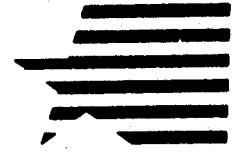


Chapter 7 RETURN ENGAGEMENT: THE 1980s



We began with the question of learning and arrived at the problem of repetition. In the last chapter I proposed a solution that three principal features of American foreign policy are jointly produced for this class of problems, by entrapment within a system of dramatic sensibility inherent to the world of power-oriented men (especially of upwardly mobile ambition) which blocks learning and repeats despite failure. It creates as *symptoms* of its presence characteristic patterns of policy, of misjudgment and misperception and of collectively self-defeating behavior within the policy process. It is a system of motivational imperative yielding compassionless policies, vicious in their consequences, afflicted by cyclical inattention and without rational long-term follow-through, lacking integrity with the ideals it professes; and a system which at least once has threatened America and the world with a nuclear war.¹

My discussion of this strongly imagined system, an intense experience of living within a world of larger-than-life drama, was not directed at the level of individual psychology, although individual psychology certainly sustains it, and individual personality variations can be consequential in their effect. The root cause is the mind's own construction of the government of a powerful state, created and experienced domestically as a solid presence above individuals' sense of themselves. Conventional political socialization catalyzes the mind to create a sensibility of larger-than-life drama and thus, making "high" office and leadership of such a drama especially attractive to those with upwardly mobile ambition, aids selectively to locate in the national security world a disproportionate number of men (and, occasionally, women) who participate to an unusually strong, vivid, and sincere degree in such a drama and also – for fear of exclusion – mold their talents and constrain their better instincts to its service.²

This system, I suggest, is the cause of diverse observations which otherwise appear unconnected. Political scientists have noted that cold-blooded (allegedly "rational") calculations of international and domestic power determine policy. Psychologists have puzzled at how error-prone and ineffective the results have been. Organizational theorists have been impressed by the lack of rational, long-term plans and policy integration and by the power-

oriented gamesmanship which afflicts the national security decision process. As we have seen, each set of different characterizations is right. I suggest they have a common source, with rational calculation ability in a peripheral role and applied to motives and dramatic necessities, designations of costs and benefits, a sense of limited personal responsibility, and assessments of reality known (intuitively) via the overdramatized imagining that characterizes this shared responsibility.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND UNREFINED IMAGINING

I will make three further observations concerning the creation of American foreign policy primarily via this second, imagination determined, track, and then move to the present day.

First, in debate about Central American policy, the American political system has been in a situation where a disjunction between the domestic character of government and the foreign policy it produces, in local reality to Central America, tends to block realistic political discussion. To most Americans (especially to the now-frayed Democratic coalition), government has been, domestically, a progressive force. Thus, the imagery of U.S. policies in Central America as repressive and indecent (and an agitated expression of values most Americans, themselves, would reject if their government were to adopt them domestically) is the reverse of popular experience. There is a disjunction between frames of reference; in America, one cannot readily play the role of a trusted and responsible leader and discuss America's foreign policy by a seemingly radical characterization.

Second, dramatic images and simple themes dictated by the instinctive dynamics of the mind are common in popular debates.³ But two distinctive features of the American political system allow simple a priori images to be sustained in its foreign affairs.

1. The American political system is not designed to assure cognitively or emotionally complex learning.⁴ Political institutions were reasonably well-constructed to solve domestic conflicts based on interest group politics; simple *agreement* among powerful domestic actors that a solution is fair, or at least one they can live with, is, de facto, a viable political solution. But in America's international relations, no feedback system is well connected to introduce realism into the internal political process: neither potential victims in other nations, nor potential beneficiaries, are voters. Politicians who rely upon standard political signals, the preferences and votes of their domestic constituents, do not find a reliable guide to produce satisfactory solutions to foreign problems.

2. An era of fortuitous success in Western European policy has obscured the general weakness of American foreign policy learning concerning other areas of the world. America's insular political process can produce effective

policy attentive to foreign realities when unofficial mechanisms, and a match between political cultures, sustain realism: Both conditions have been available for the localized arena of American policy toward Western Europe since World War II. These decisions have more typically reflected the actions of men who were well-informed about the nations and situations they faced. There has been a foreign policy establishment, a network of influential men based in New York and affiliated with the Council on Foreign Relations, which created and sustained such policies, whose members could be regularly recruited to policy positions, and who supported one another while they served in office. Tied by cultural history and ideals, the prominence of European history and languages in schooling, the experiences of family vacations, the daily ties of international financial and business relationships, the members of this European-centered network linked knowledge to political influence and to foreign policy.

The categories and theories of America's political culture also generalized successfully to this vital Western European theatre (and their use was reinforced). Western Europe is a morally and politically simpler area of the world for Americans to understand: decision makers could pursue American security interests, work through established governments which are democratic (and in countries whose elites wish them to be), and champion freedom, stability, and economic growth in the same coherent package without troubling trade-offs. The Marshall Plan reconstruction of Western European economies after World War II and the NATO alliance against the Soviet Union effectively served American security, political stability, economic growth, and other shared values. But such an American template, transferred elsewhere, does not organize realistic viewpoints and choices for successful policies in areas of the world with other principles of cultural and political organization; instead, it has produced policies impeded by irrelevant categories.⁴

Third, critics typically argue that American decision makers have not *understood* the local nature of conflicts. My conclusion is that these critics are incorrect and misdiagnose the problem. Local ignorance does not continue because decision makers were unaware of this argument or inadvertently failed to produce a policy process to give them this understanding. They *chose* to establish policy at a sufficiently "high" level of political "sophistication" at which there is no *need* – and little use for – detailed, local knowledge. Given a global political drama, and the top-down problem of a revolutionary challenge to established governments (especially linked in *any* way to the Soviet Union or Marxist ideological formulas), the policy of the drama – containment or elimination – is instinctive: America, on a world stage, plays a game of yardage and territory, a drama of will, to be won by America or its challengers. Whether there is a 10% Communist causal component or origin of arms, or a 70% component, the territory is eventually won or lost in toto. Thus, it is not only irrelevant but *dangerous*, in a world of ambitious political

actors, to become embroiled by such local considerations. These, in a cloud of complexity, would detract attention from the larger drama. That the resulting policies run aground in local realities is America's risk, a fate inherent to the second track of imagination-based policy.

I now turn to America's return engagement in the 1980s to suggest how the lessons we have drawn from history clarify the system of highly dramatized and Washington-centered imagination that is again at work.

The Carter Years

America's engagement with Central American revolutions now centrally involves two countries, Nicaragua and El Salvador. El Salvador is an enclave (8,260 square miles, about the size of Massachusetts) on the western coast of the Central American isthmus, bordering Guatemala to the north and enclosed by Honduras on the east and south. Nicaragua (57,000 square miles, about the size of Iowa) borders Honduras (to the north) and Costa Rica (to the south). Population (in the early 1980s) was 4.7 million in El Salvador and 2.8 million in Nicaragua.⁷

nicaragua

Nicaragua was ruled by a single family, the Somoza dynasty, after 1936, when American troops left and the American-created and trained National Guard, headed by the first Somoza, began to rule the country. The Somozas were consistently appreciated in Washington as American "friends," a term defined operationally as being always willing to accommodate the American ambassador. Typically for the region, the distribution of wealth and income has been very unequal: In 1978, 5% of the population received approximately 40% of the national income, and the Somoza family controlled half of the country's agricultural production. Social conditions were appalling, including high (and preventable) rates of infant mortality (about 120/1,000 live births) and widespread malnutrition among the urban and rural poor.⁸ The greed, corruption, and nastiness practiced by the regime gave it no good reason to want genuine electoral democracy.

In 1961, inspired by Fidel Castro's example, a group of about twenty university students formed the original Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), named for the nationalist hero (termed an "outlaw" by American officials at the time) who led a guerrilla fight against an American marine occupation in the late 1920s. The Somoza government contained this challenge before 1978; several times it virtually wiped out the FSLN, and the group attracted little open public support.⁹

A variety of changes produced the successful Sandinista-led overthrow of the last Somoza in July 1979.

First, the regime itself became more hateful. It created public outrage fol-

lowing the massive earthquake of 1972 that levelled Managua; millions of dollars of humanitarian aid poured in, but almost all of it was diverted to the pockets of the Somoza family and the military. The devastated victims received almost nothing – and knew it – as the National Guard sold the emergency food supplies for personal profit and the Somoza family and its friends made huge real estate killings by buying land needed for rebuilding.¹⁰ The catalyst to national mutiny occurred in January 1978 when the Somoza regime murdered Pedro Joaquin Charorro, editor of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*. The Sandinistas, like Castro in his day in Cuba, were the most visible symbol of organized opposition and had the internal organization to move quickly to expand their ranks.¹¹

Had they felt assured of reliable, incremental progress, most Nicaraguans would probably have preferred ameliorative solutions to engulfment in revolutionary violence. The American press, as it typically does, has experimented with simple images portraying the anti-Somoza revolution to be an heroic, mass overthrow of an oppressive government. But there were also systemic causes for the overthrow, especially for its success in 1979. By the late 1970s the world economy had also changed, and the Nicaraguan government and the masses, jointly, were victims, thrown into mortal combat by conditions neither controlled. A world economic recession, an enormous rise in interest rates and the cost of international debt service, and the sharp rise in oil prices sharply reversed economic growth, drove per capita income steeply downward, and especially pressured the poor for whom loss of income imperiled life and well-being in economic systems without basic welfare programs.¹² Table 7.1 illustrates the magnitude of this shared effect throughout the region.

Thus a causal (and moral) analysis of the revolution includes American administrations and Congresses which, as all Central American economies declined precipitously, were in the "inattention" phase of the policy process and did not choose (rationally) to make available the measure of resources to avoid exacerbated antagonisms. The American press, when it writes of how the odious wealthy in Central American countries do not redistribute their wealth,

Table 7.1. GDP Decline from Peak Year to 1983

Country	Peak Year	GDP per capita
El Salvador	1978	- 35%
Honduras	1979	- 12%
Guatemala	1980	- 14%
Nicaragua	1977	- 38%

Source: National Bipartisan Commission (1984), p. 49. GDP = Gross Domestic Product. It is unlikely the numbers are precise and averages derived by simple division understate the modal decline.

omits that neither do many who were substantially better off, and able to do so, in America and many other nations.

Initially, the Sandinista rebellion fared poorly against the heavily armed and professionally trained National Guard. But it received vital international support: Fidel Castro was instrumental (between March 1978 and March 1979) in the unification of guerrilla factions. President Carazo of Costa Rica permitted use of his country as a safe haven and staging area. Financial support (and arms) came from many foreign supporters, including Venezuela, Cuba, Colombia, and Panama (which served as a route for transshipment of Cuban arms). None of these regimes was subjected to military reprisals by the United States for its actions.¹¹

By January 1979, the Carter administration, following the normal American policy sequence (Table 7.2), judged Somoza's days were numbered, cut off arms shipments, and began to position itself for relations with his successors.¹⁴ A climactic meeting of hemisphere foreign ministers on June 21, 1979, produced an Organization of American States resolution condemning Somoza and calling for him to step down. Venezuela took the lead to sponsor the resolution and the Carter administration did not oppose it, although it cast about for alternatives to a Sandinista victory, unsuccessfully soliciting OAS support for a peacekeeping force that would effect formation of a broadly based provisional government to dilute Sandinista influence.¹⁴

Somoza's collapse did not occur as bloodlessly as Batista's. As the war spread, the American-trained and -armed National Guard was ruthless, unconstrained by law: 50,000 people (in a country of 2.7 million) were killed and 100,000 wounded.¹⁶

The original Government of National Reconstruction, which took power in July 1979, was composed of three Sandinista leaders and two prominent representatives of non-Sandinista democratic groups. It promised to hold free elections, but – as in the case of Castro – that promise was not fulfilled. By August 1980 the Sandinistas had engineered removal of non-Sandinistas from the central leadership and announced there would be no elections until 1985, when these would no longer have a "bourgeois character."¹⁷ It also became clear that the Sandinistas were seeking to build new, mass party organizations and establish national political unity tied to their leadership. They developed mass organizations for major campaigns to improve literacy and health (and were aided by Cuban doctors and teachers); the campaigns were genuine, and impressively successful.¹⁸

The FSLN directorate, with nine members, has appeared to operate in a collegial style without primacy by a single leader. All nine have said they are "Marxist Leninists," although it is not clear what it means to use this label or to declare (as one leader has done) that "*Sandinismo* and Marxism-Leninism are inseparable."¹⁹ But it is clear that the FSLN, vitally concerned with national security, has wanted to consolidate its power and direct the nation

Stage 1: Inattention between crises

- a. Subjective disavowal of responsibility for, or identity with, character of governments receiving aid
- b. Primary emphasis on military aid (since the Johnson administration), coupled to belief that a strong indigenous military strengthens civil order during a political and economic development process

Stage 2: As a guerrilla movement develops, pressure on the indigenous government to reform is increased, but not enough

- a. American administration takes the position that the right-wing government will become democratic and progressive because the handwriting is on the wall, economic aid is increased, military aid more so
- b. American administration advocates electoral democracy with belief that democratic elections will create a more responsive government and establish a national consensus to defeat the guerrillas
- c. Series of overconfident assessments in Washington predict that the government is just about to get serious reform underway (American press experiments with stories portraying the revolutionaries as heroes.)
- d. *In extremis*, U.S. may back coups or assassination attempts to eliminate highly intransigent dictators (Trujillo, Diem)
- e. Government does not reform and, several months before the end, America cuts off aid to position itself for relations with the new government. Last-ditch efforts search, unsuccessfully, for coalition alternatives to a revolutionary victory.

Stage 3: New revolutionary government is "felt out" to determine if it will reestablish a traditional framework of relationships

- a. Interpretation is ambiguous because since 1954 revolutionary movements have presumed American hostility and have learned to move with increased rapidity to polarize public opinion (with anti-American rhetoric) and effect rapid military buildups to deter American covert or overt invasion
- b. Revolutionary government begins aid to revolutionary movements in other countries on a small scale
- c. A "breakpoint" occurs, typically with manifest evidence that democratic elections will not be promptly held and there is a growing symbolic (e.g., arms acquisition) tie to communist ideology. (Typically, arms sales from American sources have been denied.) Transition period hope to effect tolerable relations has not succeeded

Stage 3.5: American government formally recognizes two problems: short-term problem of revolution and its spread, long-term problem of eliminating deeper causes of revolution in poverty, injustice, unresponsive governments, etc. Plans are set afoot to get a long-term (constructive) solution on track while the immediate problem is handled

Stage 4: American government begins covert operations to "raise the cost" to the regime and if possible to overthrow it

- a. Initial operations are accompanied by faith that the people do not really want the new government, especially if Marxist, and will link up with American-backed forces
- b. When the idealistic component fails to effect the anticipated popular response it is dropped, and a "nothing-to-lose" calculus leads to efforts to "make the economy scream" even though there is no realistic end game
- c. Expatriates, recruited for the harassment campaign, are led to believe America will back them to victory, even though there is no realistic American plan or expectation this will occur

Stage 5: Within several years after an American victory (more recently, defeat), the long-term program to effect change in underlying conditions which produce revolutions comes apart (e.g., Alliance for Progress, Mekong River Development Plan)

Stage 6: Inattention begins again

by its own vision, without the divisive public controversy, compromise, and entree for CIA-fostered dilution of their power they apparently fear might result from American-style democracy. *La Prensa*, still a voice of criticism, has been subject to prior censorship for substantial periods, and at times critics have been physically harassed. The record suggests, however, that the regime enjoys substantial majority favor for its accomplishments. Its humanitarian idealism has been genuine: In three years, from 1980 to 1983, it supplanted the callous indifference of the Somoza dynasty to the health of the people and eliminated polio, reduced 120,000 cases of malaria to 7,000 and reduced the infant mortality rate by 30%. The political debate in the country remains open, passionate, and diverse. Amnesty International reports no significant evidence of torture or disappearances of persons in Sandinista Nicaragua.²¹ By any measure of performance, it is the best government Nicaragua has ever had and (excepting Costa Rica) a far better government for the majority of its people than the other governments in the region which have been American allies.

The Carter administration initially sought to avoid a strong tie between Nicaragua and the Soviet Union or Cuba, sent a gracious and supportive ambassador (Lawrence Pezzullo), and provided substantial aid.²² Total U.S. aid from 1979 to 1981 came to \$117 million, more than five times the aid provided the Somoza regime from 1974 to 1979.²³ The Carter administration also actively supported disbursements to Nicaragua of \$102 million from the World Bank and \$189 million from the Inter-American Development Bank during these years.

However, the Sandinista government was instinctively mistrustful of the United States and sought to apply earlier lessons from the fate of Arbenz and the covert operations against Castro (and Allende in Chile).²⁴ The government moved quickly to organize its population for national defense and to expand its armed forces: By 1984 there was national conscription, 48,000 troops on active duty, and perhaps as many as 200,000 men and women in training for the popular militia. Weapons were widely distributed, creating the threat of a prolonged, bloody, defensive war should there be an American or American-backed invasion. (By comparison, Somoza's National Guard at the height of the civil war had only 15,000.) Soviet weapons were acquired at a pace suggesting the Sandinistas feared they had limited time; massive supplies of Soviet-bloc arms arrived together with Soviet and Cuban advisers who effected a choice of weapons professionally judged by Pentagon analysts as good choices for defense. The military forces, by 1984, had acquired heavy tanks and assault helicopters, 1,000 trucks and armored personnel carriers, mobile rocket launchers, heavy artillery, and hand weapons and ammunition to equip ground forces fully. In addition, thirty Nicaraguan pilots were trained in Bulgaria to fly MIG jets and these pilots, and their planes, were stationed in Cuba.²⁵ This conventional capability (now the largest in the region) serves two obvious purposes: combatting the CIA-funded *contras* and deterring

an invasion by American troops or any combination of regional right-wing governments.²⁵

The breakpoint in U.S.-Nicaraguan relations came with the first election of President Ronald Reagan. In the fall of 1980, just after his election and before his inauguration, rebels in El Salvador began what they called a "final offensive," hoping to achieve victory before President Reagan assumed office. Nicaragua, for the first time, began massive transshipments of Soviet-bloc arms to aid the rebels, and the Carter administration moved to cut off aid to Nicaragua. Thus the standard American policy sequence (Table 7.2) again moved down the same path.

Its new military capability has also given Nicaragua the capacity to deploy this armed force against its rightist neighbors. El Salvador is probably safe from a direct attack; there is no direct route for a Nicaraguan land invasion of El Salvador, and the American navy could readily block the Gulf of Fonseca. Honduras probably could not be defeated at the present time, but if the indigenous guerrillas made rapid gains the situation might change, especially if the Nicaraguans brought into play their thirty MICs now stationed offstage on Cuba and received aid from Cuba.²⁶ If it had reason to do so, Nicaragua could rapidly conquer Costa Rica, which has never created a military force of its own. There is a case for an American military "shield" — and deterrent messages — if American policy wishes to prevent these eventualities, however likely or unlikely.²⁷

Background and the Carter Years: El Salvador

The story of revolution in El Salvador parallels, in substantial degree, the story of Nicaragua. About 200 families control the country and its wealth (not fourteen, as in popular legend), disparities are severe, callous indifference of the wealthy for the "subhuman" peasants has been a continuing feature of the country's life; at least two-thirds of the population lives in extreme poverty; illiteracy and malnutrition are widespread in the countryside.²⁸

An American theory of political development once held that economic development would produce political development, especially democratic modernization.²⁹ That theory is no longer in good repute among social scientists: El Salvador is a country (like Nicaragua and many others) where the opposite result occurred. As did Nicaragua's, El Salvador's military governments in the 1970s became even more brutal and repressive while the economy expanded.³⁰

Briefly, following the Sandinista victory, this situation appeared to change; in October 1979, a group of young officers overthrew the government of Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero and replaced him with a five-man civilian junta which pledged land and other reforms. Their motive, from most analyses, was not reform per se but to prevent a spread of revolution. But the result illustrates a deeper fact of political power in El Salvador (and elsewhere in

Latin America); its official "government" is not a government in the (North) American conception. It is able to act only when the ruling classes of the society find it in their interest to give their support. After this reformist coup, other elements in the military and other ruling groups quickly blocked reforms; within three months, three of the civilian members of the junta had resigned in frustration (one of the members, Social Democrat Guillermo Ungo, is now a leading spokesman for the guerrillas), and the semiofficial murder squads of the ruling classes increased their campaign of mass terror and intimidation.³¹

The misleading categories used in American public discussion bear further comment: in the American template, "governments" control societies; their decisions are legitimate and binding. But in El Salvador, "government" does not have an equivalent role and the current president (Duarte, at the end of 1984) occupies a symbolic position in a public sideshow in a society where the substantial power is exercised by Cosa Nostra-type families and private armies linked with military coalitions. There is no tradition or expectation of military deference to civilian control. (Nor is the military of El Salvador organized in a top-down fashion: It is a network of personalized coalitions, often with stronger ties within themselves than to official commanders.)³² High turnout in elections traditionally has not reflected citizens' faith that elections empower a democratic government; in El Salvador, voting is compulsory.³³

The "death squads" of El Salvador are the brutish expression of ruling classes the Kissinger Commission (discussed below) has oddly championed as incipiently democratic and progressive. Several American conservatives — including the political scientist Jeane Kirkpatrick, United Nations Ambassador during the first Reagan administration — have written that right-wing governments in Central America are "authoritarian," apparently imagining them to be strict, law-and-order governments. But this American-based conception is inappropriate: the powerful men in El Salvador are not "law-and-order" authoritarians, nor do they respect the individual rights that American conservatives value. They are murderers: From October 1979 until January 1984, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Salvador documented by firsthand testimony more than 40,000 murders of civilian noncombatants.³⁴ This terrorism, murders typically accompanied by torture and hacked-up and mutilated bodies left for public display, is unimpeded by law. The national battle does not pit the principle of law and order (the side of government) against the principle of revolution (the side of the guerrillas): Prosecutors and judges have been intentionally killed, and the lives of others threatened (by people who are credible); the "security" forces have not allowed any convictions of murders of El Salvador citizens. Public remonstrances by the Carter and Reagan administrations have been judged (correctly) a bluff and have been distinctively impotent.

Terror has been directed against all nonrightists who are politically active.

The armed forces have pledged to "relentlessly persecute" political leaders of the left and have done so. (For example, six leaders of the left political coalition, FDR, were publicly kidnapped by government security forces during a press conference in November 1980, tortured, mutilated, and murdered; the incident was not even investigated.) Leaders of the (legal) Christian Democratic Party have frequently been killed; ninety Christian Democratic mayors, for example, have been assassinated since 1979. Anyone who criticizes such political murder or advocates major reform or negotiation with the guerrillas does so at realistic mortal risk. In the rural areas, the murder teams have conducted random executions in areas suspected of being favorable to the guerrillas.¹⁵

The El Salvador rebels — avowedly Marxist-Leninists and (given the circumstances, understandably) hostile to the United States — have received substantial aid from Nicaragua and, via that route, from Cuba, the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe.¹⁶ Since the spring of 1981 the flow of arms from these sources is probably small, the revolutionaries have ample funds to purchase weapons on the international black market without relying on ideologically motivated sources, and — perhaps the most important source — a major domestic black market for American-supplied weapons and ammunition now operates in El Salvador.¹⁷ But it seems clear that there is genuine, consequential support, especially sophisticated communication capabilities and expert tactical advice, by Soviet and Cuban specialists, and sites within Nicaragua are used by the guerrillas as locations for strategic planning.¹⁸

In a country of 4.7 million people, the deaths (50,000 + since 1979) have been numerous, primarily of civilians at the hands of the murder squads.¹⁹ The active combatants are a small proportion.²⁰ By early 1984 the El Salvador military had grown to about 37,000 men.²¹ The guerrilla forces also are growing and now number about 12,000.²² The guerrillas are well trained, do receive support from among the population, and now effect a casualty rate (killed or wounded) of government soldiers of about 15% a year.²³ They have also expanded their own counterterror, aimed at government officials, the economy, and the land reform and other programs designed to build government support. About sixty-three murders of civilians by guerrillas were recorded in a fourteen-month period ending in July 1983.²⁴ The long-term prospect for the regime appears poor without massive American aid: the traditional ruling elites have few friends among the masses; the ratio of troops to guerrillas is far less than the ten-to-one typically said to be needed for victory in a counter guerrilla war, and the progressively intentioned Duarte government elected in 1984 probably lacks the power to produce major change — either for progressive reform or to curb the death squads (which is a major goal of the rebels and a requirement for any negotiated settlement). The Duarte government is also subject, readily, to right-wing replacement should it attempt to acquire power or begin serious negotiations.

Policy and the Reagan Administration

The first Reagan administration, under its first secretary of state, Alexander Haig, began immediately to plan the elimination of what it conceived to be Communist power in the western hemisphere. It launched a major propaganda effort similar to the campaign which (in 1954) preceded the overthrow of Arbenz. Haig dramatized the issue of Communist-bloc weapons in the hemisphere, the threat of spreading revolutions, warned that "vital interests" of American security were at risk, and threatened to "go to the source" (i.e., Cuba).²⁵ The administration substantially increased aid (especially military aid) to the El Salvador government. Against Nicaragua, Operation MONGOOSE was born again with the CIA, under director William Casey, creating, equipping, inspiring, paying for, and directing *contra* forces to attack Nicaragua from bases in Honduras and Costa Rica.²⁶

Initially, this highly visible crusade ran into trouble. The American elite press, opposed to the direction of policy, counterattacked against the allegation of a primarily Communist-inspired revolution and left the public justifications dubious. *Newsweek* took the lead to inform the American people about the administration's "secret war" in which 15,000 troops were assembled to engage in commando raids, seek to destroy the economy, and if possible establish an enclave inside Nicaraguan territory.²⁷ Initially, Argentina was used as a "cut-out" to train guerrilla forces for use against Castro, and provide training and arms for operations in Central America, without requiring congressional approval by involving the CIA directly. The Senate Intelligence Oversight Committee blocked the early, aggressive anti-Cuban initiative and forced the resignation of the new deputy director-Plans, Max Hugel, who had been "less than candid" in disclosing the plans.²⁸ The right-wing Argentine government unexpectedly invaded the Falkland Islands and, despite the efforts of General Haig to mediate the resulting military conflict with England, the cooperative Argentine relation with Washington cooled after the government was defeated.

Secretary Haig's controversial public style — White House mail began to run ten to one *against* the administration's policies — produced impressive tactical learning.²⁹ He was dismissed in the summer of 1982, replaced by the stylistically bland and respectable George Shultz, and, while continuing its same policies, the Reagan administration astutely calmed its rhetoric, maneuvered around symbolic sensitivities, and neutralized its critics in the media and Congress.³⁰ It ceased to discuss its policies in public, except rarely and in the most general slogans. After the proxy war against Nicaragua was described in the press, the White House declared that such "secret" things should not be discussed in public.³¹ It skillfully outmaneuvered potential congressional opposition to effect a major U.S. troop buildup in Honduras under the guise of training exercises. To build a consensus (or at least disarm his critics while

the commission met), President Reagan appointed a National Bipartisan Commission in 1983, whose existence blocked rising criticism until the early spring of 1984. (I discuss the commission's report below.) Israel was used as a "cut-out" to provide weapons and aid in a channel that would outflank the congressional appropriations process and make it difficult for liberal supporters of Israel to inquire into, or criticize, the "plausibly deniable" arrangements.³² Sophisticated planners encouraged "private" funds from rightist groups in America to outmaneuver Congress and assure continuing aid to the *contras* (reportedly, about \$17 million of aid).³³ The realistic and perennial power drama fear—that opponents would be "scapegoated" if El Salvador was "lost"—was manipulated to weaken congressional criticism.³⁴ By the late summer of 1984 American "advisors" created the strategy and tactics of the El Salvador military. America trained the troops, and America was paying most of the cost of the war.³⁵

As of the fall of 1984, press reports indicate the Reagan administration wants victory (or, at least, to avoid visible defeat) in El Salvador.³⁶ It is divided in its objectives toward Nicaragua; a smaller "moderate" faction apparently hopes to use the new Operation MONGOOSE to exact economic devastation and a death rate of indigenous defenders in Nicaragua sufficient to end support for the El Salvador revolution (and this, perhaps more consequentially than its material cost, might affect their morale). A hawkish faction is said to want the complete elimination of any substantial "Marxist-Leninist" role in the government of Nicaragua, is unwilling to "learn to live" with less, and—although without a realistic end game—may be expected to press for both increased psychological warfare and military activity, although would likely prefer Honduras to take any major combat role.³⁷

The Reagan administration initially pressed for open, democratic elections in Nicaragua, and then reversed itself to demand postponement of elections held in November 1984 so that opposition groups could have more time to form and campaign openly. The baseline of silence about the Somoza regime's electoral practices suggests that the agitated argument about Nicaraguan electoral practices has been triggered not by questions of principle but as a mechanism of control, i.e., probably with the expectation that growing American-exacted damage will make support of El Salvador's rebels so unpopular that any elected government would thus be more amenable to reduce support of the rebels and anti-American rhetoric. As in the case of Castro two decades earlier, however, there has been little doubt that the Sandinista electoral victory in the fall of 1984 did reflect the wishes of the majority of the people and that, at best, only its large margin of victory would have been modestly reduced by fuller participation of exile groups backed by the United States. Thus the loud—and to a substantial degree unwarranted—administration discrediting of the election can also be seen as a maneuver to prepare American public opinion for a continuing war.

Because the administration has not produced good results, pressure has mounted (as it did for Bissell) for more direct American management. America's candidate for the presidency of El Salvador, Duarte, in 1984 received \$2.1 million of "secret" funding to assure his electoral victory—an extraordinary sum for an election in such a poor country;³⁸ mining of Nicaragua's harbors (directed by American CIA commanders) occurred in the spring of 1984;³⁹ direct tactical command by the CIA has been increasing.⁴⁰ A temporary congressional suspension of official American aid to the *contras* was primarily symbolic, did not address either the cut-out mechanisms or the free flow of "private" funding, and is unlikely to hamper a decided Executive branch's policies.

One fact should be noted concerning the Reagan administration's professed willingness to negotiate an end to conflict: Press reports consistently suggest that many hard-liners within the Reagan administration simply desire to destroy the Sandinista government (and have seen "nothing to lose" from attempts using the CIA).⁴¹ It seems probable, then, the United States has had no wholly trustworthy negotiating proposal in dealings with the Sandinistas that could, if accepted, assure that the regime can survive at peace.

THE KISSINGER COMMISSION REPORT

In 1983 President Reagan appointed a National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (the Kissinger Commission) to study this latest return engagement. My analysis will be that the commission used analytical intelligence in a secondary role and recommended policy which reflects instead the imagination syndrome outlined in chapter 6. Thus, its scenario for American policy is unlikely to work because the *Report* has, as a result, little connection with the local realities of Central America.

I have chosen to discuss the commission *Report* because, in conjunction with the earlier discussion of American policy, it illustrates my thesis by the public nature of the commission's work. That is, the standard theories (discussed earlier) of inadvertent error are implausible explanations of how the *Report* was derived: procedural threats to rationality, inaccessible knowledge of history, small group loyalty and insularity, simple unreflective thought and unchallenged assumptions do not account for the commissioners' *Report*. To be sure, no radicals were appointed to the commission, and in this sense the original appointments determined its findings. But the appointments did afford diversity within the range of variation consistent with being considered responsible American leaders; the twelve commissioners were drawn from both political parties (and included Robert Strauss, former national chairman of the Democratic Party, and Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO).⁴² Most commissioners had established careers and major constituencies independent from the Reagan administration. They were men of distinction and

accomplishment. Nor was the commission an insular group shielded from multiple advocacy. It heard testimony from almost 200 Americans representing diverse constituencies and viewpoints (and received written submissions from 400 more), heard from 300 officials and witnesses abroad (and met with the government of Nicaragua). Central American policy was being widely debated in the press. The commission heard the critics of current policy.⁶¹ That it did not *accept* their views cannot be attributed to such perennial and wishful diagnoses as criticisms that were "unheard" or even "not understood" in a formal sense.⁶²

Overview

The commissioners' viewpoint is the standard policy analysis in similar reports stretching back twenty-five years.⁶³ They recognized two problems. The short-term problem is to contain spreading revolution. The long-term problem is to eliminate the deeper causes of revolution: poverty, injustice, economic disarray, cruel and unresponsive governments.

The commission's principal conclusions may be summarized in five points:

1. The "miserable" conditions of life of most people in the region have invited revolution: "If reforms had been undertaken earlier, there would almost surely have been no fertile ground for revolution."⁶⁴

2. These conditions have been "exploited" by hostile outside forces—specifically Cuba, backed by the Soviet Union and now operating through Nicaragua—and these "will turn any revolution they capture into a totalitarian state, threatening the region and robbing the people of their hopes for liberty."⁶⁵ Indigenous revolutions themselves would not be a security threat to the United States, but they become a threat when these "aggressive outside powers" use them to expand their own political influence and military control in our hemisphere.⁶⁶

3. Without rapid progress for political, economic, and social reforms, peace in the region will be "fragile or elusive."⁶⁷

4. But unless the insurgencies are stopped, constructive American-led political, economic, and social progress can only be fragile or elusive: "Once an insurgency is fully under way . . . it has a momentum which reform alone cannot stop. Unchecked, the insurgents can destroy faster than the reformers can build."⁶⁸

5. America has a humanitarian interest to alleviate suffering and a national interest to "strengthen democratic institutions wherever in the hemisphere they are weak."⁶⁹

From this analysis the commission recommended, with great urgency, military aid to shield existing governments, suppress insurgencies, and buy time for long-term reforms it proposed. It specifically urged substantially increased military aid to El Salvador, and it predicted the days of the El Salvador government were numbered without massive American aid.⁷²

Within its assumptions, the rational policy analysis done in Washington was intelligent and superb. A refined and sophisticated inventory of more than fifty aspects of Central American societies provided for a long-term plan to reshape almost every major characteristic of those societies. Diverse policy tools would include a literacy corps, scholarships, training in public administration, reforms of the judicial system, extension of health care, rescheduling of foreign debt, improvement of international trade. And the *Report* is politically astute about its domestic constituencies: major domestic groups can find their concerns acknowledged and recognize an expanded role in an \$8 billion aid package envisioned over the next five years: banks and financial institutions are guaranteed loan rescheduling, business groups will find support for private venture capital, humanitarian organizations have their involvement funded, universities can develop ties and training programs, fervent anti-Communists will find greater military aid endorsed while liberals find recommendations to bolster "genuine democracy," link aid to human rights progress, and design "humane" antiguerrilla programs that do not rely upon government death squads and terror of the civilian population.

My plan is to analyze the commission's findings selectively, illustrating how the continuing overlay of imagination, discussed in chapter 6, makes the *Report* an ineffective guide. I will also suggest that different images were, on the objective evidence presented, more plausible.⁷³ I will use as my principal source the evidence and staff analyses provided the commission and included in its official publications. My focus will be: (1) overconfidence; (2) exaggerated fear and experience of vulnerability; (3) emotionally organized (and nonempirical) use of language; (4) an unrealistic, Maxwell Taylor-like prescription for the American policy process which overlooks a likely breakdown in the intellectual and moral integrity of the commission's planning.

Overconfidence

The commission's viewpoint envisions America in a managerial role, boldly transforming Central American societies to become liberal, democratic, progressive, and prosperous—more like the United States. This well-intentioned ethnocentrism is not so crude as the jingoism of an earlier day; the language is responsible, reflecting the managerial, problem-solving instincts of leaders in an economically advanced society.⁷⁴

In El Salvador, the commission's short-term strategy is to transform the entire political system. Death squads must end, democracy must be created and supported, reforms must move swiftly, the guerrillas must be defeated. To accomplish these results "the U.S. government must rely on the abilities and good faith of the government under attack."⁷⁵

The commission's term "good faith" is the best place to begin discussion of the problem of external validity. The evidence (reviewed earlier) shows that the opposite of pro-democratic good faith is a characteristic of El Salvador's

ruling classes. Castro's "handwriting on the wall" produced no progress. During the relative peace and growing prosperity of the 1970s, El Salvador became, as the commission notes elsewhere, more brutal and oppressive.⁷⁶ And in the late 1970s, when the Sandinista victory produced a reformist coup in El Salvador, the reformist government found itself an impotent sideshow and resigned in frustration within three months. Social, economic, and political reforms in the 1980s have been slow and undertaken under massive pressure from Washington. (One should not be misled by overconfident, activist official assurances that impressive reforms are just about to occur: The speed with which reform *can* be accomplished if there is a seriously committed political system is demonstrated by the Sandinista program in Nicaragua carried out when they too have been at war, in their case against American-sponsored *contra* forces roughly the size of the antiregime forces in El Salvador.) Forty thousand murders, including many members of the democratic left, are not the mark of ruling classes whose attitudes are favorable to social progress and democracy. In reality, one is dealing with long-standing attitudes, men who believe the American military shield reflects America's own anti-Communist interests, and whose correct lesson from recent history is that America is so locked in by its own power-drama logic that threats of aid cutoffs are a bluff. The right in Central America has probably learned faster than the American government.⁷⁷

Moreover, the practice of mass murder and terror reflects the brutality of ruling groups genuinely terrified for survival, not simply terrified of revolution but also of genuine democracy. In the situation of massive inequality in which the wealthy are located, and given their past practices and attitudes, allowing any genuine acquisition of power by a democratic government is revolutionary. There is no large middle class to mediate the alternatives.⁷⁸ At this point the commissioners should have asked themselves what incentives they offer to men who have committed 40,000 murders of civilians (each victim with a family, neighbors, and friends) to surrender power to the populace they have terrorized?

The overconfident ambition of the *Report* extends to idealized imaginings about the people of El Salvador and their faith in official (and American) promises. Just as the "hearts and minds" of Cuba's people (or Vietnam's) were once thought eager for American leadership, so El Salvador's peasants are imagined willing to forget the past, to believe that the real nature of power and the character of those who hold power has changed only because a sideshow election has given a decent man, Duarte, the title of president and to merge, trustingly and enthusiastically, with Washington's vision of progress.

The commission's bold imaginings of successful American control are also contrary to America's own historical experience in Latin America. The Alliance for Progress's military "shield" only worked when a country evidenced a strong elite consensus favorable to economic and social reform. Rightist

client governments are championed by American administrations as *just* on the verge of reform: it never works out.⁷⁹ But, I would argue, American administrations nevertheless act on the overlay because the American imagined scenario must be *made* to work if the American image of its own constructive leadership and masterful control is to be sustained.

Exaggerated Fear and Experience of Vulnerability

It seems implausible to imagine that small, poor, Central American countries threaten American national security. Yet that was the mind-set of the commission members, and they tried to suggest plausible reasons to explain the fear:

1. A series of developments which might require us to devote large resources to defend the southern approaches to the United States, thus reducing our capacity to defend our interests elsewhere.
2. A potentially serious threat to our shipping lanes through the Caribbean.
3. A proliferation of Marxist-Leninist states that would increase violence, dislocation, and political repression in the region.
4. The erosion of our power to influence events worldwide that would flow from the perception we were unable to influence vital events close to home.⁸⁰

The commissioners did not calibrate their imaginations by specific scenarios to justify their fear of a serious threat to America. But even if the Mexican government should be overthrown (and that is not a present issue), it is difficult to see new "large resources" that will need to be added to the hundreds of billions of dollars already spent annually.⁸¹ Even if a Mexican government were someday overthrown by revolutionaries willing to ally with other countries south of its borders, it remains mysterious why a concert of poor countries would bother to begin an easily defeated attack upon the U.S. mainland.

The second alleged danger, interdiction of shipping, assumes a scenario in which these small countries would want to commit suicide by war on the American navy. Such a remote threat is probably forestalled best, if the commission wished to do so, not by the fervent activism of its programs but, in a straightforward, tough-minded way by specifying to Nicaragua and a Marxist-Leninist El Salvador, privately, the types of weapons (e.g., a substantial navy) they may not acquire and then forthrightly destroying such capability if it should be acquired beyond the limits drawn.

Possibly more realistic is the third fear of widened intraregional conflict. Assuming the El Salvador government is overthrown, it is conceivable that this regime, and the Nicaraguan government, would wish — all other things being equal — jointly to aid revolutionary movements in Guatemala and Honduras. The hostility of those regimes has been long-standing, and in the event of continuing American support for the *contras* the long-term security and

peace of both Nicaragua and a new El Salvador government would be well served by eliminating hostile rightist governments and CIA staging areas on their borders.⁵² At the moment, however, the Nicaraguan government would have difficulty mobilizing its people for a sustained aggressive war (any major popular support will probably be created by American policy itself via the continuing economic destruction of the American *contra* forces.) But with America's new infrastructure and capacities to move large numbers of its troops into Honduras, the Nicaraguan government would be mad to begin a war, and thus there appears no basis to suppose a realistic threat by Nicaragua to its neighbors. Guerrilla warfare in both Guatemala and Honduras will probably not succeed if the promises of reform are genuine and these countries change the basic character of their societies as quickly as have the Sandinistas.

The fourth alleged security threat openly introduces the critical sensibility, the commission's imagining of international politics as a vivid, global drama: "The triumph of hostile forces in what the Soviets call the 'strategic rear' of the United States would be read as a sign of U.S. impotence."⁵³

The commission's anxiety is high, and it is fearful of global disorder: "if wretched conditions were themselves enough to create . . . insurgencies, we would see them in many more countries of the world."⁵⁴ Any "foreign" (i.e., Communist) instigators, newly emboldened by a sense of American impotence, have an alarmingly fertile field. This is the system of imagining discussed in chapter 6; from the top, alongside bold overconfidence is the paradoxical and deep fear that everything could begin to unravel.

I want to invite the reader to reflect upon this "domino theory" of the *Report*: It implicitly imagines American power to be a vivid, substantial presence in the minds of the politically active around the globe. America's most intimate enemy, the megalomaniacal Soviet leadership, single-mindedly devoted to world rule, is alert for signs of impotence, and presses forward with its diabolical schemes whenever it senses weakness. Thus the retiring career diplomat, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Lawrence Eagleburger, in the spring of 1984 confidently asserted the view that "the decision to walk away from the Angolan problem in 1975 was the beginning of our real difficulties with the Soviet Union. That gave the Soviet leadership an impression that they could do a number of things covertly that the United States would not be prepared to respond to . . . They are engaged—in *their* mind at least—to our detriment."⁵⁵

As I reviewed in chapter 6, several steps further along in this mental process lies the total imagination entrapment of psychosis, the megalomaniacal and paranoid experience that one's will is *the* determinant of events in the universe and all of the principal evil forces in the universe are organized in hostile relationship to the self. My point is *not*, however, that such a sensibility is clinically mad. About certain Russians, the commission might be right; obviously

one can *imagine* there are men in the Kremlin whose highly dramatized sensibility mirrors the Reagan administration's and commission's own. For example, at least one Soviet propagandist has exulted that "the Sandinista revolution, being an integral part of the world revolutionary process, serves as yet one more convincing confirmation of the helplessness of imperialism to restore its lost historic initiative and to turn back the development of the modern world."⁵⁶ Soviet *public* statements not only generally endorse the commission's own interpretation but also assert there is a global drama (of falling imperialist dominoes), in which Central America, somewhat salaciously, is seen as an encouraging indicator of American helplessness.⁵⁷

To assess political actions in a world of potentially mutual and interlocking imagination entrapments by "super" powers means that the difference between error and truth is often a matter of exaggeration, a danger to which the imagination is prone. Judgment requires calibration of the imagination by reference to the hard surfaces of local realities.⁵⁸ In this case, I believe the *Report* did get carried away by its own overdramatized imaginings. Let me suggest several observations.

First, Soviet leaders probably *are* as power-oriented—or more so—as American leaders. Richard Nixon, with an obviously different ideological and cultural content, appears a very similar personality to recent Soviet leaders: his suspicious, hardball sensibilities, and "enemies lists" kept by his staff, seem of a similar mold. Thus, too, warnings by such American leaders of Soviet orientations deserve to be treated with great seriousness.

Second, I think the commission is right that Soviet leaders *would* be encouraged if the United States did nothing, or even permitted a public victory, by people citing Marxist-Leninist ideology, in Central America.

The more important questions, however, are how such feelings of encouragement—whether permanent or transitory—would affect *actions* elsewhere, and whether the hardball power drama interpretation is, on reflection, the best interpretation on which to base an American policy.

Thus I believe the proper specific question is: What would the Soviets do, and would they be effective? I do not believe we know the answer, as even American "losses" (in Cuba and Vietnam) were permitted by America only at a high cost. There probably would be additional efforts to supply arms and encourage revolutions elsewhere. However, countries have many priorities and large-scale foreign aid has traditionally proven about as unpopular in Moscow as in Washington.⁵⁹ Moreover, the evidence suggests such victories, in the long term, do not buy the Soviet Union added influence for its own national purposes: once Americans debated who (Republicans or Democrats) lost China; today the Soviets know *they* did.⁶⁰ And the Soviet leadership, given instabilities in Eastern Europe, probably also feels extraordinarily vulnerable and could be induced to be cautious about any general escalation of such destabilization contests.

But the more important question is whether world order is effectively served by policy primarily based on the schema of East-West global drama.⁹¹ Here I think the answer is that the commission is dangerously preoccupied by the mirror image of the opposing chess master. Except in fantasies entertained by superpowers, nations and peoples of the world are not subordinate pawns whose loyalties can be taken for granted. Revolutions in Central America have not spread in periods when there are only egregious conditions and indigenous revolutionaries hopeful of a following: the evidence is that people will prefer even odious, familiar regimes to revolution *if* there is hope for economic progress and justice. Any "contest" requires America, primarily, to assure such hope in local reality. The big-picture, East-West focus misdirects attention from this more vital basis of power: When Communists talk about the issues and American leaders become preoccupied about Communists, then Communist-linked revolution becomes the primary allegiance of those who want to choose the side with the most fervently expressed ideals. Supporting – and being strung along by – right-wing regimes for anti-Communist purposes makes America as hostile to such ideals, *de facto*, as Communist propaganda alleges.

Concerning whatever role America (or American "will") plays in affecting world stability (which could, after all, be unchanged if America were to disappear), it is more plausible to believe that Soviet predictions of American behavior derive from the realistic perception that genuine and vital American interests are at stake in a local reality, not upon peripheral symbolic toughness. (Thus, for example, a convincing reason the Soviets would recognize American credibility in defending oil supplies in the Middle East is that they recognize a vital American interest at stake.)

By this analysis, however, the overdramatized sensibility of foreign policy is dangerous because it abandons stability-creating interpretations, loses the intelligent discrimination between genuine vital interests and mere peripheral advantages. President Eisenhower held a different – and probably a sounder – view than the commission's: The local government of Guatemala was geopolitically unimportant, a contest worth a covert CIA operation with 110 men. No foreign statesman who shared Eisenhower's understanding of geopolitical gradation would draw an erroneous message of weakness if the CIA failed and other actions were not mounted. If the Soviets now think differently, *that* is the graver danger and would be best addressed by a *Report* which publicly rejected its present framework and sought to restore such major distinctions.⁹²

There is a second good rule for international order which the commission spurns: tit for tat; that is, the evolution of norms of international conduct by which great powers agree mutually (even if privately) to respect certain conventions.⁹³ Since 1979, for example, 7,000 Soviet soldiers have been killed (and Soviet forces have suffered 40,000 casualties) in Afghanistan opposing rebels armed by the United States. American aid to the Afghan rebels has been \$625 million. It is most unlikely the Soviet Union will reduce its own

involvement in Central America under these conditions. The Kissinger Commission rejected such obvious negotiations as "unacceptable," yet acknowledged that the Soviets might agree to such discussions. It concluded: "[The Soviets] would welcome discussion of superpower spheres of influence, which would prompt Soviet assertions of . . . the need for U.S. abstention on the Soviet periphery, in such places as Eastern Europe and Afghanistan."⁹⁴ If one wanted to promote international order, this would be a straightforward, sober, and tough-minded deal.

Emotionally Organized Use of Language

I have suggested that when an American foreign policy spokesman speaks, there is – via dramatized imagining – a confused blending of emotion, language, inner reality, and outer reality, and of these, outer reality plays the lesser role. Verbal maneuvers substitute for other forms of analysis in a political world which is an arena of forces, pressures, national wills (or impotency) experienced directly in the mind of practitioner.

Three uses of language will serve as example. Like Kennedy's "plausibly deniable" construction that the Bay of Pigs project was not an aggressive policy of his administration, the plausibility of these usages carries the risk of substituting words, which are self-persuasive and comfortable for responsible American officials, for clear thinking.

"American Policy"

A first example is the commission's virtuous self-image for American policy. It disavows any direct link between American policy and the consistent pattern of morally objectionable practices of governments and ruling classes in Central America. There are (unspecific) allusions to past American omissions, errors, and insensitivities, but the matter is settled by declaring there has not been an "identity" between America and right-wing governments, a misperception "that lingers independent of the facts."⁹⁵ The commission says America cannot "associate itself with" or "condone" the brutal killings or any other objectionable feature of Central American regimes.

To be fair, the conscious intent of American policy has seldom been sinister: economic aid has been substantial; American leaders (most actively in the Carter administration) have spoken out for human rights.⁹⁶ American leaders would certainly prefer Central America to have democratic, liberal, progressive governments that treated their people well, and the *Report* is correct; there has not been full *subjective* identity or support. The radical-left charge that America fully supports dictators is a fantasy; despite their hopes, dictators of the right have been abandoned when their only rescue would be American troops (Batista, Somoza); others (Trujillo, Diem) have also been active targets for American removal plans when they did not reform quickly enough to prevent Communist advances.⁹⁷

However, *objective* support occurs without regard to a more comfortable

Subjective dissociation regnant primarily in the mind of the policymaker. The continuing "association" of America with brutal, uncaring ruling classes is not merely fanciful. Morally (and in an American court of law) the American political system is an accessory. And the implication is important: If one wants to understand the problems of American policy, and the extraordinary difficulty of a negotiated settlement (a principal barrier to which would be fear of American treachery), one must include a *de facto* recognition of the objective reality of that policy in local arenas.

"Marxist-Leninist"

The commissioners used the term "Marxist-Leninist" to describe the rebel movements, too readily accepting associations with the phrase, rather than analysis of men and circumstances, as evidence that "Marxist-Leninist" revolutions in Central America will establish totalitarian dictatorships, serve the "interests" of Soviet power, be generically and implacably hostile to the United States, and yield more international aggression.

The problem of inference is genuine: the commission might be correct, and its view is not satisfactorily dismissed by a balanced and hopeful view that anyone who speaks of ideals and opposes dictators is genuinely idealistic. The Sandinistas *might* be fanatics; if not they, then the El Salvador rebels. It would be incumbent upon any national commission to warn the American people if, in its best judgment, messianic, genocidal madmen of the ilk of Hitler, Pol Pot, or the Ayatollah Khomeini (who replaced the right-wing dictator, the Shah of Iran, but whose war with Iraq by mid-1984 had killed 250,000 people) were in power or likely to gain power. But are these Central Americans realistically imagined to be pawns of Soviet interests or megalomaniacal fanatics?

The historical record suggests it extremely unlikely that nationalist leaders who use Marxist-Leninist formulas, even out of deep commitment, will serve Soviet interests reliably. After supporting Mao's revolution, Soviet leaders lost China as an ally. After almost forty years, Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe is still sustained only by the presence of Soviet troops and periodic threats of violence. As I noted in chapter 5, Fidel Castro himself has provided the Russians with a signal lesson: After locking in Soviet commitment and aid at the beginning of the 1960s, he turned on the growing Soviet influence in the Cuban Communist Party, purged over half its members to assure loyalty to himself and his brother, and has maintained that vigilance.¹⁰ "Marxist-Leninist" regimes in Central America will probably afford the Soviet Union little geopolitical benefit: To power-oriented politicians, ideology is a secondary concern.

But there is a more plausible explanation of why such men and women use Marxist-Leninist, anti-American ideas for their political drama, that is, as a

reaction to circumstances rather than because they are paranoid, megalomaniacal zealots. These are people who, in the main, have little worldly experience and know America only in their local reality. America tried to assassinate and overthrow Fidel Castro at a time when (it is now public knowledge) it knew him to be the popular choice of the majority of his people. It created the greedy Somoza regime, colluded in the removal of Allende in Chile (even though *he* was freely and democratically elected), and continues to supply the arms to the El Salvador murderers of more than 40,000 civilian noncombatants with rhetoric — which must seem grotesque in the region — that it is promoting "democracy."¹¹ It has created and backed the hated Somicista contras against the best government Nicaragua has ever had, and this 1980s Operation MONGOOSE has killed hundreds of young men (with CIA financing) to seek effect economic destruction and terror. On the other hand, these Central Americans know the Soviet Union and Cuba only from a distance and in the role of benefactors and supporters of their cause. Would it not be reasonable, from their point of view, to find the framework of Marxist analysis plausible?

The commissioners' imaginings that Central American revolutionaries have an implacably megalomaniacal intent appear especially odd in light of the more plausible analogy, America's experience of reactive radicalism in the 1960s. Many of these radicals were outraged idealists who supported President Kennedy enthusiastically at the beginning of the 1960s. They became radicalized in response to actions of government they considered inhumane and outrageous. The hostile, fiery rhetoric was associated with extraordinarily little antiregime violence, and the radical sentiments and commitments *subsided* when government policies ceased to incite it. Indeed, many Americans of all ages turned angry in the early 1970s and wanted to remove President Nixon when the White House kept lists, in a somewhat juvenile way, titled "enemies lists," and tried to cover up only a fumbled burglary. The better causal analysis implies that the solution to the problem of Marxist-Leninist ideology is for the United States to cease *de facto* policies that, at the receiving end, arouse that viewpoint.

"Our" Hemisphere

A further power-linked use of language, discussion of "our" hemisphere, is of a piece with the commission's managerial scenario. It has been traditional for (North) Americans to talk in such a proprietary way since President Monroe unilaterally formulated his doctrine (1823). Related talk of "our backyard," in the phrase of the Reagan administration (not "our neighbor's house"), reflects this imagination-based and top-down sense of power and position, as does the commission's attempt to define unilaterally whose influence in Latin America will be deemed "foreign" (i.e., non-United States).

However, such paternalistic phrases are a self-absorbed overlay which imagines America to have a greater proprietary involvement in the hemisphere than it has in reality. For example:

- American trade and comparative economic domination have diminished dramatically: in 1950 the United States bought almost half of Latin America's exports and Latin America brought 56% of its imports from the United States. Today, both numbers are less than 30% and are falling.¹⁰⁰
- From World War II until 1965, Latin America did depend upon the United States for almost all of its weapons. But today, with growing military establishments, the arms sales of Germany, France, the Soviet Union, Israel, and (from within the hemisphere) Brazil approach or exceed ties to American sources.¹⁰¹
- Such indices of international power and coalitions as the voting patterns of international bodies show Latin American countries typically to be independent from – and often opposed to – U.S. positions: in 1983, on recorded votes in the United Nations, Latin American countries voted *against* the U.S. position 73.2% of the time.¹⁰²
- Latin America's annual growth rate over the past twenty years has exceeded that of the United States (6% versus 3.5%); individual countries are impoverished but, collectively, their aggregate GNP is now greater than for Western Europe in 1950.¹⁰³

Unrealistic Self-Prescription

Guided by a period of perceived tension in hemispheric relations, successive administrations have announced new Latin American policies, pledged greater attention to the region, vowed their support for Latin America's economic development, and expressed their interest in the region's political evolution . . . calling [the] new approach a Good Neighbor Policy, an Alliance for Progress, a Mature Partnership, a New Dialogue, or a Caribbean Basin Initiative . . . The next phase of this historic cycle generally sees the newly announced policy toward Latin America set aside.

– A. Lowenthal¹⁰⁴

Americans have had great difficulty thinking about Latin America without assigning it a lower position in a top-down system of imagining. And in this world of hardball drama, inattention (between crises) to those of lower position is their correlated fate.

The commission's official mandate included the request to address the problem of "building a national consensus."¹⁰⁵ Its prescription, "the best route to consensus on U.S. policy toward Central America is by exposure to the realities of Central America,"¹⁰⁶ echoed the limitations of Maxwell Taylor's report: It avoided a deep analysis of why the American political system has consistently failed to produce – and act on – this desired knowledge of reality.

For over twenty-five years there has been a well-validated recognition (in official studies) that America's *rationaly derived* long-term policy would be to accelerate development and reform in Latin America. A deeper explanation – and, I believe, a more intelligent and effective one – is that American policy derives from strong imagination system effects. Thus, between crises, these nations (and their peoples) become invisible; they are too lacking in power and status to be noticed and to engage motivation for any long-term policy.

The understanding of American institutions and the foreign policy process I have proposed forecast, by contrast, the commission's long-range, managerial program will not be adopted and sustained by Congress. And if that long-term commitment fails, the integrity of the entire *Report* falls apart; the policy of reform and repression ("change must occur, but violence is not the way,") is a message without intellectual and moral integrity if the United States political system sets policy by a dual-track approach to thinking about the world, with primacy to imagination, and will not deliver the reforms.

This forecast is also supported by historical experience. American political institutions have generally not sustained the best instincts of the American people and its leaders in long-term foreign aid programs. The Alliance for Progress – the earlier program to contain Castro's short-term threat in the early 1960s while mounting long-term social, economic, and political development to prevent further revolutions – came apart. Crises elsewhere (especially Vietnam) diverted attention; as Latin America moved out of the headlines the take-charge consensus of the Kennedy years dissolved; competing domestic demands became more salient to the political system.

Today, there is even less basis for the commission's confidence in the effects of rational analysis. Foreign aid commitments were difficult to sustain even in the *early* 1960s when there was a mood favorable to international activism and a prosperous economy. Aid to lower status foreigners is less likely during the 1980s and 1990s with the massive, locked-in budget deficits each president and Congress will face, the mounting costs of current entitlement programs for health and the elderly, and growing pressures to meet other domestic needs. There is no evidence that rightist governments of Latin America respond constructively to handwriting on the wall, and there is little evidence to suggest the American political system has the capacity to remember it is there. The probable forecast of foreign policy created by the American system is that even if President Reagan's \$8.4 billion proposal is enacted, it will substantially dissolve in three to four years; the deaths will not buy time used effectively to put a long-term solution into effect. There *will* be further revolutions and further commission reports.

In sum, my argument is that the Kissinger Report (and American policy in Central America in the 1980s) is a standard American fantasy. And as a basis for policy, such an overdramatized and oddly wired system of imagining fails (as it has since 1954) both to win the war and to win the peace.

Policy Prescriptions

It is not my intent to propose specific American policy toward Central America; the barriers to more intelligent and effective policy belong to a more intimate and basic realm than can be accessed by policy analyzing. The barriers are both systemic and belong to the knower; they are matters of self, imagination, and motivation. But there is one practical recommendation which bears directly on my thesis, judgement concerning the nature of American political institutions: if the analysis presented here is accurate, one lesson I draw is that Congress should pass President Reagan's long-term economic aid program *and* transfer its total funding, immediately, to an independent foundation so that future actions by the American political system will be unneeded to sustain the program. This rational, long-term action may be achievable. In recent years, Congress has shown wisdom in legislation to recognize features of the American political system, and especially those pressures on congressmen that need to be counterbalanced, to achieve sound long-term policies. (Both the War Powers Act and the congressional budget reforms evidence a capacity for thoughtful response to historical experience.) Such foresight and statesmanship might be used now to transfer total funding while there is still the dramatic challenge to sustain the attention and action mood.¹⁰⁷

REFLECTIONS ON GOVERNMENT LEARNING

It won't be what we want, but we can learn to live with it.

— Clark Clifford (1965) in a letter to President Johnson advising a negotiated settlement, rather than escalation of the Vietnam War.¹⁰⁸

Governments do learn, although primarily tactics to stay out of trouble in the press: both Presidents Kennedy and Reagan learned quickly to neutralize recurring press controversy that threatened the foreign policies they chose to pursue. But the basic motives have not been affected. Typically, beneath cloaks of secrecy and behind dust clouds of high-minded talk, initial failure has only increased motivation. Only by strong emotional impact, *in extremis* and faced by nuclear deterrence, has a lesson such as Clifford proposed (above) been accepted.

Revolutionaries also learn — perhaps more quickly because they have greater incentive to do so — and the result of their study has been to reduce the effectiveness of American repetitions. In 1954, Arbenz collapsed before a faked invasion force of 110 men; such clever, “low cost” American tactics have not succeeded again. In the early 1980s Fidel Castro openly — and successfully —

urged the Sandinistas to learn from his mistakes, avoid the public trials and executions that had given his enemies ammunition in the critical battle for American public opinion, and hold democratic elections promptly.¹⁰⁹

Revolutionaries are not immune from their own mis-imaginings and hasty lessons. Implacable American hostility is not a foregone conclusion: that American governments have often pressed every advantage, including invasion and assassination, against even popularly supported regimes (Castro) or democratically elected regimes (Chile), has not meant that *every* administration will do so.¹¹⁰

CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Lessons and American Institutions

To close the feedback loop from recent history, what lessons do we draw about our institutions and the learning potential of the American political system? How may Leviathans learn? The case material does not provide direct evidence to answer this question, but the conceptual framework we have created to understand the American foreign policy system can be used, together with the case material, to suggest several observations about the problem.

The Executive Branch

My thesis has been that repeating forms of American foreign policy express the operation of the mind engaged within an overdramatized and oddly wired sensibility of the nature of power, a sensibility inherent in the national security world. Via such a strong imagination system an inexorable policy logic (encoded within its structure) is engaged. The resulting policy syndrome includes overconfident use of countervailing aggression, disconnection of ideals and moral restraint beneath a belief in one's high-minded rhetoric, stark fears, policy discussions with categories and symbols of little genuine help to understand local realities, and lack of any rational long-term policy (among other effects). In the cases we have examined, American institutions follow a reparative (and ahistorical) logic that is neither rationally derived, nor moral, nor effective (on its own terms) in the long term.

From inside a larger-than-life drama, the decision maker's direct experience of reality appears so compelling as to dismiss as naive those whose sensibility concerning global politics is outside the system. Even good rational analysis (for example, the capacity to recognize *and* to act on the observation “this isn't working”), applied step by step as history unfolds, has not prevented recurrence.

I believe it strengthens the force of this last point (and indicates how other historical material might be understood using the framework) to discuss briefly a related case, the Vietnam War, whose unfolding was designed by most

of the same men who participated in the earlier Central American decisions of the Kennedy administration.

In 1961, when Kennedy and his inner circle of advisers launched the Bay of Pigs operation, they believed they could elicit an enthusiastic response from a foreign people. Kennedy committed himself, at first ambivalently, to paramilitary action which, by its failure, strengthened the American government's commitment to resolve the Cuban problem by violence.

Yet after these events and failed policies, a decade with a similar policy sequence, increasingly terrible violence compounded with idealism, unfolded, and the men who witnessed the earlier events and helped to determine them repeated their same sequence of error. Vice President Johnson, becoming president after Kennedy's assassination, with many of the same advisers — Bundy, McNamara, Rusk, Taylor, and Rostow — began and then escalated an American war in Vietnam. Again, America faced a national liberation movement backed by Communist support and using Marxist ideology. Again, policymakers initially convinced themselves they might reform an indigenous government to win "the hearts and minds" of a foreign people. Again, a president made an initial, ambivalent commitment to resolve the problem by violence. Again it failed; initial failure engendered greater violence and more failure.

If the government learning rate could be determined by the analytical intelligence of key individuals, it would have been high during the Kennedy administration and among these men as the decade unfolded. At the cabinet table with Kennedy were men of worldly experience and unusual analytical ability: McGeorge Bundy, the National Security Adviser, was a former dean at Harvard; Dean Rusk, the secretary of state, had been president of the Rockefeller Foundation, a former assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern Affairs during the Korean War, and a college dean; Robert McNamara, secretary of defense, was formerly president of Ford Motor Company; Allen Dulles, CIA director, was the most experienced director in the history of the agency. The president himself had been educated at Harvard and had won a Pulitzer Prize.¹¹

Such analytical ability, even among liberals, did not forestall the cycle of recurrence. Superbly trained analytical minds are not a sufficient condition for government learning. Presidents (who also are trapped) of both parties have followed the same policy sequence. Thus I think we must judge it fanciful to predict a remedy to be self-generated within the executive branch alone. As we have seen in chapter 5, there is a system-level logic involved, and it would take an unusual president to act outside the conventional drama.

Congress

Might Congress remedy the shortfalls in the executive branch? Perhaps, in principle, it could. But its traditional role in foreign policy has been as an emotionally expressive body. Congressional critics of hard-line policies, appre-

hensive of being scapegoated, typically score points yet ultimately defer the responsibility for policy to the president. Congress would likely act to block a policy were there to be prior and general change in public opinion, but any exception to the general rule of congressional impotence within this drama would depend upon the leadership of unusual individuals, not the system itself.¹²

However two American institutions — the press and the universities — do have the power, the role, and the independence to effect long-term change.

The Press

The *Times* creates the upper boundary of political system sophistication, and the principal news media are the daily guardians of truth, memory, and the standards for what will be accepted as accurate knowledge and serious discussion of foreign policy issues. In these return engagements, when an administration and the elite press offer different versions of reality, it is the journalists who have been telling the truth. The elite news media have become a vital national resource to sustain contact with reality, and they have a causal role in political system learning which extends beyond simple credibility; society "remembers" and applies the institutional memory *Times* reporters include in their stories.

There are two basic failings to be remedied to tame unrefined and overdramatized imaginings. First, the mass news media traffic in simple dramatic images and postures, simple themes of success or defeat; they create the domestic policy debate as a ritualized drama of "the administration versus its critics," assigning critics, like the chorus of a Greek tragedy, to a secondary role. The results of such self-indulgence can be misdirecting and (now, in a nuclear age) even dangerous. We have seen the results of such a sensibility when Robert McNamara observed rationally during the Cuban Missile Crisis that "a missile is a missile," and offered his conclusion that no deterioration of American security would result if Soviet missiles could be launched from Cuba as well as Russia. The president, Robert Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, the Marine Corps commandant, and other senior advisers agreed with McNamara's point.

But, at this moment when they might have deeply wished policy *not* be trapped within the logic of a drama, they felt unable to select, and act from, a simple, rational sensibility; *others* would think in such terms.¹³ They chose a response which the president believed to risk a 50% chance of nuclear war between the superpowers. Thus, at the system level, the past legacy of drama-based policy, sustained in public consciousness and expectations, blocks the rational lessons the American government may adopt, even when it wishes to so. (Decision makers *do* think in two modes; and my point is not that men are irrational per se but that even men with the ability, and preference, to be rational make consequential policy via the second — imagination — track.)

The vivid memory of McNamara's remark and Kennedy's response should be remembered by newsmen and editors: and, if they dramatize foreign policy issues less breathlessly, calmness would be a constructive, long-term contribution to learning.¹¹⁴

A second useful route to intelligent and effective policy would be to quote politicians less exclusively. Serious, purposive, and sustained discussions of foreign policy issues are badly needed, from people who are not apprehensive about reelections or selling a point of view or ideology.¹¹⁵ This is true especially when the templates based on American political experience (and, too, the experience of most American politicians) awkwardly misconstrue the dynamics of foreign societies. Because of the anxieties engendered by foreign policy, and the prominent – but untrustworthy – capacity of presidents to offer reassurance, a decision to open the doors a bit wider and create what would be in the public mind a “lesser pantheon” of serious, knowledgeable, and committed people in whom confidence could grow would be a useful step.¹¹⁶

Universities

So our state will be ruled by minds which are awake, and not as now by men in a dream fighting with one another over shadows and for the power and office which in their eyes are the great good.

– Plato, *The Republic*¹¹⁷

Colleges and universities play a critical role in the learning of American society. They are among the major institutions to create and sustain American standards for honesty, evidence, and what counts as serious discussion of public issues. They also have the job to codify experience and transmit its lessons to each new generation of students.

At many universities, the present curriculum in public affairs crystallized in the mid-1960s as leading universities, aided by several major foundations, drew a round of lessons about what to do next in public affairs curricula.¹¹⁸ Their prescription was to design professional training programs, and specifically to develop students' ability to perform rational decision analyses using tools of microeconomic theory and scientific methods.¹¹⁹

My thesis – in part, a reflection on this lesson – has been that neither analytical brilliance nor its deficiencies have been the cause of the policies or the repeating errors in perception and judgment we have seen. Rather, an entirely separate mode of emotion-charged mental functioning now appears to be involved. Thus I derive the lesson that an appropriate public affairs education should address this mode of political knowledge and, specifically, could usefully address four orientations by which a student establishes a relationship between his or her self and the world: (a) responsibility; (b) integrity; (c) the reflective education of imagination; and (d) the developed ability to know what one wants.

Responsibility

One inference from the case material is that government learning might increase to the extent individuals (generally) come to act from a sense of personal responsibility for collective, long-term outcomes.

Technical rationality itself is irrelevant to the selection of *whose* costs and benefits, weighted in what degree, will affect a foreign policy decision. When the death and economic destruction visited upon a foreign people are counted as “nothing to lose,” the cause is not “irrationality” in a technical sense but a refusal to be responsible to (and for) anything wider than one's own nation-state. As we have seen, no one in American government can be depended upon (by assignment to any conventional role) to act responsibly (and consistently) for long-term collective outcomes of the international political system, not even an American president.

Personal responsibility, however, needs to be *chosen*. American society, like the federal bureaucracy, engenders its own self-limiting definitions and divisions of responsibility.¹²⁰ Ritualized acts of criticism, whether from Congress or citizens, still defer responsibility to the executive branch and a presidential “over-mind,” with the typical outcome that substantive criticism becomes merely a domestic political problem for the executive branch, addressed primarily tactically, as an imagery and press relations problem. Yet government learning is a dependent variable, and committed individuals – anywhere – willing to be responsible to effect policy outcomes and government learning would be an improvement.

Honesty and Integrity

By contrast with behavior characteristic of the hardball political imagination system, honesty is a good basis for effective long-term foreign policy. There is nothing Pollyannish about the recommendation: in the long term, there is no sequence in the case material for which lying or dissembling for short-term tactical advantage effected a net American benefit. More typically (chapter 4), this type of individual “sophistication” systematically snarled the executive branch.

Nations develop reputations, and the reputation for sophisticated lying weakens the international power of the United States more consequentially than any of the hostile, external forces actually encountered in these return engagements. A high-minded *Report* by a commission whose chairman (Dr. Kissinger) was responsible for secret policies of bombing Cambodia and “dual-track” (in another sense of the term) operations to destroy Allende in Chile (behind a public facade of “noninterventionism”) can scarcely be credible to revolutionaries in foreign countries (of whom there will continue to be many in the world, in the years ahead, with whom the United States will wish to deal). To mount covert operations behind a pretense of high-minded rhetoric undercuts the credibility – hence the power – of the words of a nation's

leaders: ultimately, when the words of a nation's leaders cannot be trusted, there is no basis for either power or international order left, save violence and the threat of violence.¹²¹

The ability of anyone in American government to make an important, truthful statement rests on more than individual honesty. It requires collective intellectual integrity, that is, a coherent and consistent policy.¹²² In principle, presidential leadership should integrate American foreign policy, but between crises inattention has been the rule instead. Eisenhower's separate instincts were not bureaucratically integrated, and America's sudden Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde switch occurred because State Department moderates initially set policy but did not personally embody the full range of Eisenhower's instincts. (They were strung along, too.) Whether the hawks or the "moderates" within the Reagan administration reflect the president's views, perhaps not even he has decided.¹²³

Improved Imagination Ability

My argument has been that two separate faculties of the mind operate in political life and policy formation. Thus I have presented a brief, in part, for education of the imagination, and with it (I would argue) the development of the capacity for realistic empathy, maturity of motivation, well-calibrated judgment, and genuine learning.¹²⁴

This entire section reflects the implications of this framework, which are perhaps especially strong for universities whose students' imaginations lead them to desire upward mobility in a literal (and psychological) sense. But I want to emphasize that while I have judged standard theories of American foreign policy to be overintellectualized portrayals, my conclusion is *not* that "rational" policy is the prescription for intelligence and effectiveness. Rationality has little to do with policy, one way or the other, and maximum technical rationality would not change a great deal.¹²⁵ One *needs* the "hardball" system — rather than dismissing it — to understand the world (and *other* actors): The prescription is to recalibrate the overdramatizations and reconnect (in a more healthy way) the oddly wired connections.

But there is a further area which would be useful to address from a different angle: the problem that systems are not single individuals and cannot always be usefully imagined in this way.

First, a caveat: To some extent, as we have seen, systems *do* operate as people. The archetypal drama of American relations with Central American revolutionaries is, in part, a battle of impulses and motives based on the model of interpersonal (and intrapsychic) relations, tense dramas of the self for dominance and control extended across thousands of miles to a hemispheric — and global — scale.¹²⁶

But it is also true that systems do not function as single individuals. Their behavior is a compound of institutions, recruitment and selection procedures,

electoral risks, the penchant for drama, and the standards of truth reflected in the mass media; they reflect the curricula of universities and the sense of personal responsibility, knowledge, and sustained commitment of unofficial establishments. And much else.¹²⁷ There are, then, many processes, and many entry points, where changes may spin out their effects to support learning. And thus it follows that it would also be useful to discuss with students the nature of the political sophistication that is required for constructive effect. Now often what passes for "sophistication" is only recognition that unprincipled and selfish behavior may lie behind idealistic pretenses. Yet, while the sentence "the patient is ill because germs are pursuing their self-interest" is not wrong, neither is it scientifically sophisticated. If a patient's symptom is low energy, a well-trained physician might think of 1,200 or more possible diagnoses, each linked to appropriate, well-targeted remedies. Similarly, the capacity to appraise — and remedy — failures of government learning requires understandings of political systems which are more intelligent and effective than simple domestic dramas of moral and political criticism have been.

What One Really Wants America to Contribute to the World

A final lesson from the case material: The American foreign policy system, in its 1980s dealing with Central America, is not "on track." The political system was never designed to learn or to create foreign policy in a complex world. Behaving naturally, by its current design, its return engagements unfold in the same way as in the past, to produce the same results. What one learns from Europe's political history, an historian once observed, is how little of it one would care to repeat, and the same, I think, is true of American policies towards the impoverished peoples of Central America and their revolutions.

If the basis for learning is caring (motivation), the question to pose for students, or anyone, is: what does one really want to contribute to the world? Connected to the answer to this question, historical memory becomes useful and suggests a final observation. Specifically, the radical-left image of American policymakers has been incomplete and wrong; no past American decision maker has wanted Latin American policy to work out this badly. There is, to be sure, the standard perpetual short-term preoccupation of each administration with its simple images, anxious apprehensions, breathless activism, and obsessions to restore a challenged sense of control over world events. But each return engagement with Central American radicals, beginning with the Arbenz overthrow in 1954, has found contemporary American leaders to recognize the now-standard two problems (short-term: revolution; long-term: development and improved governments). Each generation of policymakers has wanted solution to the long-term problem to be among its legacies: in historical perspective, the performance of the American political system has not been satisfactory to its leaders, either. That the American political system, given its design, does not yet naturally embody this second purpose

and hope of the individuals who serve as its leaders is one of the lessons of history.

NOTES

1. By this model of dual-track information processing I do not intend to reject the model that rational decision processing also occurs. The case material shows ample evidence that there is a *zone* of strategic and rational calculation, primarily tactical. My argument is that almost all of the *consequential* inputs into such rational calculations derive from understandings of the nature of power, assessments of reality, motivations, and designations of costs and benefits which are produced via the strong imagination operating of the mind. For example, Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1981) shows an "expected utility" model may be useful, *provided* one assumes almost all of the *important* variables as "givens" (e.g., what is worth going to war about, how much the cost of human life is considered a "cost" by the decision maker, etc.). M. Howard, "The Causes of Wars," *The Wilson Quarterly* 8 (1984): 90-103, provides a similar view by an historian, endorsing the applicability of a "rational calculation" model, that is, if one does not also seek to explain (as the current model does) the source of motivations.

I do not intend to single out the United States. There have been many further examples of the intellectual vulnerability of instinctive, power-motivated thinking. (The British and French actions against Nasser of Egypt, for example, a failure which did not dissuade Kennedy in the early 1960s.) If one surveys the conduct of international relations, it is surprising how frequently erroneous and self-defeating the decisions of major powers have been. In Karl Deutsch's summary: "When a hungry cat concentrates his attention on a mousehole, there usually is a mouse in it; but when the government of some great country has concentrated its attention and efforts on some particular foreign-policy objective, the outcome remarkably often has been unrewarding. . . . During the half century from 1914 to 1964, the decisions of major powers to go to war or to expand a war, and their judgments of the relevant intentions and capabilities of other nations, seem to have involved major errors of fact, perhaps in more than 50% of all cases." Cited in L. Etheredge, *A World of Men: The Private Sources of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978), p. 1. A recent discussion that would suggest application of a theory of larger-than-life drama to the American Civil War is J. McPherson, "The Confederacy as a Pre-Emptive Counterrevolution" (Photocopy, 1981).

2. Etheredge, *A World of Men* presents quantitative evidence for these motivational patterns in the American national security world and reviews cross-cultural evidence that the causes of war are linked to competition and power motivation. I should emphasize that we lack evidence of how widespread such encoding might be throughout American society, potentially a crucial problem for the analysis of political economy and blockages to learning in economic growth policy. See the discussion in Lloyd Etheredge, "Dual-Track Information Processing in Public Policy Decision Making: Models of Strong Imagination Systems." Symposium paper presented to the American Psychological Association Meetings, Toronto, 1984; Lloyd Etheredge, "President Reagan's Counseling," *Political Psychology* (in press, 1985).
3. M. Halperin, P. Clapp, and A. Kanter, *Bureaucratic Behavior and Foreign Pol-*

icy, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1974); C. Argyris, *Some Causes of Organizational Ineffectiveness Within the Department of State* (Washington, DC: Department of State Center for International Systems Research, 1967); L. Bloomfield, "Planning Foreign Policy" *Political Science Quarterly* 93 (1978): 369-391.

4. See, for example, Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1964) and *Political Language: Words That Succeed and Policies That Fail* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); Doris Graber, *Verbal Behavior and Politics* (Urbana, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1976).
5. See, for example, Karl Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government: Models of Communication and Control* (New York: Free Press, 1963). For a brief discussion of the possible learning superiority of democracies - undercut by national security secrecy - see the comparative perspective of David Apter, "Letter to the Editor," *New York Times*, October 23, 1983.
6. See R. Packenham, *Liberal America and the Third World: Political Development Ideas in Foreign Aid and Social Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973); S. Eisenstadt, "Interactions Between Organizations and Societal Stratification" in P. Nystrom and W. Starbuck, eds. *Handbook of Organizational Design*, vol. 1. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 309-322.
7. National Bipartisan Commission (hereinafter NBC). *Appendix to the Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), pp. 29, 50.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 31. A useful collection of relevant documents is P. Rosset and J. Vandermeer, eds., *The Nicaraguan Reader: Documents of a Revolution Under Fire* (New York: Grove Press, 1983).
9. NBC, *Appendix*, p. 31.
10. NBC, *The Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), p. 26.
11. NBC, *Appendix*, pp. 31-32.
12. NBC, *Report*, pp. 49-53.
13. NBC, *Appendix*, pp. 32-33.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33. This same type of last-minute search occurred 20 years ago as Castro's movement spread.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 798.
20. R. Fagen "Revolution and Crisis in Nicaragua" in M. Diskin, ed., *Trouble in Our Backyard: Central America and the United States in the Eighties* (New York: Pantheon 1983), pp. 125-154; NBC, *Appendix* (1984), pp. 39. See also pp. 482-490, however, for specific discussion of relations with the Miskito Indian population by Americas Watch and Helsinki Watch.
21. The aid package ran into trouble in Congress where the reality of uncontrolled leftist revolutionaries again (as in 1959-60) produced fervent debate, demands and conditions far exceeding those applied to right wing governments, and delay; it was almost 11 months before the Carter bill, encumbered with amendments, was approved. See I. Destler "The Elusive Consensus: Congress and Central America" in R. Leiken, ed., *Central America: Anatomy of Conflict* (New York: Pergamon, 1984), pp. 319-335, p. 320.
22. NBC, *Appendix*, p. 45.

23. A useful review of learning by the revolutionaries is provided by E. Evans, "Revolutionary Movements in Central America: The Development of a New Strategy" in H. Wiarda (ed.), *Rift and Revolution* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1984), pp. 167-193.
24. U.S. Department of State, *Background Paper: Nicaragua's Military Build-up and Support for Central American Subversion* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1984), p. 8-11; NBC, *Appendix*, pp. 40-41; J. Cirincione and L. Hunter, "Military Threats, Actual and Potential" in R. Leiken, ed., *Central America*, pp. 176-177, 181.
25. U.S. Department of State, *Background Paper*, pp. 8-11. There is a tacit arms control process involving the Soviet Union and American limitations for the level and amount of weaponry it supplies to Afghanistan rebels. The Soviet buildup has given Nicaragua a solid defensive capability against any combination of its immediate neighbors but probably does not allow it to defeat Honduras. See Cirincione and Hunter, "Military Threats," p. 177. This refined appraisal is absent from the Kissinger (NBC) *Report* discussed below.
26. For a discussion of the Honduran military, see NBC, *Appendix*, p. 41. The commission's estimates are more dire than those of Cirincione and Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.
27. This is one, defensive, reason for American forces now to be stationed in Honduras, although this emplacement has been officially described as simply a result of Big Pine II (and other training exercises), thus not requiring congressional approval.
28. NBC, *Appendix*, pp. 50-56.
29. Paackenham, *Liberal America*, provides a critique.
30. American policy beginning in the mid-1960s intentionally strengthened the military in these countries with the opposite expectation. See W. LaFaber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: Norton, 1983) for a general discussion. In evaluating his thesis it should be noted that military coups and repression also occur at a non-zero rate in underdeveloped countries not penetrated and managed so extensively by the U.S.
31. NBC, *Appendix*, p. 51.
32. For discussions of the El Salvador military and the *tandu* system of organization see R. Millett, "Praetorians or Patriots: The Central American Military" in R. Leiken, ed., *Central America*, pp. 73-75; R. Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador* (New York: Times Books, 1984), pp. 44-64, 290-321. Millett emphasizes that the El Salvador military does *not* have defeat of the revolutionaries as its top priority: institutional protection and promotion of one's own *tandu* are more salient. Thus motivation and combat effectiveness of the El Salvador military are probably only modestly affected by American material aid.
33. R. Meislin, "Duarte Could Win at Polls, Lose a Nation," *New York Times* (April 1, 1984), p. 1 discusses the problem of interpretation.
34. The tabulation is an underestimate: the Archdiocese requires firsthand testimony which is more difficult to obtain from rural areas distant from San Salvador. These figures do not include "abductions by government security forces" after which the victim does not reappear: approximately 2,300 were in this category between October 1979 and mid-1983. Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, p. 62; R. White, *The Morass: United States Intervention in Central America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), p. 44, gives monthly statistics.
35. R. White, *The Morass* details the terror campaign. Comparing overt press cen-

- sorship between Nicaragua and El Salvador, it is important to note that only arch-conservative newspapers have survived in El Salvador since 1983 and there is little need for further overt acts of censorship. See Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, p. 360.
36. Department of State, *Background Paper*, p. 18 admits that the flow of arms was "heavy" from November 1980 until January 1981 and since has "varied," i.e., not been consistently heavy. The evidence provided by the department would not support the conclusion that such arms shipments now play a vital role in the El Salvador fighting. An alert Sandinista government, however, might have shipped such massive amounts of arms in the early period as to leave little need for further external support. See also Evans, "Revolutionary Movements."
37. The continuing argument about arms shipments, primarily a symbolic argument (I have suggested) rather than a motivating concern of the Reagan administration, is discussed in T. Buckley, *Violent Neighbors: El Salvador, Central America, and the United States* (New York: Times Books, 1984), p. 307 who records that the Honduran "contra" forces, officially funded by the United States to interdict the flow of arms, have not captured any weapons in 3 years. See also D. Oberdorfer and J. Goshko, "Ex-CIA Analyst Disputes U.S. Aides on Nicaragua," *Washington Post* (June 13, 1984), p. 1; S. Kinzer, "Salvador Rebels Still Said to Get Nicaraguan Aid," *New York Times* (April 11, 1984), pp. 1, 8. For a discussion of international clandestine arms trade and the indigenous black market, see Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, pp. 267-268. Bonner's statistics suggest about 250 government weapons are captured each month by the revolutionaries. *Ibid.*, p. 268.
38. U.S. Department of State, *Background Paper*.
39. H. Smith, "Salvador Vote Settles Little at Home or in Washington," *New York Times* (April 1, 1984), IV, p. 1.
40. For discussions of popular support, see Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, pp. 134-141; White, *The Morass*, p. 40-42 estimates an infrastructure of 100,000 and a popular base of one million: the source of his estimates is not provided.
41. Official American estimates must be used with caution because, from a range of estimates and definitions, they could be understated to imply success or overstated to urge the need for prompt, massive aid. By February 1984 the American embassy said there were 9,000 to 12,000 guerrillas. Note that, by official estimates, this number had grown from about 2,000 three years earlier and 6,000 in mid-1983. See Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, pp. 137-138.
42. Buckley, *Violent Neighbors*, p. 299 discusses the casualty rate reported by the El Salvador military. The military reporting of the war has not been as complete as for Vietnam and it is difficult to derive an accurate, independent military assessment from public sources. A brief discussion of guerrilla military advances is provided in Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, p. 138.
43. Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, p. 139.
44. NBC, *Appendix*, p. 463.
45. Haig's approach is reviewed in B. Rubin, "Reagan Administration Policymaking and Central America," in R. Leiken, ed., *Central America*, pp. 302-308. See also W. Smith, "Dateline Havana: Myopic Diplomacy," *Foreign Policy* 48 (Fall 1982): 157-174; Destler, "Elusive Consensus."
46. From October 1979 until early 1984 American military aid to El Salvador was about \$300 million through open official channels. See Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, p. 63. But this number depends heavily upon definition: by a broader definition White, *The Morass*, pp. 232-244, estimates \$280 million of American

- "security aid" to El Salvador in 1983 and \$216 million in 1982.
47. For a review of Reagan Administration policymaking, see Rubin, "Reagan Administration Policymaking"; V. Vaky, "Reagan's Central American Policy: An Isthmus Restored," in Leiken, ed., *Central America*, pp. 237-257. Concerning the "secret war" see White, *The Morass*, pp. 52-74, which also contains an especially good account of the role of *Newsweek's* November 1982 special report: J. Brecher, J. Walcott, D. Martin, and B. Nissen, "A Secret War for Nicaragua," *Newsweek* (November 8, 1982), also reprinted in Rosset and Vandermeer, ed., *Nicaragua Reader*, pp. 208-215. Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, reflects the stories he wrote while the *New York Times* correspondent in El Salvador.
 48. Concerning the Argentine connection, see White, *The Morass*, p. 54-55 and references to the original reporting in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Newsweek*.
 49. Destler, "Elusive Consensus," p. 321.
 50. Shultz's soporific style and personal decency aided the administration's public relations. As Shultz was interpreted as a moderating influence in Soviet-American relations, and this influence was greatly desired by potential critics of Central American policy, Shultz (and the administration) has probably, for this reason as well, been the subject of fewer attacks. Substantially overconfident, fanciful, and — on the part of some Reagan Administration officials — deceitful comments with respect to human rights "progress" in El Salvador are reviewed by a *New York Times* correspondent in Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*.
 51. In a novel move against the press, the Reagan Administration forbade press coverage when it invaded Grenada in 1983. The maneuver worked surprisingly well, from its point of view, and thus is likely to be repeated.
 52. The Israeli connection is more "known" than documented. See, for example, R. White, *The Morass*, p. 59; S. Kinzer, "Anti-Sandinista Rebels Fail in New Attempt to Unite," *New York Times* (April 26, 1984), p. A10; Associated Press, "Salvadorans Talk of More Israeli Aid," *New York Times* (April 21, 1984), p. 4; P. Taubman, "Nicaragua Rebels Reported to Raise Millions in Gifts" *New York Times* (September 8, 1984), pp. 1, 14. Israel's involvement in Honduras has also effected a double-level cut-out operation, with aid to Honduras, offset by American aid to Israel, then diverted to contra forces. It would be a very difficult channel for congressional opponents to stop. These press stories can be considered timely "alert" messages to an elite audience (especially to Congress) that such sophisticated channels should be known about. The Israeli connection began when the Carter administration officially cut off aid to Somoza. Israel and Argentina served as "cut-outs" to sell Somoza the arms he wanted while the administration, symbolically, expressed toughness about human rights violations and distanced America from Somoza's regime, in anticipation of its downfall. See, for example, Buckley, *Violent Neighbors*, p. 200.
 53. See P. Taubman, "Private Groups in U.S. Aid Managua's Foes" *New York Times* (July 15, 1984), p. 1. Taubman, "Rebels Raise Millions." American leftist groups also supply money to the El Salvador rebels and to the Nicaraguan government.
 54. The pattern continues within the policy process as well: "... the State Department is generally reluctant to oppose military escalation for fear of losing influence." H. Smith, "Ambiguities on Goals" *New York Times* (April 11, 1984), p. 8. The self-perceived political vulnerability of those whose counsel might lead to "defeat" or be stylistically "soft" can probably be accepted as a rule of the foreign policy process: Destler, "Elusive Consensus," p. 334, astutely notes the historical, self-blocking pattern that the congressional critics of hard-line policies

- operate to score points but also maneuver to assure their own ineffectiveness, so that blame for the consequences lies with the president.
55. For example, see L. Chavez, "Salvador Military Questions the U.S. Role" *New York Times* (August 19, 1984), p. 1.
 56. For example, Smith, "Ambiguities."
 57. A review of American military preparations, with reference to the ineffectual congressional criticism, is H. Smith, "U.S. Latin Force in Place if Needed, Officials Report" *New York Times* (April 23, 1984), pp. 1, 8. A detailed, professional assessment of military planning is Cirincione and Hunter, "Military Threats," pp. 178-182. A review of the role of Congress through late 1983 is provided in Destler, "Elusive Consensus."
 58. A large sum, even by American standards, and massive in such a poor country. The original report in the *New York Times* was later confirmed by the Reagan administration. See also J. Kelly, "The CIA's 'Free' Elections" *Counterspy* 8 (June-August, 1984): 33.
 59. For a review of the CIA mining see L. Cannon and D. Oberdorfer, "The Mines, the CIA, and Shultz's Dissent" *Washington Post National Weekly Edition* (April 23, 1984), p. 16.
 60. *Ibid.*; J. Brinkley, "Threats by CIA Said to Influence Anti-Sandinistas" *New York Times* (April 22, 1984), p. 1. An unusually candid interview by a former contra leader, dismissed after criticism of a CIA-authored manual discussing assassination, is J. Brinkley, "A Rebel Says CIA Pledged Help in War Against Sandinistas" *New York Times* (November 1, 1984), p. 1. (The CIA has regularly counseled contra leaders concerning their public statements and effects of American public opinion and briefed them prior to meetings with congressmen and senators.) Major aggressive activity directly commanded by the CIA occurred on October 10, 1983, when a devastating raid on the port of Corinto blew up 3,000,000 gallons of fuel. The columnist Anthony Lewis, "Fear of Change" *New York Times* (April 19, 1983), p. A19 has suggested the raid's timing, several days before an "unwitting" Kissinger Commission arrived to discuss the possibility of a negotiated settlement, may have been intended by the Reagan Administration and helped to produce a "bristling," uncompromising meeting.
Note, too, the "surfacing," of Mr. Llovio, a former Cuban official and defector. As Mr. Llovio defected in 1982, and he was not a highly ranked Cuban official (he had been the chief adviser to the Minister of Culture from 1980 to 1982), his sudden appearance on the front page of the *New York Times* (with a photograph) in 1984, soon after President Reagan's re-election, suggests CIA contingency planning against Castro. L. Maitland-Werner, "High Cuban Defector Speaks Out, Denouncing Castro as 'Impulsive'" *New York Times* (November 19, 1984), p. 1.
 61. For example, H. Smith, "Ambiguities," p. 8; J. Goshko and J. Omang, "The Secret War Inside the White House Over Peace with Nicaragua" *Washington Post National Weekly Edition* (July 23, 1984), p. 16. A general review is Rubin, "Reagan Administration Policymaking," pp. 313-315.
 62. The other members of the commission were: Nicholas F. Brady, former Republican senator from New Jersey; Henry G. Cisneros, Democratic mayor of San Antonio; William P. Clements, former Democratic governor of Texas; Carlos F. Diaz-Alejandro, professor of economics at Yale; Wilson S. Johnson, president of the National Federation of Independent Business; Richard Scammon, a political scientist and public opinion specialist; John Silber, president of Boston University; Potter Stewart, a retired associate justice of the Supreme Court; Dr.

- William Walsh, president of Project HOPE, an international medical care and education organization with major programs in the underdeveloped world. There were six Democrats and six Republicans.
63. Details are provided in NBC, *Report, Appendix*, pp. 10-24.
 64. The theory that a "hardball politics" system of imagination produces the outcome of the foreign policy process was published in 1979; its application to the Reagan administration and the Kissinger *Report* is also a prediction. See L. Eitner, "Hardball Politics: A Model" *Political Psychology* 1 (1979): 3-26.
 65. J. Chace, "Deeper into the Mire" *New York Review of Books* (March 1, 1984), pp. 40-48 reviews this history. For reasons of space I have omitted the Rockefeller Report of 1969, which helped to codify the theory (adopted earlier) that the military forces in Central America would be agents of modernization and stability.
 66. NBC, *Report*, p. 104.
 67. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 68. *Ibid.*
 69. *Ibid.*
 70. *Ibid.*
 71. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 72. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-118, 120-123. Aid was also to be linked specifically to human rights "progress": unfortunately the commission did not specify requirements, probably a serious mistake in dealing with an administration that has ignored past requirements. See Buckley, *Violent Neighbors*.
 73. Primarily, then, my methodology will be to cite the commission's own report, the analyses of its own staff, and the testimony presented to it and published in its *Appendix* to assure that I am not relying upon sources they might inadvertently have overlooked or excluded without the knowledge of some of the commissioners.
 74. A checklist useful to inventory ethnocentric errors in American policy is Eisenstadt, "Interactions."
 75. NBC, *Report*, p. 113.
 76. See Arthur Schlesinger's reflections on his own learning over 20 years: "The counter-insurgency delusion began in the Kennedy years and expanded in the years thereafter. The trouble is that regimes that call for military shields to defend themselves against their own people don't care a damn about their own dispossessed. . . . As soon as we insert our marvelous shield, moreover, we lose most of our leverage . . . we become the client's prisoners . . . Most of the time the military-shield approach only nourishes the folly and arrogance of the regime." Schlesinger in NBC, *Appendix*, pp. 791-792.
 77. Also the left: Evans, "Revolutionary Movements."
 78. See Howard Wiarda's testimony in NBC *Appendix*, pp. 207-209 et passim. LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*, also reviews this feature of these societies.
 79. Schlesinger in NBC, *Appendix*, pp. 789-793. See also the discussion by M. Greenfield, "A Lesson in Futility" *Newsweek* (March 5, 1984), p. 92.
 80. NBC, *Report*, p. 111. Vaky, "Reagan's Policy" and W. LeoGrande, "Through the Looking Glass: The Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America" *World Policy Journal* 1 (Winter 1984): 251-284 also provide trenchant critiques of the security threat hypothesis.
 81. Mexico would then be America's major line of defense.
 82. Funding will probably continue via indirect routes if direct congressional appropriations are not obtained.
 83. NBC, *Report*, p. 111.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
85. L. Eagleburger, "Interview" *New York Times* (April 22, 1984), p. E2. Underlining added.
86. Cited in M. Rothenberg, "The Soviets in Central America" in Leiken, *Central America*, p. 133.
87. *Ibid.*
88. For a further discussion of the problem of realistic empathy in Soviet-American relations, see R. White, *Fearful Warriors: A Psychological Profile of U.S.-Soviet Relations* (New York: Free Press, 1984).
89. Schlesinger, "Testimony" in NBC, *Appendix*, p. 793.
90. See the discussion, below, of Castro's stringing along of the Soviet Union and purge of the Cuban Communist Party in 1962-1963 after the Soviet Union was publicly committed to his support.
91. This reflective issue - of perspective on how one thinks about a problem and its effect on efficacy - is raised in K. Weick and R. Daft, "The Effectiveness of Interpretation Systems" in K. Cameron and D. Whetten, eds., *Organizational Effectiveness: A Comparison of Multiple Models* (New York: Academic Press, 1983) and illustrates why I have included efficacy, along with intelligence, in my definition in chapter 2.
92. Yet as American power has extended worldwide, the imagination of American leaders has extended to encompass the globe: The commissioners are in the good company of recent American presidents who have publicly perceived "vital" American security interests in every part of the globe with the exceptions of Antarctica and most of Africa. See Vaky, "Reagan's Policy."
93. See J. Nye, ed., *The Making of America's Soviet Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1984); A. George, ed., *Managing U.S.-Soviet Rivalry: Problems of Crisis Prevention* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983); R. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984) for extended discussions of this and other approaches.
94. U.S. "covert" aid to Afghanistan, and Soviet casualties, are discussed in L. Gelb, "U.S. Aides Put '85 Arms Supplies to Afghan Rebels at \$280 Million" *New York Times* (November 28, 1984), pp. 1, 9. Saudi, Israeli, Chinese, and other Arab aid was about \$100 million per year in 1984. NBC, *Report*, p. 146. Gelb, *ibid.*, and M. Erulkar, "CIA is Less Than Top-Notch in Afghanistan" *New York Times* (November 26, 1984), p. A23 discuss evidence of waste, corruption, and poor management.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 42.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.
97. U.S. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*. Senate Report 94: 465. November 20, 1975. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 191-223.
98. See Jorge Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 212-213.
99. For example, Robert White, President Carter's second ambassador to El Salvador, testified to a congressional subcommittee: "The guerrilla groups [in El Salvador], the revolutionary groups, almost without exception, began as associations of teachers, associations of labor unions, campesino unions, or parish organizations which were organized for the definite purpose of getting a schoolhouse up on the market road. When they tried to use their power of association to gain their ends, first they were warned and then they were persecuted and tortured

- and shot. . . . So the leadership of the groups gradually became discouraged and, of course, the Soviet Union—at least Cuba was there to give them understanding and support. So . . . the large majority of the leaders of the Salvadoran guerrillas are Marxist or Marxist oriented . . . I would also add that I do not really believe that the ideological roots of these people go all that deep. I think it is more a response to persecution than anything else." Quoted in Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit*, p. 88.
100. A. Lowenthal, "Latin America and the Caribbean: Toward a New U. S. Policy" in J. Lewis and V. Kallab, ed., *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Third World Agenda* (New York: Praeger, 1983), pp. 53-57.
101. Ibid.
102. P. Fromuth, "U.S. Now More Isolated in U.N. Votes" *The Interdependent* 10 (March/April, 1984): 4, discusses these statistics and their interpretation. The percentage is computed for all recorded votes, disregarding abstentions.
103. Lowenthal, "Latin America," pp. 53-57.
104. Lowenthal, "Latin America," p. 51.
105. NBC, *Appendix*, p. 3.
106. NBC, *Report*, p. i.
107. If the American political system is willing for regimes whose leaders use Marxist-Leninist rhetoric to survive in Central America, then many alternatives become possible. As a practical matter, two guidelines might be suggested by the case material, each of them directed in opposition to the instincts of current power-drama sensibility.
1. A barrier to any settlement with the Sandinistas is their fear—partly derived from recent history—of American treachery. If there is misperception on this account it is urgent that it be credibly addressed, preferably in a dramatic way.
 2. As a basis for an internal settlement in El Salvador (as well as Guatemala and Honduras), the successful policies adopted by the British in India and by the Japanese during the early Meiji restoration might be considered more hopeful than complex American-managed policies built around crucial American symbolisms, such as buying out the relatively small ruling classes with reimbursements or pensions to allow them to resettle in other countries and live out their lives peacefully in the style to which they have become accustomed. Such a financial solution might violate American moralism, but if the day of the oligarchs is to pass, it is self-indulgent to force all participants locked into the process to effect the change at a cost of blood and terror.
108. Clifford's letter is reprinted in L. Gelb and R. Betts, *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1979), p. 371.
109. Buckley, *Violent Neighbors*, p. 206. Rothenberg, "Soviets in Central America," p. 143. See Evans, "Revolutionary Movements" for a general discussion of leftist revolutionary learning.
110. However, if it did not wish to be treacherous, that is, seek to eliminate the Sandinista government behind the lulling guise of negotiations, the Regan administration would need to correct a common misperception in Nicaragua. Given their past learning, America's self-conception is not an accurate guide to the perceptions of leftist revolutionaries.
111. Too, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations shared, in significant measure, a liberal ideology. Justifiably or not, the political right is typically judged to have settled upon simple lessons to guide its policies. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations had a more open style; they attracted men who knew the difference between hypotheses and evidence, men practiced and sophisticated in the

- discernment of other viewpoints, men who could articulate their assumptions and then step back to examine them.
112. See for example Gelb and Betts, *Irony of Vietnam*; Destler, "Elusive Consensus."
113. H. Parmet, *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Dial Press, 1983), p. 278 et passim; N. Lebow, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Reading the Lessons Correctly" *Political Science Quarterly* 98 (1983): 431-458.
114. Research at the *New York Times* by C. Argyris, *Behind the Front Page: Organizational Self-Renewal in a Metropolitan Newspaper* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974) suggests newsmen may instinctively bias the news toward power drama themes. See H. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time* (New York: Pantheon, 1979) for a general discussion of the creation of political reality and, for a theoretical statement, P. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967).
115. George Kennan has provided a steady, thoughtful alternative view in discussions of Soviet-American relations, but in sustaining and developing thinking about other areas of the world, policy discussions in American society are remarkably insular.
116. The founding fathers thought the Senate would be such a body, but those hopes have not been fulfilled. Syndicated columnists have not filled the gap, and none has achieved major stature in foreign affairs since the death of Walter Lippman.
117. Plato, *The Republic* in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Pantheon, 1966), VII, p. 128. Translation is from Richards. Models of strong imagination systems suggest a refinement of the theory of upward-mobility entrapment he had in mind. The issue is not a preference for "rational" over "irrational" forms of thought but of ego-integration of diverse imaginative capacities and impulses. See L. Etheredge, "Larger Than Life Problems: The Citizen, the State, and Policy" Photocopy, 1983; L. Etheredge, "Dual-Track Information Processing in Public Policy Decision Making: Models of Strong Imagination Systems." Symposium paper presented to the American Psychological Association Meetings, Toronto, 1984) and, for a related discussion, J. Loevinger with A. Blasi, *Ego Development* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1976).
118. For example, one might consider the Harvard/M.I.T. Arms Control Program, funded by foundations, which has had extraordinary benefit in producing analysts of defense and strategic issues. The program has made for well-informed critics, certain of their technical grounding, in the nuclear freeze movement and elsewhere—but these assessments are not in the same universe of thought—of global drama—in which national policy has been made.
119. For reflective essays in this tradition see J. March, "Bounded Rationality, Ambiguity, and the Engineering of Choice," *Bell Journal of Economics* 9 (1978): 587-608; J. March and Z. Shapira, "Behavior Decision Theory and Organizational Decision Theory" mimeo, 1982.
120. Responsibility also activates learning because it raises new questions and concerns. A university with a limited responsibility (e.g., bureaucratized) will have a different character, and have less civic value, than a university where the sense of collective responsibility expands to include a society, a domestic political system, even an international political system that, through its students, learns well.
121. One of the tricks of the mind is that the hardball politics practitioner, experiencing himself to be "sophisticated" about power, in long-term practice acts naively and increases the impotence he strives to overcome.

122. For example, as I discussed in chapter 5, the Eisenhower administration had only a general rule: Any "regime dominated by international Communism" would be eliminated. But it did not communicate clearly—because it did not decide beforehand—what would trigger such a judgment. American economic warfare, beginning with a terminated sugar quota, was unexpected by Castro. The threat had not been used as a bargaining tool, and the abrupt cancellation undoubtedly scared him and provided desperate moments. When the axe fell, there was no Soviet agreement to buy Cuba's sugar, and the Soviet Union apparently had not decided to commit its prestige in Castro's support. Castro undoubtedly was testing limits and angling for what he could get. He needed to know the limits. Why should Washington conclude there was Communist *domination* at a \$100 million threshold? If trade patterns and aid were Washington's test of "domination" then—at the \$100 million mark—America retained massive domination of Cuba.
123. Presidential inconsistency, even when not duplicitous, reduces power. Eisenhower's ambassador, Philip Bonsal, presented a liberal American self-image: Castro was gracious to the ambassador; understandably he seldom bothered to talk with him. Carter's ambassador, a "kindly Dutch uncle" in his treatment of Nicaraguan Sandinistas, was also treated graciously, while the Nicaraguans speeded their arms shipments and military build-ups in anticipation of the Reagan administration. See NBC, *Appendix*, p. 45.
124. In the case of domestic policy as well, evidence is mounting that the repetition of simple ideological themes similarly reflects operations of the imagination in need of refinement. See Etheredge, "Larger Than Life Problems," "Dual-Track Information Processing," and "Strong Imaginative Systems: The Liberal Activist Case" (Photocopy, 1983) for discussions of the role of larger-than-life dramas and strong imagination systems in American domestic policy learning. R. White, *Fearful Warriors*, provides an excellent discussion of the problems of developing realistic empathy in international relations and basic elements of what might become a general algorithm.

We might contrast the traditional university education in politics and public policy with another field where the welfare of others is eventually to be affected and a practitioner must also use personal judgment. To become a clinical psychologist a student is expected to enlarge his sense of self: his own rigidities, anxieties, instinctive imaginings, personal ideals, ambivalences, and other barriers to empathy and realism are on the agenda of his (or her) education—and in part with the purpose that he be able to understand others who are *not* like his (initially restricted) sense of self. By contrast, political education was (and is) the exception, with the implication that if people are "good enough" (i.e., smart enough) they will make good choices, their right to self-expression should be honored, and they should not be intruded upon in the area of their political styles and beliefs. The traditional university education in politics and public policy can be a license for arrogance which universities, including elite universities, still have not developed a dialogue fully to engage.

125. A. Meltsner, *Policy Analysts in the Bureaucracy* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1976) gives an extended and perceptive description: in these cases, "political" analysis and "policy" analysis merge and his discussion of individuals with joint expertise is a useful direction.
126. These are zero-sum, or intra-psychic, battles. In a sense American political leaders are practicing (albeit crude) psychoanalytic theorists: The attitudes and impulses beneath the surface generalize and authority everywhere may suffer a common fate which should not be encouraged by the wrong messages.

127. See L. Etheredge, "Government Learning: An Overview" in S. Long, ed., *Handbook of Political Behavior*, vol. 2, (New York: Plenum Press, 1981), pp. 73-161 for a general discussion; L. Etheredge and J. Short, "Thinking About Government Learning" *Journal of Management Studies* 20 (1983): 41-58 for an extended discussion of definitions. They are also a function of the a priori nature of predictable beginner errors: being instinctive and encoded a priori, the hardball sensibility is too plausible; each new generation of policymakers will begin with the same lessons to learn, and will learn them too late; subsequent administrations will repeat the cycle.