

U.S. Foreign Policy

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Presidential Candidate Ronald Reagan Calls for New Economic Policies, 1980

Almost two months ago, in accepting the Presidential nomination of my party, I spoke of the historically unique crisis facing the United States. At that time I said:

"Never before in our history have Americans been called upon to face three grave threats to our very existence, any one of which could destroy us. We face a disintegrating economy, a weakened defense and an energy policy based on the sharing of scarcity." . . .

Speech delivered before the International Business Council (Chicago, Illinois, September 9, 1980). In *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol. XLVI, no. 24 (October 1, 1980), 738-741 (excerpts).

I'd like to speak to you today about a new concept of leadership, one that has both the words and the music. One based on faith in the American people, confidence in the American economy, and a firm commitment to see to it that the Federal Government is once more responsive to the people.

That concept is rooted in a strategy for growth, a program that sees the American economic system as it is—a huge, complex, dynamic system which demands not piecemeal Federal packages, or pious hopes wrapped in soothing words, but the hard work and concerted programs necessary for real growth.

We must first recognize that the problem with the U.S. economy is swollen, inefficient government, needless regulation, too much taxation, too much printing-press money. We don't need any more doses of Carter's eight- or 10-point programs to "fix" or fine tune the economy. For three and one-half years these ill-thought-out initiatives have constantly sapped the healthy vitality of the most productive economic system the world has ever known.

Our country is in a downward cycle of progressive economic deterioration that must be broken if the economy is to recover and move into a vigorous growth cycle in the 1980's.

We must move boldly, decisively and quickly to control the runaway growth of Federal spending, to remove the tax disincentives that are throttling the economy, and to reform the regulatory web that is smothering it.

We must have and I am proposing a new strategy for the 1980's.

Only a series of well-planned economic actions, taken so that they complement and reinforce one another, can move our economy forward again.

We must keep the rate of growth of government spending at reasonable and prudent levels.

We must reduce personal income tax rates and accelerate and simplify depreciation schedules in an orderly, systematic way to remove disincentives to work, savings, investment and productivity.

We must review regulations that affect the economy and change them to encourage economic growth.

We must establish a stable, sound and predictable monetary policy.

And we must restore confidence by following a consistent national economic policy that does not change from month to month.

I am asked: 'Can we do it all at once?' My answer is: 'We must.'

I am asked: 'Can we do it immediately?' Well, my answer is: 'No, it took Mr. Carter three and one-half years of hard work to get us into this economic mess. It will take time to get us out.'

I am asked: 'Is it easy?' Again, my answer is: 'No. It is going to require the most dedicated and concerted peacetime action ever taken by the American people for their country.'

But we can do it, we must do it, and I intend that we will do it.

We must balance the budget, reduce tax rates and restore our defenses.

These are the challenges. Mr. Carter says he can't meet these challenges; that he can't do it. I believe him. He can't. But, I refuse to accept his defeatist and pessimistic view of America. I know we can do these things, and I know we will.

But don't just take my word for it. I have discussed this with any number

of distinguished economists and businessmen, including such men as George Shultz, William Simon, Alan Greenspan, Charles Walker and James Lynn. The strategy is based on solid economic principles and basic experience in both government and the marketplace. It has worked before and will work again.

Let us look at how we can meet this challenge.

One of the most critical elements of my economic program is the control of government spending. Waste, extravagance, abuse and outright fraud in Federal agencies and programs must be stopped. The billions of the taxpayers' dollars that are wasted every year throughout hundreds of Federal programs, and it will take a major, sustained effort over time to effectively counter this.

Federal spending is now projected to increase to over \$900 billion a year by fiscal year 1985. But, through a comprehensive assault on waste and inefficiency, I am confident that we can squeeze and trim 2 percent out of the budget in fiscal year 1981, and that we will be able to increase this gradually to 7 percent of what otherwise would have been spent in fiscal year 1985.

Now this is based on projections that have been made by groups in the government. Actually I believe we can do even better. My goal will be to bring about spending reductions of 10 percent by fiscal year 1984. . . .

This strategy for growth does not require altering or taking back necessary entitlements already granted to the American people. The integrity of the Social Security System will be defended by my administration and its benefits will once again be made meaningful.

This strategy does require restraining the Congressional desire to "add-on" to every old program and to create new programs funded by deficits.

This strategy does require that the way Federal programs are administered will be changed so that we can benefit from the savings that will come about when, in some instances, administrative authority can be moved back to the states.

The second major element of my economic program is a tax rate reduction plan. This plan calls for an across-the-board, three-year reduction in personal income tax rates—10 percent in 1981, 10 percent in 1982 and 10 percent in 1983. My goal is to implement three reductions in a systematic and planned manner.

More than any single thing, high rates of taxation destroy incentive to earn, to save, to invest. And they cripple productivity, lead to deficit financing and inflation, and create unemployment.

We can go a long way toward restoring the economic health of this country by establishing reasonable, fair levels of taxation.

But even the extended tax rate cuts which I am recommending still leave too high a tax burden on the American people. In the second half of the decade ahead we are going to need, and we must have, additional tax rate reductions. . . .

Another vital part of this strategy concerns government regulation. The subject is so important and so complex that it deserves a speech in itself—and I plan to make one soon. For the moment, however, let me say this:

Government regulation, like fire, makes a good servant out a bad master. No one can argue with the intent of this regulation—to improve health and safety and to give us cleaner air and water—but too often regulations work against rather than for the interests of the people. When the real take-home pay of the average American worker is declining steadily, and 8 million Americans are out of work, we must carefully re-examine our regulatory structure to assess to what degree regulations have contributed to this situation. In my administration there should and will be a thorough and systematic review of the thousands of Federal regulations that affect the economy.

Along with spending control, tax reform and deregulation, a sound, stable and predictable monetary policy is essential to restoring economic health. The Federal Reserve Board is, and should remain, independent of the Executive Branch of government. But the President must nominate those who serve on the Federal Reserve Board. My appointees will share my commitment to restoring the value and stability of the American dollar.

A fundamental part of my strategy for economic growth is the restoration of confidence. If our business community is going to invest and build and create new, well-paying jobs, they must have a future free from arbitrary, government action. They must have confidence that the economic "rules-of-the-game" won't be changed suddenly or capriciously.

In my administration, a national economic policy will be established, and we will begin to implement it, within the first 90 days.

Thus, I envision a strategy encompassing many elements—none of which can do the job alone, but all of which together can get it done. This strategy depends for its success more than anything else on the will of the people to regain control of their government. . . .

The time has come for the American people to reclaim their dream. Things don't have to be this way. We can change them. We must change them. Mr. Carter's American tragedy must and can be transcended by the spirit of the American people, working together.

Let's get America working again.

The time is now.

A New Right Activist Explains Conservative Successes, 1980

Our success is built on four elements—single issue groups, multi-issue conservative groups, coalition politics and direct mail.

Conservative single issue groups have been accused of not only fragmenting American politics but threatening the very existence of our two-party system. Congressman David Obey of Wisconsin, a liberal Democrat, has even charged that government has nearly been brought to a standstill by single issue organizations.

Nonsense!

From *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead* by Richard A. Viguerie. Copyright 1980. Reprinted by permission of Richard A. Viguerie.

In the first place, all the New Right has done is copy the success of the old left.

Liberal single issue groups were around long before we were, and the liberals still have as many or more than we do.

Civil rights was a single issue that Hubert Humphrey used to rise to national office. The Vietnam War was a single issue that George McGovern used to rise to national prominence. The environment, consumerism, anti-nuclear power—these are all single issues around which liberals have organized and exercised power and influence.

In the area of public interest law, liberal groups such as the Environmental Defense Fund, the National Prison Project, the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the National Veterans Law Center, the Women's Legal Defense Fund have drastically changed the direction of the Federal government.

Ralph Nader is nothing if not a collection of single issues. The liberals who are upset now about conservative single issue groups were not upset about the groups pushing for legalization of marijuana . . . homosexual rights . . . or ERA. . . .

Single issue groups naturally emerge because the political parties run away from issues. Single issue groups are the result *of* not the reason *for* the decline of political parties.

If one of the two major political parties had concerned itself more with issues like right to life, high taxes, the growth of the federal government, the right to keep and bear arms, a strong national defense, prayer in the schools, strengthening the family, sex on TV and in the movies, there probably would not have been an explosion of conservative single issue groups. . . .

The second key to our success is the multi-issue group which is part of the conservative movement and makes no bones about it. Such a group is conservative first, last and always. It takes strong positions on every important conservative vs. liberal issue.

The multi-issue conservative movement group also takes a broad overview of where we are going and the best way to get there.

It usually does not have as many members or supporters as single issue groups because its ranks are made up of individuals who are solidly conservative across the board.

The National Right to Work Committee can find over a million people who strongly oppose compulsory unionism.

The National Rifle Association can find nearly two million people who oppose federal gun registration.

Right to Life groups can find over a million people who oppose abortion.

But a conservative group which is pro-Right to Work, pro-Right to Life and pro-gun simply can't find a million contributors who agree on 20 different conservative issues.

For example, a local union leader may dislike the National Right to Work Committee but also oppose additional gun controls.

A pro-life supporter may not care one way or the other about compulsory unionism. And so forth.

But it is a sign of conservative strength that several of our broad spectrum groups do have, if not a million members, several hundred thousand.

Multi-issue broad spectrum groups such as The Conservative Caucus, the American Conservative Union, the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, the Heritage Foundation and the National Conservative Political Action Committee, to name but a few, are trying and succeeding in covering all the bases and all the issues for the conservative movement. . . .

Which brings me to the third part of the New Right's success—coalition politics.

Coalition politics is as old as the United States of America. You could call the original Thirteen Colonies a collection of issue groups who banded together to fight and defeat a common enemy—Great Britain.

The Republican Party was originally a coalition of issue groups—Free-Soil party members, pro-business northern Whigs, and some Democrats opposed to slavery.

FDR's New Deal was basically a coalition of groups—Southern farmers, blacks, Jews, organized labor, big city Democrats and the unemployed.

In fact, a liberal coalition based on the New Deal, the Fair Deal and the Great Society has dominated the nation for almost five decades.

But in the last 12 years, since Hubert Humphrey lost the Presidency to Richard Nixon in 1968, that coalition has begun to unravel. Conservatives didn't have the institutions to fill the gap then, but we do now. . . .

Coalition politics includes working within the Republican and Democratic parties to nominate conservative candidates, promote conservative positions and create conservative majorities in both parties. . . .

I want to talk now about the fourth reason for the New Right's success—direct mail.

Like all successful political movements, we must have a method of communicating with each other, and for conservatives in the 1970's it was direct mail.

Frankly, the conservative movement is where it is today because of direct mail. Without direct mail, there would be no effective counterforce to liberalism, and certainly there would be no New Right. . . .

We sell our magazines, our books, and our candidates through the mail. We fight our legislative battles through the mail. We alert our supporters to upcoming battles through the mail. We find new recruits for the conservative movement through the mail.

Without the mail, most conservative activity would wither and die.

Most political observers agree that liberals have effective control of the mass media—a virtual monopoly on TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. . . .

However, there is one method of mass commercial communication that the liberals do not control—direct mail. In fact, conservatives excel at direct mail. . . .

Raising money is only one of several purposes of direct-mail advertising letters. A letter may ask you to vote for a candidate, volunteer for campaign work, circulate a petition among your neighbors, write letters and postcards to your Senators and Congressmen, urging them to pass or defeat legislation

and also ask you for money to pay for the direct mail advertising campaign. . . .

Where would conservatives be without direct mail? We would be where we were 20 years ago, on the defensive, isolated, fighting losing battles. . . .

There is another key to New Right success—our positive attitude toward the news media.

From the time I started in politics in the mid 1950's until the early 1970's, most conservatives and the national media were like cats and dogs, or oil and water—they just didn't mix.

Then in the early 1970's some of the national media began to notice our political activities.

I have to be honest and say that I shared the traditional conservatives' position on the press. Which was avoid them, recognize that they are all liberals, and be convinced that their basic purpose is to attack conservatives.

I remember one day a fairly well known writer for a major newspaper called and wanted an appointment to come and talk to me.

I was a little short of terrified. I told my secretary that we'd get back to him.

I then called some of my conservative associates and asked what I should do. Almost all advised me to avoid the reporter.

The advice went something like this—that newspaper is no friend of the conservative movement, that reporter will try to do you in, etc., etc.

But then I got to thinking. I and my conservative friends are not playing in the big leagues—but we want to.

We're not having a major influence on national policies—but we want to.

We're not close to our goal of governing America—but we want to. I called the reporter back and said, "Why don't you come over and, if you've got time, why don't we go to lunch?"

Well, I spent an enjoyable three hours with the reporter. He wrote a basically fair and accurate story (although it wasn't as fair and objective as my mother would have written.)

And from that day forward, I felt that I and other conservatives had to change our view of the press.

I can think of no better example of the difference between the New Right and the old right.

We realize that reporters and editors are not monsters, or even hopeless ideologues.

The vast majority are good, decent men and women who are trying to do a professional job and are looking for the kind of news which will put their stories on the front page or the nightly TV newscasts.

During the next few years, the New Right's relationship with the press improved. We felt comfortable with the press and they began to cover our activities.

However, in the spring of 1977 I realized that my associates in the New Right and I needed a more professional approach to the media.

We were dealing with the media in a casual, almost accidental way. We

needed someone to introduce us to the major media, to teach us how to call and conduct a press conference, how to have a press breakfast, how to get our thoughts across in a few seconds on TV, how to hold activities that the press would be interested in covering. . . .

Single issue groups—multi-issue groups—coalition politics—direct mail—these have been the four cornerstones of conservative growth and success in the 1970's. They will help us build a new majority in America in the 1980's.

As Congressman Newt Gingrich of Georgia has put it: "The way you build a majority in this country is you go out and put together everybody who's against the guy who's in. And instead of asking the question, What divides us?, you ask the question, What unites us?"

And what unites most conservatives, Republican, Democratic and Independent, is a desire for less government and more freedom for every American.

President Reagan on America's Spiritual Reawakening, 1983

Reverend clergy all, Senator Hawkins, distinguished members of the Florida congressional delegation, and all of you:

I can't tell you how you have warmed my heart with your welcome. I'm delighted to be here today.

Those of you in the National Association of Evangelicals are known for your spiritual and humanitarian work. And I would be especially remiss if I didn't discharge right now one personal debt of gratitude. Thank you for your prayers. Nancy and I have felt their presence many times in many ways. And believe me, for us they've made all the difference. . . .

So, I tell you there are a great many God-fearing, dedicated, noble men and women in public life, present company included. And, yes, we need your help to keep us ever mindful of the ideas and the principles that brought us into the public arena in the first place. The basis of those ideals and principles is a commitment to freedom and personal liberty that, itself, is grounded in the much deeper realization that freedom prospers only where the blessings of God are avidly sought and humbly accepted.

The American experiment in democracy rests on this insight. Its discovery was the great triumph of our Founding Fathers, voiced by William Penn when he said: "If we will not be governed by God, we must be governed by tyrants." Explaining the inalienable rights of men, Jefferson said, "The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time." And it was George Washington who said that "of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

And finally, that shrewdest of all observers of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville, put it eloquently after he had gone on a search for the secret of America's greatness and genius—and he said: "Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the greatness and the genius of America. . . .

America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

Well, I'm pleased to be here today with you who are keeping America great by keeping her good. Only through your work and prayers and those of millions of others can we hope to survive this perilous century and keep alive this experiment in liberty, this last, best hope of man.

I want you to know that this administration is motivated by a political philosophy that sees the greatness of America in you, her people, and in your families, churches, neighborhoods, communities—the institutions that foster and nourish values like concern for others and respect for the rule of law under God.

Now, I don't have to tell you that this puts us in opposition to, or at least out of step with, a prevailing attitude of many who have turned to a modern-day secularism, discarding the tried and time-tested values upon which our very civilization is based. No matter how well intentioned, their value system is radically different from that of most Americans. And while they proclaim that they're freeing us from superstitions of the past, they've taken upon themselves the job of superintending us by government rule and regulation. Sometimes their voices are louder than ours, but they are not yet a majority.

An example of that vocal superiority is evident in a controversy now going on in Washington. And since I'm involved, I've been waiting to hear from the parents of young America. How far are they willing to go in giving to government their prerogatives as parents?

Let me state the case as briefly and simply as I can. An organization of citizens, sincerely motivated and deeply concerned about the increase in illegitimate births and abortions involving girls well below the age of consent, sometime ago established a nationwide network of clinics to offer help to these girls and, hopefully, alleviate this situation. Now, again, let me say, I do not fault their intent. However, in their well-intentioned effort, these clinics have decided to provide advice and birth control drugs and devices to underage girls without the knowledge of their parents.

For some years now, the Federal Government has helped with funds to subsidize these clinics. In providing for this, the Congress decreed that every effort would be made to maximize parental participation. Nevertheless, the drugs and devices are prescribed without getting parental consent or giving notification after they've done so. Girls termed "sexually active"—and that has replaced the word "promiscuous"—are given this help in order to prevent illegitimate birth or abortion.

Well, we have ordered clinics receiving Federal funds to notify the parents such help has been given. One of the Nation's leading newspapers has created the term "squeal rule" in editorializing against us for doing this, and we're being criticized for violating the privacy of young people. A judge has recently granted an injunction against an enforcement of our rule. I've watched TV panel shows discuss this issue, seen columnists pontificating on our error, but no one seems to mention morality as playing a part in the subject of sex.

Is all of Judeo-Christian tradition wrong? Are we to believe that something so sacred can be looked upon as a purely physical thing with no potential for emotional and psychological harm? And isn't it the parents' right to give counsel and advice to keep their children from making mistakes that may affect their entire lives?

Many of us in government would like to know what parents think about this intrusion in their family by government. We're going to fight in the courts. The right of parents and the rights of family take precedence over those of Washington-based bureaucrats and social engineers.

But the fight against parental notification is really only one example of many attempts to water down traditional values and even abrogate the original terms of American democracy. Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged. When our Founding Fathers passed the first amendment, they sought to protect churches from government interference. They never intended to construct a wall of hostility between government and the concept of religious belief itself.

The evidence of this permeates our history and our government. The Declaration of Independence mentions the Supreme Being no less than four times. "In God We Trust" is engraved on our coinage. The Supreme Court opens its proceedings with a religious invocation. And the Members of Congress open their sessions with a prayer. I just happen to believe the schoolchildren of the United States are entitled to the same privileges as Supreme Court Justices and Congressmen.

Last year, I sent the Congress a constitutional amendment to restore prayer to public schools. Already this session, there's growing bipartisan support for the amendment, and I am calling on the Congress to act speedily to pass it and to let our children pray.

Perhaps some of you read recently about the Lubbock school case, where a judge actually ruled that it was unconstitutional for a school district to give equal treatment to religious and nonreligious student groups, even when the group meetings were being held during the students' own time. The first amendment never intended to require government to discriminate against religious speech.

Senators Denton and Hatfield have proposed legislation in the Congress on the whole question of prohibiting discrimination against religious forms of student speech. Such legislation could go far to restore freedom of religious speech for public school students. And I hope the Congress considers these bills quickly. And with your help, I think it's possible we could also get the constitutional amendment through the Congress this year.

More than a decade ago, a Supreme Court decision literally wiped off the books of 50 States statutes protecting the rights of unborn children. Abortion on demand now takes the lives of up to 1-½ million unborn children a year. Human life legislation ending this tragedy will some day pass the Congress, and you and I must never rest until it does. Unless and until it can be proven that the unborn child is not a living entity, then its right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness must be protected.

You may remember that when abortion on demand began, many, and,

indeed, I'm sure many of you, warned that the practice would lead to a decline in respect for human life, that the philosophical premises used to justify abortion on demand would ultimately be used to justify other attacks on the sacredness of human life—infanticide or mercy killing. Tragically enough, those warnings proved all too true. Only last year a court permitted the death by starvation of a handicapped infant.

I have directed the Health and Human Services Department to make clear to every health care facility in the United States that the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects all handicapped persons against discrimination based on handicaps, including infants. And we have taken the further step of requiring that each and every recipient of Federal funds who provides health care services to infants must post and keep posted in a conspicuous place a notice stating that "discriminatory failure to feed and care for handicapped infants in this facility is prohibited by Federal law." It also lists a 24-hour, toll-free number so that nurses and others may report violations in time to save the infant's life.

In addition, recent legislation introduced in the Congress by Representative Henry Hyde of Illinois not only increases restrictions on publicly financed abortions, it also addresses this whole problem of infanticide. I urge the Congress to begin hearings and to adopt legislation that will protect the right of life to all children, including the disabled or handicapped.

Now, I'm sure that you must get discouraged at times, but you've done better than you know, perhaps. There's a great spiritual awakening in America, a renewal of the traditional values that have been the bedrock of America's goodness and greatness.

One recent survey by a Washington-based research council concluded that Americans were far more religious than the people of other nations; 95 percent of those surveyed expressed a belief in God and a huge majority believed the Ten Commandments had real meaning in their lives. And another study has found that an overwhelming majority of Americans disapprove of adultery, teenage sex, pornography, abortion, and hard drugs. And this same study showed a deep reverence for the importance of family ties and religious belief.

I think the items that we've discussed here today must be a key part of the Nation's political agenda. For the first time the Congress is openly and seriously debating and dealing with the prayer and abortion issues—and that's enormous progress right there. I repeat: America is in the midst of a spiritual awakening and a moral renewal. And with your Biblical keynote, I say today, "Yes, let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream."

Now, obviously, much of this new political and social consensus I've talked about is based on a positive view of American history, one that takes pride in our country's accomplishments and record. But we must never forget that no government schemes are going to perfect man. We know that living in this world means dealing with what philosophers would call the phenomenology of evil or, as theologians would put it, the doctrine of sin.

There is sin and evil in the world, and we're enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might. Our nation, too, has a legacy of evil with which it must deal. The glory of this land has been its capacity for transcending the moral evils of our past. For example, the long struggle of minority citizens for equal rights, once a source of disunity and civil war, is now a point of pride for all Americans. We must never go back. There is no room for racism, anti-Semitism, or other forms of ethnic and racial hatred in this country.

I know that you've been horrified, as have I, by the resurgence of some hate groups preaching bigotry and prejudice. Use the mighty voice of your pulpits and the powerful standing of your churches to denounce and isolate these hate groups in our midst. The commandment given us is clear and simple: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

But whatever sad episodes exist in our past, any objective observer must hold a positive view of American history, a history that has been the story of hopes fulfilled and dreams made into reality. Especially in this century, America has kept alight the torch of freedom, but not just for ourselves but for millions of others around the world.

8 RONALD REAGAN'S FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS (1981)

To a few of us here today this is a solemn and most momentous occasion, and yet in the history of our nation it is a commonplace occurrence. The orderly transfer of authority as called for in the Constitution routinely takes place, as it has for almost two centuries, and few of us stop to think how unique we really are. In the eyes of many in the world, this every-four-year ceremony we accept as normal is nothing less than a miracle.

Mr President, I want our fellow citizens to know how much you did to carry on this tradition. By your gracious cooperation in the transition process, you have shown a watching world that we are a united people pledged to maintaining a political system which guarantees individual liberty to a greater degree than any other, and I thank you and your people for all your help in maintaining the continuity which is the bulwark of our republic.

The business of our nation goes forward. These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions. We suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history. It distorts our economic decisions, penalizes thrift, and crushes the struggling young and the fixed-income elderly alike. It threatens to shatter the lives of millions of our people.

Idle industries have cast workers into unemployment, human misery, and personal indignity. Those who do work are denied a fair return for their labor by a tax system which penalizes successful achievement and keeps us from maintaining full productivity.

But great as our tax burden is, it has not kept pace with public spending. For decades we have piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our future and our children's future for the temporary convenience of the present. To continue this long trend is to guarantee tremendous social, cultural, political, and economic upheavals.

You and I, as individuals, can, by borrowing, live beyond our means, but for only a limited period of time. Why, then, should we think that collectively, as a nation, we're not bound by that same limitation? We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow. And let there be no misunderstanding: We are going to begin to act, beginning today.

The economic ills we suffer have come upon us over several decades. They will not go away in days, weeks, or months, but they will go away. They will go away because we as Americans have the capacity now, as we've had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom.

In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem. From time to time we've been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an élite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. Well, if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else? All of us together, in and out of government, must bear the burden. The solutions we seek must be equitable, with no one group singled out to pay a higher price.

We hear much of special interest groups. Well, our concern must be for a special interest group that has been too long neglected. It knows no sectional boundaries or ethnic and racial divisions, and it crosses political party lines. It is made up of men and women who raise our food, patrol our streets, man our mines and factories, teach our children, keep our homes, and heal us when we're sick — professionals, industrialists, shopkeepers, clerks, cabbies, and truck drivers. They are, in short, 'we the people', this breed called Americans.

Well, this administration's objective will be a healthy, vigorous, growing economy that provides equal opportunities for all Americans, with no barriers born of bigotry or discrimination. Putting America back to work means putting all Americans back to work. Ending inflation means freeing all Americans from the terror of runaway living costs. All must share in the productive work of this 'new beginning', and all must share in the bounty of a revived economy. With the idealism and fair play which are the core of our system and our strength, we can have a strong and prosperous America, at peace with itself and the world.

So, as we begin, let us take inventory. We are a nation that has a government — not the other way around. And this makes us special among the nations of the earth. Our government has no power except that granted it by the people. It is time to check and reverse the growth of government, which shows signs of having grown beyond the consent of the governed.

It is my intention to curb the size and influence of the federal establishment and to demand recognition of the distinction between the powers granted to the federal government and those reserved to the states or to the people. All of us need to be reminded that the federal government did not create the states; the states created the federal government.

Now, so there will be no misunderstanding, it's not my intention to do away with government. It is rather to make it work — work with us, not over us; to stand by our side, not ride on our back. Government can and must provide opportunity, not smother it; foster productivity, not stifle it.

If we look to the answer as to why for so many years we achieved so much, prospered as no other people on earth, it was because here in this land we unleashed the energy and individual genius of man to a greater extent than has ever been done before. Freedom and the dignity of the individual have been more available and assured here than in any other place on earth. The price for this freedom at times has been high, but we have never been unwilling to pay that price.

It is no coincidence that our present troubles parallel and are proportionate to the intervention and intrusion in our lives that result from unnecessary and excessive growth of government. It is time for us to realize that we're too great a nation to limit ourselves to small dreams. We're not, as some would have us believe, doomed to an inevitable decline. I do not believe in a fate that will fall on us no matter what we do. I do believe in a fate that will fall on us if we do nothing. So, with all the creative energy at our command, let us begin an era of national renewal. Let us review our determination, our courage, and our strength. And let us renew our faith and our hope.

We have every right to dream heroic dreams. Those who say that we're in a time when there are no heroes, they just don't know where to look. You can see heroes every day going in and out of factory gates. Others, a handful in number, produce enough food to feed all of us and then the world beyond. You meet heroes across a counter, and they're on both sides of that counter. There are entrepreneurs with faith in themselves and faith in an idea who create new jobs, new wealth and opportunity. They're individuals and families whose taxes support the government and whose voluntary gifts support church, charity, culture, art, and education. Their patriotism is quiet, but deep. Their values sustain our national life.

Now, I have used the words 'they' and 'their' in speaking of these heroes. I could say 'you' and 'your', because I'm addressing the heroes of whom I speak — you, the citizens of this blessed land. Your dreams, your hopes,

your goals are going to be the dreams, the hopes, and the goals of this administration, so help me God.

We shall reflect the compassion that is so much a part of your makeup. How can we love our country and not love our countrymen; and loving them, reach out a hand when they fall, heal them when they're sick, and provide opportunity to make them self-sufficient so they will be equal in fact and not just in theory?

Can we solve the problems confronting us? Well, the answer is an unequivocal and emphatic 'yes'. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, I did not take the oath I've just taken with the intention of presiding over the dissolution of the world's strongest economy.

In the days ahead I will propose removing the roadblocks that have slowed our economy and reduced productivity. Steps will be taken aimed at restoring the balance between the various levels of government. Progress may be slow, measured in inches and feet, not miles, but we will progress. It is time to reawaken this industrial giant, to get government back within its means, and to lighten our punitive tax burden. And these will be our first priorities, and on these principles there will be no compromise.

On the eve of our struggle for independence a man who might have been one of the greatest among the Founding Fathers, Dr Joseph Warren, president of the Massachusetts Congress, said to his fellow Americans, 'Our country is in danger, but not to be despaired of ... On you depend the fortunes of America. You are to decide the important questions upon which rests the happiness and the liberty of millions yet unborn. Act worthy of yourselves.'

Well, I believe we, the Americans of today, are ready to act worthy of ourselves, ready to do what must be done to ensure happiness and liberty for ourselves, our children, and our children's children. And as we renew ourselves here in our own land, we will be seen as having greater strength throughout the world. We will again be the exemplar of freedom and a beacon of hope for those who do not now have freedom.

To those neighbors and allies who share our freedom, we will strengthen our historic ties and assure them of our support and firm commitment. We will match loyalty with loyalty. We will strive for mutually beneficial relations. We will not use our friendship to impose on their sovereignty, for our own sovereignty is not for sale.

As for the enemies of freedom, those who are potential adversaries, they will be reminded that peace is the highest aspiration of the American people. We will negotiate for it, sacrifice for it; we will not surrender for it, now or ever.

Our forbearance should never be misunderstood. Our reluctance for conflict should not be misjudged as a failure of will. When action is required to preserve our national security, we will act. We will maintain sufficient

strength to prevail if need be, knowing that if we do so we have the best chance of never having to use that strength.

Above all, we must realize that no arsenal or no weapon in the arsenals of the world is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women. It is a weapon our adversaries in today's world do not have. It is a weapon that we as Americans do have. Let that be understood by those who practice terrorism and prey upon their neighbors.

I'm told that tens of thousands of prayer meetings are being held on this day, and for that I'm deeply grateful. We are a nation under God, and I believe God intended for us to be free. It would be fitting and good, I think, if on each Inaugural Day in future years it should be declared a day of prayer.

This is the first time in our history that this ceremony has been held, as you've been told, on this West Front of the Capitol. Standing here, one faces a magnificent vista, opening up on this city's special beauty and history. At the end of this open mall are those shrines to the giants on whose shoulders we stand.

Directly in front of me, the monument to a monumental man, George Washington, father of our country. A man of humility who came to greatness reluctantly. He led America out of revolutionary victory into infant nationhood. Off to one side, the stately memorial to Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration of Independence flames with his eloquence. And then, beyond the Reflecting Pool, the dignified columns of the Lincoln Memorial. Whoever would understand in his heart the meaning of America will find it in the life of Abraham Lincoln.

Beyond those monuments to heroism is the Potomac River, and on the far shore the sloping hills of Arlington National Cemetery, with its row upon row of simple white markers bearing crosses or Stars of David. They add up to only a tiny fraction of the price that has been paid for our freedom.

Each one of those markers is a monument to the kind of hero I spoke of earlier. Their lives ended in places called Belleau Wood, the Argonne, Omaha Beach, Salerno, and halfway around the world on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Pork Chop Hill, the Chosin Reservoir, and in a hundred rice paddies and jungles of a place called Vietnam.

Under one such marker lies a young man, Martin Treptow, who left his job in a small town barbershop in 1917 to go to France with the famed Rainbow Division. There, on the western front, he was killed trying to carry a message between battalions under heavy artillery fire.

We're told that on his body was found a diary. On the flyleaf under the heading 'My Pledge', he had written these words: 'America must win this war. Therefore I will work, I will save, I will sacrifice, I will endure, I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone.'

The crisis we are facing today does not require of us the kind of sacrifice that Martin Treptow and so many thousands of others were called upon to make. It does require, however, our best effort and our willingness to believe in ourselves and to believe in our capacity to perform great deeds, to believe that together with God's help we can and will resolve the problems which now confront us.

And after all, why shouldn't we believe that? We are Americans.

God bless you, and thank you.

18 PRESIDENT REAGAN: THE SOVIET UNION AS AN 'EVIL EMPIRE' (1983)

During my first press conference as President, in answer to a direct question, I pointed out that, as good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution. I think I should point out I was only quoting Lenin, their guiding spirit, who said in 1920 that they repudiate all morality that proceeds from supernatural ideas — that's their name for religion — or ideas that are outside class conceptions. Morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war. And everything

is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old, exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat.

Well, I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates an historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are. We saw this phenomenon in the 1930s. We see it too often today.

This doesn't mean we should isolate ourselves and refuse to seek an understanding with them. I intend to do everything I can to persuade them of our peaceful intent, to remind them that it was the West that refused to use its nuclear monopoly in the forties and fifties for territorial gain and which now proposes 50-percent cut in strategic ballistic missiles and the elimination of an entire class of land-based, intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

At the same time, however, they must be made to understand we will never compromise our principles and standards. We will never give away our freedom. We will never abandon our belief in God. And we will never stop searching for a genuine peace. But we can assure none of these things America stands for through the so-called nuclear freeze solutions proposed by some.

The truth is that a freeze now would be a very dangerous fraud, for that is merely the illusion of peace. The reality is that we must find peace through strength.

I would agree to a freeze if only we could freeze the Soviets' global desires. A freeze at current levels of weapons would remove any incentive for the Soviets to negotiate seriously in Geneva and virtually end our chances to achieve the major arms reductions which we have proposed. Instead, they would achieve their objectives through the freeze.

A freeze would reward the Soviet Union for its enormous and unparalleled military buildup. It would prevent the essential and long overdue modernization of United States and allied defenses and would leave our aging forces increasingly vulnerable. And an honest freeze would require extensive prior negotiations on the systems and numbers to be limited and on the measures to ensure effective verification and compliance. And the kind of a freeze that has been suggested would be virtually impossible to verify. Such a major effort would divert us completely from our current negotiations on achieving substantial reductions.

A number of years ago, I heard a young father, a very prominent young man in the entertainment world, addressing a tremendous gathering in California. It was during the time of the cold war, and communism and our own way of life were very much on people's minds. And he was speaking to that subject. And suddenly, though, I heard him saying, 'I love my little girls more than anything —' And I said to myself, 'Oh, no, don't. You can't — don't say that.' But I had underestimated him. He went on: 'I would rather see my little girls die now, still believing in God, than have them grow up under communism and one day die no longer believing in God.'

There were thousands of young people in that audience. They came to their feet with shouts of joy. They had instantly recognized the profound truth in what he had said, with regard to the physical and the soul and what was truly important.

Yes, let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness — pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.

It was C.S. Lewis who, in his unforgettable 'Screwtape Letters', wrote: 'The greatest evil is not done now in those sordid "dens of crime" that Dickens loved to paint. It is not even done in concentration camps and labor camps. In those we see its final result. But it is conceived and ordered (moved, seconded, carried and minuted) in clear, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice.'

Well, because these 'quiet men' do not 'raise their voices', because they sometimes speak in soothing tones of brotherhood and peace, because, like other dictators before them, they're always making 'their final territorial demand', some would have us accept them at their word and accommodate ourselves to their aggressive impulses. But if history teaches anything, it teaches that simple-minded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly. It means the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our freedom.

So, I urge you to speak out against those who would place the United States in a position of military and moral inferiority. You know, I've always believed that old Screwtape reserved his best efforts for those of you in the church. So, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride — the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves about it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.

I ask you to resist the attempts of those who would have you withhold your support for our efforts, this administration's efforts, to keep America strong and free, while we negotiate real and verifiable reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals and one day, with God's help, their total elimination.

While America's military strength is important, let me add here that I've always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

Whittaker Chambers, the man whose own religious conversion made him a witness to one of the terrible traumas of our time, the Hiss-Chambers case, wrote that the crisis of the Western World exists to the degree in which the

West is indifferent to God, the degree to which it collaborates in communism's attempt to make man stand alone without God. And then he said, for Marxism-Leninism is actually the second oldest faith, first proclaimed in the Garden of Eden with the words of temptation, 'Ye shall be as gods.'

The Western World can answer this challenge, he wrote, 'but only provided that its faith in God and the freedom He enjoins is as great as communism's faith in Man.'

I believe we shall rise to the challenge. I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man. For in the words of Isaiah: 'He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increased strength ... But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary ...'

Yes, change your world. One of our Founding Fathers, Thomas Paine, said, 'We have it within our power to begin the world over again.' We can do it, doing together what no one church could do by itself.

God bless you, and thank you very much.

Confronting the Evil Empire by Proxy: Central America as a Battleground

Although the main target of Reagan administration foreign policy was the Soviet Union, one of the key battlegrounds for the ideological struggle against the "Evil Empire" was Central America. Your textbook stresses the president's overt and covert attempts to unhorse the Sandinista government in Nicaragua through support of the Contra resistance, itself a product of CIA activities in the unstable area. As the documents suggest, the overall thrust of the Reagan policy was reminiscent of the Eisenhower-Dulles era; the outcome, however, was much less satisfying from the administration's point of view. When you review these materials, think about continuity in American hemispheric policy, with particular emphasis on the exercise of executive authority.

Start with the brief excerpt from President Reagan's 1985 State of the Union message as an indicator of the goals and assumptions that underlay American policy toward Nicaragua and the Contras. Compare the Reagan approach to the Dulles initiative in Guatemala, discussed in Chapter 28. Watch for themes in the history of American response to revolution in the Western Hemisphere, and think about the relationship between the president's broad objectives, his management style, and the eventual result of an extensive program of covert activity.

It was ultimately the CIA-NSC program of freelance adventurism that created problems for militant anticommunists on the Reagan team. The consequence of concern for American hostages in the Middle East and

determination to aid the Contras was a scandal of major proportions that severely damaged the administration for much of the president's second term. As you examine the Tower Commission Report and the majority and minority reports of the congressional Iran-Contra panels, be conscious of similarities and differences between this crisis and the Watergate affair of the Nixon years (see Chapter 30). Assess the constitutional principles at stake in the activities of Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and National Security Advisor John Poindexter, as described in your textbook.

One reason the National Security managers decided to circumvent legislative prohibitions of Contra aid was that they supported President Reagan's anti-Sandinista zeal, despite the fact that the administration never succeeded in generating substantial public support for his policy. Review such diverse sources as the article by former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliot Abrams and the newsletter of the Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America to identify the shortcomings of U. S. Central American policy and the reasons for public reservations in the United States. Consider the authors' personal agendas as you evaluate their criticisms.

These documents place an important contemporary problem in its historical context. Your task is to identify continuities with the past and to analyze the central constitutional and policy issues raised by American interventionism.

Questions for Analysis

1. What was the rationale for the administration's policy of support for the Contra insurgency in Nicaragua? What relationship existed between President Reagan's assumptions and those of Oliver North and John Poindexter, as revealed in the documents? To what extent did their objectives justify the means employed to achieve them?
2. Compare the Watergate affair with the Iran-Contra scandal, with emphasis on the legitimate uses of power and the constitutional issues involved. Does justice appear to have been served in the handling of the North and Poindexter cases? Why or why not? What evidence bearing on constitutional interpretation may be extracted from the Tower report and the Senate-House panel reports?
3. Using your textbook as a resource, evaluate Reagan's management/administrative style. How do the documents clarify the Iran-Contra affair and its causes? What were the implications of the president's approach to his office?
4. Why was President Reagan unable to mobilize public support for his policy toward the Contras? What does the evidence suggest about the reasons for public skepticism of the Reagan program in Central America? In what way do the documents reflect the use or misuse of history? What was the result?

5. Using the documents as your major resource, develop a hypothesis with regard to responsibility for the Iran-Contra scandal. What conclusions can be drawn from the evidence concerning the question of who knew what when? Why are these important questions?
6. Examining the evidence from a long-term historical perspective, what do you regard as the strengths and weaknesses in American policy toward Latin America? How do the documents demonstrate the problems and opportunities presented by revolutionary movements in the Third World? What is your evaluation of American policies? Defend your position with evidence drawn from the documents.
7. How do the documents reflect the nature of the American governmental process in the Reagan era? What relationship between the branches of government is evident in these materials? What are its implications for the future? How does the evidence clarify the meaning of textbook references to fears and uncertainties?

1. President Ronald Reagan Sets a Tone for Central American Policy, 1985

1. President Ronald Reagan Sets a Tone for Central American Policy, 1985

We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth.

The Sandinista dictatorship of Nicaragua, with full Cuban-Soviet bloc support, not only persecutes its people, the church, and denies a free press but

arms and provides bases for communist terrorists attacking neighboring states. Support for freedom fighters is self-defense and totally consistent with the OAS and UN Charters. It is essential that the Congress continue all facets of our assistance to Central America. I want to work with you to support the democratic forces whose struggle is tied to our own security.

2. The Inter-Religious Task Force Attacks the Administration Program in Nicaragua, 1985, 1986

The level of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua reached new heights in 1985.

On Feb. 21 the facade of "interdiction" fell when Pres. Reagan admitted that the U.S. goal in Nicaragua was to change the "present structure" there and make the Sandinistas cry "uncle."

Last June, after several weeks of intensive lobbying, the Reagan Administration succeeded in persuading the House of Representatives to reverse itself and resume direct aid to the contras. Although the aid was characterized as "humanitarian," Congressional debate revealed that the envisioned support went far beyond any recognized sense of the term and contravened existing international legal standards. . . .

Over the past year the contras do not appear to have gained any significant ground. They cannot cap-

ture or hold any towns or territory and are dependent on their ability to seek safe haven from Honduras and (increasingly) Costa Rica. However, even the resumption of lethal military aid (which recent events suggest the Administration is laying the groundwork for) is not likely to alter the military balance. . . .

Meanwhile, the war continued to take tolls on the lives and economy of Nicaragua. A military offensive in the north was fairly successful, causing thousands of contras to flee into Honduras or to scatter in small bands within Nicaragua. . . .

Allegations of atrocities by the U.S.-backed contras continued to be documented with the issuance of two reports last March. A report by former New York State assistant attorney general Reed Brody documented a "distinct pattern" of murders, kidnap-

pings, assaults and torture by the contras. Similar findings were reported by Americas Watch in a report which at the same time found that serious human rights violations on the part of the Nicaraguan government had declined since 1982.

In addition, a Congressional report to the Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus confirmed that almost the entire command structure of the FDN was made up of former Somoza National Guard. The report listed the main contributors of private funds going to the contras. The list includes the Unification Church (owner of the Washington Times); the Christian Broadcasting Network; the Veterans of Foreign Wars; the Knights of Malta; CAUSA International (also the Unification Church); Soldier of Fortune Magazine; and several southern-based mercenary groups.

Direct U.S. involvement was also revealed this past year. In March, the *Wall Street Journal* reported the involvement of U.S. personnel in attacks on Nicaragua and violations of its airspace.

Later in the year it was reported that the National Security Council (NSC), a White House agency, helped raise money for the rebels from private sources. Moreover, the NSC, with full knowledge and acquiescence of the White House, helped plan anti-Sandinista military operations despite Congressional prohibitions on such aid. All the while Pres. Reagan continued to deny that the U.S. was violating international law.

Yet the violation of international law was precisely the issue when Nicaragua's presentation before the World Court at the Hague opened on Sept. 12. Nicaragua charged that U.S. support for the contras attempting to overthrow its government was "state terrorism" and in violation of international law.

While the U.S. refused to participate in the case, former CIA analyst David MacMichael testified that CIA strategy was aimed at provoking a violent military response and domestic repression by Nicaragua. While a decision is still pending, observers agreed that by legal standards Nicaragua has a strong case. . . .

By a vote of 222 to 210 the U.S. House of Representatives rejected on March 20 [1986] President Reagan's plan to extend \$100 million military and "humanitarian aid" to the contras. . . .

Explanations for the President's defeat varied; ranging from the level of "anti-communist" rhetoric emanating from the White House, the lack of a coherent policy evoking memories of Vietnam, to the opposition of U.S. allies in Latin America to the request. . . .

But the reaction of the public also played a significant role in the defeat. President Reagan went on national television the Sunday night before the vote in an effort to appeal to the American public. But in most Congressional offices phone calls opposing the President outnumbered those who supported him.

Only two weeks earlier, on March 3, nearly 200 religious leaders formed human crosses on the steps of the Capitol, commemorating people killed by the contras in Nicaragua, and accused President Reagan of preferring "terrorism to the pursuit of peace." . . .

The likely passage of any military aid to the contras, even if it is "fenced," takes the United States one step further down the road to the logical conclusion of a failed policy—the ultimate commitment of U.S. military personnel. This point was underscored by recent revelations that the contras, in need of major training, would have to be trained by U.S. advisers were military aid passed. . . .

3. The Tower Commission Assesses Oliver North's Contra Aid Scheme, 1987

... As a general matter, LtCol North kept VADM Poindexter exhaustively informed about his activities with respect to the Iran initiative. Although the Board did not find a specific communication from LtCol North to VADM Poindexter on the diversion question, VADM Poindexter said that he knew that a diversion had occurred. Mr. Regan told the Board that he asked VADM Poindexter on November 24, 1986, if he knew of LtCol North's role in a diversion of funds to support the Contras. VADM Poindexter

him enough hints that he knew what was going on, but he didn't want to look further into it. But that he in fact did generally know that money had gone to the Contras as a result of the Iran shipment."

The President said he had no knowledge of the diversion prior to his conversation with Attorney General Meese on November 25, 1986. No evidence has come to light to suggest otherwise. Contemporaneous Justice Department staff notes of LtCol North's interview with Attorney General Meese on November 23, 1986, show North telling the Attorney General that only he, Mr. McFarlane, and VADM Poindexter were aware of the diversion. . . .

On December 21, 1982, Congress passed the first "Boland amendment" prohibiting the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency from spending funds to overthrow Nicaragua or provoke conflict between Nicaragua and Honduras. The following year, \$24 million was authorized for the Contras. On October 3, 1984, Congress cut off all funding for the Contras and prohibited DoD, CIA, and any other agency or entity "involved in intelligence activities" from directly or indirectly supporting military operations in Nicaragua. . . .

The Bid for Private Funding. Because of Congressional restrictions, the Executive Branch turned to private sources to sustain the Contras militarily. In 1985 and 1986, Mr. McFarlane and the NSC staff repeatedly denied any direct involvement in efforts to obtain funds from these sources. Yet evidence before the Board suggests that LtCol North was well aware of these efforts and played a role in coordinating them. The extent of that role remains unclear.

In a memorandum to Mr. McFarlane dated April 11, 1985, LtCol North expressed concern that remaining Contra funds would soon be insufficient. He advised that efforts be made to seek \$15 to \$20 million in additional funds from the current donors which will "allow the force to grow to 30-35,000." The exact purpose to which these private funds were

replied that, "I had a feeling that something bad was going on, but I didn't investigate it and I didn't do a thing about it. *** I really didn't want to know. I was so damned mad at Tip O'Neill for the way he was dragging the Contras around I didn't want to know what, if anything, was going on. I should have, but I didn't." Attorney General Meese told the Board that after talking to LtCol North, he asked VADM Poindexter what he knew about the diversion. "He said that he did know about it *** Ollie North had given

significant arms deliveries, some running in value in excess of \$6 million, and were spending at a rate in excess of \$1 million a month. CIA officials sought to locate the source of the funding. The Director of the CIA CATF told us:

[W]hat we found out was really only one or two people. It was tremendously compartmented inside the resistance organization and no one knew the ultimate source of the money, and very, very few people even know how much there was coming in and out.

Mr. Abrams recalls:

[W]e did not engage in nor did we really know anything about this private network. We knew that it existed. We knew it in part because somebody was giving the Contras guns. . . . They were instructed to kind of stay away, as the Agency people were, on the grounds that if you got too close, you would end up being accused of facilitating and so forth.

Richard Armitage, Assistant Secretary of Defense, recalls, "[S]everal of us in those groups said, Ollie. . . you're not involved in all this, are you? And he said . . . I have broken no laws."

LtCol North and VADM Poindexter do not seem to have sought the President's approval. In his response to a May 16, 1986, message from Poindexter on the status of the Contra project, LtCol North went on to discuss White House knowledge of his activities. LtCol North speculated that the President must know, indirectly, of his Contra activities.

I have no idea what Don Regan does or does not know re my private U.S. operation but the President obviously knows why he has been meeting with several select people to thank them for

to be put was unambiguous. A number of memoranda from LtCol North make clear that the funds were for munitions and lethal aid. . . .

Who Knew What?

The Director of the CIA CATF recalls that by 1985, the CIA knew the Contras were receiving

their 'support for Democracy' in CentAm.

Later that day VADM Poindexter replied to LtCol North: "Don Regan knows very little of your operation and that is just as well."

4. The Congressional Panels' Conclusions on the Iran-Contra Affair: The Majority View, 1987

Dishonesty and Secrecy

The Iran-Contra Affair was characterized by pervasive dishonesty and inordinate secrecy.

North admitted that he and other officials lied repeatedly to Congress and to the American people about the Contra covert action and Iran arms sales, and that he altered and destroyed official documents. North's testimony demonstrates that he also lied to members of the Executive branch, including the Attorney General, and officials of the State Department, CIA and NSC. . . .

Poindexter and North cited fear of leaks as a justification for these practices. But the need to prevent public disclosure cannot justify the deception practiced upon Members of Congress and the Executive branch officials by those who knew of the arms sale to Iran and the Contra support network. The State and Defense Departments deal each day with the most sensitive matters affecting millions of lives here and abroad. The Congressional Intelligence Committees receive only the most highly classified information, including information of covert activities. Yet, according to North and Poindexter, even the senior officials of these bodies could not be entrusted with the NSC staff's secret because they might leak. . . .

The Administration never sought to hide its desire to assist the Contras so long as such aid was authorized by statute. On the contrary, it wanted the Sandinistas to know that the United States supported the Contras. After enactment of the Boland Amendment, the Administration repeatedly and publicly called upon Congress to resume U.S. assistance. Only the NSC staff's Contra support activities were kept under wraps. The Committees believe these actions were concealed in order to prevent Congress from learning that the Boland Amendment was being circumvented.

It was stated on several occasions that the confusion, secrecy and deception surrounding the aid program for the Nicaraguan freedom fighters was produced in part by Congress' shifting positions on Contra aid.

But Congress' inconsistency mirrored the chameleon-like nature of the rationale offered for granting assistance in the first instance. Initially, Congress was told that our purpose was simply to interdict the flow of weapons from Nicaragua into El Salvador. Then Congress was told that our purpose was to harass the

Sandinistas to prevent them from consolidating their power and exporting their revolution. Eventually, Congress was told that our purpose was to eliminate all foreign forces from Nicaragua, to reduce the size of the Sandinista armed forces, and to restore the democratic reforms pledged by the Sandinistas during the overthrow of the Somoza regime. . . .

Disdain for Law

In the Iran-Contra Affair, officials viewed the law not as setting boundaries for their actions, but raising impediments to their goals. When the goals and the law collided, the law gave way:

The covert program of support for the Contras evaded the Constitution's most significant check on Executive power: The President can spend funds on a program only if he can convince Congress to appropriate the money.

When Congress enacted the Boland Amendment, cutting off funds for the war in Nicaragua, Administration officials raised funds for the Contras from other sources—foreign Governments, the Iran arms sales, and private individuals; and the NSC staff controlled the expenditures of these funds through power over the Enterprise. Conducting the covert program in Nicaragua with funding from the sale of U.S. Government property and contributions raised by Government officials was a flagrant violation of the Appropriations Clause of the Constitution.

In addition, the covert program of support for the Contras was an evasion of the letter and spirit of the Boland Amendment. The President made it clear that while he opposed restrictions on military or paramilitary assistance to the Contras, he recognized that compliance with the law was not optional. "[W]hat I might personally wish or what our Government might wish still would not justify us violating the law of the land," he said in 1983. . . .

Who Was Responsible?

Who was responsible for the Iran-Contra Affair? Part of our mandate was to answer that question, not in a legal sense (which is the responsibility of the Independent Counsel), but in order to reaffirm that those who serve the Government are accountable for their actions. Based on our investigation, we reach the following conclusions:

At the operational level, the central figure in the Iran-Contra Affair was Lt. Col. North, who coordi-

nated all of the activities and was involved in all aspects of the secret operations. North, however, did not act alone.

North's conduct had the express approval of Adm. John Poindexter, first as Deputy National Security Adviser and then as National Security Adviser. North also had at least the tacit support of Robert McFarlane, who served as National Security Adviser until December 1985.

In addition, for reasons cited earlier, we believe that the late Director of Central Intelligence, William Casey, encouraged North, gave him direction and promoted the concept of an extra-legal covert organization. Casey, for the most part, insulated CIA career employees from knowledge of what he and the NSC staff were doing. Casey's passion for covert operations—dating back to his World War II intelligence days—was well known. . . .

5. A Minority Opinion of the Scandal, 1987

President Reagan and his staff made mistakes in the Iran-Contra Affair. It is important at the outset, however, to note that the President himself has already taken the hard step of acknowledging his mistakes and reacting precisely to correct what went wrong. . . .

The bottom line, however, is that the mistakes of the Iran-Contra Affair were just that—mistakes in judgment, and nothing more. There was no constitutional crisis, no systematic disrespect for "the rule of law," no grand conspiracy, and no Administration-wide dishonesty or coverup. . . .

Nicaragua

The Nicaraguan aspect of the Iran-Contra Affair had its origins in several years of bitter political warfare over U.S. policy toward Central America between the Reagan Administration and the Democratic House of Representatives. . . .

By the late spring of 1984, it became clear that the [Nicaraguan] Resistance would need some source of money if it were to continue to survive while the Administration tried to change public and Congressional opinion. To help bridge the gap, some Administration officials began encouraging foreign governments and U.S. private citizens to support the Contras. NSC staff members played a major role in these efforts, but were specifically ordered to avoid direct solicitations. The President clearly approved of private benefactor and third-country funding, and neither he *nor his designated agents* could constitutionally be prohibited from encouraging it. To avoid political retribution, however, the Administration did not inform Congress of its actions. . . .

Because the Boland Amendment is an appropriations rider, it is worth noting that there is no evidence that any substantial amounts of appropriated taxpayer funds were used in support of these efforts. In

addition, the NSC staff believed—as we do—that the prohibition did not cover the NSC. At no time, in other words, did members of the President's staff think their activities were illegal. Nevertheless, the NSC staff did make a concerted effort to conceal its actions from Congress. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that the President or other senior Administration officials knew about this concealment. . . .

The Boland Amendment

We do believe . . . that virtually all of the NSC staff's activities were legal, with the possible exception of the diversion of Iran arms sale proceeds to the Resistance. We concede that reasonable people may take a contrary view of what Congress intended the Boland Amendments to mean. . . .

Notwithstanding our legal opinions, we think it was a fundamental mistake for the NSC staff to have been secretive and deceptive about what it was doing. The requirement for building long-term political support means that the Administration would have been better off if it had conducted its activities in the open. . . .

Summary: Nicaragua

. . . (1) The Constitution protects the power of the President, either acting himself or through agents of his choice, to engage in whatever diplomatic communications with other countries he may wish. It also protects the ability of the President and his agents to persuade U.S. citizens to engage voluntarily in otherwise legal activity to serve what they consider to be the national interest. That includes trying to persuade other countries to contribute their own funds for causes both countries support. To whatever extent the Boland Amendments tried to prohibit such activity, they were clearly unconstitutional.

(2) If the Constitution prohibits Congress from restricting a particular Presidential action directly, it cannot use the appropriation power to achieve the same unconstitutional effect. Congress does have the power under the Constitution, however, to use appropriations riders to prohibit the entire U.S. Government from spending any money, including salaries, to provide covert or overt military support to the Contras. Thus, the Clark Amendment prohibiting all U.S. support for the Angolan Resistance in 1976 was constitutional. Some members of Congress who supported the Boland Amendment may have thought they were enacting a prohibition as broad as the Clark Amendment. The specific language of the Boland Amendment was considerably more restricted, however. . . .

Summary: Diversion

We consider the ownership of the funds the Iranians paid to the Secord-Hakim "Enterprise" to be in legal doubt. There are respectable legal arguments to be made both for the point of view that the funds belong to the U.S. Treasury and for the contention that they do not. If the funds do not belong to the United States, then the diversion amounted to third-country or private funds being shipped to the Contras. If they did belong to the United States, there would be legal questions (although not, technically, Boland Amendment questions) about using U.S.-owned funds for purposes not specifically approved by law. The answer does not seem to us to be so obvious, however, as to warrant treating the matter as if it were criminal.

6. Elliot Abrams Assesses the Impact of the Iran-Contra Scandal on Central American Policy, 1989

... Reagan made the establishment of democratic institutions the centerpiece of his Central America policy. In El Salvador, in Guatemala, and in relatively peaceful Honduras, it became U.S. policy to push for transitions, via free elections, to democratic governments; and furthermore to encourage those countries to improve their judicial systems, reduce military violence, expand freedom of the press—in short, to build not only democratic governments but democratic societies as well.

This was the tacit agreement: the U.S. would protect Central America from Communism by bottling up and ultimately toppling the Sandinista regime if the Right—civilian and military—would throw its support to a process of democratization, which we for our part would help in every possible way.

Not everyone was automatically or immediately willing to accept this deal. The local militaries were suspicious, the local right-wing parties were hostile, and American conservatives were dubious. For each, the administration had an answer.

For American conservatives there was an appeal to principle: the goal was not to support one or another political party, but the democratic process itself. If non-Communist leftists like the Christian Democrats entered, and won, elections, so be it; parties of the Right, too, would have an equal chance to do the same. . . .

As for the battle against Communism in Nicara-

gua, the Reagan administration, after a false start or two, had begun fulfilling its promise. . . .

By mid-1987, there were 15,000 well-equipped *contras* in the field in Nicaragua, giving the Sandinistas real trouble and moving freely throughout the countryside. In particular, the *contras'* American Redeye missiles rendered the Sandinistas' Soviet-made helicopter gunships marginal to the struggle. Contrary to the claims of congressional liberals, the Sandinistas were very well aware of the wide support for the *contras* among the populace, and of the threat they constituted to the survival of the Communist regime.

It was at this promising point—when Communism was under effective assault in Nicaragua, and democracy was being built in the neighboring countries—that the Iran-*contra* affair erupted.

Thanks to the ensuing scandal, the liberal opponents of Reagan's strategy of backing guerrilla wars against Communism were given a new, unexpected chance to teach once again their version of the "lessons of Vietnam": that a policy of anti-Communism leads to crises, scandals, adventurism, and even threatens the very integrity of our political system. But instead of combining the admission of serious mistakes with a tough defense of itself and with a frank explanation to the American people of the aims of its Central American strategy, the Reagan administration spun into a panic. High officials were thrown

overboard. Two separate investigations into official misconduct (one by the Tower Commission and one by Congress) were launched, and just as quickly overshadowed, as the President, appointing an "independent counsel" before either of these investigations had been concluded, permitted the issue to become one of criminality.

Until now, congressional votes on *contra* aid had always been won or lost by very slim margins. Even Reagan's most important victory, the \$100 million in military aid that had been authorized in the fall of 1986, had been wrung out of the Congress by a handful of votes. Now, as a result of the scandal, the tenuous majority that had backed *contra* aid was gone. Nevertheless Central America was still there, and the administration felt duty-bound to try to maintain its policy somehow.

In this weakened condition, the White House entered into negotiations in July 1987 with its former ally Jim Wright, now the Speaker of the House, a Texas Democrat with a pro-*contra* constituency. The product of these negotiations was the Wright-Reagan plan, under which Ronald Reagan agreed for the first time to link *contra* aid to Sandinista promises of reform, rather than to the *contras'* real battlefield needs.

It is hard to blame Central American leaders too much for the panic which characterized their initial reaction to this plan. They represented small, weak nations whose internal peace and stability could be upset in a weekend by Castro or Ortega. And if they sat and faced the future much surer about Castro's intentions and Ortega's than about our own, then their panic was not unfounded.

But the particular form of panic to which they succumbed was a disastrous one. For in a single day, the four Central American democratic leaders swept away the foundations of the policy which had been sustaining them, and presented to Daniel Ortega a very great gift. This they did at a summit meeting in Esquipulas, Guatemala, when they adopted the "peace plan" set forth by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, under which the *contras* would be disarmed and disbanded in exchange for Ortega's paper pledges of Jeffersonian democracy.

Now the road to democracy no longer required *contras* to eliminate Communists, but instead required agreements with Communists to eliminate the *contras*. Not even Iran-*contra* was so serious a blow to the Reagan administration's Central America policy as this. . . .

7. Berke Breathed on the Rule of Law in America, 1989

BLOOM COUNTY by Berke Breathed



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8. How the "System" Worked: A Skeptic's View, 1989



53. Afghanistan 1979-1992

America's *Jihad*

His followers first gained attention by throwing acid in the faces of women who refused to wear the veil. CIA and State Department officials I have spoken with call him "scary," "vicious," "a fascist," "definite dictatorship material".¹

This did not prevent the United States government from showering the man with large amounts of aid to fight against the Soviet-supported government of Afghanistan. His name was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. He was the head of the Islamic Party and he hated the United

States almost as much as he hated the Russians. His followers screamed "Death to America" along with "Death to the Soviet Union", only the Russians were not showering him with large amounts of aid.²

The United States began supporting Afghan Islamic fundamentalists in 1979 despite the fact that in February of that year some of them had kidnapped the American ambassador in the capital city of Kabul, leading to his death in the rescue attempt. The support continued even after their brother Islamic fundamentalists in next-door Iran seized the US Embassy in Teheran in November and held 55 Americans hostage for over a year. Hekmatyar and his colleagues were, after all, in battle against the Soviet Evil Empire; he was thus an important member of those forces Ronald Reagan called "freedom fighters".

On 27 April 1978, a coup staged by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) overthrew the government of Mohammad Daoud. Daoud, five years earlier, had overthrown the monarchy and established a republic, although he himself was a member of the royal family. He had been supported by the left in this endeavor, but it turned out that Daoud's royal blood was thicker than his progressive water. When the Daoud regime had a PDP leader killed, arrested the rest of the leadership, and purged hundreds of suspected party sympathizers from government posts, the PDP, aided by its supporters in the army, revolted and took power.

Afghanistan was a backward nation: a life expectancy of about 40, infant mortality of at least 25 percent, absolutely primitive sanitation, widespread malnutrition, illiteracy of more than 90 percent, very few highways, not one mile of railway, most people living in nomadic tribes or as impoverished farmers in mud villages, identifying more with ethnic groups than with a larger political concept, a life scarcely different from many centuries earlier.

Reform with a socialist bent was the new government's ambition: land reform (while still retaining private property), controls on prices and profits, and strengthening of the public sector, as well as separation of church and state, eradication of illiteracy, legalization of trade unions, and the emancipation of women in a land almost entirely Muslim.

Afghanistan's thousand-mile border with the Soviet Union had always produced a special relationship. Even while it was a monarchy, the country had been under the strong influence of its powerful northern neighbor which had long been its largest trading partner, aid donor, and military supplier. But the country had never been gobbled up by the Soviets, a fact that perhaps lends credence to the oft-repeated Soviet claim that their hegemony over Eastern Europe was only to create a buffer between themselves and the frequently-invading West.

Nevertheless, for decades Washington and the Shah of Iran tried to pressure and bribe Afghanistan in order to roll back Russian influence in the country. During the Daoud regime, Iran, encouraged by the United States, sought to replace the Soviet Union as Kabul's biggest donor with a \$2 billion economic aid agreement, and urged Afghanistan to join the Regional Cooperation for Development, which consisted of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. (This organization was attacked by the Soviet Union and its friends in Afghanistan as being a "branch of CENTO" the 1950s regional security pact that was part of the US policy of "containment" of the Soviet Union.) At the same time, Iran's infamous secret police, SAVAK, was busy fingering suspected Communist sympathizers in the Afghan government and military. In September 1975, prodded by Iran which was conditioning its aid on such policies, Daoud dismissed 40 Soviet-trained military officers and moved to reduce future Afghan dependence on officer training in the USSR by initiating training arrangements with India and Egypt. Most important, in Soviet eyes, Daoud gradually broke off his alliance with the PDP, announcing that he would start his own party and ban all other political

activity under a projected new constitution.³

Selig Harrison, the *Washington Post's* South Asia specialist, wrote an article in 1979 entitled "The Shah, Not the Kremlin, Touched off Afghan Coup", concluding:

The Communist takeover in Kabul [April 1978] came about when it did, and in the way that it did, because the Shah disturbed the tenuous equilibrium that had existed in Afghanistan between the Soviet Union and the West for nearly three decades. In Iranian and American eyes, Teheran's offensive was merely designed to make Kabul more truly nonaligned, but it went far beyond that. Given the unusually long frontier with Afghanistan, the Soviet Union would clearly go to great lengths to prevent Kabul from moving once again toward a pro-western stance.⁴

When the Shah was overthrown in January 1979, the United States lost its chief ally and outpost in the Soviet-border region, as well as its military installations and electronic monitoring stations aimed at the Soviet Union. Washington's cold warriors could only eye Afghanistan even more covetously than before.

After the April revolution, the new government under President Nour Mohammed Taraki declared a commitment to Islam within a secular state, and to non-alignment in foreign affairs. It maintained that the coup had not been foreign inspired, that it was not a "Communist takeover", and that they were not "Communists" but rather nationalists and revolutionaries. (No official or traditional Communist Party had ever existed in Afghanistan.)⁵ But because of its radical reform program, its class-struggle and anti-imperialist-type rhetoric, its support of all the usual suspects (Cuba, North Korea, etc.), its signing of a friendship treaty and other cooperative agreements with the Soviet Union, and an increased presence in the country of Soviet civilian and military advisers (though probably less than the US had in Iran at the time), it was labeled "communist" by the world's media and by its domestic opponents.

Whether or not the new government in Afghanistan should properly have been called communist, whether or not it made any difference what it was called, the lines were now drawn for political, military, and propaganda battle: a *jihad* (holy war) between fundamentalist Muslims and "godless atheistic communists"; Afghan nationalism vs. a "Soviet-run" government; large landowners, tribal chiefs, businessmen, the extended royal family, and others vs. the government's economic reforms. Said the new prime minister about this elite, who were needed to keep the country running, "every effort will be made to attract them. But we want to re-educate them in such a manner that they should think about the people, and not, as previously, just about themselves—to have a good house and a nice car while other people die of hunger."⁶

The Afghan government was trying to drag the country into the 20th century. In May 1979, British political scientist Fred Halliday observed that "probably more has changed in the countryside over the last year than in the two centuries since the state was established." Peasant debts to landlords had been canceled, the system of usury (by which peasants, who were forced to borrow money against future crops, were left in perpetual debt to money-lenders) was abolished, and hundreds of schools and medical clinics were being built in the countryside. Halliday also reported that a substantial land-redistribution program was underway, with many of the 200,000 rural families scheduled to receive land under this reform already having done so. But this last claim must be approached with caution. Revolutionary land reform is always an extremely complex and precarious undertaking even under the best of conditions, and ultra-backward, tradition-bound Afghanistan in the midst of nascent civil war hardly offered the best of conditions for social experiments.

The reforms also encroached into the sensitive area of Islamic subjugation of women by

outlawing child marriage and the giving of a woman in marriage in exchange for money or commodities, and teaching women to read, at a time when certain Islamic sectors were openly calling for the reinforcement of *pardah*, the seclusion of women from public observation.

Halliday noted that the People's Democratic Party saw the Soviet Union as the only realistic source of support for the long-overdue modernization.⁷ The illiterate Afghan peasant's ethnic cousins across the border in the Soviet Union were, after all, often university graduates and professionals.

The argument of the Moujahedeen ("holy warriors") rebels that the "communist" government would curtail their religious freedom was never borne out in practice. A year and a half after the change in government, the conservative British magazine *The Economist* reported that "no restrictions had been imposed on religious practice".⁸ Earlier, the *New York Times* stated that the religious issue "is being used by some Afghans who actually object more to President Taraki's plans for land reforms and other changes in this feudal society."⁹ Many of the Muslim clergy were in fact rich landowners.¹⁰ The rebels, concluded a BBC reporter who spent four months with them, are "fighting to retain their feudal system and stop the Kabul government's left-wing reforms which [are] considered anti-Islamic".¹¹

The two other nations which shared a long border with Afghanistan, and were closely allied to the United States, expressed their fears of the new government. To the west, Iran, still under the Shah, worried about "threats to oil-passage routes in the Persian Gulf". Pakistan, to the south, spoke of "threats from a hostile and expansionist Afghanistan".¹² A former US ambassador to Afghanistan saw it as part of a "gradually closing pincer movement aimed at Iran and the oil regions of the Middle East."¹³ None of these alleged fears turned out to have any substance or evidence to back them up, but to the anti-communist mind this might prove only that the Russians and their Afghan puppets had been stopped in time.

Two months after the April 1978 coup, an alliance formed by a number of conservative Islamic factions was waging guerrilla war against the government.¹⁴ By spring 1979, fighting was taking place on many fronts, and the State Department was cautioning the Soviet Union that its advisers in Afghanistan should not interfere militarily in the civil strife. One such warning in the summer by State Department spokesman Hodding Carter was another of those Washington monuments to *chutzpah*: "We expect the principle of nonintervention to be respected by all parties in the area, including the Soviet Union."¹⁵ This while the Soviets were charging the CIA with arming Afghan exiles in Pakistan; and the Afghanistan government was accusing Pakistan and Iran of also aiding the guerrillas and even of crossing the border to take part in the fighting. Pakistan had recently taken its own sharp turn toward strict Muslim orthodoxy, which the Afghan government deplored as "fanatic";¹⁶ while in January, Iran had established a Muslim state after overthrowing the Shah. (As opposed to the Afghan fundamentalist freedom fighters, the Iranian Islamic fundamentalists were regularly described in the West as terrorists, ultra-conservatives, and anti-democratic.)

A "favorite tactic" of the Afghan freedom fighters was "to torture victims [often Russians] by first cutting off their noses, ears, and genitals, then removing one slice of skin after another", producing "a slow, very painful death".¹⁷ The Moujahedeen also killed a Canadian tourist and six West Germans, including two children, and a U.S. military attaché was dragged from his car and beaten; all due to the rebels' apparent inability to distinguish Russians from other Europeans.¹⁸

In March 1979, Taraki went to Moscow to press the Soviets to send ground troops to help the Afghan army put down the Moujahedeen. He was promised military assistance, but ground

troops could not be committed. Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin told the Afghan leader:

The entry of our troops into Afghanistan would outrage the international community, triggering a string of extremely negative consequences in many different areas. Our common enemies are just waiting for the moment when Soviet troops appear in Afghanistan. This will give them the excuse they need to send armed bands into the country.¹⁹

In September, the question became completely academic for Noor Mohammed Taraki, for he was ousted (and his death soon announced) in an intra-party struggle and replaced by his own deputy prime minister, Hafizullah Amin. Although Taraki had sometimes been heavy-handed in implementing the reform program, and had created opposition even amongst the intended beneficiaries, he turned out to be a moderate compared to Amin who tried to institute social change by riding roughshod over tradition and tribal and ethnic autonomy.

The Kremlin was unhappy with Amin. The fact that he had been involved in the overthrow and death of the much-favored Taraki was bad enough. But the Soviets also regarded him as thoroughly unsuitable for the task that was Moscow's *sine qua non*: preventing an anti-communist Islamic state from arising in Afghanistan. Amin gave reform an exceedingly bad name. The KGB station in Kabul, in pressing for Amin's removal, stated that his usurpation of power would lead to "harsh repressions and, as a reaction, the activation and consolidation of the opposition".²⁰ Moreover, as we shall see, the Soviets were highly suspicious about Amin's ideological convictions.

Thus it was, that what in March had been unthinkable, in December became a reality. Soviet troops began to arrive in Afghanistan around the 8th of the month—to what extent at Amin's request or with his approval, and, consequently, whether to call the action an "invasion" or not, has been the subject of much discussion and controversy.

On the 23rd the *Washington Post* commented "There was no charge [by the State Department] that the Soviets have invaded Afghanistan, since the troops apparently were invited."²¹

However, at a meeting with Soviet-bloc ambassadors in October, Amin's foreign minister had openly criticized the Soviet Union for interfering in Afghan affairs. Amin himself insisted that Moscow replace its ambassador.²² Yet, on 26 December, while the main body of Soviet troops was arriving in Afghanistan, Amin gave "a relaxed interview" to an Arab journalist. "The Soviets," he said, "supply my country with economic and military aid, but at the same time they respect our independence and our sovereignty. They do not interfere in our domestic affairs." He also spoke approvingly of the USSR's willingness to accept his veto on military bases.²³

The very next day, a Soviet military force stormed the presidential palace and shot Amin dead.²⁴

He was replaced by Babrak Karmal, who had been vice president and deputy prime minister in the 1978 revolutionary government.

Moscow denied any part in Amin's death, though they didn't pretend to be sorry about it, as Brezhnev made clear:

The actions of the aggressors against Afghanistan were facilitated by Amin who, on seizing power, started cruelly repressing broad sections of Afghan society, party and military cadres, members of the intelligentsia and of the Moslem clergy, that is, the very sections on which the April revolution relied. And the people under the leadership of the People's Democratic Party, headed by Babrak Karmal, rose against Amin's tyranny and put an end to it. Now in Washington and some other capitals they are mourning Amin. This exposes their hypocrisy with

particular clarity. Where were these mourners when Amin was conducting mass repressions, when he forcibly removed and unlawfully killed Taraki, the founder of the new Afghan state?²⁵

After Amin's ouster and execution, the public thronged the streets in "a holiday spirit". "If Karmal could have overthrown Amin without the Russians," observed a Western diplomat, "he would have been seen as a hero of the people."²⁶

The Soviet government and press repeatedly referred to Amin as a "CIA agent", a charge which was greeted with great skepticism in the United States and elsewhere.²⁷ However, enough circumstantial evidence supporting the charge exists so that it perhaps should not be dismissed entirely out of hand.

During the late 1950s and early '60s, Amin had attended Columbia University Teachers College and the University of Wisconsin.²⁸ This was a heyday period for the CIA—using impressive bribes and threats—to regularly try to recruit foreign students in the United States to act as agents for them when they returned home. During this period, at least one president of the Afghanistan Students Association (ASA), Zia H. Noorzay, was working with the CIA in the United States and later became president of the Afghanistan state treasury. One of the Afghan students whom Noorzay and the CIA tried in vain to recruit, Abdul Latif Horaki, declared in 1967 that a good number of the key officials in the Afghanistan government who studied in the United States "are either CIA trained or indoctrinated. Some are cabinet level people."²⁹ It has been reported that in 1963 Amin became head of the ASA, but this has not been corroborated.³⁰ However, it is known that the ASA received part of its funding from the Asia Foundation, the CIA's principal front in Asia for many years, and that at one time Amin was associated with this organization.³¹

In September 1979, the month that Amin took power, the American *chargé d'affaires* in Kabul, Bruce Amstutz, began to hold friendly meetings with him to reassure him that he need not worry about his unhappy Soviet allies as long as the US maintained a strong presence in Afghanistan. The strategy may have worked, for later in the month, Amin made a special appeal to Amstutz for improved relations with the United States. Two days later in New York, the Afghan Foreign Minister quietly expressed the same sentiments to State Department officials. And at the end of October, the US Embassy in Kabul reported that Amin was "painfully aware of the exiled leadership the Soviets [were] keeping on the shelf" (a reference to Karmal who was living in Czechoslovakia).³² Under normal circumstances, the Amin-US meetings might be regarded as routine and innocent diplomatic contact, but these were hardly normal circumstances—the Afghan government was engaged in a civil war, and the United States was supporting the other side.

Moreover, it can be said that Amin, by his ruthlessness, was doing just what an American agent would be expected to do: discrediting the People's Democratic Party, the party's reforms, the idea of socialism or communism, and the Soviet Union, all associated in one package. Amin also conducted purges in the army officer corps which seriously undermined the army's combat capabilities.

But why would Amin, if he were actually plotting with the Americans, request Soviet military forces on several occasions? The main reason appears to be that he was being pressed to do so by high levels of the PDP and he had to comply for the sake of appearances. Babrak Karmal has suggested other, more Machiavellian, scenarios.³³

The Carter administration jumped on the issue of the Soviet "invasion" and soon launched a campaign of righteous indignation, imposing what President Carter called "penalties"—from halting the delivery of grain to the Soviet Union to keeping the US team

out of the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

The Russians countered that the US was enraged by the intervention because Washington had been plotting to turn the country into an American base to replace the loss of Iran.³⁴

Unsurprisingly, on this seemingly clear-cut anti-communist issue, the American public and media easily fell in line with the president. The *Wall Street Journal* called for a "military" reaction, the establishment of US bases in the Middle East, "reinstatement of draft registration", development of a new missile, and giving the CIA more leeway, adding: "Clearly we ought to keep open the chance of covert aid to Afghan rebels."³⁵ The last, whether the newspaper knew it or not, had actually been going on for some time. In February 1980, the *Washington Post* disclosed that while the United States was now supplying weapons to the guerrillas,

U.S. covert aid prior to the December invasion, according to sources, was limited to funneling small amounts of medical supplies and communications equipment to scattered rebel tribes, plus what is described as "technical advice" to the rebels about where they could acquire arms on their own.³⁶

US foreign service officers had been meeting with rebel leaders to determine their needs at least as early as April 1979,³⁷ and the CIA had been training guerrillas in Pakistan and beaming radio propaganda into Afghanistan since the year before.³⁸

Intervention in the Afghan civil war by the United States, Iran, Pakistan, China and others gave the Russians grave concern about who was going to wield power next door. They consistently cited these "aggressive imperialist forces" to rationalize their own intervention into Afghanistan, which was the first time Soviet ground troops had engaged in military action anywhere in the world outside its post-World War II Eastern European borders. The potential establishment of an anti-communist Islamic state on the borders of the Soviet Union's own republics in Soviet Central Asia that were home to some 40 million Muslims could not be regarded with equanimity by the Kremlin any more than Washington could be unruffled about a communist takeover in Mexico.

As we have seen repeatedly, the United States did not limit its defense perimeter to its immediate neighbors, or even to Western Europe, but to the entire globe. President Carter declared that the Persian Gulf area was "now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan", that this area was synonymous with US interests, and that the United States would "defend" it against any threat by all means necessary. He called the Soviet action "the greatest threat to peace since the Second World War", a statement that required overlooking a great deal of post-war history. But 1980 was an election year.

Brezhnev, on the other hand, declared that "the national interests or security of the United States of America and other states are in no way affected by the events in Afghanistan. All attempts to portray matters otherwise are sheer nonsense."³⁹

The Carter administration was equally dismissive of Soviet concerns. National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski later stated that "the issue was not what might have been Brezhnev's subjective motives in going into Afghanistan but the objective consequences of a Soviet military presence so much closer to the Persian Gulf."⁴⁰

The stage was now set for 12 long years of the most horrific kind of warfare, a daily atrocity for the vast majority of the Afghan people who never asked for or wanted this war. But the Soviet Union was determined that its borders must be unthreatening. The Afghan government was committed to its goal of a secular, reformed Afghanistan. The United States was determined that, at a minimum, this should be the Soviets' Vietnam, that they

should slowly bleed as the Americans had; at a maximum ... that was perhaps not as well thought out, but American policymakers could not fail to understand—though they dared not say it publicly and explicitly—that support of the Mujahedeen (many of whom carried pictures of the Ayatollah Khomeini with them) could lead to a fundamentalist Islamic state being established in Afghanistan every bit as repressive as in next-door Iran, which in the 1980s was Public Enemy Number One in America. Neither could the word “terrorist” cross the lips of Washington officials in speaking of their new allies/clients, though these same people shot down civilian airliners and planted bombs at the airport. In 1986, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whose emotional invectives against “terrorists” were second to none, welcomed Abdul Haq, an Afghan rebel leader who admitted that he had ordered the planting of a bomb at Kabul airport in 1984 which killed at least 28 people.⁴¹ Such, then, were the scruples of cold-war anti-communists in late 20th century. As Anastasio Somoza had been “our son of a bitch”, the Mujahedeen were now “our fanatic terrorists”.

At the beginning there had been some thought given to the morality of the policy. “The question here,” a senior official in the Carter administration said, “was whether it was morally acceptable that, in order to keep the Soviets off balance, which was the reason for the operation, it was permissible to use other lives for our geopolitical interests.”⁴²

But such sentiments could not survive. Afghanistan was a cold-warrior’s dream: The CIA and the Pentagon, finally, had one of their proxy armies in direct confrontation with the forces of the Evil Empire. There was no price too high to pay for this Super Nintendo game, neither the hundreds of thousands of Afghan lives, nor the destruction of Afghan society, nor three billion (sic) dollars of American taxpayer money poured into a bottomless hole, much of it going only to make a few Afghans and Pakistanis rich. Congress was equally enthused—without even the moral uncertainty that made them cautious about arming the Nicaraguan contras—and became a veritable bipartisan horn of plenty as it allocated more and more money for the effort each year. Rep. Charles Wilson of Texas expressed a not-atypical sentiment of official Washington when he declared:

There were 58,000 dead in Vietnam and we owe the Russians one ... I have a slight obsession with it, because of Vietnam, I thought the Soviets ought to get a dose of it ... I’ve been of the opinion that this money was better spent to hurt our adversaries than other money in the Defense Department budget.⁴³

The CIA became the grand coordinator: purchasing or arranging the manufacture of Soviet-style weapons from Egypt, China, Poland, Israel and elsewhere, or supplying their own; arranging for military training by Americans, Egyptians, Chinese and Iranians; hitting up Middle-Eastern countries for donations, notably Saudi Arabia which gave many hundreds of millions of dollars in aid each year, totaling probably more than a billion; pressuring and bribing Pakistan—with whom recent American relations had been very poor—to rent out its country as a military staging area and sanctuary; putting the Pakistani Director of Military Operations, Brigadier Mian Mohammad Afzal, onto the CIA payroll to ensure Pakistani cooperation.⁴⁴ Military and economic aid which had been cut off would be restored, Pakistan was told by the United States, if they would join the great crusade. Only a month before the Soviet intervention, anti-American mobs had burned and ransacked the US embassy in Islamabad and American cultural centers in two other Pakistani cities.⁴⁵

The American ambassador in Libya reported that Muammar Qaddafi was sending the rebels \$250,000 as well, but this, presumably, was not at the request of the CIA.⁴⁶

Washington left it to the Pakistanis to decide which of the various Afghan guerrilla

groups should be the beneficiaries of much of this largesse. As one observer put it: "According to conventional wisdom at the time, the United States would not repeat the mistake of Vietnam—micro-managing a war in a culture it did not understand."⁴⁷

Not everyone in Pakistan was bought out. The independent Islamabad daily newspaper, the *Muslim*, more than once accused the United States of being ready to "right to the last Afghan" ... "We are not flattered to be termed a 'frontline state' by Washington." ... "Washington does not seem to be in any mood to seek an early settlement of a war whose benefits it is reaping at no cost of American manpower."⁴⁸

It's not actually clear whether there was any loss of American lives in the war. On several occasions in the late '80s, the Kabul government announced that Americans had been killed in the fighting,⁴⁹ and in 1985 a London newspaper reported that some two dozen American Black Muslims were in Afghanistan, fighting alongside the Mujahedeen in a *jihad* that a fundamentalist interpretation of the Koran says all believers in Islam must do at least once in their lives.⁵⁰ Several of the Black Muslims returned to the United States after being wounded.

Soviet aggression ... Soviet invasion ... Soviet swallowing up another innocent state as part of their plan to conquer the world, or at least the Middle East ... this was the predominant and lasting lesson taught by Washington official pronouncements and the mainstream US media about the war, and the sum total of knowledge for the average American, although Afghanistan had retained its independence during 60 years of living in peace next door to the Soviet Union. Zbigniew Brzezinski, albeit unrelentingly anti-Soviet, repeatedly speaks of the fact of Afghanistan's "neutrality" in his memoirs.⁵¹ The country had been neutral even during the Second World War.

One would have to look long and hard at the information and rhetoric offered to the American public following the Soviet intervention to derive even a hint that the civil war was essentially a struggle over deep-seated social reform; while an actual discussion of the issue was virtually non-existent. Prior to the intervention, one could get a taste of this, such as the following from the *New York Times*:

Land reform attempts undermined their village chiefs. Portraits of Lenin threatened their religious leaders. But it was the Kabul revolutionary Government's granting of new rights to women that pushed orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up their guns. ... "The government said our women had to attend meetings and our children had to go to schools. This threatens our religion. We had to fight." ... "The government imposed various ordinances allowing women freedom to marry anyone they chose without their parents' consent."⁵²

Throughout the 1980s, the Karmal, and then the Najibullah regimes, despite the exigencies of the war, pursued a program of modernization and broadening of their base: bringing electricity to villages, along with health clinics, a measure of land reform, and literacy; releasing numerous prisoners unlawfully incarcerated by Amin; bringing mullahs and other non-party people into the government; trying to carry it all out with moderation and sensitivity instead of confronting the traditional structures head-on; reiterating its commitment to Islam, rebuilding and constructing mosques, exempting land owned by religious dignitaries and their institutions from land reform; trying, in short, to avoid the gross mistakes of the Amin government with its rush to force changes down people's throats.⁵³

Selig Harrison, writing in 1988, stated:

The Afghan Communists see themselves as nationalists and modernizers ... They rationalize their cul-

laboration with the Russians as the only way available to consolidate their revolution in the face of foreign "interference". ... The commitment of the Communists to rapid modernization enables them to win a grudging tolerance from many members of the modern-minded middle class, who feel trapped between two fires: the Russians and fanatic Muslims opposed to social reforms.⁵⁴

The program of the Kabul government eventually encouraged many volunteers to take up arms in its name. But it was a decidedly uphill fight, for it was relatively easy for the native anti-reformists and their foreign backers to convince large numbers of ordinary peasants that the government had ill intentions by blurring the distinction between the present government and its detested and dogmatic predecessor, particularly since the government was fond of stressing the continuity of the April 1978 revolution.⁵⁵ One thing the peasants, as well as the anti-reformists, were undoubtedly not told of was the US connection to the selfsame detested predecessor, Hafizullah Amin.

Another problem faced by the Kabul government in winning the hearts and minds of the people was of course the continuing Soviet armed presence, although it must be remembered that Islamic opposition to the leftist government began well before the Soviet forces arrived; indeed, the most militant of the Moujahedeen leaders, Hekmatyar, had led a serious uprising against the previous (non-leftist) government as well, in 1975, declaring that a "godless, communist-dominated regime" ruled in Kabul.⁵⁶

As long as Soviet troops remained, the conflict in Afghanistan could be presented to the American mind as little more than a battle between Russian invaders and Afghanistan resistance/freedom fighters; as if the Afghanistan army and government didn't exist, or certainly not with a large following of people who favored reforms and didn't want to live under a fundamentalist Islamic government, probably a majority of the population.

"Maybe the people really don't like us, either," said Mohammed Hakim, Mayor of Kabul, a general in the Afghan army who was trained in the 1970s at military bases in the United States, and who thought that America was "the best country", "but they like us better than the extremists. This is what the Western countries do not understand. We only hope that Mr. Bush and the people of the United States take a good look at us. They think we are very fanatic Communists, that we are not human beings. We are not fanatics. We are not even Communists."⁵⁷

They were in the American media. Any official of the Afghan government, or the government as a whole, was typically referred to, *a priori*, as "Communist", or "Marxist", or "pro-Communist", or "pro-Marxist", etc., without explanation or definition. Najibullah, who took over when Karmal stepped down in 1986, was confirmed in his position in 1987 under a new Islamized constitution that was stripped of all socialist rhetoric and brimming with references to Islam and the holy Koran. "This is not a socialist revolutionary country," he said in his acceptance speech. "We do not want to build a Communist society."⁵⁸

Could the United States see beyond cold war ideology and consider the needs of the Afghan people? In August 1979, three months before the Soviet intervention, a classified State Department Report stated:

the United States's larger interests ... would be served by the demise of the Taraki-Amin regime, despite whatever setbacks this might mean for future social and economic reforms in Afghanistan. ... the overthrow of the D.R.A. [Democratic Republic of Afghanistan] would show the rest of the world, particularly the Third World, that the Soviets' view of the socialist course of history as being inevitable is not accurate.⁵⁹

Repeatedly, in the 1980s, as earlier, the Soviet Union contended that no solution to the conflict could be found until the United States and other nations ceased their support of the

Moujahedeen. The United States, in turn, insisted that the Soviets must first withdraw their troops from Afghanistan.

Finally, after several years of UN-supported negotiations, an accord was signed in Geneva on 14 April 1988, under which the Kremlin committed itself to begin pulling out its estimated 115,000 troops on 15 May, and to complete the process by 15 February of the next year. Afghanistan, said Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, had become "a bleeding wound".

In February, after the last Soviet forces had left Afghanistan, Gorbachev urged the United States to support an embargo on arms shipments into Afghanistan and a cease-fire between the two warring sides. Both proposals were turned down by the new Bush administration, which claimed that the Afghan government had been left with a massive stockpile of military equipment. It is unclear why Washington felt that the rebels who had fought the government to a standstill despite the powerful presence of the Soviet armed forces with all their equipment, would now be at a dangerous disadvantage with the Russians gone. The key to the American response may lie in the State Department statement of the prior week that the United States believed that the Kabul government on its own would not last more than six months.⁶⁰

By raising the question of an arms gap (whether it was for real or not), Washington was assuring the continuation of the arms race in Afghanistan—a microcosm of the cold war. At the same time, the Bush administration called upon the Soviets to support "an independent, nonaligned Afghanistan", although this was precisely what the United States had worked for decades to thwart.

Two days later, President Najibullah criticized the American rejection of Gorbachev's proposal, offering to return the Soviet weapons if the rebels agreed to lay down their weapons and negotiate. There was no reported response to this offer from the US, or from the rebels, who in the past had refused such offers.

It would appear that Washington was thinking longer term than cease-fires and negotiations. On the same day as Najibullah's offer, the United States announced that it had delivered 500,000 made-in-America textbooks to Afghanistan which were being used to teach Grades one through four. The books, which "critics say bordered on propaganda", told of the rebels' fight against the Soviet Union and contained drawings of guerrillas killing Russian soldiers.⁶¹ Since the beginning of the war, the Moujahedeen had reserved its worst treatment for Russians. Washington possessed confirmed reports that the rebels had drugged and tortured 50 to 200 Soviet prisoners and imprisoned them like animals in cages, "living lives of indescribable horror".⁶² Another account, by a reporter from the conservative *Far Eastern Economic Review*, relates that :

One [Soviet] group was killed, skinned and hung up in a butcher's shop. One captive found himself the centre of attraction in a game of buzkashi, that rough and tumble form of Afghan polo in which a headless goat is usually the ball. The captive was used instead. Alive. He was literally torn to pieces.⁶³

Meanwhile, much to the surprise of the United States and everyone else, the Kabul government showed no sign of collapsing. The good news for Washington was that since the Soviet troops were gone (though some military advisers remained), the "cost-benefit ratio" had improved,⁶⁴ the cost being measured entirely in non-American deaths and suffering, as the rebels regularly exploded car bombs and sent rockets smashing into residential areas of Kabul, and destroyed government-built schools and clinics and murdered literacy teachers (just as the US-backed Nicaraguan contras had been doing on the other side of the world,

and for the same reason: these were symbols of governmental benevolence).

The death and destruction caused by the Soviets and their Afghan allies was also extensive, such as the many bombings of villages. But individual atrocity stories must be approached with caution, for, as we have seen repeatedly, the propensity and the ability of the CIA to disseminate anti-communist disinformation—often of the most far-fetched variety—was virtually unlimited. With the Soviet Union the direct adversary, the creativity lamp must have burning all night at Langley.

Amnesty International, with its usual careful collection methods, reported in the mid-'80s on the frequent use of torture and arbitrary detention by the authorities in Kabul.⁶⁵ But what are we to make, for example, of the report, without attribution, by syndicated columnist Jack Anderson—who had ties to the American Afghan lobby—that Soviet troops often marched into unfriendly villages in Afghanistan and “massacred every man, woman and child”?⁶⁶ Or the *New York Times* recounting a story told them by an Afghan citizen of how Afghan soldiers had intentionally blinded five children with pieces of metal and then strangled them, as a government supporter he was with just laughed. To the newspaper's credit, it added that “There is no way of confirming this story. It is possible that the man who told it was acting and trying to discredit the regime here. His eyes, however, looked like they had seen horror.”⁶⁷ Or a US congressman's charge in 1985 that the Soviets had used booby-trapped toys to maim Afghan children,⁶⁸ the identical story told before about leftists elsewhere in the world during the cold war, and repeated again in 1987 by CBS News, with pictures. The *New York Post* later reported the claim of a BBC producer that the bomb-toy had been created for the CBS cameraman.⁶⁹

Then there was the Afghan Mercy Fund, ostensibly a relief agency, but primarily in the propaganda business, which reported that the Soviets had burned a baby alive, that they were disguising mines as candy bars and leaving other mines disguised as butterflies to also attract children. The butterfly mines, it turned out, were copies of a US-designed mine used in the Vietnam war.⁷⁰

There was also the shooting down of a Pakistan fighter plane over Afghanistan in May 1987 that was reported by Pakistan and Washington—knowing with certainty that their claim was untrue—to be the result of a Soviet-made missile. It turned out that the plane had been shot down by a companion Pakistani plane in error.⁷¹

Throughout the early and mid-'80s, the Reagan administration declared that the Russians were spraying toxic chemicals over Laos, Cambodia and Afghanistan—the so-called “yellow rain”—and had caused more than ten thousand deaths by 1982 alone, (including, in Afghanistan, 3,042 deaths attributed to 47 separate incidents between the summer of 1979 and the summer of 1981, so precise was the information). Secretary of State Alexander Haig was a prime dispenser of such stories, and President Reagan himself denounced the Soviet Union thusly more than 15 times in documents and speeches.⁷² The “yellow rain”, it turned out, was pollen-laden feces dropped by huge swarms of honeybees flying far overhead. Then, in 1987, it was disclosed that the Reagan administration had made its accusations even though government scientists at the time had been unable to confirm any of them, and considered the evidence to be flimsy and misleading.⁷³ Even more suspicious: the major scientific studies that later examined Washington's claims spoke only of Laos, Cambodia and Thailand; no mention at all was made of Afghanistan. It was as if the administration—perhaps honestly mistaken at first about Indochina—had added Afghanistan to the list with full knowledge of the falsity of its allegation.

Such disinformation campaigns are often designed to serve a domestic political need. Consider Senator Robert Dole's contribution to the discussion when he spoke in 1980 on

the floor of Congress of "convincing evidence" he had been provided "that the Soviets had developed a chemical capability that extends far beyond our greatest fears ... [a gas that] is unaffected by ... our gas masks and leaves our military defenseless." He then added: "To even suggest a leveling off of defense spending for our nation by the Carter administration at such a critical time in our history is unfathomable."⁷⁴ And in March 1982, when the Reagan administration made its claim about the 3,042 Afghan deaths, the *New York Times* noted that: "President Reagan has just decided that the United States will resume production of chemical weapons and has asked for a substantial increase in the military budget for such weapons."⁷⁵

The money needed to extend American propaganda campaigns internationally flowed from the congressional horn of plenty as smoothly as for military desires—\$500,000 in one moment's flow to train Afghan journalists to use television, radio, and newspapers to advance their cause.⁷⁶

It should be noted that in June 1980, before any of the "yellow rain" charges had been made against the Soviet Union, the Kabul government had accused the rebels and their foreign backers of employing poison gas, citing an incident in which 500 pupils and teachers at several secondary schools had been poisoned with noxious gases; none were reported to have died.⁷⁷

One reason victory continued to elude the Moujahedeen was that they were terribly split by centuries-old ethnic and tribal divisions, as well as the relatively recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism in conflict with more traditional, but still orthodox, Islam. The differences often led to violence. In one incident, in 1989, seven top Moujahedeen commanders and more than 20 other rebels were murdered by a rival guerrilla group. This was neither the first nor the last of such occurrences.⁷⁸ By April 1990, 14 months after the Soviet withdrawal, the *Los Angeles Times* described the state of the rebels thusly:

they have in recent weeks killed more of their own than the enemy. ... Rival resistance commanders have been gunned down gangland-style here in the border town of Peshawar [Pakistan], the staging area for the war. There are persistent reports of large-scale political killings in the refugee camps ... A recent execution ... had as much to do with drugs as with politics. ... Other commanders, in Afghanistan and in the border camps, are simply refusing to fight. They say privately that they prefer [Afghan President] Najibullah to the hard-line Moujahedeen fundamentalists led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.⁷⁹

The rebel cause was also corrupted by the huge amounts of arms flooding in. Investigative reporter Tim Weiner reported the following:

The CIA's pipeline leaked. It leaked badly. It spilled huge quantities of weapons all over one of the world's most anarchic areas. First the Pakistani armed forces took what they wanted from the weapons shipments. Then corrupt Afghan guerrilla leaders stole and sold hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of anti-aircraft guns, missiles, rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47 automatic rifles, ammunition and mines from the CIA's arsenal. Some of the weapons fell into the hands of criminal gangs, heroin kingpins and the most radical faction of the Iranian military. ... While their troops eked out hard lives in Afghanistan's mountains and deserts, the guerrillas' political leaders maintained fine villas in Peshawar and fleets of vehicles at their command. The CIA kept silent as the Afghan politicians converted the Agency's weapons into cash.⁸⁰

Amongst the weapons the Moujahedeen sold to the Iranians were highly sophisticated Stinger heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles, with which the rebels had shot down many hundreds of Soviet military aircraft, as well as at least eight passenger planes. On 8 October

1987, Revolutionary Guards on an Iranian gunboat fired one of the Stingers at American helicopters patrolling the Persian Gulf, but missed their target.⁸¹

Earlier the same year, the CIA told Congress that at least 20 percent of its military aid to the Moujahedeen had been skimmed off by the rebels and Pakistani officials. Columnist Jack Anderson stated at the same time that his conservative estimate was that the diversion was around 60 percent, while one rebel leader told Anderson's assistant on his visit to the border that he doubted that even 25 percent of the arms got through. By other accounts, as little as 20 percent was making it the intended recipients. If indeed there was a deficiency of arms available to the Moujahedeen compared to the government forces, as George Bush implied, this was clearly a major reason for it. Yet the CIA and other administration officials simply looked upon it as part of doing business in that part of the world.⁸²

Like many other CIA clients, the rebels were financed as well through drug trafficking, and the Agency was apparently as little concerned about it as ever as long as it kept their boys happy. Moujahedeen commanders inside Afghanistan personally controlled huge fields of opium poppies, the raw material from which heroin is refined. CIA-supplied trucks and mules, which had carried arms into Afghanistan, were used to transport some of the opium to the numerous laboratories along the Afghan-Pakistan border, whence many tons of heroin were processed with the cooperation of the Pakistani military. The output provided an estimated one-third to one-half of the heroin used annually in the United States and three-quarters of that used in Western Europe. US officials admitted in 1990 that they had failed to investigate or take action against the drug operation because of a desire not to offend their Pakistani and Afghan allies.⁸³ In 1993, an official of the US Drug Enforcement Administration called Afghanistan the new Colombia of the drug world.⁸⁴

The war, with all its torment, continued until the spring of 1992, three years after the last Soviet troops had gone. An agreement on ending the arms supply, which had been reached between the United States and the Soviet Union, was now in effect. The two superpowers had abandoned the war. The Soviet Union no longer existed. And the Afghan people could count more than a million dead, three million disabled, and five million made refugees, in total about half the population.

At the same time, a UN-brokered truce was to transfer power to a transitional coalition government pending elections. But this was not to be. The Kabul government, amidst food riots and army revolts, virtually disintegrated, and the guerrillas stormed into the capital and established the first Islamic regime in Afghanistan since it had become a separate and independent country in the mid-18th century.

A key event in the downfall of the government was the eleventh-hour defection to the guerrillas of General Abdul Rashid Dostum. Dostum, who previously had been referred to in the US media as a "Communist general", now metamorphosed into an "ex-Communist general".

The Moujahedeen had won. Now they turned against each other with all their fury. Rockets and artillery shells wiped out entire neighborhoods in Kabul. By August at least 1,500 people had been killed or wounded, mostly civilians. (By 1994, the body count in this second civil war would reach 10,000.) Of all the rebel leaders, none was less compromising or more insistent upon a military solution than Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Robert Neumann, a former US ambassador to Afghanistan, observed at this time:

Hekmatyar is a nut, an extremist and a very violent man. He was built up by the Pakistanis. Unfortunately, our government went along with the Pakistanis. We were supplying the money

and the weapons but they [Pakistani officials] were making the policy.

Washington was now very concerned that Hekmatyar would take power. Ironically, they were afraid that if he did, his brand of extremism would spread to and destabilize the former Soviet republics of large Moslem populations, the same fear which had been one of the motivations behind the Soviets intervening in the civil war in the first place.⁸⁵

It was to the forces of Hekmatyar that the "Communist general" Dostum eventually aligned himself.

Suleiman Layeq, a leftist and a poet, and the fallen regime's "ideologue", watched from his window as the Moujahedeen swarmed through the city, claiming building after building. "Without exception," he said of them, "they follow the way of the fundamentalist aims and goals of Islam. And it is not Islam. It is a kind of theory against civilization—against modern civilization."⁸⁶

Even before taking power, the Moujahedeen had banned all non-Muslim groups. Now more of the new law was laid down: All alcohol was banned in the Islamic republic; women could not venture out in the streets without veils, and violations would be punished by floggings, amputations and public executions. And this from the more "moderate" Islamics, not Hekmatyar. By September, the first public hangings were carried out. Before a cheering crowd of 10,000 people, three men were hung. They had been tried behind closed doors, and no one would say what crimes they had committed.⁸⁷

In February 1993, a group of Middle Easterners blew up the World Trade Center in New York City. Most of them were veterans of the Moujahedeen. Other veterans were carrying out assassinations in Cairo, bombings in Bombay, and bloody uprisings in the mountains of Kashmir.

This, then, was the power and the glory of President Reagan's "freedom fighters", who had become yet more anti-American in recent years, many of them backing Iraq leader Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf conflict of 1990-91. Surely even Ronald Reagan and George Bush would have preferred the company of "communist" reformers like President Noor Mohammed Taraki, Mayor Mohammed Hakim or poet Suleiman Layeq.

But the Soviet Union had bled. They had bled profusely. For the United States it had also been a holy war.

54. El Salvador 1980-1994

Human rights, Washington style

The United States was supporting the government of El Salvador, said President Ronald Reagan, because it was trying "to halt the infiltration into the Americas, by terrorists and by outside interference, and those who aren't just aiming at El Salvador but, I think, are aiming at the whole of Central and possibly later South America and, I'm sure, eventually North America."¹

Psychiatrists have a term for such perceptions of reality. They call it paranoid schizophrenia.

If the insurgents in El Salvador, the smallest country by far in all of Central and South America, were engaged in what Ronald Reagan perceived as a plot to capture the Western Hemisphere, others saw it as the quintessential revolution.

Viewed in the latter context, it cannot be asserted that the Salvadorean people rushed precipitously into revolution at the first painful sting of repression, or turned to the gun because of a proclivity towards violent solutions, or a refusal to "work within the system", or because of "outside agitators", or any of the other explanations of why people revolt so dear to the hearts of Washington opinion makers. For as long as anyone could remember, the reins of El Salvador's government had resided in the hands of one military dictatorship or another, while the economy had been controlled by the celebrated 14 coffee and industrial families, with only the occasional, short-lived bursting of accumulated discontent to disturb the neat arrangement.

In December 1980, *New York Times*, reporter Raymond Bonner asked José Napoleón Duarte "why the guerrillas were in the hills". Duarte, who had just become president of the ruling junta, responded with an answer that surprised Bonner: "Fifty years of lies, fifty years of injustice, fifty years of frustration. This is a history of people starving to death, living in misery. For fifty years the same people had all the power, all the money, all the jobs, all the education, all the opportunities."²

In the decades following the famed peasant rebellion in 1932, which was crushed by an unholy massacre, a reform government had occupied the political stage only twice: for nine months in 1944, then again in 1960. The latter instance was precipitated by several thousand students of the National University who staged a protest against the curtailment of civil liberties. The government responded by sending in the police, who systematically smashed offices, classrooms, and laboratories, beat up the school's president, killed a librarian, bayoneted students, and raped dozens of young women. Finally, when the students amassed anew, troops opened fire upon them point-blank.

The bloody incident was one of the turning points for a group of junior military officers. They staged a coup in October aimed at major social and political reforms, but the new government lasted only three months before being overthrown in a counter-coup which the United States was reportedly involved in.³ Dr. Fabio Castillo, a former president of the National University and a member of the ousted government, testified years later before the US Congress that in the process of overthrowing the reform government, the American Embassy immediately began to "intervene directly", and "members of the U.S. Military Mission openly intensified their invitation to conspiracy and rebellion".⁴

Throughout the 1960s, multifarious American experts occupied themselves in El Salvador by enlarging and refining the state's security and counter-insurgency apparatus: the police, the National Guard, the military, the communications and intelligence networks, the co-ordination with their counterparts in other Central American countries ... as matters turned out, these were the forces and resources which were brought into action to impose widespread repression and wage war. Years later, the *New York Times* noted:

In El Salvador, American aid was used for police training in the 1950's and 1960's and many officers in the three branches of the police later became leaders of the right-wing death squads that killed tens of thousands of people in the late 1970's and early 1980's.⁵

If during the 1960s, the apparatus could not be charged with the level of murder or torture or disappearance of political opponents reached in Guatemala and elsewhere in Latin America, it had more to do with the modest degree of outspoken dissent and violent unrest it faced than with greater respect for human rights; those opposition groups which were not outlawed were those regarded as unthreatening; the bloated stomachs of malnour-

ished peasant children were not regarded as threatening at all.

For apparently no better reason than the fact that even militarists cherish a veneer of legitimacy, during the 1960s certain political organizations of generally urban middle-class membership were allowed to run candidates for municipal and legislative office. They did well, though the government-calculated returns consistently left the opposition as a minority in the legislature; i.e., without real power. In 1967, the government went through the motions of the first contested election for the presidency since 1931. After declaring its party, PCN, the winner, the government promptly banned one of the major contending parties, PAR, on the grounds that it supported principles "contrary to the Constitution". According to a PAR spokesperson, the "principle" involved was support for agrarian reform. Another source reports that the party was declared illegal "allegedly for dispensing Communist ideologies", which, within the government's frame of reference, may well have been one and the same.⁶

Undeterred, a center-left coalition, UNO by acronym, was formed and put forth Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte as its presidential candidate in 1972. Though UNO was confronted by violence against its candidates and campaigners, including the murder of an aide of Duarte, and the sabotaging of the coalition's radio broadcasts, it arrived at election day with high expectations. Two days after the polling, the Central Election Board, after first announcing a victory for PCN, shocked everyone by declaring that a recount had shown UNO to be the winner instead. The government quickly imposed a news blackout and for the next two days nothing was heard concerning the election results. On the third day, the Election Board announced that PCN was indeed the winner after all.

In the 1974 and 1976 legislative elections, and again in the 1977 presidential election, the government employed similar creative counting along with gross physical intimidation of candidates, voters, and poll watchers, to assure its continuance in office.⁷

A mass demonstration following the 1977 polling, protesting against electoral fraud, was surrounded by government security forces who opened fire. The result was nothing less than a bloodbath, the death toll measurable in the hundreds. In the immediate aftermath, top leaders of UNO were exiled and the party's followers became liable to arrest, torture and murder.⁸ The country's president, Col. Arturo Molina, blamed the protests on "foreign Communists". His response to charges of electoral fraud was: "Only God is perfect."⁹

Government political violence of this sort had been sporadic in the 1960s, but became commonplace in the 1970s as more and more Salvadoreans, frustrated by the futility of achieving social change through elections, resorted to other means. While some limited themselves to more militant demonstrations, strikes, and occupations of sites, an increasing number turned to acts of urban guerrilla warfare such as assassination of individuals seen as part of the repressive machinery, bombings, and kidnappings for ransom. The government and its paramilitary right-wing vigilante groups—"death squads" is the self-named modern genre—countered with a campaign centered upon leaders of labor unions, peasant organizations and political parties, as well as priests and lay religious workers. "Be Patriotic—Kill a Priest" was the slogan of one death squad. Church people were accused of teaching subversion to the peasants, what the church people themselves would call the word of God, in this the only country in the world named after Christ. The CIA and the US military played an essential role in the conception and organization of the security agencies from which the death squads emanated. CIA surveillance programs routinely supplied these agencies with information on, and the whereabouts of, various individuals who wound up as death squad victims.¹⁰

In October 1979, a cabal of younger military officers, repelled by the frequent government massacres of groups of protesters and strikers, and wishing to restore the military's

"good name", ousted General Carlos Romero from the presidency and took power in a bloodless coup. A number of prominent civilian political figures were given positions in the new administration, which proclaimed an impressive program of reforms. But it was not to be. The young and politically inexperienced officers were easily co-opted by older, conservative officers, and by pressure exerted by the United States, to install certain military men into key positions.¹¹ The civilian members of the government found themselves unable to exercise any control over the armed forces and were left to function only as reformist camouflage.

Washington had supported the removal of the brutal Romero because only three months earlier the Sandinistas had overthrown the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua, and the Carter administration did not wish to risk the loss of a second client state in Central America in so short a space of time, but brakes had to be applied to keep the process within manageable bounds.

Meanwhile, the security forces did not miss a beat as they continued to fire into crowds: the body count in the first month of the "reformist" government was greater than in the first nine months of the year. By January 1980, almost all the civilian members had resigned in disgust over government-as-usual.¹² The experience was the straw which broke the backs of many moderates and liberals, as well as members of the Salvadorean Communist Party, who still clung to hopes of peaceful reforms. The Communist Party had supported the new government, even contributed the Minister of Labor, "because we believe it is going to comply with its promises and open the possibility of democratizing the country." The party was the last group on the left to join the guerrilla forces.¹³

One of the civilians, Minister of Education Salvador Samayoa, in front of the TV cameras, simultaneously announced his resignation and his enlistment with a guerrilla group.¹⁴ For those who continued to harbor illusions, a steady drumbeat of terrorism soon brought them into the fold. A demonstration march by a coalition of popular organizations on 22 January was first sprayed with DDT by crop-duster planes along the route of the march; then, when the demonstrators reached San Salvador's central plaza, snipers fired at them from surrounding government buildings; at least 21 dead and 120 seriously wounded was the toll, some of which reportedly resulted from the demonstrators' undisciplined return of fire.

On 17 March, a general strike was met by retaliatory violence—54 people killed in the capital alone.

A week later, the Archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, an outspoken critic of the government's human-rights violations, who had called upon President Carter, "Christian to Christian", to cease providing military aid, was assassinated. In his last sermon, he had addressed the security forces with these words: "I beseech you, I beg you, I order you, in the name of God: *stop the repression.*" The next day he became the eleventh priest murdered in El Salvador in three years.

At the funeral of the martyred Archbishop—who had been a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize the year before, 23 members of the US House of Representatives being among his nominators—a bomb was thrown amongst the mourners in the plaza, followed by rifle and automatic fire; all emanating from the National Palace and some of the office buildings flanking the plaza, just as in January. At least 40 people were reported killed and hundreds injured.¹⁵

Junta president Duarte tried to put the blame for the funeral carnage on the left. His case rested apparently on bald statement and nothing else, for all eyewitness reports stated that the bomb and gunfire came from the National Palace and the other government buildings. A statement issued by eight bishops and 16 other foreign church visitors who had been present denied the government's version.¹⁶

Seven years were to pass before Duarte, elected to the presidency in 1984, accused former army Major Roberto d'Aubuisson, the prominent leader of the country's right wing, with having ordered Romero's murder. Though this was a belief already widely held, the public accusation created a stir in El Salvador and the United States. The CIA, it turned out, knew the facts no later than one year after the assassination. (D'Aubuisson, it should be noted, was a man who once told three European reporters: "You Germans are very intelligent. You realized that the Jews were responsible for the spread of communism, and you began to kill them.") The American-trained former intelligence officer was never arrested because of immunity arising from his being a deputy in the National Assembly. He died in 1992.¹⁷

During the early months of 1980, the government, with direct American influence and input, enacted a program of agrarian reform, the *sine qua non* of social change in El Salvador. Its key provision—tenant farmers gaining title to the plots they worked—was similar to programs the US had advocated in a number of other Third World hot spots since the 1950s, and for the same reasons: as a counter-insurgency tactic—stealing the guerrillas' thunder; and to make the government receiving US military aid appear more deserving, in the eyes of Congress and the world. A memorandum from the Agency for International Development (AID) in mid-1980, commenting on reaction in El Salvador to the program of "Land to the Tiller", says in part:

Many believe it is a "symbolic" and "cosmetic" measure which was proposed because it would look good to certain American politicians and not necessarily because it would be beneficial or significant in the Salvadorean context.¹⁸

The reaction of the Salvadorean agrarian elite could have been predicted. They expelled many thousands of peasants from their meager plots to preclude land being turned over to them. This was not the worst ...

The testimony of a technician of the *Instituto Salvadoreño de Transformación Agraria*, established to oversee the program:

The troops came and told the workers the land was theirs now. They could elect their own leaders and run it themselves. The peasants couldn't believe their ears, but they held elections that very night. The next morning the troops came back and I watched as they shot every one of the elected leaders.¹⁹

This was not an isolated case. The Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Jorge Alberto Villacorta, in his resignation letter in March 1980, stated that "During the first days of the reform—to cite one case—5 directors and 2 presidents of new campesino organizations were assassinated and I am informed that this repressive practice continues to increase."²⁰

"Force," wrote Karl Marx, "is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one." Revolution was now the only item of importance on the political agenda of the opposition, united as never before—united more by a common enemy than by a common ideology, but many saw this pluralism as strength rather than weakness. Leftists would now be fighting alongside (former) Christian Democrats whom, only shortly before, they had accused of serving US imperialism.

If Jimmy Carter's trumpeted devotion to human rights was to be taken seriously, his administration clearly had no alternative but to side with the Salvadorean opposition, or at least keep its hands strictly out of the fighting. The Carter administration, however, with only

an occasional backward glance at its professed principles, continued its military support of the government. Within days before his term ended in January 1981, Carter ordered a total of \$10 million in military aid along with additional American advisers to be sent to El Salvador, an action characterized by one observer as "President Carter's foreign policy establishment's last convulsive effort to evade responsibility for having been 'too soft' in dealing with the Salvadorean rebels." (Two years later, private citizen Carter stated: "I think the government in El Salvador is one of the bloodthirstiest in [the] hemisphere now.")²¹

The Reagan administration, to whom "human rights" was a suspect term invented by leftists, had little fear of the too-soft label. Its approach to the conflict was threefold: (a) a sharp escalation, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in the American military involvement in El Salvador; (b) a public relations campaign to put a human face on the military junta; (c) a concurrent exercise in news management to convince the American public and the world that the Salvadorean opposition had no legitimate cause for revolution; which was to say that what the Salvadoreans had experienced during the previous two decades, indeed for half a century, had little or nothing to do with their uprising—this, it turned out, was the inspiration of (unprovoked, mindless) "left-wing terrorists" abetted by the Soviet Union, by Nicaragua, by Cuba. The Red Devils were at it again.

Military Escalation

El Salvador did not turn into another Vietnam quicksand for the United States as many critics of the left and center warned. But for the Salvadorean people the war and its horror dragged on as interminably as it did for the Vietnamese, and for the same reason: American support of a regime—one even more loathsome than in Vietnam—which would have crumbled dismally if left to its own resources. Despite overwhelmingly superior military might, the government could hold the insurgents to no more than a stalemate.

The amount of American military aid to El Salvador from 1980 to the early 1990s, for the hardware alone, ran into the billions of dollars. Six billion is the figure commonly used in the press, but the true figure will never be known. The Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, a bipartisan congressional group, accused the Reagan administration in the mid-1980s of supplying "insufficient, misleading and in some cases false information" concerning aid to El Salvador. The administration, concluded the Caucus study, categorized most military aid as "development" aid, and undervalued the real cost of the hardware even when it was properly categorized as military aid.²²

To this must be added the cost of training Salvadorean military personnel by the thousands in the United States, and the Panama Canal Zone, as well as in El Salvador; the further training which was provided in the earlier years by Argentina, Chile and Uruguay at US behest; and the substantial military aid routed through Israel, a maneuver employed by the United States elsewhere in Central America as well.²³

One telling result of this massive provision of weapons and training, as well as the money to pay higher salaries, was the sizeable expansion of the Salvadorean armed forces and other security services. From an estimated seven to twelve thousand men in 1979, the army alone jumped to more than 22,000 by 1983, with an additional 11,000 civilian security forces; three years later, the total of these two forces had spiraled to 53,000.²⁴ The equipment available to them flowed endlessly; when, for example, in January 1982, the rebels destroyed 16 to 18 aircraft in a raid upon an airport, the United States replaced them

in a matter of weeks with 28 new aircraft.²⁵ Part of the air power available to the government were US reconnaissance planes fitted with sophisticated surveillance equipment which could provide almost instant intelligence on guerrilla movements before and after combat operations, and designate bombing targets.²⁶ The guerrillas had neither air power nor a practical anti-aircraft capability until November 1990 when they used a Soviet-made surface-to-air missile for the first time.

Predictably, the bombing, as well as the strafing and napalming, took the lives of many more civilians than guerrillas who had better learned how to avoid the attacks; countless dwellings were leveled in the process, villages destroyed, a nation of refugees created. Civilian deaths, whether from air or ground raids, were not necessarily accidental, as the many massacre stories make evident. It is a basic tenet of counter-insurgency: kill the sympathizers and you win the war.

Officially, the US military presence in El Salvador was limited to an advisory capacity. In actuality, military and CIA personnel played a more active role on a continuous basis from as early as 1980. About 20 Americans were killed or wounded in helicopter and plane crashes while flying reconnaissance or other missions over combat areas.²⁷ Moreover, the American program for training Salvadorean pilots, bombardiers and gunners could easily serve to conceal the advisers' direct participation in these operations while accompanying their trainees.

Considerable evidence surfaced of a US role in the ground fighting as well. There were numerous reports of armed Americans spotted in combat areas,²⁸ a report by CBS News of US advisers "fighting side by side" with government troops,²⁹ and reports of other Americans, some ostensibly mercenaries, killed in action.³⁰ The extent of American mercenary involvement in El Salvador is not known, but Lawrence Bailey, a former US Marine, has stated that he was part of a team of 40 American soldiers of fortune paid by wealthy Salvadorean families living in Miami to protect their plantations from takeover by the rebels.³¹

During the Iran-Contra hearings in 1987, it was disclosed that at least until 1985, CIA paramilitary personnel had been organizing and leading special Salvadorean army units into combat areas to track down guerrillas and call in air strikes.³²

These bit-by-bit disclosures pointed to a frequent, if not routine, American involvement in the ongoing combat. In September 1988 another news item related that US military advisers were caught in a gun battle between Salvadorean army forces and guerrillas and that, in "self-defense", they opened fire on the rebels.³³

The degree of overall control of the military operation by the United States is perhaps best captured by an excerpt from an interview given to *Playboy* magazine in 1984 by President Duarte, one of the few Christian Democrat leaders of the earlier days still working within the government.

Playboy: Do the American military advisers also tell you how to run the war?

Duarte: This is the problem, no? The root of this problem is that the aid is given under such conditions that its use is really decided by the Americans and not by us. Decisions like how many planes or helicopters we buy, how we spend our money, how many trucks we need, how many bullets and of what caliber, how many pairs of boots and where our priorities should be—all of that ... And all the money is spent over there. We never even see a penny of it, because everything arrives here already paid for.³⁴

In Duarte's previous incarnation as a government opponent, his view of the Yanquis was even harsher. US policy in Latin America, he said in 1969, was designed to "maintain

the Iberoamerican countries in a condition of direct dependence upon the international political decisions most beneficial to the United States, both at the hemisphere and world levels. Thus [the North Americans] preach to us of democracy while everywhere they support dictatorships."³⁵

Duarte's ideology, however, appears to have been a flexible and marketable commodity. At some point in the 1970s, if not earlier, he began to covertly supply the CIA with intelligence.³⁶

A Human Face

On 28 January 1982, President Reagan certified to Congress that the El Salvador government was "making a concerted and significant effort to comply with internationally recognized human rights" and that it was "achieving substantial control over all elements of its own armed forces, so as to bring to an end the indiscriminate torture and murder of Salvadorean citizens by these forces." The language was that imposed by Congress upon the administration if the flow of arms and American military personnel was to continue.

Two days earlier, the American and foreign press had carried the story of how government troops had engaged in a massacre of the people of the village of El Mozote in December. From 700 to 1,000 persons were reported killed, mostly the elderly, women and children. When a very long, detailed account of this incident appeared eventually, in 1993, it became more apparent than ever that this was one of the most repulsive and cruelest massacres of the 20th century carried out by ground troops face-to-face with their victims—people hacked to death by machetes, many beheaded, a child thrown in the air and caught on a bayonet, an orgy of rapes of very young girls before they were killed ... "If we don't kill them [the children] now, they'll just grow up to be guerrillas," barked an army officer to a reluctant soldier ... anti-communism at its zenith.

Both immediately and thereafter, the massacre was attended by denials and a coverup by the State Department, with abundant media complicity.³⁷ The State Department's defense of its position before a congressional committee left the committee members conspicuously underwhelmed, even though the congressmen did not yet know the full story.³⁸

Two days after the president's certification, the world could read how Salvadorean soldiers had pulled about 20 people out of their beds in the middle of the night, tortured them, and then killed them, meanwhile finding the time to rape several teenage girls.³⁹

Earlier the same month, the *New York Times* had published an interview with a deserter from the Salvadorean Army who described a class where severe methods of torture were demonstrated on teenage prisoners. He stated that eight US military advisers, apparently Green Berets, were present. Watching "will make you feel more like a man," a Salvadorean officer apprised the recruits, adding that they should "not feel pity of anyone" but only "hate for those who are enemies of our country."⁴⁰

Another Salvadorean, a former member of the National Guard, later testified: "I belonged to a squad of twelve. We devoted ourselves to torture, and to finding people whom we were told were guerrillas. I was trained in Panama for nine months by the [unintelligible] of the United States for anti-guerrilla warfare. Part of the time we were instructed about torture."⁴¹

Officers of the National Guard were also trained in the United States. In August 1986, CBS Television reported that three senior Guard officers who had been linked to rightwing

death squads received training at a police academy in Phoenix.⁴²

In 1984, Amnesty International reported that it had received:

regular, often daily, reports identifying El Salvador's regular security and military units as responsible for the torture, "disappearance" and killing of non-combatant civilians from all sectors of Salvadorean society ... A number of patients have allegedly been removed from their beds or operating theaters and tortured and murdered ... Types of torture reported ... by those who have survived arrest and interrogation included beatings, sexual abuse, use of chemicals to disorient, mock executions, and the burning of flesh with sulphuric acid.⁴³

In light of the above, and many other reports of a similar nature,⁴⁴ it can be appreciated that the Reagan administration had to exercise some creativity in getting around congressional hesitation about continued military aid to the government of El Salvador. Thus it was that in March 1984 the administration tacked on a request for additional military aid to legislation to send US food supplies to starving Africans.⁴⁵ (A few days later, it tacked on a request for support of the Nicaraguan contras to a bill to provide emergency fuel spending for the poor in parts of the United States which were suffering a severe winter.)⁴⁶

Death squad executions ... military massacres ... the legion of the disappeared ... the numbers reached well into the tens of thousands. And the death squads may have reached their arm into the United States. A number of Americans and Salvadoreans living in Los Angeles and working with refugees or actively opposing US military aid to El Salvador received death threats in 1987. Rev. Luis Olivares, a Catholic priest whose church is part of the "sanctuary" movement, was sent an anonymous letter bearing the letters "EM", which were often found on the doors or buildings of people who were targeted in El Salvador. The letters stand for *Escuadrón Muerto* [death squad].⁴⁷

In July 1987, a Salvadorean woman named Yanira Corea who had received threatening phone calls and letters was kidnapped outside the Los Angeles office of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). Two men, speaking with what she described as Salvadorean accents, forced her at knifepoint into a van, interrogated her about her political activities and colleagues, cut her hands with a knife, burnt her fingers with cigarettes, sexually assaulted her with a stick, then raped her. A month earlier, she had narrowly escaped being abducted, along with her three-year-old son. Other activists had their cars smashed or vandalized.⁴⁸

For several years under the Reagan administration, the FBI conducted a nationwide investigation of CISPES. During this period, some of the organization's offices were broken into with nothing of value taken except files. "It is imperative at this time to formulate some plan of attack against CISPES ... ", reads one FBI teletype later made public.⁴⁹

On some days during the 1980s, Washington officials issued warnings to the Salvadorean government to improve its human rights record, or told Congress that the record was improving, or told the world how much worse that record would be if not for American influence. On most other days, the United States continued to build up each and every component of the military and paramilitary forces engaged in the atrocities. In 1984, in an interview with the *New York Times*, Col. Roberto Eulalio Santibáñez, a former Salvadorean military official who had served at the highest level of the security police, confirmed—for those who may still have entertained doubts—that the network of death squads had been shaped by leading Salvadorean officials and was still directed by them. He also revealed that one of these officials, Col. Nicolas Carranza, the head of the Treasury Police, which "have long been considered the least disciplined and most brutal of the Salvadorean

security forces", had been receiving more than \$90,000 a year during the previous five or six years from the CIA. Although some members of the Treasury Police were linked by the Reagan administration itself to death-squad activities, the United States continued to train and equip them.⁵⁰

In a visit to San Salvador in February 1989, Vice President Dan Quayle told army leaders that death squad killings and other human rights violations attributed to the military had to be ended. Ten days later, the US-trained Atlacatl Battalion—which was believed to have a US trainer assigned to it at all times—attacked a guerrilla field hospital, killing at least ten people, including five patients, a doctor and a nurse, and raping at least two of the female victims before shooting them. Sources close to the El Salvador military said afterward that Quayle's warning was not taken seriously, but as rhetoric aimed at the US Congress and the American public.⁵¹

In October 1989, former Salvadorean Army commando Cesar Vielman Joya Martinez, in an interview on the CBS Evening News, related that he and others in his unit—the intelligence section of the army's First Brigade—had acted as a clandestine death squad, that the two US military advisers attached to the unit were aware of the assassinations, although they refused to hear the details, and that the advisers supplied money to his unit that helped maintain two civilian vehicles used for death-squad operations and a safehouse that served as a secret base of operations and storage of weapons. In subsequent interviews with the American press, Joya Martinez stated that the advisers had used the names Mauricio Torres and Raul Antonio Lazo, that his unit had carried out 74 assassinations of Salvadorean dissidents between April and July of 1989, and that he himself had been personally involved in eight torture murders. Apropos of deadly bombings in El Salvador in November of dissident organizations (a union hall and an organization of mothers of the disappeared), he added that his unit had received explosives training from US advisers. The Salvadorean Embassy in Washington, while denying any government involvement in death-squad activities, did confirm that "Joya Martinez was a member of the intelligence unit of the First Brigade".⁵²

In July 1990, an aide to Rep. Joseph Moakley (D-Mass.), chairman of the Speaker's Task Force on El Salvador, declared: "The fact that Joya Martinez has been in the U.S. since last August, given all kinds of interviews, been arrested, and no one from the government has bothered to question him, seems pretty strange, unless people don't want to find the answers."⁵³

On the twelfth of that month Joya Martinez had been arrested for having illegally entered the United States after being deported six years earlier. After a lengthy legal battle, he was ordered deported back to El Salvador in October 1992. His supporters in the United States expressed their concern about his safety in El Salvador, to which a State Department official responded, presumably with a straight face, that Joya Martinez "has admitted to killings and torture and it would be callous to the victims to prevent him from standing trial."⁵⁴

A few weeks after Joya Martinez went public in the United States, one of the most shocking atrocities in this war of shocking atrocities occurred. Six Jesuit priests at the University of Central America in San Salvador were shot to death in cold blood at their campus residence, along with their housekeeper and her young daughter. A witness, whom the killers failed to observe, Lucia Barrera de Cerna, said she saw five armed men in uniform carry out the murders. The Salvadorean military—whom the Roman Catholic order had often criticized for human rights violations—were the immediate and logical suspects. Because of an extraordinary outcry against the crime, in the United States and internationally, including the creation of the special congressional task force referred to above, two months later nine officers and enlisted men were arrested—a platoon from the Atlacatl

Battalion, seven of whom, it turned out, had only two days before the murders participated in combat training exercises supervised by the U.S. Special Forces (Green Berets) in El Salvador.

Almost two years passed before any of those arrested were convicted of the crime—two relatively low-level officers; their higher-ups who gave the order were not touched. Yet, this was an achievement in a country where thousands of people had been killed by military death squads, and no officer had ever before been tried, let alone convicted, for murder or other human-rights abuse. The Salvadorean military tolerated the trial of the officers because Congress had made prosecution of the killers a condition for continuing military aid.

During the two-year period, as well as after the convictions, officials of the Bush administration appeared to be trying to thwart the investigation and aid in a coverup, by such tactics as the following:

- a) grossly intimidating Cerna and labeling her a liar;
- b) refusing on grounds of national security to provide a Salvadorean court with classified documents that dealt with the case; withholding, on the same grounds, substantive material from journalists making Freedom of Information Act requests;
- c) refusing for a long time to allow questioning, by the investigating judge, of US Army Major Eric Buckland, stationed in El Salvador, who had learned of the Salvadorean military's culpability shortly after the murders from Salvadorean Col. Carlos Aviles; then imposing a series of conditions on Buckland's questioning that served to conceal much of his story;
- d) putting Buckland through such horrendous interrogation that he underwent an apparent nervous breakdown;
- e) immediately informing the Salvadorean high command about what Aviles had revealed to Buckland (which caused Aviles much grief).

Father Charles Beirne, vice rector of the Jesuit university, declared in 1991 that "the Americans were helping to protect the [Salvadorean army] high command all along. They were afraid the whole house of cards would fall if the investigation went any further." A year later, United Nations investigators were still complaining that the United States was slow in turning over vital information about the case.⁵⁵

The cruelty level of the guerrillas' military and political campaign generally stood in sharp contrast to that of the government. *Newsweek* reported in 1983 that when the rebels "capture a town, they treat the civilians well, paying for food and holding destruction to a minimum. And they have begun to free most of the government troops they capture, which helps to persuade other soldiers to surrender rather than fight to the death."⁵⁶ Eventually, however, the guerrillas began to treat civilians more harshly, in particular those suspected of informing or of other collaboration with the government, or those refusing to collaborate with rebel forces; some peasants reportedly were forced to leave their villages and farms as punishment; several village mayors were killed; young men were forcibly recruited to join the rebels.

However, given the numerous instances of disinformation disseminated by the Salvadorean government about the rebels, reports of guerrilla ruthlessness must be approached with caution. The following case is instructive (see the notes for reference to other examples):

In February 1988, the *New York Times*, reported that:

Villagers say guerrillas publicly executed two peasants ... because they had applied for and received new voter registration cards. According to the villagers, the guerrillas placed the voting cards of [the two men] in their mouths after executing them as a warning to others not to take part in the elections.⁵⁷

The story was included in a State Department booklet to highlight the guerrillas' "campaign of intimidation and terrorism". The booklet was mailed to Congress, newspaper editors, and other opinion makers. But the story, it turned out, was the invention of a Salvadorean Army propaganda specialist who had placed it in the San Salvador newspaper *El Mundo*. From there it was picked up by the *New York Times* reporter who gave the impression that he had interviewed villagers with firsthand knowledge of the incident, instead of attributing the story to the military as had *El Mundo*. The *Times* later recanted the story.⁵⁸

Outside Agitators

"Sometimes I feel like Sisyphus," said a senior Reagan administration official involved in developing US Latin America policy in March 1982. "Every time we head up the hill to explain or justify our policy, the stone comes crashing down on top of us."⁵⁹

Two weeks earlier, Secretary of State Alexander Haig had asserted that the United States had "overwhelming and irrefutable" evidence that the insurgents were controlled from outside by non-Salvadoreans. Haig, however, declined to provide any details of the evidence, saying it would jeopardize intelligence sources. Challenged to prove his charges two days later, the good general insisted that the United States had "unchallengeable" evidence of Nicaraguan and Cuban involvement in the command and control of the operation in El Salvador and, oddly enough, only the day before a Nicaraguan military man had been captured there. As it turned out, according to the Mexican Embassy in San Salvador, the man was a student on his way back to school in Mexico from Nicaragua, traveling overland because he couldn't afford to fly.⁶⁰

The following week, a Nicaraguan was captured fighting with the guerrillas. He told US Embassy and Salvadorean Army officials that he had been trained in Cuba and Ethiopia, then sent to El Salvador by the Nicaraguan government. The State Department was understandably excited. It presented the young man at a press conference in Washington, at which time he declared that he had never been to Cuba or Ethiopia, had joined the guerrillas on his own, and had made his previous statements under torture by his Salvadorean captors. He added that he had never seen another Nicaraguan or Cuban in El Salvador and denied that Nicaragua had provided aid to the guerrillas.⁶¹

"Then there were two Nicaraguan air force defectors," reported *Time* magazine during the same period, "who were scheduled to bear witness to their country's involvement in El Salvador but by week's end were judged 'not ready' to face the press." *Time* entitled its story: "A Lot of Show, but No Tell: The U.S. bungles its evidence of foreign subversion in El Salvador."⁶²

In January 1981, US diplomats disclosed that five boats had landed in El Salvador containing 100 "well-armed, well-trained guerrillas", allegedly from Nicaragua. They knew the boats had come from Nicaragua because "they were made from wood of trees not native to El Salvador."⁶³ No sign, dead or alive, of any of the hundred invaders was ever found, however.

One hundred seemed to be the number of choice for the Reagan administration. That was the count of Cuban combat troops, said a senior State Department policy maker, who were sent to El Salvador in the fall of 1981 by way of Nicaragua. "They were brought in clandestinely and given operational responsibilities in El Salvador," he asserted.⁶⁴ The later whereabouts and actions of the Cubans likewise remained a mystery.

The world was also informed that Soviet and Chinese weapons had been seized from rebels and this was cited as further proof of outside Communist aid.⁶⁵ The weapons capture may have been real—although the CIA has long had warehouses full of Communist weapons of all kinds, suitable for all occasions—but then what were we to make of the US, Israeli, Belgian and German weapons which, by Washington's admission a month later, were also to be found amongst the rebels?⁶⁶ The world arms traffic is indeed wide open and fluid. (In neighboring Honduras, the US-supported contras were using Soviet-made missiles to shoot down Soviet-made helicopters of Nicaragua.)⁶⁷ Moreover, the Salvadorean rebels captured weapons from government forces and they claimed that they also purchased arms from corrupt Salvadorean Army officers, a practice common to other Latin American guerrilla wars. A source cited by the *New York Times* corroborated the rebels' claim.⁶⁸

The centerpiece of the Reagan administration's campaign to prove the international-conspiracy nature of the revolution in El Salvador was its White Paper issued a month after taking office and based largely on purported "captured guerrilla documents", some of which were included in the report. Amongst the various analyses of the White Paper which cast grave doubts upon its claims was the one in the *Wall Street Journal* by Jonathan Kwitny. This included an interview with a State Department official, Jon D. Glassman, who was given the major credit for the White Paper. Admitted Mr Glassman: parts of the paper were possibly "misleading" and "over-embellished" ... it contained "mistakes" and "guessing". Said the *Wall Street Journal*: "A close examination ... indicates that, if anything, Mr. Glassman may be understating the case in his concession that the White Paper contains mistakes and guessing."

Amongst the many specific shortcomings of the paper pointed out in the article was that:

Statistics of armament shipments into El Salvador, supposedly drawn directly from the documents, were extrapolated, Mr. Glassman concedes. And in questionable ways, it seems. Much information in the White Paper can't be found in the documents at all.⁶⁹

It was not merely the accuracy of the White Paper that was questioned, but the authenticity of the documents themselves. Apropos of this, former US Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert White (sacked by Reagan because of excessive commitment to human rights and reforms), commented: "The only thing that even makes me think that these documents were genuine was that they proved so little."⁷⁰

When pressed to state what proof his government had of Nicaraguan intervention, President Duarte declined to answer on the grounds that the world would not believe him anyway.⁷¹ But President Reagan had some evidence to offer. He saw the hand of foreign masters pulling strings in the fact that demonstrators in Canada carried "the same signs" as demonstrators in the United States: "U. S. Out of El Salvador."⁷²

But all of this was essentially besides the point. Revolutions are not exported like so many cartons of soap. We have seen what the circumstances were in El Salvador for decades which finally provoked people to take up the gun. Ambassador White, no champion of the rebels' cause, observed that "The revolution situation came about in El Salvador because you had what was one of the most selfish oligarchies the world has ever seen, com-

bined with a corrupt security force ... Whether Cuba existed or not, you would still have a revolutionary situation in El Salvador."⁷³

Education-minister-turned-guerrilla, Salvador Samayoa, speaking in 1981, asserted that US charges that the Soviet bloc was directing the guerrilla movement "reveals Washington's deep ignorance of our movement". He pointed out that three of the five guerrilla groups that made up the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) were "strongly anti-Soviet". Samayoa added: "To say we are run by Cuba because we have a relationship with Cuba is like saying we're a Christian movement because we have received enormous help from the church. ... Instead of seeing us as Communist subversives, the U.S. should see us as a people struggling to survive."⁷⁴

Despite American patrol boats in the Gulf of Fonseca (which separates El Salvador from Nicaragua), AWAC surveillance planes in the skies over the Caribbean, and an abundance of aerial photographs, despite a large US radar installation in Honduras manned by 50 American military technicians, the finest electronic monitoring equipment modern technology had to offer, and all the informers that CIA money could buy⁷⁵... despite it all, the Reagan administration singularly failed to support its case that the fires of the Salvadorean revolution were stoked by Nicaraguan and Cuban coals; nor by the Soviet Union, Vietnam, the PLO, Ethiopia, or any of the other countries indicted at one time or another as important suppliers of military aid.

In any case, whatever military support the Salvadorean insurgents actually received from abroad—necessarily limited to what could be carried by the occasional clandestine small truck or boat—plainly did not belong in the same league, nor on the same planet, as the huge transport-planetfuls and shipfuls of American aid, in all its forms, to the Salvadorean government. The United States had waged ruthless war against the Salvadorean revolution, and threatened worse—in April 1991, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, announced that "if necessary, [the civil war in El Salvador] can be resolved the way it was in the Persian Gulf."⁷⁶

In early 1992, the war came to an official end when a United Nations commission, after a year-and-a-half effort, finally got the warring sides to agree to a cease fire and a peace agreement. A major offensive launched by the guerrillas in late 1989—in which they "brought the war home" to wealthy neighborhoods and Americans in the capital—had made clear to Washington and its Salvadorean allies, once again, finally, that the war was unwinnable. In February 1990, Gen. Maxwell Thurman, the head of the US Southern Command, told Congress that the El Salvador government was not able to defeat the rebels and that the only way to end the fighting was through negotiation.⁷⁷ Moreover, the ostensible end of the cold war had undermined the United States' professed rationale for—and may have relaxed its obsession with—defeating "communism" in El Salvador. At the same time, Congress was balking more and more about continuing military aid to the Salvadorean government, an attitude that had been growing ever since the November 1989 murder of the Jesuit priests.

One of the many provisions of the complex peace agreement was the establishment of a UN Commission of the Truth "to investigate the worst acts of violence since 1980". In March of 1993 the Commission presented its report. Among its findings and conclusions were the following:

The military forces, supported by the government and the civilian establishment, were plainly the main perpetrators of massacres, executions, torture and kidnappings during the civil war. These acts could not be blamed on the excesses of war but on premeditated and

ideologically inspired decisions to kill.

The commission called for the dismissal of more than 40 high-ranking military personnel—including Defense Minister Gen. Rene Emilio Ponce, a long-time favorite of US officials—whom it found had given the orders that led to the murders of the priests, and stipulated that none should ever be allowed to return to military or security duty and should be banned from other public and political life for 10 years.

Dismissal and a 10-year ban was also specified for government officials and bureaucrats who abused human rights or took part in a cover-up of the abuses, including the President of the Supreme Court. (Right-wing parties in the Salvadorean National Assembly quickly pushed through an amnesty law barring prosecution for any crimes committed during the war.)

Several leaders of the left were singled out for the assassinations of 11 mayors during the war.

A special investigation of death squads was called for. These squads, said the report, were "often operated by the military and supported by powerful businessmen, landowners and some leading politicians." (The peace accords did not put an end to this: dozens of leaders and members of the FMLN were assassinated during 1992 and 1993, as well as a few from the right.)

Cited as the most notorious of the death squad leaders by the report was Roberto d'Aubuisson, the principal founder of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (Arena) party, the party of the country's current president, Alfredo Cristiani. D'Aubuisson, the report confirmed, hired the sharpshooter who killed Archbishop Romero.

Other sins laid at the doorstep of the government were the rapes and killings of three American nuns and a female religious worker in 1980, the murder of two American labor advisers in 1981, and the assassination, in 1982, of four Dutch journalists, whose reports were evidently considered favorable to the guerrillas.

The Commission did not focus on any American role in the abuses and cover-up. "The role of the United States in El Salvador is a role more effectively studied by the U.S. Congress," said Commission member Thomas Buergenthal, an American jurist, at a news conference. However, the Commission did chastise the United States for failing to rein in Salvadorean exiles in Miami who "helped administer death squad activities between 1980 and 1983, with apparently little attention from the U.S. government. Such use of American territory for acts of terrorism abroad should be investigated and never allowed to be repeated."⁷⁸ (Cuban exiles, of course, have been using Miami as a base for terrorism abroad, as well as in the US, for 30 years.)

Members of Congress, outraged by the findings of the Commission of the Truth, called for the declassification of State Department, Defense Department, and CIA files on El Salvador to help determine whether the Reagan and Bush administrations had concealed evidence from Congress about widespread human rights abuses by their Salvadorean allies. "It [the Commission's report] simply verifies what a number of us knew all through the '80s," said Rep. David Obey, "that our own government was lying like hell to us." The report proves that the Reagan administration was willing to "lie ... and ... certify to anything ... to get the money it wanted."⁷⁹

Various of the more than 12,000 once-secret documents released by the Clinton administration unequivocally confirmed Obey's charge. Other papers revealed that ...

The current Vice President, Francisco Merino, had organized death squads.

The CIA referred to Roberto d'Aubuisson as "egocentric, reckless and perhaps mentally unstable"; he trafficked in drugs and smuggled arms; his paramilitary unit was responsible for thousands of murders; and in 1983 he and his advisers were invited by American Ambassador Deane Hinton to have lunch with the visiting US representative to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick. Six years later, shortly before the CIA reported that d'Aubuisson's inner circle had plotted to assassinate President Cristiani, Ambassador William G. Walker invited him to the embassy's Fourth of July party.⁸⁰

American military advisers trained a militia of some 50 wealthy Salvadoreans, ostensibly for them to be able to defend their own lavish homes against a rebel attack, but the group was actually linked to d'Aubuisson and their militia was a "cover for the recruitment, training and possible dispatch of paramilitary civilian death squads". Ambassador Walker halted the training as soon as he learned of it, despite protests from the chief of the US military advisory mission. (Another memo, written by a Defense Department official, argued that the wealthy Salvadoreans might fund death squads, but would not get blood on their own hands.)⁸¹

On 20 March 1994, the ruling party Arena and its main ally scored a victory in elections held to choose a new president, National Assembly, and hundreds of municipal governments. With the exception of a few reforms touching upon civil liberties, whose significance remains to be seen, the outcome left the society at essentially the same place it was in 1980 when the war had just begun and José Napoleón Duarte had said: "For fifty years the same people had all the power, all the money, all the jobs, all the education ..." One could now say: "For more than sixty years ..."

Why had more than half the people of El Salvador, most of them very poor, voted for parties intimately connected with not only the wealthy, but with death squads? The new president, Armando Calderon Sol, had long and close ties to death-squad godfather Roberto d'Aubuisson, a large portrait of whom hung in his office. The declassified documents referred to above raised questions about Calderon Sol himself—connections to a kidnapping and to a group of young Arena militants who bombed the Ministry of Agriculture and wreaked other havoc in the early 1980s in an attempt to destabilize the government whose new agrarian reform was supposed to take land from the wealthy.

Arena's sophisticated multimillion-dollar campaign relied heavily on nurturing two kinds of fears: the traditional fear of "communism", inculcated by decades of authoritarian rule; and the supposed economic incompetence of the left, as typified by the Sandinista rule in Nicaragua. Further, ignoring their own violent history, Arena portrayed the left as terrorists who were exclusively responsible for the war's death and destruction.

How honest and fair had the actual voting been? Was the right willing to end a half-century of political exclusion of the left? Besides having a great deal more money at its disposal than its opponents, the Arena party in power had controlled the press in El Salvador for many years—the one daily paper, *Diario Latino*, which had dared to show a brief independence, was destroyed by bombs.⁸² Moreover, the makeup of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), which supervised the election, was based on the election of 1991 which the FMLN had boycotted; it was thus dominated by Arena, with no one from the FMLN.

Many points of contention were raised about the voting, such as the following:

A large number of people who registered to vote were unable to do so because they didn't receive their voting card. According to United Nations monitors, as of 1 February these cases came to more than half a million, equal to 20 percent of the electorate. After the election, the FMLN estimated the number of such non-voters at 340,000.

74,000 other applicants were rejected because they couldn't produce a birth certificate; often this was because the local office of records had been destroyed in the war.

Another large block of people held valid voting cards but couldn't vote because they had no transportation to a distant polling station. This was exacerbated, reportedly, by a slowdown in bus service by bus companies owned by Arena supporters and the Arena-controlled bus drivers' union.

Many made it to the polling stations with their voting cards only to be kept from voting because their names did not appear on the voter-registration lists, or were spelled incorrectly (at least 25,000 such cases according to the UN; several times that, said the FMLN).

Other potential voters left the stations without casting their ballots because very long lines and an extremely cumbersome and snail-paced processing system left them still waiting when the polls closed.

These problems of course affected the poor, the rural, the less educated, and the first-time voters the most, the base of the FMLN's support.

The TSE refused international advice, declined to spend money to transport voters to the polls, and made voting unnecessarily complicated, UN observers said. "There was frightening mismanagement of the election beyond our worst expectations," said a senior UN official. "There was widespread lack of trust by the electorate before the voting, [and] now it's much worse. The [TSE] is completely discredited and has therefore tarnished the election."

The FMLN claimed the irregularities cheated the party out of several municipal and legislative seats, a contention lent credence by the UN observers who stated that thousands of people were denied voting cards in 30 towns where the FMLN was strong. The party challenged the results in 37 cities and towns, but the TSE rejected all the claims—a decision that Rafael Lopez Pintor, who headed the UN electoral division, called "shocking".

A team of observers representing the US government also said it was "troubled" that "many of the procedures cited as administrative defects" in previous elections continued to be practiced.

In the days immediately following the vote, election authorities delayed the release of official results. Then on the third day, they abruptly cut off access to party monitors to computerized tabulations. The FMLN said that initial tabulations showed that many ballot boxes contained more votes than the legal maximum of 400, some of them two to three times as many. They also claimed that in San Miguel, one of the country's largest cities, a group of Arena militants had absconded with 15 ballot boxes.

As it turned out, in the announced result for the presidency, Arena got 641,000 votes, 49 percent of the total, while the Democratic Coalition, which included the FMLN, was credited with 326,000 votes, or 25 percent. Failure of any party to win a majority necessitated a run-off election a month later, at which time Arena won 68 percent of the vote to the Coalition's 32 percent. Because the winner of the run-off was a completely foregone conclusion, there were undoubtedly many poor people who didn't vote because they were unwilling to go through the great inconvenience and uncertainty a second time.

There was also the matter of intimidation. According to observers from the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES):

Meanwhile, army helicopters buzzed cities where the opposition was strong. Soldiers set up checkpoints and machine-gun nests in towns traumatized by army massacres during the war. The government did its best to instill fear in the electorate, and must have scared many voters into staying home.

Before the election, some workers were warned that if the FMLN won, heads would roll, or they would be fired. Inasmuch as a polling official tore off the corner of each ballot, containing the same number as on the ballot, a voter could see that someone could save his number and check how he voted later.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported the story of the master of ceremonies at a rally staged by Arena, attended by a number of peasants, farmers and market vendors.

"All those who support Arena, raise your hats!" the emcee implored the crowd.

A few people lifted their hats.

"All those who support Arena, raise your hats!" he tried again. "And those who don't raise their hats are *terengos!*" he added, invoking a slang word for "terrorists" used by the army throughout this country's brutal civil war.

A lot of people took their hats off.⁸³

For the benefit of which Salvadoreans did Arena remain in power? For which of them had 75,000 civilians been killed? For whom was the US Treasury reduced by \$6 billion? Two reports from the *New York Times* ...

Over canapes served by hovering waiters at a party, a guest said she was convinced that God had created two distinct classes of people: the rich and people to serve them. She described herself as charitable for allowing the poor to work as her servants. "It's the best you can do," she said.

The woman's outspokenness was unusual, but her attitude is shared by a large segment of the Salvadoran upper class.

The separation between classes is so rigid that even small expressions of kindness across the divide are viewed with suspicion. When an American, visiting an ice cream store, remarked that he was shopping for a birthday party for his maid's child, other store patrons immediately stopped talking and began staring at the American. Finally, an astonished woman in the check-out line spoke out. "You must be kidding," she said.

One of their class, who had had enough and was leaving, commented to the *Times*: "I can't accept the fact that if you're born a peasant here, you die a peasant and your children are going to be peasants. There's no vision that kids of farmhands should be going to Harvard and running this country one day. There's no vision of a modern society."⁸⁴

After taking part in Washington's decade-long effort to train and reform the Salvadoran Army, many American military advisers have left here angry over the Salvadorans' resistance to change ... [they] say they feel manipulated and betrayed by the Salvadoran officers. ... the advisers described Salvadoran officers as being mainly interested in amassing wealth and power, as willing to deprive troops of equipment to further the officers' own ends and as allowing the regular killing or mistreatment of prisoners. ... None went so far as to say the effort to help the Salvadoran armed forces in their war against a leftist insurgency had been futile. They thought human rights abuses would have been worse or that the guerrillas might have won the war without their presence.⁸⁵

The *Times* apparently did not ask the advisers whether they believed that the United States government had in some way been *forced* to take sides in the civil war. And if not, what had their government's ultimate motive been? And if so, why had they not taken the side of the insurgents? And how bad would the human rights abuses have been if the armed forces had not been provided by Washington with a never-ending supply of every weapon and implement and training known to man to bring destruction, pain and suffering to the greatest number of people?

In a postwar survey, a United Nations inspection team declared that the allied bombardment had had a "near apocalyptic impact" on Iraq and had transformed the country into a "pre-industrial age nation" which "had been until January a rather highly urbanized and mechanized society."¹¹⁹

It will never be known how many hundreds of thousands of Iraqis died from the direct and indirect effects of the war; the count is added to every day. With the United States refusing to end the embargo against Iraq, everything has continued: malnutrition, starvation, lack of medicines and vaccines, contaminated drinking water, human excrement piling up, typhoid, a near-epidemic of measles, several other diseases ... Iraq's food supply had been 70 percent dependent on imports, now billions of dollars were frozen in overseas accounts, and with prohibitive restrictions on selling its oil ... an inability to rebuild because vital parts could not be imported, industry closing its doors, mass unemployment, transportation and communications broken down¹²⁰ ... By September 1994, with the US government still refusing to release its death grip on the embargo, still hoping that the suffering would reach critical mass and the Iraqi people would overthrow Saddam, the Iraqi government announced that since the sanctions had begun in August 1990 about 400,000 children had died of malnutrition and disease.¹²¹

After the war, when the Iraqi government was repressing a Kurdish revolt—which the US had encouraged, then failed to support—Bush said: "I feel frustrated any time innocent civilians are being slaughtered."¹²²

This was the second time the United States had led the Kurdish lambs to slaughter with a broken commitment. (See Iraq 1972-75 chapter.)

The United States had also encouraged the Shiite Muslims in Iraq to rebel, then did not back them, presumably because Washington only wanted to drive Saddam up the wall some more, make him irrational enough to incite a coup against him; but Washington was not looking to foster a pro-Iranian regime and inspire Muslim fundamentalists elsewhere in the Middle East.

American mental hospitals and prisons are home to many people who claim to have heard a voice telling them to kill certain people, people they'd never met before, people who'd never done them any harm, or threatened any harm.

American soldiers went to the Persian Gulf to kill the same kind of people after hearing a voice command them: the voice of George Herbert Walker Bush.

Beyond the Cold War: American Foreign Policy in the Reagan-Bush Era



In the wake of the U.S. experience in Vietnam, Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter alike sought to engineer what some have called America's "retreat from empire"—a scaling-back of the rampant globalism of the Kennedy and Johnson years, and the beginnings of détente with the Soviet Union and China. In contrast, Ronald Reagan campaigned for the White House on a platform that promised to restore American leadership in world affairs. Reagan and his supporters initially denounced the Soviet Union in vintage Cold War terms as an "evil empire" and pledged to rebuild U.S. military strength. Under Reagan the United States embarked on a massive military buildup, first in more or less conventional weapons and then through "Star Wars," the highly controversial Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which proposed to defend the United States with a high-tech "umbrella" of costly and sophisticated electronic weapons. The United States also pursued a new interventionism, especially in the Caribbean, where the Reagan administration invaded the tiny island of Grenada and launched a "covert" campaign to overthrow the left-wing Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Reagan's revival of Cold War patriotism touched a popular nerve, perhaps best symbolized by the flag waving and chants of "We're Number One" by Americans at the 1984 summer Olympic games in Los Angeles. By 1986, nevertheless, the administration was in deep trouble. Massive military spending, coupled with reduced taxes, sent the nation's indebtedness skyrocketing. The Iran-contra scandal, meanwhile, revealed that the president and his top advisers were clearly implicated in a foolish and illegal attempt to trade arms for hostages and divert the proceeds to the U.S.-sponsored "contras"—an anti-Sandinista guerrilla army—in Nicaragua.

The administration abruptly changed course during the final two years of Reagan's term. The president abandoned Cold War confrontation for a new pragmatism that included the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

with the Russians and progress toward a more comprehensive reduction of all nuclear weapons. Much of the change owed to developments that neither Reagan nor most Americans could have anticipated—the growing economic paralysis of the Soviet Union, the rapid dismantling of much of its empire in Eastern Europe, and the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev and a new leadership dedicated to sweeping political and economic reforms. Some saw in these developments a vindication of Reagan's policies. The United States, they claimed, had won the Cold War. Others viewed the shift as a happy coincidence. Ronald Reagan, the "teflon president," had lucked out again. Still others saw in recent developments an end not only to the Cold War but to an entire era in world history.

Yet if the Cold War had ended, the many conflicting interests and impulses on which it had for a time imposed an order of a sort remained and in fact began to reassert themselves. In the Middle East, the euphoria of the new post-Cold War era was quickly shattered by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and by the Persian Gulf war in which U.S.-led forces easily crushed the Iraqis. Although President George Bush proclaimed his commitment to the establishment of a new world order, neither the character of that new order nor America's role in it were at all clear. Indeed, even as the president called for the use of force to defend "our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom, and the freedom of friendly countries around the world," liberals and conservatives alike scrambled to reconstruct their understanding of American foreign policy.

In a March 8, 1983, speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, excerpts from which are reprinted in the first document, President Reagan invoked the image of the U.S.S.R. as a threatening "evil empire" and called for expanded U.S. military power. The second document, a graph drawn from public sources, traces the rise in military spending during the Reagan administration. The third selection, excerpted from the 1987 report of the congressional committees investigating the Iran-contra affair, describes the covert and illegal activities of Oliver North and other White House officials who sought to sell arms to Iran in return for money and the release of hostages, and then to divert the proceeds to support the U.S.-backed contra rebels in Nicaragua. In a December 1988 speech to the United Nations, Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev outlined a new and peaceful course for relations between the Soviet Union and the United States (the fourth document). In the fifth document, the editors of *The New York Times*, summarizing nearly two months of discussion and debate on the paper's op-ed page, announced on April 2, 1989, that the Cold War was over. As the Cold War ended, however, debate focused increasingly on the future of the postwar era. In the sixth document, excerpted from a joint address to Congress following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President Bush announced his administration's goal of establishing a new world order.

President Ronald Reagan on Russia as an "Evil Empire," 1983

During my first press conference as President, in answer to a direct question, I pointed out that, as good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders have openly

and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution. I think I should point out I was only quoting Lenin, their guiding spirit, who said in 1920 that they repudiate all morality that proceeds from supernatural ideas—that's their name for religion—or ideas that are outside class conceptions. Morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war. And everything is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old, exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat.

Well, I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates an historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are. We saw this phenomenon in the 1930's. We see it too often today.

This doesn't mean we should isolate ourselves and refuse to seek an understanding with them. I intend to do everything I can to persuade them of our peaceful intent, to remind them that it was the West that refused to use its nuclear monopoly in the forties and fifties for territorial gain and which now proposes 50-percent cut in strategic ballistic missiles and the elimination of an entire class of land-based, intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

At the same time, however, they must be made to understand we will never compromise our principles and standards. We will never give away our freedom. We will never abandon our belief in God. And we will never stop searching for a genuine peace. But we can assure none of these things America stands for through the so-called nuclear freeze solutions proposed by some.

The truth is that a freeze now would be a very dangerous fraud, for that is merely the illusion of peace. The reality is that we must find peace through strength.

I would agree to a freeze if only we could freeze the Soviets' global desires. A freeze at current levels of weapons would remove any incentive for the Soviets to negotiate seriously in Geneva and virtually end our chances to achieve the major arms reductions which we have proposed. Instead, they would achieve their objectives through the freeze.

A freeze would reward the Soviet Union for its enormous and unparalleled military buildup. It would prevent the essential and long overdue modernization of United States and allied defenses and would leave our aging forces increasingly vulnerable. And an honest freeze would require extensive prior negotiations on the systems and numbers to be limited and on the measures to ensure effective verification and compliance. And the kind of a freeze that has been suggested would be virtually impossible to verify. Such a major effort would divert us completely from our current negotiations on achieving substantial reductions.

A number of years ago, I heard a young father, a very prominent young man in the entertainment world, addressing a tremendous gathering in California. It was during the time of the cold war, and communism and our own way of life were very much on people's minds. And he was speaking to that subject. And suddenly, though, I heard him saying, "I love my little

girls more than anything—" And I said to myself, "Oh, no, don't. You can't—don't say that." But I had underestimated him. He went on: "I would rather see my little girls die now, still believing in God, than have them grow up under communism and one day die no longer believing in God."

There were thousands of young people in that audience. They came to their feet with shouts of joy. They had instantly recognized the profound truth in what he had said, with regard to the physical and the soul and what was truly important.

Yes, let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness—pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.

It was C. S. Lewis who, in his unforgettable "Screwtape Letters," wrote: "The greatest evil is not done now in those sordid 'dens of crime' that Dickens loved to paint. It is not even done in concentration camps and labor camps. In those we see its final result. But it is conceived and ordered (moved, seconded, carried and minuted) in clear, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice."

Well, because these "quiet men" do not "raise their voices," because they sometimes speak in soothing tones of brotherhood and peace, because, like other dictators before them, they're always making "their final territorial demand," some would have us accept them at their word and accommodate ourselves to their aggressive impulses. But if history teaches anything, it teaches that simple-minded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly. It means the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our freedom.

So, I urge you to speak out against those who would place the United States in a position of military and moral inferiority. You know, I've always believed that old Screwtape reserved his best efforts for those of you in the church. So, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride—the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.

I ask you to resist the attempts of those who would have you withhold your support for our efforts, this administration's efforts, to keep America strong and free, while we negotiate real and verifiable reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals and one day, with God's help, their total elimination.

While America's military strength is important, let me add here that I've always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

Whittaker Chambers, the man whose own religious conversion made him a witness to one of the terrible traumas of our time, the Hiss-Chambers case, wrote that the crisis of the Western World exists to the degree in which the West is indifferent to God, the degree to which it collaborates in communism's attempt to make man stand alone without God. And then he said, for Marxism-Leninism is actually the second oldest faith, first proclaimed in the Garden of Eden with the words of temptation, "Ye shall be as gods."

The Western World can answer this challenge, he wrote, "but only provided that its faith in God and the freedom He enjoins is as great as communism's faith in Man."

I believe we shall rise to the challenge. I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man. For in the words of Isaiah: "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increased strength. . . . But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary. . . ."

Yes, change your world. One of our Founding Fathers, Thomas Paine, said, "We have it within our power to begin the world over again." We can do it, doing together what no one church could do by itself.

God bless you, and thank you very much.

A Congressional Committee Reports on "Irangate," 1987

The full story of the Iran-Contra Affair is complicated, and, for this Nation, profoundly sad. In the narrative portion of this Report, the Committees present a comprehensive account of the facts, based on 10 months of investigation, including 11 weeks of hearings.

But the facts alone do not explain how or why the events occurred. In this Executive Summary, the Committees focus on the key issues and offer their conclusions. Minority, supplemental, and additional views are printed in Section II and Section III.

Summary of the Facts

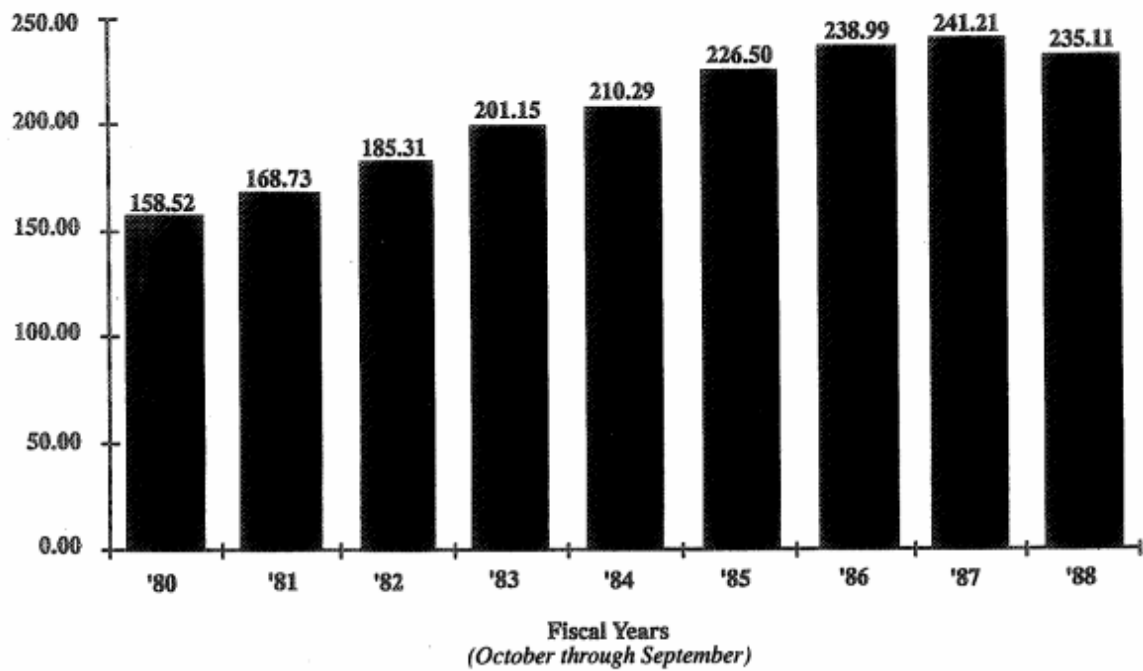
The Iran-Contra Affair had its origin in two unrelated revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, the long-time President, General Anastasio Somoza Debayle, was overthrown in 1979 and replaced by a Government controlled by Sandinista leftists.

In Iran, the pro-Western Government of the Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi was overthrown in 1979 by Islamic fundamentalists led by the Ayatollah Khomeini. The Khomeini Government, stridently anti-American, became a supporter of terrorism against American citizens.

U.S. Military Spending, 1980–1990: A Graphic

Billions of Dollars
(1982 Constant Dollars)



Statistics compiled by David Murphy, University of Maryland, College Park, from government statistics.

United States policy following the revolution in Nicaragua was to encourage the Sandinista Government to keep its pledges of pluralism and democracy. However, the Sandinista regime became increasingly anti-American and autocratic; began to aid a leftist insurgency in El Salvador; and turned toward Cuba and the Soviet Union for political, military, and economic assistance. By December 1981, the United States had begun supporting the Nicaraguan Contras, armed opponents of the Sandinista regime.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was the U.S. Government agency that assisted the Contras. In accordance with Presidential decisions, known as Findings, and with funds appropriated by Congress, the CIA armed, clothed, fed, and supervised the Contras. Despite this assistance, the Contras failed to win widespread popular support or military victories within Nicaragua.

Although the President continued to favor support of the Contras, opinion polls indicated that a majority of the public was not supportive. Opponents of the Administration's policy feared that U.S. involvement with the Contras would embroil the United States in another Vietnam. Supporters of the policy feared that, without U.S. support for the Contras, the Soviets would gain a dangerous toehold in Central America.

Congress prohibited Contra aid for the purpose of overthrowing the Sandinista Government in fiscal year 1983, and limited all aid to the Contras in fiscal year 1984 to \$24 million. Following disclosure in March and April 1984 that the CIA had a role in connection with the mining of the Nicaraguan harbors without adequate notification to Congress, public criticism mounted and the Administration's Contra policy lost much of its support within Congress. After further vigorous debate, Congress exercised its Constitutional power over appropriations and cut off all funds for the Contras' military and paramilitary operations. The statutory provision cutting off funds, known as the Boland Amendment, was part of a fiscal year 1985 omnibus appropriations bill, and was signed into law by the President on October 12, 1984.

Still, the President felt strongly about the Contras, and he ordered his staff, in the words of his National Security Adviser, to find a way to keep the Contras "body and soul together." Thus began the story of how the staff of a White House advisory body, the NSC, became an operational entity that secretly ran the Contra assistance effort, and later the Iran initiative. The action officer placed in charge of both operations was Lt. Col. Oliver L. North.

Denied funding by Congress, the President turned to third countries and private sources. Between June 1984 and the beginning of 1986, the President, his National Security Adviser, and the NSC staff secretly raised \$34 million for the Contras from other countries. An additional \$2.7 million was provided for the Contras during 1985 and 1986 from private contributors, who were addressed by North and occasionally granted photo opportunities with the President. In the middle of this period, Assistant Secretary of State A. Langhorne Motley—from whom these contributions were concealed—gave his assurance to Congress that the Administration was not "soliciting and/or

encouraging third countries" to give funds to the Contras because, as he conceded, the Boland Amendment prohibited such solicitation.

The first contributions were sent by the donors to bank accounts controlled and used by the Contras. However, in July 1985, North took control of the funds and—with the support of two National Security Advisers (Robert McFarlane and John Poindexter) and, according to North, [CIA] Director [William] Casey—used those funds to run the covert operation to support the Contras.

At the suggestion of Director Casey, North recruited Richard V. Secord, a retired Air Force Major General with experience in special operations. Secord set up Swiss bank accounts, and North steered future donations into these accounts. Using these funds, and funds later generated by the Iran arms sales, Secord and his associate, Albert Hakim, created what they called "the Enterprise," a private organization designed to engage in covert activities on behalf of the United States.

The Enterprise, functioning largely at North's direction, had its own airplanes, pilots, airfield, operatives, ship, secure communications devices, and secret Swiss bank accounts. For 16 months, it served as the secret arm of the NSC staff, carrying out with private and non-appropriated money, and without the accountability or restrictions imposed by law on the CIA, a covert Contra aid program that Congress thought it had prohibited.

Although the CIA and other agencies involved in intelligence activities knew that the Boland Amendment barred their involvement in covert support for the Contras, North's Contra support operation received logistical and tactical support from various personnel in the CIA and other agencies. Certain CIA personnel in Central America gave their assistance. The U.S. Ambassador in Costa Rica, Lewis Tambs, provided his active assistance. North also enlisted the aid of Defense Department personnel in Central America, and obtained secure communications equipment from the National Security Agency. The Assistant Secretary of State with responsibility for the region, Elliott Abrams, professed ignorance of this support. He later stated that he had been "careful not to ask North lots of questions."

By Executive Order and National Security Decision Directive issued by President Reagan, all covert operations must be approved by the President personally and in writing. By statute, Congress must be notified about each covert action. The funds used for such actions, like all government funds, must be strictly accounted for.

The covert action directed by North, however, was not approved by the President in writing. Congress was not notified about it. And the funds to support it were never accounted for. In short, the operation functioned without any of the accountability required of Government activities. It was an evasion of the Constitution's most basic check on Executive action—the power of the Congress to grant or deny funding for Government programs.

Moreover, the covert action to support the Contras was concealed from Congress and the public. When the press reported in the summer of 1985 that the NSC staff was engaged in raising money and furnishing military support to the Contras, the President assured the public that the law was

being followed. His National Security Adviser, Robert C. McFarlane, assured Committees of Congress, both in person and in writing, that the NSC staff was obeying both the spirit and the letter of the law, and was neither soliciting money nor coordinating military support for the Contras. . . .

The NSC staff was [thus] already engaged in covert operations through Secord when, in the summer of 1985, the Government of Israel proposed that missiles be sold to Iran in return for the release of seven American hostages held in Lebanon and the prospect of improved relations with Iran. The Secretaries of State and Defense repeatedly opposed such sales to a government designated by the United States as a supporter of international terrorism. They called it a straight arms-for-hostages deal that was contrary to U.S. public policy. They also argued that these sales would violate the Arms Export Control Act, as well as the U.S. arms embargo against Iran. The embargo had been imposed after the taking of hostages at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979, and was continued because of the Iran-Iraq war.

Nevertheless, in the summer of 1985 the President authorized Israel to proceed with the sales. The NSC staff conducting the Contra covert action also took operational control of implementing the President's decision on arms sales to Iran. The President did not sign a Finding for this covert operation, nor did he notify the Congress.

Israel shipped 504 TOW anti-tank missiles to Iran in August and September 1985. Although the Iranians had promised to release most of the American hostages in return, only one, Reverend Benjamin Weir, was freed. The President persisted. In November, he authorized Israel to ship 80 HAWK anti-aircraft missiles in return for all the hostages, with a promise of prompt replenishment by the United States, and 40 more HAWKs to be sent directly by the United States to Iran. Eighteen HAWK missiles were actually shipped from Israel in November 1985, but no hostages were released.

In early December 1985, the President signed a retroactive Finding purporting to authorize the November HAWK transaction. That Finding contained no reference to improved relations with Iran. It was a straight arms-for-hostages Finding. National Security Adviser Poindexter destroyed this Finding a year later because, he testified, its disclosure would have been politically embarrassing to the President.

The November HAWK transaction had additional significance. The Enterprise received a \$1 million advance from the Israelis. North and Secord testified this was for transportation expenses in connection with the 120 HAWK missiles. Since only 18 missiles were shipped, the Enterprise was left with more than \$800,000 in spare cash. North directed the Enterprise to retain the money and spend it for the Contras. The "diversion" had begun.

North realized that the sale of missiles to Iran could be used to support the Contras. He told Israeli Defense Ministry officials on December 6, 1985,

one day after the President signed the Finding, that he planned to generate profits on future arms sales for activities in Nicaragua. . . .

In February 1986, the United States, acting through the Enterprise, sold 1,000 TOWs to the Iranians. The U.S. also provided the Iranians with military intelligence about Iraq. All of the remaining American hostages were supposed to be released upon Iran's receipt of the first 500 TOWs. None was. But the transaction was productive in one respect. The difference between what the Enterprise paid the United States for the missiles and what it received from Iran was more than \$6 million. North directed part of this profit for the Contras and for other covert operations. Poindexter testified that he authorized this "diversion."

The diversion, for the Contras and other covert activities, was not an isolated act by the NSC staff. Poindexter saw it as "implementing" the President's secret policy that had been in effect since 1984 of using non-appropriated funds following passage of the Boland Amendment.

According to North, CIA Director Casey saw the "diversion" as part of a more grandiose plan to use the Enterprise as a "stand-alone," "off-the-shelf," covert capacity that would act throughout the world while evading Congressional review. To Casey, Poindexter, and North, the diversion was an integral part of selling arms to Iran and just one of the intended uses of the proceeds.

In May 1986, the President again tried to sell weapons to get the hostages back. This time, the President agreed to ship parts for HAWK missiles but only on condition that all the American hostages in Lebanon be released first. A mission headed by Robert McFarlane, the former National Security Adviser, traveled to Tehran with the first installment of the HAWK parts. When the mission arrived, McFarlane learned that the Iranians claimed they had never promised to do anything more than try to obtain the hostages' release. The trip ended amid misunderstanding and failure, although the first installment of HAWK parts was delivered.

The Enterprise was paid, however, for all of the HAWK parts, and realized more than an \$8 million profit, part of which was applied, at North's direction, to the Contras. Another portion of the profit was used by North for other covert operations, including the operation of a ship for a secret mission. The idea of an off-the-shelf, stand-alone covert capacity had become operational. . . .

The sale of arms to Iran was a "significant anticipated intelligence activity." By law, such an activity must be reported to Congress "in a timely fashion" pursuant to Section 501 of the National Security Act. If the proposal to sell arms to Iran had been reported, the Senate and House Intelligence Committees would likely have joined Secretaries Shultz and Weinberger in objecting to this initiative. But Poindexter recommended—and the President decided—not to report the Iran initiative to Congress.

Indeed, the Administration went to considerable lengths to avoid notifying Congress. The CIA General Counsel wrote on January 15, 1986, "the key issue in this entire matter revolves around whether or not there

will be reports made to Congress." Shortly thereafter, the transaction was restructured to avoid the pre-shipment reporting requirements of the Arms Export Control Act, and place it within the more limited reporting requirements of the National Security Act. But even these reporting requirements were ignored. The President failed to notify the group of eight (the leaders of each party in the House and Senate, and the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of the Intelligence Committees) specified by law for unusually sensitive operations.

After the disclosure of the Iran arms sales on November 3, 1986, the American public was still not told the facts. The President sought to avoid any comment on the ground that it might jeopardize the chance of securing the remaining hostages' release. But it was impossible to remain silent, and inaccurate statements followed. . . .

While the President was denying any illegality, his subordinates were engaging in a coverup. Several of his advisers had expressed concern that the 1985 sales violated the Arms Export Control Act, and a "cover story" had been agreed on if these arms sales were ever exposed. After North had three conversations on November 18, 1986, about the legal problems with the 1985 Israeli shipments, he, Poindexter, Casey, and McFarlane all told conforming false stories about U.S. involvement in these shipments. . . .

In light of the destruction of material evidence by Poindexter and North and the death of Casey, all of the facts may never be known. The Committees cannot even be sure whether they heard the whole truth. . . . But enough is clear to demonstrate beyond doubt that fundamental processes of governance were disregarded and the rule of law was subverted.

The common ingredients of the Iran and Contra policies were secrecy, deception, and disdain for the law. A small group of senior officials believed that they alone knew what was right. They viewed knowledge of their actions by others in the Government as a threat to their objectives. They told neither the Secretary of State, the Congress nor the American people of their actions. When exposure was threatened, they destroyed official documents and lied to Cabinet officials, to the public, and to elected representatives in Congress. They testified that they even withheld key facts from the President.

The United States Constitution specifies the process by which laws and policy are to be made and executed. Constitutional process is the essence of our democracy and our democratic form of Government is the basis of our strength. Time and again we have learned that a flawed process leads to bad results; and that a lawless process leads to worse.

**Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev
Charts a New Direction
for the U.S.S.R., 1988**

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stroika—which has a tremendous potential for promoting peace and international cooperation, we are particularly interested today in being understood correctly. . . .

What will humanity be like as it enters the 21st century? Thoughts about this already very near future are engaging people's minds. While we look forward to the future with the anticipation of change for the better, we also view it with alarm.

Today, the world is a very different place from what it was at the beginning of this century, and even in the middle of it. And the world and all of its components keep changing.

The emergence of nuclear weapons was a tragic way of stressing the fundamental nature of these changes. Being the material symbol and the bearer of the ultimate military force, nuclear weapons at the same time laid bare the absolute limits to this force.

Humankind is faced with the problem of survival, of self-protection, in all its magnitude.

Profound social changes are taking place.

In the East and in the South, in the West and in the North, hundreds of millions of people, new nations and states, new public movements and ideologies have advanced to the foreground of history.

The striving for independence, democracy and social justice manifests itself, in all its diversity and with all its contradictions, in broad and frequently turbulent popular movements. The idea of democratizing the entire world order has grown into a powerful social and political force.

At the same time, the revolution in science and technology has turned economic, food, energy, ecological, information and demographic problems, which only recently were of a national or regional character, into global problems.

The newest techniques of communications, mass information and transport have made the world more visible and more tangible to everyone. International communication is easier now than ever before.

Nowadays, it is virtually impossible for any society to be "closed." That is why we need a radical revision of the views on the totality of problems of international cooperation, which is the most essential component of universal security.

The world economy is becoming a single entity, outside of which no state can develop normally, regardless of its social system or economic level.

All this calls for creating an altogether new mechanism for the functioning of the world economy, a new structure of the international division of labour.

World economic growth, however, is revealing the contradictions of the traditional type of industrial development and its limitations. The expansion and deepening of industrialization is leading to an ecological catastrophe.

But there are many countries with insufficiently developed industry and some that are not yet industrialized. Whether these countries will follow the old technological patterns in their economic development or be able to join the search for ecologically clean industries is one of the biggest problems.

Another problem is the growing gap between the industrialized nations and most of the developing countries, which is presenting an increasingly serious threat on a global scale.

All these factors make it necessary to look for a fundamentally new type of industrial progress that would be in accordance with the interests of all peoples and states. . . .

In thinking all this over, it becomes clear that we have to look for ways together to improve the international situation, to build a new world—that is, if we are going to take into consideration the lessons of the past, the realities of the present, and the objective logic of world development.

If this is really true, it would be worthwhile to reach an understanding on the basic and genuinely universal principles of this search, and the prerequisites for it.

It is evident, in particular, that force or the threat of force neither can nor should be instruments of foreign policy. This mainly refers to nuclear arsenals, but not to them alone. All of us, and first of all the strongest of us, have to practice self-restraint and renounce the use of force in the international arena. . . .

The *New York Times* Announces the End of the Cold War, 1989

The cold war of poisonous Soviet-American feelings, of domestic political hysteria, of events enlarged and distorted by East-West confrontation, of almost perpetual diplomatic deadlock is over.

The we-they world that emerged after 1945 is giving way to the more traditional struggles of great powers. That contest is more manageable. It permits serious negotiations. It creates new possibilities—for cooperation in combating terrorism, the spread of chemical weapons and common threats to the environment, and for shaping a less violent world.

True, Europe remains torn in two; but the place where four decades of hostility began is mending and changing in complicated patterns. True, two enormous military machines still face each other around the world; but both sides are searching for ways to reduce the burdens and risks. Values continue to clash, but less profoundly as Soviet citizens start to partake in freedoms.

The experts who contributed to a two-month series on the Op-Ed page called "Is the Cold War Over?" agreed, with variations in emphasis and definition, that Soviet-American relations are entering a new era. They differed over whether Mikhail Gorbachev can last and whether his policies can outlast him, and over how much the West can or should do to help him and what to ask in return. But these questions are the stuff of genuine policy debate, not grist for old ideological diatribes.

In his four years of power, what has Mikhail Gorbachev done to bring about this reconsideration of the cold war?

"The Cold War Is Over" from *The New York Times*, April 2, 1989. Copyright © 1989 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

A great deal, as Jeremy Stone of the Federation of American Sciences rightly pointed out. Mr. Gorbachev has pushed Yasir Arafat toward renouncing terrorism and accepting Israel, supported political settlements in Angola and Cambodia, pulled out Soviet troops from Afghanistan, agreed to vastly disproportionate cuts in medium-range missiles and pledged significant unilateral reductions in Soviet forces in Central Europe.

At home, Mr. Stone said properly, the Soviet leader is introducing economic decentralization, allowing Soviet nationalities to assert their separate identities, encouraging free speech and experimenting with elections. These measures give hope for a more open Soviet society and Government. And, as Graham Allison of Harvard's Kennedy School pointed out, this has been the very goal of America's containment policy.

But what if Mr. Gorbachev is ousted? Couldn't his successors readily reverse his actions?

Frank Carlucci argued that it's too early to foretell Mr. Gorbachev's fate or judge whether he or his successors might not simply change policies. The former Defense Secretary argued that Soviet policy is in a transitional phase.

Dimitri Simes of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, on the other hand, convincingly made the case that the changes occurring in the Soviet Union are of a more fundamental nature. Whoever leads the Soviet Union, he argued, would have little choice but to respond to Moscow's current economic and political weaknesses and follow the Gorbachev path.

Mr. Simes rightly argued that the debate in the Soviet Union revolves around the scope and pace of change, not the need for change. And there is little evidence that Mr. Gorbachev's foreign and military policies are under attack. Moscow simply does not have the resources for costly global challenges.

If the Soviet Union is in such bad shape, why not squeeze hard for concessions?

William Luers, a former U.S. diplomat, offered one reason. He warned against humiliating Mr. Gorbachev in ways that would unite a proud nation against the West. Ed Hewitt of the Brookings Institution provided another: Soviet leaders still have sufficient economic strength and foreign policy options to make life easier or harder for the West.

These cautions have to be kept in mind. But the West should not shy away from driving hard bargains. That can be done, as Ronald Reagan demonstrated, without destroying relations.

What should Western policy be?

Zbigniew Brzezinski correctly argued that the West needs a strategy to deal with "the gravity of the challenge and the magnitude of the opportunity." But the West would tie itself in knots if it followed his advice to "insist that any substantial assistance be reciprocated by reforms that institutionalize economic and political pluralism."

On the contrary, the West cannot manage Soviet reforms any more than it can "save" Mr. Gorbachev. It can reinforce and encourage reforms when Western interests are also at stake—by providing credits and technology on a modest and safe scale and by easing restrictions on trade. The point is for

the West to rid itself of self-made restraints on expanding economic relations so that decisions can be made on a case-by-case basis.

The prospect of such economic openings and the diminishing Soviet threat are likely to give freer play to conflicts among Western industrialized powers, according to Edward Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He was exactly right in urging Western leaders to "act now to construct a new system of economic cooperation that would stand on its own and not lean on the imperatives of resisting" Moscow.

No one seems to have a good answer about the division of Europe, always the most dangerous East-West question. Michael Mandelbaum of the Council on Foreign Relations offered as good a prescription as anyone. He looked toward superpower talks to bring about sovereign nations in Eastern Europe and special arrangements for the two Germans.

The Bush Administration seems less attentive to these issues and more preoccupied with Mr. Gorbachev's seizing headlines worldwide. It would do better to think of him as part of the solution, not the problem, as Richard Ullman of Princeton University counseled. "Who takes the initiative," he wrote, "matters less than the result."

The Administration now nears the completion of its East-West policy review. Hints dribble out about senior officials worrying that Mr. Reagan was too friendly with Mr. Gorbachev and too eager for arms control. That's self-defeating talk. The treaty eliminating medium-range missiles in Europe represents a substantial victory for the West. Similarly, Mr. Bush and the country would gain by early completion of a treaty to cut intercontinental-range missiles and bombers.

None of the contributors recommended cosmic disarmament agreements, and Mr. Bush would be right to avoid them. But he would be flat wrong not to exploit Moscow's willingness to compromise on cutting troops in Europe and otherwise reduce the costs and risks of security.

It would also be unfortunate if the Bush team worried too much about its right flank and tried to prove that it can out-tough Mr. Reagan. That would drain them of the imagination and boldness necessary to go beyond the cold war. Presidents Bush and Gorbachev have the opportunity of the century to refocus energies and resources from sterile conflicts onto common threats to mankind.

President George Bush Proclaims a New World Order, 1990

We gather tonight, witness to events in the Persian Gulf as significant as they are tragic. In the early morning hours of August 2nd, following negotiations and promises by Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein not to use force, a powerful Iraqi army invaded its trusting and much weaker neighbor, Kuwait. Within 3 days, 120,000 Iraqi troops with 850 tanks had poured into Kuwait and moved south to threaten Saudi Arabia. It was then that I decided to check that aggression.

At this moment, our brave servicemen and women stand watch in that

distant desert and on distant seas, side-by-side with the forces of more than 20 other nations.

Tonight, I want to talk to you about what's at stake—what we must do together to defend civilized values around the world and maintain our economic strength at home.

The Objectives and Goals

Our objectives in the Persian Gulf are clear; our goals defined and familiar.

- Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait completely, immediately, and without condition.
- Kuwait's legitimate government must be restored.
- The security and stability of the Persian Gulf must be assured.
- American citizens abroad must be protected.

These goals are not ours alone. They have been endorsed by the UN Security Council five times in as many weeks. Most countries share our concern for principle, and many have a stake in the stability of the Persian Gulf. This is not, as Saddam Hussein would have it, the United States against Iraq. It is Iraq against the world.

We stand today at a unique and extraordinary moment. The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward a historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective—a new world order—can emerge; a new era—freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace, an era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony.

A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavor. Today, that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we have known, a world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle, a world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice, a world where the strong respect the rights of the weak.

This is the vision that I shared with President Gorbachev in Helsinki. He and other leaders from Europe, the gulf, and around the world understand that how we manage this crisis today could shape the future for generations to come.

The test we face is great—and so are the stakes. This is the first assault on the new world that we seek, the first test of our mettle. Had we not responded to this first provocation with clarity of purpose, if we do not continue to demonstrate our determination, it would be a signal to actual and potential despots around the world.

America and the world must defend common vital interests. And we will. America and the world must support the rule of law. And we will. America and the world must stand up to aggression. And we will. And one thing more; in the pursuit of these goals, America will not be intimidated.

Vital issues of principle are at stake. Saddam Hussein is literally trying to wipe a country off the face of the earth. We do not exaggerate. Nor do we exaggerate when we say Saddam Hussein will fail.

Vital economic interests are at risk as well. Iraq itself controls some 10% of the world's proven oil reserves. Iraq plus Kuwait controls twice that. An Iraq permitted to swallow Kuwait would have the economic and military power, as well as the arrogance, to intimidate and coerce its neighbors—neighbors that control the lion's share of the world's remaining oil reserves. We cannot permit a resource so vital to be dominated by one so ruthless. And we won't.

Recent events have surely proven that there is no substitute for American leadership. In the face of tyranny, let no one doubt American credibility and reliability. Let no one doubt our staying power. We will stand by our friends. One way or another, the leader of Iraq must learn this fundamental truth.

Our interest, our involvement in the gulf is not transitory. It predated Saddam Hussein's aggression and will survive it. Long after all our troops come home—and we all hope it is soon, very soon—there will be a lasting role for the United States in assisting the nations of the Persian Gulf. Our role then—to deter future aggression. Our role is to help our friends in their own self-defense, and, something else, to curb the proliferation of chemical, biological, ballistic missile, and, above all, nuclear technologies.

Let me also make clear that the United States has no quarrel with the Iraqi people. Our quarrel is with Iraq's dictator and with his aggression. Iraq will not be permitted to annex Kuwait. That is not a threat; that is not a boast; that is just the way it is going to be.

✻ E S S A Y S

As the Cold War gave way to a new and uncertain era in international affairs, historians and other foreign-policy experts hastened to explain the legacy of the Reagan era and to map out the future course of U.S. foreign relations. In the first essay, diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis of Ohio University offers a favorable assessment of Ronald Reagan's policies, praising the former president for "hanging tough" and for helping to bring about "the most dramatic improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations . . . since the Cold War began." In the second essay, Richard J. Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies presents a far more critical assessment of both Reagan and George Bush and of the powerful inertial momentum of America's Cold War institutions. Note that both essays were published before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Persian Gulf war, and George Bush's call for "a new world order."

Ronald Reagan's Cold War Victory

JOHN LEWIS GADDIS

The time has come to acknowledge an astonishing development: during his eight years as president, Ronald Reagan has presided over the most dramatic

"Ronald Reagan's Cold War Victory" by John Lewis Gaddis from the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. Copyright © 1989 by the Educational Foundation for Nuclear Science, 6042 South Kimbark, Chicago, IL 60637, USA.

POST-COLD WAR

19 PRESIDENT BUSH PROCLAIMS A NEW WORLD ORDER (1990)

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Our interest, our involvement in the gulf is not transitory. It predated Saddam Hussein's aggression and will survive it. Long after all our troops come home — and we all hope it is soon, very soon — there will be a lasting role for the United States in assisting the nations of the Persian Gulf. Our role then — to deter future aggression. Our role is to help our friends in their own self-defense, and, something else, to curb the proliferation of chemical, biological, ballistic missile, and, above all, nuclear technologies.

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20 THE PARIS JOINT DECLARATION (1990)

The Heads of State or Government of Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America

- greatly welcoming the historic changes in Europe
- gratified by the growing implementation throughout Europe of a common commitment to pluralist democracy, the rule of law and human rights, which are essential to lasting security on the continent,
- affirming the end of the era of division and confrontation which has lasted for more than four decades, the improvement in relations among their countries and the contribution this makes to the security of all,
- confident that the signature of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe represents a major contribution to the common objective of increased security and stability in Europe, and
- convinced that these developments must form part of a continuing process of co-operation in building the structures of a more united continent,

Issue the following Declaration:

1. The signatories solemnly declare that, in the new era of European relations which is beginning, they are no longer adversaries, will build new partnerships and extend to each other the hand of friendship.
2. They recall their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirm all of their commitments under the Helsinki Final Act. They stress that all of the ten Helsinki Principles are of primary significance and that, accordingly, they will be equally and unreservedly applied, each of them being interpreted taking into account the others. In that context, they affirm their obligation and commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or the political independence of any State, from seeking to change existing borders by threat or use of force, and from acting in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes of those documents. None of their weapons will ever be used except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.
3. They recognize that security is indivisible and that the security of each of their countries is inextricably linked to the security of all States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe [CSCE].
4. They undertake to maintain only such military capabilities as are necessary to prevent war and provide for effective defence. They will bear in mind the relationship between military capabilities and doctrines.
5. They reaffirm that every State has the right to be or not to be a party to a treaty of alliance.

6. They note with approval the intensification of political and military contacts among them to promote mutual understanding and confidence. They welcome in this context the positive responses made to recent proposals for new regular diplomatic liaison.

7. They declare their determination to contribute actively to conventional, nuclear and chemical arms control and disarmament agreements which enhance security and stability for all. In particular, they call for the early entry into force of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and commit themselves to continue the process of strengthening peace in Europe through conventional arms control within the framework of the CSCE. They welcome the prospect of new negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of their short-range nuclear forces.

8. They welcome the contribution that confidence- and security-building measures [CSBMs] have made to lessening tensions and fully support the further development of such measures. They reaffirm the importance of the 'Open Skies' initiative and their determination to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

9. They pledge to work together with the other CSCE participating States to strengthen the CSCE process so that it can make an even greater contribution to security and stability in Europe. They recognize in particular the need to enhance political consultations among CSCE participants and to develop other CSCE mechanisms. They are convinced that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and agreement on a substantial new set of CSBMs, together with new patterns of co-operation in the framework of the CSCE, will lead to increased security and thus to enduring peace and stability in Europe.

10. They believe that the preceding points reflect the deep longing of their peoples for close co-operation and mutual understanding and declare that they will work steadily for the further development of their relations in accordance with the present Declaration as well as with the principles set forth in the Helsinki Final Act.

The original of this Declaration of which the English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic will be transmitted to the Government of France which will retain it in its archives. The Government of France is requested to transmit the text of the Declaration to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with a view to its circulation to all the members of the organization as an official document of the United Nations, indicating that it is not eligible for registration under Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations. Each of the signatory States will receive from the Government of France a true copy of this Declaration.

In witness whereof the undersigned High Representatives have subscribed their signatures below.

52. Iraq 1990-1991

Desert holocaust

"This is the one part I didn't want to see," said a 20-year-old private. "All the homeless, all the hurting. When we came through the refugee camp, man, that's something I didn't need."

"It's really sad," said the sergeant. "We've got little kids come up and see my gun, and they start crying. That really tears me up."

"At night, you kill and you roll on by," said another GI. "You don't stop. You don't have to see anything. It wasn't until the next morning the rear told us the devastation was total. We'd killed the entire division."¹

While many nations have a terrible record in modern times of dealing out great suffering face-to-face with their victims, Americans have made it a point to keep at a distance while inflicting some of the greatest horrors of the age: atomic bombs on the people of Japan; carpet-bombing Korea back to the stone age; engulfing the Vietnamese in napalm and pesticides; providing three decades of Latin Americans with the tools and methods of torture, then turning their eyes away, closing their ears to the screams, and denying everything ... and now, dropping 177 million pounds of bombs on the people of Iraq in the most concentrated aerial onslaught in the history of the world.

What possessed the United States to carry out this relentless devastation for more than 40 days and nights against one of the most advanced and enlightened nations in the Middle East and its ancient and modern capital city?

It's the first half of 1990. The dismantling of the Berlin wall is being carried out on a daily basis. Euphoria about the end of the cold war and optimism about the beginning of a new era of peace and prosperity are hard to contain. The Bush administration is under pressure to cut the monster military budget and institute a "peace dividend". But George Bush, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, former Texas oil man, and former Director of the CIA, is not about to turn his back on his many cronies in the military-industrial-intelligence complex. He rails against those who would "naively cut the muscle out of our defense posture", and insists that we must take a cautious attitude towards reform in the USSR.² In February, it's reported that "the administration and Congress are expecting the most acrimonious hard-fought defense budget battle in recent history"; and in June that "tensions have escalated" between Congress and the Pentagon "as Congress prepares to draft one of the most pivotal defense budgets in the past two decades."³ A month later, a Senate Armed Services subcommittee votes to cut military manpower by nearly three times more than recommended by the Bush administration ... "The size and direction of the cuts indicate that

President Bush is losing his battle on how to manage reductions in military spending."⁴

During this same period Bush's popularity was plummeting: from an approval rating of 80 percent in January—as he rode the wave of public support for his invasion of Panama the previous month—to 73 in February, down to the mid-60s in May and June, 63 on 11 July, 60 two weeks later.⁵

George Herbert Walker Bush needed something dramatic to capture the headlines and the public, and to convince Congress that a powerful military was needed as much as ever because it was still a scary and dangerous world out there.

Although the official Washington version of events presented Iraq's occupation of neighboring Kuwait as an arbitrary and unwarranted aggression, Kuwait had actually been a district of Iraq, under Ottoman rule, up to the First World War. After the war, to exert leverage against the abundantly oil-rich Iraq, the British Colonial Office established tiny Kuwait as a separate territorial entity, in the process cutting off most of Iraq's access to the Persian Gulf. In 1961, Kuwait became "independent," again because Britain declared it to be so, and Iraq massed troops at the border, backing down when the British dispatched their own forces. Subsequent Iraqi regimes never accepted the legitimacy of this state of affairs, making similar threats in the 1970s, even crossing a half-mile into Kuwait in 1976, but Baghdad was also open to a compromise with Kuwait under which Iraq would gain access to its former islands in the Gulf.⁶

The current conflict had its origins in the brutal 1980-88 war between Iraq and Iran. Iraq charged that while it was locked in battle, Kuwait was engaged in stealing \$2.4 billion of oil from the Rumaila oil field that ran beneath the vaguely defined Iraq-Kuwait border and was claimed in its entirety by Iraq; that Kuwait had built military and other structures on Iraqi territory; and worst of all, that immediately after the war ended, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates began to exceed the production quotas established by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), flooding the oil market, and driving prices down. Iraq was heavily strapped and deeply in debt because of the long war, and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein declared this policy was an increasing threat to his country—"economic war", he called it, pointing out that Iraq lost a billion dollars a year for each drop of one dollar in the oil price.⁷ Besides compensation for these losses, Hussein insisted on possession of the two Gulf islands which blocked Iraq's access to the Gulf as well as undisputed ownership of the Rumaila oilfield.

In the latter part of July 1990, after Kuwait had continued to scorn Iraq's financial and territorial demands, and to ignore OPEC's request to stick to its assigned quota, Iraq began to mass large numbers of troops along the Kuwaiti border.

The reaction to all this by the world's only remaining superpower and self-appointed global policeman became the subject of intense analysis and controversy after Iraq actually invaded. Had Washington given Iraq a green light to invade? Was there, at a minimum, the absence of a flashing *red* light? The controversy was fueled by incidents such as the following:

19 July: Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney stated that the American commitment made during the Iran-Iraq war to come to Kuwait's defense if it were attacked was still valid. The same point was made by Paul Wolfowitz, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, at a private luncheon with Arab ambassadors. (Ironically, Kuwait had been allied with Iraq and feared an attack from Iran.) Later, Cheney's remark was downplayed by his own spokesman, Pete Williams, who explained that the secretary had spoken with "some degree of liberty". Cheney was then told by the White House: "You're committing us to war we might not

want to fight," and advised pointedly that from then on, statements on Iraq would be made by the White House and State Department.⁸

24 July: State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutweiler, in response to a question, responded: "We do not have any defense treaties with Kuwait, and there are no special defense or security commitments to Kuwait." Asked whether the United States would help Kuwait if it were attacked, she said: "We also remain strongly committed to supporting the individual and collective self-defense of our friends in the gulf with whom we have deep and longstanding ties"—a statement that some Kuwaiti officials said privately was too weak.⁹

24 July: The US staged an unscheduled and rare military exercise with the United Arab Emirates, and the same Pete Williams then announced: "We remain strongly committed to supporting the individual and collective self-defense of our friends in the gulf with whom we have deep and longstanding ties." And the White House declared: "We're concerned about the troop buildup by the Iraqis. We ask that all parties strive to avoid violence."¹⁰

25 July: Saddam Hussein was personally told by the US ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, in a now-famous remark, that "We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait." But she then went on to tell the Iraqi leader that she was concerned about his massive troop deployment on the Kuwaiti border in the context of his government's having branded Kuwait's actions as "parallel to military aggression."¹¹

25 July: John Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, killed a planned Voice of America broadcast that would have warned Iraq with the identical party-line words used by Tutweiler and Williams.¹² Hussein may not have known of this incident, although in April he had been personally assured by visiting Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, speaking in behalf of the president, that the Bush administration dissociated itself from a Voice of America broadcast critical of Iraq's human-rights abuses and also opposed a congressional move for economic sanctions against Iraq.¹³

27 July: The House and Senate each voted to impose economic sanctions against Iraq because of its human-rights violations. However, the Bush administration immediately reiterated its opposition to the measure.¹⁴

28 July: Bush sent a personal message to Hussein (apparently after receiving Glaspie's report of her meeting with the Iraqi leader) cautioning him against the use of force, without referring directly to Kuwait.¹⁵

31 July: Kelly told Congress: "We have no defense treaty relationship with any Gulf country. That is clear. ... We have historically avoided taking a position on border disputes or on internal OPEC deliberations."

Rep. Lee Hamilton asked if it would be correct to say that if Iraq "charged across the border into Kuwait" the United States did "not have a treaty commitment which would obligate us to engage U.S. forces" there.

"That is correct," Kelly responded.¹⁶

The next day (Washington time), Iraqi troops led by tanks charged across the Kuwaiti border, and the United States instantly threw itself into unmitigated opposition.

Official statements notwithstanding, it appears that the United States did indeed have an official position on the Iraq-Kuwait border dispute. After the invasion, one of the documents the Iraqis found in a Kuwaiti intelligence file was a memorandum concerning a November 1989 meeting between the head of Kuwaiti state security and CIA Director William Webster, which included the following:

We agreed with the American side that it was important to take advantage of the deteriorating economic situation in Iraq in order to put pressure on that country's government to delineate our

common border. The Central Intelligence Agency gave us its view of appropriate means of pressure, saying that broad cooperation should be initiated between us on condition that such activities be coordinated at a high level.

The CIA called the document a "total fabrication". However, as the *Los Angeles Times* pointed out, "The memo is not an obvious forgery, particularly since if Iraqi officials had written it themselves, they almost certainly would have made it far more damaging to U.S. and Kuwaiti credibility."¹⁷ It was apparently real enough and damaging enough to the Kuwaiti foreign minister—he fainted when confronted with the document by his Iraqi counterpart at an Arab summit meeting in mid-August.¹⁸

When the Iraqi ambassador in Washington was asked why the document seemed to contradict US Ambassador Gaspar's avowal of neutrality on the issue, he replied that her remark was "part and parcel of the setup".¹⁹

Was Iraq set up by the United States and Kuwait? Was Saddam provoked into his invasion—with the conspirators' expectation perhaps that it would not extend beyond the border area—so he could be cut down to the size both countries wanted?

In February 1990, Hussein made a speech before an Arab summit which could certainly have incited, or added impetus to, such a plot. In it he condemned the continuous American military presence in the Persian Gulf waters and warned that "If the Gulf people and the rest of the Arabs along with them fail to take heed, the Arab Gulf region will be ruled by American will." Further, that the US would dictate the production, distribution and price of oil, "all on the basis of a special outlook which has to do solely with U.S. interests and in which no consideration is given to the interests of others."²⁰

In examining whether there was a conspiracy against Iraq and Saddam Hussein, we must consider, in addition to the indications mentioned above, the following:

Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat has asserted that Washington thwarted the chance for a peaceful resolution of the differences between Kuwait and Iraq at an Arab summit in May, after Saddam had offered to negotiate a mutually acceptable border with Kuwait. "The US was encouraging Kuwait not to offer any compromise," said Arafat, "which meant there could be no negotiated solution to avoid the Gulf crisis." Kuwait, he said, was led to believe it could rely on the force of US arms instead.²¹

Similarly, King Hussein of Jordan revealed that just before the Iraqi invasion the Kuwaiti foreign minister stated: "We are not going to respond to [Iraq] ... if they don't like it, let them occupy our territory ... we are going to bring in the Americans." And that the Kuwaiti emir told his military officers that in the event of an invasion, their duty was to hold off the Iraqis for 24 hours; by then "American and foreign forces would land in Kuwait and expel them." King Hussein expressed the opinion that Arab understanding was that Saddam had been goaded into invading, thereby stepping into a noose prepared for him.²²

The emir refused to accede to Iraq's financial demands, instead offering an insulting half-million dollars to Baghdad. A note from him to his prime minister before the invasion speaks of support of this policy from Egypt, Washington and London. "Be unwavering in your discussions," the emir writes. "We are stronger than they [the Iraqis] think."²³

After the war, the Kuwaiti Minister of Oil and Finance acknowledged:

But we knew that the United States would not let us be overrun. I spent too much time in Washington to make that mistake, and received a constant stream of visitors here. The American policy was clear. Only Saddam didn't understand it.²⁴

But we have seen perhaps ample reason why Saddam would fail to understand.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz declared that a sharp drop in the price of oil was something the Kuwaitis, with their vast investment holdings in the West, could easily afford, but which undercut the oil revenues essential to a cash-hungry Baghdad. "It was inconceivable," said Aziz, that Kuwait "could risk engaging in a conspiracy of such magnitude against a large, strong country such as Iraq, if it were not being supported and protected by a great power; and that power was the United States of America."²⁵ There is, in fact, no public indication that the United States, despite its very close financial ties, tried to persuade Kuwait to cease any of its provocative actions against Iraq.

And neither Washington nor Kuwait seemed terribly concerned about heading off an invasion. In the week prior to the Iraqi attack, intelligence experts were telling the Bush administration with increasing urgency that an invasion of at least a part of Kuwait was likely. These forecasts "appear to have evoked little response from Government agencies."²⁶ During this period Bush was personally briefed and told the same by CIA Director William Webster, who showed the president satellite photos of the Iraqi troops massed near the Kuwaiti border. Bush, reportedly, showed little interest.²⁷ On 1 August, the CIA's National Intelligence Officer for Warning (sic) walked into the offices of the National Security Council's Middle East Staff and announced: "This is your final warning." Iraq, he said, would invade Kuwait by day's end, which they did. This, too, did not produce a rush to action.²⁸ Lastly, a Kuwaiti diplomat stationed in Iraq before the invasion sent many reports back to his own government warning of an Iraqi invasion; these were ignored as well. His last warning had specified the exact date (Kuwaiti time) of 2 August. After the war, when the diplomat held a press conference in Kuwait to discuss the government's ignoring of his warnings, it was broken up by a government minister and several army officers.²⁹

In July, while all these warnings were ostensibly being ignored, the Pentagon was busy running its computerized command post exercise (CPX), initiated in late 1989 specifically to explore possible responses to "the Iraqi threat"—which, in the new war plan 1002-90, had replaced "the Soviet threat"—the exercise dealing with an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait or Saudi Arabia or both.³⁰ At a war-games exercise at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., participants were also being asked to determine the most effective American response to a hypothetical invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.³¹ While at Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina, another war "game" involved identifying bombing targets in Iraq.³²

And during May and June, the Pentagon, Congress and defense contractors had been extensively briefed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University on a study of the future of conventional warfare, which concluded that the most likely war to erupt requiring an American military response was between Iraq and Kuwait or Saudi Arabia.³³

Another person who seems to have known something in advance was George Shultz, who was Reagan's Secretary of State and then returned to the Bechtel Corp., the multinational construction giant. In the spring of 1990, Schultz convinced the company to withdraw from a petrochemicals project in Iraq. "I said something is going to go very wrong in Iraq and blow up and if Bechtel were there it would get blown up too. So I told them to get out."³⁴

Finally, there was this disclosure in the *Washington Post*:

Since the invasion, highly classified U.S. intelligence assessments have determined that Saddam took U.S. statements of neutrality ... as a green light from the Bush administration for an invasion. One senior Iraqi military official ... has told the agency [CIA] that Saddam seemed to be sincerely surprised by the subsequent bellicose reaction.³⁵

On the other hand we have the statement from Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz, who was present at the Gaspic-Hussein meeting.

She didn't give a green light, and she didn't mention a red light because the question of our presence in Kuwait was not raised. ... And we didn't take it as a green light ... that if we intervened militarily in Kuwait, the Americans would not react. That was not true. We were expecting an American attack on the morning of the second of August.³⁶

But one must be skeptical about so casual an attitude toward an American attack. And these remarks, in effect denying that Iraq was played for a sucker, must be considered in light of the Iraqi government's stubborn refusal for some time to admit the harm done to the country by US bombing, and to downplay the number of their casualties.

The Bush administration's position was that Iraq's Arab neighbors, particularly Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, had urged the United States all along not to say or do anything that might provoke Saddam. Moreover, as Ambassador Gaspic emphasized, no one expected Hussein to take "all" of Kuwait, at most the parts he already claimed: the islands and the oilfield.

But, of course, Iraq had claimed "all" of Kuwait for a century.

The Invasion

When Iraq invaded, the time for mixed signals was over. Whatever devious plan, if any, George Bush may have been operating under, he now took full advantage of this window of opportunity. Within hours, if not minutes, of the border crossing, the United States began mobilizing, the White House condemned Iraq's action as a "blatant use of military aggression", demanded "the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces", and announced that it was "considering all options"; while George Bush was declaring that the invasion "underscores the need to go slowly in restructuring U.S. defense forces".³⁷

Before 24 hours had passed, an American naval task force loaded with fighter planes and bombers was on its way to the Persian Gulf, Bush was seeking to enlist world leaders for collective action against Iraq, all trade with Iraq had been embargoed, all Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets in the United States had been frozen; and the Senate had "decisively defeated efforts to end or freeze production of the B-2 Stealth bomber after proponents seized on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to bolster their case for the radar-eluding weapon"; the attack, they said, "demonstrates the continuing risk of war and the need for advanced weapons" ... Said Senator Dole: "If we needed Saddam Hussein to give us a wake-up call at least we can thank him for that."³⁸

"One day after using Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to help save the high-tech B-2 bomber, senators invoked the crisis again Friday to stave off the mothballing of two World War II-vintage battleships."³⁹

Within days, thousands of American troops and an armored brigade were stationed in Saudi Arabia. It was given the grand name of Operation Desert Shield, and a heightened appreciation for America's military needs was the prevailing order of the day ...

Less than a year after political changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union sent the defense industry reeling under the threat of dramatic cutbacks, executives and analysts say the crisis in the Persian gulf has provided military companies with a tiny glimmer of hope.

"If Iraq does not withdraw and things get messy, it will be good for the industry. You will hear less rhetoric from Washington about the peace dividend," said Michael Lauer, an analyst with Kidder, Peabody & Co. in New York.

"The possible beneficiaries" of the crisis, added the *Washington Post*, "cover the spectrum of companies in the defense industry."⁴⁰

By September, James Webb, former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Navy in the Reagan administration, felt moved to speak out:

The President should be aware that, while most Americans are laboring very hard to support him, a mood of cynicism is just beneath their veneer of respect. Many are claiming that the buildup is little more than a "Pentagon budget drill," designed to preclude cut-backs of an Army searching for a mission as bases in NATO begin to disappear.⁴¹

Remarkably, yet another cynical former Assistant Secretary of Defense was heard from. Lawrence Korb wrote that the deployment of troops to Saudi Arabia "seems driven more by upcoming budget battles on Capitol Hill than a potential battle against Saddam Hussein."⁴²

But can anything be too cynical for a congressman stalking re-election? By the beginning of October we could read:

The political backdrop of the U.S. military deployment in Saudi Arabia played a significant role in limiting defense cuts in Sunday's budget agreement, halting the military spending "free fall" that some analysts had predicted two months ago, budget aides said. Capitol Hill strategists said that Operation Desert Shield forged a major change in the political climate of the negotiations, forcing lawmakers who had been advocating deep cuts on the defensive.

The defense budget compromise ... would leave not only funding for Operation Desert Shield intact but would spare much of the funding that has been spent each year to prepare for a major Soviet onslaught on Western Europe.⁴³

Meanwhile, George Bush's approval rating had recovered. The first poll taken in August after the US engagement in the Gulf showed a jump to 74 percent, up from 60 percent in late July. However, it seems that the American public needs the rush of a regular patriotic-fix to maintain enthusiasm for the man occupying the White House, for by mid-October, due to Bush's extreme obfuscation of why the US was in the Persian Gulf, the rating they granted him was down to 56—since Bush's first month in office, it had never been lower; and it stayed close to that level until the citizenry's next patriotic-invasion-fix in January, as we shall see.⁴⁴

Prelude to War

As Iraq went about plundering Kuwait and turning it into Iraqi Province 19, the United States was building up its military presence in Saudi Arabia and the surrounding waters, and—employing a little coercion and history's most spectacular bribes—creating a "coalition" to support US-fostered United Nations resolutions and the coming war effort in a multitude of ways: a figleaf of "multinational" respectability, as Washington had created in Korea, Grenada and Afghanistan, for what was essentially an American mission, an American war. Egypt was forgiven many billions of dollars in debt, while Syria, China, Turkey, the Soviet Union, and other countries received military or economic aid and World

Bank and IMF loans, had sanctions lifted, or were given other perks, not only from the US but, under Washington's pressure, from Germany, Japan and Saudi Arabia. As an added touch, the Bush administration stopped criticizing the human rights record of any coalition member.⁴⁵

But Washington and the media were unhappy with Germany for not enthusiastically jumping on the war bandwagon. The Germans who only yesterday were condemned as jackbooted fascists marching through Poland, were now called "cowards" for marching for peace in large demonstrations.

Washington pushed a dozen resolutions through the Security Council condemning Iraq, imposing severe economic sanctions, and getting "authorization" to wage war. Only Cuba and Yemen voted against any of them. When Yemen's delegate received some applause for his negative vote on the key use-of-force resolution of 29 November, US Secretary of State Baker, who was presiding, said to his delegation: "I hope he enjoyed that applause, because this will turn out to be the most expensive vote he ever cast." The message was relayed to the Yemenis, and within days, the tiny Middle-East nation suffered a sharp reduction in US aid.⁴⁶

UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar acknowledged that "It was not a United Nations War. General Schwarzkopf [commander of the coalition forces] was not wearing a blue helmet."⁴⁷ The American control of the United Nations prompted British political commentator Edward Pearce to write that the UN "functions like an English medieval parliament: consulted, shown ceremonial courtesy, but mindful of divine prerogative, it mutters and gives assent."⁴⁸

The paramount issue in the United States soon became: how long should we wait for the sanctions to work before resorting to direct military force? The administration and its supporters insisted that they were giving Hussein every chance to find a peaceful, face-saving way out of the hole he had dug himself into. But the fact remained that each time President Bush made the Iraqi leader any kind of offer, it was laced with a deep insult, and never offered the slightest recognition that there might be any validity to Iraq's stated grievances.⁴⁹ Indeed, Bush had characterized the Iraqi invasion as being "without provocation."⁵⁰ The president's rhetoric became increasingly caustic and exaggerated; he was putting it on a personal level, demonizing Saddam, as he had done with Noriega, as Reagan had done with Qaddafi, as if these foreigners did not have pride or reason like Americans have. Here's how the *Los Angeles Times* viewed it:

Shortly after Iraq's invasion ... Bush carefully compared Iraq's aggression with the German aggression against Poland that launched World War II. But he stopped short of a personal comparison of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein with Adolf Hitler. That caution went out the window last month, when Bush not only compared Hussein to Hitler but also threatened Nuremberg-style war crime trials. Then, last week, Bush went further, briefly maintaining that the Iraqi leader is worse than Hitler because the Germans never held U.S. citizens as "human shields" at military sites.

After this trivializing of the Holocaust, Bush went on to warn that any acceptance of uncontrolled aggression "could be world war tomorrow". Said one of his own officials: "Got to get his rhetoric under control."⁵¹

Saddam Hussein could not help but soon realize that by seizing all of Kuwait—not to mention sacking and pillaging it—he had bitten off substantially more than he could chew. In early August and again in October, he signaled his willingness to pull Iraqi forces out of the country in return for sole control of the Rumaila oil field, guaranteed access to the Persian Gulf, the lifting of sanctions, and resolution of the oil price/production problem.⁵²

He also began to release some of the many foreigners who had had the misfortune of being in Iraq or Kuwait at the wrong time. In mid-December the last of them was freed. Earlier that month, Iraq began laying out a new Iraqi-Kuwait border, which might have meant a renunciation of its claim of Kuwait being a part of Iraq, though its meaning was not clear.⁵³ And in early January, as we shall see, his strongest peace signal was reported.

The Bush administration chose to not respond in a positive manner to any of these moves. After Saddam's August offer, the State Department "categorically" denied it had even been made; then the White House confirmed it.⁵⁴ A later congressional summary of the matter stated:

The Iraqis apparently believed that having invaded Kuwait, they would get everyone's attention, negotiate improvements to their economic situation, and pull out. ... a diplomatic solution satisfactory to the interests of the United States may well have been possible since the earliest days of the invasion.

The Bush administration, said the congressional paper, wanted to avoid seeming in any way to reward the invasion. But a retired Army officer, who was acting as a middle man in the August discussions, concluded afterward that the peace offer "was already moving against policy".⁵⁵

After a certain point in the American military buildup, could the United States have given peace a chance even if it wanted to? Former Assistant Defense Secretary Lawrence Korb observed in late November that all the components of the defense establishment were pushing to get in on the action, to prove their worth, to prove that there was still a need for them, to assure their continued funding ...

By mid-January ... the United States will have over 400,000 troops in the Gulf (it turned out to be over 500,000) from all five armed services (yes, even the Coast Guard is there). This is about 100,000 more troops than we had in Europe at any time during the Cold War. The Army will eventually have eight divisions on the ground in Saudi Arabia, twice as many as it had in Europe. ... two-thirds of the entire Marine Corps' combat power [will be there] ... The Navy will deploy six of its 14 aircraft carrier battle groups, two of its four battleships and one of its two amphibious groups ... The Air Force already has fighters from nine of its 24 active tactical wings ... as well as bombers ... Even the combat reserves are scheduled to be sent ... The reserve lobby recognized that their future funding may be jeopardized if their units do not get involved. ... Just as every service wants to be involved in the deployment, will not each want a piece of the real action?

And would the military high-command be able to resist the pressures from each service, Korb wondered. The Navy, which had moved some its carriers into the narrow and dangerous waters of the Gulf just to be closer to the action? The Marines, who might want to demonstrate the continuing viability of amphibious warfare by staging an assault on the coast? And could the Army lay back while air power carried the day?⁵⁶ [They couldn't, and it prolonged the war.]

The US military and President Bush would have their massive show of power, their super-hi-tech real war games, and no signals from Iraq or any peacenik would be allowed to spoil it. *Fortune* magazine, in an ingenuous paean to Bush's fortitude, later summed up the period before the war began thusly:

The President and his men worked overtime to quash freelance peacemakers in the Arab world, France, and the Soviet Union who threatened to give Saddam a face-saving way out of the box Bush was building. Over and over, Bush repeated the mantra: no negotiations, no deals, no face-saving, no rewards, and specifically, no linkage to a Palestinian peace conference [a point raised

by Iraq on several occasions].⁵⁷

On 29 November, the UN Security Council authorized the use of "all necessary means" to compel Iraq to vacate Kuwait if it didn't do so by 15 January. Over Christmas, we have learned, George Bush pored over every one of the 82 pages of Amnesty International's agonizing report of Iraqi arrests, rape, and torture in Kuwait. After the holiday, he told his staff that his conscience was clear: "It's black and white, good vs. evil. The man has to be stopped."⁵⁸

It's not reported whether Bush ever read any of Amnesty's many reports of the period on the equally repulsive violations of human rights and the human spirit perpetrated by Washington's allies in Guatemala, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Angola and Nicaragua. If he did, the literature apparently had little effect, for he continued to support these forces. Amnesty had also been reporting about Iraq's extreme brutality for more than a decade, and only a few months before the August invasion had testified about these abuses before the Senate, but none of this had filled George Bush with righteous indignation.

As the 15 January deadline neared, the world held its breath. Was it possible that in five and a half months no way could have been found to avoid inflicting another ghastly war upon this sad planet? On the 11th, Arab diplomats at the UN said that they had received reports from Algeria, Jordan and Yemen, all on close terms with Iraq, that Saddam planned an initiative soon after the 15th that would express his willingness "in principle" to pull out of Kuwait in return for international guarantees that Iraq would not be attacked, an international conference to address Palestinian grievances, and negotiations on disputes between Iraq and Kuwait. The Iraqi leader, the diplomats said, wanted to wait a day or two after the deadline had passed to demonstrate that he had not been intimidated.

For the United States, with half-a-million troops poised for battle in Saudi Arabia, this was unacceptable. Saddam Hussein will "pass the brink at midnight, January 15", said Secretary of State Baker, and could not expect to save himself by offering to pull out of Kuwait after that time.⁵⁹

The multiple explanations of George Bush

Our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom, and the freedom of friendly countries around the world will suffer if control of the world's great oil reserves fell in the hands of that one man, Saddam Hussein.⁶⁰

Thus spaketh George Herbert Walker Bush to the people of America. As Theodore Draper observed:

These reasons were both mundane and implausible. That "jobs" should have been mentioned first suggested that Bush, as in a domestic political campaign, sought primarily to appeal to the voters' pocketbook. It was, however, a peculiarly crass reason to go to war, if it came to that, halfway around the world.⁶¹

During the entire lengthy buildup to the war, during the war, after the war, no one was sure they understood why Bush had intervened in the Persian Gulf, and then taken the United States into war. Congressmen, journalists, editors, plain citizens kept asking, almost pleading at times, for the president to clearly and unambiguously explain his motivations,

and without contradicting what he had said the previous week. (Economists and think-tank intellectuals found it professionally awkward to admit their uncertainty, and thus wound up writing lots of authoritative-sounding mumbo-jumbo.)

The prevailing bewilderment prompted the *Wall Street Journal* to assemble a group of "voters" to discuss the issues. "They are confused about what's happening and are crying out for more information," reported the newspaper about the participants. "And they are unsettled by the perception that Mr. Bush seems to be switching his reasoning day to day." Said one participant: "So far it's been like David Letterman's Top 10 Reasons for Being There. There's a different story every week or so."⁶²

Taking place in the Persian Gulf, as it all did, of course lent itself to the belief that the liquid gold had a lot, if not everything, to do with the conflict. This, however, is a thesis which cannot be supported by the immediate circumstances. Supply was not a problem—the Energy Department acknowledged that there was not an oil shortage, and Saudi Arabia and other countries increased their production to more than make up for the oil lost from Iraq and Kuwait, which, in any event, together accounted for only about five percent of American consumption. There was a whole world ready to supply more oil, from Mexico to Russia, as well as large untapped American sources. This indicates the difficulties faced by any single producer—Hussein or anyone else—who might try to control or dominate the market; which in turn raises the question: what would such a country do with all the oil, drink it? By December it was reported that "OPEC is pumping oil at the highest levels since early summer, and unless a war in the Middle East disrupts supplies, there's a prospect again of an oil glut and sharply lower prices."⁶³

As to the price of oil: did oilmen George Bush and James Baker and the depressed American oil states want it to go up or down? A case could be made for either hypothesis. (In January 1990 the US had secretly urged Saddam to try to raise the OPEC oil price to \$25 a barrel.)⁶⁴ And how easily could Washington control it either way in a chaotic situation? As it is, oil prices fluctuate on a regular basis, often sharply—between 1984 and 1986, for example, the price of a barrel of oil fell from around \$30 to less than \$10, despite the ongoing Iraq-Iran war which cut into the production of both countries.

However, this analysis of the immediate circumstances does not take into consideration the formidable and continual influence of the "mystique of oil" upon the thinking of American policy makers. If Bush was looking for a "crisis" to impress upon the congressional mind the enduring danger of the world we live in, then getting involved in a conflict between two major oil producing countries would certainly generate the desired effect much more readily than if he had seized upon Bolivia attacking Paraguay, or Ghana occupying Ivory Coast.

The president's remark about the American way of life and everyone's freedom reflects the life-and-death seriousness that he and other policy makers publicly ascribe to oil. (What these men really believe and feel in each instance is something we are not privy to.) Earlier in the year, CIA Director William Webster had told Congress that oil "will continue to have a major impact on U.S. interests" because "Western dependence on Persian Gulf oil will rise dramatically" in the next decade; while General Schwarzkopf, who had lifelong ties to the Middle East, testified:

Mideast oil is the West's lifeblood. It fuels us today, and being 77 percent of the Free World's proven oil reserves, is going to fuel us when the rest of the world has run dry. ... It is estimated that within 20 to 40 years the U.S. will have virtually depleted its economically available oil reserves, while the Persian Gulf region will still have at least 100 years of proven oil reserves.⁶⁵

It was actually 69 percent at the time, and since the Soviet Union has joined the "Free World", it's even less.⁶⁶ It should also be noted that the good general's prediction for the

US is rather speculative, and that the term "economically available" is a reference to the fact that US domestic oil reserves are more costly to exploit than those in the Gulf. But this only makes it a profit problem, not an oil-supply problem. Moreover, the vast potential residing in alternative energy sources must be included in the equation.

At this time, the United States—seemingly in a panic about danger to the Gulf oil supply—was receiving about 11 percent of its oil from the region, while Japan, which got 62 percent of its oil, and Europe which got 27 percent from there, were hardly stirred up at all, except for Margaret Thatcher who foamed at the mouth when it came to Saddam and former colony Iraq.⁶⁷ Germany's figure was about 35 percent, yet both Bonn and Tokyo had to have their arms twisted by Washington to support the war effort. The two countries may, in fact, have been leery about helping the United States acquire greater influence and control over the region's oil.

Official Washington's embrace of the oil mystique has given rise to a long-standing policy, expressed as follows by political analyst Noam Chomsky:

It's been a leading, driving doctrine of U.S. foreign policy since the 1940s that the vast and unparalleled energy resources of the Gulf region will be effectively dominated by the United States and its clients, and, crucially, that no independent, indigenous force will be permitted to have a substantial influence on the administration of oil production and price.⁶⁸

This has not always meant the use of force. In 1973, when OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, used substantial price increases and an oil boycott in an attempt to force Washington to influence Israel into withdrawing from its recently occupied territories, the United States did not launch, or even threaten, an invasion. The matter was resolved through extensive diplomacy without a shot being fired. What saved the OPEC states from a violent fate may have been the combination of the Vietnam war still hanging heavy in the air in Washington, and the Nixon administration on the verge of being swallowed up by Watergate.

In addition to issuing several dire warnings early on about the invasion's severe economic consequences for the United States, which never came to pass, Bush warned of an even worse fate if Iraq took over Saudi Arabia. The danger-to-Saudi Arabia explanation was a non-starter. Iraq never had any designs on Saudi Arabia, as a simple look at a map makes clear. The Iraqis have a long border with that country; they didn't have to go through Kuwait to invade the Saudis; and even if they did, they could have moved into Saudi Arabia virtually unopposed during the three weeks following their takeover of Kuwait, as General Colin Powell later conceded.⁶⁹ Bush administration officials in fact admitted that neither the CIA nor the Defense Intelligence Agency thought it probable that Iraq would invade Saudi Arabia.⁷⁰ The Saudis didn't think so either, until Defense Secretary Cheney flew to Riyadh on 5 August and personally told King Fahd that his country stood in great potential danger and desperately needed a very large infusion of American military forces to defend it.⁷¹

Bush backed away from the oil rationale when critics charged that he was only trying to protect the interests of the oil industry. In October, he was interrupted while making a speech by some people calling out: "Mr. President, bring our troops home from Saudi Arabia! No blood for oil!" To which George Bush replied—as the hecklers were hustled out—"You know, some people never get the word. The fight isn't about oil. The fight is about naked aggression that [we] will not stand." A month later, if not sooner, the president again began to play the oil card, tying America's economic security to that of Saudi Arabia. Shortly afterward, he returned to "the devastating damage being done every day" to the US and international economies by the disruption of oil markets.⁷²

As to Iraq's naked aggression—a remark requiring selective-memory skills of a high order coming from a government that held all modern records for international aggression, naked or otherwise, and from a man who, less than a year before, had nakedly invaded Panama—both Syria and Israel had invaded Lebanon and still occupied large portions of that country, Israel bombarding Beirut mercilessly in the process, without a threat of war emanating from Washington. Saddam Hussein, perhaps wondering when they had changed the rules, said to the United States: “You are talking about an aggressive Iraq ... if Iraq was aggressive during the Iran war, why then did you speak with [us] then?”⁷³

During Iraq's epic struggle against the Ayatollah Khomeini, the United States of course had more than spoken to Baghdad. Washington—choosing Iraq as the lesser evil against Shiite extremism—was responsible for huge amounts of weaponry, military training, sophisticated technology, satellite-photo intelligence, and billions of dollars reaching a needy Hussein, who was also lavishly supported by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, they being concerned that Iran's anti-monarchist sentiments might spread to their own realms. Indeed, there is evidence that Washington encouraged Iraq to attack Iran and ignite the war in the first place.⁷⁴ And during this period of American support of Hussein, he was certainly the same odious, repressive, beastly thug as when he later came under American moralistic rhetorical fire. Similarly, absent Washington's prodding, the UN did not condemn Iraq's invasion, nor did it impose any sanctions or lay down any demands.

Even as it officially banned arms sales to either combatant, the US secretly provided weapons to both. The other *bête noire* of the region, the Ayatollah, received American arms and military intelligence on Iraq during the war, so as to enhance the ability of the two countries to inflict maximum devastation upon each other and stunt their growth as strong Middle-East nations.

In contrast to Iraq-the-enemy now were the two “allies” most involved, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Although Washington did not make a big thing about the “virtue” of either country, official policy was always that the United States had a principled commitment to defending the former and liberating the latter. And they were not a pretty pair. Saudi Arabia regularly featured extreme religious intolerance, extrajudicial arrest, torture, and flogging.⁷⁵ It also practiced gender apartheid and systematic repression of women, virtual slavery for its foreign workers, stoning of adulterers, and amputation of the hands of thieves. US chaplains stationed in the country were asked to remove crosses and Stars of David from their uniforms and call themselves “morale officers”.⁷⁶

Kuwait, oddly enough, was virulently anti-American in its foreign policy.⁷⁷ Though more socially enlightened than Saudi Arabia (but less than Iraq), it was nonetheless run by one family as an elitist oligarchy, which closed down the parliament in 1986, had no political parties, and forbade criticism of the ruling emir; no more than 20 percent of the population possessed any political rights at all. After the country had been returned to its rightful dictators, it behaved very brutally toward its large foreign-worker population, holding them without charge or trial for several months; death squads executed scores of people. “Torture of political detainees was routine and widespread,” said Amnesty International, and at least 80 “disappeared” in custody. The targets of the campaign, which took place in the presence of thousands of US troops, were primarily those who were accused of collaboration with the Iraqis, although this was something most of them had no choice in, and those who were involved in a nascent pro-democracy movement. Additionally, some 400 Iraqis were forced to return to Iraq despite fears that they would be harmed or executed there.⁷⁸

The elite of the region did not display much gratitude for all that George Bush said America was doing for them. Said one Gulf official: “You think I want to send my teen-

aged son to die for Kuwait?" He chuckled and added, "We have our white slaves from America to do that." A Saudi teacher saw it this way: "The American soldiers are a new kind of foreign worker here. We have Pakistanis driving taxis and now we have Americans defending us." Explaining the absence of expressed gratitude on the part of Gulf leaders, a Yemeni diplomat said: "A lot of the Gulf rulers simply do not feel that they have to thank the people they've hired to do their fighting for them."⁷⁹ Apart from anything else, people in the Arab world were very sensitive about the killing of Muslims and Arabs by foreigners, as well as foreign military presence on Arab soil, a reminder of a century of Western, white colonialism.

Bush also warned that Iraq posed a nuclear threat. True enough. But so did the United States, France, Israel, and every other country that already had nuclear weapons. Iraq, on the other hand, according to American, British and Israeli experts, was five to ten years away from being able to build and use nuclear weapons.⁸⁰ It's unlikely that the president himself believed there was any such danger. His warning came only after a poll showed that a plurality of Americans felt that preventing Iraq from acquiring nuclear weapons was the most persuasive argument for going to war.⁸¹

One factor not mentioned by Bush as a reason for the intervention, but which, in fact, probably played an important role, was the Pentagon's desire to make or strengthen agreements with Gulf-region countries for an ongoing US military presence; and considerable progress along these lines appears to have been made.⁸² General Schwarzkopf had earlier told Congress that "U.S. presence" in the Gulf is one of the three pillars of overall military strategy, along with security assistance and combined exercises, all of which lead to all-important "access", which one can take as a euphemism for influence and control.⁸³ After the war, the existence of a network of military-communication-systems "superbases" in Saudi Arabia was revealed. Ten years in the building by the United States, in maximum secrecy, its cost of almost \$200 billion paid for by the Saudis, its use during the Gulf War indispensable, it may explain why Bush moved so quickly to defend Saudi Arabia, albeit against a non-existent threat.⁸⁴

"Stop me before I kill again!"

Josef Stalin studied for the priesthood ... Adolf Hitler was a vegetarian and anti-smoking ... Herman Goering, while his Luftwaffe rained death upon Europe, kept a sign in his office that read: "He who tortures animals wounds the feelings of the German people." ... this fact Elie Wiesel called the greatest discovery of the war: that Adolf Eichmann was cultured, read deeply, played the violin ... Charles Manson was a staunch anti-vivisectionist ...

About Panama, as we have seen, after he ordered the bombing, George Bush said that his "heart goes out to the families who have died in Panama." And when he was asked, "Was it really worth it to send people to their death for this? To get Noriega?", he replied, "... every human life is precious, and yet I have to answer, yes, it has been worth it."

About Iraq, Bush said: "People say to me: 'How many lives? How many lives can you expend?' Each one is precious."⁸⁵

Just before ordering the start of the war against Iraq in January, Bush prayed, as tears ran down his cheeks. "I think," he later said, "that, like a lot of others who had positions of responsibility in sending someone else's kids to war, we realize that in prayer what mattered is how it might have seemed to God."⁸⁶

God, one surmises, might have asked George Bush about the kids of Iraq. And the adults. And, in a testy, rather un-godlike manner, might have cracked: "So stop wasting all the precious lives already!"

Tanks pulling plows moved alongside trenches, firing into the Iraqi soldiers inside the trenches as the plows covered them with great mounds of sand. Thousands were buried, dead, wounded, or alive.⁸⁷

US forces fired on Iraqi soldiers after the Iraqis had raised white flags of surrender. The navy commander who gave the order to fire was not punished.⁸⁸

The bombing destroyed two operational nuclear reactors in Iraq. It was the first time ever that live reactors had been bombed, and may well have set a dangerous precedent. Hardly more than a month had passed since the United Nations, under whose mandate the United States was supposedly operating, had passed a resolution reaffirming its "prohibition of military attacks on nuclear facilities" in the Middle East.⁸⁹ Sundry chemical, including chemical-warfare, facilities and alleged biological-warfare plants, were also targets of American bombs. General Schwarzkopf then announced that they had been very careful in selecting the means of destruction of these as well as the nuclear facilities, and only "after a lot of advice from a lot of very, very prominent scientists," and were "99.9 percent" certain that there was "no contamination".⁹⁰ However, European scientists and environmentalists detected traces of chemical-weapons agents that the bombings had released; as well as chemical fallout and toxic vapors, also released by the air attacks, that were killing scores of civilians.⁹¹

The American government and media had a lot of fun with an obvious piece of Iraqi propaganda—the claim that a bombed biological warfare facility had actually been a baby food factory. But it turned out that the government of New Zealand and various business people from there had had intimate contact with the factory and categorically confirmed that it had indeed been a baby food factory.⁹²

The United States also made wide use of advanced depleted uranium (DU) shells, rockets and missiles, leaving tons of radioactive and toxic rubble in Kuwait and Iraq. The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, in an April 1991 secret report, warned that "if DU gets in the food chain or water this will create potential health problems." The uranium-238 used to make the weapons can cause cancer and genetic defects if inhaled. Uranium is also chemically toxic, like lead. Inhalation causes heavy metal poisoning or kidney or lung damage. Iraqi soldiers, pinned down in their bunkers during assaults, were almost certainly poisoned by radioactive dust clouds.⁹³

The civilian population suffered in the extreme from the relentless bombing. Middle East Watch, the human-rights organization, has documented numerous instances of the bombing of apartment houses, crowded markets, bridges filled with pedestrians and civilian vehicles, and a busy central bus station, usually in broad daylight, without a government building or military target of any kind in sight, not even an anti-aircraft gun.⁹⁴

On 12 February, the Pentagon announced that "Virtually everything militarily ... is either destroyed or combat ineffective."⁹⁵ Yet the next day there was a deliberate bombardment of a civilian air raid shelter that took the lives of as many as 1,500 civilians, a great number of them women and children; this was followed by significant bombardment of various parts of Iraq on a daily basis for the remaining two weeks of the war, including what was reported for the 18th in *The Guardian* of London as "one of [the coalition's] most ferocious attacks on the centre of Baghdad."⁹⁶ What was the purpose of the bombing campaign after the 12th?

The United States said it thought that the shelter was for VIPs, which it had been at one time, and claimed that it was also being used as a military communications center, but neighborhood residents insisted that the constant aerial surveillance overhead had to observe the daily flow of women and children into the shelter.⁹⁷ Western reporters said they could find no signs of military use.⁹⁸

An American journalist in Jordan who viewed unedited videotape footage of the disaster, which the American public never saw, wrote:

They showed scenes of incredible carnage. Nearly all the bodies were charred into blackness; in some cases the heat had been so great that entire limbs were burned off. ... Rescue workers collapsed in grief, dropping corpses; some rescuers vomited from the stench of the still-smoldering bodies.⁹⁹

Said White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater after the bombing of the shelter: It was "a military target ... We don't know why civilians were at this location, but we do know that Saddam Hussein does not share our value in the sanctity of life."¹⁰⁰ Said George Bush, when criticized for the bombing campaign: "I am concerned about the suffering of innocents."¹⁰¹

The crippling of the electrical system multiplied geometrically the daily living horror of the people of Iraq. As a modern country, Iraq was reliant on electrical power for essential services such as water purification and distribution, sewage treatment, the operation of hospitals and medical laboratories, and agricultural production. Bomb damage, exacerbated by shortages attributable to the UN/US embargo, dropped electricity to three or four percent of its pre-war level; the water supply fell to five percent, oil production was negligible, the food distribution system was devastated, the sewage system collapsed, flooding houses with raw sewage, and gastroenteritis and extreme malnutrition were prevalent.¹⁰²

Two months after the war ended, a public health team from Harvard University visited health facilities in several Iraqi cities. Based on their research, the group projected, conservatively, that "at least 170,000 children under five years of age will die in the coming year from the delayed effects" of the destruction of electrical power, fuel and transportation; "a large increase in deaths among the rest of the population is also likely. The immediate cause of death in most cases will be water-borne infectious disease in combination with severe malnutrition."¹⁰³ One member of both the Harvard group and a later research group which visited Iraq testified before Congress that "Children play in the raw sewage which is backed up in the streets ... Two world renowned child psychologists stated that the children in Iraq were 'the most traumatized children of war ever described'."¹⁰⁴

Despite repeated statements by American authorities about taking the greatest of care to hit only military targets, using "smart bombs" and laser-guided bombs, and "surgical strikes", we now know that this was little more than an exercise in propaganda, just as referring to this suffering as "collateral damage" was. After the war, the Pentagon admitted that non-military facilities had been extensively targeted for political reasons.¹⁰⁵ Comprehensive post-World War II government studies had concluded that "the dread of disease and the hardships imposed by the lack of sanitary facilities were bound to have a demoralizing effect upon the civilian population", and that there was a "reliable and striking" correlation between the disruption of public utilities and the willingness of the German population to accept unconditional surrender.¹⁰⁶

In the Iraqi case there was a further motivation: to encourage desperate citizens to rise up and overthrow Saddam Hussein. Said a US Air Force planner:

Big picture, we wanted to let people know, "Get rid of this guy and we'll be more than happy to assist in rebuilding. We're not going to tolerate Saddam Hussein or his regime. Fix that, and we'll fix your electricity."¹⁰⁷

Those who tried to escape the bombing horror in Iraq by fleeing to Jordan were subjected to air attacks on the highway between Baghdad and the Jordanian border—buses, taxis, and private cars were repeatedly assaulted, literally without mercy, by rockets, cluster bombs and machine guns; usually in broad daylight, the targets clearly civilian, with luggage piled on top, with no military vehicles or structures anywhere to be seen, surrounded by open desert, the attacking planes flying extremely close to the ground ... busloads of passengers incinerated, and when people left the vehicles and fled for their lives, planes often swooped down upon them firing away. ... "You're killing us!" cried a Jordanian taxi driver to an American reporter. "You're shooting us everywhere we move! Whenever they see a car or truck, the planes dive out of the sky and chase us. They don't care who we are or what we are. They just shoot." His cry was repeated by hundreds of others. ... The US military, it appears, felt that any vehicle, including those filled with families, might be a cover for carrying military fuel or other war materiel, some perhaps related to Scud missiles; and even carrying civilian fuel was a violation of the embargo.¹⁰⁸

At the very end, when the hungry, wounded, sick, exhausted, disoriented, demoralized, ragged, sometimes barefoot Iraqi army, which had scarcely shown any desire to fight, left Kuwait and headed toward Basra in southern Iraq, Saddam tried to salvage a pathetic scrap of dignity by announcing that his army was withdrawing because of "special circumstances". But even this was too much for George Bush to grant. "Saddam's most recent speech is an outrage," declared the president, forcefully. "He is not withdrawing. His defeated forces are retreating. He is trying to claim victory in the midst of a rout."

This could not be permitted. Thus it was that American air power in all its majesty swept down upon the road to Basra, bombing, rocketing, strafing everything that moved in the long column of Iraqi military and civilian vehicles, troops and refugees. The nice, god-fearing, wholesome American GIs, soon to be welcomed as heroes at home, had a ball ... "we toasted him" ... "we hit the jackpot" ... "a turkey shoot" ... "This morning was bumper-to-bumper. It was the road to Daytona Beach at spring break ... and spring break's over."

Again and again, as loudspeakers on the carrier Ranger blared Rossini's "William Tell Overture", the rousing theme song of the Lone Ranger, one strike force after another took off with their load of missiles and anti-tank and anti-personnel Rockeye cluster bombs, which explode into a deadly rain of armor-piercing bomblets; land-based B-52s joined in with 1000-pound bombs. ... "It's not going to take too many more days until there's nothing left of them." ... "shooting fish in a barrel" ... "basically just sitting ducks" ... "There's just nothing like it. It's the biggest Fourth of July show you've ever seen, and to see those tanks just 'boom,' and more stuff just keeps spewing out of them ... they just become white hot. It's wonderful."

The British daily, *The Independent*, although it supported the war, denounced the glee with which the Americans carried out the barrage, saying it "turned the stomachs" and was "sickening to witness a routed army being shot in the back".¹⁰⁹

A BBC Radio reporter summed up the attack by asking: "What threat could these pathetic remnants of Saddam Hussein's beaten army have posed? Wasn't it obvious that the people of the convoy would have given themselves up willingly without the application of such ferocious weaponry?"¹¹⁰

And all this against a foe that had for five days been calling for a cease-fire.

But heaven forbid that the Americans should offend any of the people of the Gulf. Thus it

was that GIs were taught things like never to use their left hand when offering food or drink, for that hand is traditionally reserved for sanitary functions; and the proper way to beckon an Arab with one's hand and fingers, so as not to confuse it with beckoning a dog.¹¹¹

We also have the story of the American pilot who, during an earlier bombing operation, stuffed into his identification packet a \$20 bill and a note written in Arabic, Farsi, Turkish and English. It said: "I am an American and do not speak your language. I bear no malice toward your people." Then he was off, roaring through the skies toward Iraq with his payload of bombs.¹¹²

Did the GIs bear any malice toward their female soldiers-in-arms? One post-war study found that more than half the women who served in the Gulf War felt that they had been sexually harassed verbally, while eight percent (almost 3,000) had been the objects of attempted or completed sexual assaults.¹¹³

And immediately after George Bush ordered the bombing to begin, his rating with the American people jumped for joy: an 82 percent approval rating, the highest ever in his two years in office, higher even than after his invasion of Panama.¹¹⁴ One journalist later noted:

One minute of nightly truth on this "popular" war would have changed American public opinion. ... if for just 60 seconds the 6 o'clock Monday news had shown 5,000 Iraqi soldiers with hideous phosphorous burns that alter human anatomy followed by 60 seconds Tuesday night of the slaughter at the Baghdad bomb shelter ... What if on Wednesday Americans had seen 10,000 Iraqi soldiers incinerated by American high-tech weapons?¹¹⁵

Ever since the Iraqi invasion in August, and despite the many confusing soundbites and heavy rhetoric emanating from the White House, one thing seemed clear enough: if Iraq agreed to withdraw from Kuwait, military attacks against it would not take place, or would cease, whatever other punishment or sanctions might continue. Thus, it seemed like a ray of hope, however late, when the Soviet Union succeeded on 21-22 February 1991 in getting Iraq to agree to withdraw completely the day after a cease-fire of all military operations went into effect. The agreement came with specified timetables and monitoring.¹¹⁶

George Bush refused to offer a cease-fire, *per se*. He could not even bring himself to mention the word in his replies. All he would say was that the retreating Iraqi forces would not be attacked (which turned out to be untrue), and that the coalition "will exercise restraint." Saddam could have chosen to take this as the cease-fire, but he was as proud and stubborn as George.

The point Bush emphasized the most during these two crucial days, as well as earlier, was that Iraq must comply with all 12 UN resolutions. In evaluating Bush's legalistic demands, it should be kept in mind that the policy and practice of the American war had repeatedly violated the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter, the Hague Conventions, the Geneva Conventions, the Nuremberg Tribunal, the protocols of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the US Constitution, amongst other cherished documents.¹¹⁷

In the end, Bush gave Saddam 24 hours to begin withdrawing from Kuwait, period. When the time came and went, the United States launched the long-expected ground war, while the aerial attacks—including the carnage on the road to Basra—continued until the end of the month.

Said Vitaly Ignatenko, a spokesman for Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev: "It seems that President Gorbachev cares more about saving the lives of American soldiers than George Bush does."¹¹⁸