Toward a National Strategy for Central America

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In January, at the request of Senator Nunn, I testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on national strategy for special operations and low intensity conflict --the ends and means for dealing with politically motivated saboteurs, terrorists, paramilitary narcotraffickers, and insurgents. The hearing devolved into questions and answers on U.S. support for the Nicaraguan rebels, the so-called "Contras". Subsequent press coverage depicted me at odds with Administration policy, although I repeatedly disclaimed any first hand appreciation of Central America since I left command two years ago there, and tried to respond on the plane of national strategy, critical alike of Congress and the Administration.

In particular, I urged that the U.S. "gear for the long haul," adopt a long-term policy regarding the principal actors in the region, and pursue consistently over the years national objectives such as those set forth in the Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America. No national strategy can be underwritten by material aid and training meted out in highly-conditioned spurts, accompanied by repeated challenges to fundamental policy, and subjected to frequent cliff-hanging votes in Congress predicated on wholly unrealistic demands for "progress". If what we have seen in recent months is all that can be expected in Washington, if our government is incapable of the patience and persistency required in treating insurgencies, then we should acknowledge that disability, and squelch hopes that the United States will support Central Americans willing to fight and to die for democracy. The trouble is that such hopes are widespread: in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and now in Nicaragua, people expect our support, and many of them --especially the "Contras"-- have their lives on the line as a result.

At the invitation of USCINCSO, I have since the Senate hearing revisited Honduras and Panama. It was a most useful update for me. I agree with General Galvin that the Nicaraguan rebels of the FDN now have a fighting chance to present to the Nicaraguan people an alternative to the oppressions and militarism of the government in Managua. While a concerted effort to launch a wide-spread guerrilla campaign within Nicaragua did not get underway until after the aid authorized by Congress began to reach them in late October, they have accomplished much in a

short while. The training their key tactical leaders have received, while abbreviated, was directed at the right learning objectives, and should stand them in good stead in the months of fighting which lie ahead. Fighting there will be, for nearly 10,000 FDN guerrillas, armed and organized for an extended unconventional warfare campaign, are now operating inside Nicaragua, and a significant number of these have penetrated beyond the strategic Rama Road, deep into the southeast. Their overall campaign plan seems sound, and their successful infiltration of fresh units through and around the government forces massed along the Honduran border to prevent their reentry, is one dramatic indication of what they have learned since 1985, when last I tracked their operations through the intelligence available to me in USSOUTHCOM.

It is much too early to form judgement concerning their prospects. Over the coming years, we will have to watch carefully to discern whether the troops of the FDN:

-- Pursue a campaign which avoids engagement with major formations of the government's army, extends and exposes the security force, and inhibits its control over land and people.

-- Earn the support of the people, for this will be the most important measure of their success.

-- Link their military operations with political initiative, at least through relating their actions afield to a media campaign directed at informing the Nicaraguan people of their struggle for a free nation, preferably through the former plus political cooperation with the numerous parties trying to bring the government in Managua to accept a test of ballots rather than bullets, and to settle for the outcome of verifiably free elections.

Concerning the approval for the $40 million remainder of the $100 million approved by Congress, I believe that members of Congress ought to vote conscious of the fact that some 10,000 Nicaraguans are now engaged in a civil war against the Marxist-Leninist government there, committed, largely at our instance, to a life-death struggle to win freedom for their countrymen. They are quite dependent upon logistics which only the United States Congress can assure them, and the promised additional aid is vital to their continuing their struggle.

But far more is at stake than the fate of the Nicaraguan rebels: the neighbors of Nicaragua, in Honduras, in Costa Rica, in Guatemala, and in El Salvador, are watching anxiously to see whether Congress supports the

Nicaraguan democratic resistance as an acid test of the U.S. national will to support democracy in Central America. All the democratic governments there are threatened, all are dependent upon continued U.S. support, and all have good reason to regard the Marxist government in Managua as inimical to peaceful resolution of the region's economic, social, and political problems. The tragedy of the present circumstance is that the hubris of a handful of men handling U.S. policy re Iran is likely to undercut Congressional support for a Central American policy which overall has achieved a number of striking successes. Five years ago the following would have seemed quite unattainable:

--Democracy is accepted as the wave of the future in Central America, and the U.S. is its proponent and protector. Where once we were perceived as the prime support for authoritarianism, today we are seen as the main hope for economic and social progress, and as the shield of freedom.

--The U.S. now has a regional military strategy with both offensive and defensive aspects, a strategy which makes possible defense in depth of U.S. vital interests with minimal forces, encourages and sustains the advocates of democracy, and dismays and deters authoritarians of both the right and the left.

--El Salvador has not only adopted reformist democracy, but has, with substantial Congressional support embodied in a multi-year program of economic and military aid, substantially reduced the numbers of insurgents, and reasserted control over most of its people and productive land. Not since Magsaysay's campaign in the Phillipines has a U.S. supported government been similarly successful against guerrillas.

--Honduras has been induced to extraordinary generosity toward its former enemy, El Salvador, in training Salvadoran troops on its soil, and in policing its border areas where Salvadoran insurgents have sought sanctuary. Its long-standing border dispute with El Salvador is now being peacefully adjudicated in The Hague. Honduras, moreover, has assumed grave risk by harboring the "contras", and has accepted an unprecedented U.S. military presence on its soil. It has nonetheless continued its land reform and other evolution toward pluralistic democracy.

--Costa Rica's investments from abroad are up two thirds this year, and despite recent publicity over President Arias' refusal to allow use of his territory for support of the Nicaraguan rebels, military cooperation with the U.S. is the closest it has been since 1948.

--Guatemala's military leaders have adopted enlightened policies providing for support by the armed forces of the constitutional, elected government, and for respect for human rights.

Central Americans therefore are likely to see continued U.S. support for the "Contras" as an affirmation that the U.S. will help them to cope internally with staggering debt-servicing problems, stagnated economies, and grave threats to security, as well as externally with the menace of the Marxist militarists in Managua. As far as the Sandinistas are concerned, the best hope for a negotiated settlement lies in their perceiving the U.S. Congress as committed to Central America for the long haul, including and especially continued support for the UNO and the FDN in Nicaragua.

Conversely, should Congress abrogate its commitment to the Nicaraguan rebels, governments of the four democracies in Central America are likely to be shaken. This is no "domino theory", but a realistic assessment of the fragility of those governments:

El Salvador President Duarte, pressed now not only by the continuing war, but by a devastating earthquake, would surely have to contend with a reinvigorated Left and a vengeful Right, and his base of power, already eroded, would probably disintegrate.

Honduras With the U.S. wavering, President Azcona would find it more difficult to restrain further his powerful and restive military, within which are venal, nationalist, rightist individuals who question continuing cooperation with the U.S. These men are fully capable of seeking an accommodation with Managua, to insure against the return of FDN troops to Honduran soil, to seek respite from threatened insurgency within Honduras, and to free Honduran forces to face the Salvadorans, whom they regard as their main threat.

Costa Rica President Arias would be likely to adopt a stance less critical of Managua, conceivably at the cost of military collaboration with the U.S., but businessmen and democratic politicians alike would loose confidence, and internal security, already precarious, would be impaired.

Guatemala President Cerezo could expect challenges from his military, many of whom, already sceptical of U.S. persistence and concerned over their obdurate guerrilla foes, would be impelled to regress to direct control of the government, and repressive counterinsurgency.

Nicaragua A negative Congressional vote on aid for Nicaraguan rebels is quite likely to doom efforts to negotiate an end to the civil war. That war will continue, even intensify, as the Sandinistas throw in their reserves seeking a final victory. Some portions of the FDN force may try to reenter Honduras, and, if so, there could be Sandinista hot pursuit, complicated by the possibility that the Hondurans will fight to keep the "Contras" out, or to disarm them -- one U.S. supported force fighting another. In the short run there will be human costs in casualties among the rebels and the migration of their families, and political costs in terms of lost U.S. credibility. And in the longer run, the collapse of the democratic resistance in Nicaragua could precipitate a return to authoritarianism in most of Central America, and by unfettering the Sandinistas for new mischief, bring warfare to Honduras and Costa Rica as well as Guatemala and El Salvador.

I know that there are some in Congress who profess to believe that it does not matter to us whether there be a Marxist government in Managua, and that the U.S. could adopt a strategy of containment, based on extensive U.S. economic and military commitments to Nicaragua's neighbors. I agree that commitment is required in any event, but I hasten to point out that the costs of containment may prove to be intolerably high. More importantly, a strategy of containment may be self-defeating by destroying our political basis for commitment, for some of the governments which could materialize in Central America in the wake of a U.S. turn-about re the Contras may be authoritarian regimes, hardly worthy of U.S. support, and vulnerable themselves to Marxism.

It is my considered judgement that additional aid for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance is a small price to pay for preserving the gains realized in recent years by those we support in Central America, and for keeping open the prospect of negotiated settlement. I believe that denying that aid would jeopardize all that has been achieved there for democracy in recent years, a risk wholly disproportionate to the expenditure involved.

But the larger issue remains a national strategy. I advocate that our strategic objective be pluralistic democracy for all Central Americans, achieved and maintained by Central Americans. I recommend that we devote to the attainment of that objective, under the concept of helping them to help themselves, the full power of the United States --our political influence, our economic vigor, our military strength, and our moral authority-- not for a few months, or for this session of Congress, but for the foreseeable future. I urge that Congress adopt a comprehensive, long-range plan of aid for Central America which would convince friends and enemies alike that we are committed, that we intend to stay

committed until every Central American enjoys the right to choose his government in free elections, and until all governments there enjoy the peace and prosperity befitting our close neighbors.

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Soviet Activity in Latin America February 1987

Background: Speculation that Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev will visit Latin America in 1987 has highlighted the steady development of Soviet state-to-state relations with Western Hemisphere nations. The USSR is attempting to project a respectable diplomatic image and reduce the negative impact of its identification with Cuba and the Sandinistas and, thus, regional subversion. The USSR's effort to increase its presence in, and influence on, Latin America represents a long-term challenge to US interests and regional governments.

Cuba: For more than a quarter of a century, the most visible Soviet presence in the Western Hemisphere has been in Cuba. In addition to creating an island fortress there, the Soviets have underwritten Cuba's inefficient economy. In return, Castro has been Moscow's apologist in hemispheric and international forums (for example, the Nonaligned Movement), and Cuba has served as a conduit for assistance to regional subversives, as well as a Soviet surrogate, providing troops to fight in Angola and Ethiopia.

Nicaragua: The Soviet presence also has been quite visible in Nicaragua in the form of Soviet-made tanks, helicopter gunships, and other weapons. The Soviets have poured in more than half a billion dollars in military aid during the last 5 years to bolster the Sandinistas. Nicaragua provides the USSR with opportunities for political windfalls stemming from Sandinista consolidation and possible future subversive successes in the region.

South America: In South America, in contrast, the Soviets have moved toward a strategy of promoting normal state-to-state relations with most governments. They have attempted to take advantage of the new political openness that accompanied democratization in Latin America to increase their presence. Additionally, Latin American communist parties, most of which remain obedient to Moscow, have taken advantage of open political systems to strengthen their political organizations.

Over the last decade, the Soviets have developed a diplomatic, media, military, or cultural presence in every South American country except Chile and Paraguay. Soviet activities range from a substantial investment in educational exchanges (in 1979, about 2,900 students from Latin America and the Caribbean studied in the USSR; in 1985, that figure was 9300) to arms sales (Peru's army and air force have been almost totally dependent on Soviet-supplied hardware since the mid-1970s) and commercial activities (the USSR's purchases of grain made it Argentina's largest export customer during 1980-85).

Chile: In contrast to their strategy in the rest of South America, the Soviets have openly supported the violent overthrow of the Pinochet regime in Chile. The insurgents' huge arms caches found in

Chile in August 1986 could only have been assembled with Soviet-bloc participation. The Soviets probably believe they can afford to be overtly hostile toward Chile's authoritarian regime without putting at risk their diplomatic efforts with the continent's democracies.

Difficulties for Soviets: Political and economic developments in the hemisphere may make Soviet efforts to expand their influence more difficult. Some more advanced countries of Latin America have the potential to surpass the USSR in many fields; it is unlikely that they will look to the Soviet Union as a role model for economic, social, or political development. Democratization is creating new avenues for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and, as a result, lessening popular support for political extremists who advocate violence, and who often find external support for their causes. Likewise, the creation of free, open, and efficient economic systems should contribute to the alleviation of economic inequities that breed easily exploited political discontent.

Challenge to US interests: Much of the threat to US interests posed by the presence of Soviet client states in the hemisphere is obvious. Should the US be forced to concentrate its attention and resources on Latin America, the Soviets would benefit by having greater freedom of action in other parts of the world. The presence of Cuba in geographic proximity to vital sea lanes in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean would complicate US defense planning in the event of hostilities elsewhere. Another, though less obvious, challenge is the potential loss of support for the US in international forums where the trade or security assistance relationship between an otherwise pro-Western government and the USSR might give the Soviets sufficient leverage to influence that government's votes.

To meet the challenge of Soviet activities in the hemisphere, the US will have to act with consistency to help our neighbors make democracy work. Our economic policy is aimed at encouraging free and open economic systems that will create sustained, equitable economic growth. The US encourages and supports efforts to seek peaceful solutions to the hemisphere's problems. At the same time, however, the US will help provide security against violent threats to liberty and stability in the region.

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The Nicaragua Debate

The decision by the government of the United States to send $100 million in aid to the Contras will inevitably increase the level of hostilities and the level of death and destruction in Nicaragua. It will also increase the level of protest against U.S. policy both in the United States and in other countries.

We have been concerned in recent months about the absence of a systematic presentation of both sides of the Nicaraguan issue. Generally, the liberal argument is aired in the liberal press, and the conservative argument is presented in the conservative magazines. What is missing is the kind of debate about Nicaragua that was fostered so systematically by the teach-ins of the early anti-Vietnam War movement.

It is our contention that when an understanding of the arguments made on the other side is absent, public discussion is reduced to sloganeering. More importantly, it is hard to change public opinion without addressing the considerations that have led people with opposing opinions to form their conclusions.

In the fall of 1986 Tikkun *brought together four of the most influential figures in the public debate about Nicaragua. Our purpose was to provide an opportunity for our readership to hear all sides of the debate in order to develop a more comprehensive and intelligent understanding of the issues.* **Robert Leiken**, *a Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has had his pro-Contra arguments cited by President Reagan. His book* The Central American Reader *will be published by Summit Books in 1987.* **William Leogrande**, *professor of political science at American University, served as a key consultant to Congressional Democrats who led the struggle against aid to the Contras.* **Aryeh Neier**, *a leading figure in the American civil liberties community, is a lawyer and is currently the Director of The Americas Watch, an organization that monitors human rights abuses throughout the hemisphere.* **Ronald Radosh**, *a severe critic of the Sandinistas, is a professor of history at the City University of New York and he is the author of* The Rosenberg File. *Major portions of the debate between these four men are presented below.*

The general topic set forward by Tikkun *was: What should the United States policy be in relationship to the government of Nicaragua and to the Contras, and how does that policy reflect on the general set of principles governing the role of the United States in international affairs?*

Aryeh Neier: The United States is a multi-dimensional power, and it has many things that it can do in the world in order to try to promote its interests. It can use military force, or engage proxies in the use of military force, as it has engaged in Nicaragua. It has tremendous diplomatic, economic, cultural and linguistic influence in the world, and it can bring all of those to bear in order to try to promote the policies that it considers to be desirable, or to try to promote the interests that it considers to be important. My own view is that the United States should resort to the use of military force or military force by proxy only as a last resort in extreme circumstances in which the United States is attacked, or its security is imminently and clearly in danger, or in circumstances when it is absolutely necessary to engage in reprisal for some grave abuse against the United States or against the citizens of the United States.

I can also imagine certain extreme circumstances in which it is appropriate for the United States to intervene militarily when governments are engaged in abuses of their own citizens. I recall George McGovern's suggestion that we should consider intervention in Cambodia at the time of Pol Pot. It seemed to me at that time that it was a proposal that was at least worth very serious consideration. Even under those circumstances, however, one had to be concerned as to whether or not one was going to make a bad situation worse. It was important to think about the desirability of not having big powers intervene in the affairs of small states. But in an extreme circumstance, such as what was going on in Cambodia in the late 70's, one could not dismiss the idea of military intervention.

Another circumstance in which it seems to me to be legitimate to intervene militarily is one in which a power is invading another country and engaging in gross abuses in another country. An example of that would be what is going on in Afghanistan today. It seems to me to be legitimate to aid the Afghan resistance militarily against the Soviet Union. I have difficulty in seeing any of the necessary elements in the Nicaraguan situation, however, which would warrant military intervention by the United States, either directly or by proxy.

I think that U.S. military intervention is primarily an effort to prove that if the Soviet Union can control its

part of the world by force, then the United States can control its part of the world by force, too. Because the Soviet Union intervened militarily in Afghanistan in 1979 and impelled the military crushing of Solidarity in 1981, the United States is determined to show that those countries within its sphere are going to be controlled in a somewhat analogous fashion. It seems to me that it is inappropriate for the United States to legitimize, or appear to legitimize, that kind of power over countries that they regard as within their sphere. I would rather that the United States engage in a more effective worldwide crusade against Soviet Union aggression in Afghanistan and Poland rather than ape the Soviet Union by intervening and sponsoring military intervention in Nicaragua.

Robert Leiken: I think it is absurd to regard the United States' actions in Nicaragua as aping the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Had that been the case, the United States would have sent 50,000 or 100,000 troops to Nicaragua at the time that the struggle against Somoza occurred. In fact, what happened is that the United States supported the opposition against Somoza.

I also do not accept the characterization of U.S. aid to the resistance in Nicaragua as proxy. True, there are elements of it that seem to indicate a dependent mentality, much as there is on the Sandinista side vis-à-vis the Cubans and the Soviets. In essence, however, the vast majority of combatants are fighting for national popular self-determination. I think it's up to those of us who want to see an independent Nicaragua to struggle against those people in the administration and in the Contras who want dependency, who do want to turn this into a proxy force. The resistance itself is the revolt of Nicaraguans against an oppressive regime.

Let me say that I agree, of course, with the view that we should not be throwing around our military power at the drop of a hat. I would not have proposed an intervention in Cambodia in 1977. We are facing a situation today in which, at the fringes of the Soviet empire, there are revolts. I think those revolts, in most, but not all cases, are just. I think they have popular support, and that we ought to aid those movements for self-determination, both for our own security interests and for human rights reasons. We should help support the creation and consolidation of independent regimes and support popular self-determination in general. The fact that a country exists in our backyard or the Soviets' backyard should not limit its right to self-determination.

In Nicaragua, if there is any hope for national reconciliation, it rests on military opposition to the Sandinista regime being a component of our policy. But I also think our policy should aim at bringing about a situation in which there will be negotiations. I don't see that happening without military aid to the Contras.

Ronald Radosh: I think we have to look first at the Sandinista revolution, its trajectory, and where it has arrived. Just as the abuses, horrors and tyranny of the Somoza years led to the revolution of 1979, the abuses and horrors of the commandantes led to what has to be seen as a civil war—not, as the Sandinistas claim, the U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. Now, I'm fully aware that in the beginning the Contra force was put together by the CIA, trained by the Argentinian junta, and so forth. But when you get a force of plus 15,000 that is continually growing, most of these people are not the Somoza guard, which may be involved in the leadership and origins of the Contras, but are essentially Nicaraguan peasants. This is a force that amounts to far more than the Sandinistas had fighting with them against Somoza, and these people are men willing to die for what they believe is a necessary cause.

The Sandinistas were not willing to have any serious political dialogue. They would not allow, even among themselves (in terms of the differences among the commandantes), meaningful elections where the people could choose different or alternative courses of action. What they pursued was a blatant move to control the whole society on the basis of their own private agenda, which was not made public to the Nicaraguan people before their revolution.

The cause of the civil war is not the design or aggression of the United States. The cause is the policy of the Sandinistas, which has polarized the society to such an extreme that it has created a broad-based insurgency made up of diverse elements of the population: peasants, devout Catholics, the Miskito Indians, and young draft evaders. They could have moved in a different direction and kept the country unified in a manner that was truly popular. Instead, what they have done is to create a new oppressive force and a civil war.

The way out of the impasse is the kind of political pressure that would force the Sandinistas to do what we hope will be done in El Salvador—that is, to force the government of El Salvador to engage in a serious, meaningful dialogue with the rebels. The Sandinista government of Nicaragua has to accept the fact (which they say is currently unthinkable and they will never do) that they must engage in a dialogue and discussion with the rebels fighting them. Despite the origins of this civil war, the rebels are a legitimate force.

I am not convinced that this means we should, however, be supporting the rebels; I'm deeply concerned that there has been no real meaningful, serious, deep purge of the Contra leadership, which is filled with Somicistas, people whose own plan for Nicaragua would bring it back to something akin to the old order.

The Contra war, in its own perverted way, gives the Sandinistas an excuse for repression and an external source of legitimacy.

A different kind of policy could be pursued that would put the maximum kind of economic/political/diplomatic pressure against the Sandinistas that might be as efficient and as satisfactory as support of the military effort funding the Contras. I think that this has to be given a serious try before we move into a policy of supporting the Contras. We're putting the cart before the horse.

Bill Leogrande: We've already heard an enormous amount of foolishness in this debate. The current policy of the United States is very simple: to overthrow the Sandinista government and to replace it, not with a non-aligned or independent regime, but with a government that would be compliant to the basic policy and interests of the United States in this hemisphere. The basic aim behind this policy is analogous to Afganistan. The Soviet Union went into Afghanistan as it went into Czechoslovakia, as it went into Hungary, as it was prepared to go into Poland if worse came to worst, in order to maintain regimes in its immediate periphery that were compliant to Soviet policy and Soviet interests. That's exactly the same reason the United States is trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. It's the reason we tried to overthrow the Cuban government before. It's the reason we overthrew the Brazilian government in 1964, and the Guatemalan government in 1954.

There's a long, long history of this kind of behavior, not just on the part of the United States or the Soviet Union, but on the part of great powers everywhere, and to pretend that somehow the policy towards Nicaragua is aimed at the establishment of democracy is just so much sophistry. Our Nicaraguan policy is a specific manifestation of a broader policy called the Reagan doctrine, which amounts to an effort to use military force to roll back the Soviet empire at its fringes. It is, in that sense, a very radical doctrine, a sharp departure from basic tenets of U.S. foreign policy since World War II, which were designed around a containment policy. The effect of this is to put the United States in the business of supporting proxy wars against Third World governments that we don't like.

In the Nicaraguan case, it seems to me that this policy is wrong and counterproductive. The idea that the Contras are not a proxy force seems to me to do violence to our notions of language. The idea that the Contras have somehow become a broad-based insurgency denies reality. I don't think you can believe that anybody, except perhaps the CIA people over in Langley, Virginia, knows whether there are 15,000, 5,000 or 25,000 Contras. The notion suggested by Mr. Radosh that this has become a broader based movement than the Sandinistas led, with more people involved, seems to me to be wrong. I don't know anybody, including Arturo Cruz, who would argue that the Sandinistas didn't come to power in 1979 at the head of a political movement which encompassed virtually every sector of Nicaraguan society. That is to say, the Sandinistas were indeed a revolutionary vanguard, in the sense of leading the struggle against Somoza. They were the ones who defeated the national guard. They had as much legitimacy to constitute a revolutionary government as the founding fathers of this country. Mr. Radosh's notion that the Sandinistas, through the abuse and horrors of the commandantes, have produced a civil war, seems to me to be silly business, as is the attempt to equate the Sandinistas' human rights records with those of Somoza, El Salvador or Guatemala. This notion that somehow, the Sandinistas have created this "totalitarian dungeon," as Ronald Reagan puts it, seems to me to fly in the face of the facts.

Why is our policy a nonsensical policy? There are two good sets of arguments to explain this. One set deals basically with legal issues. These say that the policy is a violation of our international obligations, that the administration, because of a lack of domestic support, has been forced to commit a series of violations of domestic law, and that the nature of the policy involves a repudiation of the most basic principles that are supposed to lie at the heart of what our government stands for: non-aggression and self-determination. Even beyond this moral argument, however, the policy is simply ineffective. The Contras have no chance of winning, and even if they did, there is very little likelihood that they would give us any better of a regime than the one that's in power today. Meanwhile, the pursuit of this policy raises the danger of wider war. It destabilizes civilian politics in surrounding countries and fuels the regional arms race. It has led to the increasing military presence of Cuba and the Soviet Union, which has accelerated over the course of the war enormously, and has led to a reduction of domestic political liberty and pluralism. There is no question in my mind that under the siege mentality that's come out of the war, there is a growing sense inside Nicaragua that many domestic opponents are a kind of fifth column in league with the Contras, and in point of fact, many of them *are* in league with the Contras. Many of them are quite open about their sympathy for the armed opposition to the Sandinistas, and even more so, about their hopes for a direct intervention by the United States.

Neier: I heard Mr. Leiken talking about security interests, but I did not hear what those security interests

might be. I can't see where there is some compelling need to act upon the basis of protecting the security of the United States. I also heard him talk about human rights interests, and yet I didn't hear what the basis is for advocating that the United States should intervene militarily on the grounds of human rights interests. What I did hear was that we should not have intervened in 1977 in Cambodia when one or two million people were slaughtered by the Khmer Rouge, and that the human rights situation in Nicaragua is so grave that we ought to intervene. I would point out, however, that while there have certainly been significant human rights abuses in Nicaragua, comparable abuses have been committed in most of the countries in the world. If intervention is justified by human rights concerns, then the legitimate question is, why don't we intervene militarily in all of those countries? Is there something about the Nicaraguan situation that hasn't been articulated yet by either Mr. Leiken or Mr. Radosh which makes it different from the many other places where governments create a broad-based opposition and where there are human rights abuses on the scale of human rights abuses that have prevailed in Nicaragua?

Leiken: Every human rights defender that I know of in Nicaragua—including those who led the opposition to Somoza, like the Permanent Human Rights Commission in Nicaragua—regards the human rights situation under the Sandinistas today as being far worse than that under Somoza. Now, when one says that, one is immediately charged with apologizing for or defending Somoza. I have no intention of doing that. I think that the revolution was a vast struggle against Somoza and a just one. But with respect to trading the right to strike and the right to organize, with respect to the activities of political parties and to the Church and its ability to carry out its religious duties, and with respect to the numbers of political prisoners, there is no question that the human rights situation in Nicaragua has deteriorated since the time of Somoza.

I've been asked what are my criteria for U.S. intervention. I assume that we are defining intervention here very broadly, since we are clearly not talking about a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua, but rather about assistance to a popular opposition movement. One criterion has to do with security. The Sandinistas, since their inception, have been tied to Cuba and the Soviet Union, both politically and ideologically, in terms of their training. One need only read the original document of the Sandinistas. It is the most artless apology for the Soviet Union one can find, and it was written by the founder of the organization as a textbook for the organization. We are not talking about a non-aligned socialist movement, we're talking about a pro-Soviet movement, which in the first year after its revolution identified its Soviet strategic affiliations. They signed party to party and state to state pacts with the Soviet Union in March of 1980. Within the first year they were in power, Cuban military advisors had occupied the chief advisory roles in their developing Sandinista army. Nicaragua is not any old non-aligned Third World country, but one whose leadership has, over the years, seen its vocation as affiliating with the Soviet Union strategically.

What does that mean for our security issues? Central America is made up of very economically and politically weak countries. Mexico is now going through a profound crisis, which is not just an economic crisis, but a political crisis. The consolidation of a pro-Soviet regime in Central America in that situation is clearly one that threatens our long-term security interests.

I would not support aid for the rebels in Nicaragua if that were the only criteria. My second criterion is human rights and the existence of a popular movement against the regime. It is true that the CIA and the Argentines took remnants of the national guard and incorporated spontaneous groups which were fighting against the Sandinistas. But I was in the camps in Honduras and talked to peasants as well as to what they call "regional commandante groups" (guerrilla leaders) about their origins, and I was surprised to realize that many of them belong to different groups. I was able to identify six or seven different groups that I hadn't even heard about, that had been fighting against the Sandinistas since 1980 or 1981, some of them from an extreme leftist position, and some of them from no particular ideological position at all. It is just a grotesque caricature of the Contras to regard this as a national guard-dominated movement. As this resistance has developed, local leaders have emerged. They're the ones who lead the troops. Of the 50 or 60 regional task force leaders, maybe a dozen at the most had any relationship with the national guard, and if they did, they were corporals, sergeants or lower level people who were drafted into the guard, or in a few cases, non-commissioned officers who had been there several years. But most, even of the mid-level leadership, were not guardist.

Radosh: I think that what Mr. Leogrande has done is to present a very typical, well-stated, and clever argument which pretends to be an analysis of U.S. foreign policy, but really becomes a defense of the Sandinistas. I find it quite insidious. For example, Mr. Leogrande would have the Sandinista policy essentially be a response to the U.S. I think that if you begin to look at the evidence from before the revolution and immediately thereafter, it's quite clear that this really isn't

the case. There is what the *New York Times* called in an editorial, "the Nicaraguan march toward Stalinism" which comes not from the U.S. pressure which pushes the Sandinistas, but from their own program, their own agency, their own ideology. The evidence is clear that essentially from the minute they took power, they wanted as much power for themselves and used, as one observer said, laws, lawlessness, and violence to gain their ends, and were particularly concerned with crushing all political opposition. In effect, when Mr. Leogrande calls all domestic patriotic opposition to the Sandinistas essentially pro-Contra, he does exactly what the Sandinistas do: He discredits all internal opposition to the Sandinistas, whether Contra or not.

Let me read you one part of what Nicaragua is like. This is a quote that I am sure Mr. Leogrande is familiar with, but I don't know if the readers of *Tikkun* are familiar with it. It's from a Nicaraguan patriot, an opponent of the Sandinistas, who said this before the Nicaraguan election: "We don't want a country where there's no free press, where our leaders travel surrounded by bodyguards, where power is abused. We don't want a country where young people don't dare go to the movies, because they are afraid of being abducted for military service. The Sandinistas seek enemies under everyone's bed, and they respond to all situations with the mentality of a military or the police. They have assumed the right to control anyone who does anything else, behaving frequently in a very arbitrary manner. This arrogance and abuse of all classes, it is hard to classify this as revolutionary conduct, and the people are very much aware of it." And of course, as you are aware, that is not said by any of the editors of *La Prensa* or the former *La Prensa*, since it no longer exists, or by Monsignor Archbishop Obando y Bravo, or by any Contra leader. It was, of course, said by Domingo Sanchez Salgado, the presidential candidate of the old-line Nicaraguan Marxist-Leninist Communist party, the so-called Nicaraguan Socialist Party.

Now, when you get a coalition in Nicaragua from conservatives in the business community to communists like Salgado who know quite clearly what the Sandinistas are doing in their own country, you have an indication of the roots of what I call a broad-based opposition. And I think that to blame this on the United States, rather than on the program, agenda and orientation of the Sandinistas, is an illusion.

Mr. Neier raised issues about the Contras and their support. I would rather turn the tables on Mr. Neier and ask him if he would be willing to go along with Michael Walzer, for example, who opposes the Contras but says quite clearly that insofar as we can, we should make things hard for the Sandinistas politically or economically? They certainly should not expect the Americans to bail them out.

I would respect somebody who says, "I am opposed to the Contras for scores of reasons, but can't we at least be clear that American citizens, not to speak of the government, must stand firmly for the self-determination of peoples, express our solidarity with the anti-Sandinista forces, and make it clear that the Sandinistas are not our friends." What I think Mr. Leogrande is really doing is not arguing against American policy, but arguing in favor of the Sandinistas and trying to get us to support a pro-Sandinista policy, and I think that's wrong. I have no compunction about saying that we should be opposed to the Sandinistas, as people who believe in democracy and self-determination, just as we should be opposed to the Salvadoran military, or the old Guatemalan one.

Leogrande: Let me try to get some of the red paint that you've tried to tar me with off my jacket. You basically try to frame the issue in terms of whether the Sandinistas are good guys or not, instead of whether the policy of the United States is right or makes any sense. In fact, it seems to me that the issues of the nature of the Sandinista regime and the nature of U.S. policy are obviously not totally unconnected with one another. As Mr. Neier said at the beginning, under certain conditions, if a regime were odious enough, then various kinds of interventions, direct or indirect, might be legitimate. The Reagan administration has worked very hard to try to demonize the Sandinistas so as to convince people that, yes, indeed, they are so much the epitome of evil that the threshold justifying intervention has been crossed.

I think that this is simply wrong. The administration has lied and distorted the facts, and presented the Sandinistas as the worst regime in the history of the region, when in fact, our policy has supported regimes much, much worse than the Sandinistas. I don't have the slightest doubt that if the Contras were to win tomorrow, the Contra regime would look a lot more like Pinochet than it would look like Corey Aquino.

The idea that the Sandinista's human rights record is without question worse than Somoza's is very difficult to respond to. I'm not sure what you say to someone who looks at the sky and says, "It's green," when everyone knows it's blue. I don't know anyone who studies Nicaragua in a serious way or has spent any time there who would come to this conclusion about human rights in Nicaragua. I don't know any international human rights organization that has come to this conclusion. I don't see how you can look at Somoza's behavior, the summary executions of opponents en masse, for example, and call the Sandinistas' human rights record worse than that.

With regard to the issue of U.S. security, it is certainly true that the Sandinistas have an ideological inclination toward Cuba and the Soviets. But how does that threaten our long-term security? Do we really believe that the future stability of Mexico depends upon the nature of the regime in Nicaragua rather than what Mexico does and how we ourselves respond to Mexico's current difficulties? It's the domino theory, dressed up in 1980's fashions, but it's still the domino theory.

With regard to the notion that the Contras now represent a popular movement, this seems to me to be the same type of argument as the notion that human rights abuses in Nicaragua are worse now than they used to be. It is essentially the same self-delusion that the United States had at the Bay of Pigs. We were convinced that if we would put 1500 men ashore, then the vast majority of Cubans—who actually hated Castro—would rise up and throw him back into the sea. We were wrong in Cuba in 1961. We are wrong today in Nicaragua.

The notion that the national guard does not dominate the Contra movement, that of the top 50 or so military leaders, only 12 had relations with the national guard, is a false notion. A recent look at the biographies of 47 or so of the top commanders of the Contras found that no less that 45 of them had national guard careers in their background. The idea that somehow these folks really are just honest, democratic Nicaraguans looking for self-determination seems to me to be a pipe dream.

The Sandinista trajectory has not been the kind of monolithic irrepressible march toward Marxist-Leninism that people have tried to characterize it as being. I think that whether one looks at the Sandinistas' relationship with the United States or their relationship with the Soviet Union, or their relationship with their own domestic opposition, the trajectory is, as one would logically expect, a complex interplay of their ideological agenda and the actual political realities which they face. It is neither the one in total nor the other.

Neier: First of all let me say that when one discusses the governments and the human rights records, I don't think it's very useful to try to replay history and say if it weren't for so-and-so it would have been X. I don't know that it's useful to say that even if there had been no Contra war, the Sandinistas would have been as repressive as they are; or on the other hand, to say that if there had been no Contra war, they would have been much less repressive. I think we have to confront what we have and a theory that we can deal with.

What we have is a government in the context of a guerrilla war which is a severe threat to that government, made more severe by the prospect that the United States will try to see that it is carried to its conclusion, that it will overthrow the current Nicaraguan government. Certainly the Sandinistas can't be blamed if they think there's a significant possibility that they could be overthrown by the war that is now underway.

I think it's important to look at the way governments behave when faced with such challenges. There have been four other guerrilla wars underway in Latin America during the period that the Contra war has been underway in Nicaragua: the Salvadoran war, the war which is tapering off or ending in Guatemala, the war in Colombia, and the war in Peru. In each of the other four guerrilla wars that has been underway in Latin America, there have been thousands of political opponents of the government, and presumed peasant supporters of the political opponents of the governments, who have been killed by government forces. Of those other guerrilla wars, only the Salvadoran war posed a comparable or greater threat to the survival of that government. The Colombian war which is reaching its most intense phase right now, the Peruvian war which has been intense for some time, the Guatemalan war which was at its most intense from 1980 to 1982, never had a reasonable prospect of overthrowing the governments against which those guerilla forces fought.

The Sandinistas have been repressive as far as dissenters are concerned. I think they committed their greatest abuses against the Miskitos in late 1981 and during 1982 when they killed a significant number of Miskitos and forcibly relocated thousands in a highly abusive manner. But the Nicaraguan government's practices, obnoxious and abusive as they have been, do not fall into the category of the murder of thousands that has gone on in Colombia and Peru, and the murder of tens of thousands which has gone on in El Salvador and Guatemala.

When one deals with such questions as freedom of the press, I think it's worth noting that in the Salvadoran context, one newspaper's editor and photographer were hacked to death and another newspaper was closed after several assassination attempts were made against the editor and army troops surrounded the building of the newspaper. In the Guatemalan context, the Committee to Protect Journalists just published a list of journalists killed around the world, and over the last decade Guatemala ranks second only to Argentina in that period, with some 49 journalists who were murdered, and except for the possibility that one of them was murdered by guerrilla forces, all of the others were murdered by government forces in Guatemala. Even in the context of Peru and Colombia, journalists have hardly been immune.

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To answer Mr. Radosh's question, if it were not for the war context, would I be endorsing a variety of measures against the Sandinistas on the basis of their human rights record, the answer is, "of course." I believe that the mechanisms that are available to the United States to exercise pressure on governments that commit human rights abuses should be used against the Sandinistas. I have, for example, been highly critical of the Reagan administration for not opposing loans, in the multi-lateral development banks, to a variety of governments that have committed serious human rights abuses. U.S. law requires that the U.S. should oppose loans to those governments.

As far as the human rights record is concerned, I think it's very important to criticize the abuses committed by the Sandinistas, but we must not criticize abuses that have in fact not taken place. I have seen, for example, figures on the numbers of political prisoners and these figures are utterly absurd to anybody who has examined the situation in Nicaragua with any care. There *are* political prisoners in Nicaragua, there *are* severe abuses in the pre-trial detention mode of those persons who are imprisoned on political grounds, but let's deal with reality rather than fantasy.

Leiken: I think that what we just heard was an example of the way in which The Americas Watch has confused the question of human rights with their political stance and the way in which they are constantly shifting the two around. In the guise of an objective account of the human rights situation in Nicaragua, Mr. Neier shifts the subject to Colombia, Guatemala, and Peru, to other countries that have guerrilla wars. He approaches the human rights question in Nicaragua entirely in terms of Nicaragua's external security problems. But human rights violations are not the result of the war. In some cases, as in Nicaragua, they are the cause of the war.

The promise of the Sandinistas was that the revolution would be an alternative, it was going to be a whole new kind of society. To justify it now in terms of its being similar to, or not quite as bad as Colombia, or Guatemala, is abusive sophistry. I think the thrust of Mr. Neier's remarks is that we shouldn't be concerned about the banning of *La Prensa* since this sort of thing is a common Latin American practice. I think again, you are putting a human rights organization in the service of human rights practices which you should be criticizing, which you should be opposing, which you should not be finding ever more sophisticated ways to make appear less serious or finding ways to shift the subject from.

Radosh: Mr. Leogrande said that the U.S. was wrong about the Bay of Pigs and it is wrong now about Nicaragua. Well, I would say that we—not we the U.S. government, but we the American Left—were wrong about Cuba. I can remember using all the arguments about Cuba that Mr. Neier or Mr. Leogrande use today about Nicaragua. For example, we thought that Castro wanted a humanist revolution, neither capitalist nor communist—a non-aligned Cuba, a Cuba that was not Marxist-Leninist, but that was free, a different society. Castro, of course, as it turns out, says he was always a Marxist-Leninist. He was just hiding his agenda until the time was ripe. What we have now is a Cuba that is a militarized society, a vicious police state, a repressive society. Even Mr. Neier agrees in characterizing it this way, if I read his recent piece in the *New York Review* correctly. He characterizes Cuba as a country with one of the worst human rights records in the hemisphere, a left wing equivalent to the authoritarian right wing regimes, perhaps as terrible in its treatment of political prisoners.

Cuba did not turn out to be the way we all swore it was then, and of course we all argue that Cuba's drift toward the Soviet Union was the result of the U.S. pressure instituted against it. Well, we begin to read, on the basis of records now coming out years later, and on the revelations of people like Carlos Frangui, that that was not the case. In fact, it was a bitter internal struggle which we were totally blind to, a struggle between the liberating revolutionaries like Frangui and the hard-line Marxist-Leninists led by Fidel and Raul Castro and Che Guevara. What they instituted in Cuba was a rigid Soviet-style state with a unique Cuban background, which of course the American Left has always said really made it different, but in fact it was not different. How much better would it have been, if, instead of fighting only against the U.S. policy in Cuba, we at the time had seen the true situation, and extended our hand to the democrats who opposed Fidel Castro. Batista was better. It was a freer country under Batista than it is under Castro. As horrible as the supposed Batista tyranny was for years, despite the fact that Batista was a tool of the U.S. and the U.S. had hegemony and control in Cuba, all of which is true, and despite Cuba being part of an informal American empire, things were better for Cubans under Batista than they are under Castro. I don't care how many schools and hospitals Castro has built. As somebody said the other day, Pinochet is sending out propaganda about all the schools and hospitals he's built, too, in Chile. That cannot be a criteria for deciding whether a society is good or not.

Mr. Neier is correct in saying that we don't go to war simply because a country has a bad human rights record, that there are scores of countries with terrible human rights records.

Indeed, I have always opposed the brutal human rights records of the right wing authoritarian regimes, many of them supported by the United States.

I think one of the reasons the situation in El Salvador has grown slightly better is because Democrats or opponents of the U.S. policy were able to mount sufficient pressure, and Congress said no funding unless the human rights situation improves. The administration clearly wanted to ignore the human rights situation. But now when it comes to Nicaragua, I am quite disturbed by what I see as a counter tendency. I think, and I am not clear whether it's conscious or not, that people like Mr. Neier are doing exactly the same thing in reverse, that is to say there is a tendency to whitewash and downgrade the extent of human rights abuses in Nicaragua, to "prettify" them.

Leogrande: I want the transcriber to be sure to get Mr. Radosh's quote "the supposed Batista tyranny"—the supposed tyranny of Batista and that things were much better under Batista than they had been under Castro. The 20,000 people that Batista killed between 1952 and 1959 might think differently about that. Mr. Radosh said that schools and hospitals are not criteria for deciding whether or not you have a good society. I suppose perhaps not, if you have the money to use private ones, but if you don't, it seems to me that schools and hospitals were an improvement over not having schools and hospitals. It may not be the only criterion of a good society, but it certainly is what I count as one criterion for improvement in a society.

But the issue of Cuba actually is more interesting even than those little short snipes. Radosh says we should have helped the democrats in Cuba. But the question is how. The United States government did everything they could to get rid of Castro except to send in the 82nd airborne to kill him. They poisoned his cigar, tried to get the Mafia to try to assassinate him, and sent our forces to the Bay of Pigs. We conducted a covert war against him for close to ten years, all to no avail. And the reason it was to no avail was because even though he was a communist, even though he jumped into bed with the Soviet Union, the Cuban people still supported him. Now that might seem odd to us, we might find that hard to understand, especially if we didn't know anything about U.S.-Cuban history. But it's a reality, and I don't know of anyone who doubts that in reality, in 1961 and 1962 and on throughout the 1960's, a majority of Cubans supported their government, especially supported it in its confrontations with the United States. And I submit to you that we are setting in motion, or have already set in motion, exactly the same sort of dynamic in Nicaragua. Our policy toward Nicaragua today is not and cannot be free of the legacy of our historical relationship with that society, which is one of imperialism. In 1909 we overthrew the only quasi-independent government that Nicaragua had. We were identified as the enemy by the George Washington of Nicaragua, Augusto Sandino. We're the ones who put in power and kept in power the last dictator, Somoza. However our policy may have changed in the last ten years, or not changed, we cannot pretend that that part of our history doesn't exist, because Nicaraguans know that prior history.

We are, in fact, continuing a long, long history and legacy of trying to control the domestic politics of Nicaragua. I would suggest that we ought to have a great amount of humility about our capacity to export democracy around the Caribbean Basin. The interventions earlier in the century were aimed at securing security and economic interests, but the Marines went abroad under the cloak and banner of democracy. This was not necessarily a hypocritical move; we really thought that we were going to bring democracy to these unstable, authoritarian little countries. We built schools, we built hospitals, we held free elections, we created professional military establishments. And then we left. And in our wake we left the dictatorships of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Papa Doc Duvalier in Haiti, Batista in Cuba, Somoza in Nicaragua. So it seems to me that we ought to be humble about thinking that we know better than other people how they should organize their own lives and politics.

Tikkun: There is one issue that I want to throw before you that hasn't yet been addressed, and that is about anti-Semitism in Nicaragua. What's the truth of it, and is it relevant to this policy discussion? Is it irrelevant that the Nicaraguan government is alleged to be close to and support the PLO? Should that be something that a Jewish community in the United States takes into account when determining its relationship to the Nicaraguan revolution?

Leogrande: It is relevant as one issue in a range of human rights issues, and obviously a very important one given the history of anti-Semitism in this century. The relationship between the Sandinistas and the PLO goes back a very long time to the very early years of the Sandinistas when the PLO allowed them to send combatants to training camps in the Middle East for military training. One gets the sense that the Sandinistas' closeness to the PLO and their hostility toward Israel is partly a function of their general ideological stance, which is one of solidarity with the Third World revolutionary movements, of which they regard the PLO as one, and partly a function of the unique relationship that the Somoza regime had with Israel. Somoza was

one of the promoters of the establishment of the state of Israel, and had quite good and reasonably close relations with Israel during the 50's and 60's. The Israelis in 1977, of course, became a major arms supplier to Somoza when the United States cut back its military assistance to the regime. So I think that there are two elements at work here: there's the ideological element on the one hand, and the-friend-of-my-enemy-is-my-enemy element on the other.

Tikkun: The Jewish people of the United States might take the same reasoning and say, "a-friend-of-my-enemy-is-my-enemy." Or should they? In other words, if that's a reasonable position for Nicaragua to take, is it a reasonable position for Jews to take?

Leogrande: I think it depends concretely on what the Sandinista government does in its relationship with the PLO. If it were to become active directly in the Middle East, then I think that that becomes a much greater concern. But it seems to me at this point that that's a relatively small aspect of Nicaraguan foreign policy.

Neier: Most of the things which involve the alleged anti-Semitic acts by the Sandinistas took place prior to the time that The Americas Watch started monitoring Nicaragua. We sent our first mission there in March of 1982. The episode involving the burning of the doors of the synagogue took place in 1978 when Somoza was still in power and the Sandinistas were a revolutionary force. Some allege that it was the Sandinistas who did it; there isn't any way that we can look into that and make any useful determination. There are also the allegations involving the actions against various prominent Jews in Nicaragua shortly after the triumph of the Sandinistas; again, we haven't looked into that. Our monitoring starts at a later period. The things that one is aware of in the later period are some anti-Semitic expressions, particularly in *El Nuevo Diario*, the newspaper that certainly takes the same line as the party. Obviously those are obnoxious. So is the anti-Semitic sermon that was given by Archbishop, now Cardinal, Elondo. Elondo is the foremost anti-Sandinista, and he gave a sermon in 1984, which was reprinted in *La Prensa* that sounded like an older variety of anti-Semitism, not the sort of racial anti-Semitism that we've known for the last century, but the traditional Christian anti-Semitism of an earlier period. The anti-Semitic stuff in *El Nuevo Diario* is somewhat similar to the sort of thing that we get from those who derive an anti-Semitism out of PLO support or whatever.

Radosh: I think one thing all the Nicaraguan elements might be united on is anti-Semitism. Connor Cruise O'Brien in *The Atlantic Monthly* cites Sandinista Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto as saying something to the effect that the Jews killed Christ. So there does seem to be in all elements of Nicaraguan society a pervasive anti-Semitism. I would say that it seems that a great many Nicaraguans from all sides are anti-Semitic—the problem is that the Sandinistas are in power, and this is compounded by the PLO tie. Again, we have the Castro analogy. Castro, for a while, always used to compare Cuba and Israel as small, beleaguered powers pushed in and forced on themselves because of neighboring hostile states. Then, when he tried to get the leadership of the non-aligned Third World movements, he quickly shifted his position without anyone being aware that he had broken ties with Israel. This led to the famous U.N. "Zionism is Racism" speech, and he tried to gain leadership in the Third World by attacking Israel, which is disgusting. The tie with the PLO is a dangerous one and not to be downgraded, but to be looked at very closely. It's something to definitely be concerned with and not underestimated. Again, one cannot excuse it by pointing to what we would consider a backwards or reactionary Israeli policy of arming Third World dictators. There are peace movements in Israel who oppose this kind of thing. The Peace Now forces, for example, are saying to the Israeli government that Israel should change its foreign policy and they don't try to excuse Israel's bad foreign policy by using the political and military diplomatic alliances of other countries like the Sandinistas' Nicaragua with the PLO.

Tikkun: Shifting back to U.S. policy in Nicaragua, there's a set of points that I'd like to ask all of you to address. Although there are human rights violations in Nicaragua, the level of abuse is not sufficient to distinguish it from dozens of other abusive regimes in the world. If American policy is to be determined by an effort to stop human rights abuses, Nicaragua would not reasonably be the first choice of intervention. Consequently, it seems surprising that Nicaragua is a major point of our intervention. Further, the U.S. does not even attempt to overthrow oppressive regimes that are overtly antagonistic to the U.S. One might, for example, think of Syria as a human rights abuser that is clearly aligned with the Soviet Union, one which is against us and our interests. So what we have here is something that has to be understood in terms of a global United States policy. It is a reversal from a policy of containment to an aggressive rollback policy on the part of the United States. The same government that's pushing this rollback in Nicaragua is also talking about trying to do the same thing in Angola. It seems that what we have in Nicaragua is really the first step in what would be a

real change in the direction of American foreign policy, a new move to try to roll the Soviet Union back onto the periphery. Some of the policy-makers fantasize that eventually they'll overthrow Soviet regimes in Eastern Europe. Is there any plausibility in looking at what the United States is doing in Central America in terms of rolling back communism?

Neier: I would think much better of the United States policy in Nicaragua if I thought it were a useful way of rolling back Communist tyranny. I don't have any doubts that it is desirable in the world to roll back Communist tyranny. I think that probably the largest number of sufferers—not probably, definitely—of tyranny in the world are those suffering from Communist tyranny. Communist tyranny has proven to be particularly difficult to deal with, and if I thought that what the U.S. was doing in Nicaragua served that purpose, I still might not favor exactly what the U.S. is doing in Nicaragua, but I would certainly be inclined to think more kindly of it. In fact, I think the United States is not prepared to challenge Communist tyranny in places that it has largely ceded to the Soviet Union. My guess is that if you look at all of this in the largest geopolitical and historical terms, the administration is exacerbating the problem of Communist tyranny, specifically Soviet tyranny. I think that the posture of the Soviet Union in response to a rollback policy would be all the more to deny efforts being made to create alternative societies within parts of the Soviet empire. One of the great struggles in the world today is the struggle of those movements within the Soviet empire to create independent existences, alternative cultures. One of the foremost duties of anybody who is committed to human rights is to assist in that effort and not to do the things which geopolitically will help to make it more difficult for those movements.

Tikkun: So what you're saying is that you think that Solidarity or other movements in Eastern Europe might be weakened by the United States' intervention in Nicaragua?

Neier: I can remember traveling around Europe when Martial Law had been declared in Poland and the U.S. was broadcasting the "Let Poland Be Poland" film. Everywhere I went in Europe I saw posters saying "Let Central America Be Central America." I think it's urgent that the world as a whole perceives the difference between the United States and the Soviet Union, and that the world opposes the kinds of things that the Soviet Union does to crush independent and alternative movements. That's the largest geopolitical question.

The other question, which I don't think one can evade, is that the means by which the United States is attempting to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, if it is presumably a means that is motivated by a concern for human rights, makes the human rights situation worse. That is, the forces we are sponsoring have selectively targeted Sandinista supporters and murdered them; they have also engaged in indiscriminate attacks against civilians. I don't believe one can be said to be promoting human rights if one sponsors forces that engage in those kinds of attacks on civilians.

Radosh: To return to an earlier issue for a moment, I would like to argue against aid to Jonas Savimbi in Angola. Indeed, very responsible Republican conservatives have produced extremely cogent arguments against aid to Savimbi, emphasizing the shortsightedness of U.S. policy. But I think that you can take a different position on Nicaragua even if you don't support the so-called Reagan policy.

I don't analyze the situation in Nicaragua in terms of the Reagan doctrine. As a historian looking back, I think a more apt analogy could be made to the Truman doctrine. The American Left, including myself, always opposed the Truman doctrine. For example, we opposed aid to Greece and Turkey in World War II when the pro-Communist side lost. I'm aware that the Greek monarchy was, as we used to say, an "unpopular monarchy," representing a minority of the people, and the Communist side had strong support, and it was a civil war. In retrospect, I'd say the Truman doctrine was correct. Thank God the Communist side lost in Greece. We would have another pro-Communist, Stalinist regime, the equivalent of those in Eastern Europe, if the Greek Communists had won. It would have been a disaster. Surely Greece had to go through the periods of right wing reaction, the general's coup supported by the United States, but what was the outcome? A democracy in Greece led by the Greek Left. You wouldn't have had that kind of a development if the side I supported in 1948 and on through the 1950's had won. I'm glad they lost. I think, in retrospect, the Truman doctrine was correct, and, therefore, I think that something like the Truman doctrine today would be much more sensible than a Reagan doctrine. Now, as we look in Nicaragua, I cannot at this point support the Contras for many of the reasons Mr. Neier states. However, I'm again deeply saddened that someone like Mr. Leogrande or someone from the American Left cannot get themselves to say *anything* critical on the smallest level of the Nicaraguan government. You have a reprehensible state of emergency, a farcical legal system, a farcical election, you have people convicted for political crimes. If you oppose the Contras, you have a responsibility to tell the commandante, "Stop confusing dissent with

counterrevolution," to oppose their repressive measures, and to say, as someone concerned with self-determination and the right of peoples, "We must oppose the policy of the Nicaraguan government as being essentially anti-humane, reactionary and repressive."

I think Mr. Leogrande would say, "Aid the Sandinistas, welcome them into the family, and let them have their breathing space for the revolution." He thinks everything would get better because their agenda is basically a good one. That's where the real disagreement lies. I think their agenda is Marxist-Leninist, and that if we stop all kinds of pressure against them, they'd move in one fell swoop to implement a Cuban-style state.

Tikkun: Assuming you're right about their agenda, doesn't the United States have friendly relations with countries like China that do have that kind of agenda?

Radosh: The situation in China, judging from the recent works written by outside observers, has changed considerably for the better towards democracy as a result of the economic changes and the loosening-up.

Leiken: We cannot approach this question of Nicaragua by comparing the human rights violations that are committed there with those committed in other countries, or by comparing Nicaragua with countries that are more opposed to the United States. We have to see that in Nicaragua the human rights abuses are systematic in nature. It is very important to the Sandinistas' political survival that their human rights violations be invisible to outsiders and that they be quite systematic about eliminating their opposition. It's a much more scientific practice of human rights violation, and that's what makes the Soviet Union and the Soviet empire a much more dangerous human rights violator on the international scale; it is systematic and much harder to expose. We're also talking about the creation of a system, of a kind of rule in Nicaragua, which I would distinguish from China, in that China is not part of the Soviet empire and, therefore, does not constitute a security threat to us, or to other independent countries.

Tikkun: But does Nicaragua actually present a plausible security threat to the United States? Are the Nicaraguans really going to come charging up through Texas and overthrow the most powerful government in the history of the world?

Leiken: This is why I've emphasized since the beginning the Nicaraguan strategic connection with the Soviet Union. Nicaraguans have developed a political relationship with the Soviet Union, and Soviet advisors have been involved since very early on in the regime. Thousands of Cubans were involved in both civilian and military security tasks; Soviet arms were coming in as early as 1980. It's the ideological connection reinforced by the concrete physical strategic connection with the Soviet Union that poses a threat.

Tikkun: Is the idea that Soviet troops would eventually land in Nicaragua and be that much closer to the United States?

Leiken: I don't think so. There are a number of ways that the Sandinistas could use to become a strategic threat, and some of them have already been deployed. One is terrorism—the Sandinistas right now, for example, are (and were in the past) able to blackmail the Costa Ricans by either threatening to, or actually going ahead and sponsoring terrorist acts and bombings. In San Jose right now the new Costa Rican government is attempting to carry out the promise of an economic recovery that it made in the election. It is very easy for the Sandinistas to discourage investments and to make Costa Rica look like an unstable place through blackmailing and putting pressure on the regime. The Sandinistas have sent two forces on two different occasions into Honduras. They were defeated, but the attempt was there. They have sent support to the Salvadoran rebels. Finally, I think they would build a large military machine. If they were to dominate Central America by a variety of means, by creating movements in those countries which were not just revolutionary but pro-Soviet, you could have a United Soviet Socialist Republic of Central America. Don't laugh, because the Sandinistas' documents in the 1960's and 1970's talked about that as one of their slogans. If you had that on the Mexican border, coupled with an unraveling political and economic situation in Mexico in which leftist opposition would develop, that opposition coming from the Left, through Cuban and Nicaraguan and Soviet indirect support, would become linked with the Soviet Union. I don't understand why people have such a hard time with this. I'm not saying there's going to be a conspiracy to unravel, to destabilize, but the Soviets fish in troubled waters.

Tikkun: Assume that everything you say is true. Why wouldn't it be a better use of U.S. resources—our financial and leadership resources—to go into Central America and get rid of these troubled waters by providing economic stability to a sufficient degree so that the guerrillas couldn't fish there anymore? Instead of allowing repressive or oppressive regimes, or extremes of poverty, we could get rid of poverty before we had to engage in military struggles.

Leiken: This wouldn't work for two reasons. First of all, I think we should give economic support to those countries, but I think it would be an illusion to think that economic support would be sufficient, particularly on the levels that will be given by a Congress concerned with Gramm-Rudman and the deep economic recession that our country is facing. Secondly, I don't think that even larger levels of support could turn those countries; they're not going to become stable in the near future.

The Soviet empire, particularly in the Third World, is experiencing a crisis—for the same reasons that the U.S., French, and British empires went through a crisis—because these countries basically want to be independent. This is a moment in which the Soviet empire is weakening, and he who thinks that it will weaken through a policy of economic aid or simply by encouraging peaceful dissent just doesn't understand the nature of the Soviet mood. Just as with the Sandinistas, force is necessary to make the Soviets move; and just as the Sandinistas were correct in assuming that only armed struggle would get rid of Somoza, only armed struggle will weaken the Soviet empire and bring about what Mr. Neier says he supports—rolling back the Soviets.

Leogrande: Mr. Radosh wants to know why I can't find anything nasty to say about the Sandinistas. First of all, I have talked about the reduction of liberty in Nicaragua during the last few years. I agree, for the sake of the record, with much of the characterization of the human rights situation that Mr. Neier has put forward. As for the farcical elections, however, I'd point out that the Sandinistas got 67% of the vote in an election which was more open than the election in El Salvador or Guatemala, and more honest than the election in Mexico. Which is not to say it was a perfect election, by any means, but it was hardly the kind of Soviet-style election that the Sandinistas' enemies have tried to characterize it as.

I'd feel a lot more comfortable criticizing the Sandinistas for their human rights practices if my own country wasn't engaged in a war, an illegal war, of aggression against the Sandinistas. It seems to me that my first responsibility as a citizen is to look after my own house. This notion that the Sandinistas would behave better internally, be more open, more pluralistic, if we would just pressure them a little more—well, it is hard to imagine the scenario whereby a government that has ideological proclivities which are anti-democratic in some way, will under pressure become more open when we have a long historical record of regimes with staunch democratic records and traditions becoming less democratic under that kind of external pressure. So the logic of this case escapes me, and unless we can be shown some plausible way in which this will work, it seems to me we have a right to be skeptical about it.

We also have about four or five years worth of Contra war in which the human rights situation and political liberty have gotten worse. So we have a certain historical record to work with which shows that the situation has in fact not been remedied by the war.

The bigger question I want to address, though, is why do we hate the Sandinistas so much? Why is the United States and the people who support the Reagan administration, and even those like Mr. Radosh who don't really support the administration's policy, why do we hate the Sandinistas so much? One of the arguments that has been put forward is that the Sandinistas have such a terrible human rights record. I think that position has been thoroughly demolished, and I don't think anybody would claim that that's the principle reason for wanting to get rid of the Sandinista government, because demonstrably we don't go after regimes with much more grotesque human rights records and try and overthrow them. If we were really in favor of overthrowing governments that are gross abusers of human rights, we'd have been fighting against the South Africans a long time ago. No, I think Mr. Radosh has given us the key to it in his two phrases regarding Batista's "supposed tyranny" and "China's democracy." The real definition of democracy in all of this is a country that sides with the United States in the Cold War. That's what really counts, that's what we're really looking for. And I submit to you that this is nothing new, it is a notion of "The Free World," of "our side" versus "their side"; and there's no such thing as a non-aligned neutral, there are only people who stand with us, and people who stand in the "new scientific system of repression of the Soviet Union," which is just another way of saying that there are totalitarians who are the bad guys, versus authoritarians, who are our guys and eventually will become democracies. They're "incipient" or "latent" democracies, a sort of interesting political teleology which we don't need to go into.

Is it the security threat, then? Mr. Leiken gives us a long list of things, but at the core is this notion of the Sandinistas being tied to the Soviet Union. That doesn't seem to me to be enough, however. You have to ask what it is that they might actually or plausibly do that would pose a threat to the United States. We're told that they may blackmail the Costa Ricans; they haven't got anything on us, in terms of blackmailing the Costa Ricans over the last few years—nobody's blackmailed Costa Rica more than the United States. We haven't used the threat of terrorism, we've used the threat of withholding economic assistance.

"They'll subvert their neighbors, they'll create a large

military machine, they'll come to dominate Central America with pro-Soviet regimes, and then they'll go after Mexico." I'm reminded of the argument made in the 1960's that after South Vietnam, then all of Indochina, then Thailand and India, and soon we'd be fighting on the shores of Australia. It's just not plausible; it didn't work out that way. The security threat the Sandinistas pose is not a plausible threat. If they were actively attacking their neighbors, the United States would be down on top of them with a ton of bricks, and they know it very well. If they were to allow Soviet troops or Soviet missiles or anything that could pose a really direct threat to the security of the United States, similarly, the United States would be down on them in a second. The idea that they might interdict the sea lanes and disrupt oil shipments and so-on is a lot of foolishness. It simply is not a credible argument. The only version of that argument that has the slightest credibility is this notion of interdicting supplies to Europe in the event of a conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and even that is a highly improbable scenario which can be prepared for, it seems to me, in other ways than trying to fight counterrevolutionary wars all through Central America.

The reality is that the Sandinistas don't, in fact, pose a very grave threat to the security of the United States, and what's even more important than that, what security threat they do pose, what legitimate security interests the United States does have in the region, can in fact be met short of getting rid of the Sandinista regime. It seems to me the one thing that has become clear in the long and agonizing history of the Contadora process is that if the issue is really Nicaragua's foreign policy, if it is really Nicaragua's relationship with Cuba and the Soviet Union that is so disconcerting to the United States, then that issue can be solved by Contadoran agreement. So it's not really the security issue either that's at the heart of this. It's not about human rights, it's not about democracy, it's not about security, and it's not even really about the Soviet Union. What it's about is colonial empire. It's about the right of the United States, which it arrogates to itself, to control the destiny of countries in its own immediate backyard. It's a kind of great power arrogance that goes back to the turn of the century; it has been clothed in a new anti-Communist garb in the post World War II period, but the basic outlines of it have not changed since the turn of the century. It is the rawest kind of great power politics and promotion of a particular notion of self-interest and I think it is an erroneous notion of self-interest. □

LETTERS

Continued from page 5

stuck in that place. And until we move beyond, there is no way that we can wholeheartedly love God. This is not a matter of philosophy or religion, if these terms refer to something one practices in one's head or at special times. It is a matter of life and death, everyday life and everyday death.

As for my phrase "a lesser god": We can appreciate ordinary Biblical narratives from any number of viewpoints. But from the point of genuine religious insight, for someone who has had even a peep into reality, the narrative becomes a lie whenever it introduces God as a character. "God" is then a limited being, usually an ill-tempered or obsessive father figure: Nobodaddy, as Blake called him. Thus in the *Akedah*, on the narrative level, he resembles the tsar who put Dostoevsky through his terrible mock-execution. As a parable, though, the story has deep spiritual meaning. Not as an integration of love and severity, which are mutually exclusive; here the Zohar's insight seems shallow to me, and quite mistaken in thinking there can ever be too much loving-kindness. After all, killing is not a stronger form of spanking. ("This hurts me, Isaac, more than it hurts you.") To me, the parable means that to love God ultimately means to leave behind wife and children and everything we love. As a Zen master once told me, "First kill your parents, then kill your lover, then kill God."

The Book of Job is unusual for a Biblical narrative in that it presents, in the Voice from the Whirlwind, a God who is *not* a character—who becomes his own Sabbath vision of the world. If this God has a name, it is the name spoken from the Burning Bush: *ehyeh*, I am. When Job, through his catharsis, earns the vision and opens his heart to the terror and serenity of it, he undergoes a spiritual transformation that no other Biblical character has undergone. He is able to leave behind all his knowledge of good and evil and take a large bite from the fruit of the other Tree (now what was its name?). And his story becomes the whole story.

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE
OF B'NAI B'RITH
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

MEMORANDUM

To: ADL National Commission

From: Burton S. Levinson

Date: January 30, 1987

Subject:

I thought it may be of interest for you to read the congratulatory message Daniel Ortega, President of Nicaragua, sent to Yasir Arafat. The following text was broadcast on the Nicaraguan radio several weeks ago.

Dear Commandant Arafat:

On the occasion of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Palestinian armed forces for the struggle of national liberation, and on behalf of the FSLN, the people and the Government of Nicaragua, and myself, I send you our sincere and fraternal embrace.

Similarly, I am pleased to have a new opportunity to express our solidarity and firm support for the noble struggle of the Palestinian people, who fight for their legitimate and inalienable rights over the territories occupied by Israel.

On this occasion, we reiterate our most vigorous condemnation and rejection of the genocidal attacks carried out against Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon as part of the policy of force and intimidation practiced by the Zionist regime of Israel and its regional allies.

On this memorable occasion, I take the opportunity to thank the Palestinian people's solidarity and to express our firm conviction that our peoples will defeat the unfair, illegal, and immoral aggression imposed on us because of our invincible determination to be free.

The people of Sandino send their fraternal greetings to the PLO, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Fraternally,

Daniel Ortega Saavedra

This unambiguous message is consistent with the Sandinistas' long-term commitment to the PLO and hatred of "Zionists." Its worrisome implications for Israel, "its regional allies," and world Jewry are obvious.

BSL:saj

Current
Policy
No. 952

Promoting Freedom and Democracy in Central America

United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Following is an address by President Reagan before the American Newspaper Publishers Association, Ellis Island, New York, May 3, 1987.

It's a great honor to be here with you on this, the 100th anniversary of your convention. The truth is, it's always a great pleasure to be addressing something older than I am. I'm beginning to feel right at home here in New York Harbor. Last year, of course, we celebrated another centenary—that of the Statue of Liberty—the generous lady who, for 100 years, now has stood watch over this gateway to freedom. It couldn't be more appropriate that, a year later, we gather here on Ellis Island to celebrate with all of you, the ladies and gentlemen of the fourth estate, who also have stood watch over our freedoms and who have been the guardians of our liberty.

You all know what Thomas Jefferson said of the press—that given the choice of a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, he wouldn't hesitate for a second to choose the latter. Of course, Jefferson said that before he became President.

You know, it reminds me of a particular editor who just wouldn't admit to any mistakes ever in his paper. Everything in his paper had the weight of scripture. And then early one morning he received a call from an outraged subscriber who protested that his name was listed in that morning's obituary section as having died the previous day. And the editor said, "And where did you say you were calling from?"

Well, of course, presidents aren't always entirely objective themselves, like Harry Truman when he read the reviews of Margaret's recital. And then Bill Moyers likes to tell the story of one day at lunch with President Johnson. Bill was saying grace when Johnson bellowed, "Speak up, Bill, I can't hear a darn thing." And Bill looked up and said, "I wasn't addressing you, Mr. President." The fact is, if those of us in government and the press sometimes think of ourselves as antagonists, it's only in the context of transitory events. The rush of daily business can obscure for us a deeper truth—that we're two complementary institutions, each drawing life and strength from the other and that together we hold the sacred trust of democratic government and freedom. The life and hope of liberty in an all-too-often threatening world—that is our solemn responsibility.

Mr. Jefferson also wrote that the truth of human liberty is self-evident, but he knew its success was anything but so. It was only the courage and the will of free men that gave freedom a chance, and, once established, it was only their continuing dedication that kept freedom alive and allowed it to prosper.

The Dream of Freedom

That dream of freedom has a special meaning to us today as we gather here on Ellis Island, beneath the gaze of Miss Liberty. It would be easy to come here and tell once more the story of those who have passed through these gates, to simply celebrate once again the freedoms Americans enjoy. But my job today is more difficult. It's not about those who came to this land, but it's about the dream that brought them here. Today, another people are in search of that dream, and theirs, too, is an inspiring story—one that must speak to the heart of all who came to this island and cherish the great lady of this harbor.

I speak of the people of Central America. And let me begin in 1981. I wonder how many remember that when we first drew attention to the crisis in El Salvador, we were met with an almost fatalistic acceptance of communist victory in that country—if not the whole region. Democracy, it was said, couldn't work in El Salvador: the people were too poor; they had no democratic tradition; they didn't want the chance for democracy that we offered; in fact, their sympathies lay with the communist guerrillas, we were told.

But then one day the silent, suffering people of El Salvador were offered a chance to choose for themselves—a national election. And despite the bullets, the bombs, and the death threats of the communists, the people of El Salvador turned out in record numbers, standing in line for hours waiting to vote—to vote for democracy.

Congressional observers in that national election told me of a woman who was wounded by rifle fire on the way to the polls because the guerrillas

tried to keep the people from getting there. She refused to leave the line and have her wound treated until after she had voted. And the wait in the line was hours long. One grandmother, as she started to the polls, had been warned by the guerrillas that, if she voted, she would be killed when she returned from the polls. She told them, "You can kill me, kill my family, kill my neighbors, but you can't kill us all." That was the voice of Central America—the testimony of a people determined to be free.

The Threat to Freedom and Democracy

Much has been achieved since 1981. In a region in which military dictatorships have dominated society, democracy is taking root. A decade ago, only Costa Rica was a democracy. Today, Costa Rica has been joined by elected civilian governments in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras—only Nicaragua remains a dictatorship. But while the trend toward democracy is unmistakable, the threat to freedom and democracy in Central America remains powerful because of Sandinista totalitarianism in Nicaragua. The aspirations of millions for freedom still hang in the balance.

The elected leaders of neighboring Central American countries understand this; they have personally told me this. They know the Nicaraguan regime threatens their own future and the stability of this hemisphere. They know that the establishment of a genuinely democratic system in Nicaragua—with the full, guaranteed liberties of free assembly, free speech, and free press—offers the only real hope for the long-term peace and security of the region. They know such a system provides a check and balance on any government, discourages militarism, and ensures the people's right to choose their own destiny. And that's why the views of our Central American friends and the aspirations of the Nicaraguan people are one and the same—the establishment of full, popularly elected, legitimate democratic rule in Nicaragua. So what we seek for Nicaragua is simple enough: self-determination for the Nicaraguan people—the right to select their own leaders in free, fair, contested, and regularly scheduled elections.

The majority of Central Americans have made this choice. And I have come here today to say to you that the freedom fighters of Nicaragua are fighting for the same thing that the brave woman in El Salvador risked her life for: democracy—real democracy, rooted in sound, stable, democratic institutions and ensuring the full range of political liberties and human rights. And I have come here to say that the U.S. Government pledges to the American people what the freedom fighters have pledged to their own people: that our objective in Nicaragua is clear—free elections.

On the other hand, the Soviets and the Sandinistas have also made a choice, not for democracy, not for a free press, and not for free elections but for control through force. In 1986 alone, overall Soviet-bloc assistance to the Sandinistas exceeded $1 billion. These Soviet shipments have made the small country of Nicaragua an aggressor nation with the largest military machine in Central America, threatening the security of the entire region.

The Challenge to the United States

Make no mistake: the Soviets are challenging the United States to a test of wills over the future of this hemisphere. The future they offer is one of ever-growing communist expansion and control. And this is the choice before Congress and our people—a basic choice, really, between democracy and communism in Nicaragua, between freedom and Soviet-backed tyranny. For myself, I'm determined to meet this Soviet challenge and to ensure that the future of this hemisphere is chosen by its people and not imposed by communist aggressors.

Now, I could go on for hours about our negotiations with the Sandinistas, the Contadora process, and the missions of my regional diplomatic negotiator, Philip Habib. But since those first negotiations back in 1979, in which the Sandinistas promised a democratic, pluralistic society, we've seen that these Marxists-Leninists never intended to honor those promises; we've seen them use negotiations time and again simply to delay, to manipulate world opinion. And that's why the choice remains the same: democracy or communism, elections or dictatorship, freedom or tyranny.

The debate in this country over Central American policy has been direct and tough—and, yes, even heated at times. While such debate is healthy, we all know that a divided America cannot offer the leadership necessary to provide support and confidence to the emerging democracies in Central America.

I do not think there's anyone in Congress who wants to see another base for Soviet subversion, another Cuba, established on American shores. And yet that is what is happening right now. It's now an issue on which all Americans must unite; it's simply too important to become a partisan firefight in the next election. If we cut off the freedom fighters, we will be giving the Soviets a free hand in Central America, handing them one of their greatest foreign policy victories since World War II. Without the pressure of the Central American democracies and the freedom fighters, the Soviets would soon solidify their base in Nicaragua, and the subversion in El Salvador would reignite. The Nicaraguans have already infiltrated operatives even into Costa Rica, and they're simply waiting for the signal. Soon the communists' prediction of a "revolutionary fire"—it's their words—sweeping across all of Central America could come true. Let us not delude ourselves about the ultimate objective of the Soviets' billion-dollar war in Nicaragua.

There is a line attributed to Nikolai Lenin: "The road to America leads through Mexico." I do not intend to leave such a crisis for the next American president. For almost 40 years, America has maintained a bipartisan consensus on foreign policy. The Democratic Party—the party of Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John Kennedy—has stood in firm support of democracy and our national security. This is no time for either party to turn its back on that tradition or on the cause of freedom, especially when the threat to both is so close to home.

U.S. Policy Framework

The survival of democracy in our hemisphere requires a U.S. policy consistent with that bipartisan tradition. So today, I want to describe the framework of that policy, a policy that begins with support for the stable, long-lasting democracy in Costa Rica and the democracies taking root in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

The Need for Additional Economic Assistance. Many in Congress have stressed the importance of maintaining sufficient levels of economic aid to assist those democracies. I couldn't agree more. That's why additional economic assistance must be approved for the four Central American democracies.

Continuing Diplomatic Efforts. Second, close cooperation with our democratic friends in Central America is also essential, and our policy is to continue now, as in the past, diplomatic efforts to achieve a lasting peace. Earlier this year, President Arias of Costa Rica put forward a proposal aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Nicaragua. At the center of his proposal is an insistence on democracy in Nicaragua. The United States welcomes

this initiative and supports its general objective. At the same time we have some concerns which need to be resolved, particularly on the sequence of implementation. It's essential that any ceasefire be negotiated with the full range of the opposition. It is our profound hope that a Central American consensus can be reached soon and that a process leading toward freedom in Nicaragua can go forward.

Congress has expressed its support for the efforts of the Central American democracies to achieve a diplomatic settlement to the regional conflict. They've asked for an increased effort by the United States to examine ways for a peaceful conclusion to the civil strife in Nicaragua. This Administration has always supported regional diplomatic initiatives aimed at peace and democracy, whether it be through Contadora, through face-to-face meetings with the ruling party in Nicaragua, or through current Central American initiatives. Let me say right now that I will lend my full support to any negotiations that can build democracy throughout Central America without further bloodshed.

You know, I recently received a letter signed by 111 Members of the House of Representatives calling for a major diplomatic effort "designed"—their words—"designed to achieve peace, security guarantees for all Central American nations, the promotion of democratic institutions, and the removal of Soviet and Cuban military personnel from Nicaragua." While I do not endorse everything in the letter, I certainly join these Congressmen in calling for the restoration of freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom to assemble, freedom of speech, and free elections—all of which are now denied by the Government of Nicaragua.

Our Senate passed, by a 97–1 vote, a resolution stating that a "durable peace is only possible within the context of democratic regimes committed to eradicating extreme poverty, to establishing an effective means for equal opportunity for all elements of society, and free and periodic elections."

So, while Congress gets no argument from me in seeking a peaceful, diplomatic solution in Nicaragua, you can see the key is democracy and that a majority in Congress clearly recognized this. That's why I strongly believe there is a solid basis upon which to build a common effort with Congress to resolve this conflict in Central America. I plan to make every effort to work toward these goals, and I hope Congress will join with me.

Supporting Freedom Fighters. And that brings me to the third element in our policy—our commitment to, our support for the freedom fighters who have pledged their lives and honor to a free Nicaragua. This Administration's support of the Nicaraguan freedom fighters, in their struggle for peace and democratic government, will not change unless the regime in Nicaragua accedes to the democratic aspirations of the Nicaraguan people. Every day the Nicaraguan people are becoming more outraged by the repression of their communist rulers. The democratic Nicaraguan resistance, including the freedom fighters, today offers the only political alternative to the dictatorship of the past and the communism of today. That alternative is democracy, and it's winning increasing support from the people of Nicaragua.

For as long as I'm President, I have no intention of withdrawing our support of these efforts by the Nicaraguan people to gain their freedom and their right to choose their own national future. In the next few months, I'll be asking Congress to renew funding for the freedom fighters. Again, I stress the danger of the course argued by some in the Congress: that the most expeditious route to peace in Central America is abandoning our commitment to the Nicaraguan freedom fighters. Delays and indecision here at home can only cause unnecessary suffering in Nicaragua, shake the confidence of the emerging democracies in the region, and endanger our own security.

We've come a long way in these last 7 years toward understanding the true nature of the Sandinista regime and its aggressive aims against its own people and its democratic neighbors in Central and South America. A new bipartisan consensus is forming, one that rejects all the old excuses. Last year, in an editorial entitled "The Road to Stalinism," the *New York Times* charged that the "pluralistic revolution" the Sandinistas promised is "hopelessly betrayed." Stated the *Times*: "Only the credulous can fail to see the roots of the police state now emerging."

And then my old friend, Tip O'Neill, in the wake of one of the Sandinistas' most blatant acts of aggression, declared that Daniel Ortega was what he had always said he was, nothing less than a "Marxist-Leninist communist," intent on provoking a "revolution without borders."

Well, now the question before the American people and the U.S. Congress is, "What do we do about it?" Well, despite almost universal acknowledgment of the brutal, totalitarian, and subversive intentions of the Sandinista regime, the renewal of aid to the freedom fighters is still a debated question. But I think there's increasing recognition that the freedom fighters are the only ones who stand between the Sandinistas and their expansionistic aims; that they are the major obstacle to preventing all of Central America from being engulfed in the communists' "revolutionary fire"; that the freedom fighters are the only ones who offer the hope of freedom to the people of Nicaragua and a chance for a stable and long-lasting peace in Latin America. They're worthy of our support.

So that's why the upcoming vote in Congress on whether to continue providing support to the freedom fighters in Nicaragua may well be the most important vote our representatives cast in 1987 and possibly one of the most important cast in their careers in public office.

The Call to Freedom

It's an important question for the press and media, as well. I can't help but note that in the new democracy of El Salvador, communist-supported guerrillas continue to try to bring down democratic rule. There's little or no media attention. Yet, just across a border in Nicaragua, the freedom fighters battle against a totalitarian communist regime and are assailed far and wide as lawless terrorists or worse. Forgive me, but the story needs perspective. And that perspective is provided by the aggressive nature of Sandinista communism.

Today, the people of Nicaragua know from experience the reality of Sandinista communism: the brutality, the poverty, the oppression. And for that reason they know what we too often forget—that freedom is worth fighting for.

It's the same firsthand knowledge of oppression and yearning for liberty that steels the brave Afghan resistance and gives them the courage to take up arms against the overwhelming might of the Soviet military machine; the same knowledge that inspires the brave Angolans and Cambodians, fighting long wars of liberation against their Soviet-backed oppressors; the same knowledge that drove the Grenadian people to embrace the American servicemen liberating their country and throw flowers in their path. And wasn't it something to see graffiti on the walls saying not "Yankee Go Home," but when I was there, every place I looked, it was saying, "God Bless America."

They were all responding to the call to freedom—a call that has a particular eloquence among these buildings, on this island where so many of our ancestors greeted the sight of Liberty with tears of joy. We hear the call of freedom in the work to which you've dedicated your lives,

sounding clearly, proudly, every morning and evening in the pages of a free press. Tragically silenced in Nicaragua by the closing of *La Prensa*, we still hear that call in the brave voice of its publisher, Violeta Chamorro, who makes it clear that on the subject of freedom, the press can never be agnostic. She said, "Without liberty of the press, there is no representative democracy, nor individual liberty, nor social justice. . . only darkness, impunity, abuse, mediocrity, and repression."

Well, that's the choice we face: between the light of liberty or the darkness of repression. When, after terrible voyages of sickness and hardship, our ancestors first spied Liberty's torch, they knew that light shone for them—"those huddled masses yearning to breathe free." For those who've known only the bitterness of want and oppression, that torch burns especially bright.

Today, the light of freedom is our sacred keepsake, the promise of America to all mankind. We must forever hold its flame high, a light unto the world, a beacon of hope that extends beyond this harbor all the way to the jungled hills of Nicaragua, where young men are fighting and dying today for the same liberties we hold dear; all the way into the hearts of people everywhere who fight for freedom. ■

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Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Promise and the Challenge

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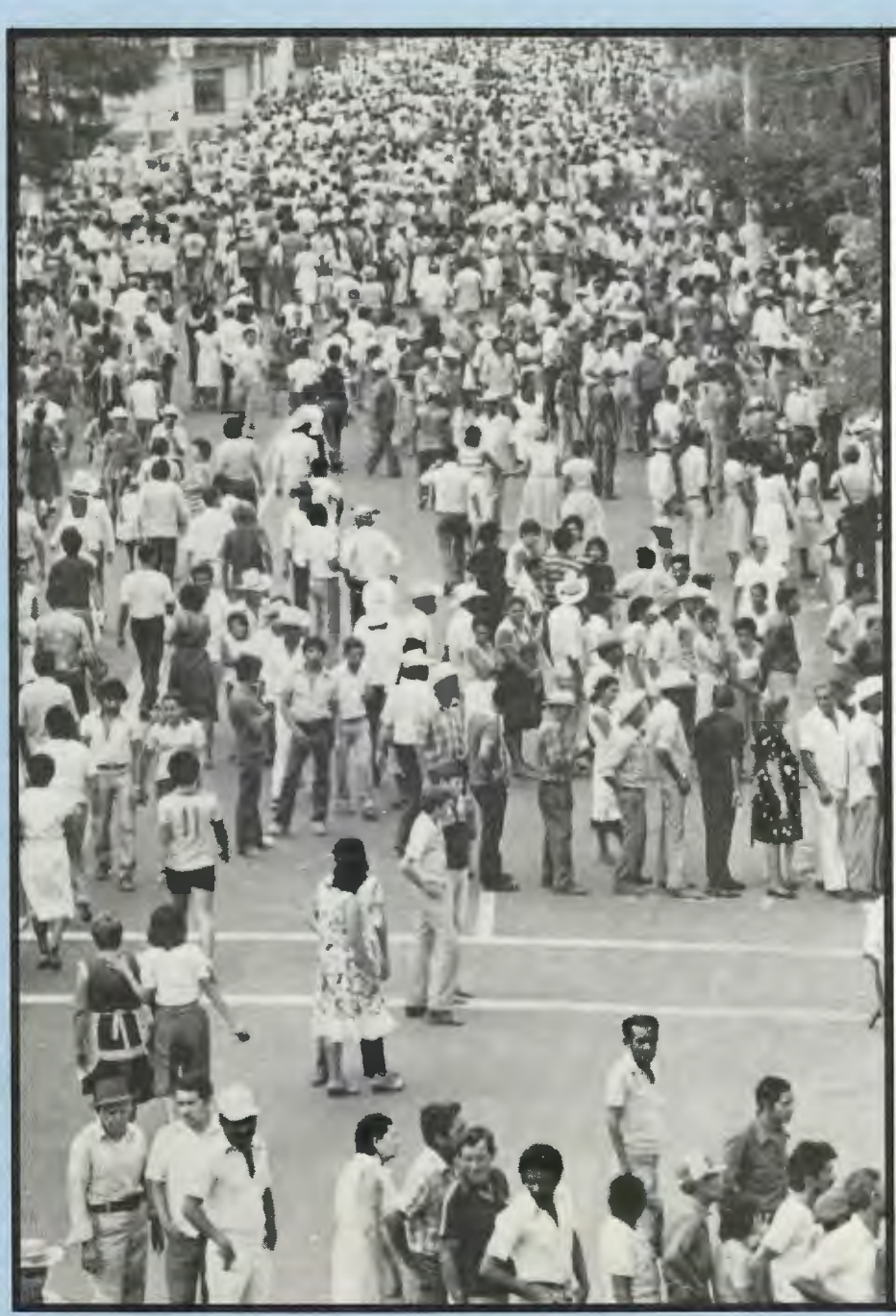

"Latin America's extraordinary effort to create a democratic order is the most stunning and moving political fact of recent years."

José Sarney, President of Brazil,
Address to the UN General Assembly,
September 23, 1985

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Cover photo: Waiting to vote in El Salvador May 1984. (© UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)

Recent moves toward more democratic systems of government in Latin America are now a decade-long trend that has led to the replacement of numerous military regimes or dictatorships (see map at centerfold). In the United States during the same period, considerations of human rights, the dignity of the individual, and the defense of freedom have led to a widening bipartisan consensus in support of democracy as a key principle of U.S. foreign policy.

These converging trends create a rare opportunity. If sustained, they could have profound implications for the future of the Western Hemisphere. At a minimum, their continued convergence can make possible a new era of greater cooperation in hemispheric relations.

The instability of past Latin American development and the discontinuity of U.S. policy toward its neighbors make clear that this long-term promise is still just a possibility. Today's converging trends are real, but they are also fragile. Latin Americans continue to struggle with numerous and urgent obstacles to full democratization, including appalling differences in the living standards of rich and poor, inadequate economic opportunities, and political extremism. To help turn today's promise into tomorrow's reality, the United States also must overcome many domestic problems and conflicting priorities that hinder sustained U.S. support for democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Both the democratic promise and the challenges to it have become more sharply defined since the Department of State first reported on the democratic transition nearly 3 years ago (see "Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean," Current Policy No. 605, August 1984). This report was prepared in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs.

Latin America and the Caribbean

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the early 19th century when most of the nations in the hemisphere achieved independence, most people living in the region found that national independence did not necessarily bring individual freedom. Today's democratic advances, however, could mark a watershed between a past of instability and authoritarianism and a future of greater freedom.

Just a decade ago, such a possibility seemed remote indeed. In 1976, only 34% of the people in the Western Hemisphere outside the United States and Canada enjoyed democratic rule. True, Costa Rica had a strong tradition of civilian authority, competitive politics, and model constitutional arrangements for elections. But Costa Rica's neighbors in Central America were presided over

> ***"Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."***
>
> **Reinhold Niebuhr**

by generals who had become presidents either by open use of force or by stage-managed elections. In South America, democratic Venezuela and Colombia were almost as isolated. Led by generals as different as Chile's Augusto Pinochet on the right and Peru's Juan Velasco on the left, the continent was almost defiantly militarized. The promise of Bolivia's national revolution of the 1950s had given way to military dominance, as had Uruguay's social democratic utopia. Even decentralized and moderate Brazil was under military rule. Individual Latin Americans bearing witness to torture and official violence were in exile throughout the Americas and Europe. When internal war and repression in Argentina were followed by surprise military action in the Falklands/Malviñas Islands, many saw a pattern that symbolized a region condemned to military abuse and antidemocratic practice.

In marked contrast, today 91% of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean live in nations committed to a future based on democratic principles. In 10 years, 10 countries have moved, often dramatically, toward democracy. In nine of the ten, military presidents have been replaced by elected civilians: Argentina (1983), Bolivia (1982), Brazil (1985), Ecuador (1979), El Salvador (1984), Guatemala (1986), Honduras (1982), Peru (1980), and Uruguay (1985). In the 10th country, Grenada, an elected civilian succeeded two consecutive autocrats who were themselves civilians but who had relied on armed thugs to rule. (In an 11th country, Panama, direct military rule ended in 1978, but in a clear setback for democracy in 1985, a civilian president was pressured to resign by the military.) In the Caribbean Basin, the six former British dependencies—Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines—that became independent nations during the past decade did so as democracies.

The following examples of electoral politics where there were none just a few years ago highlight the progress that has been made from the Caribbean to Tierra del Fuego and from Central America to the Andes.

Argentina. The 1983 presidential and legislative elections ended a decade of internal conflict and military rule. Voter participation exceeded 85% of those registered in an open contest among eight political parties representing the full political spectrum. The presidential race offered a choice between candidates from Argentina's two major historic movements, Peronism and Radicalism. In winning, Radical Civic Union leader Raúl Alfonsín received the most votes in Argentine history. In the two ensuing years, voter registration increased by an additional 4%, and the 1985 legislative elections again attracted massive participation.

Brazil. Congressional and municipal elections in 1982 heralded the transition to civilian government and the resurgence of competitive electoral politics in Latin America's largest country and the world's third most populous democracy (after India and the United States). The percentage of adults who voted rose

The richness and variety of democratic life in Latin America and the Caribbean are symbolized by four elected political leaders. Eugenia Charles (top left), head of the center-right Dominica Freedom Party and Prime Minister of Dominica; José Napoleón Duarte (top right), Christian Democratic reformer and President of El Salvador; Victor Paz Estenssoro (bottom left), founder of the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement and three-time President of Bolivia; and Raúl Alfonsín (bottom right), leader of the Radical Civic Union Party and President of Argentina. (Photos of Duarte, Paz, and Alfonsín courtesy of the Organization of American States)

from 45% in 1962 to 81% in 1982. A civilian president was elected by indirect vote on January 15, 1985, but died before his inauguration. In accordance with legal procedures, the civilian Vice President-elect, José Sarney, was sworn in, ending two decades of military rule. The democratic transition is being completed with the writing of a new constitution by the Congress elected in November 1986 by more than 47 million voters.

Dominican Republic. The ruling party expected to retain the presidency and to control the legislature in the May 1986 national elections. But after 70% of the registered voters cast their ballots, the opposition candidate had the most votes. When the leader of the opposition, Joaquín Balaguer, became president in August 1986, the entirely peaceful transfer of power was a reaffirmation of Dominican democracy. The absence of either interference by the military or outside intervention also contrasted markedly with past Dominican history, which includes the 31-year Trujillo dictatorship, a military operation by the United States and the Organization of American States in 1965, and overt pressure from the United States for all sectors to support the results of the democratic elections in 1978.

El Salvador. Four times in 5 years, massive numbers of voters braved violence and threats of violence to cast their ballots in hotly contested nationwide races conducted under intense international scrutiny. In 1984, an absolute majority of all adult Salvadorans twice defied guerrilla appeals for a boycott to vote in the first truly competitive presidential elections in 12 years. The result: civil engineer and Christian Democratic leader Jose Napoleon Duarte—the very man who had been denied the presidency by the military in 1972—was elected over retired Army Maj. Roberto D'Aubuisson and six other candidates.

Grenada. After the Marxist New JEWEL Movement seized power in a 1979 coup, it reneged on its promise to hold elections. In October 1983, however, the New JEWEL's "People's Revolutionary Government" disintegrated in bitter factional fighting. Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and three other ministers were assassinated by their own comrades. At the invitation of Governor General Sir Paul Scoon, a joint U.S.-Caribbean military expedition restored order, then withdrew, leaving a provisional government named by Grenada's Governor General to organize free elections. On December 3, 1984, 85% of Grenada's registered voters went to the polls to elect a parliament. Six political parties were on the ballot, including one formed by supporters of Maurice Bishop and one backed by former Prime Minister Eric Gairy (whose violent overthrow had initially enabled Bishop to seize power). Neither of these groups was successful: the New National Party garnered roughly 58% of the vote, and Herbert Blaize formed a new government in accordance with the 1974 constitution.

Guatemala. Seeking a political path out of Guatemala's internal violence and international isolation, military leaders in 1983 decided to transfer power gradually to civilians. On July 1, 1984,

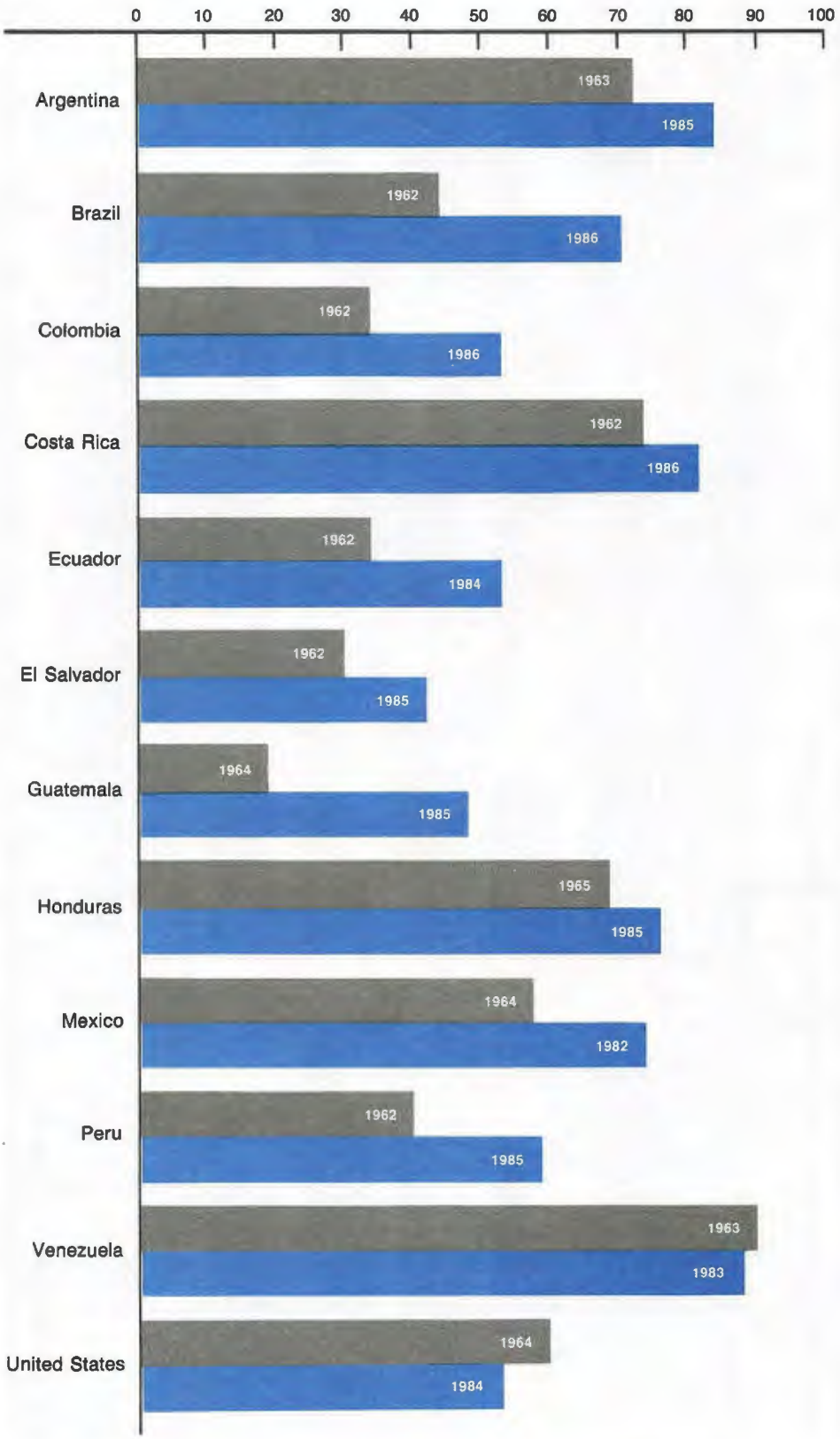
72% of Guatemala's eligible voters cast ballots that sent representatives from nine political parties and one regional civic committee to a constituent assembly. On November 3, 1985, free elections were held for president, vice president, congressional deputies, and mayors. When no candidate for the presidency received a majority, a runoff was held on December 8, 1985, between the two leading contenders, both civilians. In that contest, Christian Democrat Vinicio Cerezo won more than 68% of the vote. On January 14, 1986, the new constitution came into force, Cerezo was inaugurated, and military control over daily life in Guatemala was sharply reduced.

Peru. After 12 years of military rule, the 1979 constitution and 1980 presidential elections put Peru back on a democratic course under civilian leadership. Since then, municipal (1983 and 1986) and presidential (1985) elections have followed prescribed constitutional and legal procedures. In 1985, more than 91% of Peru's registered voters divided their ballots among candidates representing 12 political parties. Alán García became the first member of Peru's historic American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) party to be elected president. He also became the first elected civilian since 1945 to receive Peru's presidential sash from another elected civilian.

Uruguay. Uruguay returned to democratic government in March 1985 following 12 years of military rule that had tarnished a record of freely elected civilian government dating back to the 19th century. More than 87% of the nation's eligible registered voters cast their ballots in national elections in which two major political parties and a leftist coalition competed.

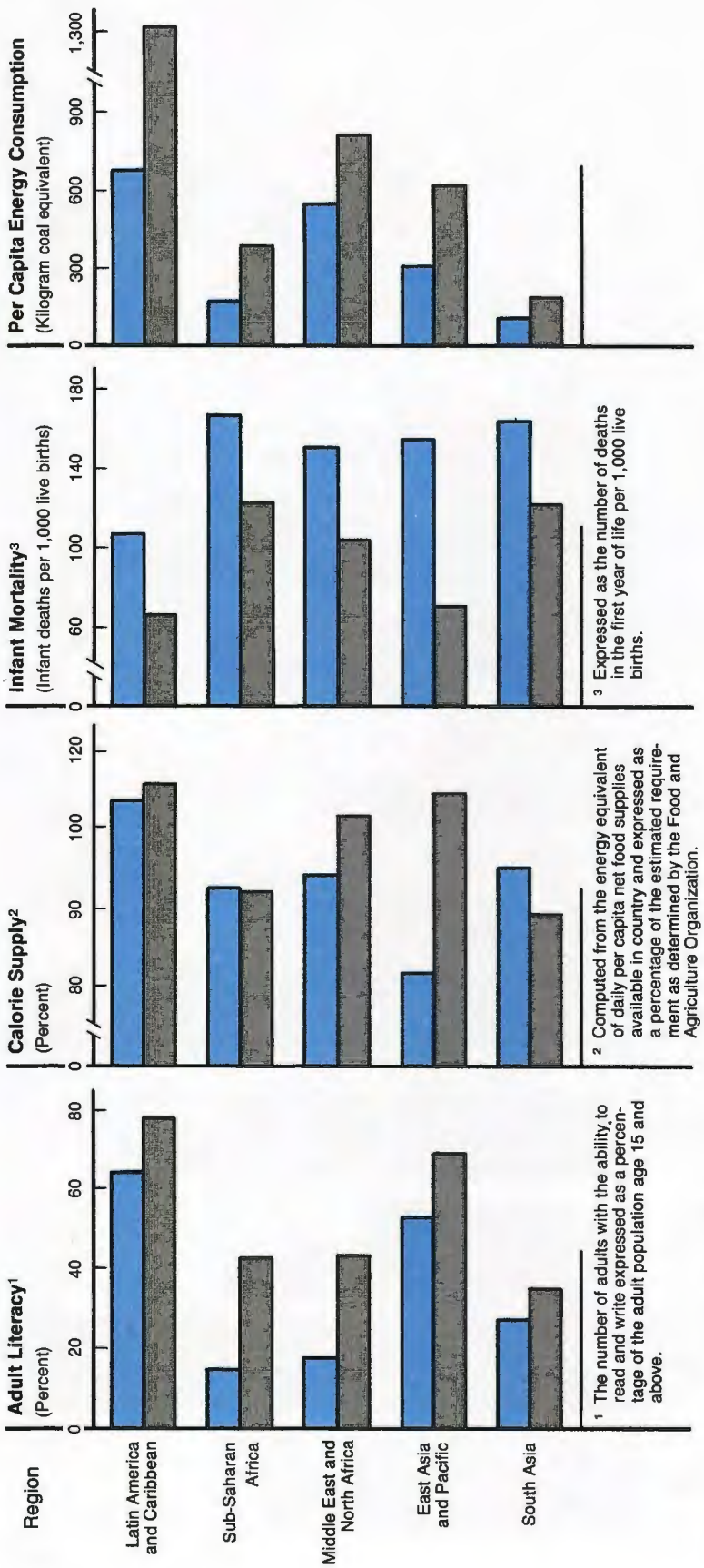
The swell of democracy is not superficial. It has been welcomed by electorates which have organized, campaigned, and voted in record numbers throughout the region. Since 1980, voters in 24 independent countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have cast more than 280 million votes in more than 50 nationwide elections to select presidents, national legislatures, and constituent assemblies. In virtually every case, the number of people going to the polls reached record highs.

Growth of Voter Participation in Selected Countries[1]



[1]Estimates based on votes cast as a percentage of total population age 20 or over as reported in the *United Nations Demographic Yearbook* for the year in question.

Regional Comparison: Indicators of Living Standards, 1960 and 1980



Source: World Bank, *World Tables*, 1983 (3d ed.).

Compared to the 1950s and 1960s, the proportion of eligible voters actually going to the polls has been up sharply, in some cases by as much as 50%. Nor have the increases resulted from forced voting. Turnouts were as high or higher in some countries where voting is not mandatory (85% in Grenada in 1984 and 89% in The Bahamas in 1982) as in some countries where voting is traditionally compulsory. Where voting is required, the historic form of voter protest, the incidence of blank or defaced ballots, tended to diminish substantially as voters gained the opportunity to vote for genuine alternatives.

Democracy, of course, is more than free elections. But its essence is the right of citizens to decide regularly whether to keep or replace those who claim to represent them. The absence of genuinely free elections in Chile and Paraguay, patently unfair elections in Nicaragua, and allegations of vote fraud in Mexico and Panama are major continuing difficulties. Cuba has not held a single direct popular election for national office since Castro came to power in 1959.

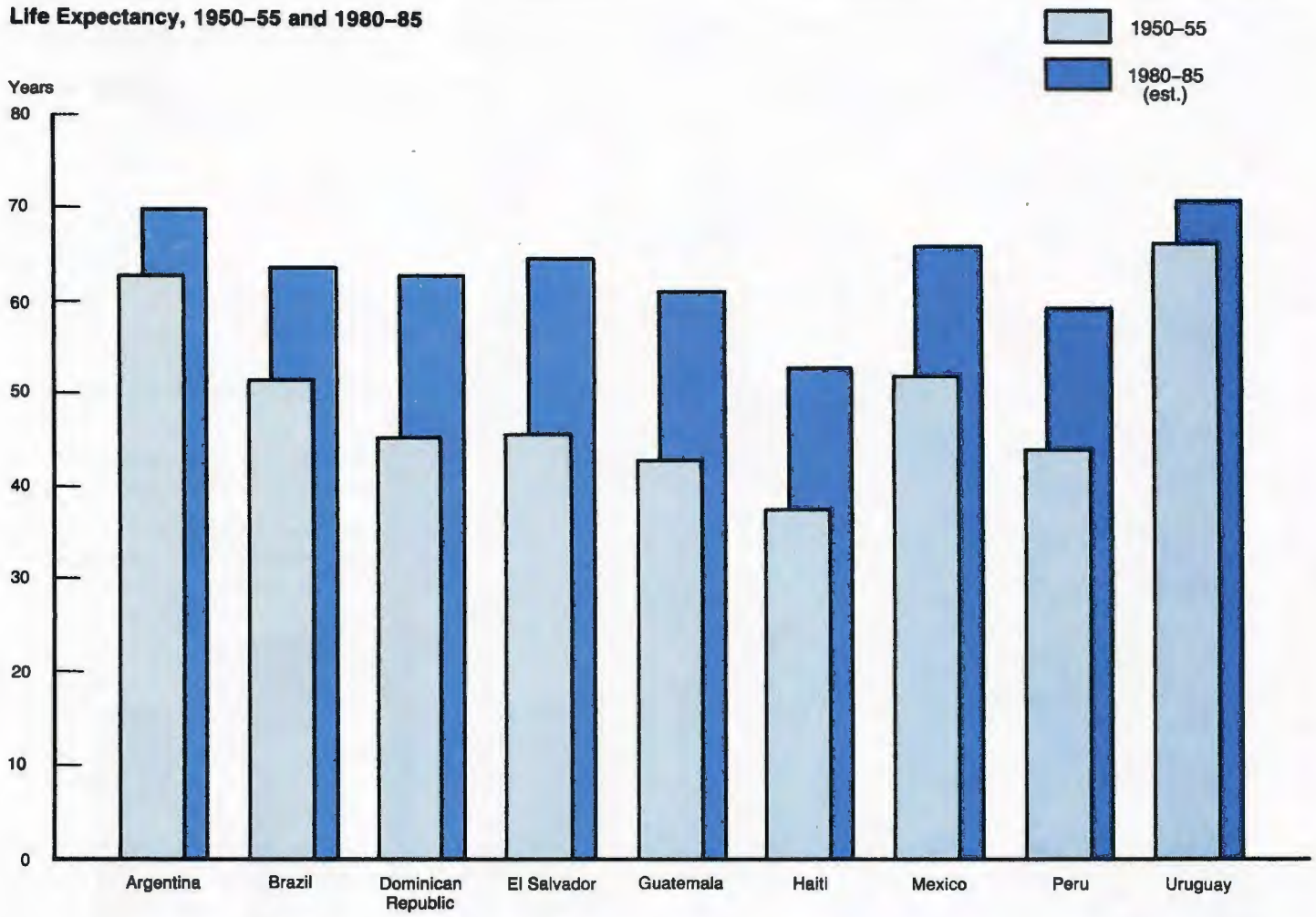
Though Latin America's recent electoral record is still far from perfect, the changes that have already taken place have made an enormous difference for millions of Latin Americans. Most of the brutal dictatorships are gone. Latin America's longstanding democracies—Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Colombia—no longer are isolated. On the contrary, it is the authoritarian regimes that are becoming isolated. Cuba and Nicaragua on the totalitarian left, and Chile and Paraguay on the authoritarian right, are the only major exceptions to the trend. Even Haiti, perhaps the most compelling case of a country plagued by brutal dictatorship and the degrading economic deprivation that it generated, has taken the first steps toward democratic government following the ouster of the Duvalier dynasty on February 7, 1986.

ROOTS OF CHANGE

The shift away from authoritarian regimes (typically dominated by military leaders) to freely elected governments (typically led by civilians) reflects many forces, some of them quite transient. But more lasting underlying forces have been at work as well.

Social change and economic development, the growth of institutions, and political and cultural shifts have com-

Life Expectancy, 1950–55 and 1980–85



Source: CEPAL, *Informe de la Reunión Regional Latinoamericana Preparatoria de la Asamblea Mundial sobre el Envejecimiento,* San José, March 31, 1982.

bined to weaken the old power centers and add new ones. Influences from outside the region also have been important. This section describes the many factors increasing Latin America's capacity to sustain democracy; the next section discusses the many problems with which democrats must still contend.

Improved Socioeconomic Conditions

Latin American societies are scarred by poverty and sharply unequal distribution of opportunities and services. Yet, over the last two generations, standards of living (as measured by infant mortality, literacy, nutrition, and energy consumption) have improved more dramatically in Latin America and the Caribbean than in any other region in the developing world (see charts, p. 4).

Between 1960 and 1980, per capita income doubled despite rapid population growth. Throughout Latin America, urbanization, industrialization, and institutional development broke down old class structures and spurred the growth of middle classes. Values and attitudes developed that foster political participation and make dictatorships harder to sustain.

This increased potential for democracy cannot by itself guarantee that democracy will be achieved or maintained. Moreover, recent declines in gross domestic product have created a host of problems (discussed in the next section) that pose serious challenges to the democratic transition. But the development that has taken place is undeniably improving the base necessary for democracy to prosper.

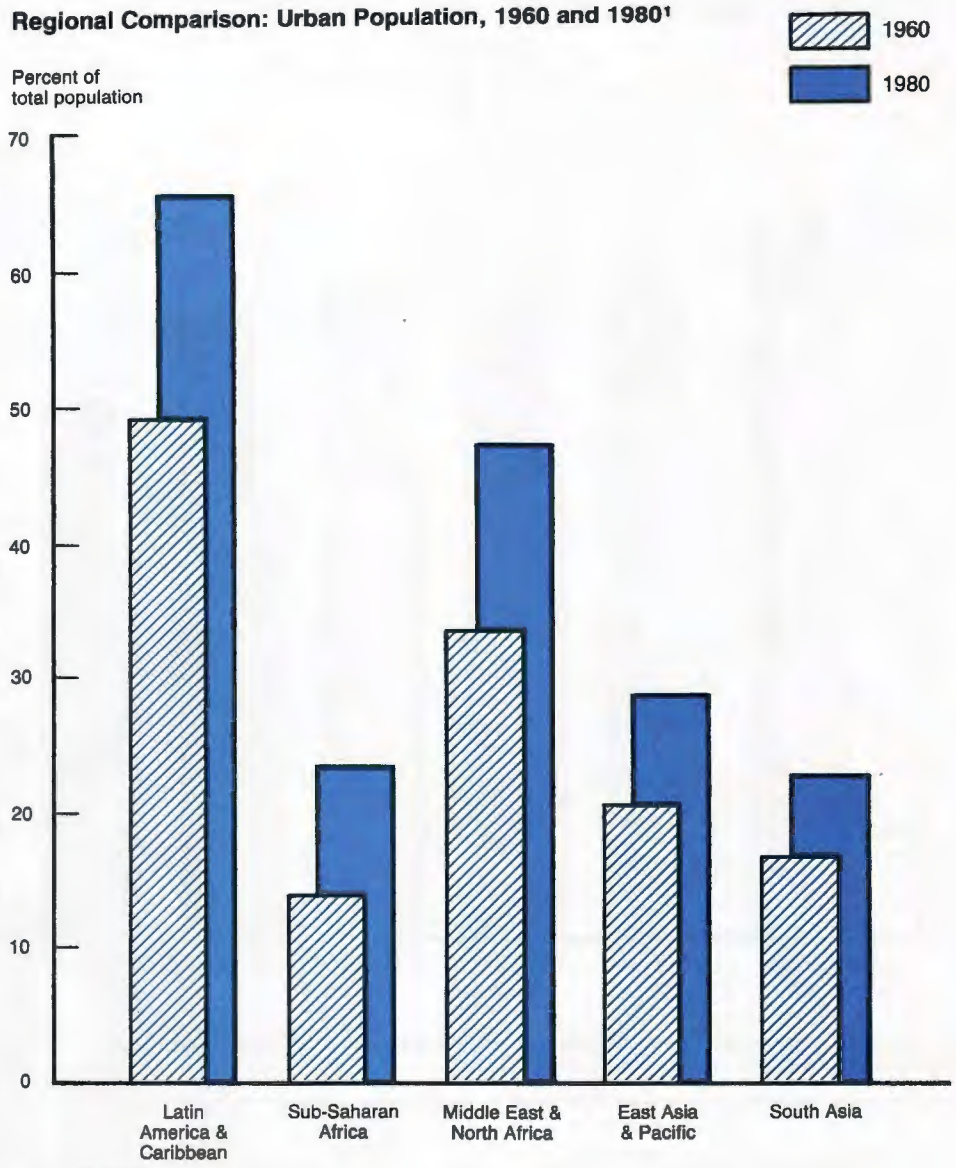
Education. Improvements in education have outstripped increases in population. The percentage of primary school-age children attending school increased from 57% in 1960 to 82% in 1980. In 1960, only 35% of the region's children aged 12–17 were enrolled in school; a mere 6% of the university-age population attended universities and technical schools. By 1980, these figures were 63% and 26% respectively. These gains account for the 79% adult literacy

rate for the region in 1980. Such successes have increased political awareness, increased expectations about the role of government, and expanded economic opportunities for workers and entrepreneurs.

Health. Lowered infant mortality rates and increases in life expectancy have combined with the virtual eradication of once-common debilitating diseases such as poliomyelitis to improve general health conditions. Healthier individuals have more opportunity to develop political interests, as well as greater energy to devote to political involvement.

Urbanization. Once overwhelmingly rural, Latin America has urbanized faster than the rest of the developing world. In 1950, only seven cities in the region had populations larger than 1 million; by 1980, the number had climbed to 25, and this figure could double by the end of the century. About 37% of Latin America's population resided in urban areas in 1950. Today, more than two-thirds of the region's people are city dwellers. Urbanization has eroded the rural power base of the traditional landed elite, while simultaneously facilitating communication and political participation.

Regional Comparison: Urban Population, 1960 and 1980[1]



[1] As defined by individual countries.

Source: World Bank, *World Tables*, 1983 (3d ed.).

Institutional Development

The spread of education and industrialization have transformed old institutions and created new ones. Both public institutions (military forces, government bureaucracies, and national universities) and private institutions (the church, political parties, private universities, trade unions, and major corporations) have been affected.

The evolution of religious and military institutions—"the cross and the sword" of the Spanish conquest and key pillars of traditional order ever since then—illustrates the new values, organizational diversity, and reduced power of individual *caudillos* that have increased space for democratic politics.

In the quarter century since Vatican Council II, Latin America's Roman Catholic bishops have tended to act as social critics, leading the church to positions open to change and independent of secular authorities. Together with the spread of Protestantism, this has encouraged political as well as religious diversity.

The armed forces, meanwhile, have become less tied to economic elites and more professional. Despite ever-present rewards for strong individual leadership, military leaders must deal with their fellow officers within an institutional framework. The road to command is now usually as much a function of technical competence, bureaucratic skill, and coalition building as it is of personal magnetism or direct troop command.

Political and Cultural Changes

Mass Communications. Radio has given virtually every household in Latin America and the Caribbean access to information previously reserved to the traditional elites. More people are reading an ever-growing variety of newspapers, magazines, and books. And except for the few people isolated in remote regions such as the Amazon Basin or Patagonia, almost everyone has at least occasional access to television.

Improved access to information and ideas has raised expectations and increased pressures for participation and political change.

Democratic Activism. Aspirations for greater political participation have tended to combine in recent years with rejection of the violence and abuse of political extremists and dictatorships of both left and right. Volunteer civic education programs, such as the Argentine organization *Conciencia* (see box, right), have proliferated. By informing people of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a democracy, civic movements draw more people into the political process.

Momentum. With each election, the right to choose becomes more institutionalized, establishing habits of pluralistic political practice that widen voter participation and broaden support for democratic government. Each election increases political activism, as more citizens take part in civic education programs, serve as poll workers, campaign for candidates, or run for office. With each peaceful transition from one civilian government to its successor, the democratic machinery is further refined and improved.

External Influences

U.S. Policy. Under two very different administrations since the mid-1970s, the United States has sought to encourage democratic transitions in Latin America. Under the Administration of President Jimmy Carter, support for human rights was the guiding principle. During the Administration of President Ronald Reagan, the emphasis shifted toward a policy championing the broader values of democracy. The practical effect was one of substantial bipartisan continuity. Bolivia and El Salvador, for example, were both very controversial at the time of the 1980–81 transition between the Carter and Reagan Administrations. In both cases, the United States consistently supported democratization to successful outcomes. By 1986—when the U.S. offer to transport Jean Claude Duvalier out of Haiti helped prevent further bloodshed and proved a key factor in Duvalier's decision to step down—few doubted that democracy was one area where the U.S. Executive and Congress had found common ground.

Conciencia and the Future of Democracy

In August 1982, on the eve of Argentina's return to civilian government after 8 years of military rule, 22 women organized a grassroots movement to help the nation prepare for the general elections. Today, *Conciencia* (Awareness) has more than 8,000 members engaged in countless projects to educate Argentines about their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.

Conciencia's goal is to train the nation's citizens, particularly its women, to participate actively and effectively in political and community life. In addition to courses in basic civics, civic leadership, and political participation that emphasize consensus building, *Conciencia* sponsors lectures and exhibits on various domestic and international topics, publishes a series of educational pamphlets, and produces "public service" announcements for radio and television. All activities are nonpartisan.

Conciencia's success has motivated similar women's groups in several Latin American countries. At the request of a group in Montevideo, Uruguay, *Conciencia* helped establish the Uruguayan organization *Encuentro* (Encounter) in 1985. *Conciencia* has also provided assistance to a sister organization of the same name in São Paulo, Brazil. Requests from groups in Bolivia, Chile, and Peru have prompted *Conciencia* to organize the First South American Meeting on Civic Education and Participation, scheduled for September 1987 in Buenos Aires. Participants from 10 countries are expected to attend.

Conciencia receives financial support from corporations, local foundations, and the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED), established by Congress in 1983 to support the development of democratic institutions around the world. NED support for *Conciencia* has been managed by OEF International, originally established as the overseas arm of the U.S. League of Women Voters. The NED also is assisting other civic education organizations in Dominica and the Dominican Republic and is a major source of funding for the Buenos Aires conference.

The impact of *Conciencia* on civic education at the grassroots level is a measure of the powerful attraction of democracy as both a political system and a way of life. It has inspired thousands in Latin America, drawn primarily from the middle class, to make a personal investment in democratic government. *Conciencia's* success demonstrates that democratic solidarity across borders can be eminently workable.

The Board of Directors of *Conciencia* meets in Buenos Aires. (© *The New York Times*/Daniel Merle)

Iberian Examples. Despite frequent political disagreements, most Latin American countries have cultural and emotional affinities to Spain and Portugal rooted in the colonial experience. The demise of authoritarian military regimes in the two Iberian "mother" nations during the mid-1970s added impetus to democratic forces in Latin America. The subsequent consolidation of democracy in both countries provided democratic models to complement that of the United States and those of Latin America itself.

Failed Alternatives. Democracy also has profited by negative examples. The military development model (generally dubbed "Nasserist" for its Egyptian variant despite its prevalence in Latin American history) has taken a severe drubbing along with military dictatorships in general. And the evident misery inflicted on the people of Cuba by the rigid political and economic controls imposed by Castro's regime inspires little willing emulation.

Outside the hemisphere, calls for political and economic freedom in Poland, student demonstrations in China, and the replacement in the Philippines of President Marcos by the popularly elected Corazon Aquino, also have bolstered the belief that democracy is the tide of history.

FACING THE CHALLENGES

Though recent progress is undeniable, democracy's future is far from secure. Such factors as literacy and organizational potential are necessary ingredients of democratic politics, but they are not sufficient. Like Europe's experience with nazism and fascism, Latin America's history demonstrates that wealth and a widely educated citizenry are not necessarily incompatible with dictatorship—consider the records of Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. Socioeconomic development is not enough by itself to avoid dictatorship or turn authoritarianism into democracy.

Many observers of the Latin American scene see the region caught up in a perpetual cycle of instability in which elected civilian governments lose the authority to govern and give way to authoritarian military regimes, which, in turn, lose legitimacy and give way to a repetition of the cycle. In this view, the democratization described in this report is superficial and transient, the product of "time-for-a-change" swings induced by the failure of authoritarian regimes to cope with economic and social problems, their abuses of human rights, and plain political exhaustion. Similar swings took place after World War II and again in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Each time, the pendulum swung back again.

Is recent progress just the latest swing in an endless cycle? Or do the nations of the region finally face a real opportunity to maintain their democratic momentum? This section attempts to contribute to an answer by analyzing five key problems that impede democratic consolidation.

Militarism

Military leaders and institutions played key positive roles in the democratic transition in several countries, notably Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Uruguay. In several countries, moreover, military leaders have sought changes in their relations to civilian institutions that would reduce pressure on the military and provide a more stable political balance. For their part, while recognizing their debt to particular military leaders, the new democratic governments have generally sought to strengthen civilian authority over the military institutions.

The results have included a historic low in the frequency of military coups. Legal provisions prohibiting or limiting military participation in politics are more common, as are arrangements increasing civilian participation in matters previously reserved to the military. In Guatemala, new military statutes require an officer to be off active duty for 5 years before running for public office. In Argentina, civilians now occupy key positions in the Ministry of Defense, including those responsible for the defense budget. In Peru, the 1933 constitution gave the military what could be interpreted as independent authority to decide the meaning of the constitution itself; the 1979 constitution eliminated this provision and states explicitly that the armed forces are subordinate to constitutional authority.

Two incidents make clear, however, that military pressures remain a threat to democracy.

President Vinicio Cerezo of Guatemala and his wife are greeted by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Hector Gramajo on their return from Europe in October 1986. (Photo courtesy of *Depto. Información y Divulgación del Ejército, Sección de Relaciones Públicas,* Guatemala)

Two Democrats Betrayed

José Martí

The poet-essayist José Martí is revered in much of Latin America as Cuba's national hero and the inspirational hero of Cuba's independence from Spain.

Born in Cuba in 1853, Martí was just 16 when he was arrested for treason for writing a letter critical of Spanish colonial rule. He was expelled from Cuba after serving 8 months of a 6-year prison sentence. Martí studied in Spain and worked as an educator, political writer, and journalist in New York, Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, and elsewhere in the hemisphere. The cause of Cuban freedom was always his foremost concern.

In 1892, Martí led several exile groups in founding the *Partido Revolucionario Cubano*, a Cuban liberation movement. In 1895, the revolutionaries landed their ships in Cuba to wage a war of independence. Barely 1 month later, Martí was shot and killed in a skirmish with Spanish forces. His life and prolific writings made him a natural choice as Cuba's preeminent national hero. By 1953, the centennial of Martí's birth, more than 200 full-length biographies of his life had been written.

Fidel Castro has gone to great lengths to associate himself with the memory of Martí. He began his revolution by quoting extensively from Martí and even imitating his landing by sea in eastern Cuba. Today, Castro includes Martí in the pantheon of heroes—Marx, Lenin, Engels, and Che Guevara—that Cubans are taught to admire.

Castro's use of Martí has to be selective, however. As in the days of Martí, Cuba's political opposition is in exile or in jail, its economy is tied to a foreign empire, and it is governed by a dictator whose powers exceed those of a Spanish viceroy.

Martí opposed personal rule as much as he opposed colonialism, abandoning an 1884 plan to liberate Cuba because he feared some of its leaders were seeking personal gain. His political writings championed democracy as the path to national self-determination and a just social order. Martí advocated both political freedom from Spain and economic independence from the United States, and he believed that democracy—ensured by a free press, an active legislature, and general freedom of expression—would prove Cuba's best guarantee.

The sad truth is that Martí's vision of democracy and national sovereignty is as distant today for most Cubans as it was in 1895.

Pedro Joaquín Chamorro

Jailed five times and exiled twice by the Somozas, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, editor of the independent daily *La Prensa* and a member of a leading Nicaraguan conservative family, never wavered in his belief in democracy and a free press. From early adulthood on, Chamorro never accepted the thesis that there could be no political opposition in Nicaragua. He played a leading role in two armed attempts to oust the Somozas and fought frequent censorship to use *La Prensa* as a platform to urge democratic reform.

His deep convictions and fearless determination made him a natural leader of the opposition. In 1966–67, Chamorro coordinated the National Union of the Opposition (UNO) against Somoza's presidential candidacy. In 1974, he led the Union of Democratic Liberation (UDEL), a coalition of opposition political groups that included people of the left and the right, in boycotting Somoza's staged elections.

When Somoza accused Chamorro of instigating Sandinista violence by criticizing him in *La Prensa*, Chamorro replied, "The regrettable deaths and injuries. . . are not the fruits of my harvest, but of the violence your regime has institutionalized for many years."

On January 10, 1978, Chamorro was shot to death while riding to work. Spontaneous riots erupted in Managua as news of his murder spread. The killers were never found, but Chamorro's death became the catalyst that united all elements of Nicaraguan society against Somoza. When Somoza fell 18 months later, in July 1979, Chamorro's widow, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, became a member of the five-person junta at the head of the new government.

The tragedy of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro has not ended. In April 1980, Violeta de Chamorro resigned from the junta. "I realized that the course promised did not correspond to what was being done," she wrote later to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States. "The principles for which we all fought. . . have been betrayed by the party in power, that is, the Sandinist Front of National Liberation."

In June 1986, the Sandinistas closed *La Prensa* indefinitely. In an open letter to Daniel Ortega, Violeta de Chamorro wrote that the "Sandinista party has already created a great concentration camp in Nicaragua. . . by means of repression and the banning of all contradictory opinion."

Nine years after his death, the freedom for which Pedro Joaquín Chamorro fought continues to be denied to his countrymen.

In September 1985, Panama's civilian President Nicolàs Ardito Barletta resigned under pressure from the Defense Forces less than halfway into the term for which he had been elected. The presidency was assumed, according to constitutional procedures, by Vice President Eric Arturo Delvalle. This preservation of democratic forms and the continuing openness of Panamanian society kept the event from being an outright reversal of Panama's move toward democracy, but it was a serious setback nonetheless.

In January 1987, the elected civilian President of Ecuador, León Febres Cordero, was kidnaped and held several hours by a group of dissident air force officers. He was released only after freeing a jailed general who had challenged the government and after governments throughout the region had urged both the military and the civilian opposition to put the preservation of democratic institutions above domestic political rivalries.

Preserving democracy requires close civil-military cooperation and good government. As memories of past military abuses and failures fade, the risk of renewed military interventions will increase again in direct proportion to the difficulties democratic governments will have in coping with economic and social problems and in fighting insurgency, terrorism, and the illegal narcotics traffic. Mutual respect is critical. Civilians must recognize military contributions to the national defense and, in many cases, to public administration and development in remote areas. For their part, military leaders must honor the constitutional order and administer their own institutions in a manner that contributes to public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of civilian democratic government.

Civil-military cooperation becomes absolutely critical when a society faces terrorism, illegal drug trafficking, or guerrilla warfare. An active and in some instances even expanding military role may be required to counter such threats. But defining the nature of the threat and choosing the appropriate response require close cooperation between civilian and military authorities. And then the actual defense of democracy must be carried out without unnecessary or indiscriminate force. Abusers of human rights cannot claim to be acting in the name of democracy.

Five former members of the Salvadoran National Guard at their trial for the murders of four American churchwomen near Zacatecoluca, El Salvador, in December 1980. On May 24, 1984, a jury convicted all five and gave them the maximum sentence of 30 years imprisonment. (© UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)

Increased concern for human rights is apparent in several key countries where military and public security forces had previously been involved in gross violations of human rights. In El Salvador, military personnel now receive human rights training, and the National Police recently inaugurated a comprehensive, professional course in human rights that is mandatory for all personnel. In the past 2 years, human rights violations have been reduced to a fraction of their previous levels. Similar improvements in human rights performance have been registered in Argentina, Brazil, and Guatemala, where the military and civilian leadership is committed to respect human rights.

In Argentina, high-ranking military officers accused of committing severe human rights abuses during the military regime from 1976 to 1983 have been tried in civilian courts. Nine members of the ruling juntas were tried together for rights violations; five of the nine were convicted, with two receiving life sentences. In 1986, Ramón Camps, an army general in charge of the civilian police during military rule, was sentenced to 25 years in prison for human rights violations. In all, several hundred military personnel were expected to have been indicted before the statute of limitations for indictments for these crimes expired on February 22, 1987, a date established in an effort to ensure continued civil-military cooperation.

Looked at in historic perspective, the current shift to democratic rule appears to offer a genuine opportunity to break the cycle of alternation between civilian governments that lack the authority to govern and military governments that lack the legitimacy to last. Setbacks are inevitable, but the general prognosis is improving.

Economic Difficulties

The phenomenal economic gains of the 1960s and 1970s have been partially eroded in the 1980s by macroeconomic policies that fail to cope with falling commodity prices, global recession, and foreign debt that approaches $400 billion for the region. Only Brazil has been able to maintain consistently high growth rates since 1983. Although oil prices and interest rates have fallen since their

peaks in 1981, the prices of most of the hemisphere's commodities have remained depressed. The oil-producing countries in the region—Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela—were hit especially hard by the collapse of petroleum prices in 1986. In many countries, the old statist, protectionist policies that inhibit investment, reduce business initiative, and stimulate capital flight are changing only slowly.

A rising tide of protectionism in the developed countries—essential export markets for Latin America and the Caribbean—also threatens growth. In recent years, the United States has substantially outperformed all other industrialized countries in expanding the purchase of Latin American and Caribbean goods. At the same time, however, U.S. exports to the region contracted sharply, creating a more favorable trade balance for Latin America but also adding fresh pressures to open the hemisphere's markets to U.S. products.

Most of the Latin American and Caribbean countries that have achieved modest growth during the 1980s still find that the economic gains do not offset higher population growth. The pressures of immediate human needs increase the difficulties of allocating scarce resources to important longer term institutional development.

The United States and the other members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) realize the importance of coordinating their economic policies to promote free trade and economic stabilization so as to facilitate continued democratic progress. The OECD countries also recognize that nations committed to democratic government and policies fostering economic growth should receive priority for foreign assistance. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank are all creating incentives for policy reforms that promote economic freedom, less state interference, and higher economic growth.

Greater participation by Western Hemisphere nations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) should help stave off protectionist demands by broadening the opportunities for redress of trade grievances. In 1986, Mexico joined the GATT, and Costa Rica applied for membership. Twenty Latin American and Caribbean countries are now members of GATT and are participating in the new multinational trade round agreed to at the Uruguay talks in September 1986.

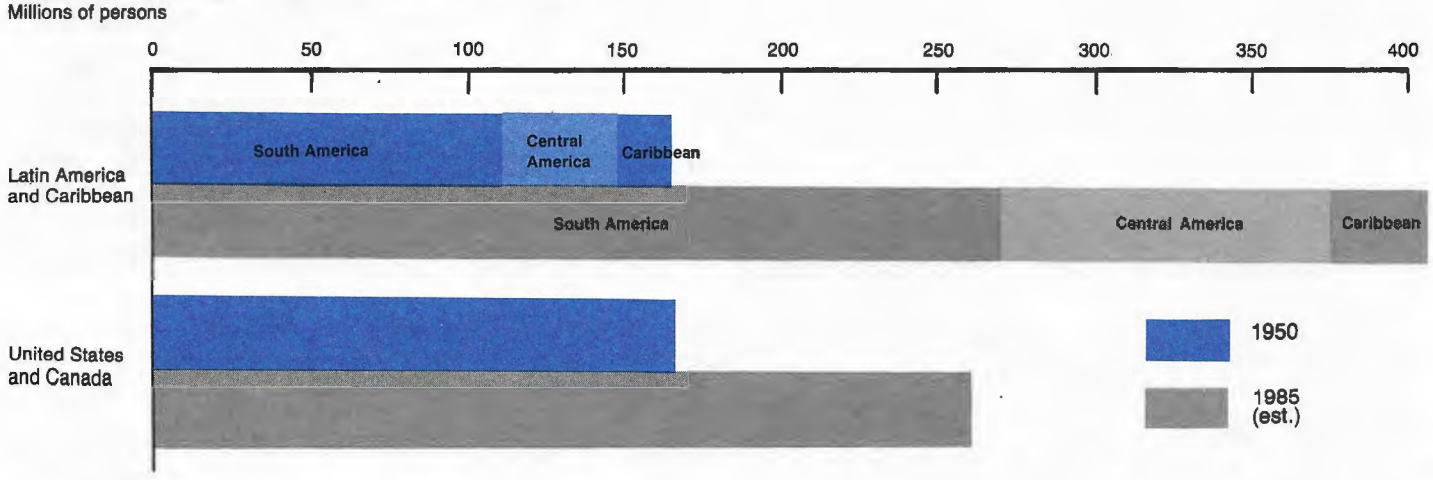
The consolidation of democratic governments throughout Latin America and the Caribbean offers the promise of a stable political environment for restored economic health. Many Latin American governments are encouraging private entrepreneurship and reducing restrictions on foreign investment in order to stimulate growth. As economies become more market-oriented and generate higher levels of savings, investment, and production and lower levels of inflation, living standards will improve provided population growth is restrained. Such positive developments would lead to greater confidence in the political system that inspired them. Democracy, however, also provides an environment in which unpopular measures can be challenged and even disrupted. Should growth not resume, and should the critics of current economic policies prevail in coming elections, governmental intervention in the economy and confrontation with creditors could increase.

Illegal Narcotics Trade

The growing illegal narcotics trade, spurred by the tremendous demand for drugs in the United States, has become a major regional problem. In some situations, narcotics traffickers have aligned themselves with guerrillas and terrorists, buying protection that undermines elected civilian government. Addiction among youth and government corruption are major problems. No nation in the Western Hemisphere is untouched by the production, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs.

The increase in narcotics-related activities—from crop production to processing to transshipment to bank laundering of profits—is caused in part by severe economic problems. Faced with limited opportunities at home and a

Western Hemisphere: Population, 1950 and 1985



Source: *United Nations Statistical Yearbook, 1983/4.*

large market for narcotics in the United States, many people have turned to the drug trade out of economic necessity. In Bolivia, for example, it is estimated that approximately 350,000 people, or 5% of the population, depend directly on coca production for their livelihood. The 61% growth rate in Bolivia's agricultural sector between 1980 and 1986 was due almost entirely to increases in coca production.

Institutional Weaknesses

The civilian institutions critical to democracy's proper functioning are often fragile, inefficient, or unevenly developed. Judicial systems generally suffer from inadequate financial, institutional, managerial, and human resources. For decades, the press and media have been strongly influenced by authoritarian regimes or traditional elites; journalists typically suffered from low pay and poor training. The resulting mixture of servility and resentment hampers objectivity and professionalism. The difficulties faced by political parties in developing national organizational structures and effective leadership are compounded by the disruptions and losses suffered in past repressions. Electoral laws and procedures have been subject to frequent changes, and there is a lack of trained electoral administrators. Finally, but far from least in importance, the pervasiveness of hierarchical structures with deep historic and cultural roots have created ingrained authoritarian habits even among individuals and parties with democratic intentions.

Many of these weaknesses can be overcome if the current democratic momentum continues and if those Latin Americans interested in overcoming them are able to obtain cooperation from groups with similar interests. Fortunately, linkages between political parties in Latin America and the Caribbean and international political movements are stronger than ever before. So are direct party-to-party ties. Many European political party foundations are active throughout the hemisphere. Parliamentary exchanges between legislators in the hemisphere and their counterparts in other countries are a growing source of solidarity, as are similar programs involving democratic trade unions.

Political Extremism and Totalitarianism

Latin America's authoritarian tradition and the lack of a democratic consensus have promoted factionalism, intransigence, and fear of instability. On both the far left and the far right, political movements have relied on force to attain objectives.

Dictatorships of the right—typically closely linked to the military—have historically been the nemesis of Latin American democrats. While in most cases not establishing totalitarian controls over all aspects of life, dictatorships like those of Gen. Fulgencio Batista in Cuba and Gen. Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua have carried out some of the cruelest abuses of human rights in the postwar period. Moreover, by cloaking abuse in democratic forms such as plebiscites, artificial opposition parties, and rigged elections, such dictatorships debase democratic ideas and procedures and discredit genuine democrats.

> ***"There can be no peace, even if [the Sandinistas] throw all their artillery and their helicopter gunships into Lake Managua, if there is no democratic opening in Nicaragua."***
>
> **Honduran President José Azcona, May 21, 1986**

Authoritarianism of the far right has thus been a major factor contributing to a new and growing threat to democracy in Latin America: the threat of communist totalitarianism.

The totalitarian threat takes several forms. The most obvious is the actual consolidation of totalitarianism in power as occurred in Cuba and is happening in Nicaragua. Like traditional dictatorships, totalitarian governments are highly authoritarian. A key difference is that they also are systematically hostile to all activities independent of state control. By stifling individual enterprise and driving professionals and entrepreneurs into exile, these new "revolutionary vanguards" have aggravated their countries' social and economic underdevelopment as well as denied the political and cultural rights of their citizens.

A second threat is subversion. Acting both directly and through Cuba and, more recently, Nicaragua, the Soviet Union has provided support—ranging from propaganda to training and weaponry—to guerrilla forces and other terrorist groups in Latin America and the Caribbean. In El Salvador, such assistance helped turn what had, in the 1970s, been poorly armed and mutually antagonistic bands of kidnapers and bank robbers into what by the early 1980s had become a centrally commanded and well-armed guerrilla army with secure communications.

A third threat is that the totalitarian offensive will stimulate a new reaction from the far right. Guerrilla warfare and other forms of subversion have antidemocratic consequences even when their perpetrators do not succeed in seizing power. In Central America, the guerrillas have been stopped by improved government performance, the outstanding leadership of democrats like Presidents José Napoleón Duarte of El Salvador and Vinicio Cerezo of Guatemala, and U.S. support for democracy, but persistent subversion from Nicaragua could still endanger this progress by stimulating an ugly resurgence of right-wing extremism. In Chile, the authorities succeeded in discovering—before they could be used—large caches of arms secretly smuggled in by the Soviet bloc, but the evident threat of armed insurrection that the arms represented created new problems for moderates working for a democratic transition to replace the military regime of General Pinochet.

The United States

A NEW CONSENSUS?

For more than three decades, it was an axiom of American foreign policy that politics stopped at the water's edge. The axiom reached its height during World War II when the Democratic and Republican Parties united to defeat fascism and militarism. Following the war, both parties supported containment of the new threat: Soviet expansionism. Unfortunately, that bipartisan consensus, which had been the hallmark of the postwar period, began to break down over the war in Southeast Asia.

For awhile, it appeared that a new consensus might coalesce around consideration for human rights. But the concept of "human rights" suffered the fate of many fresh ideas and was viewed with a suspicion that produced heated controversy. There were contradictions between the policy's stated goals and its actual implementation. It proved to be an incomplete moral basis for policy because, strictly applied, it treated the problem of political repression without regard to the structure of government that permits or prevents abuses. In addition, the soundness of the human rights policy in national security terms was called into question as it became identified—rightly or wrongly—with two traumatic foreign policy events: the fall of the Shah of Iran and of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua. Both had been viewed as staunch U.S. allies in areas of geostrategic importance and both were replaced by governments inimical to U.S. interests, to democratic ideals, and to fundamental human rights.

The idea that U.S. foreign policy should embody America's values was fundamentally sound. The basis for a consensus did exist. It ultimately found expression in a value that the American people—that, indeed, all people—could rally around; a value more constructive than the concept of containment, on which the original postwar consensus had been built, and more comprehensive than that of human rights, on which the new consensus had initially foundered; a value, moreover, that clearly defined the conflict between a democratic United States and a totalitarian Soviet Union. Support for democracy, the very essence of American society, is becoming the new organizing principle for American foreign policy.

Support for democracy advances U.S. interests in several important ways.

Democracy helps to guarantee U.S. security. Democratic governments, because they must be responsive to their people, tend to be good neighbors. Open and regular political competition lessens political polarization and extreme swings of the pendulum (as happened in Chile, Cuba, and Nicaragua) and makes nations more resistant to subversion. Democratic governments are more reliable as signatories to agreements and treaties because their actions are subject to public scrutiny.

Democracy also advances important U.S. political and economic interests. Democratic countries are more likely to protect human rights and create environments in which people can work to achieve their full potential. Democratic processes are good for business and labor. Once established, political and economic freedoms provide a predictable and equitable basis for economic development.

Democracy helps the United States organize itself to cooperate and get things done internationally. As a people, Americans are more comfortable dealing with democratic governments than with authoritarian regimes. Our common interests are better understood. A foreign policy that supports democracy is capable of garnering broad, enduring public and congressional support. It is much easier for the United States, as a democratic society, to work with civilians like Presidents Alfonsín and Duarte than with the generals who preceded them.

Support for democracy not only embodies American values; it reconciles the conflict that often arises between U.S. strategic interests and the need to give moral substance to whatever policy serves those interests. As a commitment with bipartisan support, it provides the basis for a consistency and continuity in American foreign policy that have long been seen as lacking. Finally, support for

The Case of Bolivia

Bolivia in 1967 became the end of the line for Che Guevara and his band of Cuban guerrillas. But with 175 or more changes in government in 162 years of independence, Bolivia has long been Latin America's most unstable country. Already among the poorest countries in the world, with an annual per capita income of less than $600, Bolivia must now overcome the decline of the tin mining industry that has been its most important source of nonagricultural employment. Finally, Bolivia has recently become a major production and staging center for global trafficking in cocaine.

Despite these extraordinary obstacles, Bolivia has in recent years made significant progress toward democracy. Calls for political liberalization led to Gen. Hugo Bánzer's resignation in 1978 and ushered in a series of short-lived military and civilian regimes. In presidential elections in 1980, former President Hernán Siles (1956–60) won a popular plurality, but General Luís García-Meza, using Siles' failure to win a majority of the popular vote as a pretext, seized power in August 1980 with the support of Bolivian narcotics traffickers.

Secretary of State Edmund Muskie denounced the García-Meza coup, and the Carter Administration downgraded diplomatic relations, suspended nonhumanitarian aid and military assistance, and closed the U.S. military mission in Bolivia. Despite pressure to normalize ties with Bolivia, the Reagan Administration continued to deny U.S. support to García-Meza. On October 10, 1982, new military leaders allowed Siles to assume the presidency. The Siles government received considerable economic assistance and moral support from the United States. Because his government was weakened by a lack of cooperation among coalition members, a faltering economy, and increasingly violent labor disruptions, Siles cut his term short by 1 year and called a presidential election in 1985.

Thirty parties and eighteen presidential candidates participated in the 1985 election. The final electoral count gave 28.5% of the vote to retired army general and former dictator (1971–78) Hugo Bánzer. Ex-president (1952–56, 1960–64) Victor Paz Estenssoro, patriarch of the 1952 revolution, had the second highest tally, 26.4%. Because neither candidate won a majority, selection of the president fell to the legislature, which voted 94 to 51 for Paz despite his having placed second to Bánzer in the popular vote. Bánzer accepted the legality of the outcome, and he and his party have actively cooperated with the Paz government on vital policy issues such as economic reform and narcotics control.

democracy enables U.S. foreign policy to match (and exceed) what has been identified as perhaps the strongest element of Soviet foreign policy: an enduring sense of direction.

These new perceptions have particular significance for U.S. policy in Latin America and the Caribbean, where many believe that the United States has sacrificed democratic principles and even encouraged repressive military regimes in the pursuit of containment and stability at any price. This critical view ignores the role that U.S. assistance programs and support for free trade, to take just two examples, have played in the fundamental socioeconomic transformations that have contributed to the democratic transition. Nevertheless, cynicism about U.S. purposes has broad acceptance and contributes to the ambivalence that many people in Latin America and the Caribbean express about relations with the United States. Now that U.S. policy embodies democratic values in an explicit, concrete, and continuing manner, the impact on public opinion will, over time, prove quite substantial.

SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY: PROVEN TOOLS

The United States cannot support democratization in Latin America unless it supports the efforts of Latin Americans. Democracy depends on complex interactions that come in many forms; it is not an export commodity. This section considers U.S. efforts to make more effective use of the proven tools of statecraft to support the movement toward democracy in the hemisphere; the following section describes efforts to create new tools to bolster democratic institutions and development.

Diplomacy

Two principal goals of U.S. diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean are to strengthen democratic government and to promote peaceful resolution of the conflicts and tensions that threaten its consolidation. Diplomatic activity to advance these goals takes a variety of forms in many different arenas.

The President and the Secretary of State, along with other key foreign policy leaders, enunciate U.S. goals in major foreign policy speeches, in bilateral meetings with their counterparts in the region, and in consultations with our allies. Their visits to the region, and invitations extended to the democratic leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean to come to the United States, are consciously used to demonstrate U.S. support for democratic rule and repudiation of both civilian and military authoritarian regimes.

The President himself announced the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) in February 1982 in a speech before the Organization of American States. His message linked the future of democracy in that part of the hemisphere to economic development and pledged major U.S. support for those dual goals. On this and other occasions, President Reagan has stressed that the United States will not remain indifferent "when democratic values are at risk."

Support for democracy also has been the recurrent and consistent theme in speeches by the Secretary of State and the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. At the OAS General Assembly, in testimony before committees of Congress, and in statements in numerous public fora during the past 5 years, U.S. leaders have reaffirmed Jefferson's maxim that "the will of the people is the only legitimate foundation of any government."

Support for democratic institutions was a main theme of President Reagan's visit to Central and South America in December 1982. Accompanied by Secretary of State George Shultz, the President visited two traditional democratic allies (Costa Rica and Colombia) and Brazil, where congressional elections had just marked a major step in the democratic transition. In February 1986, the President met with the prime ministers of several independent English-speaking Caribbean nations in Grenada in a demonstration of democratic solidarity.

Visits by the Vice President, the Secretary of State, and other senior officials are employed to reinforce our commitment to democratic civilian rule. The inaugurations of democratically elected leaders (among them the Presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Uruguay, and Venezuela) have become key occasions for mutual support and consultations among democratic forces. The inauguration of President Raúl Alfonsín in December 1983 (at which Vice President George Bush represented the United States) became a powerful and emotional celebration in which representatives of Spain, Portugal, Peru, and Ecuador—all countries that had moved into the democratic ranks during the previous decade—demonstrated their solidarity with the newest member of the international democratic community.

The state visit to Washington of President Alfonsín in 1985 was the first by an Argentine head of state since 1958. The official visit by President Vinicio Cerezo in May 1987 will be the first ever by a Guatemalan president. During 1986 alone, the civilian Presidents of Brazil, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Mexico made state or official working visits to the United States. President Reagan also met at the White House with Gen. Henri Namphy, head of Haiti's National Governing Council, as a signal of support for the democratic transition there and for the

> ***"The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy—the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities—which allows a people to choose their own way, to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means."***
>
> **President Ronald Reagan,**
> **Address before the British Parliament,**
> **London, England, June 8, 1982**

electoral timetable drawn up by his provisional government. In addition, the President has met with several of his Latin American and Caribbean counterparts while they were in the United States on private visits.

Progress toward democracy is a major topic of discussion with our European allies. In consultations such as the semiannual NATO experts' meetings on Latin America and the Caribbean, U.S. officials regularly exchange views with allied officials on the status of democratic government and the measures being taken to support its continuance. Consultations within the framework of the OECD provide an opportunity to win support for policies that promote growth and development for our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere, thereby strengthening the economic underpinnings of democracy. In fora such as these, as well as in bilateral consultations with our allies, the United States has urged sending international observers to encourage electoral freedom and to recognize it publicly when it takes place.

Through the efforts of the President's Special Envoy for Central America, who is charged with promoting negotiations to resolve the conflict there, the United States supports regional negotiations, giving special emphasis to the need for comprehensive, simultaneous, and verifiable implementation of the security and democratic goals set forth in the 1983 Contadora Document of Objectives. Three distinguished Americans have served as Special Envoy: Richard Stone, former U.S. Senator (D–Florida); Harry W. Shlaudeman, former Assistant Secretary of State and now U.S. Ambassador to Brazil; and Philip C. Habib, former Under Secretary of State and Special Middle East Envoy, the current Special Envoy.

Military Assistance

Military assistance for Latin America and the Caribbean consists of funds provided under the Military Assistance Program (MAP) and the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. In fiscal year (FY) 1986, military assistance for the region totaled approximately $234 million, or about 4% of all U.S. military assistance worldwide. (The 1986 figures included a small amount of credit assistance under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. FMS credits to the region have been discontinued in favor of MAP grants.)

Approximately 82% of U.S. military assistance for the region in FY 1986 went to El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Colombia—four regional democracies battling insurgencies. Nowhere is this assistance more important than in Central America, where the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua supports guerrilla movements in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and provides military training to a nascent insurgent movement in Costa Rica. Another 9% went to support the development of basic surveillance, search and rescue, and self-defense capabilities in the Caribbean democracies. Our military assistance also supports hemisphere-wide efforts to halt the production and trafficking of narcotics.

Under the initial FY 1987 allocations, military assistance to the region has been cut by about 7%, thus limiting our ability to support our neighbors in combating both guerrilla insurgencies and illegal narcotics trafficking.

In October 1986, Congress approved $100 million to support the Nicaraguan democratic resistance in its struggle to recover the promise of democracy stolen from the Nicaraguan people by the Sandinistas.

The Power of Public Opinion

Of the 33 independent nations of Latin America and the Caribbean, only three—Cuba, Nicaragua, and Paraguay—prohibit independent public opinion polls. In the rest of the region, political parties, individual scholars, and dozens of polling firms are continually using internationally recognized survey methods to measure citizen concerns.

Political polling, from in-depth questions about citizen concerns to polls on candidate popularity and opinions on foreign affairs, is the speciality of several dozen respected public opinion firms, including Gallup affiliates, from Mexico to Argentina. *UNIVISION*–Spanish International Network, the largest Spanish-language television system in the United States, has conducted extensive voter exit polls in several countries, including El Salvador, developing a record of predicting election returns with enviable accuracy.

Economic Assistance

U.S. bilateral economic assistance totaled slightly more than $1.5 billion in FY 1986. It is administered by the Agency for International Development (AID) and consists of developmental assistance, Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance, and PL 480 food aid to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Developmental assistance accounted for almost 30% of total U.S. bilateral economic assistance to the region. Those funds are used primarily to improve educational and health systems, to support improvements in infrastructure, to build democratic institutions, and to bolster the private sector as the principal engine of growth.

The Economic Support Fund, which is used almost entirely for budget support, comprised about 42% of U.S. bilateral economic assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean in FY 1986. Almost 30% of U.S. bilateral economic assistance for the region in FY 1986 consisted of ESF for the countries of Central America.

In FY 1987, reduced global foreign assistance appropriations required that U.S. bilateral assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean be cut by nearly 20% to approximately $1.2 billion. These cuts come at a critical time when many of the countries are instituting difficult economic reforms, attempting to consolidate democratic civilian government, and battling leftist insurgents.

The United States provides additional economic assistance to the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean through contributions to multilateral institutions such as the the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and the Caribbean Development Bank. In 1985, U.S. contributions to multilateral development banks for Latin American programs were approximately $2 billion. Programs administered by these institutions provide additional sources of funding, generally on concessionary terms, for development projects in the region. U.S. contributions to these institutions also face cuts in FY 1987.

Economic Stabilization

The United States has a fundamental interest in the prosperity of the countries of the Western Hemisphere. Our strategy for dealing with economic problems, including the debt crisis, has been coordinated with other industrial countries. Applied on a case-by-case basis, the strategy emphasizes the need for economic adjustment in the debtor countries with the support of the international financial institutions, especially the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

At the 1985 annual meeting of the IMF and World Bank in Seoul, Korea, U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker proposed an initiative that builds on and strengthens the previous strategy. The plan he put forth contains three essential and mutually reinforcing elements:

- **First,** adoption of economic policy reforms to promote growth in the debtor countries;
- **Second,** a continuing central role for the IMF coupled with an increase in structural adjustment loans by the World Bank to support these reforms; and
- **Third,** when the first and second elements are in place, new lending by the commercial banks to provide additional support for the reforms and for long-term growth.

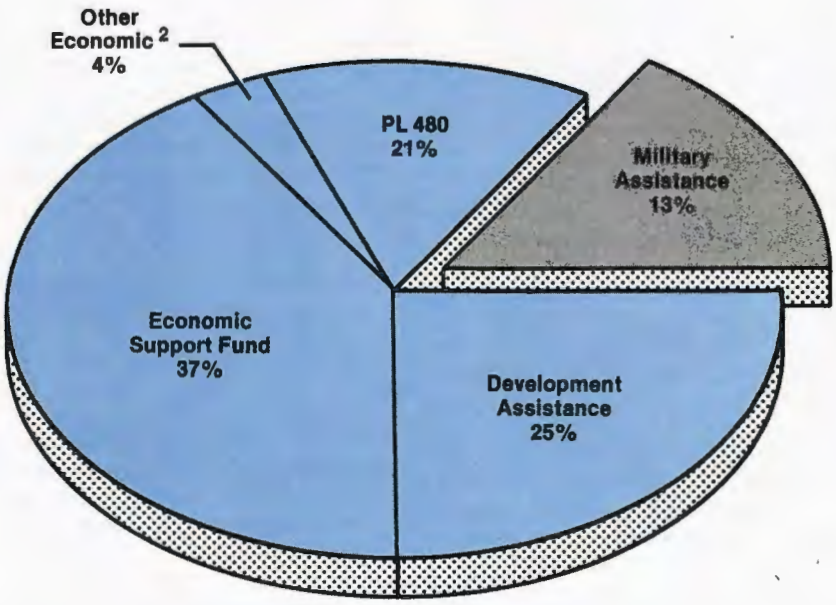
The heart of the new strategy is increased emphasis on growth to reduce debt and raise living standards. This approach has received strong support internationally and was recently affirmed by the IMF Interim Committee and the IMF/World Bank Development Committee at their meetings in September 1986.

The renewed emphasis on growth requires reduced reliance on statism, market intervention, and import substitution. The response thus far has been encouraging. Most Latin American and Caribbean countries have established more realistic exchange rates, expanded exports, and cut inflation. Several countries have begun to reduce entrenched structural barriers to growth; specifically, to take steps to reduce price controls and subsidies, to liberalize trade, to attack overregulation and excessive bureaucratic controls, and to improve the investment climate, including reducing restrictions on private foreign investment. Until these reforms produce practical results for a majority of citizens, however, the democratic leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean would benefit greatly from a demonstration that the developed countries (and especially the United States) are prepared to ease the burdens imposed by existing debts.

U.S. efforts to reduce domestic inflation have lowered international interest rates, thus reducing the debt-servicing burden on all the Latin American debtors. Similarly, our battle against protectionism and our own continuing economic growth in the last 4 years have helped countries in the region by enabling them to increase their exports. U.S. imports from Latin America and the Caribbean—mostly manufactured products—rose by nearly 7% per year during the 1980s, a rate well in excess of annual growth in gross domestic product. At the same time, the region reduced imports from the United States. Thus, a $3-billion U.S. trade surplus with Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981 had become a $17-billion deficit by 1985.

The Caribbean Basin Initiative is an attempt by the United States to engage the nations of the Caribbean and Central America in the development of new opportunities for trade, investment, employment, and broad-based growth in the region. The program was designed with a 12-year lifespan representing a long-term U.S. political commitment with incentives beyond immediate trade objectives. Countries with the policy framework to promote private investment and innovation will be most able to seize trade opportunities. The CBI has not yet generated the substantial economic growth that was originally envisioned. Thus the United States has added several other benefits and continues to seek additional measures for promoting economic growth.

U.S. Bilateral Assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean, FY 1986[1]



[1] Bilateral assistance amounted to $1.8 billion. This does not include U.S. contributions to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Interamerican Development Bank, and the Caribbean Development Bank expended in Latin America and the Caribbean.

[2] "Other Economic" includes funds for programs of USIA, Peace Corps, and the State Department (e.g., refugees, narcotics).

Peace Corps

The Peace Corps has been one of the most successful U.S. foreign policy initiatives of the postwar period. Almost 1,700 Peace Corps volunteers are currently serving in 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Throughout the region, Peace Corps volunteers continue traditional programs such as teacher training, nutrition, and health care. In recent years, however, programs have focused increasingly on support for the private sector with training and technical assistance in management and marketing to small businesses and entrepreneurs. New projects include activities that range from the development of income-generating student cooperatives modeled on the "Junior Achievement" program to technical assistance in crop diversification to small farmers.

Educational Exchange

In the past 5 years, the United States Information Agency (USIA) has expanded various international visitor programs. Exchange visitor grants fund travel to the United States for outstanding regional leaders in fields as diverse as journalism, arts and sciences, politics, government administration, and education. Through the Fulbright Program, American scholars have the opportunity to teach, study, and conduct research abroad while their foreign counterparts are given similar opportunities in this country. In addition, USIA administers the new pilot Central American Program for Undergraduate Scholarships (CAMPUS). The new Central American Peace Scholarship (CAPS) program, using AID resources, will eventually bring a total of 7,000 students from lower and middle class backgrounds to the United States. Other USIA programs support student exchanges at the secondary school level, help set up special programs for voluntary visitors to the United States, and arrange for U.S. travelers to the region to meet with counterparts in their respective fields.

Bipartisan Commission Stimulates Support for Democracy in Central America

In July 1983, President Reagan appointed a National Bipartisan Commission on Central America to advise on a long-term U.S. policy that would best respond to the challenges of social, economic, and democratic development in the region and to internal and external threats to its security and stability. The Commission, headed by former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, reported to the President on January 10, 1984, that the fundamental strategic and moral interests of the United States require a long-term national commitment to economic opportunity, human development, democracy, and security in Central America.

The President and Congress approved the recommendations of the Commission virtually unchanged, setting in motion a comprehensive strategy of economic and military assistance to address the root causes of poverty and social unrest, to foster equitable development, and to support democratization to help the region move beyond its history of dictatorships and instability. The strategy is to:

- Support democratic processes and institutions by backing free and competitive elections, the administration of justice, technical training, and the development of leadership skills;
- Stop declines in income, employment, and economic activity by providing major balance-of-payments support;
- Build the foundation for long-term economic growth by supporting improvements in economic policy and the infrastructure needed for efficient production and diversified exports;
- Assure the widest possible distribution of the opportunities and benefits of growth by helping to create jobs and improve health, education, and housing for the poor; and
- Help secure peaceful evolution in support of these objectives by providing military assistance to create a shield to protect democratization and growth from Soviet-backed subversion.

Complementing these development and security policies, U.S. diplomacy supports negotiations both within and among the countries of Central America to bring about the reconciliation needed to achieve socioeconomic progress, national security, and lasting peace.

This bipartisan approach, whose foundations are the promotion and defense of democracy, has proved critical to the progress achieved since 1984 in every country of Central America except Nicaragua. And the Commission noted that "the development of an open political system in Nicaragua, with a free press and an active opposition" would be a key to progress there as well.

Support for Private Sector Organizations

The U.S. Government lends its help to appropriate private initiatives that support democratic development. Long-term AID support for the programs of the "Partners of the Americas" helps develop linkages between U.S. civic and community organizations, youth groups, service organizations such as the Lions and Rotary Clubs, and business groups and their counterparts in the hemisphere. These people-to-people programs promote mutual understanding and cooperation and contribute to institutional development.

In 1986, AID funded and the Department of State assisted with the organization of a regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean sponsored by the International Committee for a Community of Democracies (ICCD). The ICCD promotes worldwide democratic solidarity as a means of sustaining, promoting, and defending democratic practices in more than 50 democratic countries around the globe.

Liaison With Trade Unions

U.S. diplomatic missions in Latin America and the Caribbean traditionally have maintained active liaison with trade unions and labor leaders because of their central role in national politics throughout the region. U.S. Government funds also support various activities of the AFL–CIO, including a major training program for union organizers at the George Meany Center in suburban Washington, D.C.


1976
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Venezuela
Guyana
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Colombia
Ecuador
Peru
Brazil
Bolivia
Paraguay
Uruguay
Chile
Argentina
Types of Government, LATIN AMERICA and The CARIBBEAN: 1976 and 1986
Largely or entirely democratic and open societies
Dictatorships or military regimes
Not catagorized
Note: Haiti was a dictatorship until February 7, 1986.
Names and boundaries are not necessarily authoritative.


1986
Mexico
The Bahamas
Cuba
Jamaica
Haiti
Dominican Republic
St. Christopher and Nevis
Antigua and Barbuda
Dominica
Saint Lucia
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Barbados
Grenada
Trinidad and Tobago
Belize
Honduras
Guatemala
El Salvador
Nicaragua
Costa Rica
Panama
Venezuela
Guyana
Suriname
Colombia
Ecuador
Peru
Brazil
Bolivia
Paraguay
Uruguay
Chile
Argentina
Names and boundaries are not necessarily authoritative.

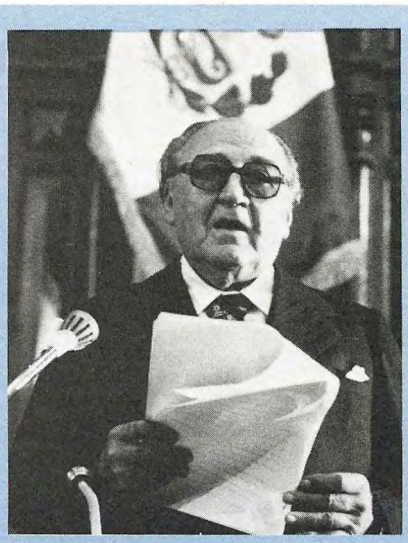
SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY: RECENT INITIATIVES

The National Endowment for Democracy

The National Endowment for Democracy was established by Congress in 1983 in the belief that private institutions in free societies can contribute to the development of democracy through assistance to counterparts abroad. Four constituent institutes—the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute, the Center for International Private Enterprise of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and National Republican Institute for International Affairs representing the two major American political parties—administer a broad range of projects in the region that emphasize leadership training, civic education, expanding and strengthening the linkages among U.S. and regional political parties, development of electoral machinery, support for democratic workers' federations, and promotion of private enterprise. Although most of the Endowment's funds are provided by congressional appropriation, it is an independent, nonpartisan organization. In fact, the National Endowment for Democracy is probably the most concrete example of the growing bipartisan consensus in foreign policy based on support for democracy as its guiding principle.

Administration of Justice

The development of independent, accessible, and fair justice systems is a crucial part of the consolidation of democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean. The U.S. Government recognizes this important fact and, in the past several years, has developed an innovative program to assist democratic Latin American and Caribbean governments in their efforts to carry out fundamental judicial reforms. Collaborative efforts involve the Departments of State and Justice, USIA, and AID. The U.S. program first focused on Central America and is now expanding to the Caribbean and South America. Under the program, the United States has given support for a variety of practical judicial reform measures including training for judges, prosecutors, and other legal personnel; improving court administration; reproducing and disseminating basic legal materials; training for criminal investigators; modernization of law codes; strengthening of case reporting systems; and support for local bar associations. In addition, U.S. officials are facilitating the establishment of cooperative links between relevant private U.S. organizations—such as law schools, bar associations, and law institutes—and their counterparts in Latin America and the Caribbean. Grants to support these activities have been made to the UN-affiliated Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD), the University of the West Indies, the Inter-American Bar Association and Foundation, and private and governmental agencies in individual countries.



Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (1895–1979) addresses Peru's Constituent Assembly, of which he was president, on July 23, 1978. Haya founded one of the hemisphere's first mass movements, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), while in exile in Mexico in 1924. (© UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)

Electoral Institutions

The consolidation of democratic government in Latin America and the Caribbean depends in large measure on increased public confidence in the electoral process and the institutional capacity to administer it. U.S. assistance seeks to build this capacity in national institutions through technical assistance, training, and material resources to help establish sound laws and procedures, administer elections, carry out measures to prevent fraud, and educate citizens about the voting process. In El Salvador in 1982, 1984, and 1985, and in Guatemala and Honduras in 1985, U.S. assistance for the electoral process—including provision of special ballot paper and ink and aid to computerize voter registration rolls—supported the democratic transition. AID funds have also been used to finance training of poll monitors in Guatemala and to support teams of international electoral observers for elections in Honduras and El Salvador.

In addition to assistance to individual countries, AID provides support to technical assistance, training, and research programs of the Inter-American Center for Electoral Assistance and Promotion (CAPEL), a division of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, located in San José, Costa Rica. The creation of CAPEL was a Latin American initiative, stemming from a meeting of foreign ministers in October 1982. Its services and resources are available to public and private institutions and individuals throughout the region.

Since 1984, increased funding has allowed CAPEL to expand its programs rapidly. The center has developed a roster of electoral experts from the Americas and Europe who can provide technical advice and participate in training courses, research projects, and observer missions. CAPEL has responded to requests for technical advice from Bolivia and Honduras on improving and computerizing voter registries; from Guatemala on drafting a new electoral law; and from Ecuador on improving the vote counting system. The center has conducted training courses on electoral legislation in Guatemala, Costa

Rica, and Honduras, cosponsored by each country's electoral court, the bar association, and local universities. A private organization in Haiti invited CAPEL to collaborate in a seminar on the electoral process and in a proposed nationwide voter education project to promote full participation in the elections scheduled for 1987.

CAPEL's growing data center collects and disseminates materials on electoral legislation, rights, and processes, and maintains permanent records of election results for all the countries in the region. The Department of State is aiding development of an electoral data base through a project with the Institute of Interamerican Studies at the University of Miami that is being coordinated with CAPEL. The data base will be available to students, journalists, and scholars from throughout the hemisphere as well as government analysts.

By collaborating with national organizations, CAPEL is building a valuable network of individuals and institutions committed to promoting well-administered, free, and competitive elections. In 1985, CAPEL helped stimulate creation of the Association of Electoral Organisms of Central America and the Caribbean, an organization designed to foster international cooperation to promote representative democracy. As its interim secretariat, CAPEL helped organize and fund the association's first annual meeting in San Salvador in December 1986 to which both Haiti and the Philippines sent official observers.

Strengthening Legislative Capacity

AID funds are used to support activities designed to promote and facilitate continuing interchange among parliamentarians in Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Western Europe, as well as to build the institutional capacity of regional legislative bodies.

In 1982, AID funded a training seminar for newly elected legislators initiated by the Congress of the Dominican Republic and a local university. Interest generated by the seminar led to the design of a long-range program of support services to enhance the policymaking and administrative skills of legislators. Drawing on this model and with technical assistance from participants in the Dominican program, the legislatures of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are undertaking similar programs funded by AID to strengthen information management and analysis and administrative support.

Antinarcotics Assistance

The United States is cooperating with governments throughout the hemisphere to end production of and trafficking in narcotics. In Mexico, Jamaica, and Colombia, we are working together to eradicate drug crops. Our most dramatic efforts to date have been in Bolivia, where U.S. military forces provided transportation for local law enforcement teams to destroy drug processing laboratories.

In the Caribbean and The Bahamas, we have supported extensive programs to interdict drug shipments. Other programs throughout the region support training for law enforcement officers and public education. The war on drugs at all levels also is being expanded with new resources provided by the omnibus drug bill passed in 1986. Of course, a central part of any strategy must deal with the massive consumption of drugs in the United States.

Civil-Military Relations

In 1987, U.S. authorities in California arrested retired Argentine General Suarez Mason whose extradition Argentina had requested after his indictment for human rights abuses. Through tangible actions, private consultations, and public statements, the U.S. Government is attempting to make clear that it expects cooperation between U.S. and Latin American military services to take place within a framework of civilian control and support for democracy. This was the theme of a major address entitled "A Democratic Vision of Security" by Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams at the 25th commencement ceremony of the Inter-American Defense College on June 13, 1986 (see Current Policy No. 844).

Poll workers in San Salvador open a ballot box and begin to count the votes in the presidential runoff election of May 6, 1984. Ballot counting had to be done by candlelight after guerrillas disrupted the city's power supply. (© UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)

Tiradentes: A Vision Vindicated

In late 1788, in the Province of Minas Gerais in the Brazilian interior, a group of men launched the first major conspiracy against Portuguese colonial rule. Their motives were mixed: freedom from debt and taxes owed to the Crown, a more open commercial system, and abolition of a social structure that denied them upward mobility. Some were inspired by the dream of a free republic, patterned after the newly independent American colonies. As students in France, several had discussed their plans with Thomas Jefferson.

The central figure in the *Inconfidência Mineira* (or Minas Conspiracy) was Joaquin José da Silva Xavier, a low-ranking officer known by his nickname "Tiradentes" (toothpuller), who embodied the complex motivations behind the conspiracy. After several business failures and the loss of his property, he entered the military but was passed over for promotion in favor of officers with better connections. Because of his dental skills, Tiradentes eventually met some merchants in Rio de Janeiro and, with them, developed his plans for an independent republic.

The scheme called for Tiradentes to provoke a riot, then lead an assault on the Governor's residence at the head of a group converted to the republican cause. After declaring an independent republic in Minas Gerais, the conspirators hoped to carry their war of independence to the other provinces. The constitution they planned called for economic reforms; freedom for native-born slaves; and establishment of a university, schools, and hospitals. Citizens would have the right to bear arms and would be required when necessary to serve in a national militia, but there would be no standing army. Each town would have a council subordinate to a parliament in the capital. After 3 years of provisional rule to consolidate the republic, elections were to be held annually.

Before they could carry out the plan, one of the conspirators divulged the plot. Tiradentes confessed but, to spare the others, claimed that he had conceived the plot alone. Among the charges leveled against him was attempting to translate the U.S. Constitution into Portuguese. The conspirators were tried, convicted, and sentenced to death; all save Tiradentes had their sentences commuted. On April 21, 1792, he was led to the gallows on the outskirts of Rio and hanged.

After Brazil became an independent republic almost 100 years later, Tiradentes was hailed as a hero. His vision had helped thrust Brazil into the nationalist, anticolonialist, republican mainstream of the Enlightenment and set Brazil on the road to the democracy it enjoys today.

With funding from AID and other donors and the assistance of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs of the Department of State, the School of International Service of the American University in Washington, D.C., is undertaking a study of civilian-military relations designed to promote dialogue among scholars and military and civilian leaders from the United States and Latin America. Civil-military relations is now a standard topic in the Washington briefings given to participants in USIA's International Visitor Program.

The Need for Mutual Support

The promise created by the convergence between Latin American democratization and increased U.S. support for democracy can only be fulfilled if headway is made in overcoming two separate problems, one for each potential partner in the quest for inter-American cooperation. They are Latin American instability and U.S. inconsistency.

For Latin America, the preliminary indications suggest that, this time, the cycle of instability is being broken in enough countries to make a difference. The strengthening of constitutional government has increased protection of human rights and provided channels for the redress of grievances. Freedom of the press has been restored in as large a country as Brazil, in some ways the freest of societies, and as small a country as Haiti, where for decades government censorship limited all forms of political expression.

Many of the same forces that sparked the decline of authoritarianism seem likely to favor continued democracy. Urbanization, industrialization, and the growth of the middle classes are continually expanding the potential democratic power base. Higher rates of education and literacy are increasing the number of people capable of seeking an active role in government and of communicating and obtaining mutual support from like-minded groups to protect democracy once achieved.

In 1985, two amendments to the Charter of the Organization of American States were proposed to recognize that "representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace, and development of the region" and that the promotion and consolidation of democracy are among its essential purposes. These provisions foster and reflect the potential for hemispheric solidarity and cooperation among countries united by democratic principles and practices. The inaugurations of newly elected civilian governments have become regular occasions for the democratic nations of the hemisphere to show their commitment to these principles.

The international implications of Latin America's democratic revolution are enormous. The democratic Government of Argentina has stressed its desire for a negotiated settlement with the United Kingdom over control of the Falklands/Malviñas Islands. This approach sharply contrasts with that of the predecessor military regime, which tried to resolve the issue through military action. In July 1986, Argentina and Brazil signed a dozen accords designed to promote trade, cooperation

in key industries, and otherwise strengthen mutual support and cooperation.

Finally, the absence of democracy has been recognized as a major source of conflict within countries as well as among them. In Central America, democratization has been the key to progress in El Salvador, while in Nicaragua the absence of democracy hampers national reconciliation. Democratization in both El Salvador and Honduras contributed to reducing historic border tensions and to their ability to implement the dispute resolution mechanisms contained in the 1980 peace treaty ending the 1969 war between them.

In the United States during the past decade, the U.S. Government—with both the Congress and the executive branch participating and, at times, even seeming to compete—has taken an increasingly active role in support of democratic processes and institutions throughout the hemisphere.

Considerable uncertainty nonetheless remains about the consistency of vigorous U.S. support for the democratic revolution in the region. Lack of sufficient funding for U.S. foreign assistance could, over time, cripple U.S. foreign policy. New protectionist trade barriers would aggravate the debt crisis. Halting support for democratic forces in Nicaragua would further endanger the security of the Central American democracies.

Increased U.S. continuity in foreign policy and political and financial commitment to democracy would mitigate many of these threats. Continued support for democracy requires a consistency—the combination of political will and sufficient resources—that has often been absent from U.S. foreign policy in recent years. The emergence of bipartisan coalitions in the Congress on matters from the Caribbean Basin Initiative to support for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance suggests this may be possible.

In short, though the dangers are great and growing, those who envision an enduring cooperative relationship among democratic societies throughout the Americas have more reason to be optimistic today than at any time since the early days of the Alliance for Progress. In Latin America, democratic achievements are all the more impressive because they have come piecemeal, one country at a time, usually without grand illusions about the outside world. In the United States, the realization that our neighbors in Latin America and the Caribbean are increasingly committed to democracy and that their success is important to our own security is strengthening support for a new bipartisan consensus.

If the United States and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean continue to provide each other support and encouragement, as they have in the past decade, it will be possible to say that democracy will have fulfilled its promise as both a cause and a result of good relations between Latin America and the United States. ■

Nicaragua: Appearance v. Reality

Elections were held throughout the Somoza era. Real power, however, was never put to a vote. The major change under the Sandinistas is that elections are not even regular.

General Somoza offered the Conservative opposition 40% of the seats in a constituent assembly in 1971. The "pact" between the Conservatives and Somoza's Liberal Party was rejected by other opposition parties, including the Independent Liberal Party and the Social Christian Party. But Somoza's manipulations made possible legal and constitutional changes that allowed him to run for president in 1974 in an election in which 9 out of 10 opposition groups had been excluded.

On August 17, 1974, Nicaragua's Roman Catholic bishops responded to the exclusion of the opposition by issuing a pastoral letter that declared that "a dominant majority party does not have the right to exclude and deny recognition to the minorities." The bishops denounced "legal weapons," asserting: "When the law becomes an instrument of force used to deprive citizens of their rights, to sterilize and destroy civic action, to imprison for the sole offense of not accepting the only system or the existing regime, it is legal war: it is the absurd destruction of man by the law."

Ten years later, in 1984, the Sandinistas put Nicaragua through the motions of another election. As in 1974, the Sandinistas never intended that the elections would determine who would exercise power. As in 1974, the Sandinistas permitted a faction of the Conservatives to win the largest share of opposition votes. And as in 1974, other parties opposed the ruling party's manipulation. Major opposition forces united in the *Coordinadora Democratica* to run Arturo Cruz for president but boycotted the election when it became clear that their candidates were denied the right to campaign freely. The Independent Liberal Party tried to withdraw later in the campaign, but was prohibited from doing so on a technicality.

On April 22, 1984, Nicaragua's Roman Catholic bishops responded to the growing polarization of Nicaraguan society by issuing a pastoral letter which declared that "it is dishonest to constantly blame internal aggression and violence on foreign aggression" and called for national reconciliation through dialogue. "All Nicaraguans inside and outside the country," asserted the bishops, "must participate in this dialogue, regardless of ideology, class, or partisan belief. Furthermore, we think that Nicaraguans who have taken up arms against the government must also participate in this dialogue."

On February 7, 1987, seven opposition parties—the Independent Liberal Party, the Social Christian Party, the Constitutional Liberal Party, the Popular Social Christian Party, the Conservative Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Communist Party called for the creation of a National Peace Commission to work for a ceasefire; full political, social, and economic rights in accordance with the new constitution; general amnesty; and an election calendar. The 1983 Contadora objectives and more recent Central American negotiating initiatives, including proposals put forth by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica on February 15, 1987, also make clear that democracy can no longer be left to appearances.

Country Summaries

Type of election(s) | Date of most recent election(s) | Date of next election(s)

Antigua and Barbuda

Parliament	Apr. 1984	By 1989

Antigua and Barbuda, which achieved its independence from Great Britain in 1981, has a parliamentary system of government with an elected House of Assembly and an appointed Senate. The British monarch, who continues to be recognized as chief of state, is represented by an appointed Governor General. The governing Antigua Labor Party (ALP), led by Prime Minister V.C. Bird, Sr., won decisively in the April 1984 elections, defeating an opposition coalition composed of the United People's Movement, the People's Labor Movement, and the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement. Although the centrist ALP swept 16 of 17 parliamentary seats, the election was considered free and fair by all accounts. A new opposition party, the United New Democratic Party (UNDP), was formed in March 1986 from the remnants of several old opposition parties. The UNDP, which has attracted several newcomers to politics, has a moderate, pro-Western philosophy.

Argentina

Congress	Nov. 1985	Nov. 1987
President	Oct. 1983	Nov. 1989

Argentina's most recent return to democracy began with a record-breaking turnout of more than 15 million voters in presidential and congressional elections on October 30, 1983. Argentines also went to the polls in large numbers in October 1984 in a nonbinding plebiscite on the Beagle Channel Treaty prior to the treaty debate in the Congress. Subsequent legislative elections in 1985 were widely considered an important step in consolidating democracy in Argentina. A wave of terror bombings designed to disrupt the campaign failed when the government invoked a state of siege, which in no way interfered with the campaign or the polling. The nearly 84% turnout, which approached that of the 1983 presidential election, was seen as a massive repudiation of violence and a popular affirmation of democracy. Distribution of the vote probably also helped to consolidate democracy: while the governing Radical Civic Union Party of President Raúl Alfonsín maintained its majority in the lower house, the Justicialist (Peronist) Party, despite serious internal divisions, polled sufficient support to maintain its plurality in the Senate and its credibility as a potential democratic alternative. In late 1986, parties began active campaigning for the 1987 round of congressional and provincial elections.

The Bahamas

Parliament	June 1982	By 1987

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas became an independent member of the British Commonwealth on July 10, 1973. As in most other Commonwealth nations, the chief of state is the British monarch, who is represented by an appointed Governor General. The government is a Westminster-style parliamentary democracy. The executive and the legislative branches are interdependent, but the judiciary is independent. Parliament, which has a maximum term of 5 years, consists of two houses: an appointed, 16-member Senate and an elected 43-member House of Assembly. The Senate's members are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of both the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition. Members of the House of Assembly are elected from individual constituencies. Prime Minister Sir Lynden O. Pindling's Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) has won five consecutive national elections dating back to 1967. The next election must take place by August 1987.

Barbados

Parliament	May 1986	By 1991

One of the most stable and prosperous countries in the Caribbean, Barbados is a flourishing parliamentary democracy with an elected lower chamber (House of Assembly) and a nominated upper chamber (Senate). The chief of state is the British monarch, who is represented by an appointed Governor General. Elections constitutionally are due every 5 years. There is a well-established two-party system; both parties are moderate, centrist, and pro-Western. Major differences center on personalities rather than philosophy. The ruling Democratic Labor Party (DLP) of Prime Minister Errol Barrow is closely allied to the island's major labor union and won 24 of 27 seats in the May 1986 elections. The opposition Barbados Labor Party won three seats and is led by Henry Forde. Although there are several radical, left-wing parties active in Barbados, they do not pose a challenge to the dominance of the two major parties. Elections have been scrupulously free and keenly contested.

Belize

Parliament	Dec. 1984	By 1989

Belize achieved independence from Great Britain in 1981 after an extended period of internal self-government. The pattern exemplifies the successful local adaptation of the British parliamentary tradition that flourishes in the Caribbean. In December 1984, in the first general elections since independence, the United Democratic Party (UDP) led by Manuel Esquivel won 21 of 28 seats in the House of Assembly. Voter turnout was moderate, and the election was free of any charges of fraud. The UDP, a moderate-to-conservative party, favors private enterprise to diversify Belize's sugar-based economy. The major opposition party is the moderate-to-leftist People's United Party.

One Inspiration, Many Models

In 1813, Thomas Jefferson imagined the day when the people of Latin America would be liberated from colonial rule and military despotism. In a letter to his old friend Lafayette, he predicted that the inevitable conflicts of the old autocratic order would "bring the people into motion, into action, and into the exertion of their understandings." The example of the United States, Jefferson hoped, would be "an excitement as well as a model for their direction."

In their struggle for independence, the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean did find inspiration in many of the same Enlightenment principles that formed the basis of Jefferson's constitutional thought. The philosophers of the Enlightenment believed that, just as there were laws of Nature, there were laws that governed human activity. They had limitless confidence in the ability of reason to discern those laws and apply them to human affairs. They also believed that man could be persuaded by Reason to conform to those laws without resort to the tyrannical and barbarous practices of earlier governments.

It was in the New World that men first attempted to apply these principles and to systematize not only the laws that govern the citizens of the state but also the rights of those citizens. These principles, spelled out in constitutions throughout the Americas, are familiar to all of us: government derives its authority from the consent of the governed; all men are equal under the law and entitled to due process; government has an obligation to guarantee individual liberties such as freedom of speech, of assembly, and of religion; and the constitution itself forms a body of supreme law.

The people of Latin America and the Caribbean sought additional inspiration in the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" and the Spanish Constitution of 1812. A number of the original Latin American constitutions went beyond the U.S. model by outlawing slavery. Constitutional revisions in this century have emphasized economic and social rights conforming to contemporary conceptions of social justice.

As Jefferson had envisioned, the United States did serve as an inspiration for the independence movement throughout the Western Hemisphere. Today, however, U.S. policy does not envision a single model of government for our neighbors. We know now that that is neither possible nor desirable. The region's constitutions establish many different forms of government—federal and unitary, parliamentary and presidential, republic and commonwealth. But Jefferson's essential vision remains: as democratic neighbors, we have a role to play in support of a democratic transition based on the values that all people of the Americas share—liberty, equality, justice, and peace.

Top: The Barbados House of Assembly is one of the oldest representative bodies in the world. The House, the lower chamber of the modern Parliament pictured here, has met continuously since 1639. (Photo courtesy of the Barbados Board of Tourism, New York)

Bottom: Brazilian President José Sarney tells a joint session of the U.S. Congress on September 11, 1986: "The true name of peace is democracy, because democracy is understanding, the capacity to find solutions other than the solutions of might." (Photo courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives)

Bolivia

Congress, President	July 1985	July 1989
Municipal	July 1985	Dec. 1987

Bolivia returned to democratically elected government in October 1982 following 18 years of military regimes. In 1984, faced with an increasingly chaotic economic situation, inflation of more than 20,000%, severe social unrest, the specter of a military coup, and the incapacitation of his government, President Hernán Siles Zuazo called for national elections in July 1985, a year ahead of schedule. The first round of the 1985 balloting gave no candidate an absolute majority. In accordance with the Bolivian Constitution, the Congress then chose between the principal vote winners and elected Victor Paz Estenssoro president.

Once installed, the Paz government moved swiftly and successfully, with the support of losing presidential candidate Hugo Bánzer and his Nationalist Democratic Action Party, to impose stringent economic reforms and deal with disruptive social elements. In 1986, the Paz administration requested U.S. military assistance to mount a very effective drug interdiction campaign despite severe domestic political criticism.

Brazil

President	Jan. 1985 (indirect)	Jan. 1991* (direct)
Mayoral	Nov. 1985	Nov. 1989
Congress, Governors	Nov. 1986	Nov. 1990

Brazil has held three major elections in the last 2 years. Following two decades of military rule, a civilian was elected president by an electoral college on January 15, 1985. The President-elect, Tancredo Neves, fell ill on the eve of his inauguration and died without taking office. Vice President-elect José Sarney became president. President Sarney has established himself as a major political figure in his own right. The Sarney administration is backed in Congress by the Democratic Alliance, comprised of two centrist parties: the PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement) and the PFL (Liberal Front Party). Together, they have instituted significant changes in the social and economic spheres.

A second major election was held on November 15, 1985, when Brazilians voted for mayors of the capital cities of the country's 23 states. The Democratic Alliance won most of the races. A third election on November 16, 1986, selected governors, federal deputies, two-thirds of the Senate, and state legislatures. Again, the Democratic Alliance scored a major victory, with the PMDB winning 22 of 23 gubernatorial races and majorities in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The election was especially significant because the Congress will write a new constitution for Brazil.

* The new constitution may change the presidential term; thus, it is possible that the next presidential elections will be held before January 1991.

Chile

Constitutional plebiscite	Sept. 1980	1989

The military took power in Chile in September 1973, replacing an elected government led by Marxist Salvador Allende, whose alliance with both Marxist-Leninist radicals and Moscow-line communists was creating mounting opposition and disorders in what had previously been considered one of Latin America's most democratic countries. The military ruled by decree until 1981, when a constitution ratified by a September 1980 plebiscite took effect. The constitution's provisions and the conditions under which it was adopted were criticized by opposition groups.

The constitution confirmed Gen. Augusto Pinochet as president until 1989, at which time another plebiscite is scheduled to vote on a single candidate nominated by the junta of commanders of the army, navy, air force, and police to serve until 1997. If the junta's nominee receives a majority of the votes cast, he would assume his duties on March 11, 1989. If the nominee is not confirmed in the plebiscite, the constitution provides for open presidential and congressional elections to be held 90 days before the completion of Pinochet's current term extended by 1 year; that is, the new election would be held 90 days prior to March 11, 1990. On that date, the newly elected president and Congress would accede to power.

President Pinochet has publicly opposed any changes to the 1980 constitution, although opposition representatives and some government supporters have advocated replacing the plebiscite with free elections. A constitutional amendment allowing free elections in 1989 is theoretically possible, if proposed by President Pinochet and ratified by plebiscite.

While the 1973 military takeover enjoyed considerable popular backing, opposition to continued military rule has grown over the 13 years of the Pinochet government. It responded to mounting public opposition and demonstrations with a tentative political opening in 1983, which ended with the imposition of a state of siege. Another period of liberalization followed the removal of the state of siege in mid-1985, but the Pinochet government firmly rejected dialogue with the democratic opposition, which had by then come together in a broad coalition of political parties known as the National Accord. The Chilean far left, meanwhile, has actively supported terrorist violence in hopes of blocking development of conditions that might lead to a peaceful transition to full democracy. The government, in turn, has used this communist-sponsored terrorism to justify broad crackdowns against the opposition. An assassination attempt against President Pinochet by communist terrorists in September 1986 led to reimposition of a state of siege, which was lifted in January 1987.

The Pinochet government has taken some steps to establish the juridical framework for the presidential plebiscite expected in 1989: adopting an electoral registration law in 1986 and announcing that a law to legalize democratic political parties would be promulgated early in 1987. But severe restrictions on political activity and other human rights prob-

lems persist. Efforts to improve the political atmosphere and restore fundamental freedoms such as freedom of assembly and speech are necessary for meaningful progress on a transition to full democracy. The United States has strongly supported a return to elected, democratic civilian government in Chile, welcoming the National Accord and urging dialogue between the government and the democratic opposition.

Colombia

Congress	Mar. 1986	**Mar. 1990**
President	May 1986	**May 1990**

Colombia has been governed by democratically elected governments for most of this century. The only exception was the dictatorship of Gen. Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953–58). Since then, the Liberal and Conservative Parties have dominated the political system, generally alternating the presidency between them. Congressional and presidential elections in 1982 and 1986 were considered free of fraud. The 1986 presidential election, which saw heavier than usual voter turnout, produced a landslide victory for Liberal Virgilio Barco Vargas over Conservative Alvaro Gomez Hurtado. President Barco continued efforts to entice guerrillas to join the political system.

Costa Rica

President, Congress	Feb. 1986	**Feb. 1990**

Costa Rica is one of Latin America's oldest constitutional democracies. The Constitution of 1949 eliminated the army in order to end any institutionalized military threat to elected civilian government; created a fourth branch of government—the Supreme Electoral Tribunal—with remarkable independent powers to assure scrupulously honest elections; and prohibited presidential reelection (or the election of anyone in the president's cabinet or immediate family). National elections, held every 4 years, select the president, two vice presidents, the entire Legislative Assembly, and local municipal councils.

In 1982 and 1986—and for many years before—the elections were actively contested, free of fraud, and featured voter turnouts of approximately 85%. Two major parties—both moderate—dominated both elections: the Christian democratic Social Christian Unity Party and the social democratic National Liberation Party. The latter captured both the presidency and the legislature in the last two elections. Other parties active in the 1982 election included the center-right National Movement, the communist Pueblo Unido coalition, and the fringe Independent and Democratic Parties. The 1986 election, which gave the presidency to Oscar Arias, also included the communist Popular Alliance, the communist Pueblo Unido coalition, the personalist National Christian Alliance, and the fringe Independent Parties. An earlier split within the Costa Rican Communist Party (PVP) was successfully arbitrated by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.

Cuba

Although Fidel Castro's ascension to power in 1959 was based in part on his promises to bring democratic freedoms, Cuba is a communist one-party state, and—with the fall of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic and Duvalier in Haiti—the most important exception to Caribbean traditions of democracy and representative government. The Cuban constitution contains provisions for popular and competitive elections; freedom of the press, speech, and religion; and guaranties of civil liberties. However, in accordance with the constitution, these protections are not available to "enemies of socialism," as defined by the state. Thus, Castro rules through classic authoritarian and Marxist-Leninist repression. There are no independent institutions or freedom of press or speech. Neither an independent judiciary nor a free trade union exists, and there are restrictions on religious practice.

Behind the ideological smokescreen, Castro's government is that of an aging, traditional *caudillo,* within the modern control mechanism of the 20th century party-state. There is no concept of a legal organized opposition, and this is summed up in Fidel Castro's aphorism: "Within the revolution, everything; against the revolution, nothing." Under these circumstances, those elections that have been held in Cuba since the revolution have been recognized as meaningless.

Dominica

Parliament	July 1985	**By 1990**

Dominica is a parliamentary democracy in the British tradition with an elected House of Assembly and nominated Senate. Unlike the other states of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), where the chief of state (the British monarch) is represented by an appointed Governor General, the head of state in the Commonwealth of Dominica is the president. Dominica, however, remains a member of the Commonwealth and continues to recognize Queen Elizabeth II as sovereign. Elections are constitutionally due every 5 years and have been free and fair. In the 1985 national election, the Dominica Freedom Party (DFP) of conservative, pro-Western Prime Minister Eugenia Charles defeated the leftwing opposition Labor Party of Dominica and the affiliated Marxist-led Dominica United Labor Party.

Dominican Republic

President, Congress	May 1986	**May 1990**

Despite an earlier history of alternating civil turmoil and authoritarian rule, democracy and fair election procedures have become institutionalized in the Dominican Republic. Suffrage in the Dominican Republic is universal and compulsory for those over age 18 and married. Over 70% of the registered voters participated in the 1986 national

elections. The country's three major political parties, the Reformist Party, the Dominican Revolutionary Party, and the Dominican Liberation Party, are represented at all levels of the government—federal, state, and local. With the election of Joaquín Balaguer in May 1986, the Dominican Republic has now had six consecutive elections at 4-year intervals. This follows a 5-year period of instability (1961–66) and the long dictatorship of Rafael L. Trujillo (1930–61). Two of those elections—in 1978 and 1986—resulted in the transfer of power to the major opposition party.

Ecuador

Congress, Municipal	June 1986	**Jan. 1988**
President	May 1984 (2d round)	**Jan. 1988 (1st round)**

Seven years of military rule ended in 1979 when Ecuador returned to civilian rule with elections under a new constitution. The constitution stipulates that no president may succeed himself. The inauguration of President León Febres Cordero on August 10, 1984, marked the first transition in 24 years from one elected democratic government to another.

Democratic institutions have had to survive several potentially destabilizing events since 1979. In May 1981, President Jaime Roldós died in a plane crash, but Vice President Osvaldo Hurtado assumed power in an orderly transition even though he belonged to a different party. In March 1986, a disgruntled air force general, Frank Vargas, staged two uprisings against the government of President Febres Cordero. In January 1987, rebellious air force troops supportive of Vargas briefly kidnaped the president and obtained Vargas' release from military custody. This incident generated coup rumors and led to opposition calls for Febres Cordero's resignation. In response, the Ecuadorean Armed Forces publicly rejected the notion that they might use the crisis to reimpose military rule, and Febres Cordero declared his intention to complete his term and to hold elections as scheduled in 1988.

Febres Cordero, a businessman, is a member of the Social Christian Party (PSC), which in the 1984 elections joined several other parties in a coalition called the National Reconstruction Front to defeat the presidential candidacy of Rodrigo Borja Cevallos of the Democratic Left (ID). Borja is one of several candidates expected to seek the presidency in 1988. In the midterm elections of June 1986, the ID won 17 seats in the unicameral Congress, giving it the largest congressional representation of any political party. The ID and other opposition parties hold a total of 40 of the 71 seats in Congress and have vigorously debated government initiatives, especially economic policy.

El Salvador

President	May 1984	**May 1989**
Congress, Municipal	Mar. 1985	**Mar. 1988**

In 1979, a reformist coup began what has turned out to be a gradual transition to democracy despite civil war and foreign intervention. In 1982, popular elections were held for a constituent assembly. Political parties allied with the guerrilla umbrella organization, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), rejected an offer of automatic registration for the elections, and called on voters to stay home. Very heavy voting was widely interpreted as a popular plea for peace. When none of the six participating parties won a majority, the assembly selected independent lawyer Alvaro Magaña Borja to head a government of national unity.

A presidential election was held on March 25, 1984. Eight candidates representing a broad political spectrum competed in the first round. José Napoleón Duarte, a founder of the Christian Democratic Party and former populist mayor of San Salvador, and Roberto D'Aubuisson, a retired army officer and leader of the ARENA (National Republic Alliance) party, received the most votes. In a runoff held on May 6, 1984, Duarte won 54% of the vote to become El Salvador's first freely elected civilian president in more than 50 years; more than 80% of the electorate went to the polls.

International observers attested to the fairness of both rounds of the 1984 presidential elections. Legislative and municipal elections, held as scheduled in March 1985, were again judged by international observers to have been free and fair. In a surprise result, the Christian Democrats obtained an absolute majority in the Legislative Assembly by winning 33 of 60 seats. The remainder of the seats were split among ARENA (13 seats), the Party of National Conciliation (12 seats), and several minor parties. El Salvador is now preparing for the next round of Legislative Assembly (1988) and presidential (1989) elections. In addition to the established parties, new conservative and social democratic parties are seeking legal inscription from the Central Electoral Council and working to build support for the next elections.

Grenada

Parliament	Dec. 1984	**By 1989**

The parliamentary elections of December 3, 1984, were the first national elections since 1976, the first since the rise and disintegration of the Marxist New JEWEL Movement, and the first since the brief 1983 U.S.-Caribbean military operation to restore order. Not surprisingly, the elections took place under the close scrutiny of several observer organizations. The observers concluded overwhelmingly that the elections were free and fair. The 84% voter turnout produced a firm mandate for the New National Party coalition led by Herbert Blaize. Five other parties participated in the elections, including the Grenada United Labor Party of former Prime Minister Sir Eric Gairy and the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, formed by supporters of the late Marxist prime minister, who had ousted Gairy in the 1979 coup.

Guatemala

Congress	Nov. 1985	Nov. 1990
President	Dec. 1985 (runoff)	Nov. 1990

Constituent Assembly elections on July 1, 1984, with the participation of an unprecedented 72% of the eligible electorate were characterized by international observers to have been remarkably free and open. The number of voters exceeded by nearly 800,000 the previous high recorded in 1982. Nine political parties and one regional civic committee, covering the legal political spectrum in Guatemala, won seats. In the 1985 National Assembly elections, three parties or coalitions, representing the right, center, and left, won 23, 21, and 20 seats respectively. The left-of-center Christian Democrats ran well in the heavily populated Indian highlands. The center-right Union of the National Center won the majority of seats in the capital area and made a strong showing on the south coast. The conservative parties (particularly the National Liberation Movement) fared less well than expected but retained their traditional strongholds in the eastern portion of the country. At the other end of the political spectrum, the Social Democratic Party competed openly after years of exile and won one congressional seat. President Vinicio Cerezo of the Christian Democratic Party was inaugurated on January 14, 1986. Guatemala still faces formidable social, cultural, human rights, and economic problems, but the progress made since 1984 is encouraging.

Guyana

President, National Assembly	Dec. 1985	No later than Mar. 1991

While Guyana maintains the structure of a multiparty parliamentary republic within the Commonwealth, its 1980 constitution defines the country as a "democratic sovereign state in the course of transition from capitalism to socialism." The constitution states that presidential, National Assembly, and regional elections are to be held every 5 years. Since 1964, the People's National Congress (PNC) has dominated political life in Guyana. Opposition parties and some civic organizations have charged electoral fraud. Since 1980, there have been two elections, the first on December 15, 1980, and the most recent on December 9, 1985. In the last election Desmond Hoyte was elected president. Opposition parties have either pulled out of these elections (1980) or refused to acknowledge the results as valid (1985). Municipal elections were scheduled for December 1986 for the first time since 1970; however, the opposition parties decided to boycott the elections even before nominations were closed. They alleged that the elections would not be fair since the PNC dominated the electoral machinery. The unopposed PNC candidates were declared elected by the elections commission, but no voting took place.

Haiti

Constituent Assembly	Oct. 1986	Not applicable
Constitutional Referendum	Not applicable	Mar. 1987
President, Congress	Not applicable	Nov. 1987

On February 7, 1986, President-for-Life Jean-Claude Duvalier fled Haiti, ending almost 30 years of autocratic government under the Duvalier family. He left behind an impoverished people with the lowest per capita GDP in the Western Hemisphere, a bankrupt government, a faltering economy, and an almost complete lack of institutions capable of participating effectively in a democracy. The "elections" held during the Duvalier era were designed to perpetuate the status quo and placate aid donors insistent on tangible evidence of democratic reform.

The National Governing Council (CNG), the transitional government led by General Henri Namphy, replaced Duvalier, eliminated the repressive symbols and practices of his regime, and set in motion a process of political institution-building. In June 1986, the council issued a comprehensive political calendar. Fulfilling one of the initial steps in the calendar, the CNG held Constituent Assembly elections on October 19. The assembly will draft a new constitution which then is to be approved in a national referendum in March 1987. Elections are to be held in November 1987 for a president and for members of the national legislature. Dates of future elections will be determined with the adoption of a new constitution.

Honduras

President, Congress	Nov. 1985	Nov. 1989

The April 1980 Constituent Assembly elections began a process that ended nearly 18 years of military rule. On November 29, 1981, Roberto Suazo Córdova of the Liberal Party won 54% of the presidential votes and 44 of 82 congressional seats. The major opposition party, the National Party, won 34 seats. Suazo's inauguration in January 1982 restored democratic civilian government to Honduras. In 1985, José Azcona Hoyo of the Liberal Party won election as president with about 51% of voters casting ballots for his party. The Liberal Party won 67 of 134 congressional seats and the National Party won 64. Azcona's election led to the first transfer of power between two democratically elected presidents in Honduran history.

The National Party, the oldest political party in Honduras, has traditionally maintained a moderate-to-conservative ideology and close ties to the Honduran military. The Liberal Party, which developed from the National Party in the early years of this century, has maintained a slightly more reformist ideology. Two smaller parties, the Innovation and Unity Party and the Christian Democratic Party, have taken positions somewhat to the left of the two major parties, but neither has obtained substantial electoral support. The National Congress recently passed elec-

toral reforms that include the introduction of American-style party primaries and conventions to select presidential candidates.

Jamaica

Parliament	Dec. 1983	By 1988

Jamaica, a member of the Commonwealth, has been a functioning democracy since independence in 1962. Under the country's parliamentary system, elections are held for members of the House of Representatives in each of the country's 60 constituencies. The constitution requires the prime minister to call a general election not later than 5 years after the first sitting of the previous parliament. The 1980 election saw the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) defeat the then-ruling People's National Party (PNP) led by Michael Manley. In 1983, Prime Minister Edward Seaga called a "snap" election. The PNP boycotted the election because it contended that new elections should not be held until the voter rolls were updated. Following a revision of the rolls and the adjustment of electoral districts to reflect population shifts, the PNP participated in island-wide municipal elections on July 29, 1986. Opposition victories in 12 of the 13 parishes have led to PNP domination of local government, while the JLP controls the national government. The next parliamentary election must be called by December 1988 and held within 3 months of being called.

Mexico

President	July 1982	July 1988
Chamber of Deputies	July 1985	July 1988

Unlike many countries in the region, civilians have governed Mexico throughout most of the 20th century. For almost 60 years, this leadership has been drawn exclusively from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). PRI candidate Miguel de la Madrid was elected president in 1982. But in recent years, opposition political parties have grown in membership and have run successfully in some municipal and legislative elections. Under electoral reforms begun in the late 1970s and modified in 1986, opposition parties have begun to play an increasingly important role in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house in Mexico's bicameral national legislature. Beginning with the new Chamber that will be elected in 1988, at least 200 of that body's 500 seats will be allocated to the opposition on the basis of a modified form of proportional representation. In addition, the opposition will still be able to compete for the Chamber's remaining 300 seats, which are elected on the basis of single-member districts. In the July 1985 congressional elections, the opposition won 8 of the 300 single-member districts then being contested. One-hundred seats allotted to the opposition in 1985 were divided among eight opposition parties on the basis of proportional representation. The opposition, of which the National Action Party (PAN) is the largest component, often accuses the PRI and electoral officials of fraudulent practices. On some occasions, election reviews have indicated irregularities at the local level and initial PRI victories have been overturned. In general, however, election campaigns and balloting are conducted in an open manner.

Nicaragua

President, Congress	Nov. 1984	1990

In July 1979, a broadly based coalition, whose military component was the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), overthrew the 44-year-old Somoza dynasty. The promised democracy never materialized. In April 1980, moderate members of the original revolutionary junta resigned, and, by the end of 1981, the FSLN held all key positions.

After rejecting elections as useless bourgeois trappings, the Sandinistas announced presidential and congressional balloting for November 1984, the week before the U.S. elections. The key opposition force was the *Coordinadora,* made up of political parties, labor unions, and private sector organizations, which nominated former junta member Arturo Cruz as its presidential candidate. The *Coordinadora* ultimately did not register its candidates because it believed the FSLN failed to provide the conditions necessary for free and fair elections. *Coordinadora's* rallies were broken up by government-sponsored mobs. Although the electoral law required that all parties be given equal time on television, opposition parties were denied access to the media. The FSLN received 67% of the vote, and Daniel Ortega was elected president. Some 75% of those eligible voted. Power was not at stake in the way the FSLN conducted the elections, but the fact of holding elections at all did give the FSLN some credit abroad.

Since 1984, political parties opposed to the FSLN have attempted to maintain some semblance of political life inside Nicaragua while exile groups, most of them linked to the armed resistance, have formed the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), the Southern Opposition Bloc (BOS), and the Miskito-Sumo-Rama Indian Unity (MISURASATA).

A new constitution was promulgated January 9, 1987, but was followed the same day by the declaration of a state of emergency. The government had said that municipal elections would be held in 1987 but did not set a specific date. Since then, the government has equivocated on that promise.

Panama

President, Congress	May 1984	May 1989

In 1968, the late Gen. Omar Torrijos and several other military leaders seized power, instituting prolonged rule by the National Guard (subsequently known as the Panamanian Defense Forces). The

Panamanian Constitution, in effect since 1972, provides for basic civil liberties; freedom of the press, speech, and assembly; and regular, competitive elections. While Panama is generally viewed as an open society and constitutional norms are followed for the most part, the Defense Forces' involvement in governmental affairs is pervasive.

The 1984 elections, the first direct presidential and legislative elections held in Panama since Torrijos came to power, remain a source of friction between the government and opposition party leaders. Although more than three-quarters of Panama's electorate participated in the elections, the vote was widely perceived as flawed, due to the prolonged vote tabulation process which was marked by irregularities. The resignation in September 1985 of President Nicolás Ardito Barletta, who had been declared the winner of the 1984 contest, under pressure from the Panamanian Defense Forces was viewed as a further setback to democracy. Barletta was succeeded by Eric Arturo Delvalle, who had been elected vice president in 1984.

The Democratic Revolutionary Party is the largest member of the National Democratic Union Coalition, the political organization affiliated with the Panamanian Defense Forces. The Panameñista Party of Arnulfo Arias is the opposition party with the greatest mass support, but historically it has been a major political force only when Arias has been an active candidate. The Panamanian Christian Democratic Party is well-connected internationally, maintaining close contact with the Christian Democratic International. This opposition party is respected for its ideological integrity but lacks a significant grassroots following.

Paraguay

President, Congress	Feb. 1983	**Feb. 1988**

There has been little change in Paraguay's political system since Gen. Alfredo Stroessner emerged as the political strongman in 1954 following several years of instability. The legal opposition parties are guaranteed one-third of the seats in Congress but are effectively powerless. A state of siege is continuously renewed and human rights problems persist. Though Paraguay has few political prisoners, the free exercise of individual liberties is curtailed, and opposition media voices remain banned or under heavy government pressure. In February 1983, President Stroessner was reelected to a seventh term that ends in 1988. The elections resulted in the ruling Colorado Party officially receiving more than 90% of the votes cast. Opposition party officials claim, however, that the elections were characterized by impediments to voter registration, fraud, ballot-box stuffing, and tabulation irregularities. The United States strongly supports the evolution of a more open political system in Paraguay, in which freedom of the press and expression are protected and all democratic parties can participate.

Peru

Congress, President	Apr. 1985	**Apr. 1990**
Municipal	Nov. 1986	**Nov. 1989**

Peru returned to democratic rule in 1980, ending 12 years of military dictatorship. The new constitution, promulgated in 1979, provides for the separation of powers among an executive (president), a bicameral legislature, and a judiciary; one 5-year term for the president; a second-round balloting system in presidential elections; and enfranchisement of illiterates. In the 1980 elections, Fernando Belaúnde Terry, whom the military had ousted in 1968 when it came to power, was elected president. In April 1985, Peru again had free and fair elections for a president, two vice presidents, and 240 members of the two houses of Congress. In July 1985, the Popular Action Party of President Belaúnde turned power over to the rival American Popular Revolutionary Alliance Party (APRA) of President Alán García marking the first transfer of power between democratically elected civilian presidents in 40 years. APRA also gained a majority in the Congress. Nationwide municipal elections in 1980, 1983, and 1986 have reinforced the democratic trend and have recently brought local self-government to many rural communities for the first time.

APRA, founded by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre in 1924, was Peru's first mass political party. Inspired by the Mexican Revolution, APRA has been both anti-imperialist and anti-Marxist. Over the years, it has evolved into a social democratic party; it champions integration of all of the disparate elements of the Peruvian population into the country's society. The center-right Popular Christian Party favors a greater role for private enterprise in the economic development of Peru. The United Left (IU) is a coalition of leftist parties, including two communist organizations and entities further to the left of the communists. In the 1983 municipal elections, the IU won the mayoralty of Lima, Peru's capital and largest city; the APRA candidate won this position in the 1986 local elections. Ex-President Belaúnde's Popular Action Party fared badly in the 1985 national election and became a minority party.

St. Christopher and Nevis

Parliament	May 1984	**By 1989**

St. Christopher (commonly called St. Kitts) and Nevis, which became an independent member of the Commonwealth in 1983, has a parliamentary system of government with an elected House and an appointed Senate. Prime Minister Kennedy A. Simmonds, leader of the People's Action Movement, rules in coalition with the Nevis Reformation Party, led by Simeon Daniel. This coalition government returned to power in a peaceful, democratic election in 1984. The leader of the opposing St. Christopher-Nevis Labor Party, Lee Moore, lost his seat in the 1984 elections, thus limiting his ability to challenge the present government.

St. Lucia

Parliament	May 1982	By 1987

St. Lucia—an independent nation within the Commonwealth since 1979—is a parliamentary democracy in the British tradition with an elected House of Assembly and nominated Senate. Elections are constitutionally due every 5 years and have been free, fair, and keenly contested. The centrist St. Lucia Labor Party (SLP) won the first postindependence election in 1979 but was brought down by internal squabbling and economic decline. The governing United Workers Party, a conservative party led by Prime Minister John Compton, won the 1982 elections. The Progressive Labor Party, a leftist splinter group of the SLP, is the only other major opposition group but is seen as unlikely to attract any significant electoral support.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Parliament	July 1984	By 1989

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a British-style parliamentary democracy with an elected House of Assembly (lower house) and an appointed Senate (upper house). The country has been an independent member of the Commonwealth since independence in 1979. Elections are due every 5 years and have been free, fair, and keenly contested. Five parties contested the 1984 elections. The two major parties are Prime Minister James Mitchell's New Democratic Party and the opposition St. Vincent Labor Party of newly elected leader Vincent Beache. Both parties are centrist. The three nominally radical parties that contested the 1984 elections were resoundingly defeated.

Suriname

Until a violent military coup in February 1980, Suriname was a functioning democracy with a history largely free of violence. The last national elections—and the only ones held since independence in 1975—were the parliamentary elections of 1977. The new military government, headed by Lt. Col. Desiré Bouterse, suspended the constitution and placed effective power in the hands of a five-member military authority, subsequently reduced to its current two members. In August 1985, Bouterse, the chairman of the military authority, was made head of government. In January 1985, a 31-member National Assembly was appointed; 14 members were nominated by the military, and 17 were nominated by the labor unions and a business association. The assembly was tasked with drafting a new constitution. The military authority announced in December 1986 that the constitution would be ready by March 1987. The constitution is expected to be submitted to a popular referendum by September 1987. General elections are scheduled to be held no later than March 1988. In July 1986, a new cabinet composed of representatives of military, labor, and business groups, as well as of the three traditional political parties, was appointed to implement a program of political and economic reforms. The nature of this program has not been further defined.

Trinidad and Tobago

Parliament	Dec. 1986	By 1992

Trinidad and Tobago achieved independence in 1962, initially retaining the British monarch as head of state. The country became a republic in 1976, replacing the hereditary monarch, represented by an appointed Governor General, with a president as head of state. The government is a Westminster-style parliamentary democracy in which the executive and legislative branches are interdependent; the judiciary is independent. The nation's bicameral Parliament has a maximum term of 5 years. There have been six parliamentary elections since independence. The first five elections were won decisively by the Peoples' National Movement (PNM), formerly headed by late Prime Minister Sir Eric Williams. In the December 1986 general elections, however, the center-to-left National Alliance for Reconstruction, under the leadership of A. N. R. Robinson, resoundingly defeated the ruling PNM.

Uruguay

President, Congress	Nov. 1984	Nov. 1989

Uruguay has one of the longest democratic traditions in Latin America, and voting is taken very seriously. The advent of military rule in 1973, in the wake of long-term economic decline and a serious problem of insurgency and terrorism, is seen by almost all Uruguayans as an anomaly in the country's political history. The return to democratic rule, marked by the inauguration of President Julio Maria Sanguinetti for a 5-year term in March 1985, following elections in November 1984, was supported by the vast majority of Uruguayans. Voter turnout was estimated at more than 90% of the electorate. The victorious Colorados won 41% of the vote, followed by 35% for the Blancos and 22% for the Broad Front. These parties now hold roughly those same proportionate shares

in the bicameral legislature. In addition to the Colorado and Blanco parties, a third political factor is the leftist Broad Front coalition, including Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, socialists, and communists.

Venezuela

Congress, President	Dec. 1983	**Dec. 1988**

Venezuela has had a democratic government since the dictatorship of Gen. Marcos Perez Jimenez was overthrown in 1958. Presidential elections are held every 5 years and are preceeded by years of campaigning. In the last four elections, the opposition party has won and been duly seated. In the 1983 elections, Social Democratic candidate Dr. Jaime Lusinchi was elected president. The central government has considerable power since state governors are appointed, not elected. There are municipal elections for aldermen every 5 years, shortly after the national elections. Although there are a variety of small parties, including the Communist Party, which cover the entire political spectrum, power has alternated between the two major parties, the Social Democrats (Accion Democratica) and the Christian Democrats (COPEI). Venezuelans are enthusiastic supporters of democratic elections and encourage electoral activity in other Latin American and Caribbean nations with less experience.

Dependent Territories

Anguilla

House of Assembly	Mar. 1984	**By 1989**

The British monarch is represented by an appointed Governor, who presides over an elected Executive Council and a House of Assembly. Chief Minister Emile Gumbs led his Anguilla National Alliance to victory in March 1984 over the opposition Anguilla People's Party.

Aruba

Parliament	Nov. 1985	**By Nov. 1989**

On January 1, 1986, Aruba became an autonomous state within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Prior to this date, Aruba formed part of the Netherlands Antilles. The Aruban Government is a parliamentary democracy. General elections for the 21-member Parliament are held every 4 years. A free election was held on November 22, 1985, to choose the Island Council, which became the National Legislature when Aruba achieved separate status.

British Virgin Islands

Legislative Council	Sept. 1986	**By 1991**

The British Virgin Islands is a British dependent territory governed by an appointed Governor and an elected local government. Former Chief Minister Cyril Romney's government fell to a vote of "no confidence" in August 1986. Elections in September 1986 brought Chief Minister Lavitty Stout's Virgin Islands Party to power.

Cayman Islands

Legislative Assembly	Nov. 1984	**Nov. 1988**

The Cayman Islands is a British dependent territory with a parliamentary form of government. The Legislative Assembly consists of 12 elected members and three official members. There are no political parties in Cayman, though loosely structured "teams" of like-minded politicians have banded together to contest elections. The last election took place in 1984. Elections must take place at least every 4 years.

Montserrat

Legislative Council	Feb. 1983	**By 1988**

Montserrat is a British crown colony. Elections are held every 5 years. In March 1983, Chief Minister John Osborne was reelected, but his People's Liberation Movement lost two of its seven seats in Parliament to the opposition People's Democratic Party.

Netherlands Antilles

Staten	Nov. 1985	By Nov. 1989

The Netherlands Antilles is an autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The government is a parliamentary democracy. There are two levels of government: the central government and the local governments of the island territories of Curaçao, Bonaire, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, and Saba. General elections for the 22-member Staten, or parliament, and for the Island Councils are held every 4 years.

Turks and Caicos Islands

Legislative Council	May 1984	To be determined

The Turks and Caicos Islands is a British Crown Colony. The government consists of a Governor appointed by the Queen and an 11-member elected Legislative Council. The People's National Party (PNP), headed by Norman Saunders, won eight seats in the May 1984 election. Saunders was appointed Chief Minister but had to resign when he was arrested and subsequently convicted of narcotics trafficking offenses in the United States. Nathaniel Francis replaced Saunders as Chief Minister but resigned in 1986 when a Commission of Inquiry established by the Governor found Francis and two of his ministers unfit to hold public office. The commission also found the leader of the opposition party to have been involved in a conspiracy to commit public order offenses to overthrow the Francis government. As a result of these internal difficulties, the constitution was amended by an Order of Council that replaces the Executive Council, drawn from elected members of the Legislative Council, with an Advisory Council, nominated by the Governor. The constitution is currently under review.

French Overseas Departments

French Guiana

National	Mar. 1986	By 1991

French Guiana normally holds elections every 5 years. It elects one Senator and one Deputy to the French Senate and National Assembly.

Guadeloupe

National	Mar. 1986	By 1991

In Guadeloupe, elections are open, democratic, and actively contested by parties on both the left and the right. Voter turnout is traditionally low; often fewer than 40% of registered voters cast ballots. As a French overseas department, Guadeloupe's political parties are essentially local versions of those competing in metropolitan France. Communists and socialists compete independently of each other on the left, while disagreements have led to the formation of separate *Union pour la Democracie Française and Rassemblement pour la République* slates on the right. Guadeloupe's northern dependencies, St. Martin and St. Barthelemy, operate as separate political entities but retain representation in the regional and general councils located in Guadeloupe.

Martinique

National	Mar. 1986	By 1991

An overseas department of France, Martinique enjoys an open political system. In recent years, elections in Martinique have been highly competitive and often very close, with strong, well-known local candidates heading up tickets offered by both the right and the left.

"Twenty-five years ago, when the Alliance for Progress was first launched, the entire hemisphere seemed to discover that there could be no long-term security without economic development. Today, we are learning a new lesson: in addition to the nexus between security and development, there is a second nexus—this one between security and democracy."

Elliott Abrams,
Assistant Secretary of State
for Inter-American Affairs,
to the Inter-American Defense
College, Washington, D. C.,
June 13, 1986

Additional Information

Recent steps to strengthen the rule of law in Latin America and the Caribbean are summarized in U.S. Department of State Special Report No. 145, "Hemispheric Cooperation in the Administration of Justice," April 1986. The role of the military within a democracy is the subject of Current Policy No. 844, "A Democratic Vision of Security," an address by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams before the Inter-American Defense College, June 13, 1986. U.S. support for democracy in Central America in accordance with the recommendations of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (the "Kissinger Commission") is extensively documented in the report to the President from the Secretary of State, Special Report No. 148, "The U.S. and Central America: Implementing the National Bipartisan Commission Report," August 1986. The progress made in one particular case also is summarized in "Guatemala's Transition Toward Democracy," Public Information Series, November 1986. Special Report No. 132, "Revolution Beyond Our Borders: Sandinista Intervention in Central America," September 1985, examines in detail the manner in which a powerful minority proclaimed itself a vanguard committed to revolutionary internationalism and sought to undermine elections and democratic reforms.

These materials and others on U.S. foreign policy and U.S. relations with Latin America and the Caribbean are available by writing to the Bureau of Public Affairs, Room 5815A, United States Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520, or by telephoning (202) 647-6575.

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