, with the United States paying about half."¹⁰⁰

In 1984, US aid increased to \$80 million.¹⁰¹ A decision was made by Congress in July 1984 to add another \$50 million to the aid programme. Congress allocated \$250 million for the fiscal year beginning 1 October 1984. This reportedly more than doubled the size of the programme and would by late 1985 bring the total US aid since 1979 to \$625 million. These were relatively modest

⁹⁹ Arnold, A : Afghanistan : The Soviet Invasion in Perspective....p 118. In the autumn of 1983, Representative Charles Wilson had added \$40 million to the Afghan aid budget through a secret amendment added to the defence appropriations bill. This amendment allowed for the boosting of the rebels' defences by the purchase of Swiss anti-aircraft guns in order to challenge Soviet monopoly of air power. See The Economist, 19 January 1985, p.33.

¹⁰⁰ The New York Times, 10 March, 1981, p 3.

¹⁰¹ Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.....p 278.

amounts compared to the approximately \$4 billion that the occupation was costing Moscow each year.¹⁰²

The Afghan war resulted in the largest covert operation by the CIA since the Vietnam war. Bradsher estimates that Afghan aid accounted for more than 80% of the CIA's annual expenditures for covert operations.¹⁰³ During the period from 1980 to 1986, the aid programme to the resistance totalled \$ 1,2 billion in weapons aid involving at least \$ 750 million in Congressional CIA appropriations together with additional help from China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and others. This amount of US aid to the resistance (\$ 750 million) was five times more than the publicized amount for the aid programme to the Contras in Nicaragua. As the Afghan stalemate intensified, pressure in the United States for a more wide-ranging commitment to the Afghan resistance increased.

In contrast to Nicaragua, Afghanistan evidently appeared to be an unambiguous case for supporting anti-communist action.¹⁰⁴ Thus it is not surprising that in FY 1985, the Afghan aid budget totalled \$250 million which was more than double what the Administration requested and ten times the size of the Nicaraguan programme.

¹⁰² In addition to the CIA weapons aid programme, the United States also provided humanitarian assistance which was administered by the Agency for International Development. The controversial AID programme, which received appropriations totalling \$18 million in 1986 and \$ 15 million in 1987, operated inside Afghanistan in partnership with the resistance groups.

¹⁰³ Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and the Soviet Union....p 278.

¹⁰⁴ The Economist, 19 January 1985, p.33

In 1984, Congressional bequests to Afghanistan became public. In June 1985, the House of Representatives for the first time publicly voted funds to sustain the resistance in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁵ By March 1986, amid the growing emphasis on the Reagan Doctrine as the central theme of Reagan's foreign policy, it was decided to provide the Afghan resistance with Stinger missiles and to upgrade aid to Cambodia. In the process leading to this decision much interagency conflict arose. As George Shultz observed in his memoirs :-

"The CIA was running the war , but the Defense Department controlled the Stinger missile and did not want Stingers used for fear that they would fall into Soviet hands and thus compromise our technology or be sold to Third World terrorists for use against American targets.....In the State Department some people worried that any American weapons system that could turn the tide would so antagonize the Soviets that it would sour our overall effort to improve relations. I strongly disagreed, We should help the freedom fighters to be as effective as possible.... The President eventually agreed."¹⁰⁶

However, implementation of the Stinger decision was delayed for nearly a year. Training of the resistance in the use of this

¹⁰⁵ See Rosenfeld, S : "The Guns of July", Foreign Affairs, Vol 64, No 4, Spring, 1986 p 698.

¹⁰⁶ Shultz, G : Turmoil and Triumph : My Years as Secretary of State.....p 692.

weapon took longer than expected. Pakistan was also concerned that the supply of Stinger missiles would provoke Soviet retaliation.

In 1985, the Administration decided to help the Mujahedeen to win and not only to "bleed" the Soviets. In addition, the political objective of encouraging the Mujahedeen to establish a unified political entity that would challenge the legitimacy of the Kabul regime was added. In April of that year President Reagan openly aligned himself with the "bleeders" for the first time when he signed the National Security Decision Directive 166 which called for efforts to drive the Soviet Union from Afghanistan "by all means available".¹⁰⁷ Consequently, there was a large increase in the Administration's budgetary allotments for Afghanistan in October 1985. The White House bypassed the appropriation process by reprogramming \$200 million of fiscal 1985 funds left unspent in a secret Defence Department account.¹⁰⁸

ALTERNATIVE DIPLOMACY

As has been observed earlier in this chapter, the implementation of the Reagan Doctrine in Afghanistan was juxtaposed with efforts to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan at the negotiating table. International Public opinion as reflected in voting patterns in U.N. General Assembly resolutions concerning Afghanistan

¹⁰⁷ Harrison, S : Afghanistan : Soviet Intervention, Afghan Resistance and the American Role.....p 202.

¹⁰⁸ This went beyond the \$250 million already allocated for the year.

overwhelmingly favoured a withdrawal of the Soviet Union's occupying forces

Within the United States the policy of providing both military and humanitarian assistance to the Mujahedeen was seen by many as a means to exert additional leverage on the Soviet Union to withdraw its military forces from Afghanistan.

There was a persistent dilemma that pervaded earlier efforts at peace negotiations. The Soviet Union insisted that the only opposition to Afghan leader Babrak Karmal was externally motivated, and any resistance to his rule was the result of outside interference. Therefore in order to withdraw, the Soviet Union wanted a Western undertaking against outside interference and against the free choice of the people of Afghanistan.¹⁰⁹

In February 1980, Margaret Thatcher's government suggested the "neutralization" of Afghanistan. This demonstrated a softening of the initial response to the invasion. The suggestion was also adopted by other NATO powers.¹¹⁰ The idea of Afghan neutrality was rejected by the Soviet Union. It argued that Afghanistan already had a sovereign government and that the Soviet troops would only withdraw once the United States and its allies stopped interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs. The suggestion of neutrality was also rejected by the United States.

¹⁰⁹ See Bradsher, H : Afghanistan and the Soviet Union....p 226.

¹¹⁰ Newell, N and Newell, R : The Struggle for Afghanistan.....p 200.

The "bleeders" in the United States were opposed to the UN formula for settlement because it linked Soviet withdrawal with the termination of aid to the Afghan resistance. They also argued that the formula would legitimize the DRA regime.

Following the 1985 Soviet-American summit, the United States gave conditional support to the four UN draft agreements that were later adopted. This reversal of policy was announced on 13 December 1985 and was criticized by former Assistant Secretary of Defence Richard Perle and other influential "bleeders". By mid-1986, the United States had given open conditional support to a new transitional regime dominated by non-communists to be followed by elections.

On 14 April 1988, four agreements under the auspices of the United Nations were signed in Geneva. These served to bring to an end the eight-year war in Afghanistan. Such peace negotiations were made possible by Gorbachev's statements that the Soviet Union would be willing to withdraw its troops subject to certain conditions.

The Geneva agreements on Afghanistan consisted of four "instruments" and a memorandum. The terms of the agreements were:

- (a) Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to observe mutual "non-interference" and "non-intervention" in each other affairs.

(b) Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to encourage the voluntary return of refugees

(c) Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed that Soviet troops would withdraw within nine months of the date when the instruments came into force. i.e 15 May 1989

(d) The United States and the Soviet Union agreed to respect Afghanistan's neutrality and non-aligned status.

(e) A separate memorandum provided for the stationing of a small force of UN observers to check compliance with the agreement.¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

Writing in 1991 Oliver Roy argued that the policy of supporting the Afghan resistance was both a technical success as well as a political failure. Its ultimate success was the achievement of the withdrawal of Soviet troops with the minimum of American involvement.¹¹² However, the policy was a failure in the sense that Najibullah survived after the Soviet withdrawal; there was further fighting amongst the Mujahedeen and a destabilization of

¹¹¹ See The Economist, "The Afghans win another round in the Great Game," 16 April 1988, p.57. For an excellent analysis of the content and significance of the Afghan Accords see Klass, R : "Afghanistan : The Accords: in Foreign Affairs Vol 66 No 5, Summer 1988.

¹¹² It cost the United States \$2 billion over ten years.

Pakistani domestic policy.¹¹³

The subsequent collapse of the Afghan Regime headed by Najibullah led, in turn, to a major outbreak of fighting between various factions of the Mujahedeen. However, as in this case of the implementation of the Reagan Doctrine elsewhere, the efficacy of a policy of aiding anti-Marxist insurgencies cannot be measured in a vacuum. The policy of Glasnost and New Thinking in Soviet foreign policy must also be factored into any political equation.¹¹⁴

What may be concluded, with a fair degree of certainty, is that the implementation of the Reagan Doctrine in Afghanistan was an important factor in influencing Soviet decision-makers to shift from a military strategy in Afghanistan to one predicated upon seeking a peaceful joint resolution (with the United States) to the conflict that racked that country.

¹¹³ Even after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, the Soviet Union continued to supply the Najibullah government with food, arms and fuel. See The Economist "Afghanistan's new Great Game," 31 August 1991, p.49.

¹¹⁴ In this regard the following factors probably contributed to the Soviet decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan :- (1). The financial costs of continuing to support the Afghan regime and fighting a counter-insurgency war in that country. (2). A small but increasingly visible anti-war lobby in the Soviet Union. (3). Sustained international public opinion (4). Gorbachev's realisation that an overall improvement in relations with the West (something which he realised was imperative to his own survival) was contingent upon a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In the first three chapters of this thesis the salient characteristics of the various doctrines of American foreign policy were discussed. The subsequent analysis of the Reagan Doctrine and, in particular, the application of that doctrine in Nicaragua and Afghanistan revealed both the continuity and innovation that characterised the Reagan Administration's approach to foreign policy.

The Reagan Doctrine reaffirmed the time-honoured American belief that the United States has a special destiny or mission to preserve and uphold democratic values and also to support others aspiring to emulate the ideals that lie at the bedrock of the American creed or way of life. However, the Reagan Doctrine also had to grapple with another perennial question namely how could, or rather how should, the United States assist those fighting, in the name of democracy, human rights and self-determination, against tyrannical regimes.

In the case of the Reagan Doctrine, the United States eschewed the option of merely serving as an exemplar or as "a beacon of hope" and instead actively sought to give assistance to specific movements who were engaged in anti-Communist struggle. However the pervasive memory of America's denouement in Vietnam and the concomitant lack of a bipartisan consensus on the part of the

U.S. Congress severely circumscribed the form of assistance that the United States was able to give to the Contras, the Mujahedeen, UNITA and the Cambodian resistance. Clearly the direct use of American forces was never a feasible, or for that matter a desirable, option.

The policies encapsulated in the idea of the Reagan Doctrine were, in essence, a manifestation of two related developments.

In the first instance the doctrine represented a rebuttal to the expansion of Soviet influence in the Third World during the second half of the 1970's. In contradistinction to earlier decades, Soviet expansionism now elicited a antagonistic response. As George Shultz and others were quick to observe the resistance movements of the 1980's tended to be anti-Marxist in character and sought to topple regimes that regarded themselves as being radical enlightened and anti-Western in character. Thus, the Reagan administration was presented with a relatively singular phenomenon. Guerilla movements such as the Contras and Mujahedeen, in turn, looked to the United States for assistance. Reagan and many of those responsible for foreign policy in the administration were determined to reject the notion that Soviet advances in the Third World were irreversible. In essence, the Reagan Doctrine aimed at the very least to raise the costs for the Soviets and, at best, to demonstrate the fallibility of the Brezhnev doctrine.

The other indispensable factor was Ronald Reagan's election as

President in November 1980. Ronald Reagan brought to his office a single-minded determination to reverse the global balance of power that he believed had shifted increasingly in favour of America's principal adversary, the Soviet Union. This shift was apparent on a number of levels. The most evident Soviet advances had occurred in the nuclear balance and in the Third World. Thus Reagan was confronted with a new geopolitical landscape and he firmly believed that Soviet advances in the Third World impacted negatively on America's global standing. He was determined to halt and, where possible, reverse these global power trends.

The Reagan Doctrine was often rationalised in moral terms and couched in hyperbolic rhetoric. This was hardly surprising given Reagan's firm ideological conviction and his antipathy towards the Soviet Union and the system it represented. In the first chapter it was observed that American foreign policy has been largely devoid of a disjunction between moral considerations and geostrategic/security imperatives. It was also observed that when a disjunction did occur geostrategic concerns generally took precedence. In the case of the Reagan Doctrine such a tension did indeed crystallise regarding Nicaragua. Opponents of the Administration's policies in Central America questioned the democratic credentials of the Contras, and argued that it was immoral and indeed illegal to intervene in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. This contrasted with the application of the doctrine to Afghanistan. Support for the Mujahedeen was largely regarded as being both morally correct, legal and geopolitically desirable.

The Reagan Doctrine bore similarities with many of the other doctrines of American foreign policy.

The application of the Reagan Doctrine to Nicaragua suggested, mutatis mutandis, that the Western Hemisphere and especially Central American and Caribbean, were still regarded as a geopolitically vital region of the world. The perceived increase in Soviet influence, exercised through Cuba, and now Nicaragua, was unacceptable to the Reagan Administration. Support for the Contras, the overthrow of the New Jewel Movement in Grenada as well as massive economic and military assistance to the government of El Salvador, all indicated that from President Reagan's perspective the Monroe Doctrine was still valid and its essential elements still applied.

The Reagan Doctrine also reaffirmed the enduring relevance of the Truman Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine formally gave expression to the policy of containment. The Reagan Doctrine, which was a response to the failures on the part of the United States to contain Soviet expansionism in the Third World during the 1970's signalled a return not only to containment but also to the potentiality of rolling back Soviet gains. These two doctrines more so than any others embodied America's allegiance to the ideals of national independence and self-determination. The Reagan Doctrine, like that which bore President Truman's name, was also cast in terms of a moral crusade against the evils of a totalitarian dogma that threatened the well being and freedom of people. However a major distinction also existed. The Truman

Doctrine, unlike the Reagan Doctrine, was never seen to be a doctrine of liberation. The Truman Doctrine was essentially preventative inasmuch as it sought to assist those threatened by Communism. The Reagan Doctrine, by contrast, offered support to those fighting against incumbent Marxist or pro-Soviet client regimes.

Indeed, because some of the supporters of the Reagan Doctrine used sweeping rhetoric and characterised the doctrine as one of "roll back", the Reagan Doctrine bore similarities, at least on a declaratory level, with the policies of the Eisenhower administration. However there were also important differences. The Reagan Doctrine, although it was limited in its application, and although its objectives were often ambiguous, went beyond the rhetorical bravura of John Foster Dulles.

Ronald Reagan had initially rejected the notion of America being a nation in relative decline. He had contended that the United States could "walk tall" on the global stage and had the necessary resources to support a policy of global containment. However the President's policies tended to be much more pragmatic and much less ideologically-charged than much of the declaratory signals suggested. The Reagan Doctrine was a selective policy. It was applied in only a small number of cases and was confined to indirect assistance. Geographically it was also limited to Third World states in which the stakes were relatively low for both superpowers.

Thus, through the Reagan Doctrine, the Reagan Administration tacitly acknowledged what had previously served as the *raison d'être* of the Nixon Doctrine. The United States was unable to rekindle a policy of global containment predicated upon symmetrical response. Interests needed to be calibrated and were not indivisible. Moreover, in the same way as the Nixon Doctrine sought to shift the burden of defence to regional allies so to did the Reagan Doctrine seek to preclude the direct use of American forces in third world conflicts.

The Reagan Doctrine also continued the tradition of unilateralism that has characterised most of America's foreign policy doctrines. The Reagan Doctrine was formulated and operationalised by the United States acting on its own. Neither in formulating or applying the doctrine was there any intention of involving America's traditional allies.

A distinguishing feature of the Reagan Doctrine was its gradual evolution. The Reagan Doctrine was not an instrument of policy induced by one distinctive crisis but was instead a response to a collective set of events. Indeed those who first spoke about the existence of the Reagan doctrine did so in the context of analyzing a set of policies that were already in place or which had already been activated. This contrasted sharply with both the Truman Doctrine and the Carter Doctrine which were elaborated in response to a specific and immediate crisis.

It would be too reductionist to view the Reagan Doctrine as

constituting a response only to a external political developments. Consistent with other U.S. diplomatic doctrines, the Reagan Doctrine was also influenced by domestic political considerations. The Reagan Administration had castigated the Carter Administration and its putative paralysis in conducting foreign policy. Reagan had won the election in 1980 partly because he promised to restore a more assertive, and less reactive, foreign policy. The support of anti-Marxist insurgencies was both an effective and relatively inexpensive strategy and, given its pro-active character, demonstrated America's resolve to reassert itself as a global power.

The question that still remains to be considered is was the Reagan Doctrine successful? The answer to this is less clear-cut than might be imagined. This is due to the fact that the objectives of the doctrine remained shrouded in ambiguity.

If the intention of the Reagan Doctrine was to induce a Soviet withdrawal from Angola, Nicaragua and Afghanistan (in this case a direct withdrawal of Soviet troops) the doctrine may be said to have been spectacularly successful. However even if this was the ultimate objective the Reagan Doctrine was only one variable in a larger equation. The Soviet retrenchment in the Third World was as much, if not more, a manifestation of Soviet domestic policy and a re-prioritizing of Soviet foreign policy concerns.

Some supporters of the Reagan Doctrine believed that support for movements such as the Contras and Mujahedeen would pressurize the incumbent regimes into political liberalization and

democratization. The eventual agreement on the part of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the MPLA in Angola to hold such elections were indeed due, in part, to the policies implemented under the Reagan Doctrine. However once again the Reagan Doctrine was only a partial factor. In the case of Nicaragua the elections of 1990 were stimulated by a variety of factors which included pressure from Moscow on the Sandinistas, a Sandinista belief that they could not lose such an election, regional pressures and domestic economic factors.

As a strategy of roll-back the Reagan Doctrine would appear to have been relatively successful. In none of the conflict theatres that were targeted by the Reagan Doctrine was there a military overthrow of the incumbent government. However, it ought to be realised that roll-back did not necessarily aim at producing a military outcome. The idea of roll-back envisaged the collapse of a pro-Soviet or Soviet-supported regime. In both Nicaragua and Afghanistan this ultimately occurred. However in the case of Afghanistan the collapse of the Najibullah regime coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union itself.

In the final analysis the Reagan Doctrine can best be described as innovative and moderately successful. It should also be regarded as a doctrine that was limited in its objectives. Although the United States had begun to finally emerge from the era of post-Vietnam trauma and self-doubt, the American people remained extremely circumspect about supporting any policy that could conceivably entrap the United States directly in another

protracted Third World conflict.

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APPENDIX :

**THE SANDINISTAS
SEVENTY TWO HOURS
DOCUMENT**

APPENDIX C

The Seventy-two Hour Document

Two months after the Sandinista victory in July 1979, the leaders of the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) met in secret for three days to lay plans to consolidate their power. Their detailed report on the meeting, issued on October 5, 1979, and intended to be circulated only among party members, soon became well known outside the FSLN.

Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista People's Revolution¹

I. INTRODUCTION

BROTHERS:

The First National Assembly of Cadres of the Sandinista National Liberation Front took place in Nicaragua on September 21, 22, and 23, 1979. Although not all leaders and rank-and-file cadres were in attendance, there was sufficient representation among the comrades present to give us a fairly good idea of the situation in our country.

The National Directorate called this assembly, which bore the name of the national hero, Rigoberto López Pérez,² in order to have a direct exchange of ideas with responsible, intermediate cadres on the national problems and on the internal activity of the organization.

As a result of these three days of work, and after analyzing the national situation, guidelines were drawn for the purpose of formulating concrete proposals for the different areas of work and for the different sectors involved in our revolutionary process.

We need to underscore the transcendental nature of this assembly in the history of our organization, as, by unanimous consensus of the Sandinista delegates, it was agreed to call in the future our top body [the] National Directorate of the FSLN. In fact, this was the first time that the leaders, cadres, and militants of our organization were gathered together. This assembly confirmed in a definitive manner the indestructible unity of our vanguard organization, which, led by the National Directorate and unanimously supported by all our militant and revolutionary membership and our people, once more

Translated and published by the U.S. Department of State, February 1986. Notes for this document are on page 517.

confirms that our people, led by the FSLN, are victoriously marching toward the sun of our historical and total liberation.

For obvious reasons, in a report which we want to circulate widely to all our militants, both within the country and abroad, we cannot divulge as we would like to the fundamental aspects of what was discussed. We are certain that within the party structure, the political guidelines and analyses can be expanded upon and dealt with at greater depth. All our militants should devote time to study these guidelines and look for creative ways to apply them in their respective areas of work, while, at the same time, through proper party channels, they should convey their opinions, ideas, and contributions which could better define and enrich the guidelines in this circular.

II. THE PRESENT SITUATION

A. The Sandinista Revolution and the Question of Power

Over the past two years, the struggle for power in Nicaragua essentially centered on seeking the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship through a military defeat of its principal means of support: the *Somocista* [National] Guard. The strategy of our organization for the armed struggle can be said to be based on three vital objectives: (a) the national and international isolation of the dictatorship; (b) a bold policy of national alliances of a combative character; and (c) the development of all forms of insurrectional participation of the masses. Through a decisive combination of political and armed struggles, our organization, particularly since the second half of 1977, by promoting and utilizing the growing participation of the masses in the political and military struggle, turned the structural crisis of the *Somocista* system of oppression of our people into an ever deepening and uninterrupted crisis.

From the moment of the unleashing of the political crisis for the regime, the Sandinista National Liberation Front brought back to the surface the power system that imperialism and the local reactionary forces had created during the 1930s for the purpose of resolving through the creation of a puppet military regime the failure of the military intervention which had been humiliated politically and militarily by the patriotic forces led by our national hero, Augusto C. Sandino. From the very beginning of the crisis of *Somocismo*, we realized more clearly that the true enemy we would have to confront was the imperialist power of the United States and, to a lesser degree, the treachery and demagoguery of the local reactionary bourgeoisie.

We should make special mention, in order to clarify the issue of the nature of the power which emerged with the triumph of the revolution, of the spectacular rise of the struggle of the masses. The last two years, from the middle of 1977 on, were decisive in the overthrow of the dictatorship, because during that period our people began to involve themselves more and more in the strategy for the conquest of power as implemented by our organization.

The class struggle was taking a massive, all encompassing, revolutionary character. Actually, our people understood and comprehended with absolute clarity that, in order to satisfy their enormous needs, the dictatorship had to be overthrown by a popular revolutionary movement.

The masses were increasing their heroic participation in the struggle, not retreating a single step in the face of the regime's genocidal repression, toughening their spirit and forms of struggle, seeking a confrontation with the dictatorship, and overcoming all obstacles. These included the efforts to overcome the subjective conditions which served to limit the power of our vanguard, that is to say, the problem of the different factions and that of deviations from the strategic line.³ Our organization was faced with two crucial problems in securing the military defeat of the dictatorship: on the one hand, solving the material problems of a type of war which was extraordinarily complex because of its diverse forms of combat, its intensity, its scale, and its extensiveness; and, on the other hand, neutralizing through an adroit combination of internal and external alliances and a spectacular diplomatic struggle of worldwide extent the interventionist policies of imperialism intended to make our Sandinista revolution fail.

In the final months especially, it was over one point that all those who for different circumstances found themselves involved in the Nicaraguan conflict became enmeshed in an obsessive struggle: the retention or dissolution of the National Guard, although clearly between these two extremes there was a variety of intermediate positions. Actually, the Sandinista Front had all the advantages. We can say that the historic trap that imperialism and the local reactionaries had set for the Sandinistas in 1933 and 1934 by the substitution of a native interventionist force allowed the Sandinista movement, under today's conditions, to draw imperialism and the reactionary bourgeoisie into a colossal ambush which proved extremely effective. With the combination Saca-sa-Nicaraguan Guard,⁴ they succeeded in cutting short for Sandino the continuity of the struggle using the banners of national liberation, especially since the Yankee troops, with the greatest of cynicism, had withdrawn early in 1933, without the political and economic domination having been resolved in favor of our people.

The military dictatorship, which was founded as a consequence, created, with the passing of the years, sharp contradictions and was rejected by all the "democratic" segments of the population. The Sandinista movement of today, facing the Somoza-Genocidal Guard combination, was able to wage a true struggle of national liberation by raising the highly unifying anti-Somoza banner while at the same time routing the military underpinnings of the bourgeois system of domination, with the help of the bourgeoisie itself.

In order to clarify further the question of power, it is necessary to assess more carefully the significance of the defeat of the National Guard. Imperialism in Nicaragua—with the model that it imposed on us, just as on the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Venezuela, El Salvador, and so on—saw its domination assured through the National Guard. *Somocismo* in Nicaragua, rather than an accident, was a historic necessity that resulted from the meshing of a militarist model of imperial domination with the characteristics of a traditional society, strongly paternalistic, where the influence of the land-owning aristocracy heightened the power of family clans. But the Guard was really the essence of power. With the defeat of the Guard, the substance was attacked, and, of course, the form, *Somocismo*, fell to pieces.

On the other hand, the military dictatorship model was applied in Nicaragua under socioeconomic conditions that could not allow imperialism to establish its domination by using the national bourgeoisie as a direct intermediary—as it was able to do in other

societies such as Argentina and Chile. The bourgeoisie in Nicaragua was just beginning to come to life when it was uprooted by the intervention of 1909. And at the time of the crisis of imperialist power in 1927 and 1933, this same bourgeois class was nearly wiped out economically by the impact of the great world depression. There was no alternative other than that of installing a direct military dictatorship without class intermediaries. For this reason and the natural weakness of the native bourgeoisie, the political and economic power of the Somoza dictatorship attained a markedly monopolistic character. The bourgeoisie in Nicaragua did not really pursue its own policy but was limited to developing its role of accumulating material possessions, while in reality it was represented by the dictatorship in the political field. This explains why, when the dictatorship was collapsing as an instrument of domination, the bourgeoisie, lacking parties and political know-how, resorted to trade unions and economic organizations to strengthen its political participation.

In reality, we helped bring about the fusion of the crisis of the capitalist mode with that of the dictatorship, so that the crisis of the latter became, of necessity, the crisis of the economic order, the exhaustion of a dependent capitalist system, based on the super-exploitation of labor, which had made of the military dictatorship a historical need.

For this reason, the overthrow of the dictatorship by the revolutionary action of the masses and their vanguard historically opened the doors not only to a new political regime but also, and most importantly, to a new and different socioeconomic plan of transition, the base necessary to build the new revolutionary power, the expression of the interests of the workers, peasants, and all the other oppressed sectors of our people.

It is important to emphasize this here, because by defeating the National Guard and overthrowing the dictatorship, we also dealt a decisive blow to the power of the bourgeoisie.

B. On the Correlation of Forces

The Sandinista victory of July 19 erased all the question marks. The pressure of the imperialist circles and international reactionaries was of no avail in saving what for some was mainly the support of their geopolitical interests and for others the preservation of the bourgeois democratic system. The National Guard was not even disbanded by decree as some had hoped; after having suffered successive humiliating defeats, the National Guard collapsed like a house of cards and fled in disgrace with its tyrants, its commanders, and its false heroes. Few victories in the annals of revolutionary war have been as complete as the Sandinista victory. All the events that usually accompany such a defeat occurred at a dizzying pace one after another: military defeat in the war fronts, the takeover of urban centers, the rout of the commanders, the flight of the high command, the capture *en masse* of prisoners of war, the general disarmament, and, as the culmination of the wickedness, the total rout. Nothing was left of that army but shame, smoke, and ashes. It was totally routed.

The Government of Reconstruction—the result of a special class alliance but principally the political alternative organized by the Sandinista Front to neutralize Yankee intervention—entered triumphantly into Managua under conditions totally different from those which had existed at the time of its creation. The war had been won by *Sandinismo*, and the people recognized above all the total victory of *Sandinismo*.

It is true that in the situation prevailing in 1977, the alliance with the democratic elements of the bourgeoisie was skillfully aimed at the main objective of isolating *Samocismo* and widening the forces of the Sandinista Front. It was an alliance for internal neutralization. Nevertheless, the alliance that took the form of the Government of National Reconstruction, the Cabinet, and, to a large degree, the same basic program of the FSLN, under the circumstances of the new insurrectional offensive, was dictated by the need to neutralize Yankee interventionist policies in light of the imminent Sandinista victory.

Actually, the selection and organization of the government was a relatively easy task, as it did not have to be negotiated with the opposition parties of the bourgeoisie, but merely involved appointing patriotic figures who were somewhat representative. Thus, in practice the Government of Reconstruction began its administration in a situation different from that which had given rise to it. The presence of known Sandinista figures in the government compensates for the lack of consistency between the political system which the government put in place and the hard facts of the Sandinista revolution and the crushing military victory.

The alliance that the MPU represented also was somewhat affected by our revolutionary triumph. In a few days the MPU disappeared and the Sandinista Front emerged as the hegemonic force of the Nicaraguan revolution, lending momentum to the growth of mass organizations. A partisan army without precedent began to be organized within a state which nevertheless still had vestiges of old institutions; a Sandinista people; and, finally, the red and black flag covers the national territory. We can assert, without fear, that internally there is no force other than that represented by *Sandinismo*.

We can nevertheless state that since July 19, the FSLN exercises the control of power in the name of the workers and other oppressed sectors or, to put it another way, that the workers control power through the FSLN. However, despite its sweeping victory, *Sandinismo* has not made radical moves to transform all this power once and for all into the power of the workers and peasants, because political expediency dictates that more favorable conditions be developed for the revolution and requires that first the more urgent task of its political, economic, and military consolidation be obtained in order to move on to greater revolutionary transformations.

Thus, two months of government have netted the revolution few results that we could consider sweeping. We Sandinistas are engaged in military and political organization, consolidating our revolutionary bases, but we have not yet advanced with the same energy in the area of in-depth economic and social transformations which this time would change, in historical terms, the relations of power between workers and capital.

With regard to the economic project in itself, of course, our economy is still in a state of deterioration, and overall production levels are down because of the war, among other things, but mainly because of the economic disaster into which Somoza plunged the country, leaving it a foreign debt of around \$1.6 billion.

In spite of this, certain economic measures have been taken in order to place the economy on a course which could give the people the independence which they really need. These fundamental measures for the economy of the country are:

- a. The expropriation of the property of Somoza and the *Samocistas*.
- b. The nationalization of banks.

- c. The creation of the Agrarian Reform Institute.
- d. The expropriation of unoccupied houses and lands.
- e. The creation of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce.

Of course, we will not see the results of these steps in the short term but rather in the medium and long term. The Somoza dictatorship caused economic damage of unbelievable consequences.

With regard to the expropriation of the property of Somoza and *Somocismo*, we can say that the Agrarian Reform Institute has in its possession six million manzanas⁷ of the finest farmland of the country, farmland which once belonged to *Somocismo*.

There are no fewer than 140 enterprises clamoring for qualified personnel and financial resources to be able to keep this process moving forward and to prevent industrial production from grinding to a halt.

But, with the factories and lands of the *Somocistas*, we have a starting point for the economic transformation of the country. To those we should add the immense wealth of the state which was previously in the hands of individuals and corporations who look for themselves whatever they could and exploited it for their personal gain. This has stopped. Our projects are ambitious, and the results of the initial investigations indicate that, despite disproportionate and uncontrolled exploitation of our natural resources, we have prospects for obtaining substantial amounts of foreign exchange by making optimum use of the resources of the state for production.

The nationalization of banks will enable us to begin monitoring funds entering the country and to manage them properly. Government financing will be determined by the real needs of those who request it in accordance with the interests of the people.

Another important economic measure which will benefit the masses is the rent freeze, which will tend to eliminate landlords in such a manner that negotiations can begin for the state to take over all rental housing and implement a policy of readjustment of rents whereby the tenant will pay the state a given percentage of income.

However, it is not only through the Agrarian Reform Institute that the first tasks of the revolution will begin to be implemented in the countryside. At present, there are two kinds of production units: the large farm administered directly by the state, and the cooperative sector which also is managed by INRA [the Agrarian Reform Institute] and consists of the various agricultural cooperatives that are being organized.

Six million manzanas of land have been taken from *Somocismo* and placed under the direct responsibility of INRA. In León alone, there are 45,000 farm workers in eighty-four production units run either by cooperatives or by the state.

INRA itself has under its control 23 per cent of the coffee production, placing the state in a position of direct influence in this important sector of production. As of now, INRA expects to receive \$23 million in aid from other governments and a loan of \$800,000 from the IDB [Inter-American Development Bank].

Finally, the creation of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce marks the beginning of an open trade policy with all the peoples of the world, without any considerations other than those arising from our own people. This will allow the centralization and control of imports and exports pursuing a suitable policy of giving priority to imports which are strictly necessary and of exporting products which will earn us the foreign currency to meet the needs of our own development as a revolution.

With regard to the agricultural sector, despite the widespread smuggling and thefts that have occurred in some parts of the country, it is estimated that for 1979, that is to say during the last months of the year, it will be possible to export some 30 million pounds of meat more than *Somocismo* had, reaching a total of 90 million pounds, which will bring in approximately \$100 million.

Concerning grain production, it is estimated that there is a 44 per cent shortfall, including rice, beans, corn, and sorghum. The biggest problems are with corn. Some 125,000 manzanas were planted, whereas about 190,000 were planted previously, and the crop is not expected to satisfy the needs of the country. Only 10,000 manzanas of beans have been planted, when usually 25,000 were sown before, but with a late harvest, the needs of the country will be met.

There are no great problems with rice, but the supply of sorghum will not satisfy national demand, as only 30,000 [manzanas] were planted compared to 90,000 sown under *Somocismo*.

We should clarify that during the Somoza era, both the government and private enterprise inflated and exaggerated the figures in order to make production costs appear higher and thus make bigger profits.

With regard to cotton, between 40,000 and 45,000 manzanas were planted compared to approximately 250,000 planted previously. This would mean a decrease of foreign exchange earnings to only \$100 million, the same as from beef, with the difference that with beef 80 cents of every dollar remains in the country, while with cotton 80 cents of every dollar is spent on imported inputs. When we speak of an estimated \$100 million, we also include cotton byproducts (seed, twine, etc.). The decreased cotton production will have grave consequences for the revolution because of the unemployment it will cause among the peasant masses.

We already have lopped off a strategic portion of the economic power of the bourgeoisie, reinforcing the material bases which strengthen the position of the exploited classes. Nevertheless, we can assert without ambiguity that only a change in the relations of production which begins in this area of the social economy of the state administration will really tilt, this time in depth, the balance of power between classes in favor of the oppressed, who already count on—this should not be discounted—the power of the arms of the Sandinista People's Army which assures from now on the irreversible character of the conquests and goals achieved so far.

It is important to note, and it is a matter on which for different reasons the FSLN and the bourgeoisie appear to agree, that the dominant factor which dictates the rules in matters of politics is the alignment of forces at the international level, and, more specifically, the influence exerted at the continental level by imperialism and its allies. In other words, under the present circumstances, although it would be wise to maintain a skillful posture of neutralization with respect to imperialism, the FSLN appears instead to have adopted an instinctively defensive posture which has placed us in a conservative position without the benefit of a definite policy for this phase. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie, contrary to the conservative role it played in the past, finds itself in an excellent position to take advantage better than we can of the machinery of the state, its own economic base, and its channels to enhance the contingency policies of imperialism in order to affect our revolutionary process.

Imperialism lost its armed instrument in Nicaragua and lacks secure means to set up in the immediate future any reactionary movement. The kind of military victory achieved over the dictatorship makes it impossible for now, from a practical point of view, to organize aggression by the defeated GN [National Guard], mainly because it would require the solid support of a border or at least nearby state. But Honduras, forced to maintain a neutral position while it is going through a complex internal situation, and El Salvador and Guatemala, which are facing problems of social upheaval, could not embark on such a chancy venture. Probably some GN detachments who maintain contacts with hardcore leaders and could eventually obtain the support of unofficial right-wing military groups or gangs like the "MANO BLANCA" can engage in very limited terrorist or banditry activities. In addition, subversive acts organized by saboteurs of the ultra left or lumpen [proletariat] elements infiltrated in our ranks could contribute in some way to a spontaneous counter-revolutionary uprising.

Without downplaying the need for a strong army capable of assuring the National Defense, it should be noted that at present there are no clear indications of an armed counter-revolution by *Somocista* force from abroad which actually threatens our stability. Actually, what merits our attention, from this point of view, is domestic matters. From another point of view, it appears far more likely that for some time to come counter-revolutionary action from abroad will be in the form of financial pressure organized by imperialism to destabilize the social and economic foundation of the Sandinista revolution.

Up to now, the rousing momentum of our resounding, historic victory plus the confidence of the masses in their vanguard, the FSLN, have enabled us to maintain a considerable degree of leadership over our people. Moreover, a determined political pragmatism practiced by the FSLN has won us the overwhelming support of the middle classes of the population. It can be said that the substance of the FSLN's policy since July 10 translates to a large degree into a policy attractive to the patriotic elements of the nation, as reflected by the influence of various factors which have affected our decisions, such as:

- a. The need to gain ground to consolidate our army.
- b. Keeping a high degree of social cohesiveness, particularly with the bourgeoisie.
- c. Expectation of financial aid from the Western bloc.
- d. The need to eliminate any legitimacy from imperialism's tactics of undermining our position.
- e. Common sense (pragmatism) in matters of political direction on the part of our organization's leadership. After all, it is a positive development that this "intermediate" situation is helping to stimulate desires to merge with the FSLN which have been expressed by "middle-of-the-road" political groups such as the PLI [Independent Liberal Party], the PS [Nicaraguan Socialist Party] of Ramírez, the Progressive wing of the MDN [Nicaraguan Democratic Movement], the PC [Communist Party of Nicaragua], and the PSC [Social Christian Party], while, at the same time, the bourgeois reaction remains politically bankrupt. On the other hand, however, this type of institutionalization will give rise to contradictions, the signs of which are already beginning to surface. Moreover, Sandinista energies have been devoted to bringing together all those social sectors which in the past had been oppressed in its mass organizations, the only means

through which they can guarantee the realization of their most heartfelt aspirations. The impact of the revolution has penetrated deeply into the revolutionary masses, because they were the principal actors in the struggle, the force behind the triumph. Nevertheless, our people are still going through a truly trying situation, at a stage during which we are working to create the indispensable foundation for the new regime to function and to bring about the necessary conditions for solving the acute economic and social problems that afflict the population.

But it is evident that sixty days after the triumph the masses have advanced qualitatively in political consciousness, in organizational experience, in education, and in combative spirit further than other revolutions. In this time alone, the workers and the peasants, the social base of the revolution, have organized themselves in great numbers in the Sandinista Workers Central and the Rural Workers Association, acquiring a strength never before seen in our country. The people's organization—CDS [Sandinista Defense Committees]⁹—operates nationwide; the youth and the women, like other social sectors, are rapidly organizing themselves for the purpose of consolidating and defending the revolution. Nevertheless, greater efforts are required to show the organizations their true role now that the contradiction between people and dictatorship has been resolved. Now the issue is to defeat the new enemies, those who are against the revolution and the reconstruction of the country in accordance with the aspirations of the oppressed and exploited masses. And it is in the area where our people, despite all vicissitudes, are demonstrating with great fervor their unbreakable will to defend its revolution and to follow the leadership of the FSLN.

Another danger facing the masses and specifically the workers' movement is posed by the efforts to divide, confuse, sabotage, and boycott undertaken by the right and the ultra left. In the case of the latter, its efforts are expressed not only in the political and organizational field but also take the form of armed action. Although they are not sufficiently strong to take power, they aim to create an image of instability about our country in the international community and to confuse some backward sectors of our people such as the peasants by taking advantage of the freedoms instituted by the revolution through the government.

Instead of going into a detailed explanation, we will cite some examples. The labor relations between employers and workers have remained practically intact, and with minimal changes the Ministry of Labor maintains the same structure that it had under the dictatorship. Unemployment is high in both the cities and the country. Wages have not been adjusted, and the rate of inflation is really hurting the grass-roots segments of the population, while the most important measures of the revolution are of a structural character whose effects can only be felt in the long run.

In the meantime, there is fertile ground for the anti-Sandinista agitation conducted by groups such as the Workers Front and the PS [Nicaraguan Socialist Party] of Chaguite [Domingo Sánchez]. Paradoxically, the reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie can find a magnificent opportunity to confuse the masses and even to organize them in blocs of resistance against the measures taken by the government. This is the case with the Large Coffee Growers Cooperative, where reactionary sectors were able to bring together thousands of small producers who today are effectively manipulated by reactionary pressure. This type of situation demands that rather than a policy which up to now has been

characterized by a series of realistic actions which are not always coherent, we adopt policies which fall within a strategic concept of the revolutionary phase which has been opened with the Sandinista victory.

C. The Problem of the Character of Our Revolution

We should avoid unnecessary theoretical arguments and attend directly to the matter which in effect is endangering the success and deepening of our Sandinista People's Revolution. It is evident that the military base of imperialism in Nicaragua has been destroyed, for today, there is no interventionist aggression knocking at our door. The reactionary bourgeoisie is defenseless, knowing by class intuition that its fate can depend upon a telephone call. There is broad consensus about the need for sweeping changes. However, we Sandinistas are not exercising all the power that the victory on July 19 gave us. This failure of ours to exercise our power has been more pro forma and quantitative rather than real and qualitative, but, in any event, it is evident that we have to strive to lay the foundation of a system of power that will not endanger the stability of our revolution.

The conduct of the bourgeoisie in these last weeks, in addition to certain moves of imperialism in the financial field, gives us an important clue about how to determine, if not the character of our revolution in a global sense, at least the frame of reference for formulating a political strategy for the current phase.

Through the dictatorship and its hub, the GN [National Guard], something defended imperialism in Nicaragua. This something is an economic system which, since its establishment, represents one cog in the movement of the overall machinery of imperialism. It is the continuity of this system that constitutes the primary objective of imperialist policy, and, today in our country, despite the revolution which has had a principally political and democratic effect, the bases exist for an imperialist alliance with groups of traitors for the purpose of undertaking a counter-revolutionary plan. The worst of all is the fact that both imperialism and the bourgeois traitors can avail themselves of the Nicaraguan state itself to carry out their plans.

The fact is that the economic and financial sector of the state, with the exception of the agrarian reform—and with certain limitations even in this case—are in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This situation could afford the opportunity for the most reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie and for imperialism first to rebuild and then to consolidate a model of economic development with the following elements:

- a. Maintaining dependency with respect to imperialism.
- b. Strengthening the "free enterprise" system.
- c. Isolating and undermining revolutionary social and economic programs.
- d. Strengthening as an economic and political class one sector of the bourgeoisie: the "traitorous bourgeoisie."

As basic aspects of this model to be promoted with every external resource and internal support, we should mention:

- a. Promoting in the government the thought of the indispensable need for the "take-off" of the reconstruction to be based on heavy foreign indebtedness, which would bring the Nicaraguan debt to a level of \$4 billion. This would lock our country to the international capitalist system with a permanent deficit economy. In other words, we sell cheap

what we produce and they sell to us at high prices that which we need in order to produce and to subsist; and, because the balance of trade is not in our favor, they will make us loans to keep on going.

- b. Attracting, through financial resources and promises of "renegotiations," the IMF [International Monetary Fund] into Nicaragua. This means shackling our economy to all the extortionist policies of imperialism in matters of control of investments, employment, wages, exchange rate, taxation, and the like, which, of course, are at odds with revolutionary policy.

- c. Increasing dependency on technology and supplies originating in the U.S.A. and its allies.

- d. Renegotiating the foreign debt, but under political pressures and conditions which are detrimental to the sovereign measures which we can take in economic matters.

- e. Through agents infiltrated in the government, injecting substantial financial aid to rebuild and ensure the expansion of "local" capitalism. Also, using "American" banks as bridgeheads in the country to strengthen the "free enterprise" system. Some organization could take over the management of the financial assistance while at the same time playing the role of political leadership.

- f. Tying whenever possible the financing to private banks or financial mechanisms protected by the government of the United States, and the Congress, so that, in the event of any nationalization, they could invoke the just compensation clause, which, if not resolved, could lead to the application of an automatic [economic] blockade.

- g. Contaminating industry, commerce, and private agriculture with North American capital or joint investments in order to protect the Nicaraguan enterprises by [linking them with] this same blockade mechanism.

- h. Curtailing the external assistance that could be channeled to the public sector.

- i. Supporting the political strengthening of the trade unions, associations, and parties of the bourgeoisie.

In short, in our country the enemies of the revolution are:

- a. The traitorous bourgeoisie, the principal instrument of the counter-revolution. This enemy is personified in the class of the financial oligarchy, which is trying to entrench itself in industry, commerce, and agriculture (the Fernández Holmans, the Montelegre Callejas, and the like),¹⁰ the commercial and industrial sector which had not yet become a financial oligarchy but had played a leading role in private initiative, and the class of local agricultural bourgeoisie which is attempting to create alliances with the peasantry for the purpose of creating a counter-revolutionary social base, particularly with the most backward of the peasantry.

- b. The vestiges of *Somocismo*, represented by the *Somocista* government officials, members of *Somocista* organizations, paramilitary personnel, *Somocistas* who have infiltrated mass organizations and the army, as well as the corrupt practices which characterized the Somoza regime.

- c. The ultra-left sectors who are trying to confuse the people by the use of provocative attitudes against the revolution.

The above does not, of course, exhaust the subject [but] attempts to show that it is through financial means that, for now, the beginning of a tactic of distorting our revolution is being put into effect. For today there are no other reactionary forces to promote.

and it is evident that imperialism, after having failed time after time to prevent our victory, is now counting on elements who are at its disposal to continue its persistent action to undermine [the revolution]. In our opinion, this is the main danger that we are facing. That is precisely where we are the weakest and least experienced.

For this reason, we believe that our revolution, if it has a clear democratic content, should at the same time endeavor to achieve our national liberation in the economic field. And this is the essence of one of the tasks most clearly bequeathed to us by Sandino. We should remember that in 1933 he pointed out that while the Yankee intervention appeared to have ended, political and economic intervention remained intact. Politically we have dealt a tremendous blow to imperialism; however, it is in the economic field, where the bonds of domination are maintained and now threaten to become the basis of the rebirth of an axis of counter-revolutionary forces, that in the medium term a serious danger can exist to our revolution.

Consequently our revolution should make qualitative progress in the economic field as well, seeking how to transform the social relations of production in all that area in which we have brought the bourgeoisie to bay, incorporating urban and rural workers *en masse* into the struggle for fundamental changes in Nicaraguan society.

In this way, the nature and character of our revolution will be advancing during this transitional phase, opening all the avenues of power in its dimension which must belong solely to the true creators of social wealth: the workers.

III. OUR TACTIC

Recognizing fully the harsh domestic and international situation and knowing that the Sandinista People's Revolution is marching toward its definitive emancipation, after completing the democratic transition stage, we need to indicate the political and military course of action that the forces of the revolution ought to pursue under the present circumstances. For a long time, American imperialism, the rabid enemy of all peoples who are struggling to achieve their definitive liberation or who are in the process of achieving it, established by force bonds of political and economic domination in our country through various means. By eliminating forever the political-military tool created to exercise this domination, our people have succeeded in breaking the bonds that tied them to the imperial dominion. They did not, however, do away with the economic dependence fostered for years by the dictatorship and the bourgeoisie. Therefore, our revolution must have a strong national, anti-imperialist emphasis, stressing efforts to achieve national liberation in an economic sense without neglecting its political and military consolidation at the domestic and international levels.

The specific circumstances which resulted from the events in Nicaragua leading up to the fierce battle in which the dictatorship was toppled have given the Sandinista Front and its people an extraordinary degree of power, capable of imparting a markedly democratic, popular, and anti-imperialist quality to the process. They also are an important factor in shifting the correlation of forces in our favor and moving the revolutionary process forward in its transitional phase. An undertaking such as this requires a correct tactic in the different fields and a skillful channeling of all revolutionary forces and their

allies against their enemies, that is to say, the traitorous bourgeoisie, the vestiges of *Somocismo*, and the ultra left at the domestic level and American imperialism at the international level.

Attracting our friends and forming with them a solid bloc to neutralize the moves of the reactionaries and to isolate and crush our enemies implies performing the following tasks during this stage:

1. Expose the traitorous bourgeoisie, the ultra left, and the vestiges of *Somocismo* from the domestic sector; and organize the driving forces of the revolution and place them under the leadership of the FSLN.

It is the task of our vanguard to unite all sectors of the nation around the defense and consolidation of the revolution. Its main strength lies with the workers and peasants, the bourgeoisie and the democratic sectors of the bourgeoisie that identify with the revolution, and it is from these groups that it must extract all of the energy it needs to achieve its objectives. The organized revolutionary masses are the indispensable source of power, the sole force that can preserve the revolution and spur it on to greater revolutionary transformations. Only they can go the distance precisely because they carry inside themselves the power to transform capitalist society. Although it is true that our main concern is to unite all democratic, progressive, and revolutionary sectors to consolidate the revolution, it is much more important to ensure the influence, education, organization, and guidance of the most revolutionary classes, turning them into the driving force of the revolutionary process.

Preventing the dispersal of the worker-peasant movement and of the masses in general in a country in which certain organizations for their own interests have traditionally striven to keep them dispersed is a complex and difficult task. Nevertheless, we should aim all of our political efforts in that direction in order to involve the organized masses in the central tasks of the revolution and set them against the main enemy whom we will inevitably have to confront. The position in which the Nicaraguan revolutionary movement finds itself as a result of its victory enables it to take a more advanced stand in this regard, particularly because *Sandinismo* is capable of influencing and establishing its political and military leadership over all segments of the masses. The policy we will have to follow in the future must be for *Sandinismo* to lend greater strength and vigor to activities of the masses and, at the same time, to place left-wing political groups under our leadership with an eye toward gradually absorbing them [into *Sandinismo*] and its mass organizations.

It is in the way that *Sandinismo* is able to show its ability to unite, lead, and rebuild the country that it will be able to keep intact its victory and that the revolutionary process will be able to bring about sweeping revolutionary transformations. The position of the FSLN with respect to the political parties of the left is dependent on the attitude of these parties with respect to the revolutionary process. If their attitude entails an actual danger, these parties will be treated as enemies of the revolution. Such is the case of the groups who, from ultra-left positions, have adopted sabotage and counter-revolutionary positions, such as the MAP [Popular Action Movement] and its organizations and the Trotskyite groups; these groups opposed to the [revolutionary] process must be crushed!

On the other hand, with [regard to] the leftist organizations which show a predisposition to work toward the interests of the revolution, whether through becoming an integral part of the FSLN by dissolving their mass organizations or, in the end, through working closely together under the leadership of the FSLN, we should encourage them to work without rest to maintain the revolution.

But there are other sectors which also need to be brought over to the side of the revolution. The petty bourgeoisie now is coalescing and recognizes the FSLN as the vanguard of the revolutionary process. The same thing is happening with small organizations of this sort and with the democratic sectors of the bourgeoisie who prefer to work within an established framework rather than waste away. We should attract the petty bourgeoisie masses by giving them their own organizations and by integrating them into the affairs of state, and, keeping in mind the international situation, we should also preserve the micro parties, doing work inside them for the purpose of assimilating into the revolution the most important elements that compose them. Our policy should seek that those micro parties—which instead of representing the petty bourgeoisie are rather groups of organized petty bourgeoisie—remain, especially in order to carry out a policy of changing their opinion of the Council of State, which should have a real base in the political activity of the organized working masses. With some of these groups we can be frank and explain the situation; with others we should be cautious in order to achieve the desired objectives.

On the other hand, we must isolate from the democratic sectors the traitorous bourgeoisie, which blindly persists in trying to keep our country subject to the economic dependence of imperialism. Our policy is to achieve this isolation through an appropriate political tactic that responds to the situation presented by the revolutionary process. We should hit it not by attacking it as a class, but by attacking its most representative elements as soon as they give us the first opportunity. By striking political and economic blows, we will greatly reduce its power and its capacity for counter-revolutionary maneuvering. The same kind of isolation should be used with ultra-left groups which persist in organizing activities of sabotage and confusing the masses. Pursuing this policy facilitates the identification of the enemies of the revolution, making it possible for the masses to direct the heaviest blows, to annihilate the counter-revolutionary enclaves of the traitorous bourgeoisie, the remnants of *Somocismo*, and the ultra left.

With the Catholic Church and Protestant Church, we should strengthen relations on a diplomatic level, maintaining, generally, a careful policy which seeks to neutralize as much as possible conservative positions and to strengthen our ties with the priests sympathetic to the revolution, while at the same time we are stimulating the revolutionary sectors of the church. With the Protestant Church, which is generally formed by North American religious sects, we should adopt a restrictive policy, conduct an intelligence operation on them, and, if they are caught, arrange for their immediate expulsion.

Finally, with the former National Guardsmen who did participate in some measure with the FSLN or who surrendered before they were called upon to do so, we should follow a policy of rapprochement, while keeping files on them and preventing them from obtaining positions of responsibility in the Sandinista People's Army or in the government. Obviously, exceptions should be made for those who, by possessing certain technical skills and an acceptable record, are indispensable.

2. Make the State Sector the focus of the national economy and guarantee the effective participation of the mass organizations.

In order to achieve our objectives we should make use of the political forces of *Sandinismo*, of the mass movement, and of the governmental structure, placing its economic policy at the service of the working masses and the allied sectors who, on a national level, show a willingness to support the cause of the revolution. The hub of the economy in our country should be the State Sector, because it is through it that we can let the organized masses participate.

At the same time we should implement a production system which takes into consideration, first and foremost, the interests of the nation as a whole, which establishes a new kind of social relations of production, and which stimulates the democratic sectors of the bourgeoisie to produce within the framework established by the economic policy. In this respect, the mass organizations, particularly those involved in the organization of the workers and peasants, should understand perfectly that their political action is to be channeled toward the reinforcing of the different policies formulated on the governmental level by the Sandinista National Liberation Front through its National Directorate, to educate the masses on how to use the power they have conquered, to consolidate the revolution, to rebuild the country, and to defend the conquests [already] achieved from the actions of the reactionary forces which are attempting to reverse the revolutionary process.

Our organizations must clearly distinguish the forces that are on their side from those that are against them. The relations of production cannot be viewed in the same way they were before the overthrow of the dictatorship.

First of all, we must distinguish between the State Sector and the economy promoted by the sectors of private enterprise. The first consists of all the property seized from the *Somocistas* both in the countryside and in the cities which now has come under state administration. Consequently, instead of considering the state as the owner, the class organizations should participate directly in production, in reconstruction, in vigilance so that the plans of the government for the economy are carried out effectively, and in purging the remnants of *Somocismo* from state institutions. They should also provide skilled workers to make the state enterprises function and solve the unemployment problems of the workers by finding employment for them in the production centers of the state as new places of work open. In other words, [they should] be convinced that the State Sector is at the service of the popular interests and, in addition, it gives birth to a production system which allows it to rely on its own resources in order to break the ties of economic dependence on imperialism.

Secondly, we should pressure the progressive sectors of the bourgeoisie in order to bring their level of production in line with the standards of the new regime, producing mainly what is in the national interest. Conversely, we must not allow the traitorous bourgeoisie any opportunity to take advantage of its ties with imperialism because we know that instead of following an economic policy in accordance with the most urgent needs of the masses and all the country, they prefer to export products to increase their wealth, even if the people starve to death and remain permanently unemployed. All this means that in the economic as well as governmental field, we must address ourselves to the following tasks:

On the Economic Level—

a. Our economy must adhere to comprehensive national planning whose hub must be the State Sector, through which we can establish in the field of production a strong base of social relations of production and organization as a function of our historic and total liberation.

b. The national economy must try to become independent of the system of extortion and subordination imposed by imperialism worldwide which limits us to a role of suppliers of raw materials and buyers of manufactured products and forces us to depend on cyclical imperialist financing.

c. Establish economic policy measures in the fields of production and export, international trade, and the use of techniques and financing in order to break imperialism's hegemony in the national economy.

d. Break away from the concept of production for profit which uses a high degree of imported components and try to attend to our own economic realities which demand that we utilize our work force (much of which remains unemployed because of labor-saving trends whose justification is to maintain "competitiveness").

e. Base our industrial and economic development on the use of our raw materials.

f. Reject the notion of reconstruction based on massive infusions of foreign capital, [and instead] help ourselves through a national effort, complemented by financial aid, by applying an austerity policy, especially with regard to products that require foreign exchange.

g. Avoid the spread of labeling and canning industries while stimulating industries with a high domestic value added.

h. Establish fiscal, taxation, custom, and credit policies based on nationalist and popular orientation.

i. The organization of state exploitation of our natural resources (minerals, forests, and fishing).

j. Promote industrial development under state control in areas of production that are of strategic importance to the country's economic development.

On the Government Policy Level—

a. Develop bolder social plans in the fields of education, health, and housing in order to bring the revolution to the masses. Give priority to the peasant population, particularly on the northern border and the ATLANTIC COAST.

b. Effectively control the banking and financial sectors, both by government decrees and through politically trustworthy cadres. Forbid foreign banks from making loans to the private sector.

c. Create state enterprises to organize fishing, industry, and mining. At the same time, the Trusts should disappear, giving way to corporate enterprises that will administer and direct them.

d. Support the Agrarian Reform's plans for expansion.

3. Our international policy seeks to secure the support of friendly countries, governments, and organizations and to neutralize the reactionary sectors.

The foreign policy of the Sandinista People's Revolution is based on the full exercise of national sovereignty and independence and the principle of revolutionary international-

alism. The objective of the FSLN's foreign policy is to achieve the consolidation of the Nicaraguan revolution as this will help to strengthen the Central American, Latin American, and world revolution. The consolidation must be achieved through the solution of the military and economic problems, principally because with the solution of the first we are strategically preparing to repel any aggression and with the second we can make headway in severing the ties of economic dependence on North American imperialism. This concept will govern our foreign policy as expressed in the following guidelines:

a. Develop political and diplomatic relations which will strengthen our process of military consolidation and economic independence.

b. Stimulate and strengthen the formulation of a national anti-imperialist and democratic policy, both internationally as well as on the continental level, and in the Caribbean area in particular.

c. Contribute to and promote the struggle of the peoples of Latin America against fascist dictatorships [and] for democracy and national liberation.

d. In the Central American region, because of its immediate strategic value, the same principles will apply, emphasizing the need to neutralize, through the proper handling of their internal contradictions, the aggressive policies of the military dictatorships of Guatemala and El Salvador and the differentiation with the special situation in Honduras and the friendly conduct of Costa Rica and Panama.

4. On the organizational situation of the masses.

Beginning with the cadres conference, "Rigoberto López Pérez," the role of the Secretariat of the Masses and all its affiliates was clearly defined. This allows us to better undertake the tasks of organizing the masses and to carry out the work correctly, and to grasp the full scope of the role of the Party's Departmental Directive Committees and the nationwide tasks of the Secretariat of the Masses. To begin with, we should say that the Departmental Directive Committees of the FSLN are the political instruments of the FSLN through which proper guidance of the work is assured. In the specific field of mass organization, they are charged with watching and assuring that the organizational line is adhered to in every way as well as [providing] the proper guidance to all the militant forces involved in these matters in the Departments. The policy of the FSLN toward the masses should pursue the following objectives:

a. Make every effort to unite the revolutionary masses around the vanguard.

b. Strengthen and promote the mass organizations which are the real expression of the people's will.

c. Create legal instruments through which the mass organizations can participate in the decision-making of sectors of the government when necessary.

d. Within the organizational lines, the FSLN gives priority to the revolutionary mass organizations: workers and peasants of the CST [Sandinista Workers Central], ATC [Rural Workers Association], and any other peasant organization, so that these organizations may be the defenders of the revolution. Secondly, we should promote the organization of the democratic sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

e. Give priority to work within the CST and the ATC in the state enterprises, guaranteeing them, in accordance with their development, participation in the decision-

making of the enterprise and offering the organized masses the possibility of improving their technical knowledge.

f. Devise [two] different lines of political work, one for the state workers' unions and another for the unions in the private sector. In the latter, the unions should do surveillance and exert pressure.

We should also broach the tasks which should be taken up immediately by the Departmental Directive Committees related to mass organization. We must work hard to educate our people and its most advanced sectors on the practical significance of the tasks of national reconstruction, spurring production and promoting of the various organizations that they have to build to consolidate the revolution. Failure to do so could create serious and perfectly foreseeable political problems. We state this because we already know of excesses committed by heads of mass organizations which practically nullify the authority of the representatives of the government. They demand measures which have nothing to do with the guidelines issued; rather, they make the mass organizations the sole judges of how things should be run without taking into consideration the character of the revolution and the policy of alliances which we should follow.

Actually, in some cases Sandinista leaders have attempted to become managers of enterprises and to establish administrative policy, thus creating political problems for us, instead of playing their proper role, which is that of control, vigilance, and demanding that the state policy drawn up by the FSLN is followed to the letter. The policy of the mass organizations must take into account the objective reality of the revolution; from the economic point of view we have state enterprises and firms which belong to the private sector. Therefore, our policy must take into consideration these situations, these conflicts and these relations, because otherwise, contrary to our doctrine, we will be promoting anarchy. We will find ourselves bogged down in problems of our own making and unable to attend to the fundamental problems which truly we ought to solve. In view of the above, our activities among the masses should be governed by the following guidelines:

a. Form national organizations with the participation of delegates from those mass organizations which already have developed a structure in the departments. Where no structures have yet been formed, it is up to the party organs in charge of such work, as it is up to this national organization, to counsel and guide those affiliated with these organizations. The CST, the ATC, and the CDS have priority in the structuring of these national bodies of the organization.

b. Draw up a draft charter for the mass organizations, emphasizing their bylaws and their declaration of principles. The former will include the organizational concept of the mass organizations, and the latter the political aims of the organization. For this purpose, the Secretariat of the Masses is in the process of forming the teams who will take charge of accomplishing this task.

c. The Secretariat of the Masses will transmit, through the national bodies, the policy the mass organizations should be required to follow. These same bodies will go through the channels of the Departmental Directive Committees through the Executive Commission. The purpose of this is to begin to differentiate the role of the National Secretariat of the Masses from that of the party leadership organizations in the departments. It also has the same aim of strengthening internal order.

d. Once the necessary documents have been drafted, a procedure would be established through which the departmental organizations would be consulted, and a Constitutional Congress of the Mass Organizations would be convoked at a national level.

e. In the departments where the [organizational] work is just beginning, it is necessary to build the departmental mass organizations, keeping in mind the democratic participation of the masses so that they themselves can put in their most advanced representatives. Once this is done, we must select the delegate who will be part of the national body and send him to the National Secretariat of the Masses.

f. Mobilize the masses to bolster the production process, especially in those areas of the economy where our government and FSLN are most deeply involved.

g. Establish connection between delegates of the mass organizations and the state bodies in order to give a stronger impetus to the economic policy and to the relations that should be maintained.

h. See to it that the majority of workers are drawn, by means of their class organizations, into state enterprises. In other words, the CST and the ATC, under the new conditions, should resolve the unemployment problem through the ties they have with the state and thus assure the resumption of industrial and agricultural production. The case of the firms in the private sector is different because there it involves the worker-owner relationship. Nevertheless, we must know how to advise our organizations as to what kind of relationship they should adopt and to turn to state bodies in order to clear up their problems of vigilance and control so that these businesses produce that which is in the interest of the nation, and not to take radical measures unless they are necessary because any measure that tends to paralyze overall production is a serious blow to the efforts to overcome the economic crisis.

i. Hold assemblies with delegates of the national and departmental organizations and with the organized workers in order to show the latter their tasks.

j. Make full use of mass cadres to extend the organization to all departments (including municipalities).

k. Support the efforts of our organization in the struggle to suppress counter-revolutionary pockets.

5. Build, strengthen and educate the Sandinista People's Army, while cultivating its loyalty to its people and its revolution, whose vanguard is the FSLN.

The Sandinista People's Army is the armed organization *par excellence* of the revolutionary masses of Nicaragua. The triumph of our revolution makes it possible for the Sandinista People's Army to be recognized as the Constitutional Army of the Republic. For the same reason, it is the mission of the FSLN to assure the loyalty of its members to the revolution and to the leadership of the historic vanguard: the FSLN. This revolutionary loyalty should be assured through the following mechanisms and tasks:

a. A permanent effort of political education within the armed forces.

b. The organization of the FSLN's vanguard structure which would guarantee the transmission and application of our organization's policies and would assure the political activity of our militants in the army.

c. The FSLN exerts its influence and its political leadership through the directive committees and internal groups of militants within the armed forces. The DN [National

Directorate], through the military committee, assures the political education policy through the military chain of command and will be the organization in charge of the FSLN party structure within the Sandinista People's Army.

d. The party structure should carry out its mission by seeking to strengthen and respect always the military structure and chain of command.

e. It is the task of the FSLN to strengthen the political education section of the Sandinista People's Army, which must be composed of militants of the vanguard with recognized revolutionary qualities.

Other Tasks Within the Armed Forces Are:

a. Strengthen the military leadership in zones of strategic importance and see to it that highly sensitive regions be under the command of a member of our DN [National Directorate]. Specifically the North, South and Atlantic zones.

b. Purge the army at all levels, eliminating those elements who are incompatible with revolutionary measures.

c. Institute mandatory military service.

d. Draw up an emergency plan to take care of the vital needs of the comrades in the Army.

e. Issue military laws and regulations.

f. Establish military regions in accordance with a strategic approach to national defense, eliminating the urban militia type of army. Maintain law and order in the cities with the police and place the forces [of the army] in the countryside or the periphery. Prohibit the carrying of large weapons of war in the cities as well as the display of grenades, with exceptions.

6. The task is: Reorganize the FSLN and transform it into the party of the Sandinista People's Revolution.

We could not face the tasks related to the burning issues of the revolution if our organization did not recognize that an important objective is the building of the revolutionary party. This party, which has a definite class position, a unique political principle, a scientific ideology, and a correct strategy and tactic, places itself at the forefront of all society and embodies the political and military leadership of all revolutionary forces which struggle and work to carry the revolution toward incomparably greater achievements.

For nearly four years, the FSLN was shaken by the problems created by the political crisis of October 1975. During this time, the styles, the practices, and the strategic-tactical concepts that prevailed in each of the factions served to foster a climate of political mistrust among the factions, resulting from the serious divisions within the Sandinista Front. More than once we were in danger of not being able to carry forward the strategic plan for the insurrection and to bring about the necessary conditions in order to unify the different tendencies under one single, monolithic leadership. The imperatives of the political situation at the end of May, the urgency to enter combat as united as possible, the necessities of the war, the vital need to oppose the enemy with the maximum of forces and weapons, and the historic duty to lead our people to victory allowed the uniting, in many places, of a great number of forces under a single leadership. Generally, they followed the political and military instructions of the constituted leader-

ship and fought tremendous battles against the *Somocista* guard until they ground it to dust.

Nevertheless, the realities of today are different. We are an organization which, at the head of its people, has seized power, and that allows us to implement the political plan proclaimed for so many months. This is a necessary condition for advancing toward a higher stage of the struggle where power will definitely be in the hands of the people. In order to assure a correct revolutionary leadership, the leadership of all the forces, to promote the most varied range of organizations, to raise the level of political consciousness of our people, to efficiently fight the traitorous bourgeoisie who have begun mobilizing to oust us from the state apparatus and take over the economy of the country while they are trying to organize themselves politically—that is to say, in order to discharge such responsibilities, we need to count on a vanguard detachment which can, first of all, eradicate from within the Sandinista Front all remnants of sectarianism and place the organization under a single recognized politico-military leadership and, secondly, rapidly begin building the revolutionary party.

It is impossible to successfully accomplish the task of consolidating the Sandinista People's Revolution without being able to count on that instrument of the vanguard, without this political apparatus which constitutes the best known collective leadership of the society. It has an organizational aspect, it works out the contradictions that arise as the process evolves and solves the problems that systematically appear; it leads the class struggle and guides the whole nation down the road "strewn with victories. Without this vanguard, without this revolutionary party which is the highest form of organization of the workers and their most characteristic leader, it would be much more difficult to face the crucial tasks, to maintain power, and to place [that power] at the service of the revolution.

The most serious internal danger facing the FSLN is the maintenance of divisionist, sectarian, or factional positions which in actuality serve to boycott and sabotage the internal cohesion of the organization, weakening any position of unity the FSLN could adopt with respect to other revolutionary organizations. To speak of internal unity within the organization means to remove forever the original causes of the political crisis and to make efforts to build within the organization the party mechanisms for resolving the contradictions so as to strengthen the vanguard. An organization that does not stimulate collective discussion, the education of its militants, the participation of its members in the burning issues of the movement, is an organization that ages quickly, loses its vigor and force, and is liquidated politically. It should be understood that it is not a matter of implementing within the organization a non-critical approach, the ultra-democratic way, and excessive centralism, but to function scientifically in accordance with the revolutionary principles that govern an organization.

Everyone realizes that we are going through a period when our biggest efforts are devoted to the most efficient redeployment of the militant forces. Some of these forces still show their own tendencies, styles and practices, political immaturity, and ideological weaknesses. These traits are destined to disappear permanently, but this will not be achieved without the participation of and the conscious will of the militants to overcome the present limitations once and for all.

To speak of monolithic unity from now on will mean to change all the militant forces,

which now are divided and without direction, into a powerful and organized force which is the political guarantor of the revolutionary process. This unification, which can in no way resemble the unity in action that characterized the activity of the political factions of the FSLN in the past, should take into account the specific situation in which we find ourselves at present. That is to say, we are in an organization which through insurrection has overthrown the *Somocista* dictatorship, taken power, and installed a type of democracy particularly representative of the popular interests whose main duty is to prepare itself for the new struggles that are approaching.

We must fulfill with maturity our people's historical imperative of having a strong, capable, and monolithic vanguard. We must deal critically, and not with mistrust, with all those manifestations of sectarianism, competitiveness, supremacism, and organizational disintegration and consistently struggle to crystallize and create the organic political and ideological unity of Sandinista militants. We must constantly and systematically spread [our message] and educate our brothers in the revolutionary principles that govern a vanguard, which, at the same time, are the strongest guarantee of unity of the organization. We must fight to the death against amateurish organizational practices and theoretical, dogmatic, and liberal approaches in Sandinista militants. We must claim as ours all lessons learned as a result of the political crisis of the FSLN, analyzing them with a positive spirit and, above all, learning to be conscious of the fact that it is necessary to struggle every day and with all our forces in order to keep our vanguard united.

These are extremely important, unavoidable tasks and the formidable challenge facing Sandinista militants in order to erase the memories generated by the political crisis of the FSLN. This is the only way to keep the organization intact and to infuse it with the powerful energy displayed by its militants. Nobody can, at this time, divert their efforts in order to implant sectarianism or to live conspiring against the unity of the organization. This would mean lowering our guard and preparing fertile ground for divisions while the enemy is preparing, joining forces, and working feverishly to develop his political apparatus in order to struggle to gain control of the political process.

It must be understood that, generally, in every organization there are currents that run against the tide. They create contradictions, but this is something quite logical, quite natural, part of every political organization when within the organization a correct ideological struggle takes place against currents alien to the revolutionary ideology. It is thus that greater strength and political consolidation are obtained. And, if this struggle is fought within the organic framework of political participation within the organization, nothing can destroy the organization; it is invincible.

But this is one thing, and it is something quite different to believe that it is possible to carry on political activities outside the organization, that any militant, on the basis of his own beliefs, can continue to promote factional positions without regard to the political guidance of the central bodies of the FSLN. Many of our brothers have a tendency to attempt to put into practice their particular experiences based on a purely mechanical approach, imposing unrealistic methods by using altogether theoretical arguments. They attempt to undermine the political authority of comrades who belonged to a different faction in the past. This is nothing less than an attempt to ignore the development of the FSLN, its historic foundation, the objective reality that faces us, and the political and organizational objectives we are pursuing at the present stage.

We can affirm that the organizational objectives for which we currently are striving are the following:

1. Reorganize the militant forces of the FSLN and unite all the scattered forces under a single, sound political and military leadership, creating leadership bodies at every level of the organization whose overall leading body is the National Directorate.
2. Eliminate factions within the FSLN and educate the militants on a basis of a single set of political principles under one strategy and one tactic, and starting from a single internal organizational policy.
3. Make the best use of the cadres and the militants, attending to the most urgent needs at the national level.
4. Begin building the revolutionary party whose ideology is none other than the one that embodies the Sandinista heritage and the contributions of the world revolution.

On the other hand, before determining the tasks concerning organizational matters, we should make clear their political content. We must say that under the new conditions, all organizational criteria have greater flexibility. We are an organization whose greatest aspiration is to maintain revolutionary power, not to conquer it. Consequently, our goal is to work to educate our people to recognize their vanguard and the tasks it has proposed, beginning from the fundamental premise that the FSLN is the legitimate organization to lead the revolutionary process. On the basis of this premise, it is of paramount importance to point out this reality to each of the organizations that are politically and organically independent by clearly explaining the FSLN policy of integrating people into the vanguard and the need for counting on a single set of organizations with a clear revolutionary content in order to accomplish the appointed objectives.

After the years of struggle during which our organization suffered brutal repression, new perspectives are opening in our country for giving the masses a true vanguard, which, taking into account our own organizational experience and the lessons taught and learned through revolutionary theory, can form a solid organization. In it, on one hand, the political structure of revolutionary leadership is guaranteed, and, on the other hand, the participation of the most advanced elements of the people. At the same time, this will strengthen the FSLN's organization politically and ensure the class approval of the exploited and oppressed sectors of the nation.

Toward this end, the organizational policy of the FSLN seeks primarily to continue organizing the militants into select organizations that can guarantee effective guidance for the revolutionary tasks, subject to strict standards of militancy that seal the revolutionary content of *Sandinismo*. It also enlightens all the militants as a whole. On the other hand, it should allow access to the vanguard by the numerous advanced elements of the people who, following a policy of tightly regulating individual membership, will remain in their mass organizations and extend more widely the influence of the Sandinista Front within all the organized and non-organized sectors of the country.

The lines of organization of the FSLN serve to achieve the following objectives:

1. Strengthen the leadership of the National Directorate as the highest body of the FSLN and of the revolution as well as analyze the tasks adequately so as to get down to the orientation of the work in every field. Toward this end, our leadership has been organized into three commissions: Governmental, Military, and Executive. The latter sees to it that the strategic conduct, the guidelines, and the policies in the different fields and

the agreements arrived at by the National Directorate are put into practice in such a way as to advance the process and the vanguard to new, qualitatively better situations. This in no way means that the Executive Commission is hierarchically higher than the rest of the members of the DN [National Directorate], but that it had been constituted to facilitate the smooth execution of the tasks.

2. Maintain the secretariat as an auxiliary consultative and advisory instrument formed by cadres of proven revolutionary caliber, loyal to the revolution and with long histories within the organization. It is they who will promote the various policies nationwide. This group of cadres heads the secretariats created by the DN, and one of their major responsibilities is to see that the purity of the party line is maintained in their specialized fields, to advise the Directive Committees in the departments, and to prevent the rise of deviations of any kind.

3. The State Commission will be in charge of promoting the governmental policy of the FSLN and the organization of Sandinista forces in matters regarding the central government. The Military Commission will have among its functions taking charge of the political work and the organization of Sandinista militants in the armed forces on a national level.

4. Put together as soon as possible the Departmental Directive Committees using the most distinguished cadres, regardless of the area in which they currently work. It is a matter of giving to these leadership bodies the greatest authority possible and converting them into the supervisors of tasks in the departments. In this way, the militant cadres of the FSLN who are engaged in the areas of internal organization, of the masses, the army, and the like, will be perfectly capable of becoming part of the Departmental Directives, devoting the bulk of their energies to the work of leading Sandinista forces. The Directive Committees will maintain ties with the Executive Commission and will receive their instructions from it.

5. Reproduce in the departments the organic framework that will be under the direction of the Directive Committees of the FSLN, which basically entails the creation of Sandinista organizations in the areas of masses, propaganda, education, and the state. We will thus be able to count on a complete political and organizational apparatus through which we can pursue, in an organized way, the extraordinary tasks that have fallen on our shoulders.

6. Organize the membership, resolving first the situation of many comrades, especially those who joined the struggle in the heat of battle and developed great qualities, and who today consider themselves Sandinista militants. A condition for membership is participation in any of the mass organizations and acceptance with revolutionary discipline of the requirements which will be imposed in this category.

7. Immediately select the rank-and-file militants who should be sent to strengthen the organizational work among rural and urban workers and the peasants. We all should be guided by the need to strengthen as soon as possible the Sandinista Workers Central (CST) and the Rural Workers Association (ATC) with militants and cadres. At the same time, we point out to these Sandinista groups the tasks to be achieved and the direction the workers' movement should take with regard to production and the real participation, not subjective or abusive of power, of the class organizations in the revolution.

8. Create organization bases in the municipal administrations in the departments,

sending to accomplish this comrades with recognized authority and broad organizing experience.

9. Place those Sandinistas who are state employees under the direction of the Departmental Directive Committees, at the same time guaranteeing greater political involvement in the tasks of organizing the masses during their free time.

10. Have orderly control over Sandinista militants as well as over those whose organic situation within the organization is being clarified.

Finally, in order to bring to its conclusion this Circular #1, we need say that the different National Secretariats are involved in drafting specific plans to implement our practical policies in each of the fields.

Again, we would like to convey our greetings to you. We have already taken the first step by overthrowing the dictatorship. From now on, we expect our tasks to be more arduous, much more difficult, with stumbling blocks that we will surely overcome. The battle has not yet ended, and while our enemies by their actions are digging their own graves, we Sandinista Revolutionaries continue advancing tirelessly, winning new victories, loyal to the revolution, faithful to our people, developing greater unity, struggling, building the new fatherland and our definitive liberation.

Free Fatherland or Death

NATIONAL DIRECTORATE

Sandinista National Liberation Front

"From the Fatherland of Sandino"—October 1979

NOTES

1. The following translation conforms as closely as possible to the original Spanish text. Material in brackets rather than parentheses, e.g., interpretations of initials or abbreviations, has been inserted to assist the reader. Similarly, minor revisions have been made in the format; e.g., capitalization, paragraph spacing, and indentation, in order to make the translation more readable. Footnotes have been added to clarify certain references in the text.

2. Rigoberto López Pérez assassinated President Anastasio Somoza García in September 1956.

3. In the mid-1970s, the FSLN split into three feuding factions: the Prolonged Popular or faction, led by Tomás Borge; the Proletarian faction, led by Jaime Wheelock; and the Third Force or Insurrectionalist faction, led by Daniel and Humberto Ortega.

4. Juan Bautista Sacasa was president of Nicaragua in the early 1930s.

5. The United People's Movement (MPU), an alliance of twenty-two political, labor, and mass organizations of the left, was formed in July 1978 and was pledged to bring down the Somoza regime.

6. Red and black are the colors of the FSLN flag.

7. One manzana = 1.75 acres.

8. The MANO BLANCA is a right-wing terrorist organization.

9. The CDS are "block committees" modeled after the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

10. These are prominent families in Nicaragua's private sector.

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Name of thesis: The Reagan doctrine in historical perspective.

PUBLISHER:

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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