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ENCOURAGING DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS:
THE PROBLEMATIC IMPACT
OF UNITED STATES' INVOLVEMENT

by

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Encouraging Democratic Transitions: The Problematic Impact of United States' Involvement

by

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of the requirements for the degree of

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A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this thesis is to examine what role, if any, the United States can play in encouraging democratic transitions. It is a comparison of some of the different approaches the United States used in its relations with three countries in which it had varying amounts of influence: Chile (some influence), Brazil (relatively little influence), and El Salvador (relatively major influence). The two most fundamental questions it asks are: What would be the best policy for the United States to follow should it decide to encourage a democratic transition in any given country? And assuming a coherent approach, how much of an impact are United States' efforts likely to have? In reference to the first question, this study finds that a bipartisan foreign policy, prudently using the various instruments at its disposal, is the best course for the United States to follow. As for the second question, the United States can have an impact on democratic transitions, but that impact is likely to be quite limited in comparison to the influence of other factors (historical, cultural, social, economic, and political) within that country. As such, increased involvement does not necessarily increase the ability of the United States to encourage a democratic transition. It is, in effect, a problematic impact.

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I. I N T R O D U C T I O N

"Democracy is like sex. When its good, its great. When its bad, its the best thing going."

Winston Churchill

The various goals of United States' foreign policy in regards to Latin America should be understood in their most fundamental form. A primary aim has been oriented towards maintaining stability in the region.¹ Since the 1970s there has been a greater emphasis on human rights.² Others have argued that it is a combination of protecting American security, political and economic interests in the area.³ Promoting stability, supporting human rights, and protecting American interests in Latin America are not, however, mutually exclusive goals.

For a viable, long term stability to be maintained, basic human rights must be respected. If large segments of the population are denied those rights, resistance will grow. To maintain stability in the face of this growing resistance, coercion will also have to be increased. Thus, the stability is founded, not on loyalty to the system, but on the use of force.

¹. Lars Schoultz, National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 34.

². Pressure to adopt a foreign policy based on human rights began in Congress in the mid-1970s, and was later strongly endorsed by President Jimmy Carter. See, US, Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights and US Foreign Policy, 96th Cong., 1st sess., 1979, pp. 220, 221, and 343.

³. Harold Molineu, US Policy toward Latin America: From Regionalism to Globalism (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 9-12.

Such stability is a fragile stability. It is strong on the surface, but weak underneath. Without force, it will quickly crumble. Therefore, the respect for human rights is in the best interests of long term stability.

American security, political and economic interests, likewise, benefit from regional stability. Without stability, long term security planning becomes increasingly problematic. In addition, policy becomes more confused, and economic investment assumes greater risk. Therefore, in the long term the various goals of United States' foreign policy are actually complementary. As such, there exists one necessary condition under which all of these long term aspirations of United States' foreign policy can be met: Good government in those respective Latin American countries.

In Federalist 51 James Madison wrote, "in framing a government, which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself." Good government is that government which is able to meet both of these conditions. If either condition is not met, then it is not good government. A government which is unable to control the governed leads to instability. A government which is unable to control itself becomes repressive and corrupt. Neither situation is acceptable.

Madison argued further that "a dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions." Clearly, this is a government within a specific framework. While "auxiliary precautions" refer to a separation of powers as suggested by Montesquieu, the hallmark, again, is "a dependence on the people." It is, in other words, a democracy. Therefore, good government implies some form of democratic government.

For the purpose of this study, the term democracy will be used along the lines of Robert Dahl's classic study. It is defined as "a political system one of the characteristics of which is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens."⁴ The necessary (but not necessarily sufficient) conditions for a democracy are that it allow its citizens the right to formulate their preferences, to indicate those preferences to fellow citizens and their government by individual and collective action, and to have their preferences weighed equally (i.e. without discrimination against the content or source of those preferences) in the conduct of government.⁵

Democratic government in Latin America is in the best long term interests of the United States. This is not to say that the United States has always supported democracy in Latin America. Often, short term concerns have eclipsed long term interests. American history is replete with examples. During the Cold War, policy ranged from support for authoritarian regimes to benign neglect. Such short sightedness should not, however, detract from the long term benefits of the support for democracy. It helps maintain stability, without which US security, political and economic interests cannot be protected. It also tends to respect human rights. One might even say that the dilemma posed by Robert Osgood between idealism and realism has its solution within this context.⁶ Support for democracy helps achieve the

⁴. Robert Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 2.

⁵. *ibid.*

⁶. Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

various goals of United States' foreign policy while staying true to American ideals. It is, then, a fundamental assumption of this thesis that the United States can best achieve its foreign policy goals in the region by promoting democratic government in those countries. If the United States can best promote its foreign policy aims by assisting the development of good government, and hence democracy, it would be useful to examine how such a policy could be implemented.

Current literature does not adequately address the role international actors can play in influencing a transition to democracy in developing countries. Most scholars agree that of the major factors which help explain democratic government (historical, cultural, social, economic, political, and international), external factors are the least significant.⁷ Thomas Bruneau and Philippe Faucher are even more explicit: The theme of foreign involvement in support of democracy is ambiguous and one cannot conclude on the basis of existing documentation that it is an important factor in the initiation of a transition.⁸ For this reason, the extent of this project is rather limited. It does not seek to explain democratic development. Instead, it focuses on the impact the United States government, one of the principal international actors, can have on that process.

For the purpose of this study, it is important to understand that democratic development is indeed seen as a process. For instance, Adam

⁷. Larry Diamond and Juan Linz, "Introduction: Politics, Society, and Democracy in Latin America", Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America, ed. Diamond, Linz and Lipset (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), pp. xiii, 47.

⁸. Thomas Bruneau and Philippe Faucher, "Back to Politics: Democratic Transitions in Retrospect", Working Paper (1987).

Przeworski notes that democratic transitions are a process that consist of strategic situations, or "conjunctures". They include liberalization, the establishment of democratic institutions, the development of representative relations among institutions and between the government and civil society, the institutionalization of economic conflicts (the ability of individuals to have their concerns addressed by institutions within government or between government and civil society), and the imposition of civilian control over the military.⁹ Rather than concentrating on the final product, i.e. democracy, this study examines the impact the United States can have on that process.

In order to better clarify the process above, it may be useful to provide some definitions. To borrow from O'Donnell and Schmitter, a transition is "the interval between one political regime and another."¹⁰ A regime does not refer to the government itself, but to government and the means of representation. It is, in other words, the link between society and those who rule. In this sense, each of the case studies which follow examines a transition from a military regime towards one that uses democratic means of representation.

Przeworski's stages of democratic transition can be perhaps simplified into three categories: liberalization, democratization, and consolidation. The first stage, liberalization, is "the process of making effective certain

⁹. Adam Przeworski, "How Do Transitions to Democracy Get Stuck and Where?", University of Chicago, September 1988. A paper presented at the Conference on Internationalization of Political Democracy, Universite de Montreal, September 28 to October 2, 1988.

¹⁰. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 6.

rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or third parties."¹¹ The respect for human rights is the most fundamental aspect of this stage. The second stage links the population with the government. It encompasses the establishment of democratic institutions, and the development of representative relations. It also establishes rules for institutionalizing economic conflicts, and imposing civilian control over the military. Democratization refers to

the processes whereby the rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles, or expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations, or extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation.¹²

The final stage, consolidation, sees the successful completion of that process. In this stage, the participants choose to play by the rules which have been established. As Przeworski concludes, a transition to democracy is completed when partisan alternation in office becomes a real possibility, when reversible policy changes can result from alternation in office, and when civilians have established effective control over the military:

To put it more abstractly, democracy is consolidated when uncertainty is institutionalized: nobody can control the outcomes of the political process ex post, the results are not predetermined ex ante and they matter within some predictable limits.¹³

A democratic transition in Latin America can therefore be viewed as a process that includes the liberalization of a military regime, the ensuing democratization, and the resulting consolidation of democracy.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine what role, if any, the United

¹¹. *ibid.*, p. 7.

¹². *ibid.*, p. 8.

¹³. Przeworski, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

States can play in influencing the transition to democracy in lesser developed countries. It is a comparative study of some of the different approaches the United States could and did use in attempting to encourage that process in three countries in which it had some influence (Chile), relatively little influence (Brazil), and significant influence (El Salvador).

The comparative analysis of these three countries is no easy matter. The disparity between them makes comparisons difficult. It would have simplified the task to have chosen countries that were more similar in nature. Concentrating on countries within a particular region, such as Central America, the Caribbean, the Andean countries, or the Southern Cone may have permitted a more conclusive study. Yet, as soon became apparent, the greatest problem in this research was not as much related to regional specificity as it was in determining the precise impact any particular US administration's policy had on any given democratic transition. The large number of variables made precise cause and effect relationships almost impossible to measure. As such, what would have been gained in detail was outweighed by what would have been lost in comparison, since only observations of a general nature were of value. Therefore, the choice of countries in which the United States had varying amounts of influence provided a better opportunity for a more comprehensive policy analysis.

Chile was chosen as the country representing the middle level of influence because of a combination of factors: its relative size and population, its distance from the United States, past US involvement in its affairs, and recent interest in seeing a transition. Other countries, such as Argentina, would also have been interesting cases. However, Chile offered one thing that few others did. The continuity of the Pinochet regime reduced the

number of variables during the transition, thereby offering a tremendous advantage.

Brazil was a more obvious choice. It was selected as a case study with which the United States has relatively little influence because of its overwhelming size, both in terms of land and population, and because of its tremendous importance to both the region and in terms of its relationship with the United States. In other words, the relative lack of influence did not equate to an ambivalence as to the fate of that country.

El Salvador was a more difficult choice. It is still far from consolidating a democratic transition, it is a highly sensitive political issue, and its civil war added an important and complicated variable. Yet, no other country appeared as a more attractive alternative. Nicaragua would have been fascinating, but then one runs into the problem of whether the United States was trying to encourage a transition, or whether it was attempting to overthrow a government with which it did not agree. As for the other countries in the region, none received the level of financial assistance, or persistent attention, as did the government and situation in El Salvador.

All of the countries selected were under one form of military regime or another during all or at least part of the Carter (1977-1981) and Reagan administrations (1981-1989). Unfortunately, they were also at different stages in the transition process. For this reason, and because the case studies were so very different, United States' foreign policy was divided in terms of the approaches for each individual country, and not in terms of the effect that any single approach had on all the countries. To compensate for these anomalies a few basic measures were taken.

Due to its basic continuity and middle position, Chile provided the

"classic" example. Many of the policies that would have some bearing in all cases were developed in this section because they apply especially well to this case study: Carter's human rights policy, Reagan's realism, and the compromise between the two. To avoid repetition, some of the analysis from those two periods was not extended to the chapters on Brazil and El Salvador. However, the reader should keep these policies in mind throughout the study.

The lack of evidence of United States' influence on the transition in Brazil, and the fact that a transition was already underway before Carter's policies could be applied, presented another hurdle. As such, this chapter emphasized US-Brazil relations in general. For example, the nuclear proliferations issue examines what might have happened had Carter's human rights policy been applied before Brazil's "abertura" (political opening) got under way.

The chapter on El Salvador was also challenging. The civil war itself presented the greatest obstacle. As such, background information on that country is provided to a greater extent than in the other two case studies, since that conflict had a considerable impact on United States' foreign policy. In addition, since the civil war continues, the issue of consolidation is difficult to address. As in the other chapters, the results of administration policies were difficult to measure. Therefore, much attention was given to the policies themselves. Success was measured as much in terms of an administration's ability to gain support for those policies as it was by the impact of those policies. Due to the sensitive political nature of such policies, and especially as they concern El Salvador, the reader should keep in mind that the success or failure of certain administration policies was sometimes viewed in terms of the ability to finance those

policies. This is particularly true of analysis concerning the Reagan administration. As such, it is not necessarily an endorsement of the policy itself.

In addition to the above case studies, another issue had to be addressed. Changes in the world, especially with regards to the Soviet Union, are bound to have important repercussions on United States' policy towards Latin America. The situation with Salvador Allende in Chile would, no doubt, have been handled far differently were it to have occurred today instead of 1973. While Soviet policy affected US relations with all three countries in varying ways, it proved most expedient to examine the effect on those relations as a whole by dealing with the issue in a separate chapter. Preceding the three case studies, therefore, is an examination of what impact the changes in the international system will have on US foreign policy in the region. Since those changes apply most directly to Central America and the Caribbean, the chapter concentrates on those areas. The changes, however, will have implications on US policy elsewhere in the region.

Also of importance is the research method for this project. This study attempts to combine historical analysis with political science. As Professor Edward Laurance suggests, it is the combination of these two disciplines that is likely to yield the greatest results. Without the empirical contribution of historical analysis, political science often becomes nothing more than misguided theories. On the other hand, history in and of itself does not offer the advantages of a systemic approach that could be useful in the analysis and/or prediction of the impact that important individuals, ideas, or events can have. Therefore, a combination of the two methods of examination appeared to be the best approach to use.

The general thesis of this study is that international actors, in this case the United States, can indeed have an impact on democratic transitions, even though it may be to a much lesser degree than one might wish. Yet, even if the impact is not great, it still merits study. This research, therefore, is not concerned with whether a democratic transition was the ultimate intention of any particular administration. Instead, it addresses the issue from the standpoint that were a democratic transition in a developing country to be a priority for United States' foreign policy, then what would be the best course to follow? Specifically, it asks: What has the United States done to influence democratic transitions in the past? Does greater US influence generated by economic and political clout have a significant impact on that process? Should the approach vary with the degree of influence? And assuming a coherent policy, to what extent can the United States influence a democratic transition in another country? This, in essence, is the subject of this research.

I I . C H A N G E S I N T H E I N T E R N A T I O N A L S Y S T E M

"I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!"

William Shakespeare

A Midsummer-night's Dream

Fundamental changes within the Soviet Union and in its foreign policy have had profound effects throughout the world. One area in which those changes are beginning to be felt is in Latin America, especially as it regards the Caribbean and Central America. Although the precise effects on that area will not be known for some time, any such changes are bound to have repercussions for United States' security interests in that area. This chapter analyzes the changes in Soviet policy towards that area, and the effects those changes may have on US security interests in the region.

Soviet influence in the Caribbean and Central America has been a concern to US officials since the days of the Eisenhower administration. With the aftermath of World War II, United States authority in the region was unquestioned. In addition, Soviet policies tended to be counterproductive. During Stalin's reign the rigidity of his policies and the intransigence of local Communist parties made collaboration with Latin American states nearly impossible. After his death in 1953, however, the Soviet Union began to establish diplomatic, commercial, and cultural ties.¹

¹. G. Pope Atkins, Latin America in the International Political System, 2nd ed. (Westview Press: Boulder, 1989), pp. 97-103.

power in January 1959 the Soviet Union was able to take advantage of the situation. Having drawn its conclusions from the US-sponsored overthrow of the reformist Arbenz regime in Guatemala in June 1954, the Cuban government decided to turn to the Soviet Union for protection against possible US intervention.² Thus began a Soviet-Cuban relationship that has significantly influenced events in the region.

Khrushchev's policies of supporting revolutionary movements as a way of undermining US influence were continued under Leonid Brezhnev, although without the "pyrotechnics" (i.e., in a more prudent and patient manner).³ Instead of challenging the United States directly, as it had in the Cuban missile crisis, it began to use Cuba as a surrogate. In the 1960s and 1970s Cuban advisers were sent to Ghana, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, Sierre Leone, Somalia, South Yemen, and Iraq. In addition, Cuba assisted Algeria in its war against Morocco, and it sent thousands of troops to both Angola and Ethiopia.⁴ Yet, of even more concern to the United States was Cuban support for revolutionary movements in Latin America, and the connection the US government drew to the Soviet Union.

In the 1960s Cuba lent direct assistance to revolutionary forces within such countries as Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. The fact that the Soviet Union had counseled caution to the Cubans in those early years, and that Cuban relations with the Soviet Union were

². Richard Immerman, The CIA in Guatemala, 4th printing (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1988), p. 196.

³. Adam Ulam, Dangerous Relations (Oxford University Press: New York, 1983), p. 32.

⁴. Harold Molineu, US Policy Toward Latin America (Westview Press: Boulder, 1986), pp. 160-161.

often strained during that period were irrelevant.⁵ The Soviets were still providing aid to the Cubans, Soviet advisers were present on the island, and the United States acted as though Communist states were a monolithic bloc. This view appeared to confirm itself in 1968 when Castro defended the Soviet-led invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia.⁶

Thus, it was not the Cuban revolution alone that concerned Washington, but the importance of that area in terms of the overall East-West conflict. In response, the United States greatly increased its involvement in the area. No longer the "Good Neighbor" (ended with Guatemala in 1954), the United States was once again big brother to the area. It not only supported development through the Alliance for Progress, it also used the OAS to cover its intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965.

While the era of detente allowed the United States a certain reprieve from direct involvement in the area, any hopes for accomodation were all but ended with the fall of Anastasio Somoza in July 1979. Within weeks of the fall of Somoza, the Sandinistas and Cubans began to establish training camps and an arms supply network for the Salvadoran guerrillas.⁷ In addition, Cuban

⁵. William Ratliff, Castroism and Communism in Latin America, 1959-1976 (AEI-Hoover Policy Study 19, November 1976), pp. 43-44. Ratliff notes that increasing Cuban dependence on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe prevented a break in relations, despite the Soviet "betrayal" of the Cuban government during the missile crisis.

⁶. *ibid.*, p. 45. A more flexible Cuban line emerged in 1968 because Castro needed to devote more time and resources to his faltering economy (which made Soviet economic and military aid vital) and because he recognized the repeated failures of the castroite line throughout Latin America (epitomized by the death of Guevara). See p. 34.

⁷. "Cuban and Nicaraguan Support for the Salvadoran Insurgency", Department of State Bulletin, May 1982, p. 72.

advisers, with Soviet backing, assisted the governments of Guyana, Jamaica, Grenada, and, of course, Nicaragua. For the Reagan administration the implications were clear: The Soviets were behind the growing level of violence and a line had to be drawn.⁸

Viewing the instability in Central America and the Caribbean as a result of the geostrategic situation led once more to heavy US involvement in the region. Instead of the Alliance for Progress, there was the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). US backing for an anti-communist regime in El Salvador remained extensive, despite human rights violations. Pressure on the Sandinistas was applied by supporting the Contras, and frequent US maneuvers were held in neighboring Honduras. In 1983 the US invaded the island of Grenada, finding around 100 Cuban "combatants" and 30 Soviet advisers.⁹ It was a tense period in the Cold War. The costs of these policies to the United States have been high, not only in terms of dollars, but in the divisiveness it caused among the American people, including the Iran-Contra affair that virtually crippled the administration.

Yet, the costs to the Soviet Union have also been high. In addition to poor relations with the West, Soviet policy in regards to the developing world had other drawbacks. First, the financial costs of commitment were high and continued to escalate. Second, support for revolution resulted in less than desirable relations with other influential states, including Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. Third, once support for a movement or government was initiated, it became difficult to withdraw or even reduce that commitment.

⁸. Molineu, op. cit., p. 161.

⁹. *ibid.*, p. 205.

The collapse of any regime linked to the Soviet Union would contradict the "inevitable march of history", and result in a considerable loss of prestige.¹⁰ Finally, Soviet policy was counterproductive. As Vladimir Stanchenko notes,

In retrospect, it is clear that the introduction of Soviet arms into the region was the least acceptable way to consolidate ostensibly pro-Soviet forces at a time when other actors in Latin America and Western Europe were trying to support and help leftist movements gain a firm economic and political base. Instead, the growing Soviet presence in the region led to a somewhat deeper polarization of forces in Central America and made pro-Soviet groups rather more vulnerable.¹¹

Thus, Soviet policy resulted in a costly competition with the United States. Its effect was not only to undermine the authority of the American government. It made the Soviet position untenable as well. As a result, "novoe myshlenie" or "new thinking" was born.

New thinking on the part of the Soviets is driven by this cost/benefit analysis. It is a radical change in both the theory and practice of Soviet foreign policy, especially as it applies to the areas of regional conflicts and arms control. It recognizes that Soviet interests would be better served by reducing involvement in regional conflicts (both direct and indirect) and by agreeing to arms control, thereby cutting its losses, lessening international tensions, bringing a halt to the arms race, and allowing the Soviets to establish beneficial economic ties with the West. Such change was essential given the increasingly critical situation within the Soviet Union.¹²

¹⁰. Atkins, op. cit., p. 101.

¹¹. Vladimir Stanchenko, "The Soviet Union and Central America", The Washington Quarterly, Summer 1990, p. 199.

¹². Jiri Valenta, "'New Thinking' and Soviet Policy in Latin America", The Washington Quarterly, Spring 1990, pp. 135-138.

This policy change became evident as early as February 1986, when Mikhail Gorbachev declared that Afghanistan was a "bleeding sore" at the Communist Party's Twenty-seventh Congress.¹³

However, the one area in which this new thinking has been slow to take root is in Central America and the Caribbean, especially with regards to Cuba. As recently as June 1990, Secretary of State James Baker noted that while events elsewhere have been viewed quite favorably,

We (the Bush administration) are still concerned, however, about Soviet support for Cuba and Cuban support for the rebels in El Salvador. Continued Soviet military assistance for Cuba is a striking exception to the Soviet Union's "new thinking" on regional issues.¹⁴

That the United States government views US-Soviet cooperation in this region as essential is clear.¹⁵ A considerable effort has been made to resolve the issues. Over time, one can be optimistic that these efforts will succeed. Yet, as noted above, progress is being made rather slowly.

One reason the Soviet Union has been slow to abandon its relationship with Cuba is that the costs are not as great as they might appear. Although some US sources estimate that Soviet aid to Cuba totals some \$5 billion per year, the figure is somewhat misleading. For one thing, the CIA bases its figures on the official US-Soviet exchange rate, which is 10 to 15 times more

¹³. Carol R. Saivetz, "'New Thinking' and Soviet Third World Policy", Current History, October 1989, p. 325.

¹⁴. James Baker, "Recent Developments in US-Soviet Relations", Current Policy No. 1285, Bureau of Public Affairs, State Department, June 1990, p. 3.

¹⁵. Michael Kramer, "Anger, Bluff and Cooperation", Time, June 4, 1990. For instance, when Bernard Aronson took his first trip as the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs in June 1989, his destination was not Central America (the area of his responsibility), but Moscow where he met with his Soviet counterpart. (p. 40)

than the ruble is worth on the Soviet black market. In addition, Moscow does not grant any aid in the form of hard currency. Rather, it extends credits that Cuba uses to barter for Soviet goods, some of which could not be sold on the open market. While Cuba receives petroleum at below market prices (after refining it, any surplus is sold on the world market for cash), over 70% of that subsidy is returned in the form of sugar, and the Soviets receive citrus products and nickel as well. As arms control requires the Soviet Union to reduce its inventory, Cuba could be a convenient outlet.¹⁶ None of this suggests that the Soviet Union will not limit support to its Cuban ally, only that it need not do so.

A more important reason that Soviet support for Cuba has been exceptionally strong is political. Gorbachev faces strong opposition from hardliners within the Soviet Union to any overtures that risk losing its strategic position in Cuba.¹⁷ Furthermore, there is strong support from those who believe that Cuba has been a reliable ally over the last three decades. Soviet editor Sergo Mikoyan summed up this position when he wrote,

New political thinking does not mean a break in the commitment, traditional friendship, and special relations the Soviet Union shares with Cuba. The Soviet Union cannot sacrifice its conscience, self-respect, and self-image by betraying friends in order to win someone's appreciation.¹⁸

¹⁶. Wayne Smith, "Washington Vexed by Soviet Support of Castro, but the Subsidy Will Continue", Los Angeles Times, May 13, 1990. For the value of the Soviet ruble on the black market, see "Ruble Shrinks Again", Wall Street Journal, November 13, 1989, and John Valentine, "Analysts See Soviets Backing Ruble with Gold", Wall Street Journal, December 11, 1989.

¹⁷. Michael Kramer, "Searching for Cuba Libre", Time, June 18, 1990, p. 22.

¹⁸. Sergo A. Mikoyan, "Soviet Foreign Policy and Latin America", The Washington Quarterly, Summer 1990, p. 190.

For these reasons, the Soviet Union has been hesitant to unilaterally abandon its position in the Caribbean and Central America. The Soviets seek assurances from the United States that it will not take advantage of the situation. As such, the Soviet Union has endorsed a negotiated settlement to the conflicts in Central America, and it has suggested that it will end its subsidies to Cuba, provided the United States lifts its economic embargo against the Castro regime.¹⁹

For the Bush administration, this may be difficult to do. The Cuban community in Florida is bitterly opposed to any type of a deal that leaves Castro in power, and they have considerable influence in the Republican party.²⁰ However, the Bush administration is most interested in reducing its defense commitments (and therefore liabilities) in the region. It has backed regional negotiations in Central America, and it hopes that its talks with the Soviets will pay off with the eventual liberalization of the Cuban government.²¹ There is good reason to believe that the United States and the Soviet Union will come to an accommodation over the area. It is clearly in both nations' interest to do so. By offering the Soviets something in return, such as the cessation of TV Marti, the United States could give the Soviet

¹⁹. Saivetz, op. cit., p. 325. The Soviets have been strong supporters of the Central American peace plan since 1987. For notes from a speech given by Yuri Pavlov, the head of the Latin American Department of the Soviet Ministry see, Sandra Dibble, Fred Tasker and Mimi Whitefield, "Exiles Press Soviets for Change in Cuba", Miami Herald, May 27, 1990. See also, Al Kamen, "US Encourages Soviets to Aid Salvadoran Talks", Washington Post, October 18, 1990.

²⁰. Kramer, "Searching for Cuba Libre", op. cit.

²¹. Kramer, "Anger, Bluff and Cooperation", op. cit., pp. 38-45.

Union the justification it needs to bow out gracefully.

Of course, this may not even be necessary. The increasing entropy of the Soviet Union may well lead to its disintegration. In this scenario, support for Castro could well become a non-issue. Subsidies would end, not because the Soviets were seeking closer ties with the West, but because they could no longer deliver their goods. There are already signs this is beginning to occur. By the summer of 1990 the Soviets were nearly 14 million barrels (two months supply) short in their crude oil deliveries to Cuba, due almost exclusively to problems within the Soviet Union.²² As the situation becomes more desperate, support for Cuba would continue to decline.

The question, then, is what impact all these changes will have on US security interests in the Caribbean and Central America. The answer would appear to be a favorable one in that a major source of support for anti-American movements is removed. The reality, though, is that the region is far more problematic than most Americans might think, with the changes bringing less results than one might hope. The overall impact, however, is likely to be positive.

Several factors indicate that the end of US-Soviet competition in the region is likely to have less of an impact than one might wish. For one thing, the two successful insurrections in the region (the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions) occurred with virtually no Soviet support. Castro did

²². "Drastic Action to Offset Oil Shortage", Latin American Weekly Report, September 13, 1990, p. 10, and "Cuba Cuts Fuel Consumption as Soviet Oil Deliveries Fall", Washington Post, August 30, 1990.

not even call himself a communist until after he had seized power in 1959.²³

In regards to Nicaragua, David Nolan observed that "had the Sandinistas not been exposed to Marxism, they would have found or created another paradigm on which to construct their ideological vision".²⁴ And unlike events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where communism confronted nationalist aspirations, nationalism within Cuba and Nicaragua is closely identified with their revolutions and with the leaders themselves.²⁵

As long as there are revolutionaries in Latin America, the potential for the support of insurgencies will continue to exist. Castro has stated his support for the "liberation" of peoples against "imperialist" forces on numerous occasions, and this support is manifest under Article 12 of the 1976 Cuban Constitution.²⁶ Likewise, the Sandinistas, who remain the most powerful single force in Nicaraguan affairs, have demonstrated their willingness to support insurgencies. In one of their original declarations they pledged to promote the "struggle for a true union of the Central American peoples within

²³. For an account of the Cuban revolution from the revolutionaries' perspective, see Ramon L. Bonachea and Marta San Martin, The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959, (Transaction Books: New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1974).

²⁴. David Nolan, The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution, 3rd printing (Institute of Interamerican Studies: University of Miami Press, 1988), p. 123.

²⁵. John Pearson, "Castro Keeps the Faith-But Can He Keep It Alone?", Business Week, December 11, 1989, p. 81.

²⁶. William Ratliff, op. cit., p. 41. It states that Cuba "espouses the principles of proletarian internationalism and of the combative solidarity of the peoples" and "recognizes the legitimacy of the wars of national liberation, as well as armed resistance to aggression and conquest; and considers that its help to those under attack and to the peoples for their liberation constitutes its internationalist right and duty".

one country, beginning with support for national liberation movements in neighboring states".²⁷ One would expect such comradery to continue.

By the same token, insurgent movements have been suspicious of external actors, especially the Soviet Union. Many have wondered about the Soviets' commitment to revolution. As one Honduran leftist put it, "revolutions are like people. They lose passion. Russia is old, bureaucratic and corrupt."²⁸ Other guerrillas have never forgiven the Soviet Union for its "betrayal" during the Cuban missile crisis.²⁹ Some even question Cuban motives. Fabio Castillo, founder of the Central American Revolutionary Workers Party quipped, "the Cubans are arrogant. Why should we fight United States domination only to accept Cuban domination?"³⁰

In response, guerrillas have resisted the temptation to rely on any one source. An arms network has been established. Some groups, such as the FMLN in El Salvador, have stockpiled enough ammunition to last for years, and they can now train and organize themselves.³¹ They have, in other words, become independent. It is as if insurgent groups had anticipated the eventual US-Soviet accomodation all along.

However, the impact of the fundamental changes within the Soviet Union and in its foreign policy has indeed been profound. The dismal failure of the

²⁷. Nolan, op. cit., p. 37.

²⁸. James LeMoyne, "The Guerrilla Network", The New York Times Magazine, April 6, 1986, Section 6, p. 18.

²⁹. ibid., p. 20.

³⁰. ibid., p. 73.

³¹. James LeMoyne, "El Salvador's Forgotten War", Foreign Affairs, Summer 1989, p. 120.

Soviet model and the rejection of communist ideology by Eastern Europe must, if anything, force insurgent groups in the Caribbean and Central America to reassess their position. Hopefully, they will come to the conclusion that their best hope lies in integrating themselves into the World economy, and in accepting peaceful coexistence. Even if it does not, without the massive support of some patron power, pariah states in the region that desire to support insurgencies will be forced to pay more attention to internal economic matters just in order to survive. The export of revolution will become increasingly ever more problematic.

What this all means for United States' security in regards to the region will only become clear after some time has passed. It should, however, lead to a lower level of intensity for conflict in the region. The causes of instability have not been removed, and they are far from being solved. But events may allow change to occur at a more manageable pace.

Perhaps the best result from all of this is that the United States no longer need view the region in terms of the East-West conflict. The US will thus be more apt to accept independent neighbors, and better placed to support needed social change (assuming, of course, that there is continued interest in the region). There would, then, be less of a perceived need for insurgent groups to distance themselves from the United States, and this could help reduce tensions. Whether this will equate to increased US involvement in democratic transitions, or a decrease in its interest in the region (benign neglect), remains to be seen. What is clear is that the legacy of Guatemala in 1954 has been an unfortunate one. It would be historic if that watershed could be passed.

With the enormous changes that have taken place, a longer term

perspective by policy makers in the United States is now more possible.

Should they look to the long term, and choose to support democratic government in Latin America now that the Cold War is over, what kind of an approach would be the most effective? To examine this question, as well as the others posed in the introduction, the thesis now turns to the case studies on Chile, Brazil, and El Salvador.

I I I . C H I L E

"Where every man in a state has a vote, brutal laws are impossible."

Mark Twain

The United States has been interested in influencing the orientation of Chilean government since its independence movement began in September 1810. Later that century, Secretary of State James G. Blaine's efforts to mediate the War of the Pacific in 1880, ultimately won by the Chileans, and American support for President Jose Manuel Balmaceda during the civil war of 1891, ultimately won by the opposition, made Chile's relations with the United States "less than cordial."¹

American investments in Chile expanded rapidly in the beginning of the 20th century, from approximately \$5 million in 1900 to nearly \$200 million in 1914. By 1930 American investors had controlled the overwhelming share of mining interests, including almost 90 percent by value of Chilean copper production, and 70 percent of all foreign investment in Chile. Commerce with the United States accounted for more than half by value of Chilean foreign trade.²

With increased investment, American involvement in Chilean politics intensified. Beginning in the 1930s the United States used various political and economic pressures and rewards to limit the scope of the Chilean communist

¹. Brian Loveman, Chile: The Legacy of Hispanic Capitalism, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 114, 213.

². *ibid.*

party, which was founded in 1922.³ After World War II these efforts took on increasing importance. American influence was used to encourage Chile to break off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, and shortly thereafter, the US supported the Chilean government when it passed the Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy in 1948, officially outlawing the Communist party.⁴

By forcing the Communists underground, the Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy did the Chilean government considerably more harm than good, so prior to the 1958 election the law was lifted by then outgoing President Carlos Ibanez. In the ensuing election, Socialist candidate Salvador Allende was narrowly defeated by a coalition of liberals and conservatives who supported Jorge Alessandri. Concern for a possible Communist victory in the future led the United States to vigorously apply its Alliance for Progress to Chile, a program that attempted to counteract the appeal of the Cuban Revolution throughout the rest of Latin America. One aspect of the program was agrarian reform, and in the 1960s the United States put pressure on the Alessandri government to adopt a land reform program. It is important to note that land reform was the single most bitterly resisted policy by the Chilean Right during the previous thirty years.⁵

³. *ibid.*, p. 254.

⁴. *ibid.*, p. 258.

⁵. *ibid.*, p. 265.

In 1964 the US government used covert means to help finance the electoral campaign of Eduardo Frei, a Christian Democrat who favored land reform.⁶ While providing generous incentives for investment to foreign capital, the new government also successfully introduced programs for agrarian reform and agricultural unionization, which finally cleared Congress in 1966-67. In addition, virtually all parts of the political spectrum supported legislation for the "Chileanization" of the copper industry, which most felt was being exploited by Americans at the expense of Chile. The United States government felt that any further turn to the left would be detrimental to American interests.

In the 1970 election campaign between Salvador Allende and Jorge Alessandri, the United States took extensive efforts to influence the outcome. The Central Intelligence Agency spent nearly three and one half million dollars to organize anti-Allende propaganda, subsidize conservative Chilean news media, buy votes, and bribe Chilean congressmen, who according to the constitution had the authority to choose from among the candidates if there was no majority.⁷ Following the electoral victory by Allende on September 4, 1970, the CIA made twenty-one contacts with key military and police officers to help prevent Allende from assuming the presidency. Despite these efforts, Allende was confirmed as president of the democratically elected socialist

⁶. Kalevi Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), p. 261.

⁷. *ibid.*

government on October 26, 1970.⁸

Immediately, the American government began efforts to destabilize the Allende government. With activists from China, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other communist sympathizers throughout Latin America flooding into Chile, the United States began to fear that Chile would serve as a base for South American revolutionaries. American multinational firms, such as International Telephone and Telegraph, began to put pressure on the American government to take action against a socialist government that was certain to exert control over private interests. The subsequent nationalization of American-owned copper mines, and many other firms (state control of industries increased from 31 in November 1970 to 285 in May 1973)⁹, encouraged the US to cut back credits and new loans to Chile via the Export-Import Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank. The CIA continued to channel funds to the opposition press (which Allende tried to control), opposition politicians, private firms, and trade unions, and it helped organize street demonstrations and support a truckers' strike that adversely effected the Chilean economy.¹⁰ By encouraging conditions that might exacerbate instability caused by Allende's policies, the US helped create an atmosphere that eventually led to a military coup in September 1973.

⁸. Genaro Arriagada, Pinochet: The Politics of Power (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 85. In the 1970 election, Allende received 36.3 percent of the vote, compared to 34.9 percent of the vote for Alessandri, and 27.8 percent of the vote for the Christian Democrats' candidate, Radomiro Tomic. Chile's congress could, therefore, have chosen to elect Alessandri had it so desired. See, Loveman, Chile, op. cit., pp. 294-295.

⁹. Loveman, Chile, op. cit., p. 281.

¹⁰. Holsti, International Politics, op. cit., pp. 261, 262.

Whereas most Western European countries distanced themselves from the Chilean government in the first years of military rule, the Nixon and Ford administrations supported the Pinochet government by backing multilateral loans to the government. As compared to \$67 million received by the Allende government from 1971-1973, Chile's financial assistance rose to \$628 million from 1974-1976.¹¹ Certain factors, however, were working against continued support: The increased knowledge in the United States of human rights violations committed by the Pinochet regime; the killing of President Allende's exiled foreign minister, Orlando Letelier, along with an American in September 1976 in Washington, DC, by Chilean secret police; and findings by the United States Congress, especially within the Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence (the so-called "Church Committee", named after the Chairman, Senator Frank Church (Democrat-Idaho)) that previous US administrations were being less than forthright about US involvement in foreign countries, led to a reversal of American foreign policy.

Though United States foreign policy towards Chile over the years has clearly been oriented primarily towards protecting American economic interests, it can also be argued that the US has favored democracy in that country. US support for its independence in 1810 and for its presidential system of government in its 1890 civil war, though limited, shows some kind of support for representative government (though the congressionally-dominated government that eventually replaced it was no less representative). Aversion to the possibility of a communist-dominated government since the 1930s can

¹¹. Arriagada, Pinochet, op. cit., p. 14.

justifiably be attributed to a concern that such a government would ultimately usurp the most basic rights of its citizens. Even when the US government attempted to undermine the Allende government, it did so largely by supporting opposition groups external to the military. Accusations that the US government was involved in the coup have been repeatedly denied, and there is no proof that the CIA either organized or directly supported the coup d'etat.¹² Furthermore, it could easily have been argued that the military government would be strictly a transitional one, taking upon itself the "...patriotic commitment to restore justice, institutionality, and Chilean identity."¹³ As such, American support for Pinochet can be seen as a concern for law and order, and the establishment of a solid base on which to support a democratic transition. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that by the election of President Carter in the fall of 1976 a policy change was needed and would be forthcoming.

A. PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

The goal of ending military rule in Chile (or at least its liberalization) as a fundamental aim of US policy actually began with Congress when it passed the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974. In Title IX it states, "US

¹². Holsti, International Politics, op. cit., p. 262. There is, however, considerable circumstantial evidence that the United States was more involved than some were willing to admit. See, US, Congress, Senate, Staff Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973, and Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 1975.

¹³. Arriagada, Pinochet, op. cit., p. 14.

aid should be used to encourage democratic and local government institutions within the recipient states." It was amended in 1976 to include a statement of human rights. In a statement prepared for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Stanley J. Heginbotham of the Library of Congress said,

Frustrated with the apparent unwillingness of the Nixon and Ford Administrations to make human rights conditions abroad a significant consideration in its foreign policy, Congress passed, in the form of what have become known as (the) Harkin amendments, legislation prohibiting, with some qualifications, foreign assistance transfers to any country whose government engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights.¹⁴

With President Carter's victory in the 1976 election, the executive branch joined Congress in making the protection of human rights the nation's highest foreign policy priority in Latin America. Heginbotham continued,

...the Carter Administration made it clear that it wanted to go beyond the identification of a limited number of egregious violators and use its influence incrementally to improve human rights conditions in a wide range of countries.¹⁵

It was clear that with the situation in Chile, the United States government was going to put pressure on the Pinochet government to liberalize its internal policies.¹⁶

The difference between a human rights policy and one that encourages a democratic transition are certainly important, but it is the connection that is germane to this thesis. Ernest Lefever, Director of the Ethics and Public

¹⁴. US, Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights and US Foreign Policy, 96th Cong., 1st sess., 1979, p. 343.

¹⁵. *ibid.*, pp. 220, 221.

¹⁶. For a comprehensive study of the development of human rights policy see, Lars Schoultz, Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

Policy Center at Georgetown University, argues that there are three fundamentally different concepts of human rights. The first is a universal application because it is shared by virtually all cultures. It is founded in religious or ethical thought and "calls for sanctions against political authorities and others guilty of genocide, brutalizing innocent people and similar atrocities." The second is more a result of our "Western democratic experience" and is therefore shared by a minority of states. Such rights would include the freedom of religion, movement, speech, press, and assembly; equality before the law; the concept of being innocent until proven guilty, including safeguards for accused persons; a judicial system independent from executive authority, and periodic elections. A third concept refers to economic rights, such as the right to a job or adequate health care. However, according to Lefever, these are not so much rights as social objectives.¹⁷

The goal of influencing a democratic transition, then, is a product of our Western heritage and the impact this has on our beliefs of human rights. Democratic government is the means to an end in the sense that it helps achieve the goal of human rights. That the government's policies were not limited to the first concept of human rights, but included the others as well is evident from statements by Carter's Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher.

Testifying before Congress, Christopher specified three areas in which the government attempted to integrate human rights considerations into the foreign policy process: (1) Reporting and evaluating human rights conditions in various countries; (2) incorporating human rights into both bilateral and

¹⁷. *ibid.*, p. 13.

multilateral diplomacy; and (3) linking human rights considerations to foreign assistance programs.¹⁸ That human rights included more than the universal concept is clear. He said, "...we attach fundamental importance to all three basic categories of internationally recognized human rights--That is, personal, economic and political rights."¹⁹

While reporting and evaluating human rights conditions in various countries played an important role in publicizing human rights violations, diplomacy attempted to negotiate their eventual dissolution. However, the actual carrot and stick approach was applied via the third area listed by Christopher. A combination of foreign assistance programs and economic sanctions were used to influence the process towards political liberalization. Christopher stated, "in distributing the scarce resources of our foreign assistance programs, we will demonstrate that our deepest affinities are with nations which commit themselves to a democratic development."²⁰ For the Carter administration, you could not have human rights without a democracy.

An interagency group was developed to consider loans and grants to countries on the basis of human rights. Consisting of representatives from the Departments of State, Defense, Labor, Treasury, Commerce, and Agriculture, plus the National Security Council, the Agency for International Development, and any other agencies that might have an interest in the process, such as the Arms Export Control Board, the interagency group would make a decision based on five basic factors: (1) The human rights situation in the recipient

¹⁸. *ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁹. *ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁰. *ibid.*

country, including any positive or negative trend; (2) the political, economic, and cultural history within that country, with an emphasis on considering the level of human rights performance that "can reasonably be expected" in light of that history; (3) fundamental US interests with respect to that country; (4) the direct benefits of a loan in regards to the needy; and (5) the effectiveness a decision to defer or oppose a loan would have in comparison or in combination with other available diplomatic tools for indicating the country's concern about human rights.²¹

President Carter's human rights policy was supposed to be a framework within which to influence a transition towards democracy on a world wide basis. However, as can be seen by the basic factors that influenced decisions of the interagency group, individual countries were likely to receive considerably different treatment. Chile's past history of democratic development, its relative isolation from areas of direct concern to US national security interests, and the prospect that US pressure might have some influence within that country ensured that human rights abuses in Chile would receive a relatively high profile in the administration's foreign policy.

B. CARTER'S POLICY IN REGARDS TO CHILE

The inauguration of President Jimmy Carter in 1977 meant an abrupt change in US foreign policy in regards to Chile. Although the US Congress had already voted to terminate all new programs of military assistance and arms sales to the Chilean government in 1976 as a result of the Letelier killing,

²¹. *ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

the Carter administration marked a much greater willingness than the previous administration to use US influence to increase pressure on the Pinochet regime. The new administration voted in international organizations to condemn the Chilean government's human rights policy; it officially received opposition leaders; and it pressured Chile with sanctions and other diplomatic methods to improve the human rights situation.²²

It can be argued that US sanctions had some impact on the Pinochet regime. Genaro Arriagada, a member of the opposition, stated that US pressure concerning human rights and the need to attract foreign investment into Chile were two factors that contributed to a moderate political opening in the summer of 1977. In July of that year Pinochet announced a long term democratization process in the Chacarillas Address. The following month Pinochet abolished the DINA, the national intelligence agency responsible for some of the regime's most publicized human rights violations, including the killing of Letelier.²³

The effectiveness of administration policies was enhanced by American labor. The AFL-CIO threatened a boycott after strike activity in Chile from 1977 to 1978 was met with a variety of repressive measures. The inability of the Chilean government to control workers in government-owned copper mines, the single most important source of foreign exchange for the country, and the threat of isolation from US markets because of a refusal by American workers to offload Chilean shipments led the government to adopt a more relaxed labor

²². Arriagada, Pinochet, op. cit., p. 32.

²³. *ibid.*, p. 33.

policy in 1979.²⁴

When the Chilean Supreme Court rejected a request in October 1979 for the extradition of three of the responsible parties in the Letelier killing, the US government was outraged. The next month the government passed a series of measures that reduced the size of the US mission in Chile by about one-quarter, it terminated a military sales pipeline, it eliminated the US military group in Santiago, it prohibited new Export-Import Bank loans to Chile and it refused to approve any new activities by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation in Chile.²⁵ It was clear that in the case of Chile the Carter Administration was carrying its human rights policy to its logical extreme.

The problem with Carter's human rights policy was equally evident. US ability to influence a military government that has the means and will to carry out its overall program is rather limited. While Pinochet did propose a transition process in the Chacarillas Address, it must be remembered that the process was divided into three stages that were to last 14 years. In addition, DINA was quickly replaced by the CNI, the National Information Center, which retained most of the legal privileges enjoyed by DINA.²⁶ In this sense, changes that were supposedly the result of pressures from the United States were more cosmetic than substantive. In addition, pressure against the Chilean government during the labor strikes was more a consequence

²⁴. Loveman, Chile, op. cit., p. 333.

²⁵. US, Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, US Economic Sanctions Against Chile, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981, p. 39.

²⁶. Arriagada, Chile, op. cit., p. 33.

of American workers than the US government itself. Perhaps the greatest miscalculation made by the Carter Administration was in the use of its heavy handed tactics to force the Chilean government on a specific issue: The extradition request concerning the Letelier case.

The reaction in Chile to US sanctions was intense. A foreign affairs commentator in Brazil noted that prior to a vote in the United States' Congress to end all US aid to Chile, including an attempt to bar loans to that country by private banks, the Chilean government publicly reminded the American government that 76 percent of all foreign investments in Chile were American owned.²⁷ Following the vote, the Chilean Foreign Minister condemned the sanctions in the strongest of terms:

...The executive branch has done everything within its powers according to current legislation. It is therefore intolerable that the US Government--which up to a short time ago was one of the parties involved in the extradition suit--should appoint itself the only judge on the merits of its demands.

The United States, first through pressure and now through these measures, has unsuccessfully tried to make our government interfere with the powers of the supreme court. Nothing good can be said about a government which is applying illegal pressure to override a court ruling. Its efforts to punish are [?useless]. This is the aggressive and bullying behavior of a government acting with violence and unfairness against a materially smaller country [words indistinct].²⁸

Neither is it clear that these sanctions were in the least bit effective.

Arriagada stated that they had no political effect, being easily compensated for by a generous flow of loans from US banks to private Chilean economic

²⁷. "Foreign Affairs Commentator on US-Chilean Relations", PY111825 Sao Paulo Radio Bandeirantes Network in Portuguese 0230 GMT 11 Oct 79 PY, as translated into English by FBIS, 12 Oct 79, D1.

²⁸. "Cubillos Assails US Decision", PY010051 Santiago Chile Domestic Service in Spanish 2300 GMT 30 Nov 79 PY, as translated into English by FBIS, 3 Dec 79, E1.

circles. Quoting Pinochet, he pointed out that "the rejection of the White House and Capitol Hill does not matter as long as my government gets along well with Wall Street."²⁹

By the end of the Carter administration, human rights policy began to show signs of strain. In reference to the five basic factors considered by the interagency group considering loans and grants on the basis of human rights, Warren Christopher said, "it should be apparent from these five principles that we do not rigidly adopt the same approach to foreign assistance decisions just because two countries have a similar human rights situation."³⁰ Herein resided part of the problem: A policy that was based on something as absolute as human rights was designed to be flexible in order to meet the changing environment. Contradictions were bound to occur. When they did they were seen as the hypocritical result of political gamesmanship, and not as a policy based on high moral standards. Perhaps Stanley Heginbotham of the Library of Congress summed it up best of all. He testified that,

The case-by-case approach followed by the Administration, combined with the reluctance to articulate--indeed, apparently even to formulate--principles guiding individual decisions, contributed to public and congressional concern over the consistency with which the policy was being pursued.³¹

This inconsistency was seen by many as not serving America's best interests. What followed was a fundamentally different approach by the new administration of President Ronald Reagan.

²⁹. Arriagada, Chile, op. cit., pp. 35, 36.

³⁰. US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights and US Foreign Policy, 96th Cong., 1st sess., 1979, p. 25.

³¹. *ibid.*, pp. 346, 347.

C. THE REAGAN APPROACH

President Reagan entered office with an entirely different mandate than did President Carter. Rather than having to deal with the overwhelming guilt many Americans felt in regards to the Vietnam War and Watergate, the Reagan administration was confronted with the immediate consequences of the Ayatollah, the Sandinistas, and Afghanistan. To put it simply, instead of concentrating on ethical issues, the new administration was concerned with American national security.

One of the first comprehensive critiques of Carter's human rights policy was made by Ernest Lefever of Georgetown University. In July 1979 he appeared before Congress, noting that there were six major problems with the Carter approach: (1) It underestimated the totalitarian threat; (2) it confused totalitarianism with authoritarianism, arguing that "there is far more freedom of choice, diversity of opinion and activity...in an authoritarian state than in a totalitarian one", and there is a greater "...capacity of authoritarian rule to evolve into democratic rule"; (3) it overestimated America's influence abroad; (4) it confused domestic and foreign policy; (5) it ignored the perils of reform intervention; and (6) it distorted foreign policy objectives.³² On the final point he was particularly adamant. He said:

The lopsided application of human rights criteria is justified by White House and State Department spokesmen on pragmatic grounds. They frankly admit that they give more critical attention to allies than to adversaries because they have more leverage over the former--we can withhold or threaten to withhold aid from our friends, so why not strike a blow for freedom where we can, or if one prefers, why not

³². *ibid.*, pp. 224-235.

administer the two-by-four to a mulish friend.³³

Lefever did not necessarily criticize the goals of the Carter administration, but its effects. It was the alienation of allies that was his major concern. It was a policy that played into the Soviets' hands. In ending his testimony he surmised,

The entire human rights crusade is replete with irony because what is done in the name of virtue may lead to dire consequences...it is not inappropriate to recall the words of columnist Michael Novak: "One of the best ways to create an immoral foreign policy is to try too hard for a moral one."³⁴

These concerns were addressed by appointing individuals sympathetic to this viewpoint in numerous positions, including ambassadors to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick and later, LT GEN Vernon Walters, US Army (Retired). The change in policy was basically a result of the critiques of the Carter administration: First, Carter's criticisms and punitive measures, far from assisting democratic forces within Nicaragua and Iran, had isolated the countries' leaders and ultimately led to their overthrow by more radical anti-American forces; and second, public criticism was an ineffectual way to get pro-Western regimes to liberalize.³⁵ The new administration would encourage forces that sought a long term transition towards democracy, but only in a way which did not adversely disrupt regional stability, and in a manner that did not feed public expectations. The problem was that it required continued patience in the face of further repression.

³³. *ibid.*, p. 235.

³⁴. *ibid.*, p. 240.

³⁵. Jefferson Morley, "What Jimmy Knew: Reagan Administration Human Rights Policy", New Republic, July 29, 1985, p. 11.

In the November 1979 issue of Commentary, Jeane Kirkpatrick published the article "Dictatorships and Double Standards" which launched her political career. In that and a subsequent article, "US Security And Latin America", Kirkpatrick espoused the principles that she believed should be the basis of America's Latin American policy. She reasoned the United States had to think more realistically about the politics of Latin America; that the alternatives to existing governments, and the amounts and kinds of aid and time required to improve the lives and expand the liberties of the people in Latin America often left the United States with unattractive choices. As such, the US had to abandon the hopes of creating democracies in countries where "the realities of culture, character, geography, economics, and history" made such developments problematic. Therefore, the aim of the United States should be to "assess realistically the impact of various alternatives on the security of the United States and on the safety and autonomy of the other nations of the hemisphere."³⁶

Vernon Walters was similar to Jeane Kirkpatrick in that he viewed the process towards democratization as primarily an internal matter that had to be resolved by the actors involved. Though he seemed to be somewhat more optimistic that democracy could eventually flourish in Latin America, he was also cautious to point out that the US could do more harm than good in trying to force the issue. He articulated those thoughts by saying,

The United States is seen by all Latin Americans, whether of right or left, as largely a big power that tries to push them around and the only thing that they often agree on is that they will resist that pressure...

If we really want to change this, and if we really want to get better human rights, I don't think we can do it by increasing

³⁶. Jeane Kirkpatrick, "US Security and Latin America", Commentary, January 1981, p. 40.

harshness. I am not aware of any case in history where these types of external sanctions have had any real effect on a country other than, as I say, to rally the people around their government.³⁷

Walters believed that in order for the US to effectively influence any transition towards democracy, it had to do so quietly and patiently. To push too hard was to be counterproductive. Policy was based on results, not standards.

Reagan administration policy towards Chile largely followed these precepts. In the first few years it was extremely reluctant to criticize the Pinochet regime, but eventually did so after an increase in human rights abuses in 1982. By 1985 the administration wholeheartedly endorsed a transition to democracy, but it never went to the extremes pursued by the Carter administration. The administration's approach became, in retrospect, a mixture of the Carter and early Reagan years.

D. REAGAN'S POLICY IN REGARDS TO CHILE

President Reagan began his term by trying to improve the relations with Chile that had been so strained during the Carter administration. In February 1981 his administration lifted the prohibition on Export-Import Bank dealings with Chile and reinstated the invitation to the Chilean Navy to participate in Operation Unitas, a US-sponsored hemispheric naval exercise that the Chilean Navy had been excluded from in 1980 as a result of the Letelier extradition rebuff. Military aid, though, was not reinstated because of congressional

³⁷. US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, US Economic Sanctions Against Chile, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981, p. 55.

restrictions.

However, the greatest change was one of rhetoric. In August 1981 the administration sent Kirkpatrick to meet with Pinochet. It was described as one of the most cordial visits his regime ever had. The visit was also unusual in that Kirkpatrick failed to meet with any of the democratic opposition, the first high level US official in some time that refused to do so. She was "rewarded", some forty-eight hours after her visit, when Pinochet exiled the president of the Chilean Commission for Human Rights, Jaime Castillo.³⁸

This action certainly caused some personal embarrassment for Kirkpatrick. She had obviously followed her own analysis, as well as others, to its logical extreme. While there were many benefits to this low profile approach, the apparent weaknesses were made manifest. The US could not afford to ignore the opposition. Otherwise, its credibility as a nation seeking the best way to promote human rights would be severely undermined. Clearly, some compromise was needed.

According to the Chilean press, a report on the first two years of the Reagan administration released in January 1983 listed priorities for American foreign policy. The highest priorities were given to maintaining world peace, focusing on international economic issues, and addressing relations with the Soviet Union. The encouragement and promotion of democracy in Latin America was listed in fifth place.³⁹ Thus, from their perspective, a major reason

³⁸. Arriagada, Chile, op. cit., p., 46.

³⁹. "El Mercurio Assesses US-Chilean Relations", PY092305 Santiago El Mercurio in Spanish 31 Jan 83, p. 3, as translated into English by FBIS, 10 Feb 83, E1.

that relations with Chile took such a low profile was that the emphasis in the Reagan administration was on other issues. This relatively low priority is in striking contrast to the major emphasis human rights had received during the Carter administration.

By late 1982, however, forces within the Reagan administration had started to change. According to Chilean political analyst Heraldo Munoz, the failure of the Chilean government to take concrete actions for a political opening, and an increase in repression that began in 1982 made it difficult for the Reagan administration to continue its "silent diplomacy" towards Chile. In one important change, the US State Department released 14 declarations concerning human rights in 1983.⁴⁰ In March 1984 the pressure was increased again when Stephen Bosworth, head of a US Department of State delegation, stated publicly in Chile that the United States wanted to see a peaceful transition towards democracy in that country, adding that "the people must be allowed to participate in the transition process."⁴¹

When the Pinochet government declared a state of siege in November 1984, the growing disapproval of the Reagan administration led to further changes, particularly in personnel. In May 1985 Elliot Abrams, the former US Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, replaced Langhorne Motley (whom members of the opposition called a "Pinochet sympathizer") as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. In August of that year, James

⁴⁰. "Analyst Says Relations with US 'Tense'", PY062005 Santiago Radio Cooperative in Spanish 1715 GMT 6 Nov 84, as translated into English by FBIS, 9 Nov 84, E5.

⁴¹. "US Official: Transition to Democracy Wanted", PY1513 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 1100 GMT 15 Mar 84, as translated into English by FBIS, 16 Mar 84, E1.

Theberge, whose close ties with Pinochet had virtually cut him off from the Chilean opposition, was replaced by Henry Barnes, a career diplomat who was seen in Chile as being better able to work with the opposition.⁴²

These changes marked the unequivocal end to Reagan's "silent diplomacy" strategy towards Chile. In 1985 Ambassador Barnes protested Pinochet's regime by attending a service for victims of police brutality. Later, the US abstained from approving loans to Chile by the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank. In the United Nations the US supported a condemnation of Chile's human-rights policies, and in December 1987 the government issued a strong statement which called on Chile to hold free elections. In addition, Congress authorized \$1 million for the opposition in the 1988 plebiscite (to decide whether or not to continue with the Pinochet regime).⁴³

Throughout this period it is evident that Congress was more willing than the Reagan administration to apply public pressure on the Pinochet regime. Relations were particularly strained between the executive and legislative branches during the first few years, but even after the appointment of Elliot Abrams the administration was hesitant to apply economic sanctions. The administration argued that the adverse effects created by that type of pressure would fall heaviest on those least able to afford it.⁴⁴ Others outside the administration argued that sanctions were exactly what was needed

⁴². Arriagada, Chile, op. cit., p. 67.

⁴³. Douglas Stanglin, "Bankrolling Oppositions: The US As Off-Again Ally", US News and World Report, Sept. 12, 1988.

⁴⁴. Elliot Abrams, "US Support for Transition to Democracy in Chile", US Department of State Bulletin, March 1986, p. 71.

to bring about substantive change.⁴⁵ One factor not mentioned by critics of the administration, however, was that the sanctions applied by Congress had, after a decade, left the US with little leverage. By 1988 one of the few options left was to raise tariffs on apples, grapes and kiwis, the products of Chile which had replaced copper as its chief area of exports to the United States.⁴⁶

Effects on the opposition in Chile during the Reagan administration are somewhat ambiguous. Arriagada argued that whereas the first few years of Reagan's policies led to the deterioration in the morale and outlook of the opposition, the changes in personnel in 1985 were seen as a major setback for the Pinochet regime.⁴⁷ Other politicians within the moderate opposition saw it much the same way. They stated that later American officials indicated they had "a more balanced appreciation of the Chilean situation than earlier ones."⁴⁸ On several occasions, members of the moderate opposition sought US assistance. In August 1983 some 100 students staged a demonstration outside the US Consulate in Santiago, requesting help for the Chilean transition process.⁴⁹ In May 1985 former Foreign Minister Gabriel Valdes, a Christian Democrat, asserted that the US could do a lot more to help restore democracy,

⁴⁵. Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, "Is Chile Next?", Foreign Policy, Summer 1986, p. 73.

⁴⁶. Stanglin, "Bankrolling Oppositions", op. cit., p. 43.

⁴⁷. Arriagada, Chile, op., cit., pp. 45 and 68.

⁴⁸. "Politicians React to Elliot Abrams' Comments", PY 192038 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 1600 GMT 19 Jan 87, as translated into English by FBIS, 21 Jan 87, E1.

⁴⁹. "Students Seek US Aid, Demonstrate at Consulate", PY182113 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2011 GMT 18 Aug 83, as translated into English by FBIS, 19 Aug 83, E4.

although he and other members of the opposition opposed outright intervention.⁵⁰ The opposition was disappointed with the aid that it received from Congress for the 1988 plebiscite, though this was due more to the fact that of the \$1 million earmarked for the opposition, only \$600,000 was received, while the other \$400,000 virtually disappeared.⁵¹ It does, however, note the interest in obtaining US support.

The Chilean left was understandably much more hostile. The Popular Democratic Movement (MDP) seemed unlikely to forgive, let alone forget, the role by the US in the ousting of Allende. A communique issued by the group in November 1983 stated that "the only objective of the US interventionist offensive is to defend its interests by preserving a system of domination whose nefarious effects principally burden the popular sectors."⁵²

The communist Chilean economist, Jose Cademartori, was even more explicit. He exclaimed,

Pinochet's dictatorship--and this is something that Chile has not forgotten--is a creature of US imperialism. Therefore, they are responsible for the crimes; they are responsible for 10 years of poverty, exploitation, and suffering by the Chilean people. There can be no reconciliation; there can be no effort to incorporate the Yankee officials in the solutions that the Chilean people need and seek for their problems. Any effort to involve the US ambassador--who is a well-known element, a well-known CIA agent, and an official of the US banks--is prejudicial to the interests of our people. Chile needs a

⁵⁰. "Idea of US 'Intervention' Prompts Controversy", PY150400 Paris AFP in Spanish 0030 GMT 15 May 85, as translated into English by FBIS, 16 May 85, E1.

⁵¹. "Opposition 'Disappointed' on Aid", PY261457 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 1030 GMT 26 Mar 88, as translated into English by FBIS, 26 Mar 1988, p. 39.

⁵². "MDP Scores US 'Interventionist Offensive'", PY091600 Paris AFP in Spanish 2342 GMT 8 Nov 83, as translated into English by FBIS, 10 Nov 83, E2.

solution to its problems based on its own needs.⁵³

Though given as part of an interview in Cuba, and maybe therefore as more propaganda than substance, it still underscores the difficulty the US would have in influencing members of the left.

These same sentiments are seen as late as 1986, when Jose Sanfuentes, the Secretary General of the MDP, denounced US efforts to influence a transition in the strongest terms. He said it was the very clear mission of Ambassador Barnes to "maintain Pinochet's dictatorship."⁵⁴

Yet even here there may be hope. Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela argued in the Winter 1989/90 issue of Foreign Affairs that even the socialist left had moderated its tone, seeing a positive US element in the departure of Pinochet, coming to understand the complexities of US foreign policy, and identifying more with the moderate socialism of contemporary Europe.⁵⁵ How long the Chilean left will distrust Washington remains to be seen.

E. TOWARDS THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

Since Patricio Aylwin's victory in the December 1989 election the attempt to consolidate democracy has been primarily an internal matter. Two of the major issues facing his government have been resolving the issue of human

⁵³. "Communist Leader on Current Crisis, US Support", PA261658 Havana International Service in Spanish 0000GMT 26 Jun 83, as translated into English by FBIS, 27 Jun 83, E 14.

⁵⁴. "MDP Says US Envoy Barnes Divides Opposition", PY292242 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 1630 GMT 29 Jan 86, as translated into English by FBIS, 30 Jan 86, E1.

⁵⁵. Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, "Chile's Return to Democracy", Foreign Affairs, Winter 1989/90, p. 185.

rights abuses of the Pinochet regime, and establishing civilian control over the military, which is one of Przeworski's conditions for democratic consolidation (see introduction). Maintaining business confidence, while addressing the concerns of the average Chilean, has also been a high priority. The latter is important to the consolidation of democracy because it sets a precedent for the institutionalization of economic conflicts. While the United States may not be able to play a direct role, it can provide support on the periphery, especially as it concerns economic growth.

Shortly after the December election Chilean emissaries met with leaders in the United States and Western Europe. The issue was not a specific plea for financial aid, for which Chile was too well off to qualify, but a request for a more generalized type of support. Noting that Chile was in the midst of a delicate transition, those emissaries merely pointed out that "they would like to be able to count on support."⁵⁶ To their dismay, such support from the United States was slow in coming.

After assuming office in March 1990, the Chilean government had expected that US trade and diplomatic sanctions designed to pressure the Pinochet regime would quickly be removed. Among the issues of contention were US trade sanctions that imposed duties on some Chilean exports to the United States, and the Kennedy Amendment, which banned the sale of US military equipment. By the fall of 1990 those issues had not been resolved. One Chilean official warned, "the Americans don't seem to realise how rapidly anti-US sentiment can be whipped up in Chile. If they do not give ground, it will harm them as much

⁵⁶. As quoted by Eugene Robinson, "Chile's Next Government to Face a Balancing Act", Washington Post, December 17, 1989.

as us."⁵⁷

Another issue that had exacerbated tensions was a ban on Chilean fruit, imposed by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) after two grapes had been found to contain cyanide. This ban caused an estimated loss of over \$300 million to Chile's exporters. With some members of Congress looking on, the US General Accounting Office (GAO) supported the FDA decision. However, a study released later by the University of California at Davis indicated that the high volatility of cyanide, with its rapid rate of dissipation, meant that the grapes had been contaminated while they were in FDA hands.⁵⁸ The refusal of US officials to address this grievance only added to the problem.

This was particularly perplexing because relations with other countries had improved dramatically. In 1990 President Aylwin received warm greetings when he addressed the United Nations General Assembly. In contrast, during Pinochet's tenure UN delegates would abandon the hall in protest whenever his envoy took the floor. During that year Aylwin also visited virtually every country in Latin America, his government re-established relations with Mexico, and an investment treaty was signed to promote joint ventures with Spain. In addition, President Aylwin was formally invited to join the Group of Rio, a prestigious forum of democratically elected Latin American presidents.⁵⁹ The United States was clearly out of step with the way the rest of the world was greeting Chile's return to democratically elected government.

⁵⁷. As quoted by Leslie Crawford, "Chile's Long Road Back to Favour", Financial Times of London, November 3, 1990.

⁵⁸. "The Week", National Review, December 17, 1990, p. 12.

⁵⁹. Leslie Crawford, "Chile's Long Road Back to Favour", op. cit.

Continued US sanctions were incomprehensible to Chilean officials. Finance Minister Alejandro Foxley noted, "...we were not responsible for the human rights problems that generated US sanctions. Yet, it has taken eight months to get the first signs that something will change. This frustrates Chileans."⁶⁰ This statement is telling. What upset the Chileans was not the idea of sanctions per se, but the way in which they were applied. In other words, it was alright to push for liberalization, but the final phase, that of democratic consolidation, deserved encouragement. For Chileans, continued pressure would not contribute to the improvement of the situation, whatsoever. It appears that in this stage, the carrot may be more effective than the stick.

By the end of 1990 the United States government had begun to respond. In October, both countries formally agreed to create an intergovernmental council on trade and investment, including cooperation on the current Uruguay Round trade negotiations at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.⁶¹ In December, the ban on military equipment transfers was lifted. In a compromise between Congress and the administration, the United States gave President Aylwin's government several volumes of evidence pertaining to the Letelier assassination, although it remains to be seen whether the Chilean Supreme Court will reverse its earlier decision to refuse the US request for extradition. In addition, the White House, with congressional consent, announced that the 1987 trade sanctions would be lifted. Administration

⁶⁰. Tim Frasca, "Chileans Prepare Mixed Welcome for Bush Visit", Christian Science Monitor, December 6, 1990.

⁶¹. "US, Chile Agree on Trade Council", Journal of Commerce, October 3, 1990.

officials also suggested that under the Enterprise for the Americas initiative, Chile would be eligible for debt forgiveness for money owed the United States government, which currently amounts to nearly \$500 million.⁶²

Much of the delay in American support can be explained by bureaucratic inertia. Yet some of the problems also stem from the congressional role in the American foreign policy process. Just as Congress had pressured the Reagan administration into "getting tougher" on Pinochet, so too it may have hampered the Bush administration's favorable response to such a successful transition. Only after close consultation with Congress could the administration lift the trade sanctions and the ban on military equipment, and this delay caused hard feelings among many people in Chile who had sacrificed dearly for a democratic transition. Clearly, Congress has the right and obligation to work with the President on matters of foreign policy, and one understands that this is the price of a sharing of powers. However, matters such as these indicate there should be more efficient processes to change foreign policies when conditions warrant.

F. CONCLUSION

The United States has a definite role to play in the process of a democratic transition in countries where it has some influence, but that role is difficult to define. Furthermore, after being defined it must be followed with utmost care and caution. It would appear that a compromise between the high profile given to human rights by the Carter administration, and the

⁶². Charles Green, "Bush Hails Chile as Model for Rest of Latin America", Miami Herald, December 7, 1990.

"silent diplomacy" of the Reagan administration would provide the most effective support in influencing a transition. Perhaps some final conclusions drawn from these periods are in order.

The primary responsibility for affecting a transition to democracy, and also the credit for its success, lies with actors internal to the situation. While exiles may be able to influence world public opinion and should likewise receive our moral backing, it is those individuals who apply internal pressure that most deserve the support. When Pinochet declared that "no foreigner, however powerful, can impose his will", he revealed a telling statement.⁶³ Pressure should be applied not only for the purpose of influencing the government, but for supporting the opposition, as well. Otherwise, as Vernon Walter noted, the result may be to rally the people around their government.

If the US government does decide to apply sanctions it must keep several points in mind. Sanctions appear to be most appropriate for influencing the liberalization of a regime. There is no evidence that they assisted democratization, and there is some evidence that it was actually counterproductive when it came to the consolidation of democracy. In addition, unless sanctions are applied by all parties involved they are ineffective. The government must not only consider how other nations will react, it must also remember the relations private industries have with the government involved. As was seen in Chile, Pinochet viewed Carter administration policies as less important than the country's relations with the business sector. It is also of interest that at times American labor was able to apply as much pressure as was the US government.

⁶³. Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, "Is Chile Next?". op. cit., p. 60.

Equally important, sanctions can be counterproductive. Regardless of the situation, relations between nations are ultimately determined by the governments in power. The country that applies the sanctions should not carry policies to the point of severing ties. Again, this relates to supporting the opposition, not undermining the government, such as occurred from 1970-1973. If one destabilizes the situation in a country to the point that the government must relinquish power, it must be remembered that someone has to pick up the pieces. This could be one of the reasons the Pinochet regime was so repressive. In addition, a sanction used is a sanction lost. In other words, if sanctions are continually applied to the point of forcing the regime in power to become independent, later influence attempts will be less effective. The basic point concerning sanctions is that they should be used judiciously and as a means of last resort.

Another issue in regards to influencing a transition is that no single incident should set the agenda. To place the success or failure of American foreign policy on one event is extremely risky. As in the Letelier case, it can cause a severe strain in relations without producing results. As Vernon Walters remarked,

If we are really trying to influence them in the sense of obtaining a change, I don't think it is by further pointing the finger at them that we will succeed. I think the US Government actions in the Letelier case were fully reported in the Chilean press. I do not think there is any Chilean who doesn't realize that the United States was outraged by this murder on the streets of an American city. I think we have made the point.⁶⁴

⁶⁴. US, Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, US Economic Sanctions Against Chile, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981, p. 55.

It may behoove the US to de-emphasize specific issues, while stressing general trends instead.

One possible instrument to accomplish this compromise lies within the very nature of the US system. It is not necessarily bad that Congress applies the pressure it does. It may be useful to use Congress as a sounding board, expressing our public concern, while in some way encouraging self-restraint in its ability to direct policy. In that manner, the administration could act as the moderating power, standing as the force of reason. The US should not, however, follow the extreme example of Kirkpatrick by refusing to meet with the opposition, but it should limit action that would reduce US influence in the future. In this way, the administration would have the actual responsibility of conducting foreign policy, while being able to use Congress as an excuse for constraints it would have to follow.

While the United States can influence transitions to democracy in countries with which it has some influence, the best advice would be to remain patient. It must remember that other forces outside its control tend to be more important. For instance, during the Carter administration the countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay were under military rule for the majority of the time. In contrast, by the summer of 1989 only Chile was without a democratically elected government. These historical changes had, undoubtedly, put pressure on the Pinochet regime. Yet, forces such as these are beyond US control. With these limits in mind, it is important to remember that external actors do play a role in democratic transitions. It may be a very limited one, but it is evident nonetheless.

I V . B R A Z I L

"Debt is the sink of inequity."

German-American adage

United States' interests in Brazil during the 19th century were, for the most part, limited. It was the first nation to recognize independent Brazil, which proclaimed its independence on September 7, 1822. However, due to American opposition to monarchical government, full recognition did not become official until May 26, 1824.¹ For the next half-century, relations between the two countries were rather noneventful.

United States' democratic ideas seem to have played an important role in the overthrow of the empire from 15 to 17 November 1889.² Within two weeks the State Department instructed the US Minister, Robert Adams, to accord formal US recognition to the new republic as "soon as the majority of the people of Brazil shall have signified their assent to its establishment and maintenance."³ Formal recognition was granted on January 29, 1890, and by joint resolution on February 19, 1890, the US Congress congratulated the people of Brazil on "their just and peaceful assumption of the powers, duties, and responsibilities of self-government, based upon the free consent of the

¹. "US Policy toward Governments of Brazil, 1824-Present: Questions of Recognition and Diplomatic Relations", Department of State Bulletin, September 1974, p. 346.

². Robert Wesson and David Fleischer, Brazil in Transition (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), p. 142.

³. "US Policy toward Governments of Brazil, 1824-Present", op. cit., p. 347.

governed, and in their recent adoption of a republican form of government."⁴

During the years of the First Republic, relations between the United States and Brazil were good. In comparison to other countries, US economic interests in Brazil were minor until World War I, and did not become the dominant foreign interest until World War II. During that period, most nationalistic impulses were directed against the British, who had important investments in Brazil, and who often used heavy-handed tactics to secure their position. The US, on the other hand, was seen as a counterbalance to Brazil's chief rival, Argentina. As a result, relations between the United States and Brazil during the years of the First Republic remained cordial.⁵

This situation began to change in the 1930s when Getulio Dornelles Vargas became Chief of the Provisional Government with support of the military. Though relations continued to be very good at first, leftist and rightist forces began to play an important role in the internal politics of Brazil. Both antidemocratic and anti-US, communists and fascists began to play for power. In November 1935, communists attempted to establish a new order, but they were crushed by the government. In 1937 a new authoritarian regime was established, the Estado Novo, which banned parties, dismissed the Congress, censored the press, and suppressed elections.

The pro-fascist Estado Novo led to a competition between the US and Germany for influence in Brazil. The Germans purchased large quantities of Brazilian agricultural and mineral products in exchange for German manufactures. In addition, the Germans offered the Brazilians weapons to

⁴. *ibid.*

⁵. Wesson, Brazil, op. cit., p. 142.

modernize their forces, something the United States was reluctant to do. By 1938, German sales to Brazil exceeded those of the United States. In May of that year the "Integralistas", a radical sector of the officers' corps that was pro-German, attempted a coup. Though unsuccessful and severely repressed, it showed the depth of pro-Axis feelings in Brazil, and the need for Vargas to address these concerns in Brazilian foreign policy.⁶

President Franklin D. Roosevelt chose to avoid putting pressure on the Vargas regime, and the US persisted in actively courting the Brazilian government. In exchange for Brazilian assistance, the US eventually provided supports for the price of coffee, played a critical role in building the Volta Redonda steel mill, transferred significant amounts of weapons, and aided in the construction of airfields and other facilities. During World War II US forces were based in Brazil, military and economic aid proliferated, and extensive bilateral public and private sector economic cooperation occurred. Three-fourths of all US military aid to Latin America went to Brazil.⁷

The close cooperation with Brazil during World War II would have profound effects for the next few decades. While much of the rapport established throughout that period would benefit US interests, the increased US presence would also result in friction between the two countries, including a US propensity to take the relationship for granted. The more the US tried to pressure Brazil, the greater the tension between the two governments became. The result was a loss of US influence in Brazil. While these forces would

⁶. *ibid.*

⁷. Abraham Lowenthal, Partners in Conflict: The United States in Latin America (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 124.

apply to US-Brazil relations in general, it would also provide a general indication of what might occur should the United States push too hard for a particular course of action.

A. BRAZIL'S DEMOCRACY AND THE ROAD TO THE MILITARY COUP

When Getulio Vargas was forced to resign on October 29, 1945, a new era of democratic government began. It seemed as if favorable conditions would allow it to succeed. United States support for a democratic international environment was conducive to good bilateral relations, the domestic economy was not experiencing any unusual strain, the armed forces were impressed by the demise of German and Italian fascism, and the Vargas dictatorship had led to the emergence a vigorous liberal opposition capable of effective parliamentary leadership.⁸

The immediate post-war period, perhaps reinforced by the establishment of democratic government in Brazil in 1946, saw continued close ties between the two nations. Brazil was solidly behind US Cold War diplomacy, and the Brazilians actively supported the creation of the Inter-America defense and security system. From 1945-1954 Brazil ranked second only to Nicaragua in its voting support in the United Nations for North American positions. Yet, diplomatic and security issues were of secondary concern to the Brazilian government. The chief aim was the economic growth and development of the country, and in this area the US was seen to be as much a constraint on Brazil

⁸. Bolivar Lamounier, "Brazil: Inequality Against Democracy", Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America, ed. Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989), p. 124.

as it was anything else.⁹

From 1946 to 1951 the cooperation between the countries was excellent, but Vargas's return to power in 1951 marked a turn in the relationship. The Joint Brazil-US Economic Development commission, established in 1950 to help finance infrastructure projects through the Export-Import and World Bank, was disbanded in 1953 after the Brazilians had created the national petroleum monopoly, Petrobras. As a result, of the \$500 million that was projected to be received by the Brazilians, only \$200 million arrived. For the US these loans were conditional; they were, in effect, an effort to liberalize the Brazilian economy. For the Brazilians the US was seen as a reneger, and this was an underhanded attempt by the US government to further project its influence into another sovereign country. The effect was an increase in economic nationalism that further strained the relationship.¹⁰

Throughout the 1950s the situation continued to deteriorate. An anti-US backlash occurred in 1954 when the threat of a military coup against Vargas resulted in the suicide of the former dictator. In a note he left behind, Vargas claimed that sinister domestic and foreign forces were behind his undoing. Though no proof of US involvement has ever been produced, it was believed by many Brazilians at the time that the CIA and/or US corporations were acting to protect their political and economic interests.¹¹

⁹. Riordan Roett, "Brazilian Foreign Policy: Options in the 1980s", Authoritarian Capitalism: Brazil's Contemporary Economic and Political Development, ed. Thomas Bruneau and Philippe Faucher (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), p. 180.

¹⁰. Albert Fishlow, "Flying Down to Rio: Perspectives on US-Brazil Relations", Foreign Affairs, Winter 1978, p. 390.

¹¹. Wesson, Brazil, op. cit., p. 146.

In 1958 President Juscelino Kubitschek proposed a United States-Latin America long-term multilateral program of economic development, called Operacao Pan America, which met with considerable skepticism from the Eisenhower Administration. The United States believed Brazil's economy needed a better environment for business, not government aid, so in 1958-59 the US withheld approval of a \$300 million loan until Brazil would accept International Monetary Fund requirements for exchange liberalization and fiscal austerity. In June 1959 Kubitschek decided against accepting the loan with strings attached, so he broke off negotiations with the IMF. This event was used by the political left to demonstrate against what was perceived as disinterest by the US in Brazil's economic well-being.¹²

US pressure on Brazil to liberalize its economy continued beyond Kubitschek. Kubitschek, who left heavy external and domestic debts as the price of his industrialization policies, was succeeded by President Janio Quadros. Quadros attempted to placate the United States by promoting fiscal stabilization. He failed in this attempt. It is not surprising, therefore, that he blamed foreign reactionaries for his downfall. The left, as it had previously, fingered the US as being the major culprit.

In 1962, under the Goulart administration, the US threatened to invoke the Hickenlooper Amendment, a rider to the Foreign Aid Bill that obligated the US to suspend aid to any country that expropriated property belonging to Americans without the payment of just compensation. Brazil's efforts to settle related claims in order to avoid the amendment's enactment led to allegations that the US was only interested in the welfare of its own citizens

¹². Roett, "Brazil Foreign Policy", op. cit., p. 180.

and not in the development of Brazil.¹³

The following year the US again offered to provide economic assistance, but it was so conditioned that it was almost rejected by the Brazilian ambassador to Washington before he had the chance to consult with his government.¹⁴ As the Brazilian economy continued to decline, Goulart abandoned any attempts at a stabilization program, and by mid-1963, his government turned increasingly towards the radical left. Thereafter, the United States cut off economic aid, except for projects in the Northeast that would benefit anti-Goulart state governments. The US government watched as the chaotic forces continued to mount, and it discretely encouraged anti-communist forces to pressure the government, while it kept in close contact with the Brazilian military.¹⁵ On March 31, 1964, the military overthrew the government of President Goulart and ended nearly twenty years of democratic rule.

US attempts to influence the liberalization of the Brazilian economy during the 1950s and early 1960s could have been a good lesson for later attempts to influence a transition towards democracy. Two trends that developed in the Estado Novo made influence attempts by the US extremely problematic during Brazil's experiment in democracy. The first was an increase in tension between the executive, which developed "Caesarist overtones" under Vargas, and forces within parliament that tried to pull toward some sort of congressional or party government, despite not having the

¹³. *ibid.*

¹⁴. Fishlow, "Flying Down to Rio", *op. cit.*, p. 392.

¹⁵. Wesson, Brazil, *op. cit.*, pp. 148, 149.

support of a well-structured party system. The second powerful trend that occurred under Vargas's dictatorship was an enormous increase in bureaucracy and government intervention.¹⁶

The failure of the US to influence the economic liberalization of Brazil seems to be a result of misreading these trends. The US government clearly saw the result of the increase in Brazil's state apparatus as being inefficient and inhospitable to US interests. What it may have failed to consider, however, was the extent to which this had been ingrained into the system, and the subsequent difficulty in changing it. Any heavy handed methods to change this rapidly would, therefore, lead to considerable resistance. In addition, the tension between the executive and legislative branches was exacerbated when extensive pressure was applied to influence internal change. Instead of encouraging moderate forces, US pressure for an all or nothing liberalization of the economy may have helped to fractionalize politics, thereby encouraging the more radical elements. Perhaps the US government would have been more successful had it been more sensitive to Brazilian concerns, and more patient in its deliberations.

The period from 1945 to 1964 indicates that the amount of US involvement in an economy as large as Brazil's did not necessarily translate into political influence. Cooperation during the first few years of that period were excellent, not because the US had political influence, but because priorities were similar. The Brazilians desired good relations, but they were not willing to trade control over their development for those relations. Therefore, when the US began to exert its economic influence in a political

¹⁶. Lamounier, "Brazil", op. cit., p. 124.

fashion, the result was not compliance, but defiance. Instead of increasing access to markets, the United States had contributed to economic nationalism. Put simply, the amount of American influence on politics in Brazil had been significantly overestimated by those US officials who desired to see change within Brazil.

B. DEALING WITH THE MILITARY: THE SUBTLE APPROACH

Two trends became apparent during the two decades of Brazilian democratic government. The first was an increase in economic nationalism, with a corresponding rise in political independence in foreign policy for Brazil. This resulted in a fundamental tension between the United States and Brazil that was sure to increase any time the US tried to force its way.¹⁷ A second trend of importance was an increased pace in military activism. Military coups were discussed in 1954, 1955 and 1961, and carried out in 1945 and 1964. All the major actors in the polity attempted to utilize the military for their own political needs, so the power of the military as the arbitrating or moderating institution in the political system increased as conflict increased.¹⁸ The United States may even have helped this trend in the 1960s by stressing internal security against counterinsurgency, thereby urging the Brazilian military to become more deeply involved in all sectors of society.¹⁹

¹⁷. Lowenthal, Partners in Conflict, op. cit., p. 125.

¹⁸. Alfred Stepan, The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 85.

¹⁹. *ibid.*, pp. 126, 127.

In regards to influencing a transition to democracy this meant two things: The US would have to deal with a politically entrenched military, and any efforts to pressure the regime would have to be done in such a manner as to avoid inflaming nationalism.

There is ample evidence that the US inhibited the potentially more repressive actions of the armed forces during the 1964 coup by supporting democracy, constitutionalism, and elected governments. For instance, the generals felt it necessary to insist that they were intervening to save democracy from the threat of communist dictatorship. Despite having welcomed the change in government, there is no proof that the US instigated, planned, directed or participated in the coup itself. Rather, it was primarily the result of political forces in Brazil that had struggled for control of that country since 1945.²⁰

A message conveying good wishes was sent, not to the military's Supreme Revolutionary Command, which actually ruled, but to Ranieri Mazzilli, the President of the chamber of Deputies who assumed the title of acting President before Goulart left Brazil. Later, at a news conference, on April 3, 1964, Secretary of State Dean Rusk stated that "...in the case of Brazil...the succession there occurred as foreseen by the Constitution and we would assume that recognition is not involved in that particular issue or point."²¹ Although these actions were intended to strengthen the civilian authorities, they had a different effect. Because they followed the coup so closely, they

²⁰. Thomas E. Skidmore, Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 322-330.

²¹. "US Policy toward Governments of Brazil, 1824-Present", op. cit., p. 351.

were considered by many to be confirmation of US involvement.

Even though the US government had hoped for a more moderate regime, and had seen military rule as a last resort, it nonetheless actively supported the military regime of Castelo Branco. In the first year of his rule the US poured in approximately \$500 million in aid, far in excess of the amount given to any other country in the hemisphere. The regime responded with a series of Institutional Acts that proclaimed sweeping powers for the military, it packed the Supreme Court, and it seemingly destroyed the opposition. The embarrassment of the US government became evident when Under Secretary of State Thomas C. Mann hinted that the US was transforming the Alliance for Progress into an alliance for ever-increasing militarization in the Western hemisphere.²²

Yet, as long as the Brazilian government maintained close ties with the US, especially as it concerned US foreign investment, Washington was hesitant to pressure the military towards returning to democratic rule. This approach was justified by Ambassador Gordon in July 1967 when he stated,

History will long dispute the merits of the acts of commission and omission during the past three years in Brazil. Castelo Branco lacked both the experience and the temperament for genuine popular leadership, but he did know that the Brazilian body politic had never recovered from the dictatorship of Getulio Vargas and that some kind of basic political therapy, if not surgery, was indispensable.

It can be said with assurance that the prospects today for stable and genuine constitutional democracy in Brazil are far better than three years ago, or than they would have been if the hard liners had taken power.²³

The US clearly had its priorities. The highest priority was to sustain its

²². As cited in, "Brazil: Second Act", The Nation, November 15, 1965, p. 345.

²³. As cited by Dom Bonafede, "Washington Backs the Pooh Bahs", The Nation, May 26, 1969, p. 664.

economic influence and this meant maintaining cordial relations with the Brazilian government. Democracy, from this point of view, would return when conditions were right. There was no point in forcing an issue that was beyond US control.

This approach appears to have backfired. In a cable sent by the US embassy in January 1967 the message was clear: "The extent of Castelo Branco's all-out support for United States policies has served to increase anti-Americanism rather than to lessen it."²⁴ Instead of protecting US interests in Brazil, a nationalistic reaction caused the underlying difference between the two states to become manifest. When President Castelo Branco was replaced by Artur da Costa e Silva, not only did Brazilian foreign policy return to its more independent course, but the severity of the military dictatorship increased as well.

By offering no public opposition to the policies of the military regime, the United States appeared to be supporting that regime. For most observers, the obvious conclusion was that the only thing that mattered to the United States government was that other countries towed the party line. The difficulty of using economic pressure to change political behavior in a country as large as Brazil has already been shown. Now one sees another problem. Ignoring the nature of a non-democratic regime just to maintain good relations draws the antipathy of those opposed to that regime. A little friction between governments is normal in a state of relations. It is only when that friction translates into disruptive policy that the damage occurs.

²⁴. Wesson, Brazil, op. cit., p. 155.

In December 1968 General Golbery do Costa e Silva signed the Fifth Institutional Act, a decree which declared a state of siege, closed Congress, imposed press censorship and withheld judicial appeal. The police and military were used to quell the opposition. The US met this increase in repression through subtle diplomacy. Ambassador John Tuthill, who had replaced Lincoln Gordon, met twice privately with Carlos Lacerda, an opposition leader who was known to have played a role in the overthrow of three presidents. In addition, the US State Department began to refer to Golbery's government as "military dominated". The result was that Costa e Silva refused to see Ambassador Tuthill, and relations with the United States became strained. Nevertheless, the United States never openly criticized the Brazilian government, even though Ambassador Tuthill had pleaded with Secretary of State Dean Rusk to do so.²⁵

President Nixon continued the diplomatic approach. He allowed aid to fall significantly, and he supported efforts by Ambassador Tuthill to cut the embassy staff as a sign of protest. However, his administration refused to claim that these maneuvers were a protest to military rule. The reduction of aid was the result of "increased selectivity", and cuts in personnel were attributed to plans to increase efficiency.²⁶ The closest the US administration came to outright support for democracy was in the text of a joint statement delivered when President Emilio Garrastazu Medici visited Washington. They agreed, "...that the primary goal of an era of peace and

²⁵. Bonafede, "Washington Backs the Pooh Bahs", op. cit., p. 665.

²⁶. "One Country Where US Ambassador Orders: Yankee Go Home", US News & World Report, December 9, 1968, p. 38.

prosperity for the region can be achieved only by cooperation which in turn must be founded on the principles of freedom and self-determination."²⁷ The Nixon administration may have preferred a transition to democracy, but any pressure that was applied was accomplished in private, or in a manner that would avoid embarrassing the military regime. It was a policy of patience.

In essence, the Nixon administration publicly ignored the issue of military government in Brazil. To the extent that it attempted to encourage political liberalization, its efforts were behind closed doors. In other words, it appeared that US policy accepted the belief that political liberalization should be left strictly to the mercy of the government of Brazil. What else could be done? Clearly, sanctions to liberalize the economy had only resulted in increased economic nationalism. Would not pressure for political liberalization have been equally counterproductive? The answer to these questions is unclear. It should be noted, though, that sanctions and silence are not the only alternatives.

If it appeared that the United States was applying pressure in a manner that left the government of Brazil no alternative, then it could have been used by nationalist forces. If, on the other hand, such pressure was applied in a manner that did not demand a policy change on behalf of the Brazilians, but instead only suggested US disapproval, then it may have succeeded. For example, the United States could have limited its response to public criticism, especially if used in a sparing fashion. Sanctions are problematic because they, by definition, demand a policy change. Silence is problematic because it suggests acquiescence. Open criticism, provided it does not

²⁷. "President Medici of Brazil Visits the US", Department of State Bulletin, January 3, 1972, p. 14.

involve a policy change, appears to be a middle path.

The Ford administration was equally reserved in its criticism. One justification for this low profile approach might have been that the repression during the Costa e Silva and Medici presidencies had largely subsided by the time that Ernesto Geisel had succeeded Medici in 1974. Geisel had begun to allow a political opening, or "Abertura", and it would not have made sense to apply pressure just as the situation was beginning to improve. In other words, one administration had limited options because of what the previous administration had chosen not to do. Any open criticism would, at this time, have appeared inconsistent. A middle path by the Nixon administration would thus appear to have had other benefits as well.

Another reason the US did not apply greater pressure was the recognition that Brazil was largely independent of the US, and efforts to influence the trend towards democracy could have resulted in a backlash. Brazilian independence was being demonstrated in a number of areas. A foreign policy that was increasingly oriented toward the Third World, much as Quadros's had been, made evident the limits of American control. For example, during that time period Brazil provided support for the MPLA in Angola, it increased contacts with other nations for trade, including the Soviet Union, and it registered a pro-Palestinian voting record in the United Nations.²⁸

A significant area of contention was over the Brazilian refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. The Brazilians were keen on reducing their dependence on foreign oil, so they actively pursued the development of nuclear power as a national goal. The Brazilians indicated they were willing

²⁸. Fishlow, "Flying Down to Rio", op. cit., p. 397.

to accept US assistance by awarding a contract to Westinghouse for the construction of Brazil's first nuclear power plant. However, attempting to control the flow of enriched uranium, the US government attached so many strings that the Brazilians decided to look elsewhere. In 1975 they signed an agreement with West Germany, thereby obtaining the necessary items for nuclear power plant construction. Concerned over the proliferation of nuclear material, the US tried to prevent the deal. Having failed in that endeavor, it settled for being able to extract an agreement from both Germany and Brazil. Both countries pledged that any technology would not be made available for weapons production.²⁹

The manner in which the Ford administration dealt with the nuclear issue, and the subsequent signing of a memorandum of understanding in 1976, stipulating that the two powers would consult each other on issues of concern, are indicative of how the US would try to influence a transition towards democracy in that period. Like the previous administrations, the US recognized the limits of trying to influence events. It showed its concern over sensitive issues, and was capable through diplomatic channels to voice these concerns. It was not, however, willing to risk a severe strain in a relationship with a country the US felt was so important. Jimmy Carter was less subtle.

C. DEALING WITH THE MILITARY: THE CARTER APPROACH

²⁹. Thomas E. Skidmore, The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil: 1964-85 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 194.

Two policies had overwhelming implications for US-Brazil relations during the Carter administration: Nuclear non-proliferation and human rights. Though Carter's stance against the spread of nuclear capabilities was not directly related to attempting to influence a transition towards democracy, his policies are indicative of what might have occurred had he pursued heavy handedness against the military in that area. His human rights efforts, which provided the framework to influence a transition towards democracy, were applied less rigorously to Brazil due to the fact that the human rights abuses had for the most part subsided.

President Carter decided to make Brazil a showcase in his efforts to limit nuclear proliferation. As one of his first initiatives he tried to pressure the West Germans into withdrawing from the agreement, reportedly even threatening the withdrawal of US troops from West Berlin. When the Germans balked, Carter sent his Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, to reassert US control over the situation. The Brazilians saw this more as an attempt to protest Westinghouse's lost business than to safeguard the world against nuclear proliferation. As such, Ernesto Geisel used this event to stir up nationalist sentiment for his own political benefit. For the Brazilians, it was their right to develop their own nuclear industry. This attempt by Carter to impose his standards in such an obvious way was clearly a failure. By late 1977 he had given up on this effort.³⁰ As David Fleischer and Robert Wesson put it, "the campaign that the Carter administration briefly waged against the Brazil-German deal seemed a remarkable exercise in diplomatic futility, which if successful only would have embittered US-

³⁰. *ibid.*

Brazilian relations."³¹

Had the Carter administration really wanted to affect a paralysis in Brazil's attempt to build a nuclear power industry, it may have been much more effective to concentrate on private groups instead. It would have to be done through private channels, since any efforts by the administration to influence the internal affairs of another sovereign nation, especially one that was big and developing, would be seen as intervention. Yet important forces within Brazil could have made this possible. There was an extensive antinuclear movement that could have received support from similar groups in the US and Europe. The delays and cost overruns made the economics of the program questionable, especially in light of Brazil's abundant hydroelectric potential. In addition, a shortage of foreign exchange forced the curtailment of nonurgent imports.³² By encouraging those most adversely affected by Brazil's nuclear power program, the US might have increased internal debate. Instead, US pressure on the Brazilian government provided a rallying point for Geisel.

Carter's human rights campaign appears to have had the same result as his stance against nuclear proliferation. As was noted in the previous chapter, the basis for this policy actually originated in Congress. However, it was President Carter that took the lead in implementing this policy. Once again, efforts were concentrated on a government to government basis. That is, pressure applied on the Brazilian government to liberalize politically far exceeded any attempts by the United States to encourage democratization by

³¹. Wesson, Brazil, op. cit., p. 160.

³². ibid, p. 159.

supporting institutions within that country. Much of this was obviously due to a reluctance to interfere in the affairs of a sovereign state. It does, however, highlight the limits of US involvement in the democratic transition in Brazil.

When the State Department issued its annual report on human rights conditions in 1977 in all countries receiving US military assistance, as mandated under the Harkin Amendments, Brazil was on the list. Many of the charges were the result of earlier investigations, such as Amnesty International, but the report nonetheless infuriated the Geisel government. In response, the Brazilian government cancelled a US-Brazil military aid agreement that had begun in 1952. As US ambassador John Crimins noted, by September 1977 "all formal structure of military cooperation between the two countries" had been ended.³³ In rejecting all military aid, the Brazilian government had effectively eliminated the requirement for any further State Department reports on human rights in Brazil.

The administration further publicized the human rights issue when First Lady Rosalyn Carter made an official tour in June 1977. During the trip a Brazilian student representative gave her a letter that denounced the government's human rights violations, and on a stop in the Northeastern port city of Recife, Mrs. Carter met with two US missionaries who had been the earlier targets of police maltreatment. As a result, the Brazilian government attempted to show that the US was again trying to influence internal Brazilian affairs, thereby using nationalism to strengthen its position. The extent of success of either the Carter administration's attempt to publicize the human

³³. Skidmore, The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, op. cit., p. 197.

rights issue, or the Brazilian government's attempt to gain internal support by demonstrating its independence, is unclear.

In a visit to Brazil in March 1978, President Carter met with several members of the opposition. Speaking in terms of the desirability for international observance of human rights, he avoided outright charges against the government, which might have been interpreted as interventionism. Instead of trying to focus on the human rights issue, which had been reduced in significance because of the Abertura, the remainder of the Carter administration was spent trying to repair the damage that had occurred as a result of the nuclear non-proliferation fiasco and the outdated human rights report. However, the Brazilian government never allowed the relations to become more than amicable, and later on it refused to back Carter on his Olympic boycott and grain embargo of the Soviet Union in response to their invasion of Afghanistan.³⁴

The results of President Carter's human rights policy were mixed. On the one hand, the Brazilian government was clearly perturbed at what it saw as meddling behavior. Foreign Minister Azeredo da Silveira commented that the worsening of US-Brazilian relations was "the exclusive direct responsibility" of the Carter administration.³⁵ Relations between the two countries were adversely effected, military ties were weakened, support for US policies was virtually nonexistent, and it can be argued that Carter's policy had very little effect.

³⁴. Wesson, Brazil, op. cit., p. 161.

³⁵. "Azerdo Blames Carter for Worsening Relations", PY030245 Sao Paulo O Estado de Sao Paulo in Portuguese 2 Mar 79 p. 6 PY, as translated into English by FBIS, 5 Mar 79, E1.

On the other hand, the damage was not irreparable. By 1979 Vice President Mondale was able to visit Brazil in a much improved atmosphere. On talks that included human rights and nuclear energy, one paper noted, "instead of the aggressiveness of both parties in the past, the talks were more mature this time."³⁶ Also at the meeting, President Joao Baptista Figueredo issued a promise to transform Brazil into "a full democracy in which the human rights of every citizen will be fully guaranteed."³⁷ In regards to the abrogation of the military agreements, it is something the Brazilian government may have wanted to do anyways, and it should be noted that there was no further retaliation beyond that point. Neither is it clear that Carter could have gained support for his policies to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Brazil had already reasserted its independence in foreign policy under Costa e Silva, and the government stood to gain financially from increased sales to the Soviet Union.

Members within the Carter administration saw their human rights policy as an overall success. As administration official Warren Christopher noted in 1979,

Moreover, there are tangible human rights progress. We do not claim credit for particular improvements. But we believe that we have contributed to an atmosphere that makes progress more likely to occur.

In the past year, significant steps toward the transfer of power from the military to civilian democratic institutions were taken in...Brazil...and...in Brazil...more freedom was extended to the press, to labor organizations and to political parties.³⁸

³⁶. "Paper Discusses Improvement in Relations with US", PY272121 Sao Paulo O Estado de Sao Paulo in Portuguese 24 Mar 79 p. 5 PY, as translated into English by FBIS, 28 Mar 79, D2.

³⁷. *ibid.*

³⁸. US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights and US Foreign Policy, 96th Cong., 1st sess., 1979, p. 26.

Moreover, members within the opposition parties offered their support for this policy. Worker's Party Deputy Ailton Soares and the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party leader, Deputy Freitas Nobre, wholeheartedly endorsed the Carter approach.³⁹ Furthermore, US diplomats reported conversations with Brazilians who expressed gratitude for US support for human rights, and individuals who had worked for a democratic Brazil thought US pressure had been helpful in moderating official policy and pushing toward political liberalization.⁴⁰

It is not insignificant that Carter was publicly cheered when he spoke of human rights while in Brazil. Yet, it is also important to remember that unlike the cases of Argentina, Chile, and several other countries, the United States did not propose any economic sanctions against Brazil. The pressure was limited to public criticism of the regime. It was, in effect, a policy between sanctions and silence. President Carter's human rights policy was, therefore, only moderately applied, primarily because the human rights abuses in Brazil had significantly declined. This leads one to believe that pressure, when applied judiciously, may have a positive impact on the transition towards democracy in a country with which the US has significant interests in maintaining good relations, but relatively little influence in that country.

D. PRESIDENT REAGAN AND THE RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO

³⁹. "Government, Opposition React to Reagan Victory", PY051233 Sao Paulo Radio Bandeirantes Network in Portuguese 1000 GMT 5 Nov 80, as translated into English by FBIS, 6 Nov 80, DI.

⁴⁰. Skidmore, The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, op. cit., p. 197.

When President Reagan came to power he returned, for the most part, to the subtle approach pursued by previous administrations. Testimony from General Alexander Haig during his Senate Confirmation Hearings, noting that Carter's policies (especially concerning nuclear proliferation) were "fraught with good intentions but lacking in realism", was received positively in Brazil.⁴¹ The implementation of realpolitik, within a framework combining respect for human rights and the use of force, was seen in Brazil as being compatible with international behavior at the time.⁴²

The Reagan administration did not abandon the idea of encouraging the transition towards democracy in Brazil, but its emphasis, according to Langhorne Motley, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, switched from stressing human rights to providing the infrastructure to support it.⁴³ This policy was supported by the "Report of the Western Hemisphere Commission on Public Policy Implications of Foreign Debt", which stated,

...Within reasonable limits, democracy in Latin America requires economic reform in order to survive...Three elements are crucial to insuring that democratic governments in Latin America withstand the present economic crisis and achieve lasting prosperity. These are: Orderly resolution of the debt crisis; preservation of an open US

⁴¹. "Jornal do Brasil Analyzes Haig's Senate Statements", PY150251 Rio de Janeiro Jornal do Brazil in Portuguese 14 Jan 81 p. 10, as translated into English by FBIS, 23 Jan 81, D1.

⁴². "O Estado Foresees Pragmatic Reagan Foreign Policy", PY221532 Sao Paulo O Estado de Sao Paulo in Portuguese 21 Jan 81, p. 3, as translated into English by FBIS, 23 Jan 81, D1.

⁴³. US, Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, US Policy in Latin America: 1985, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, p. 59.

market; and development of a strong private sector in Latin America.⁴⁴

To pursue this strategy, the Reagan administration sought to increase its influence in the liberalization of the Brazilian economy by improving relations between the two nations. Vice President George Bush, on a visit to Brazil in October 1981, announced that the ban on Brazilian purchase of enriched uranium would be eased. In addition, contacts between the US and Brazilian militaries were renewed. In 1982 the US granted Brazil a \$1.2 billion short term loan to help Brazil through its debt crisis. During the course of the Reagan administration the relations continued to be focused on trade and other economic matters.

This focus on economic matters was largely reflected by the opposition in Brazil. When President Reagan met with Ulysses Guimaraes, president of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party, the main opposition force in Brazil, the talks centered on recent IMF restrictions and the foreign debt. Support for a transition to democracy did not seem to be an important issue.⁴⁵ This does not mean that all opposition parties focused exclusively on economic matters. Leonel Brizola, president of the Democratic Labor Party, was concerned that the Reagan administration viewed the democratic process as destabilizing, and was thus abandoning all support for democracy. It is important to note, however, that Brizola based his assessment from discussions with friends linked to US university circles, and not from conversations with members of

⁴⁴. US, Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Latin America in the World Economy, 98th Cong., 2nd sess., 1984, p. 121.

⁴⁵. "Politicians, Press Comment on Reagan Visit", PY011112 Paris AFP in Spanish 0209 GMT 1 Dec 82, as translated into English by FBIS, 1 Dec 82, D3.

the US government.⁴⁶ Yet, for the most part, economic development seemed to dominate the agenda.

In retrospect, political liberalization and democratization in Brazil was largely an internal matter. The military regime, led by Generals Geisel and Golbery, permitted both to occur as a result of calculations of forces within the country, and not because of pressure or encouragement from the United States. Domestic pressure from an indentifiable opposition, which intensified following the 1982 elections, made the military rethink its position.⁴⁷ With the election of Tancredo Neves to the presidency in January 1985 the first two stages of the democratic process had virtually been assured. The consolidation of democracy, however, was far from complete.

E. TOWARDS THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

When Fernando Collor de Mello replaced Jose Sarney in March 1990 as President of Brazil, democracy had yet to be consolidated. Economic conflict, especially with regards to Brazil's enormous international debt, continually plagued that country's leaders. In addition, because President Sarney took over that country's leadership as a result of Neves' unfortunate death, and not as the result of an electoral triumph, he was forced to rely on the

⁴⁶. "Leonel Brizola Comments on Reagan Policies", PY040104 Sao Paulo O Estado de Sao Paulo in Portuguese 3 Mar 82 p. 7, as translated into English by FBIS, 6 Mar 82, D2.

⁴⁷. Alfred Stepan, Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 60-67.

military as a critical part of his power base.⁴⁸ Therefore, the relationship the United States had was not with a democracy per se, but with a country attempting to complete the final phase of a democratic transition. The primary role the United States has played in this process was (and is) to help Brazil work through its predicament on debt and the related inflation. However, it was (and is) just as concerned with that country's ability to exert civilian control over the military. It is towards this part of the democratic transition that this study first turns.

The consolidation of democracy in Brazil is clearly in the best interests of the United States. In terms of civilian control over the military, this concerns primarily nuclear proliferation and the spread of ballistic missiles. As has been noted, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty was a major point of contention between the United States government and the military regime of Brazil. Ballistic missiles, however, have also been of primary importance. On a visit to Brazil, US Secretary of State George Shultz expressed concern over Brazilian arms sales to the Middle East. In reference to ballistic missiles, Shultz noted that their proliferation was "harmful to world peace."⁴⁹

In 1987 the United States began restricting the export of rocket and ballistic missile technology to Brazil under the terms of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). As some experts suggest, whereas Brazil is extremely sensitive and vulnerable to the limitations placed by the United

⁴⁸. *ibid.*, p. xv.

⁴⁹. "Visit Success for US", PY0808034288 Sao Paulo Folha de Sao Paulo in Portuguese 7 Aug 88 p. A-4, as translated into English by FBIS, 8 Aug 88, p. 34.

States on the transfer of such technology in the short term, Brazil is likely to become less vulnerable in the long term.⁵⁰ As such, civilian control over the military in general, and over arms sales in particular, is important to managing the spread of ballistic missiles. The United States, however, has played no identifiable role in helping to establish civilian control over the military.

This part of the consolidation of democracy is being accomplished mostly by the efforts of President Collor de Mello. He began by cutting the military's share of the budget from six percent to 2.2 percent, and by asserting civilian power in areas traditionally regarded as military preserves.⁵¹ Although these cuts have resulted in spreading discontent among the military, they are not expected to threaten Collor de Mello's ultimate goal of exercising civilian control over the military.⁵² The other part of democratic consolidation, that is, the ability of the system to manage economic conflict (see introduction), is addressed below.

The economy that President Sarney inherited from Brazil's military regime was, to put it simply, a mess. Under such circumstances, the management of economic conflict is most problematic. Although external factors (including a worldwide recession, a depression in commodity prices, higher world interest rates, and restrictions in credit) contributed significantly to the crisis,

⁵⁰. Scott D. Tollefson, Brazilian Arms Sales, Ballistic Missiles, and Foreign Policy: The Search for Autonomy, PhD Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC, 1991.

⁵¹. James Brooke, "Brazil's President Makes the Military To the Line", New York Times, September 9, 1990.

⁵². James Brooke, "'Free Falling Salaries' Anger Brazil's Military", New York Times, December 6, 1990.

the heart of the problem was (and is) an extremely inefficient and corrupt public sector.⁵³ Accounting for 40-50 percent of GNP, it pervades the entire system. Vested interest groups have made cutting it virtually impossible. Thus, unlike the political situation, where the military regime was under internal pressure to permit liberalization and democratization, pressure for economic liberalization has come almost completely from the international environment, and especially from the United States, as it has a major voice in the IMF.

The link between economic liberalization and the ability of the system to manage economic conflict is not clear. In many ways, economic liberalization could actually exacerbate economic conflict as protected sectors are forced to adapt, making the consolidation of democracy in the short run more difficult, not less. In the long term, however, economic liberalization is most likely to produce the greatest degree of economic expansion, and this could alleviate many of the current pressures experienced by the Brazilian government. In addition, influencing changes in economic policy that are unpopular with the public may be more difficult than assisting political changes that promote a transition to democracy. As such, economic liberalization is an indirect, yet important, link. With these thoughts in mind, the remainder of this section deals with the role the United States has played in attempting to influence that liberalization, and to gain some sense of the ability of international actors to influence changes within Brazil.

Debt has been the primary leverage that external actors have had on the

⁵³. Eliana Cardoso and Rudiger Dornbusch, "Brazilian Debt: a Requiem for Muddling Through", Debt, Adjustment and Recovery, ed. Sebastian Edwards and Felipe Larraín (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), pp. 300-307.

government of Brazil (and perhaps vice versa). In order to ease its credit problems, that government has had to turn to the international community for assistance. Yet, as the following analysis suggests, that leverage has not been as successful as one might wish. The Brazilian government resisted pressures from the International Monetary Fund to reduce the size of the government deficit and to reduce the subsidies to state-owned enterprises. Brazilian Planning Minister Joao Sayad said in December 1985 that "Brazil cannot continue negotiating with the IMF because Brazil is not willing to apply recessionary formulas."⁵⁴ In reference to the Baker Plan, which provided new loans to debtor countries that would initiate fundamental economic reforms, Sayad added that businessmen "will not accept the Baker plan because it would bring recession and our industry is not willing to bear any further reduction of activities such as that experienced between 1980 and 1982."⁵⁵ By the same token, Brazilians appreciated the willingness of the Reagan administration to discuss alternative solutions.⁵⁶

That Brazilians viewed United States' assistance as important is without question. Former Finance Minister Luis Carlos Bresser Pereira believed that support from then US Secretary of the Treasury, James Baker, was more

⁵⁴. "US Should Find Political Solution to Debt", PY060157 Sao Paulo O Estado de Sao Paulo in Portuguese 4 Dec 85 p. 26, as translated into English by FBIS, 6 Dec 85, D1.

⁵⁵. *ibid.*

⁵⁶. "Government Reacts Favorably to Reagan Idea on Debt", PY051646 Sao Paulo Radio Bandeirantes in Portuguese 1600 GMT 5 Aug 87, as translated into English by FBIS, 6 Aug 87, M1.

important than that of the IMF.⁵⁷ And when President Reagan praised some Latin American countries for their anti-inflation economic policies during his inaugural speech at the IMF in October 1986, while failing to mention Brazil, the Brazilian government took notice, and it was widely interpreted by the that country's media as a warning to that nation's policy makers.⁵⁸ Thus, foreign countries are indeed sensitive to what is said, or in this case not said, by important officials of the United States government.

Brazil's leaders clearly understand the need to resolve that country's major economic problems. In a conversation with Secretary of State Shultz, Sarney emphasized that

Latin America is going through a process marked by a decline of expectations and of impoverishment as compared to the more dynamic parts of the world...(this could even) jeopardize the democratization process taking place on the continent.⁵⁹

With regards to inflation, Sarney warned fellow Brazilians that it was a serious threat to the consolidation of democracy:

...the vitality and strength of a dynamic economy, with a high employment level, a great harvest, a high level of exports, good economic indicators, and a destructive, persistent, and perverse inflation creates pessimism, corrodes the morale of the country, unleashes uncontrollable speculation, generates instability and distrust, and what is worse, threatens all our institutional achievements.

The high inflation rate, which is higher than ever before, could lead to the destruction of democracy and freedom and could prevent the

⁵⁷. "Bresser Stresses Political Support for Plan", PY240332 Rio de Janeiro Rede Globo Television in Portuguese 2255 GMT 23 Jul 87, as translated into English by FBIS, 24 Jul 87, M2.

⁵⁸. "Government Annoyed over Reagan's Omission", PY021501 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1429 GMT 2 Oct 86, as translated into English by FBIS, 3 Oct 86, D1.

⁵⁹. "Sarney, Shultz Discuss Trade Problems", PY0708235688 Sao Paulo O Estado de Sao Paulo in Portuguese 6 Aug 88 p. 7, as translated into English by FBIS, 8 Aug 99, p. 32.

consolidation of a pluralistic, open, and free society.⁶⁰

In other words, the Brazilians knew the extent of the problem. They also knew that something was going to have to be done to resolve it.

The government of Brazil viewed reducing its debt and increasing its trade as the key to improving the situation. Itamaraty, the Brazilian foreign service, received President Bush's approval of the Brady Plan, a debt reduction scheme proposed by US Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, with "satisfaction", noting that "it is very good because it is a clear signal that the most important country in the world is aware of the foreign debt problem."⁶¹ On the other hand, Itamaraty was extremely critical of the protectionist sentiment in the United States Congress. Since the United States buys approximately 27 percent of all Brazilian exports, Brazil relies heavily on the surplus from that trade to service its debt. Therefore, that government is very concerned with maintaining access to its North American markets. As a result, Brazil sees the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as beneficial, perhaps even necessary, to its survival.⁶² However, it is quite evident that debt reduction and increased trade will not in and of

⁶⁰. "Sarney Says Inflation Could Destroy Democracy", PY0601140189 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 0900 GMT 6 Jan 89, as translated into English by FBIS, 9 Jan 89, p. 36.

⁶¹. "Government Welcomes US Plan on Debt", PY1703144589 Rio de Janeiro O Globo in Portuguese 16 Mar 89 p. 21, as translated into English by FBIS, 20 Mar 89, p. 53.

⁶². "Itamaraty Criticizes New US Trade Bill", PY1908000488 Brasilia Domestic Service in Portuguese 2200 GMT 18 Aug 88, as translated into English by FBIS, 19 Aug 88, P. 24 and "Reduction of Imports Possible", PY 202300 Sao Paulo O Estado de Sao Paulo in Portuguese 18 Nov 87 p. 22, as translated into English by FBIS, 23 Nov 87, p. 31.

themselves solve Brazil's economic woes. Structural reforms are needed, as well.

The Sarney government was incapable of resolving its underlying problem. Collor de Mello thus inherited an economic crisis, including an inflation rate of 84 percent in March 1990 alone, the month of his inauguration. The debt problem was just as serious. In July 1989 Brazil was no longer able to fully service its foreign debt, so by the fall of 1990 it had grown to \$115 billion. In April 1991 it reached \$123 billion. The problem appears endemic. Promises by Collor de Mello to begin privatization within his first three months in office have yet to be fulfilled. In addition, the radical measures that he pushed through to deal with these problems may not last. Opposition to his austerity program became so widespread by late 1990 that voters elected opposition candidates in two-thirds of the states. Perhaps even more telling, the percentage of people who no longer believe that his plan will work jumped by six times, from a level of seven percent in March 1990 to 41 percent in November of that year.⁶³

The United States has continued to be a principal player in attempting to encourage reforms that would have a lasting impact. In November 1990 Brazil was granted \$250 million in loans from the the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), but that was only after the United States warned Brazilian officials that the country's growing arrears on debt to foreign banks and governments were getting out of control.⁶⁴ In April 1991 that warning became a reality

⁶³. James Brooke, "Economy of Brazil Still Ails", New York Times, December 3, 1990.

⁶⁴. Stephen Fidler, "Brazil Wins \$250 M in IADB Loans", Financial Times of London, November 30, 1990.

when the United States blocked a \$350 million loan for sanitation programs in Brazil until that government chose to repay interest on its debt. The pressure, however, is not so much designed to collect interest on the debt as it is to force Brazil to implement serious economic reforms, especially as it concerns privatizations and trade liberalization. In short, the United States, and with it the IMF, are attempting to use their leverage over Brazil as a means to force that country's government to implement policies that it is unable, or unwilling, to undertake of its own accord.⁶⁵

The events above might serve to indicate the amount of influence international factors have on political decision making in Brazil. In the present situation one finds the government of Brazil in a serious financial situation. If it defaults on its loans it will be unable to rely on further credit, something that could severely restrict Brazil's future economic growth. The government recognizes the extent of the problem and would like to resolve it, but because of internal opposition it has found it difficult to undertake the necessary reforms. On the other side is the international community: That is, the IMF in general, and the US in particular. Both are genuinely united in their desire to see Brazil succeed in its endeavors, and most importantly, there is general agreement as to what needs to be done, namely a reduction in Brazil's public sector and the overall liberalization of the economy. The IMF and the United States are in a unique position to demand reforms. They have the ability to reward those reforms, and Brazil clearly recognizes that its best interests would be served by working with these actors. As such, Brazilian officials have been willing to negotiate with the

⁶⁵. "Latin American Debt: Catching Up". The Economist, April 13, 1991, pp. 77-78.

IMF and the United States on those issues. Such circumstances appear to be ideal for the success of an influence attempt.⁶⁶

The reality of the situation, however, indicates the limits of such influence. Even under ideal conditions the international community has been unable to force fundamental economic reforms against Brazil's will. Since 1985, the IMF and the US have continued to pressure Brazil to make substantive changes, yet that pressure has had limited impact. While debt and inflation continue to rage, politics as usual persist. As one editorial remarked,

(such) has been the recent history of Brazil: promises of change, rewarded by reschedulings and lower interest rates, but always reneged upon as governments bought off their friends in the civil service and business with higher public spending and trade protection.⁶⁷

This is not to say that external pressure cannot succeed in changing internal policies, or that they are not important. Indeed, the IMF and the United States have played very important roles in this process. Rather, it indicates that Brazil will need to be virtually on the brink of collapse before such pressures will be sufficient to induce internal forces to mend their ways. Under more normal circumstances international factors would, therefore, affect the politics of Brazil only at the margins. Yet, as stated earlier, the link between economic liberalization and the management of economic conflict is indirect. Therefore, the actual impact that the United States can have on the consolidation of democracy in Brazil is difficult to assess.

F. CONCLUSION

⁶⁶. K.J. Holsti, International Politics, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), pp. 140-152.

⁶⁷. "The Polish Precedent", The Economist, April 13, 1991, p. 16.

Should the United States desire to influence a transition to democracy in a country where US interests are important, but where the ability to influence the course of events is severely constrained, it must be done deliberately, patiently, and with the utmost care. Pressure that exceeds a certain level tends to be counterproductive, causing a nationalistic backlash that can easily disrupt relations, and producing unintended internal support for the government concerned.

United States policy should avoid the economic sanctions route, as large economies tend to have multiple alternatives. In addition, if contractions in the economy are effective in forcing liberalization, it is the incoming democratic regime that is forced to deal with the problem, not an enviable position to be in. Furthermore, excessive pressure on the system is just as likely to bring repression, as the government in question forces its policies to deal with the new constraints.

In certain situations, however, some pressure can be beneficial. At times, open criticism of the regime, provided it is used judiciously, can have a positive impact. Moderate pressure makes known the United States' position, without "demanding" a policy change. It also has the benefit of letting the opposition know that they are not forgotten. In addition, overt pressure may be encouraged by forces outside the administration, such as Congress or private groups, but their influence should be primarily restricted to moral support. US pressure can also be applied diplomatically. By meeting with the opposition in private, and by having serious discussions with the persons in power behind the scenes, US policy can be made clear without driving a wedge in the countries' relations.

As in the case study of Chile, the overriding factors in the democratic transition in Brazil were domestic in origin. Involvement by the United States was greatest in both the liberalization and consolidation phases of that transition, but even here the influence was limited. And concerning the impact of external influences on democratization, the impact was minimal, indeed. As such, US involvement exceeded its ability to affect the nature of the transition. This involvement did, however, impact other areas of US-Brazil relations in important ways. Put simply, the impact on relations is considerably greater than the impact on a democratic transition. Thus, it is the limits of US influence combined with the importance of US-Brazil relations that weigh most heavily on these policy prescriptions.

V . EL SALVADOR

"Thus says the Lord:

'Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence,
and those who are for the sword, to the sword;
those who are for famine, to famine,
and those who are for captivity, to captivity.'"

Jeremiah 15:2

The United States had, until recently, been relatively uninterested in the affairs of El Salvador. El Salvador had not suffered US intervention as had many of its Central American and Caribbean neighbors. US investment in the country had not been extensive, and internal developments did not appear to affect other US security concerns in the region.¹ Not until after World War II did the United States begin to even consider El Salvador, and this was strictly within the context of the East-West conflict. As such, a small amount of US aid was provided to El Salvador as part of the Mutual Security Act of 1951.²

¹. Harold Molineu, US Policy Toward Latin America (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 48-50. Molineu argues that US interventions in Central America during the first third of this century were largely the result of the US military guaranteeing a free hand for US business interests. Ipso facto there was no need to use military force to maintain economic leverage in El Salvador.

². Agency for International Development, "US Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations: Obligations and Loan Authorizations", July 1, 1945-September 30, 1986(1987) as cited in G. Pope Atkins, Latin America in the International Political System (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 264-268. Under the Mutual Security Act, from 1953-1961, US Export-Import loans to El Salvador totalled 3.2 million dollars and US economic assistance added another 11.1 million dollars. Both these figures were considerably below the average for funds received by other Central American nations. Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama received an average 12.2 million in US Export-Import Bank loans and 122.6 million in

Following the Cuban revolution, an increased emphasis was placed on promoting stability in the region. Under the Alliance for Progress military aid and counterinsurgency training were made available (in 1962 the CIA and US military helped found ANSESAL, the Salvadoran national security agency), as well as economic assistance to help promote growth.³ The US role also appears to have been to encourage changes within the system itself.

In 1961 the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and a group of US business corporations founded the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), a US government-financed group that aimed to encourage the development of non-Communist trade unions in Latin America.⁴ Evidence that the US was involved in strengthening trade unions in El Salvador can be found in government documents. They also indicate that the US may have pressured El Salvador to nationalize its central bank and the Salvadoran Coffee Co., adopt a system of price controls, exchange controls, and high tariffs, develop a progressive income tax, install a

US economic assistance during that period. El Salvador received 23.5 million less than the next lowest aid recipient (Honduras), during that period, again demonstrating the relative lack of importance the US placed on that country.

³. Martin Diskin and Kenneth Sharpe, The Impact of US Policy in El Salvador, 1979-1985 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 10. Though Diskin and Sharpe claim the US role in El Salvador was only minor until late 1979, they say "its major effect was to improve the military's repressive capability."

⁴. Atkins, Latin America, op. cit., p. 153. Atkins, citing a US Senate Foreign Relations Committee study, said that AIFLD activities tended to give it the appearance of an instrument of the Cold War, it polarized the view of the political spectrum in Latin American labor, and it involved the AFL-CIO in some awkward contradictions of its principle that trade unions should not be tied to political parties.

"burdensome" extensive social security system, and attempt to coopt communist intellectuals by allowing them to takeover the university in 1965. In addition, Ambassador Murat Williams was reportedly deeply involved in the organization of the Christian Democratic Party.⁵

With the failure of Castro to export his revolution by late 1968, and the growing evidence that he tacitly accepted the Soviet doctrines of peaceful coexistence and the evolutionary transition to socialism, the increase in military governments in Latin America, US involvement in Vietnam, and growing domestic problems at home, the United States turned its attention away from supporting democracy in Latin America.⁶ Policy towards El Salvador during the Nixon and Ford administrations was largely one of benign neglect, meaning the toleration of military regimes.

With Carter, the emphasis on foreign policy switched to human rights. The ability to influence events within El Salvador, however, was relatively limited. Although Carter did exert diplomatic and some economic pressure to encourage the Oscar Romero regime (1977-1979) to end its repression, military aid had already been suspended under the Ford administration, and the Carter administration was seen as inconsistent by the Salvadorans.⁷ These efforts

⁵. "Government Documents: On US Policy for El Salvador", Inter-American Economic Affairs, Winter 1980, p. 94. Senator Jesse Helms claims that these efforts adversely affected El Salvador's economic growth, creating a burden which the government was unable to meet. This argument is countered by Diskin and Sharpe, US Policy in El Salvador, op. cit., p. 10, intimating that the oligarchy refused to implement any such reforms.

⁶. Atkins, Latin America, op. cit., pp. 126, 311.

⁷. Diskin and Sharpe, US Policy in El Salvador, op. cit., p. 10.

would probably have had little importance were it not for an important external event: The fall of Anastasio Somoza in July 1979. With the Sandinistas coming to power in neighboring Nicaragua, the Carter administration sought to avoid a repeat of a revolution that was believed to be caused by repression from above.³

A. ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT

For most analysts in the United States, the problems in El Salvador were seen to have their origins in two interrelated areas: Inequality, and the lack of inclusion. Therefore, any solution to that country's civil war would necessitate addressing these concerns.

The roots of El Salvador's problems can be found in the 19th century. The colonial structure that had been largely left intact until the 1870s was finally challenged by Liberal President Rafael Zaldivar (1876-1885). During his administration the country expropriated lands belonging to the Church, and the Indian communities and common lands, which resulted in rapidly expanding coffee production. It also reduced the number of landowners with regards to the arable land. Power became concentrated in the hands of a few families and

³. Robert Pastor, Condemned to Repetition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 32, 217-221, 223-228. Pastor, who was the Director of Latin American and Caribbean Affairs on the National Security Council from 1977 to 1981, details how sensitive the Carter administration was to charges that the Sandinistas were supplying the Salvadoran rebels. It sought to address this problem by promising a continuation of aid to the Sandinistas, provided they would guarantee to restrict any resupply to the rebels, and by pressuring the Salvadoran government to grant reforms.

the rest of the population became peasant tenants.⁹

The landowners combined authoritarianism and paternalism to control the country. Repressive, and for the most part effective, the ruling oligarchy began to meet organized resistance and social unrest with the arrival of the Great Depression of 1930. In response to the unrest, relatively free elections were held. In January 1931 Arturo Araujo won the presidency. A landowner dedicated to reform, he began to concern other landowners with his socialist leanings. Coupled with government inefficiency and a fiscal crisis that precluded paying the military and civil servants, the results were predictable. A coup d' etat was led by General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez on December 2, 1931.¹⁰

Believing that any chance for reform had passed, the Communists began to plan for a rebellion in January 1932.¹¹ The final date was planned for the 22nd. Unfortunately for the rebels, an informer's tip led to the arrest of the leader of the rebellion, Farabundo Marti, on January 18th at a small farm near San Salvador. The government found a large quantity of bombs, arms, and other information concerning the revolt, including leaflets, specific plans, and a list of names of other people involved. Although Communist Party leaders had the opportunity to call the whole thing off, they decided to

⁹. Hector Perez-Brignoli, A Brief History of Central America, translated by Ricard Sawrey and Susana Stettri de Sawrey (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 87.

¹⁰. *ibid.*, p. 110.

¹¹. Some sources indicate that the Soviets were involved in trying to stimulate that insurrection. See Atkins, Latin America, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

proceed with the revolt.¹²

On January 22, 1932, Indian peasants erupted in rebellion primarily in the western provinces of El Salvador. The government responded with a heavy hand. Within days the rebellion was crushed. Documents captured by government soldiers indicated a significant number of people had made cash contributions to the rebels. The government decided to liquidate any support for the rebels through terror. The ensuing onslaught, known as the Matanza or "Massacre", resulted in the death of between 8,000 and 10,000 persons.¹³ The massacre eliminated most of the members of the Communist Party, but it also served as a monument to military repression.

For the next 12 years El Salvador was ruled by General Martinez. His support and legitimacy came almost exclusively from the oligarchy, whose perceived threat of their own interests led them, in effect, to abdicate control of political power to a virtual military dictatorship. While the oligarchy continued to pursue economic interests, the military took charge of maintaining stability and in the process furthered its own institution. Political power (including personal gain) was thus decided within a set of

¹². Philip Russell, El Salvador in Crisis (Austin, Texas: Colorado River Press, 1984), p. 36.

¹³. *ibid.*, pp. 36 and 37. This low estimate comes from a study of the Matanza done by Thomas Anderson in 1971. His figures are based on the amount of ammunition the government had in store at the time. Other estimates believe the figure to be around 30,000. One author even claims the number could have been as high as 50,000. See Liisa North, Bitter Grounds: Roots of Revolt in El Salvador, 2nd ed. (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1985), p. 18.

allegiances to seniority and loyalty to the tanda.¹⁴ The tanda, or graduating class, became the means for each member of the military to advance. As Richard Millet notes,

Each class, known as a tanda, strives to protect and advance its members' fortunes. Success for one member means success for all and failure for any weakens the entire group. Hence they protect the less competent, more blatantly dishonest among them, viewing those outside the tanda system as unfit to judge the officer corps...Under this system, loyalty becomes incestuous, and group advancement, rather than defense of the national interest, becomes the ultimate goal.¹⁵

The importance of the Martinez regime was that it established a pattern of rule through the 1970s. The army, which had been a tool of the oligarchy until 1932, became the most important political group in the country. Instead of working for the oligarchy it now worked with it. In order to maintain some semblance of legitimacy, it continued its predecessors' practice of holding elections, and as before, there was little doubt that the outcome would produce a president favorable to those concerned. Through the centralization of state power it was able to consolidate control in an impressive manner, and it used this control to suppress dissent against "communist" elements.¹⁶ For several decades the government was able to maintain control.

Since 1972, however, violence has been endemic. In that year the government used blatant fraud to deny a victory to a coalition of the Christian Democrats (PDC), a moderate party headed by the former mayor of San

¹⁴. David Browning, Conflicts in El Salvador, No. 168 (London: The Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1984), pp. 5 and 6.

¹⁵. Richard Millet, "The Central American Militaries", Armies & Politics in Latin America ed. Lowenthal and Fitch (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1986), p. 209.

¹⁶. Russell, El Salvador in Crisis, op. cit., p. 41.

Salvador, Jose Napoleon Duarte (the presidential candidate), and the Social Democratic Party (MNR), headed by Guillermo Ungo (the vice-presidential candidate). A post-election rebellion was quickly crushed and Duarte and many of his followers were arrested or exiled.¹⁷

Another chance for a democratic solution (Richard Millett called it "El Salvador's last chance for peaceful change") was scotched in 1977 when the oligarchy joined with the military to use massive fraud in denying the presidency to a moderate opposition figure. Again there was a protest, and the government responded by shooting hundreds of demonstrators. In addition it passed a "Law to Defend and Guarantee Public Order". This restricted public meetings, established press censorship (it provided a three-year prison term for those who published internally or sent abroad any unfavorable news about the government, the economy or the society), prohibited strikes and suspended individual rights and normal judicial procedures for anyone disturbing the public order.¹⁸ These events were not lost on the Carter administration. Nor were figures published as a Congressional Research Service Issue Brief, stating that the top 10 percent of landowners controlled 78 percent of arable land, while the lowest 10 percent owned only 0.4

¹⁷. Richard L. Millett, "The Politics of Violence: Guatemala and El Salvador", Current History, February 1981, p. 70.

¹⁸. Millett, "The Politics of Violence", op. cit. p. 71.

percent.¹⁹

These types of facts made a convincing case to view inequality and the refusal of the government to include those seeking a peaceful redress to their plight as the fundamental causes of the problem in El Salvador. From this perspective, it is only natural to assume that the administration would pressure the regime to relax its repression, stress inclusion, introduce land reform, and improve its redistribution of wealth. However, to see the problems of El Salvador as solely endogenous, and to believe that they could be solved by political means alone would be to miss some central issues that did much to explain the divisive nature of US policy towards El Salvador.

B. CARTER'S RESPONSE

US administration pressure on the Salvadoran government to reduce repression, as stated earlier, had been applied for some time. However, with the fall of Somoza it appeared to be intensified. The US ambassador to El Salvador, Frank J. Devine, began to send interviews he had with opposition leaders to the various media in the summer of 1979. In official statements he expressed the Carter administration's desire to press for fair elections in El Salvador as a first step toward a political solution. In addition, he called for socioeconomic changes and supportive statements by the Salvadoran

¹⁹. Mary Jeane Reid Martz, "El Salvador: United States Interests and Policy Options" (Congressional Research Service Issue Brief IB80046, 1980), pp. 1-2 as cited in Millett, "The Politics of Violence", op. cit., p. 71. Complementary figures were published by Diskin and Sharpe, "US Policy in El Salvador", op. cit., p. 5. They state that in 1971, 1.5 percent of all farms accounted for 49 percent of all farm land, and 92 percent of the farms represented only 27 percent of the land.

government to that effect.²⁰

On October 15, 1979, a group of reform minded young Army colonels overthrew the government of General Romero and installed a mixed civilian-military junta in its place. With strong backing from the United States the coalition began to institute reforms.²¹ The junta disbanded ORDEN (a repressive paramilitary group intended to control rural political organizations), it removed conservative senior officers, it promised to investigate the disappearances of persons that had occurred under Romero's rule, it nationalized the coffee export trade, and it prepared for land reform by freezing many of the landholdings. The one thing it would not do, however, was to turn control of the army and security forces over to the civilians. For the civilians this was unacceptable, and they resigned in protest on

²⁰. "US Ambassador Devine Accused of 'Meddling'", PA011818 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1530 GMT 31 Aug 79 PA, as translated into English by FBIS, 4 Sep 79, p. 1.

²¹. Millett, "The Politics of Violence", op. cit., p. 71. The coalition consisted of Social Democrats (including Guillermo Ungo) and the rector from the Central American University (Roman Mayorga), both of whom had close ties to unions and popular organizations. Conservative business groups were also represented. Others claim that the coup itself was directly promoted by the US State Department: "US Accused of Directly Supporting Junta", PA012257 San Salvador EL INDEPENDIENTE in Spanish 1 Feb 80 p. 15 PA, as translated into English by FBIS, 5 Feb 80, p. 2. This view was echoed by members within the US Congress opposed to State Department policies. See "Government Documents: On US Policy for El Salvador", Inter-American Economic Affairs, Winter 1980, p. 88.

January 3, 1980.²²

A second junta was quickly formed. With the support of Washington, the Cabinet was reorganized and members of the Christian Democratic party were brought into the new government. Using a combination of promises of economic and military aid and threats of a total cut-off of support if the regime fell, the Carter administration deterred a coup attempt from the extreme right. It continued to press the Salvadoran government for reform, which responded by passing a major agrarian reform law and nationalizing the banks.²³

Despite these reforms, the new junta was unable to control the right-wing paramilitary "death squads". Political assassinations were intensified, including the murder of the Attorney General Mario Zamora, a Christian Democrat, and Archbishop Romero, an outspoken opponent of repression, in March 1980. The Christian Democratic party was badly split. Several leaders resigned from the junta and joined the disloyal opposition. In April they formed the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). Duarte, who entered the junta after the desertions of fellow party members, attempted to maintain a fragile coalition. US economic and military assistance totalling \$90 million was conditioned on the junta's survival, essentially bribing the military and business groups to cooperate. The result was a facade. As the government attempted to maintain the appearance of moderation, the country became

²². Diskin and Sharpe, US Policy in El Salvador, op. cit., pp. 11 and 12. Individuals resisting these efforts included the Defense Minister (Col. Jose Guillermo Garcia); his deputy (Col. Nicolas Carranza); the heads of the National Guard (Col. Eugenio Vides Casanova), National Police (Col. Reynaldo Lopez Nuila), and Treasury Police (Col. Francisco Moran); and the officers in charge of the intelligence agencies.

²³. Millett, "The Politics of Violence", op. cit., p. 72.

enveloped in civil war.²⁴

The Carter administration had attempted to promote a political solution to the problems in El Salvador. Its aid was aimed at getting those in El Salvador's government to support administration efforts toward these ends. As such, it was primarily directed at solving internal problems. Economic aid of \$63 million was focused on creating jobs through public works, feeding the hungry, and improving health, education, and housing. Military aid was confined to nonlethal equipment, such as trucks and radios, although training for selected officials was provided. Not until January 16, 1981, after the guerrillas had launched their "final offensive" did the administration supply arms and munitions.²⁵

Even after the Carter administration had left office, former officials continued to stress that a negotiated settlement was possible. In their view, the problem continued to be an internal matter. They recognized that the Nicaraguan government was supplying arms to the rebels, but they were convinced that any "militarization" of the conflict by the United States would only worsen the situation. They stressed the need to link aid to human rights, to press for the inclusion of the left through negotiations, to continue with land reform, and for the United States to come to terms with the Nicaraguan government.²⁶ These thoughts were not shared by the new

²⁴. *ibid.*, pp. 72 and 73.

²⁵. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, The Situation in El Salvador, 97th Cong., 1st sess., March 18 and April 9, 1981, pp. 5 and 6. Testimony provided by Walter J. Stoessel, Under Secretary of State.

²⁶. *ibid.*, pp. 100-103. Testimony provided by Robert E. White, former Ambassador to El Salvador.

administration.

C. ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

Little argument could be made against the fact that El Salvador was a country with great injustices and inequality. But was the situation being put in the proper perspective? This question was asked by some conservatives, who believed Ambassador White was distorting events in El Salvador, and that the Carter administration was only contributing to chaos within the country.

A major point of contention that these conservatives had with conventional wisdom was that inequality was not the most serious problem. Their priority was economic growth, and they insisted that Carter administration efforts to press for land reform, and its support for the nationalization of banking and exports would only make matters worse. According to Senator Jesse Helms (Republican-NC), a major spokesman for conservatives, such "reform" represented "the substitution of ideology for economics."²⁷

Land reform was a particular miscarriage of justice. As Senator Helms pointed out, the reform supported by the administration would give each inhabitant only 3/10ths of an acre, not even enough to provide subsistence. This was in a country that had already become self sufficient in food production. In addition, "the disruption of the agricultural pattern would break the back of the economy in general, destroy the export market, and

²⁷. "Government Documents: On US Policy for El Salvador", op. cit., p. 89.

reduce foreign exchange to negligible amounts."²⁸

These arguments were supported in a study done by Claudia Rosett. According to her the economic reforms backed by the Carter administration would have crippled the economy even if it had been at peace. The expropriation of banks and farms created uncertainty over the status of property rights. As a result, people refused to invest in property that might be taken away in the future. The compensation the government provided consisted of worthless bonds in bankrupt industrial concerns, which amounted to little more than theft by the government. In addition, the government gave no guarantees that should the former landholders turn the companies around that the government would not strip them of their proceeds a second time. What was in effect a competition among the oligarchy became the product of a government-run coffee monopoly that used exports to subsidize the rest of the economy.²⁹

Bank nationalizations and exchange controls further exacerbated the problem.³⁰ The nationalization of the banks led the government to earmark blocks of credit for political projects. Since these were not based on market forces, bank credit became a bottleneck to economic growth. Furthermore,

²⁸. *ibid.*

²⁹. Claudia Rosett, "Economic Paralysis in El Salvador: What the Guerrillas Don't Destroy, Central Planning Does", Policy Review, Fall 1984, pp. 45 and 46.

³⁰. For the effects on an economy caused by government intervention in the financial market see Gerald M. Meier, Leading Issues in Economic Development, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 205-210. An analysis of controlled exchange rates is provided in Franklin R. Root, International Trade and Investment, 6th ed. (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co., 1990), pp. 313-316.

foreign-exchange controls, designed to keep capital from leaving the country, prevented many firms from buying much needed imports because of a shortage of dollars. Central Bank approval was required for any transaction. Again, priorities tended to emphasize political necessities at the expense of market forces, thereby causing many factories and companies to wait so long for exchange that they went out of business. This was in addition to having to deal with increased government corruption.³¹

If these were the effects of the reform, could they be justified on the sole basis of reducing inequality? In other words, were conditions so bad that almost anything was worth trying? The answer to this is that there is considerable doubt.

Senator Helm's argument was that El Salvador was not any more economically oppressed than other countries in Latin America. Citing statistics generated in 1977 by the OAS Economic and Social Council he argued that the top 5 percent of the population had a far lower percent (24%) of the national income than did most Latin American nations (32.7% average) and that the lowest 20 percent received 5.7 percent, considerably higher than the Latin American average (3.7%). The Gini index coefficient (used to measure the level of inequality in a particular country) for El Salvador was .50, classified as "moderate" by the UN. These are in sharp contrast to the land distribution figures used by the Carter administration to formulate policy.³²

Senator Helms drew from a World Bank study to show that the urban and rural population living below the poverty line, while high (20% and 30%

³¹. Rosett, "Economic Paralysis", op. cit., p. 46.

³². "Government Documents: On US Policy for El Salvador", op. cit., p. 90.

respectively), was still below the average for the rest of Latin America. That same study showed a significant increase in income distribution between 1965 and 1977, as well as rapid growth.³³

In addition to these indicators of economic inequality, Senator Helms pointed to statistics published by the Inter-American Development Bank, showing that El Salvador spent a greater percentage of government spending on education (22.4%) and public health (9.6%) than did most of the countries in Latin America. Its infant mortality rate was very high, but according to the same report it was no worse than many of the countries in the region.³⁴ All of the major points made by Senator Helms are confirmed in other sources, including the Statistical Abstract of Latin America.³⁵

While noting the caveat that almost anything can be done with statistics, it is difficult to believe that the solutions promoted by the Carter administration would address the economic issues in El Salvador. United States' insistence on government control over the economy had undermined a country that grew at a solid rate during the 1960s and 1970s. Something ran

³³. *ibid.*

³⁴. *ibid.*, pp. 91 and 92.

³⁵. Statistical Abstract of Latin America, Vol. 22, James W. Wilkie, ed. (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1983), p. 143. This study shows public expenditure on education as a percentage of government spending in 1977 to be 26.0%, higher than any other country in the region except for Costa Rica and Uruguay. Vol. 27 (1989), p. 161 of SALA shows that public expenditure on health as a share of total central government expenditure in 1977 was 9.2%, higher than any other country in Central America. (It was consistently higher throughout the 1970s) Vol. 27 (1989), p. 338 shows that income distribution was more equitable in El Salvador (29.5% for the highest 10% and 5.5% for the lowest 10%) than in most other Latin American nations, and that the growth the economy experienced in the 1960s and 1970s benefited lower income groups as well.

deeper than the mere fact of inequality. It certainly existed, but instead of approaching the problem as a way to reduce poverty, the Carter administration used the issue of inequality to promote a political agenda. This agenda was seen as a compromise between the repressive right and the radical left. It was a negotiated settlement bent on inclusion. Unfortunately, neither side was interested in compromise, and both sides were willing to take extraordinary measures to secure their goals.

D. FORCES ON THE LEFT

For the Carter administration the Sandinistas' involvement in the supply of arms to the Salvadoran rebels seemed to be of secondary importance to that of addressing El Salvador's internal woes. Most within the administration were convinced that the arms supply for the final offensive (an effort to bring a rapid close to the civil war) was a result of Reagan's victory in November 1980, and not some desire to create a communist revolution throughout Central America.³⁶ Ambassador White claimed that even though arms did flow into the country, the people refused to "pick them up" because they were "sick and tired of violence."³⁷ Some even argued that there was little evidence presented by the Reagan administration that outside sources were involved in any significant way.³⁸

³⁶. Pastor, Condemned to Repetition, op. cit., pp. 223-228.

³⁷. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The Situation in El Salvador, op. cit., p. 103.

³⁸. Diskin and Sharpe, US Policy in El Salvador, op. cit., pp. 49 and 50.

A strong case can be made to support these views. Forces of the opposition repeatedly denied that they were interested in anything other than the resolution of conflict within their own country, and they continued to call for a negotiated settlement.³⁹ There were certainly moderate elements within the opposition that had few intentions of a revolutionary struggle. Yet these moderate forces had joined with Communist guerrillas, a fact that makes the opposing argument equally convincing.

At a secret meeting in Havana in May 1980, Salvadoran guerrillas formed the supreme executive body of the insurgents, calling it the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU). Containing three members from each of the five active armed extremist organizations operating in El Salvador, the DRU was to act as the military high command for the conduct of guerrilla warfare and terrorist actions.⁴⁰

Most of the guerrilla organizations had their origins in the Communist Party of El Salvador. However, its eschewal of violence since the 1930s, in combination with worsening conditions, led many extremists to form splinter groups in the 1970s. The largest group was organized by the former Secretary General of the Communist Party of El Salvador, Salvador Cayetano Carpio. In 1974 he established the Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the

³⁹. A wide range of related statements can be found throughout FBIS. For statements regarding a negotiated settlement in the midst of the "Final Offensive" see, "FDR's Ungo Says Dialogue Possible With US", PA151951 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 1130 GMT 15 Jan 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 16 Jan 81, p. 7, and "FDR's Rivas Says Reagan Mistaken About El Salvador", PA132118 Paris AFP in Spanish 0216 GMT 13 Jan 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 16 Jan 81, p. 8.

⁴⁰. "Organization and Evolution of the Salvadoran Insurgent Movement", Department of State Bulletin, May 1982, p. 75.

purpose of which was to serve as "the vanguard of the revolution".⁴¹

Another important group, founded in 1972 by Joaquin Villalobos, was the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP). Dedicated to a strategy of "peoples' revolutionary warfare", it emphasized urban terrorism. Both the FPL and ERP staged violent disturbances following the formation of the civilian-military government in October 1979.⁴²

The Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN) was formed in 1975 when two ERP activists, Ernesto Jovel and Ferman Cienfuegos, broke away from the group when internal dissention led to the assassination of a key leader, Roque Dalton. Another small group to be formed in the late 1970s was the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC), led by Fabio Castillo, which conducted acts of terrorism to establish its revolutionary credentials. Finally, in October 1979 the Communist Party formed its own military wing, the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL). Together these groups formed the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in October 1980 to serve as the political/military umbrella for all five extremist organizations.⁴³

The difficulty for the FDR and its moderate forces, such as Guillermo Ungo and Ruben Zamora (Mario Zamora's brother, who defected from the Christian Democrats following his brother's assassination), was twofold: It did not

⁴¹. *ibid.*

⁴². *ibid.*

⁴³. *ibid.* Each of these organizations, in turn, had a political wing. The FPL controlled the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), the ERP directed the Popular Leagues of February 28 (LP-28), the FARN oversaw the United Popular Action Front (FAPU), the PRTC had ties with the Movement of Popular Liberation (MLP), and the Communist Party, or FAL, operated through the National Democratic Union (UDN), a legal political party that was free to participate in elections.

share a common ideology with the extremists, and it had no control over the DRU.⁴⁴ By joining with the FMLN it became associated with guerrilla violence and thereby undermined its role in a negotiated settlement.

While some leaders within the FMLN carefully couched their statements to indicate that the guerrillas had only modest aims, others were much more candid.⁴⁵ One spokesman indicated that,

The heroic Salvadoran people and the FMLN, their revolutionary vanguard, will never kneel. With the brother peoples of Central America whose struggles are increasingly more interwoven in a multifaceted manner and with the inexhaustible world solidarity we have the capacity to win and we will win...The world is with us. Imperialism is against the march of history! United to fight until final victory! Revolution or death, we shall win!⁴⁶

It was this all-or-nothing attitude that worried many conservatives. Combined with the support the guerrillas were receiving from Nicaragua and Cuba, it became especially troublesome.

The Reagan administration's refusal to provide proof of a massive flow of arms to the Salvadoran insurgency gave some credit to the liberals' claim that the East-West conflict was being blown out of proportion. Yet, the reasons for doing so were quite valid. It did not make intelligence available

⁴⁴. *ibid.*

⁴⁵. The willingness of the FMLN to pursue a negotiated settlement is noted in a number of statements. Representative samples include "FMLN Says US Opposed Political Solution", PA221743 Havana International Service in Spanish 0000 GMT 20 Sep 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 24 Sep 81, p. 5, and "FMLN High Command Addresses Letter to Reagan", PA312300 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 1200 GMT 30 Jan 82, as translated into English by FBIS, 1 Feb 82, p. 1.

⁴⁶. "FMLN Sees Aid Renewal As Reply to Dialogue Efforts", PA 171517 (Clandestine) Radio Liberation in Spanish to El Salvador 1200 GMT 17 Jan 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 19 Jan 81, p. 15.

publicly because it feared it would lose access to critical information, not to mention the fact that it might risk the lives of people who were providing that information. Nonetheless, it was able to make a forceful case by working through congressional committees, and by outlining the general flow of arms and detailing the international network that provided aid to the rebels.⁴⁷

Cuban and Nicaraguan support for the Salvadoran rebels was coordinated within weeks after the fall of Somoza in July 1979. Training camps were established and the beginning of an arms supply network was laid. The Cubans would provide coordination, and the Sandinistas would serve as a conduit for this arms trafficking system that was large in scale and included contributors from around the world.⁴⁸

The Reagan administration provided a number of examples that illustrated the flow of arms. Reconnaissance noted a large number of C-47 cargo flights beginning in the summer of 1980 from the Papalonal airfield in Nicaragua to locations within El Salvador. Weapons deliveries over land went from Nicaragua through Honduras, where in January 1981 authorities captured a truck

⁴⁷. "Cuban and Nicaraguan Support for the Salvadoran Insurgency", Department of State Bulletin, May 1982, pp. 72-76. For a general view on the East-West contribution to the conflict see US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Situation in El Salvador, 98th Cong., 2nd sess., January 26 and February 6, 1984, pp. 195-198. See also, The Soviet-Cuban Connection in Central America and the Caribbean, Department of State and Department of Defense, Washington, DC, March 1985, and The Challenge to Democracy in Central America, Department of State and Department of Defense, Washington, DC, June 1986.

⁴⁸. *ibid.*, p. 72. Colonel Bui Tin of the Vietnamese Army acknowledged in an interview in September 1981 that it was their duty to provide support to the Salvadoran struggle (p. 76). Other documents show that Libya and Ethiopia sent certain amounts of military assistance. See Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The Situation in El Salvador, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

load of weapons consisting of over 100 M-16/AR-15 automatic rifles, fifty 81 mm mortar rounds, 100,000 rounds of 5.56 mm ammunition, machine gun belts, field packs, and first aid kits. In April 1981 authorities intercepted a tractor-trailer containing ammunition and propaganda hidden in the sidewalls of the trailer. During the same time frame a storehouse was found in Tegucigalpa that contained a false floor and a special basement for storing weapons. Staging areas for arms shipments to El Salvador were also found to be operating out of Costa Rica and Guatemala, where authorities in both states determined that large numbers of weapons originating in Nicaragua had passed through their countries.⁴⁹

Training was also an important aspect of Cuban and Nicaraguan assistance. Nicaragua would provide basic training for thousands of guerrillas in military tactics, weapons, communications, and explosives. For more specialized training, guerrillas would transit from Nicaragua to Cuba for instruction in sabotage and demolition efforts. It is estimated that over 900 Salvadorans were trained in Cuba in 1980.⁵⁰

Reports of arms shipments came from sources external to the administration as well. Investigative reporting, supported by interviews with

⁴⁹. *ibid.*, p. 73. Weapons captured in Costa Rica included 13 vehicles designed for arms smuggling, 150-175 weapons ranging from mausers to machine guns, TNT, fragmentation grenades, a grenade launcher, ammunition, and 500 combat uniforms. In Guatemala a number of weapons were captured that were traced to US units in Vietnam. Other weapons captured included M-60 machine guns, 57 mm recoilless rifles, and M-72 antitank weapons (pp. 73-76).

⁵⁰. *ibid.* In addition, other terrorist organizations (such as the PLO) provided skilled personnel for positions (such as pilots) that Salvadoran guerrillas were unable to fill themselves (p. 76).

guerrillas and their benefactors (Castro, Ortega and others) found that there was indeed external support for the Salvadoran insurgency. These sources included the Washington Post, San Diego Union, El Diario de Caracas, the Toronto Globe and Mail, and the New York Times.⁵¹ Of course, this does not prove that El Salvador was part of the larger East-West struggle, but it does lead one to the conclusion that perhaps the Reagan administration was right.

There is every reason to believe that members of the FDR were sincere in their stated willingness to negotiate. But the crux of the matter was that they were only one element of the guerrilla forces, and as already pointed out, they had no control over the wider aims of the DRU. As Ambassador White pointed out,

Ungo is not a communist. Ungo is a committed Democrat. The same is true of a large majority of the Frente. The problem is, if history teaches us anything, it is that when committed Democrats come into power and behind them are guns wielded by Marxist-Leninist leadership, then the Democrats don't last very long.⁵²

For the Reagan administration the issue was clear. In order to stabilize the situation in Central America the communists had to be defeated. But in order to defeat the communists, congressional support was required. The solution, then, was to find a method acceptable to Congress. Emphasizing democracy was the answer.

E. OUTSIDE EL SALVADOR

As the Salvadoran government had demonstrated throughout its history, it

⁵¹. ibid., p. 76.

⁵². Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The Situation in El Salvador, op. cit., pp. 184 and 185.

was quite willing to use sufficient force to quell the opposition. Since the military was unlikely to lose its will to govern, the insurgents decided to concentrate heavily on international support for their cause. The government, in response, turned to external sources, especially Washington, where in the end, both decided to concentrate their efforts (although, as we have seen, the government did so to a greater degree than did the rebels). As one editorial put it, "everybody runs to Washington. The Revolutionary Democratic Front did it. Members of the junta do it. Private enterprise does it."⁵³ The conflict was no longer an internal matter; it had become international.

From the beginning the insurgents attempted to maintain that the conflict was strictly an internal matter. Repeated statements attempted to deny any link to the East-West conflict. Representative of this position was a statement given in an interview in Geneva by Robert Cuellar, the Executive Director of the Christian Movement for Justice and Peace:

(Question) You are being accused of receiving arms and aid from Cuba, Nicaragua, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam. What is your answer to this?

(Answer) Without being a military expert I can assure you that the arms available to us and in the hands of the rebels are bought with funds from societies and movements in solidarity with the rebels in El Salvador. Many of these societies are in Canada, the United States and Western Europe. They give us generous contributions for the purchase of arms from the black market and the international arms market. The mouthpieces of US sources claim that they have secret documents proving that the Salvadoran rebels cooperate with international communism. This is a fabrication by the US CIA and its propaganda orchestra. There are political advertisements in West European papers appealing for help and contributions for us. The majority of the Salvadoran people suffer from hunger and the most abominable social injustice but this majority is absolutely not

⁵³. "Paper Questions US Ambassador's Objective", PA 092302 San Salvador THE NEWS GAZETTE in English 7-13 Dec 80 p 4, as translated into English by FBIS, 10 Dec 80 p. 2.

communist.⁵⁴

This denial was reiterated by the General command of the FMLN. They stated,

President Reagan has repeatedly lied and tried to include the matter of US intervention in El Salvador within the East-West conflict. This is preposterous. It is impossible geographically to provide sustenance to the FMLN from abroad.

The United States has taken control of both oceans--the Pacific and Atlantic. It has bases for logistical support from abroad. Our forces and resources are national in origin and are based on popular support.⁵⁵

While the guerrillas attempted to achieve victory on the military front, the political wing of the FMLN/FDR attempted to sway international public opinion to support their cause, or at least to abandon the Salvadoran government. They were, in several ways, extremely successful, receiving support from socialists throughout the world, including such countries as Mexico, France, Spain, and Germany. However, in the final analysis it was the policy of the United States that would most influence the outcome.

The effort to gain international support was identified early as an important goal by the insurgents. The Revolutionary Coordinating Board of the Masses (CRM), before it was superseded by the DRU in May 1980, cited several diplomatic aims. Among them, it decided to "ask the democratic and progressive countries of the world, including the Vatican, to break diplomatic and other relations with the counterrevolutionary government junta." In addition, it would "request the US labor unions and popular organizations to

⁵⁴. "Romero Aide Blames US For Salvadoran Situation", LD020951 Paris AN-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AD-DUWALI in Arabic 30 Mar-5 Apr 81 pp 26-28, as translated into English by FBIS, 2 Apr 81, p. 4.

⁵⁵. "FMLN Command Addresses US Congress", PA 172119 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 0000 GMT 16 Aug 85, as translated into English by FBIS, 19 Aug 85, p. 2.

pressure their government in order to stop economic and military aid to the counterrevolutionary government junta."⁵⁶

Shortly after the FMLN was established as the political-military front for the guerrillas, this goal was reiterated. Speaking on behalf of the FMLN and for the FDR, Guillermo Ungo said,

Above all, now that a political-diplomatic commission has been established by the FDR and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) with full powers to carry out its tasks abroad as part of the overall national and international struggle to discuss the formation of the future revolutionary government, we will make every effort to reach that dialogue with governments and democratic forces.⁵⁷

This diplomatic effort met with considerable success, as several countries provided political and organizational support.

In January 1981 Socialist International President Willy Brandt and Secretary General Bernt Carlsson issued a statement calling for "revolutionary change" in El Salvador, since "all attempts at peaceful political change had been blocked by violence and fraud."⁵⁸ This statement was also endorsed by the Spanish Socialist Party, the PSOE. Further support for the insurgency was added in August 1981 when France and Mexico issued a joint declaration recognizing the FDR-FMLN coalition as "a representative political force ready to take on the attendant responsibilities and exercise the attendant rights of

⁵⁶. "CRM" Links US Envoy With Antileft Campaign", PA011502 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1200 GMT 1 Apr 80 PA, as translated into English by FBIS, 2 Apr 80, p. 1.

⁵⁷. "FDR's Ungo Says Dialogue Possible With US", PA151951 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 1130 GMT 15 Jan 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 16 Jan 81, p. 7.

⁵⁸. As quoted in, Eusebio M. Mujal-Leon, European Socialism and the Conflict in Central America (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989), p. 33.

governing."⁵⁹ On December 16, 1981, the UN General Assembly endorsed a "negotiated political solution" by a vote of 68 to 22 with 53 abstentions.⁶⁰

Although the international criticism of the government of El Salvador was certainly useful politically, it also had its limitations. Unless the rebels could considerably limit economic and military support for the government of El Salvador, they would find it increasingly difficult to win the war. Such support was being provided by the Reagan administration, and although it was under considerable international and domestic pressure to limit support, it was able to stand firm.

While the insurgency continued its international diplomatic offensive, the government of El Salvador also sought to gain international legitimacy. In the so-called Caracas declaration in September 1981, the Salvadorans were able to obtain support from a number of OAS states in rejecting the Mexican-French declaration as interventionist.⁶¹ The Salvadoran government continued to seek international support in other matters, but it also knew that it was aid from Washington that was vital. As such, it focused primarily on obtaining aid in the context of the East-West struggle.

⁵⁹. *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶⁰. Raymond Bonner, Weakness and Deceit: US Policy and El Salvador (New York: Times Books, 1984), p. 288.

⁶¹. "Hector Dada Criticizes Caracas Declaration", PA222009 Havana International Service in Spanish 0000 GMT 22 Sep 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 24 Sep 81, p. 6. It should be noted that in addition to recognizing the FDR-FMLN coalition as a representative force, the French-Mexican declaration also called for a solution to the conflict that included the dismissal of the president, the formation of a new government and a change in the army. See "President Duarte Interviewed in Washington", PY142007 Santiago Chile COSAS in Spanish 8 Oct 81 pp 12-13, as translated into English by FBIS, 15 Oct 81, p. 1.

The government of El Salvador has repeatedly viewed the insurgency as a communist plot, but with the guerrillas' "final offensive" in January 1981 the issue of military support from the US became vital. As we have seen, there was already considerable evidence of support from the Sandinistas to the insurgents. Napoleon Duarte, a member of the third coalition junta, attempted to make the most of those events. He said,

...the important thing is that this concern shows that the Salvadoran problem is not a simple national, domestic problem, but rather a geopolitical problem that is affecting all of Latin America. That is why we must understand that it is the result of an international Marxist strategy, of geopolitical action to obtain control of Central America, and the Caribbean in order to establish a center of operations for America and the world...⁶²

However, to rely on the East-West issue as the sole reason for a continuation of US aid would not be enough. Congressional opposition to Reagan administration policy was continually mounting, so another strategy was needed. With assistance of the US administration, the government of El Salvador attempted to improve its image and increase its legitimacy by holding elections and supporting (at least verbally) the protection of human rights. It is towards this strategy that the focus now turns.

F. THE REAGAN APPROACH

⁶². "Duarte Comments on US Aid, Situation in Country" PA160008 Tegucigalpa Radio America in Spanish 1209 GMT 15 Jan 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 16 Jan 81, p. 4. For similar comments by Salvadorans on the East-West struggle see, "US Political Opposition to Aid Draws Criticism", PA110446 San Salvador DIARIO LATINO in Spanish 9 Feb 82 p 7, as translated into English by FBIS, 18 Feb 82, p. 2, and "'Rights Commission' Asks US to Suspend Aid", PA241644 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2112 GMT 23 Jul 82, as translated into English by FBIS, 26 Jul 82, p. 2.

It is most unlikely that the Reagan administration had as its original aim the development of democracy in Central America. A typical example of this attitude was expressed by Jeane Kirkpatrick, the first US Ambassador to the United Nations in the Reagan administration. The reader will recall from the chapter on Chile that she espoused a more "realistic approach" to assess the "impact of various alternatives on the security of the United States and on the safety and autonomy of the other nations of the hemisphere." Security, not democracy, was the most important goal.

That the Reagan administration viewed security interests as a top priority is clearly stated in its desire to defeat the guerrillas militarily.⁶³ Implicit in this argument is that a democratic government could not prosper as long as it was threatened by communist revolutionaries. Therefore, security was a precondition to democracy. Such a view runs counter to the liberals' belief that a negotiated settlement was possible without the defeat of the rebels, and that a negotiated settlement was the best way to limit further bloodshed.⁶⁴ This does not, however, mean that the administration was not sensitive to public opposition. Hence, a goal of democracy was seen as the way to gain support for Reagan's policies.

Criticism of Reagan administration policy was early in developing, and it had the potential of significantly limiting any aid to the Salvadoran government. By the summer of 1981 Congress was able to pass the International Security and Development Cooperation Act, thereby restricting aid to El

⁶³. Millett, "The Central American Militaries", op. cit. p. 210.

⁶⁴. "Why Nobody Wants to Talk", Newsweek, July 11, 1983, p. 34.

Salvador unless it could be certified that its government was making a concerted effort to comply with human rights.⁶⁵ It was obvious to the Reagan administration that if it was going to get aid to fight the guerrillas, a new emphasis was going to be required.

One of the first administration officials to state that democracy in El Salvador was a fundamental goal was Thomas Enders, the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. In September 1981, testifying before the Foreign Affairs Committee he said,

...we have no doubt about the difficulties involved in applying that (the democratic process) to a country like El Salvador; but I think there cannot be any other solution to a deeply divided country than democratic institutions. You cannot lose that from sight. We have to move toward it.⁶⁶

Thus, there was a broad suggestion that the economic and military aid being sent to El Salvador would serve some higher purpose.

In January 1982 President Reagan made a much more direct connection between democracy and aid when he stated in Presidential Determination No. 82-4 that

...I hereby determine that the Government of El Salvador is committed to the holding of free elections at an early date and to that end has demonstrated its good faith efforts to begin discussions with all major factions in El Salvador which have declared their willingness to

⁶⁵. US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Presidential Certification on El Salvador, Vol. 1, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., February 2, 23, 25, and March 2, 1982, and Vol. 2, June 2, 22; July 29; August 3, 10, and 17, 1982. The incredible volume of material on this subject is indicative of its sensitive nature, and the importance it was given by all concerned.

⁶⁶. US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, US Policy Options in El Salvador, 97th Cong., 1st sess., September 24, November 5, and 19, 1981, p. 23.

find and implement an equitable political solution to the conflict.⁶⁷ President Reagan was doing what he felt was necessary to gain congressional approval for his program. This approach brought considerable condemnation from opposition within Congress, but was still successful in obtaining the desired aid.⁶⁸

The March 1982 elections held in El Salvador gave the Reagan administration a moral boost. The refusal to negotiate with the guerrillas prior to the election was based on the belief that such talks would give the guerrillas a share of power they were unable to secure by fighting, or to win in an election.⁶⁹ The results seemed to vindicate this belief. The Christian Democrats won 40% of the vote, while two right wing parties, ARENA and the PCN, won 29% and 19% respectively. Twelve percent of the ballots were blank.⁷⁰

With these elections the Reagan administration was able to refine its position and strengthen its case. The State Department was assigned the task of demonstrating the administration's commitment to democracy. In a speech

⁶⁷. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Presidential Certification on El Salvador, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 2.

⁶⁸. *ibid.*, p. 20. A letter was signed by 55 members of Congress that demanded President Reagan withdraw his request. Nonetheless, 370.1 million dollars in Direct Economic Assistance and 42.2 million dollars in Security Assistance was approved for FY 1982. For cumulative aid see the appendix.

⁶⁹. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Thomas Enders, as quoted in William Henry, "The Perils of Negotiating", Time, March 15, 1982, p. 23.

⁷⁰. Diskin and Sharpe, US Policy in El Salvador, op. cit., p. 23. The FDR and FMLN had refused to participate in the elections for fear of their safety, and because they felt the military would retain its veto power.

given about the time of the elections, Secretary of State Alexander Haig emphasized the goal of "a Central America in which basic political and economic decisions are made by Central Americans within democratic, pluralistic political systems."⁷¹

Secretary of State George Shultz was able to build on the groundwork laid by Haig. In March 1983 he outlined a six-point strategy aimed at establishing democracy in El Salvador. It included support for democracy, reform, and the protection of human rights; support for economic development; support for the security of the nations of the region; hope in the future (long-term incentives to spur sustained economic growth would be provided by the Caribbean Basin Initiative); deterring any attempt by the Sandinistas to promote a "revolution without frontiers"; and the support for peaceful solutions to the conflict. On the last point the Secretary cited a speech by Reagan on March 10, 1983, in which the President enunciated his support for negotiations aimed at "expanding participation in democratic institutions - at getting all parties to participate in free, nonviolent elections."⁷²

Support for democracy was echoed at all levels. In August 1983 Langhorne Motley, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, and Elliot Abrams, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, appeared before congressional committees to repeat and clarify the administration's aim to establish democracy throughout Central America. They were aided by two

⁷¹. "Secretary Meets With Central American Foreign Ministers", Department of State Bulletin, May 1982, p. 71.

⁷². George Shultz, "Strengthening Democracy in Central America", Department of State Bulletin, April 1983, pp. 37-39. Secretary of State Shultz further outlined this strategy in "Struggle for Democracy in Central America", State Department Bulletin, May 1983, pp. 10-12.

developments in El Salvador: A constitution was being drafted, and elections were being prepared for the following year. The message was unmistakeable: If the guerrillas wanted a share of power they were going to have to participate in elections.⁷³

In addition to pressure from Congress, the Reagan administration had to compete with the Contadora Process, a group of four Latin American presidents who came together in January 1983 to encourage a negotiated settlement to the conflict.⁷⁴ President Reagan gave his blessing and pledged his support in a letter to the presidents in July 1983. Again, the President emphasized that the establishment of democratic institutions was his highest priority, and he underlined the need to promote long term economic growth in order to "guarantee the basic needs of their (the Central American) people." He promised to respect the principle of non-intervention, provided there was a verifiable withdrawal of all foreign military and security advisers (including Soviets and Cubans from Nicaragua), and a certifiable freeze on the acquisition of offensive weapons. He also made it clear the administration would pursue its own efforts toward a resolution of the conflict.⁷⁵

⁷³. Langhorne Motley, "Elections in El Salvador", Department of State Bulletin, September 1983, pp. 79-82. Also that issue, "Fourth Certification of Progress for El Salvador", pp. 82-85.

⁷⁴. For specific Contadora Group statements, proposals, and the draft treaty, see Contadora and the Central American Peace Process: Selected Documents, ed. Bruce M. Bagley, Roberto Alvarez, and Katherine J. Hagedorn, SAIS Papers in International Affairs, No. 8 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 164-217.

⁷⁵. "The Contadora Process: President's Letter to the Presidents of the Contadora Four, July 26, 1983", Department of State Bulletin, September 1983, p. 83. The Contadora Four Presidents included Ricardo de la Expriella, Panama; Belisario Betancur, Colombia; Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, Mexico; and Luis Herrera Campins, Venezuela.

Paradoxically, support for Contadora by the Reagan administration was largely an effort to maintain Washington's control over peace negotiations in the region. It felt that such efforts to find a negotiated, verifiable and enforceable peace in Central America was impractical and would be used by the Sandinistas as a cover to continue their export of revolution.⁷⁶ The Reagan administration, however, also recognized that there was considerable support in Congress for Contadora and a negotiated settlement, and that continued aid to the government of El Salvador was dependent upon at least the perception of the administration's willingness to support such efforts.⁷⁷ As such, the administration's support for Contadora lacked any real conviction.

This lack of conviction by the administration impacted on its ability to secure aid. In addition, continued human rights abuses by the Salvadoran military meant that a major effort was required to get a favorable vote on each request. In the summer of 1983 the administration lobbied to have the restrictions on certification reduced, arguing that the process overemphasized high profile events at the expense of the long term evolutionary process.⁷⁸ It was a valiant effort, but without the support of Democrats in Congress it was bound to fail. The loss of support for administration policy in the region meant a new strategy was required. What was needed was a bipartisan approach. To prevent others from gaining control over policy in the region,

⁷⁶. Riordan Roett, "Forward", Contadora and the Diplomacy of Peace in Central America, ed. Bruce M. Bagley, SAIS Papers in Latin American Studies (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), p. x.

⁷⁷. Cynthia Arnson, "Contadora and the US Congress", Contadora and the Diplomacy of Peace, op. cit., pp. 123-141.

⁷⁸. "Fourth Certification of Progress for El Salvador", op. cit., p. 84.

President Reagan decided to form a bipartisan panel to investigate the issue. The result was the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, known commonly as the Kissinger Commission.

In July 1983 President Reagan nominated a group of 12 bipartisan and prestigious individuals, headed by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, to examine the conflict within Central America. Over the next six months the commission selected leading consultants to look at social, economic, political, security and diplomatic issues, as well as US interests in Central America. It travelled to eight Central American and Contadora countries, where it met with both government officials and private citizens. In addition, the commission heard testimony in Washington from numerous expert witnesses, as well as from officials from the US Department of State, Defense, JCS, CIA, NSA, AID and other government agencies. On January 10, 1984, they delivered the report to President Reagan for his consideration.⁷⁹ The report concluded that Central America was a vital region, and that a sustained US interest in the area was required. It recognized that the issues involved were complex, but it also stated that the East-West conflict was the dimension that gave the civil war in El Salvador its strategic importance.⁸⁰ The significance of the administration's aid request was therefore directed not at establishing democracy per se, but at using economic development and institution building as the tool to combat communist expansionism, which when

⁷⁹. Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, January 1984, p. 2. The Commission included: Henry Kissinger (Chairman), Nicholas Brady, Henry Cisneros, William Clements, Jr., Carlos Diaz-Alejandro, Wilson Johnson, Lane Kirkland, Richard Scammon, John Silber, Potter Stewart, Robert Strauss, and William Walsh.

⁸⁰. *ibid.*, pp. 126 and 127.

defeated would eventually allow democracy to be consolidated.

Among other things, the Kissinger Commission Report emphasized the need for a significant increase in military aid to the Salvadoran government.⁸¹ Equally important, it rejected the notion that negotiations alone could solve the conflict. A commitment to free elections within the context of regional security was deemed to be the key to any successful settlement. Economic and social development were recognized as essential for the long term (the report called for large amounts of aid (\$8 billion) to stabilize the economy and ease human suffering), but they could not occur without first establishing security.⁸² In essence, it was what the administration had been advocating for some time.

The Kissinger Commission was a brilliant stroke by the administration. It could now pursue its agenda, while maintaining the pretense of a bipartisan policy toward the region. Economic and military aid for El Salvador was now more readily available, and in significantly higher quantities.⁸³ For the remainder of the administration it stood as the blueprint for administration policies. Presidential elections in El Salvador in May 1984, Constituent Assembly elections in March 1985, and municipal and legislative elections in March 1988 seemed to vindicate the approach. But just how successful was it?

⁸¹. *ibid.*, p. 102. The report also highlighted the need to make the aid contingent upon progress toward free elections, and the vigorous protection of human rights, including the prosecution of past offenders, (p. 104).

⁸². *ibid.*, pp. 13 and 14.

⁸³. Bacevich,, American Military Policy in Small Wars, op. cit., p. 5.

G. ANALYSIS OF THE REAGAN APPROACH

Opponents of the Reagan administration continued to criticize its reluctance to pursue a negotiated settlement. Others, who supported the Kissinger Commission recommendations, believed that the administration, while lending rhetorical support, was in reality undermining the process. One thing was clear: Some alteration of the policy was likely to occur.

Liberals continued to be incensed by administration policy. They believed that the goal of a defeat of the guerrillas was unrealistic, and that the United States was therefore largely responsible for the prolongation of a war that had caused tens of thousands of deaths. As such, it was fundamentally immoral. Robert Goldman, a professor of law at the American University noted,

...The Reagan Administration by pursuing its bankrupt policy of ethical and political realism, has done harm throughout this hemisphere by consistently seeking military alliances and solutions rather than supporting democratic forces and nonviolent measures.

It has done harm by debasing and sacrificing the ideals of democracy for the illusion of order and friendship that a military regime imposes, no matter how corrupt or obscene that regime. And it has done harm by squandering the moral currency of human rights by its rhetoric of convenience.⁸⁴

The argument that the Reagan administration's "rhetoric of convenience" was immoral presupposes that the administration was concerned with a military solution only, implying that it was unconcerned with the establishment of democracy. This is not necessarily true.

⁸⁴. US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Status of Democratic Transitions in Central America, 100th Cong., 2nd Sess., June 23 and 28, 1988, p. 31.

The administration was concerned that a guerrilla victory would lead to the establishment of a hostile Marxist state. Such a state would hardly be democratic. As mentioned earlier, while this view cannot be proved to be correct, there is substantial evidence to support those who believe it to be correct. As such, their first concern was with the survival of the Salvadoran government. In order to help the Salvadoran government survive, military assistance was provided. Herein lies the half truth: The Reagan administration was indeed prolonging the war. But it was doing so only because it believed that a victory by the guerrillas provided an unacceptable alternative.

To view the security of a nation as an administration's top priority is only common sense. The counter argument to this is that the guerrillas had been willing to negotiate, and that through negotiations the civil war could be ended, peace established, and democracy enhanced. The guerrillas have always been willing to negotiate, but on what terms? They have implied that they would confiscate the wealth of landowners and distribute it throughout society. They have maintained the position that they should be given control over certain sectors of the country. They have repeatedly stated their confidence of ultimate victory, and they have refused to disassemble their armed power.⁸⁵ It was this threat of continued violence to achieve political power, and thereby gain control over the economic means of production, that had so worried the Reagan administration.

⁸⁵. "FMLN Document States Policy On Dialogue", PA201416 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 0034 GMT 20 Nov 85, as translated into English by FBIS, 21 Nov 85, pp. 3, 4, 6, 11 (respectively). Pages 2-18 of this issue contain a complete listing of FMLN demands for a negotiated settlement.

The use of "rhetorical convenience" to describe President Reagan's support for democracy is also somewhat inappropriate. While it may be true that the administration did not support a democratic transition in and of itself, a strong case can be made that it truly believed in supporting a democratic transition as the best means to prevent a communist takeover. It is a recognized fact that democracy cannot prosper in the midst of anarchy, so to say that the administration supported "military alliances and solutions" at the expense of democratic forces seems to miss the issue. Military assistance was needed if democracy was to have a chance, and the refusal of the guerrillas to partake in elections (for whatever reasons) provided the administration with its justification to provide aid. That the administration used the theme of democracy to procure military assistance in order to establish the foundation for that system was not "a rhetoric of convenience", it was a necessity. It was not immoral. It simply went against fundamental assumptions made by the other side.

Another argument against the administration was that it was undermining the Duarte government in its attempt at reform. According to some sources the United States applied pressure against land reform because it feared the right would defect from the regime. In addition, administration support for austerity measures placed considerable pressure on Duarte to reduce government expenditures. Reportedly, it also undermined his regime because the United States called for privatization of the economy, thereby strengthening the right.⁸⁶

The seriousness of this argument is not so much in a difference of

⁸⁶. Diskin and Sharpe, US Policy in El Salvador, op. cit., pp. 36-38.

opinion over the causes of economic ills, but in the charge that the Reagan administration was ignoring the recommendations of the Kissinger Commission. According to this view the Kissinger Commission aimed at not only counter-insurgency victory but at social and economic reforms. According to Sam Dillon, "American officials since 1985 have routinely criticized the 1980 land and banking reforms as economically unsound, even though the commission's report supported such reforms as necessary moves toward social justice."⁸⁷ Dillon also stated that targets of "human development" and judicial revitalization were behind schedule.⁸⁸

This argument can be easily justified by reading the Kissinger Commission report. For example, one recommendation was the requirement that "economic growth goes forward in tandem with social and political modernization."⁸⁹ Yet, it should be remembered that this was a bipartisan report, containing something for everyone. It goes on to say that the situation requires that "the nations of the region pursue appropriate economic policies" and it added, "we encourage the greatest possible involvement of the private sector in the stabilization effort."⁹⁰ As far as the targets are concerned, the damage the guerrillas inflicted upon the economy and society cannot be overstated. Therefore, it could be said that disagreements over the Reagan administration's compliance with the report were a matter of interpretation.

⁸⁷. Sam Dillon, "Dateline El Salvador: Crisis Renewed", Foreign Policy, Winter 1988/89, p. 155.

⁸⁸. *ibid.*, pp. 157-159.

⁸⁹. National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁹⁰. *ibid.*, pp. 40, 47.

While the administration may have been able to support its policies on matters of principle (this is not to say that they were correct, merely that they were justifiable), it had a more difficult time arguing that it was a success. While it must be remembered that the principal aim of the policy was to prevent a collapse of the Salvadoran government and resultant guerrilla victory (of which it has been largely successful), the more general aims of democratic development and economic growth have been elusive.

A report to the Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus outlined many of the problems with administration funding. Waste and corruption by the Salvadoran government, resistance of the military and the right to reform, and tenacity of the rebels' war against the economy meant that a half billion dollars a year was required to sustain the stalemate in El Salvador.⁹¹ In addition, there had been a serious misuse of funds, including the use of US economic aid for military purposes. Legal and judicial reforms were also at a standstill. The report therefore recommended a decreased emphasis on military aid, and a related increase in aid aimed towards reform and development. It also suggested that aid should be linked to human rights and a negotiated settlement to the war.⁹² In essence, the report suggests that Congress is unwilling to continue to provide substantial funds for a war that the government in El Salvador has so far been unable or unwilling to win. With no end in sight, it was suggestive of administration options.

Another problem the administration faced was the conduct of the war

⁹¹. Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore), Rep. Jim Leach (Rep-Iowa), and Rep. George Miller (D-Cal), "Bankrolling Failure: United States Policy in El Salvador and the Urgent Need for Reform", Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, November 1987, p. 26.

⁹². *ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

itself. A study conducted at the Kennedy School of Government by four active duty US Army Officers was most revealing. Not only did it suggest important changes had to be made, but it stated clearly that without American support the government of El Salvador would collapse.⁹³ Their study pointed out that the major problems included: A dearth of study on small wars within US military schools, a lack of organizational responsibilities and authority for fighting such wars (both in Washington and in the field), improper security assistance (unpredictable funding and too little control by the US in how the money is spent), a lack of a clear vision as to US intentions (including political support to sustain that vision), inappropriate use of technology, and the lack of debate over what to do when the US withdraws.⁹⁴

Perhaps the major problem in these efforts by the Reagan administration to help the Salvadoran government win the war appears to be within the government of El Salvador itself. In other words, it was not just the tenacity of the guerrillas that had prolonged the war. As Richard Millett writes,

...The Reagan administration's priority was defeating the guerrillas. Restoring domestic order required creating a more effective military...This policy assumed that defeating the guerrillas was the Salvadoran military's top priority too, and that US aid would increase military professionalism, which would decrease human rights abuses and enhance the military's public image...(but) the armed forces had their own agenda. Their top priority was protecting the military institutions from radical guerrillas, civilian politicians and foreign reformers. Next was promoting one's own *tanda* and excluding from the

⁹³. Bacevich, American Military Policy in Small Wars, op. cit., p. 46.

⁹⁴. *ibid.*, p. 49.

system those who had not passed through the Escuela Militar.⁹⁵ Therefore, if the Reagan administration's policy was going to be successful, then a strategy would have to be found to motivate the military to produce results. Stalemate was unacceptable.

H. THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

The Bush administration does not appear to be willing to match Reagan's commitment to defeat the guerrillas at continued high costs. It has been more willing to compromise on critical issues, especially negotiations concerning power sharing, but it has done so in the context of allowing Central American leaders to take the initiative.⁹⁶ In this way, the Bush administration has attempted to lessen its responsibility in the conflict, while appearing to be vigorous in support of its resolution.

The Bush administration has pledged support for the government of El Salvador. In a statement following the March 1989 Presidential election the White House said,

...the guerrillas will not succeed in obtaining the political victory in the United States that they cannot win among the people of El Salvador. The United States is committed to the defense of democracy and human rights in El Salvador.⁹⁷

⁹⁵. Richard Millett, "The Central American Militaries", op. cit., p. 210. Problems with the Tanda system were also mentioned in the Kennedy School study (Bacevich, p. 82).

⁹⁶. Stephen Baker, "For Bush, Central America Won't Be A Crusade", Business Week, January 16, 1989, p. 50.

⁹⁷. "Presidential Election Held in El Salvador: White House Statement, March 22, 1989", Department of State Bulletin, May 1989, p. 84.

However, the administration has also demonstrated considerable sensitivity to congressional concerns.⁹⁸ It welcomed statements by President Alfredo Cristiani concerning his commitment to continue the dialogue with the FMLN guerrillas, and it highlighted conditions to US aid by stating that "...so long as El Salvador continues on that path (democracy and human rights), the United States will remain a firm and steady ally."⁹⁹ While the Bush administration has warned that aid is contingent on the respect for human rights, it has also been less inclined to push for reforms.¹⁰⁰

In one sense, the Bush administration has been walking a fine line between President Carter's policy on human rights with its emphasis on a political settlement, and President Reagan's goal of establishing security first, and then building democracy from that foundation. Like the Carter administration it seeks a political solution to the crisis. Like the Reagan administration, it is willing to commit considerable military and economic aid. Yet, it is unwilling to go as far as either did in their respective direction. It is playing a tug of war with Congress, while it hopes for the best.¹⁰¹ The key issue has therefore become the inability of either the

⁹⁸. On March 24, 1989, President Bush, James Wright (Speaker of the House), George Mitchell (Senate Majority Leader), Thomas Foley (House Majority Leader), Robert Dole (Senate Republican Leader), and Robert Michel (House Republican Leader) signed the Bipartisan Accord on Central America. This bipartisanship marked a clear departure from Reagan administration strategy.

⁹⁹. *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰. Douglas Farah, "Can Benign Neglect Solve El Salvador's Problems?", US News and World Report, November 6, 1989, p. 59.

¹⁰¹. For the willingness of the administration to support the Salvadoran government see, Maureen Dowd, "Bush Seeks A Rise In Aid To El Salvador", New York Times, February 2, 1990. For congressional reluctance to continue to fund the war at present levels see, Al Kamen, "Committee Votes 50% Cut In El Salvador

Salvadoran government or the rebels to win a clear victory.

In many regards, the Salvadoran government's use of elections as the key to solving its civil war, and the theme of democracy as the underpinning in its attempt to procure international assistance to fight the guerrillas, has been relatively successful. From 1982 to 1989 it was able to hold six national elections, all of which were open to the opposition.¹⁰² In so doing, it has gone far towards maintaining its legitimacy and improving its stature in world public opinion. Perhaps even more importantly, that government received nearly \$4.5 billion in US aid since 1980.¹⁰³ After being threatened by defeat at the hands of the insurgents in 1981, the government of El Salvador has gone far in solidifying its position.

In comparison, the guerrillas have also had important successes. After it became clear that they could not defeat the government of El Salvador as long as it received US support, the major concentration of effort was to put pressure on Congress to cut aid. The insurgent left did continue to receive support from its counterparts in Western Europe, but it was evident that those countries would not risk relations with the United States by playing an

Arms Aid", Washington Post, April 27, 1990. For administration willingness to support negotiations see, Clifford Krauss, "Baker Presses Lawmakers to Back El Salvador Talks", New York Times, April 14, 1990, or "El Salvador: Angry Paymaster", The Economist, May 19, 1990, pp. 50 and 52.

¹⁰². "Presidential Election Held in El Salvador", Department of State Bulletin, May 1989, p. 84. The reader should recall that the stated reasons the guerrillas did not participate in the elections were that they believed the military would retain its veto power, they wanted a role in drafting the constitution, and because they feared for their safety.

¹⁰³. Al Kramen, "Salvadoran President Seeks Continued Military Aid", Washington Post, September 25, 1990.

opposing role in the area.¹⁰⁴

The insurgents have advanced a two-pronged approach towards reducing US aid to El Salvador: It has lobbied interest groups in the United States to pressure Congress, and it has held out the prospects of a negotiated settlement in a war that has been a financial burden to the United States. Both have produced results.

Throughout the 1980s the guerrillas found a sympathetic ear from many church groups and religious leaders, academics, antiwar activists, newsmen, women's groups, various unions, and several famous people.¹⁰⁵ These groups, in turn, have pressed Congress to cut off aid to the Salvadoran government.¹⁰⁶ Influential members in both houses of Congress have reacted to such pressure. As a result, the administration has continually had to fight for each request.¹⁰⁷ Though eventually approved, the aid came with numerous

¹⁰⁴. Mujal-Leon, European Socialism and the Conflict in Central America, op. cit., pp. 38, 39, 56, 59, 85, 98.

¹⁰⁵. An example of interest groups and responsive legislators can be seen in "US Groups Show Solidarity with Guerrillas", PA131334 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 000 GMT 13 Jun 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 16 Jun 81, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶. For example, prior to a Senate vote to cut off aid to El Salvador in October 1990, groups such as the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador spent \$30,000 on a television ad campaign in swing senators' states. See, Christopher Marquis, "Salvador Aid Opponents Plan Graphic Ad Drive", Miami Herald, September 20, 1990.

¹⁰⁷. Even after Bush supported negotiations with the guerrillas as a way to bring peace to El Salvador, something Reagan refused to do, the administration has still had difficulty in obtaining sufficient aid. See, Al Kamen, "Committee votes 50% Cut in El Salvador Arms Aid: Lawmakers Seeking Change in US Policy", op. cit.

restrictions that have often handicapped the war effort.¹⁰⁸

Another tactic the guerrillas have used was to make support for the government of El Salvador so expensive that a negotiated settlement appears to be an easy way out of the quagmire. In the mid-1980s the guerrillas switched their strategy to include the destruction of economic infrastructure targets. Rebel attacks on the economy have caused in excess of \$300 million a year in economic losses.¹⁰⁹ As such, it has been difficult for the US aid effort to keep the economy from deteriorating. In FY 1987 an historical first occurred: US funding surpassed El Salvador's contribution to its own overall budget.¹¹⁰ The question that has been constantly asked is if the effort is worth it.

Just as the Salvadoran government has been able to survive the onslaught of the guerrillas, so have the Salvadoran insurgents persevered against the military's attempt to defeat them. The situation within El Salvador has, therefore, changed little. In contrast, the situation outside that country has changed considerably. As was indicated in the earlier chapter on Soviet foreign policy changes, the new international environment means that the United States no longer needs to view events within El Salvador in terms of the East-West conflict. Yet, as that chapter also indicated, those changes do not necessarily mean that the government of El Salvador can be abandoned without due concern. With neither side able to win a clear victory, negotiations appear an attractive alternative to conflict. They should not, however, be the pursuit of negotiations at any cost.

¹⁰⁸. Bacevich, American Military Policy in Small Wars, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁰⁹. Hatfield, Bankrolling Failure, op. cit.

¹¹⁰. *ibid.*, p. 1.

The Bush administration has had to face this dilemma head-on. In November 1989 six Jesuit priests were murdered, and most indications are that the deed was carried out by Salvadoran military personnel. Congress was infuriated. Despite heavy lobbying by the administration, both houses of Congress voted in 1990 to withhold approximately half of the \$85 million in military assistance ear-marked for El Salvador in FY 1991.¹¹¹ Aid was to be restored if the FMLN was to launch another military offensive, or if it rejected UN mediation efforts. On the other hand, it would be cut off completely if the government of President Cristiani either refused to accept the UN plan or failed to prosecute military officers believed responsible for the slaying of the priests. Given that no Salvadoran officer had ever been convicted of a human rights abuse, the odds were good that aid would be cut off.¹¹²

Within five weeks of the Senate vote, the Salvadoran rebels launched a series of attacks that claimed at least 220 lives and left about 400 people wounded, the most in one month since the November 1989 offensive. In addition, they shot down a government jet fighter and a C-47 gunship with surface-to-air missiles.¹¹³ Noted one European diplomat with close ties to the FMLN, "the only explanation I can think of is that radical elements can't bring themselves to accept any agreement not entirely on their own terms, even though (Alvaro) de Soto (the UN mediator) has given them much of what they

¹¹¹. Michael Ross, "Senate Votes 74-25 to Cut El Salvador Arms Aid in Half", Los Angeles Times, October 20, 1990.

¹¹². Lindsey Gruson, "Salvadoran Foes in Rights Accord", New York Times, July 27, 1990.

¹¹³. Kenneth Freed, "Salvador Rebels Lose Support in Latest Offensive", Los Angeles Times, December 7, 1990.

want."¹¹⁴ On January 15, 1991, two American airmen in a US helicopter were murdered after they had been shot down by guerrillas, and this resulted in a resumption of US military aid by administrative order. It turned out that the missiles the rebels had been using to shoot down those aircraft had been recently purchased from Nicaraguan army officers in defiance of a ban by that government.¹¹⁵

However, all hope is not lost. The series of negotiations that began under UN auspices in July 1990, continue to be held in Mexico. And although past human rights abuses remain a major obstacle, substantial accord has been reached on electoral and judicial reform.¹¹⁶ In addition, an appeals court ruled that the case against the nine soldiers accused of murdering the six Jesuit priests can go to trial, something unthinkable not so long ago.¹¹⁷ Another positive sign that a negotiated settlement is possible was the Salvadoran rebel leaders' order to end election interference in the March 1991 elections, the first time that had occurred in the history of the decade-old guerrilla coalition.¹¹⁸ Caution, however, is prudent.

The guerrillas have always been willing to negotiate. Yet, it is interesting to note the terms. The most important stipulation is the demand

¹¹⁴. *ibid.*

¹¹⁵. "The Little War That Will Not Stop", The Economist, February 16, 1991, p. 33.

¹¹⁶. "Salvadoran Peace", The Monterey Herald, April 11, 1991, 2A.

¹¹⁷. "Murder Trial on", The Monterey Herald, April 11, 1991, 2A.

¹¹⁸. Mark A. Uhlig, "Salvador Rebels Plan to End Efforts to Disrupt Elections", New York Times, March 2, 1991, p. 1.

that the US end all military and economic aid to the Salvadoran government.¹¹⁹ More recent demands include the expulsion of more than 200 military officers and a total restructuring of the armed forces.¹²⁰ Although these demands deserve serious discussion, they should not be preconditions to a cease fire. Negotiations must not become a siren call. One should recall the words of President Cristiani:

Cutting aid (to the Salvadoran government) will not end the war quickly; in fact, it may prolong it. The FMLN guerrillas are looking for a signal that the US will abandon its earlier resolve, thus giving them grounds to continue the pursuit of their objectives by force.

I have made it abundantly clear that military reform, including a major reduction in the size of our armed forces, is a priority for my government. But while more than two-thirds of our soldiers are simply standing guard over our electrical power system and economic infrastructure, it is absurd for us to dismantle our defenses unilaterally before a cease-fire agreement.

Instead, I urge the continuation of full US military assistance to El Salvador until the FMLN agrees to a cease-fire. When this is achieved, I am prepared to decline half of all available US military aid. Our goal remains to free our people from the constant fear of attack and to incorporate the FMLN into the democratic process.¹²¹

I. CONCLUSION

Although the primary purpose of this case study is to examine what role the United States can play in influencing a democratic transition in countries with which it has considerable influence, it would be inappropriate to exclude the role that the United States has played in El Salvador's civil war. While

¹¹⁹. "FDR's Menjivar on Conditions for Talks with US", PA170318 Paris AFP in Spanish 0223 GMT 17 Jan 81, as translated into English by FBIS, 19 Jan 81, p. 13.

¹²⁰. Alfredo Cristiani, "Cut Aid, and See Democracy Abort", Los Angeles Times, October 1, 1990.

¹²¹. *ibid.*

the other two case studies focused on American foreign policy with regards to military regimes, neither had to endure a conflict of this nature. This conclusion is, therefore, concerned with El Salvador's democratic transition, and its civil war.

This study shows that US foreign policy can be effective when it is unified on fundamental issues. The Carter administration was successful in pressuring the right to reduce human rights abuses, and the Reagan administration was successful on those occasions in which it defined support for democracy as the best way to achieve its aims. It also shows that when US foreign policy is divided, it can be not only ineffective, but damaging as well. The Carter administration's emphasis on land reform was never properly implemented, and was probably counterproductive anyway, and the Reagan administration's willingness to walk a fine line on security assistance led to increasing resistance by Congress to fund the war, which jeopardized future aid.

Aid should therefore be linked to fundamental concepts agreed to by both the administrative and legislative branches. Issues such as human rights and free elections are the two most important. General funds that are used to pressure the Salvadoran government towards reform in controversial areas, such as land reform, should be avoided. A clear statement of purpose is needed--one that has overwhelming bipartisan support. If such a policy cannot be found, then the US is likely to continue to muddle through.

Generalizations about the impact of United States policy on democratic transitions in countries with which it has considerable influence are more problematic. As this case study suggests, the primary concern of US foreign policy with regards to El Salvador was the civil war. To examine that policy

in terms of a democratic transition is, therefore, somewhat misleading. An attempt, however, will be made.

The most basic conclusion of this study is that in order for a democratic transition to be completed, civil war must first be ended. Not only is consolidation impossible, but liberalization and democratization are in jeopardy, as well. Efforts are so focused on establishing control over the situation that basic human rights cannot be guaranteed, and the development of democratic institutions and the corresponding representative relations suffer accordingly.

As opposed to the previous case studies, the United States was actually quite involved with both the liberalization and the democratization processes. Pressure has been continually exerted over the government of El Salvador to respect human rights, and considerable effort has been put into strengthening existing institutions. In addition, it is difficult to imagine that regularly scheduled, open elections would have taken place without US assistance.

However, as in the previous case studies, the limits of actual US influence are evident. Although human rights abuses are no longer on the scale that existed in the early 1980s, they still persist. US control over the military, especially as it concerns the *tanda*, is particularly weak. Considerable pressure is needed on a continual basis in order to have any noticeable impact. Yet, a total cut off in aid would only make matters worse. If the military were to believe that it no longer had anything to lose, than it is quite possible that a return to the horrendous repression of the past would occur. And while considerable efforts have been made to improve the judicial system, these, too, have proven inadequate.

The fault of these efforts lies, not so much with US policy, but with the

situation in El Salvador itself. In other words, it is forces within El Salvador that will ultimately determine whether democracy will succeed. This is not to say that mistakes in US foreign policy have not been made, or that problems no longer exist. On the contrary, US foreign policy in regards to this situation requires constant correction, and it is rare that it hits its intended mark. However, it must be remembered that the current situation is not a result of US involvement, but of Salvadoran intransigence. It is, after all, their war.

The conflict in El Salvador is an ongoing affair that has claimed the lives of some 72,000 people in just over a decade. As this study has shown, both sides in the conflict share responsibility. It has caused billions of dollars in economic damage, further exacerbating a situation that has caused considerable hardship for the people least able to afford it; the poor.

No easy solution exists for the conflict. It has its origins in centuries of history, and the problems cannot be solved in a single generation. While the opposition continues to berate the inequality within society and repeat the need for reform, the central issue in this debate is neither. It concerns the basics of power sharing, or in this case, the inability to share. The rebels want some power before a constitution is drafted. The government says that one is already in place, and that if the insurgents want a share of power then they will have to lay down their arms and join the democratic process.

In the center of this mess is the United States. It has attempted desperately to build an infrastructure with which the government of El Salvador can govern its people. Yet, forces on the extreme left and right continue to sabotage those efforts. On the one hand, the United States should

press for negotiations, because only through compromise can a true democratic transition occur. On the other hand, negotiations at any price would only show that the protracted use of terror is an effective way to gain power that cannot be secured by legal means.

The Bush administration appears to be taking this middle road. In conjunction with Congress, it has pressed for negotiations, while continuing its support for the government of El Salvador. Yet, if it is forced to abandon this path, for whatever reason, it will be the people of El Salvador, not the United States, who will suffer in the end. With the changing international situation, further involvement in El Salvador is, therefore, increasingly more of a moral issue than one of security. Since support for El Salvador is no longer determined by the context of the East-West conflict, the issue must focus on reducing the amount of suffering in a neighbor to the south. However, those within El Salvador must take responsibility for their plight.

As for the current conflict, it is unclear exactly what the guerrillas would do if they ever achieved power. They could develop a totalitarian or an authoritarian state, or they might provide for a democratic government. This, however, is not the issue that should be emphasized. In this context, the importance is stressed on how they come to power. As long as the guerrillas refuse to participate in elections, and continue to use violence to gain a share of power, they should be treated as guerrillas.

If one were looking for a recommendation concerning the situation in El Salvador it would be to continue to aid the government of El Salvador against the insurgents and to support elections as the best way to solve that country's problems. Aid should be provided to whatever party wins the

elections (provided they are conducted fairly under the circumstances), in the hopes of building a more secure, more democratic government. Pressure can and should be applied to hold officials responsible for their actions, but the success of that pressure is likely to be limited. As a result, expectations should be low. One senator appears to have said it best,

...El Salvador needs less politicization, not more. The terror needs to be put down, and the economic situation stabilized. Our policy should be to support depoliticization and security, so that working people and farmers can go about their lives and jobs in peace. Until the fundamental human rights are restored, it is a misplaced priority to expect a full-blown democracy to re-emerge. Our policy should be to support neither the left nor the right nor the center, but to go beyond politics to the basic issue of freedom.¹²²

The United States can support a democratic transition in countries with which it has considerable influence, but as in the other case studies, it is severely restricted by the nature of domestic politics within that country. In the case of El Salvador, support should be limited to what is necessary to prevent the insurgents from seizing power by undemocratic means. The rest is ultimately up to the people of El Salvador.

¹²². "Government Documents: On US Policy for El Salvador", op. cit., p. 96.

V I . C O N C L U S I O N

"I once was told,
'If you say "free the slaves",
Then anything you say to back it up
weakens the argument.'
The naked assertion
is its own best vehicle."

Benjamin S. Pitkin

Several forces influence democratic transitions in developing countries. They include historical, cultural, social, economic, political, and international factors. Of these, the least explored is the role that international actors have on those transitions. The purpose of this study was to examine what role those actors can have, in particular the United States, and to prescribe certain policies for use in assisting such developments.

Generalizations are, of course, difficult. It is impossible to know if the lessons learned from each of these case studies would apply to other countries. El Salvador is certainly a unique case, and whereas the economic situation may dominate US policy concerns in one country, such as Brazil, political factors may be the most important in another, such as Chile. Thus, different variables make specific policy recommendations of little practical use. There are, however, some broad observations that can be made, and it is with these thoughts that this study now concludes.

To begin with, the aims of any given policy do not necessarily produce the desired results. As such, policy will necessarily undergo constant corrections. Part of this is due, no doubt, to the special circumstances of each situation. However, it also demonstrates the nature of the US political system. When any given foreign policy was pursued to its logical extreme,

either in terms of a high moral purpose (as it did in some ways in the Carter administration) or realpolitik (as it did in some ways in the Reagan administration), it inevitably met opposition. This is not to say that those policies were wrong, only that they were not supported by the mainstream at that time. And support for policy is an important part of a successful policy.

Any policy that attempts to influence a democratic transition in another country will require close coordination between the President and Congress. To expect Congress to give the administration a free hand in the conduct of its foreign policy is an unreasonable assumption. Nor should it. Congress played an important role in forcing the Reagan administration to clarify its position and to better define its policies. In this way, tension between the executive and legislative branches produced a moderate policy. Over time, it forced an approach that assumed a middle path between Carter's human rights policy and Reagan's realism. As Osgood has observed, "an idealistic policy undisciplined by political realism is bound to be unstable and ineffective; political realism unguided by moral purpose will be self-defeating and futile."¹ In one sense, a Republican administration and a Democratic Congress were able to find this balance. In contrast, the control of both the executive and legislative branches of government by the Democrats during the Carter administration is perhaps one explanation of why Carter's policies were not as balanced or as successful as one might have hoped.

¹. Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self-interest in America's Foreign Relations (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 451.

As such, US foreign policy needs to be bipartisan. Its goals may be lofty, but expectations should be modest. It is important to stress the areas of agreement, and to limit the areas that can be most divisive, even if that means reducing US involvement. Some tension is not only inevitable, but necessary as well. It should not, however, reach a point at which one branch no longer respects the rights of the other. Congress must be mindful of the President's role in making foreign policy, but the President should also expect Congress to judge the results. Again, this is not necessarily the "correct" way to approach these matters. It merely appears to be the most appropriate given the US system.

Given a bipartisan approach, the United States has many options at its disposal. As it did in each of the case studies, it can encourage a transition using a bilateral approach. In particular, agencies within the US government can support institutions in a particular developing nation. As in the past, it can also provide broader support through initiatives such as the Caribbean Basin Initiative or the Enterprise for the Americas. Such efforts, however, will probably continue to meet with limited success.

The following table may serve to highlight the results of this study. The first column indicates the level of US involvement (LI), where H=High, M=Medium, and L=Low. The second category estimates the impact of US involvement in that country's civil war (CW), which serves as a standard by which to measure the other areas. In this category, only El Salvador received a value. Given the level of US involvement, the third category estimates the impact that involvement can have on the liberalization process (L), the next category estimates the impact on democratization (D), and the fifth category estimates the impact that US involvement can have on the consolidation of

democracy (C). The final category estimates the total impact that the United States had on any given transition. It is an average of the values given for L, D, and C:

Country	LI	CW	L	D	C	Total
Chile	M	NA	1	0	<1	<1
Brazil	L	NA	1	0	<1	<1
El Salvador	H	3	2	1	NA	2

Key: 0=Little or no factor, 1=Somewhat of a factor, 2=Minor factor, 3=Major factor, 4=The primary factor, NA=Not applicable, and <=Less than.

While the precise level of impact may be impossible to discern, these results still serve a useful function. They indicate that the United States is likely to have the greatest impact in encouraging regime liberalization, as opposed to democratization or the consolidation of democracy. Considerable efforts should, therefore, be made in defending human rights and in promoting civil liberties. Pressure is most appropriate during this phase, especially in countries such as El Salvador, where the government has fewer options. Unfortunately, the level of success is likely to be less than desired, so policy must be patient. As both Chile and Brazil suggest, sanctions must be applied in a judicious manner. Overt criticism of a regime's policies also appears to be a useful instrument, but it, too, has its limits. Therefore, most pressure should come from the diplomatic (behind the scenes) level. In addition to the tactics mentioned above, rewards for positive steps taken by a regime are also in order.

Once liberalization begins, it appears that internal forces are less in need of international actors. Once they are given the basic freedoms of expression, they can begin to organize and increase pressure on the regime

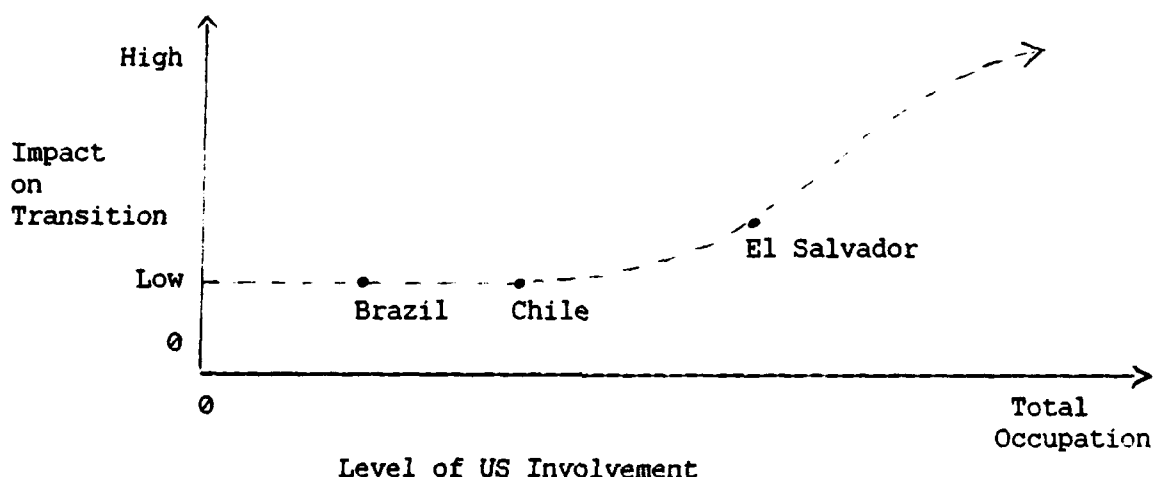
from within. In these case studies, and especially as it relates to Chile and Brazil, it was the internal actors that ultimately forced the regime on the path towards democracy. In effect, the United States becomes a bystander, waiting to see if those groups have the ability to become a viable option in the democratization process. If they are not ready, there is little else the United States can do. If they are successful, then the US can once again begin to play a role, this time as a supporter of democratic consolidation.

As far as the United States is concerned, support for the consolidation of democracy is largely an indirect role. As it should have done with Chile, it can immediately provide moral support by accepting that country back into the fold of democratic nations. As with Brazil, it can also use its influence in the IMF and World Bank to encourage policies that favor economic growth, although policy makers should remember that such policies can be very divisive in the short term, and therefore carry considerable risk.

As far as overall US policy is concerned, the level of influence that the United States has in another country appears to be relatively unimportant. This is due primarily to the fact that internal forces ultimately determine the nature of any transition, and many of those forces are relatively immune to United States' influence. This is particularly true in countries with which the US has a moderate level of influence, such as Chile, or relatively little influence, such as Brazil. In both types of countries the United States should use considerable restraint, because those countries tend to have more options. In a country with which the US has considerable influence, such as El Salvador, it can be somewhat more aggressive as those countries tend to be more dependent. But here again, it would be prudent to recall that the effort is likely to be significantly greater than the degree to which it might

influence any democratic transition.

A graph of these results yields other information that may be of interest. By comparing the United States' involvement (in both economic and diplomatic terms) with its impact on the various transitions, one finds one side of a bell curve:



From this graph, three things are evident. First, the level of US involvement in democratic transitions is likely to be limited. Since the data used for this graph are too imprecise, it is impossible to tell when US involvement would have increasingly important ramifications, although at some point, greater US involvement will bring increasing (and eventually decreasing) rates of return. However, as the case study on El Salvador shows, that involvement may have to be so great that it is unlikely to occur given the political environment in Washington. (It is quite possible that in terms of aid, El Salvador has already reached the point of diminishing returns.) Such a point would mean a virtual occupation of that country, and that is clearly not a viable option in the pursuit of a general theory to promote democratic transitions in developing countries. Exceptions (such as Panama and Grenada) may occur, but they are likely to be few and far between.

The second implication of this graph is that the United States is unlikely to have a significant impact on its own. As such, it would appear that were the US to be serious about promoting democratic transitions in developing countries, it would need to rely on greater resources. Therefore, another approach the United States could use would be to combine efforts with other countries and international agencies in order to maximize international efforts towards influencing those transitions. In some important ways this approach is now being followed. Changes in Soviet foreign policy have made a more moderate approach by the US possible. With the "New World Order", the Bush administration has demonstrated its ability and desire to work with other nations when there is fundamental agreement on policy aims. Such agreement may not be easy, but it is not impossible. In addition to the US, the nations of Western Europe consider a nation's efforts to promote democracy and secure basic human rights before dispensing aid, and there are indications that Japan may do so as well (even if the motives are different). Institutions, such as the UN, may also begin to play a greater role in international affairs, though to be effective their role would have to be expanded. From this perspective, the approach could be similar to the one suggested for the US, only on a much greater scale. The continued coordination of these actors will be most difficult, but such coordination would provide the best hope of influencing a democratic transition.

Since the changes in the world's political environment are relatively recent, it is difficult to determine the impact that well coordinated international actors could have on democratic development. However, the results of this study indicate that they are unlikely to be as great as one might hope. More pressure may be able to be applied to a greater number of

countries, but as in each of these case studies, the effort is likely to be much greater than the impact. This does not mean that such influence attempts are not worth the effort. On the contrary, they are in everyone's best interest. It implies only that considerable patience is required. In short, it is most probable that internal factors will continue to dominate democratic transitions, with international factors playing only a secondary role.

The third and final point to be made from this graph is that the United States appears to have some influence regardless of its involvement. It could be, in effect, a residual influence that results from the mere fact that the US is recognized as a great nation, which serves as an example for all concerned. Thus, if policy makers wish to promote democracy abroad, serving as a beacon is one way to do it. In conclusion, good foreign policy begins with good government here at home.

A P P E N D I X A

I. Direct US Economic and Military Assistance to Chile (M US)

Year	Economic Assistance	Military Assistance	Total Econ/Mil	Total S. America	Average ¹ S. America
1974	4.0	15.9	19.9	290.4	29.0
1975	73.3	.7	74.0	318.0	31.8
1976	81.5	-	81.5	304.2	30.4
1977	19.2	-	19.2	135.6	13.6
1978	6.9	-	6.9	196.1	19.6
1979	10.5	-	10.5	180.7	18.1
1980	10.2	-	10.2	141.7	14.2
1981	12.1	-	12.1	145.7	14.6
1982	6.7	-	6.7	133.0	13.3
1983	2.8	-	2.8	204.7	20.5
1984	1.7	-	1.7	328.2	32.8
1985	1.3	-	1.3	219.2	21.9
1986	1.1	-	1.1	235.7	23.6
1987	1.1	-	1.1	235.4	23.5
1988	-	-	-	190.0	19.0
1989	-	-	-	113.4	11.3
1990	-	-	-	136.9	13.7

II. Direct US Economic and Military Assistance to Brazil (M US)

1974	13.0	52.8	65.8	290.4	29.0
1975	13.5	60.9	75.4	318.0	31.8
1976	4.6	44.6	49.2	304.2	30.4
1977	3.8	.1	3.9	135.6	13.6
1978	2.0	-	2.0	196.1	19.6
1979	1.9	-	1.9	180.7	18.1
1980	2.4	-	2.4	141.7	14.2
1981	1.1	-	1.1	145.7	14.6
1982	.7	-	.7	133.0	13.3
1983	.4	-	.4	204.7	20.5
1984	-	-	-	328.2	32.8
1985	.8	-	.8	219.2	21.9
1986	.7	-	.7	235.7	23.6
1987	5.4	-	5.4	235.4	23.5
1988	-	-	-	190.0	19.0
1989	-	.1	.1	113.4	11.3
1990	-	.1	.1	136.9	13.7

¹. 10 South American countries are included in the total and the average: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

III. Direct US Economic and Military Assistance to El Salvador (M US)

Year	Economic Assistance	Military Assistance	Total Econ/Mil	Total Cent Am	Average ² Cent Am
1974	9.6	1.1	10.7	83.5	13.9
1975	3.6	4.6	8.2	121.7	20.3
1976	5.4	1.0	6.4	144.4	24.1
1977	6.1	.6	6.7	881.8	147.0
1978	10.4	-	10.4	82.8	13.8
1979	11.1	-	11.1	123.2	20.5
1980	58.3	5.9	64.2	191.2	31.9
1981	114.0	35.5	149.5	300.0	50.0
1982	182.2	82.0	264.2	470.2	78.4
1983	245.6	81.3	326.9	732.5	146.5 ³
1984	215.9	196.6	412.5	809.7	161.9
1985	433.9	136.3	570.2	1,290.3	258.1
1986	322.6	121.8	444.4	971.2	194.2
1987	462.9	111.5	574.4	1,225.3	245.1
1988	316.5	119.9	436.4	1,032.4	206.5
1989	269.9	86.4	355.4	905.2	226.3 ⁴
1990	247.8	98.6	346.4	739.4	184.9

Sources: US. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Year(s): 1981 (Part 1), 96th Cong., 2nd sess., 1980, pp. 76-77, 126+ (1974-1979); 1982 (Part 7), 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981; 1983 (Part 6), 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 1982; 1986-1987 (Part 6), 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985; 1988-89 (Part 7), 100th Cong., 1st sess., 1987 (1988); 1990-1991 (Part 7), 101st Cong., 1st sess., 1989 (1989-1990). See also, Wilkie, James W., and Enrique Ochoa, eds. Statistical Abstract of Latin America, Volume 27. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, University of California, 1989, pp. 769-772 (1980-1987).

². Six Central American countries are included in the total and the average: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

³. Nicaragua received no further aid after 1982. The average figure for Central American aid was, thereafter, divided among only five countries.

⁴. Panama received no further aid after 1988. The average figure for Central American aid was, thereafter, divided among only four countries.

APPENDIX B

Trade with the United States as a percentage of that country's total foreign trade.

Year	Chile Export/Import	Brazil Export/Import	El Salvador Export/Import
1973	8.6/21.9	18.1/28.6	33.2/29.4
1976	10.1/23.8	18.3/22.6	32.7/28.6
1978	13.5/27.0	22.7/21.1	23.0/28.6
1979	11.0/22.6	19.1/18.4	28.4/29.2
1980	12.1/27.2	17.4/18.6	39.7/32.4
1981	15.0/25.6	17.6/16.3	17.1/25.5
1982	21.6/25.9	20.5/15.0	34.6/33.6
1983	28.1/19.9	23.2/15.6	38.6/32.5
1984	26.0/21.5	28.5/16.1	37.6/33.3
1985	22.7/21.3	26.9/19.7	48.2/33.9
1986	21.7/20.5	26.7/24.6	46.2/48.1
1987	21.5/19.1	29.2/20.6	44.3/39.4

Source: Wilkie, James W., and Enrique Ochoa, eds. Statistical Abstract of Latin America (Vol. 24/Vol. 27). Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, University of California, 1985 (Vol. 24), p. 484; 1989 (Vol. 27), p. 604.

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