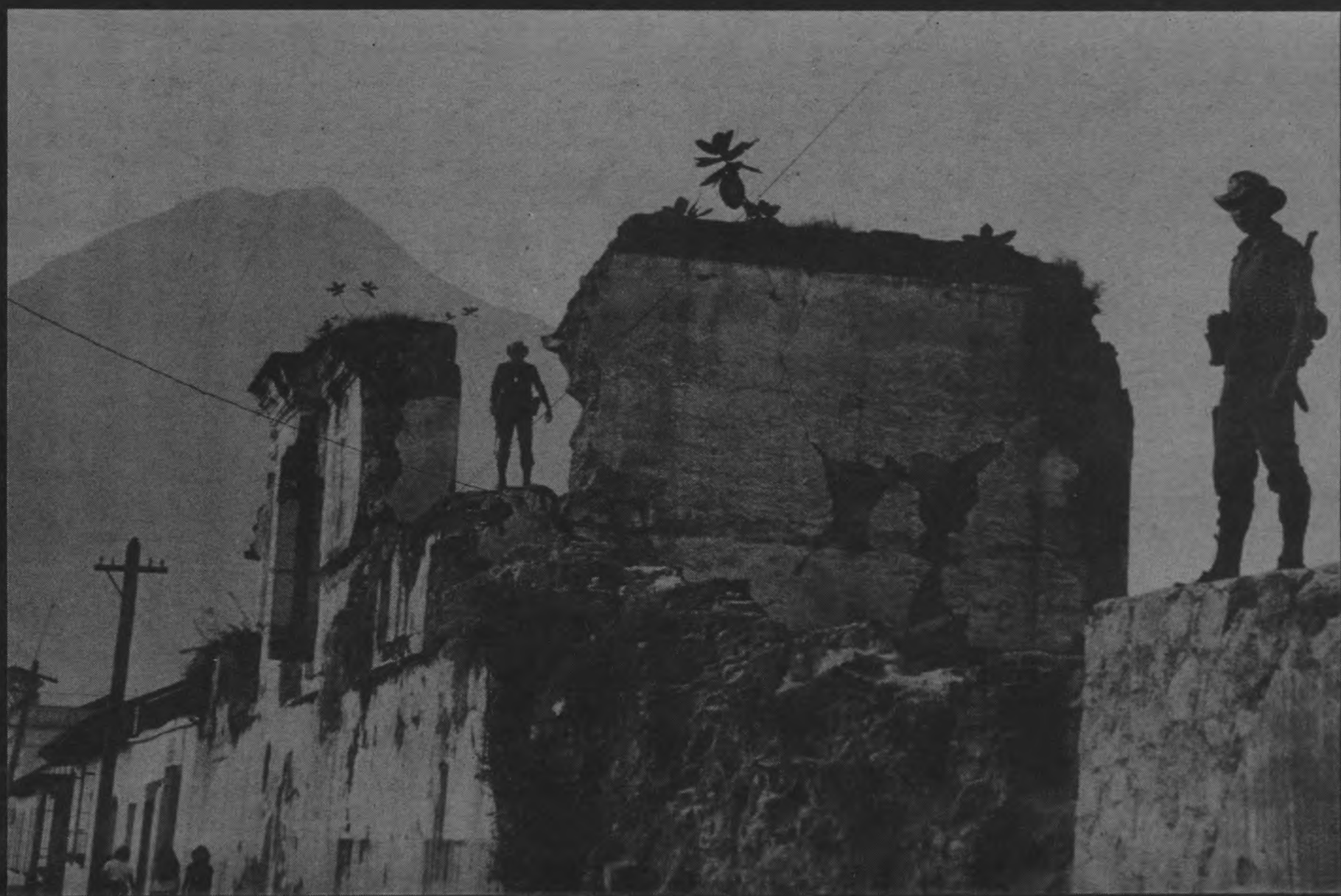


Central America



"I have seen prisoners as young as 15 years old who were in the regular army. When asked why they participate in 'search and destroy' operations in which innocent civilians are killed, they have told me they are taught that 'women are potential factories to produce more guerillas and children are the seeds of the guerillas who need to be destroyed.' They freely admit to participation in such actions, saying that to show any sign of hesitation or reluctance is to incite personal danger from their superiors."

— from Congressional testimony by Dr. Charles Clements on March 23, 1983



Economic Disparity Breeds Revolt

By ROBERT BERNSTEIN

In the news we hear of Central America as a "trouble" region. We hear of great numbers of people killed and tortured. And we know of U.S. involvement. Yet a recent poll showed that only eight percent of Americans even know which side the U.S. is on in both El Salvador and in Nicaragua.

Perhaps it is felt that detailed knowledge is unimportant because, as one student in my lab remarked, "It sounds as if both sides are doing a lot of killing." I hope that people will take more time to follow the details; I believe they will find the situation considerably more meaningful than random fighting.

First, on the issue of numbers killed by each side. "El Salvador's Roman Catholic church reported that 2,527 civilians have been killed by paramilitary squads and the army during the first six months of 1983. It said 43 civilians were killed by guerrillas during the same period (*Los Angeles Times*, 7/18/83). It is clear that the U.S.-backed government poses the greatest threat to the citizens of El

Salvador, not the guerrillas.

Yet even these numbers do not tell the full story. The guerrillas are an organized coalition of revolutionary groups. They operate on a coherent strategy. The majority of this strategy is to win over the support of the population by providing medical care, education and protection from the army and the death squads. The guerrillas presently control one-third of the country in this way. Any killing of civilians, such as selected business and government officials, is a minor part of the overall strategy.

By contrast, the government's function is to terrorize the population so as to maintain the control of the few wealthy landowners. For this reason, the official security forces "have been regularly involved in a systematic and widespread program of torture, disappearance, and individual and mass killings of men, women and children" as reported by Amnesty International. Since this terror is their only means of control, the quantity of the killing and the grisly tortures are an essential part of the government's operation.

The Salvadoran government exists largely because of the backing of the United States. The support we provide is mostly in the form of weapons and military training. A large part of the so-called "economic aid" to which President Reagan refers is actually "non-lethal" military equipment such as uniforms. And, as Senator Dodd of Connecticut has testified, most of the remaining aid ends up as investments back here on Wall Street.

Why do we provide this support? President Reagan claims that he is concerned that the Soviets are behind the revolutions in Central America and that we must keep them out. I do not know if he actually believes this, but the argument has no basis in fact. "People in Central America do not need the Soviets to tell them that they are hungry," as a friend from rural Mexico has told me.

That their revolutions are in large degree Communist is no surprise. Free enterprise in Central America has always meant wealth for a few and misery for the majority. Elections are meaningless when the vast majority of people cannot even read a ballot, and more importantly where any opponent is assassinated before the election.

Communism to these people simply means a redistribution of wealth for the common good. In both the long term and short term it is not in the United States' interest to violently oppose such movements, for such redistribution of wealth is inevitable where the disparity between the haves and the have-nots is so great. This is above and beyond the moral issue of violently opposing such movements.

The Soviets' presence in Cuba and Nicaragua exists solely to the extent that we refuse to provide a source of trade and credit to these countries, as well as our attempts to violently disrupt these countries. Dealing with the Soviets is certainly better for them than letting their people starve to death.

The Road To Peace?

By STEVE LIST

The possibility of negotiations in war-torn El Salvador has once again collapsed, and with it the hope for a respite in the violence which has rocked this country for four years. For at least another winter El Salvador will be immersed in bloody civil war.

Prior to his meeting with Mexican President Miguel DeLaMadrid yesterday, special Presidential Envoy Richard B. Stone stated that the Salvadoran government is "on the road to peace" and will not accept any plan to share power with opposition forces.

Stone's statement came at the end of his two week trip through Latin America, in which he met with officials in Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and the leaders of the Contadora group (Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, and Panama). Stone also encountered the leaders of the Salvadoran guerilla front the FMLN and their political arm the FDR (Democratic Revolutionary Front). The special envoy met with the guerillas in an effort to set up a dialogue between them and the Salvadoran government.

The primary implication of Stone's statement is that there is no visible end in sight to the fighting in El Salvador. Constructive negotiations between the Left and Right have once again been stopped before they were begun, and both sides seem to have dug in for at least another year of sustained combat. If El Salvador is on the road to peace it sure is taking the long way around.

El Salvador cannot be considered on the road to democracy when the whole left of center (and much of the center) is completely excluded from the political process. It would be ludicrous to think it is. But this is what the American public has been repeatedly told by the Reagan administration. The example of Salvadoran "democratization" most often given is the "free and democratic" elections which were held last year. But what is generally not publicized is that all the candidates ranged from the moderate to extreme Right. Any Left-leaning candidates would have undoubtedly been killed by the death squads of the Right. But though conditions have deteriorated even further since that time, statements such as Stone's appear almost everyday in the major papers.

Unless the Left is made a part of the decision-making process in El Salvador, and more importantly, unless the desires of the common Salvadoran are recognized by the existing regime, the fighting will continue. And it will become increasingly bitter. The only way out of this vicious circle is negotiations. If they've failed, as Stone's statement seems to indicate, it will only increase the determination of the guerillas. And when they win, (for their victory is assured given existing conditions), they will be even more militant and anti-U.S. than they are now. Then Ronnie's fear of another aggressive, Marxist regime in Central America will have become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

With the passing of every news day it becomes more evident that Central America will be a major policy issue for years to come. It involves issues ranging from draft registration domestically, to the cold war internationally, to the countries of Central America and how their people are coping with a very tragic situation. Whatever a person's ideological disposition may be, it is essential to be aware of how our government is attempting to confront the seething social and political problems to our south.

The material received by the *Daily Nexus* for this issue is proportionately represented; roughly 9 liberal positions to one conservative.

The *Daily Nexus* wishes to thank all the contributors for their work, especially Brenton Kelly for his photographic contributions. Information for the captions was provided by Sean Kelly, the former Central American Bureau Chief for *Voice of America*.



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Economic Interests Prevail

By DAVE HENSON

United States military commitment to Central America is rapidly escalating. Our government's policy is to support right-wing military regimes that are sympathetic to U.S. corporate interests; governments that are rabidly anti-communist, socialist, liberal, or any perspective involving peasants and workers seeking reform and freedom from oppression. An examination of the history of U.S. involvement in Central American affairs shows that the real basis for U.S. Latin American policy is not, as the Reagan Administration says, to create a "shield for democracy," or to help the "freedom fighters" promote liberty, but is rather a policy based on furthering the already extensive U.S. economic interests in the region.

Since the Spanish Conquest beginning in the early 1500's, the native people of Central America have been subjugated to the will of foreign invaders who exploit the land and its people for their own profit. For 300 years the Spaniards slaughtered and enslaved the native population. Scores of thousands of Indians were forcefully converted to Christianity. Under the colonial system of *encomienda*, colonists were granted large tracts of land as well as Indians who served as virtual slaves (eg: the conqueror Hernan Cortez was granted an *encomienda* of 23 entire towns and over 200,000 Indians): This allowed the minority of Spaniards to subordinate and control millions of native Indians.

Through epidemics of cholera, small pox, typhoid and measles brought by the Spaniards, the Indian population of Mesoamerica, estimated to be about 10-15 million before the Conquest, was reduced to less than 2 million before 1650. In other words, some six-sevenths of the population was liquidated.

The total number of Spaniards who migrated to the area during the Conquest was about 300,000, and about the same number of African Slaves were imported. The few Spaniards who intermarried with the Indian and black populations created the *mestizo*, the predominant race in Central America today.

U.S. influence in Central America began

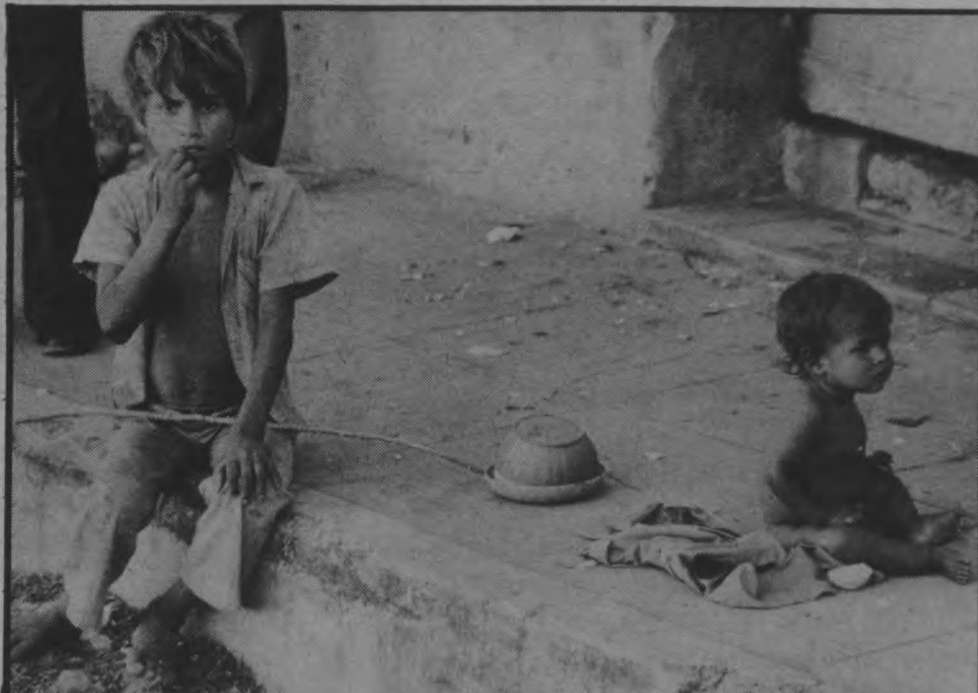
in 1855 when an American, William Walker, brought an army of mercenaries to Nicaragua, gained control of the army and became president by 1856. He attempted to establish a slave state in Nicaragua, destroyed the largest city, Granada, and was then defeated by the forces of the Central American republics in 1857. Walker escaped when the U.S. Navy evacuated him and the few other Americans in Nicaragua in order to "protect the lives and safety of U.S. Nationals." Walker returned to Nicaragua in 1860 with a new army, but was captured and executed in Honduras.

By the late 1800's, U.S. economic interests in the area had increased, culminating with Minor Keith's creation of the United Fruit Company in 1899. The UFCO quickly obtained large sections of Central America and used its economic power, and the power of the U.S. government, to influence the policies of Central American governments and to place politicians favorable to their interests in power, thus gaining the name of *el pulpo* — the octopus.

The early decades of the 20th century saw increasing U.S. influence; the U.S. engineered coups, mediated treaties, determined the policies of puppet governments, leading to the occupation of Nicaragua by U.S. Marines in 1927.

From 1928-1934, Nicaraguan patriot Augusto Cesar Sandino led a guerrilla force against the U.S. occupation forces. The Marines withdrew in 1934, but not before establishing, training and arming the elite National Guard, and placing at its head Anastasio Somoza. Ostensibly to engage in peace talks, Somoza invited Sandino to the National Palace where he was seized by the National Guard and executed. The Somoza dynasty controlled Nicaragua, always with the support of the U.S., until its overthrow in 1979 by the Sandinistas.

Like the rest of the western world, Central American workers struggled for the right to form unions during the '20s and '30s, but were brutally crushed by U.S. supported dictators — Somoza in Nicaragua; Carias Andino in Honduras (1932-48); Ubico in Guatemala (1931-44); and Hernandez Martinez in El Salvador (1931-44). Frequent peasant uprisings were suppressed with



Street scene in El Salvador's northern Chalatenango province where the nearly four year old civil war has taken some of its heaviest toll. As in other wars the children bear some of the greatest burden. Childhood itself becomes an early casualty and life turns into a very personal battle for survival.

NEXUS/Brenton Kelly

great bloodshed. An example is how the democratically elected government of Arbenz in Guatemala began a land reform program and was overthrown in 1954 by the Guatemalan military (encouraged and supported by the CIA).

The reason that the U.S. historically had been a deciding factor in the politics of every Central American country is not because we are stopping the spread of Communism, (many of the U.S. sponsored coups were pre-Cold War), but rather because our government puts economic interests of a few multi-national corporations, like the United Fruit Co., before the liberty and dignity of the people of Central America. The fundamental problem with U.S. foreign policy is that it was designed to acquire and protect profit, not to spread democracy and liberty throughout the world.

By accusing every liberation movement in Central America of being "communist" and "Soviet sponsored," our government rationalizes secret coups, massive military aid and occasional Military invasions. Our government is not so much anti-communist as it is anti-change; because change means the indigenous people gaining control over their own lives, their own resources and their own destiny. Sooner or later the U.S. is going to have to get on the right side in the Third World: the side of progressive change that liberates and empowers people with the same dignity and liberty that we American's cherish as an inalienable right.

I hope that we get on the right side soon; for the sake of Truth and Justice, as well as for the sake of the millions of people in Central America who suffer daily because of our profit-before-people policies.

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For over 10 years our water district has only pretended to solve Goleta's water shortage. The present majority members have masqueraded as environmentalists as they have undermined the water district's ability to keep Goleta beautiful. They have squandered money on excessive salaries for themselves and their attorney, and have failed to efficiently use excess Cachuma water (20 years worth wasted over the dam this year). They have selectively enforced the moratorium and overlooked violations by their political allies.

Three candidates want to end this unnecessary water shortage and political dishonesty. David Lewis, Don Weaver and Gary McFarland are technically qualified, professionally trained and environmentally sensitive. But above all, they are committed to using local water sources (which have always been available) to solve Goleta's water shortage.

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Chemist-in-Charge — Lompoc Waste-Water Plant Lab
I.V. Renter — Eleven year resident

DON WEAVER:

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Licensed Engineering Geologist
Board Member — State Water Quality Control Board
Board Member — Goleta Water Dist.
Goleta resident — 25 years

GARY McFARLAND:

Registered Civil Engineer
Goleta Water Dist. Engineer — for 3½ Years
Board Member — Goleta Water Dist.
Goleta resident — 10 years

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FOR GOLETA WATER DISTRICT

NOV. 8

The U.S. Strong Arm

By DAVID W. POESCHEL

The United States is a nation experienced with revolution and civil war. And because it is the strongest nation on earth and a leader of the free world, it has the opportunity to show its Latin brothers a better way of life. But after 200 years of maturing and nurturing of the self-evident truths, what has the big brother expounded? Big biceps (as well as another big thing that only real men have).

At a time when Central and South American nations are struggling for democracy and self determination, a struggle that pits the poor and powerless against murderous military dictators who know nothing other than "might makes right," the U.S. government, lead by Ronald Reagan, has sent thousands of troops, gun boats, and tanks into Central America. This has resulted in heightened tensions and an upping of the ante in an already over-militarized region.

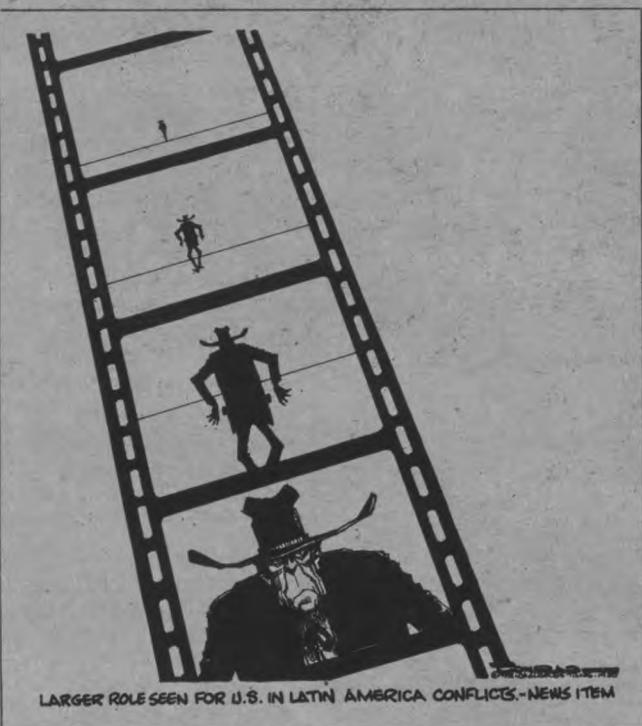
This kind of action is the root of the problem, for it has become the custom that political power is derived from military might. It is not so in the United States, and it should not be so in Central America. Moreover, as a supplier of arms, the United States is directly responsible for many of the political murders and aggressions in the area, especially in El Salvador. Without weapons provided by the super powers, such forceful dictatorships would not exist.

The black and white, bad guy-good guy thinking of the Reagan Administration is a problem. Apparently believing that Reagan wears a white hat and the communists black, the White House Director of Public Liasion complained, "I think the media has tried to portray what we think are the bad guys, the communists, as Robin Hoods." One ought to realize that just as the United States citizens have no desire to seek communist rule, the Latin peoples would not seek communist rule if the capitalist governments in the area provided the economic and political freedoms that U.S. citizens enjoy.

It is too sad that a problem as complicated and sensitive as Central America policy, is lead by a man who tells a Hispanic audience that he had "served enchiladas to the

queen of England." A man who, while on a four nation Latin American tour, toasted Brazilians by saying, "To President Figueredo, to the people of Bolivia..."

Leaving aside any personal emotion towards President Reagan, one can see upon closer examination that the Reagan Administration's policies are actually in violation of the U.S. and international law. In mid-1982, an addition to the classified budget authorization for the CIA explicitly stated that there shall be no funds "for the purpose" of trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. Later after publicity, congress approved similar legislation, referred to as the Boland amendment, named after its author. The administration has said the purpose of the millions of dollars in aid granted to the Nicaraguan rebels based in Honduras in the form of weapons and training is



to interdict Cuban and Nicaraguan arms flowing into El Salvador. However, there has been no evidence that a single gun has been intercepted. It has become increasingly obvious that the U.S. backed rebels have only one goal, that goal being to oust the communist Nicaraguan government. As far back as May, it was reported that William J. Casey, director of the CIA, and Thomas O. Enders, then assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs, had predicted to a congressional committee that the U.S. supported rebels have a good chance of "overthrowing" the Sandinista government by the end of the year. Reagan has referred to the rebels as "freedom fighters."

Meanwhile on the diplomatic front, the Reagan Administration, which has made an effort to publicly appear eager for a diplomatic solution, has been dragging its feet. On one instance, Reagan delayed a debriefing of the special envoy after a meeting with Salvadoran rebels, an action obviously designed to slow the process. Moreover, an offer from Fidel Castro to pull out all of his military advisors and stop the arms flow provided that all foreign intervention be stopped was ignored as propaganda. Reagan said the communist could not be trusted.

All this demonstrates the Reagan Administration's failure to understand the problem in Central America, thus resulting in faulty policies. The Central American nations need respect and self-determination. They need help from a good role model not destructive military power.

Off To Latin America

By ANDREA WOODWARD

I grasp (blindly) for something intangible. What is the switch that will illuminate its nature for me? Where is it?

I am going to find it. I am going, in the literal sense, to Latin America to find meaning.

Sounds silly to physically seek a philosophical understanding of what I am here for. Maybe it is, but I suppose that being a member of a society of doers rather than thinkers, I must actively do something. If that is the case, then I am not truly stepping outside the norms of our society as I would like to. I wish to step outside North American society to try to perceive it and the rest of the world differently. The only way I can see to do that is to break with the world I know and even break a little with what is expected of me as a member of this world.

It is not that I have never been out of the country. On the contrary, I have travelled in Mexico with my family, spent a year in Japan as a high school exchange student and, most recently, studied for six months in Spain. However, none of these experiences has broken through my protective shell composed of middle-class American values.

I remain a nice upper middle class white woman from a nice upper middle class white family. I will graduate in June from a nice upper middle class (mostly) white university. My life experience has, in short, been far too nice, upper middle class and white.

I could graduate in June and enter the upper middle class (mostly) white working world, but, quite frankly, I lack direction. I want to do something that may not be exactly important but I would like to it have significance.

Why go to Latin America of all places? A quixotic notion of doing a little something to right the wrongs that have been done to the southern half of our continent in order to maintain our standard of living. Maybe it's guilt for having had it so good that motivates me. A good friend of mine said, "You get and get and get and then it's time to give a little back." I'm thinking about the Peace Corps or some other organization, but I may just go all by myself not knowing what I'll find and stay until I find it.

Less important reasons include the fact that I am fascinated by Latin America and would like to see for myself what is going on down there. I speak pretty good Spanish, and my fluency should improve. Furthermore, I know that whether my experience turns out to be positive or negative I will benefit by what my friend calls "general personal experience" so my reasons for going are not entirely altruistic.

If it sounds like I am trying to sell myself on the idea, it does because I am. While I think it would be a great thing for me to do, I am still afraid. I am fearful of being too idealistic and suffering immediate burnout caused by frustration at not being able to accomplish anything. I don't like the idea of being in physical discomfort — bugbitten, plagued by dysentery or even sweaty. (Yes, these are my middle class values speaking.) Finally, I am afraid of not being able to step back into the mainstream of middle class American life. What if I decide the only recourse is revolution?

Then I sternly scold myself for letting my fears run wild. After all, I am looking for something more important than the same comfortable position I have always been in. So, this year I shall investigate various programs, study Spanish and Latin America. By next September I expect to be gone to find it.



Two Guatemalan peasants waiting for their bus to come. NEXUS/Brenton Kelly

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An Important Role Ahead

By LANNY EBENSTEIN

Too often, in the realm of international relations (and in other realms as well), people become confused about what they are talking about. Everyday we pick up a paper or hear a radio report and learn that, "the United States has done such-and-such to so-and-so," or that, "the Soviet Union has done this-and-that to you-know-who." In these media announcements, due in part to the manner in which they are presented, it is very difficult to keep all the actors and their parts straight, much less to know what the plot is. Consequently, most of us go around mouthing something we have heard or read without really understanding it. Because we are uninformed (or misinformed), we generally lack the ability to give meaningful input as to the best course to follow in a particular situation.

This essay is entitled my role in El Salvador because it is the author's belief that this is the issue at stake when we discuss what the role of the United States in El Salvador should be. At the present time, we choose to look at the world as organized into countries and nations. We do not perceive that when we discuss what the role of our nation should be in a situation, we are really discussing what our individual role in that situation should be. Due to our anachronistic way of looking at the world, we can hide our decisions behind a conceptual shield (of the nation-state system) which obscures our own responsibility for those decisions. However, we are responsible for our decisions. If I say that the United States should supply to the existing regime in El Salvador more weapons which will kill people, I must take responsibility for action. While it is true that many others in the United States must agree with this action in order for it to become effective, this does not negate my responsibility.



With this introduction what, then, is the role I want to take in El Salvador? To answer this question, certain moral beliefs have to be laid down in terms of what I believe in, and factual evidence as to what is happening in El Salvador has to be presented which coheres to these beliefs. This analysis will determine my position.

As to my moral beliefs, I would with special force hold to the principle known as the golden rule, namely that we should do unto others as we would have others do unto us. Ultimately, I can offer no support for this position except that I have faith in its validity. Unfortunately, if someone disagrees with this, it is logically impossible to prove him wrong, as logic is most useful in pointing out contradictions in conclusions arising from the same premises, rather than in pointing out contradictions in conclusions arising from different premises (if premises are different, it is not illogical for conclusions to be different).

If I would do unto others what I would have others do unto me, the next question becomes what, specifically, would I have myself and others do? In regard to this I would advocate a code of conduct that incorporates all the attributes of what one author has called the "hurrah-words:" people should be honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, loving and the like. This is the code I should attempt to pursue in my relations with others, and this is the code I would like others to pursue towards me.

How does all this determine what role I should take in El Salvador? Well, it follows from what I have said above that I should advocate those actions in El Salvador that will most promote what I believe in.

From a moral perspective, the current situation in El Salvador is very messy. The colors of the conflict there are not drawn in black and white tones (regardless what extreme advocates of various positions believe); rather, they are drawn in different shades of grey. A corrupt and oppressive old regime has been challenged by a group of people who would establish a new regime that would probably be less corrupt, but more oppressive. If this was all there were to the situation, I would probably not want to become involved; the situation is just not clear enough to forcefully do anything for either side, it is not pressing enough to warrant time and energy when there are more important issues elsewhere. I would reluctantly hope that the regime which was less oppressive would prevail, as oppression of a whole people is worse than the corruption of their leaders.

Three other factors are involved in El Salvador which change this analysis: the old regime has been supported in the past by the U.S. (i.e. by all of us); the old regime has recently been moving in the direction of less corruption and oppression; and the new regime would be supported by the Soviet Union.

Regarding factor number one, it is morally and politically wrong that the United States has supported, and continues to support, corrupt and oppressive regimes merely because they support our foreign policy line. This is a black mark on all of us, and it is something we should not do in the future. However, we can not hold our own misdeeds against others. Consequently, the fact that the United States has acted wrongly to El Salvador in the past by supporting the old regime (and thereby also helping to bring about the current conflict) does not mean we should now support the potential new regime, if the new regime would be worse than the old regime. Rather, our poor past in El Salvador would probably reinforce a policy of non-involvement, supporting neither regime, as our actions in the past have not benefited the people there.

On the other hand, factor number two indicates a policy of possibly more support for the old regime. Because the old regime is improving (genuinely free elections have been held in which there was good participation), they merit more support than they did several years ago. The difference between the old and potential new regime is greater than it once was (in favor of the old regime). However, the improvements by the old regime have not been significant enough to really warrant much support for it, nor to overrule the other factors discussed above which indicate a policy of non-involvement.

Finally, factor number three indicates a policy of significant support for the old regime. The policies of the

Soviet Union in the world are barbaric; as a nation it in no way advocates the code of conduct mentioned above. As an individual I oppose the Soviet Union and all that it stands for. Therefore, I should oppose its actions in the world. This changes the situation in El Salvador as follows: I should advocate a policy there which will give the old regime an amount of support equal to whatever the potential new regime is getting from the Soviet Union (through Cuba). This policy would do two things: it would help deter the ascension of a new regime that would prove disastrous for the people of El Salvador, and it would again internalize the conflict.

One side should not prevail in El Salvador because it was helped by an outside power. The amount of aid which the United States gives to the old regime should not be greater than what the Soviet Union is giving to the potential new regime because this would again unbalance the equation. Rather, the amount of U.S. military aid should match what the Soviet Union expends. A policy such as this firmly held to would have the advantage of allowing negotiations to get both the United States and the Soviet Union out of El Salvador.

Once both sides understood that any of their actions in El Salvador would merely be countered by the other side, it would be foolish for either to persist there. This is the policy I would advocate, therefore it is the role I would have the United States take; this would be my role in El Salvador.

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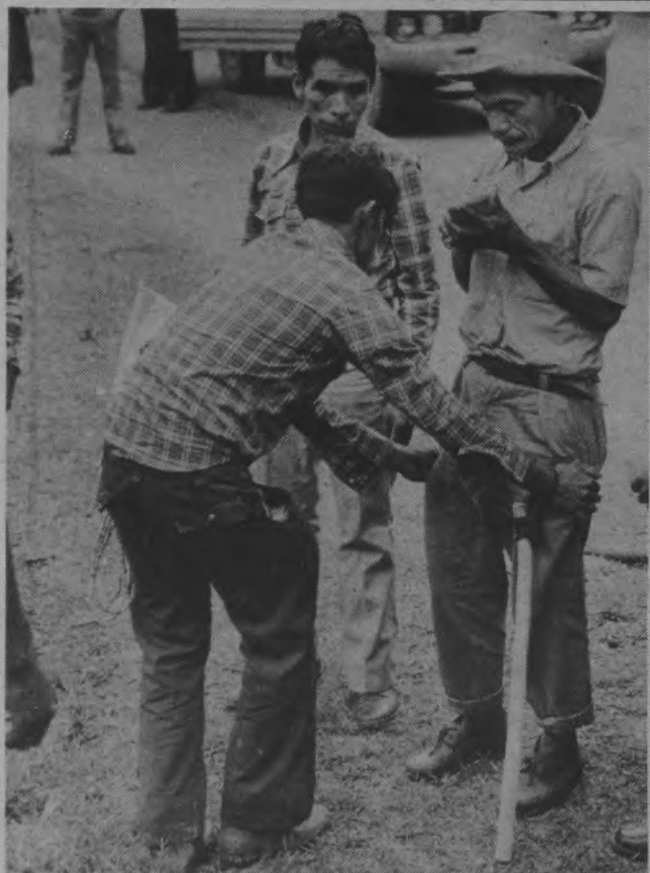
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Civil patrols frisk an old man at a road block in northern Guatemala. The patrols are part of a government program which has armed thousands of villagers.

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The Definition Is The Problem

By RICHARD DULANEY

The raging debate within the Carter Administration, which ultimately led to the resignation of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, pointed up the two predominant schools of thought regarding the motives and intentions of the newly emergent Third World.

These two competing perspectives — which are often labelled "regional" and "globalist" — provide an impetus for our formulation of causal models to explain the historical forces and current events in El Salvador and Central America. Defining the cause of a problem is the critical first step in developing or analyzing a suitable policy. Bringing a specific attitude to bear on a problem will significantly influence the nature of the policy, as problem situation definitions are usually related to one or another group of strategies. Hence, choosing one definition may automatically preclude whole groups of policy options.

The first model might be called the indigenous model. Amenable to a regionalist view, this model attributes primary causal importance to sub-systemic determinants of events and processes. Applied to Central America, a domestic supporter of this perspective would see the revolutions in Cuba and Nicaragua as indigenous uprisings of a majority against the repressive oligarchy of a handful of wealthy landowners. Working class and peasant resolve to achieve economic justice crosses national borders and allies the Salvadoran rebels with the Castro regime and the Sandanistas. An important component of this is the role of the superpowers: the U.S. and the USSR are evaluated by their position on the liberation issue, rather than by the ideology that each offers the area. The locus of the problem originates within the nation; superpower policies and perspectives are self-serving and of secondary importance. The regional nationalists are not concerned with superpower spheres of influence, nor with deciding which camp most deserves their allegiance; rather their concerns center on methods to remain non-aligned, while rectifying societies they view as only partially decolonized.

While espousing the need for economic and social justice, an American supporter of an "interventionist" model will impute different causes for unrest. From this perspective, the Soviet Union — brandishing the spectre of world Communism — is to blame, inciting revolution through its regional proxies, Cuba and (more recently) Nicaragua. The USSR, through its constant propaganda war (backed by arms flows), is intervening and disrupting the usually harmonious relations between the United States and its hemispheric partners. As such, civil strife is far from wholly indigenous, as the USSR is undermining regional attempts at democracy; these exogenous characteristics of regional dilemmas present a threat to U.S. security interests. There are two important aspects of this perspective. First, regional conflicts must be viewed as extensions of the global U.S.-USSR tension, thus reversing the priorities of the previous model. Second, the concept of American national security must be extended beyond U.S. borders — to the hemisphere in particular, as well as to the

rest of the world.

Hemispheric relations have certainly dominated the U.S. foreign policy agenda through the first half of the President's term. Throughout the three previous decades, Central America had only required periodic attention from the U.S. foreign policy community. Conservative predecessors (to the current administration) John Foster Dulles and Arthur Vandenberg had fashioned the Organization of American States as an instrument to implement policies based on a globalist interpretation of Soviet aims. Yet the OAS had crumbled by Johnson's tenure, and the 1970's saw a startling series of upheavals that culminated in the overthrow of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, to whom the Carter Administration, after much hesitation and vacillation, denied support.

This view of "International Communism" — shared by Reagan and his supporters — gave rise to an American proclivity to shore up regimes, militarily and economically,



that promised to safeguard American hemispheric security interests. The need to thwart perceived Soviet expansion (and the related need to demonstrate strong determination to the Soviet Union) justified sending U.S. troops into Guatemala in 1954 and the Dominican Republic in 1965, as well as supporting outright repressive military regimes in Guatemala, Brazil and Nicaragua. By late 1981, the battery of political crises in Central America had sharpened public debate over U.S. policy toward that region, and the growing turmoil — manifested in urban and rural violence in El Salvador — provided the fledgling Reagan Administration with its first major foreign policy challenge.

And the Reagan Administration responded in a globalist fashion, declaring that it was time to "draw the line" against Soviet aggression. Reagan's response was predictable; he had been elected primarily on his platform of economic austerity, and had largely delegated foreign policy responsibility to more experienced, but like-minded, subordinates: Vice President George Bush, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency; Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger; and Secretary of State Alexander Haig, whose hardline anti-Soviet convictions had been strengthened by his tour of duty as Supreme Commander of NATO forces in Europe. This conservative coterie had adopted an updated but basically unchanged "domino theory," vowing to deter the dismaying chain of events in Nicaragua and El Salvador that threatened to engulf Honduras, Guatemala, and Costa Rica.

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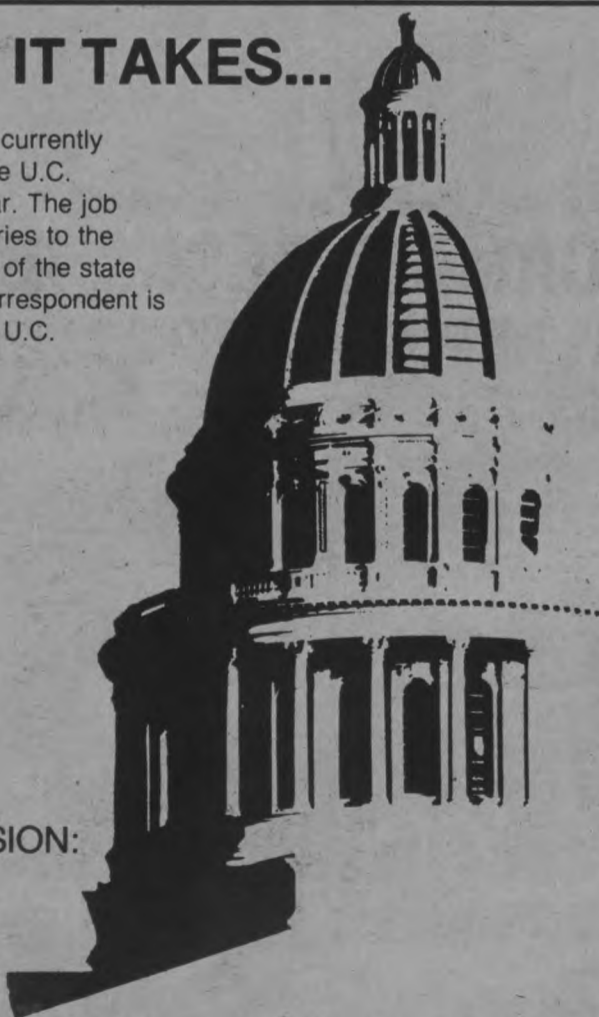
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America's Interventionist Role

By MARC BORGMAN

I have just returned from a two week journey to Nicaragua. I have an immense interest in Central America, having studied mostly Third World and Latin American politics at UCSB and from having spent six weeks in Guatemala and Honduras and extensive time in Mexico. Misunderstandings about Central America abound.

For example, we are constantly barraged with press reports of arms "flowing" from Nicaragua to El Salvador. If only it were true, but alas, this passage of arms has not been proved; no arms have been intercepted; the U.S. White Paper has been thoroughly discredited.

Conflicts in Central America are viewed only as East-West struggles. False again. The struggle down south is the result of a history which includes cultural dichotomies as old as pantheism versus monotheism, armed intervention by the U.S. (in Mexico from 1910-1932, Nicaragua from 1912-1933, Guatemala in 1954, Cuba in 1962, Dominican Republic in 1965, Chile in 1973, and now Nicaragua and from dismal dictatorships that squeeze the poor.

The failure to recognize indigenous causes for revolutionary movements in Central America will forever condemn the U.S. to placing "blame" on our enemies and will result in an endemic drain on our human and material resources, not to mention perennially bad relationships with our neighbors.

Nicaragua, specifically, stands out as a good example of our governments' misguided efforts to overthrow a revolutionary government for the purpose of validating a simplistic political position. We seem to forget that our freedoms were also born from the barrel of a gun.

The Nicaraguan government has an exemplary humanistic purpose. Health and education are now officially considered social rights and are provided free. No longer is dehydration by diarrhea the leading cause of infant death, and one million people, one third of the population, is involved in education from basic learn-the-alphabet campaigns to medical schools. Land for housing is a social right and not a merchantile product to be exchanged for profit.

And yet, we persist in pulling out "evidence" of totalitarianism, or Cuban influence. The only Cubans I saw were at my hotel (they were classical guitar teachers) and on TV (a theater group). Many Cuban doctors and nurses are in Nicaragua for two year stints. They have excellent experience in tropical medicine.

Since last March 1982 an official state of emergency has existed in Nicaragua due to the combination of U.S. armed support of counterrevolutionaries and severe economic pressure by the U.S. and its international agencies. So, having squeezed the country militarily and financially, we condemn the measures they take to protect themselves. It

is as if Reagan, having broken a man's legs, berates him for not walking properly.

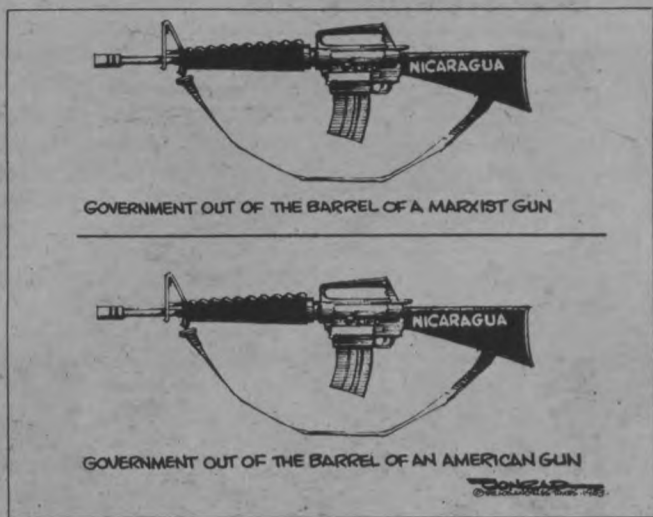
I will quote Carlow Fuentes, a Mexican diplomat and writer. "The problems of Nicaragua are Nicaraguan, but they will cease to be so if they are deprived of all possibilities of normal survival. Why is the U.S. so impatient with four years of Sandinismo, when it was so tolerant of forty-five years of Somocismo? Why it is so worried about free elections in Nicaragua, but so indifferent to free elections in Chile? And why, if it respects democracy so much, did the U.S. not rush to the defense of the democratically elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende, when he was overthrown by the Lation American Jaruzelski, General Augusto Pinochet? How can we live and grow together on the basis of such hypocrisy?"

"Nicaragua is being attacked and invaded by forces sponsored by the U.S. It is being invaded by counterrevolutionary bands led by the former commanders of Somoza's national guard who are out to overthrow the revolutionary government and reinstate the old tyranny. These are not freedom fighters. They are Benedict Arnolds."

Americans need to understand the local conditions in Central America and not succumb to knee-jerk platitudes uttered by our national leaders. We must stop the anachronistic policies of the "big stick." Central Americans are struggling to cease being banana republics. They do not want to become balalaika republics. Let us not force them to choose between begging before the Soviet Union and capitulating to the United States.



NEXUS/Brenton Kelly
Sean Kelly, former Central American bureau chief for the Voice of America, encounters a Salvadoran soldier. Artillery is visible in the background.



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