

American Policy toward Nicaragua during Ronald Reagan's Presidency



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Introduction.

In my time as a student of American politics and history it has always interested me, why a superpower like the United States of America has intervened so much in other countries' affairs. It has especially captivated me when it comes to a small country like Nicaragua. Between 1853-1933 the United States intervened 13 times in Nicaragua. And U.S. Marines were furthermore an occupying force from 1911-1925.¹ From 1925-1979 U.S. supported right-wing dictator Somoza and his family, who ruled Nicaragua until the population finally overthrew their oppressors. The end of the civil war saw the coming of a new Marxist-Leninist regime governed by the Sandinistas. Through my studies I learned how the Reagan administration in the nineteen eighties had led a proxy war against the Sandinistas, by the use of the Nicaraguan Contras. A war the administration felt so strongly about that it evolved into the Iran-Contra affair, when Congress cut funding for the Contras (see appendix 3). Again, I was intrigued by what motives Reagan and his administration had when deciding foreign policy toward Nicaragua and the problem statement for my master thesis consequently became:

What variables shaped U.S. policy toward Nicaragua during Ronald Reagan's presidency?

Reagan administration's policies

During Ronald Reagan's presidency, the administration carried out various policies toward Nicaragua. The most significant was to turn the Nicaraguans, who were in violent opposition to the Sandinistas, into an army. This army called themselves 'The Counterrevolutionaries', shortened to the name Contras. The U.S. also carried out policy through diplomatic channels. In the years of 1982 and 1983 economic sanctions and a trade embargo was imposed. The United States furthermore engaged in negotiations with the Sandinistas several times. However it was not a bilateral agreement between Nicaragua and U.S. that ended the conflict. A regional peace agreement, led by Costa Rican President Arias, managed to establish a cease-fire between the Sandinistas and the Contras in 1988. Furthermore, in 1990 elections were

¹ Smith, Gaddis (1994). *The last years of the Monroe doctrine 1945-1993*. U.S: Hill and Wang.

held in Nicaragua. Where the Sandinistas lost and consequently they turned over government power to the moderate centrist party UNO in April 1990.

Outline of the thesis

Through my research I discovered five different variables, which each could explain what shaped U.S. policy. The variables are:

1. The situation the Ronald Reagan and his government inherited from the previous administration, which is analyzed in chapter 2.
2. The influence of Ronald Reagan's ideas and moral beliefs that is analyzed in chapter 3.
3. Why the internal strife in the Reagan administration also shaped policy making as analyzed in chapter 4.
4. The way Congress managed to influence policy, which is analyzed in chapter 5.
5. The impact of the Vietnam War on policy as analyzed in chapter 6.

All five variables will be analyzed individually and afterwards be discussed in chapter 7. Furthermore, the theories in chapter 1 will be used in the discussion to argue that the second variable, the ideas and moral beliefs of Ronald Reagan, is the most significant factor in the shaping of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

Theories

International relation theories can help explain the mechanisms that influence policy making. Social Constructivism sees identities and ideologies as influencing factors on how international relations are conducted and on which background foreign policy is made. If identity influences policy making it is important to investigate what this identity is composed of and here it is argued that cognitive images of countries are a part of the identity that influences policy makers' decisions.

Social Constructivism

Social Constructivism is a theory within the field of International Relations. It is concerned with the role human minds and consciousness play in international affairs. It started as a counter reaction to the materialist approach of Neo-realism. Where Social Constructivism argues that social aspects are key to understanding world politics, Neo-realism explains a state's behavior in international relations as based on the possession of material power, like military or economic strength. Social Constructivism furthermore understands international affairs as something taking place within the minds of people. It is not external from humans and cannot be seen objectively. It has been argued that international relations studies thus have to analyze the ideas and beliefs that form the identity of the policy makers.²

In Social Constructivism relations between states are conceived as a social construction and the social world of relations are created by the identity of the people involved in it. This means that there are no laws that everyone follow, like a law of nature. All states do therefore not act the same in identical situations. Hence it is impossible to explain a state's behavior with a systemic theory. Instead you have to focus on the social context where state's identities are made, in order to find out how the state's identity affects relations with other states.³

² Jackson, Robert & Sørensen, George (2010). *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. US, Oxford University Press. Ch. 6, p. 2

³ Hopf, Ted, as quoted in Jackson, Robert & Sørensen, George (2010). *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. US, Oxford University Press. Ch. 6

It is moreover argued that politics 'at home' determines what actions the state carries out abroad, because each state is a product of domestic social practices that form the identity. States act according to their individual identity and therefore they all act differently. Furthermore, they do not act the same toward any two states. Evidence suggests that based on the state's own identity it perceives other states' motives and interests. Thus evaluating each individual state and condemning them to be either an ally or an enemy.⁴

The constructivist theory has been applied to account for the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is argued that the two traditional international relations theories; Realism and Liberalism or Idealism, are insufficient to explain what happened⁵ because Soviet policy makers went beyond a relaxation in international relations and ended up dissolving the state (USSR). It is argued that social constructivism can explain this degree of change. It is argued that by exploring the intellectual shift in Soviet leadership, evidence suggests that the reason for the change in policy was a change in identity within the Soviet policy makers. This identity change was an essential alteration in the understanding of the threat from the Western world.⁶

As argued in this thesis the Carter administration and the Reagan administration had very different approaches to Nicaragua. Evidence suggests Reagan perceived Nicaragua as more of an enemy state than Carter did. Consequently they portray two different identities that created two different foreign policy outcomes. There is accordingly an affinity between the identity of the president and the foreign policy identity of the United States which determines international relations. This affinity can be explained by Social Constructivism.

⁴ Hopf, Ted (1998). *The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory*, International Security, Vol. 23, No. 1, p.24-26

⁵ Realism explains the collapse as grounded in Soviet's bad economy and imperial overstretch. However, it fails to account for the rationale in letting the Eastern European countries break loose without the Soviets using force. Thereby letting the countries move outside of Soviet sphere of influence and consequently destroying the balance of power, which is essential to realists. Liberalism interprets the collapse of the Soviet as an emergence of new conceptions of the state's interest. These new interest would have led to a more conciliatory policy toward Western Europe with increase trade and diplomatic relations.

⁶ Herman, Robert G. (1996), *Identity, Norms, and National Security: The Soviet Foreign Policy Revolution and the End of the Cold War*, NY, Columbia University Press.

Cognitive Images

The theory of Cognitive Images looks into the minds of policy makers, at the identity that forms the decisions. The theory uses a political psychological context of images to explain on what basis policy makers operate. The theory does not neglect circumstances and other factors that influence the making of policy, but regards the cognitive images as a foundation that influence all decisions, all the way from processing information to the implementation of a strategy.⁷

It is argued that a cognitive image is a classification of people or countries that policy makers perceive as similar. The human brain is not capable of processing too much information and need a system which simplifies the incoming data. In the brain the information on e.g. countries, is organized in different categories or patterns, putting a country in a specific category. This speeds up the process of deciding whether information is conceived as true or false.⁸ An example could be when the brain verifies whether or not it is true that the Canadian government has been taken over by a military coup. The brain would quickly think of this as false because of the categorization of Canada as a peaceful democratic society. In the same way it is more likely to think of a military coup as true when speaking of Egypt, if the brain has categorized this country as being more prone to coup d'états.

It has been argued that these images make it easier to predict the behavior of other countries and thereby what action the policy makers own country should take. For the reason that it simplifies the perception of the world, people are inclined to filter information through the cognitive images. However, the brain can change and adopt new information or move countries to different categories if enough new information settles.⁹

According to the theory of Cognitive Images, during the cold war, American policy makers divided countries into the following categories; ally, neutral, enemy and dependent and furthermore the enemy's dependent. An enemy was a country whose goals were in opposition to one's own country. It is argued that the United States

⁷ Cottam, Martha L., (1994). *Images and intervention: U.S. policies in Latin America*. U.S. University of Pittsburgh Press, p.18

⁸ *Ibid*, p.18

⁹ *Ibid*, p.18

viewed the Soviet Union as having contradictory goals to theirs and thus saw them as an enemy state.¹⁰ Latin American countries were thought of by U.S. policy makers as: “...*weak, childlike, inferior...and often led by a corrupt elite*”, and U.S. did not treat these countries as equals. Because of this perception they saw Latin American countries as dependent. In itself a dependent country does not constitute a threat, but because Latin American countries were seen as weak, they were exposed to Soviet subversion and in danger of becoming an enemy’s dependent. A Latin American country was incessantly branded as a dependent. If one of them pursued independence from the U.S. it was a threat, because often it could not change into a neutral or an ally, only into an enemy’s dependent.¹¹

¹⁰ Cottam, Martha L., (1994). *Images and intervention: U.S. policies in Latin America*. U.S. University of Pittsburgh Press, p. 19-20

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 25

Setting the Stage

In this chapter I analyze what situation in Nicaragua the Carter administration handed over to the Reagan administration. It is clear that the Carter administration's approach to the situation in Nicaragua was greatly influenced by the aftermath of the Vietnam War and Carter's moral principle of non-intervention. Furthermore the commitment to human rights made it difficult for the Carter administration to support the continuation of a dictator's regime, with the Democratic majority in Congress. Moreover the Carter administration did not involve itself sufficiently in the conflict to be able to avoid a Marxist-Leninist takeover of a country close to the United States. He thus left a situation that Reagan saw as threatening to U.S. national security.

The Carter administration's foreign policy ideology

Reshaping the idea of the United States as a benevolent superpower

In 1977 after Watergate and the Vietnam War, the newly elected President Carter expressed that he wanted Americans to once again be proud of their country and the people in charge. He was elected in opposition to former Secretary of State Kissinger's power politics, which left the public in the dark and carried out unpopular decisions. He wanted to have a democratic foreign policy where the people were involved. In a speech in June 1977 at Notre Dame University, Carter stated this belief: *"We can also have a foreign policy that the American people both support and, for a change, know about and understand. I have a quiet confidence in our own political system"*¹².

Before he took office, Carter's foreign policy goals were made in close collaboration with his national security advisor Brzezinski¹³. They both portrayed a president that wanted to change world opinion to a more positive perception of U.S. The most important goals were; first and foremost to continue the policy of détente and work on a better relationship between U.S. and Soviet, and reduce the two countries' number of arms, which was pursued through the SALT II agreement. This treaty, however, never became ratified by Congress, because USSR invaded Afghanistan, nevertheless

¹² Notre Dame Commencement Speech June 1977

¹³ Brzezinski, *Power and principle*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London 1983.

the agreement was still being honored by both sides. The Panama Canal treaty did also have a very high priority. Carter strongly believed that the canal belonged to Panamanian people and in the end he reached his goal, even though he had to struggle with Congress to get the treaty ratified. His foreign policy goal for Latin America, next after the Panama Canal Treaty, was to work on bettering bilateral relations between the United States and all the Latin American Countries, especially the democracies.

In 1978 the FSLN also called Sandinistas, succeeded in uniting the Nicaraguan people against their dictator Somoza. This group was by the Carter administration seen as very leftist leaning, but not considered to be controlled by Cuban influence. The Carter administration did not see the Sandinistas as “dangerous” Marxist –Leninist insurgents, as the Reagan administration later defined them¹⁴. Anyhow the Carter administration did not prefer them to take power of Nicaragua no matter how much public support they had. In 1978 the administration hoped instead to create a transitional government consisting of the moderate party FAO, and they were worried that the Sandinistas would seize power.

However, the administration was very reluctant to act as a hegemonic power in Latin America. They believed previous administrations had made bad choices of intervening so much in the affairs of sovereign countries. However there was continuous pressure from other Latin American countries to take action, which forced Nicaragua more and more in the center of attention of the administration. And in the end they decided to act through the diplomatic channels.¹⁵

From September 1978 the top of the administration focused on the situation in Nicaragua, and worked multilaterally on getting mediation between Somoza and the moderate opposition started. A Nicaragua without Somoza and with a democratic elected government was the final goal for the Carter administration. The mediation was steered by the U.S. and ran from October 1978 to February 1979 and involved Somoza opposite the moderate party FAO. But Somoza, who probably had never intended to make a compromise, withdrew after several months of negotiation and refused to step down. Thus setting the grounds for a civil war.

¹⁴ Carothers, Thomas, (1991) *In the Name of Democracy*, U.S, University of California Press, p. 82

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 81

Non-Intervention

Evidence suggests that in the beginning of Carter's term, which ran from 1977-81, people were optimistic and had a faith in a new beginning.¹⁶ It is argued that the late seventies were marked by the failure of the Vietnam War and Carter thus adhered to non-intervention.¹⁷ A White House aide told that Carter in a meeting with the president of Venezuela said: *"he did not believe the United States should engage in a policy of changing the governments of small nations"*.¹⁸ Carter wanted to avoid repeating the mistakes of previous administrations, where the Vietnam War was the best example of intervention that had failed. In a speech at Notre Dame University he said of military interventions: *"This approach failed, with Vietnam the best example of its intellectual and moral poverty. But through failure we have now found our way back to our own principles and values, and we have regained our lost confidence"*.¹⁹

Human Rights

Human Rights, was a key word in the Carter administration as vocalized in Carter's inaugural speech: *"Our moral sense dictates a clear cut preference for these societies which share with us an abiding respect for individual human rights.[...]There can be no nobler nor more ambitious task for America to undertake on this day of a new beginning than to help shape a just and peaceful world that is truly humane."*²⁰

However it was difficult to always follow the moral principles and support human rights if it conflicted with American security interest. For instance did Carter walk a thin line between getting Soviet to negotiate about the SALT II agreement, and at the same time trying to get them to loosen their grip on the Soviet people, by criticizing them for their lack of civil rights. It is argued that Carter did not succeed in carrying out his human rights policy completely.

Nevertheless it impacted on the administration's policy. A study by Stohl, Carleton and Johnson has shown that Carter managed to put human rights on the world agenda.

¹⁶ Pflüger, Friedbert, *Human Rights Unbound: Carter's Human Rights Policy Reassessed*. Presidential Studies Quarterly, Vol. 19, No. 4, Fall, 1989.

¹⁷ See chapter 6 for an explanation to the impact of the Vietnam war.

¹⁸ Pastor, Robert(1987) *Condemned to Repetition*, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, p. 65

¹⁹ Carter, Jimmy, *Notre Dame Commencement Speech June 1977*, retrieved May 2011 from: <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3399>

²⁰ Carter, Jimmy, *Inaugural speech, January 1977*, retrived may 2011 from <http://www.american-presidents.com/jimmy-carter/1977-inaugural-address>

Furthermore the study proved that repressive regimes were cut in aid during Carter's presidency, than during the previous presidents.²¹ Consequently during the Carter administration around 30 countries were cut in aid due to violations of human rights, among them Nicaragua.²²

To avoid another Cuba

After their final military victory, the Sandinistas were sworn into office on July 20 1979. Three days after Somoza had left Nicaragua and sought exile in the U.S. The new Nicaraguan leaders were warmly welcomed by several Latin American countries. The U.S. followed suit. The administration, still fixated on avoiding previous administrations' mistakes, was very focused on avoiding Nicaragua becoming another Cuba. They did not want to push the Sandinistas to radicalization and give them an opportunity to blame own mistakes on the United States.²³

Number one priority was furthermore to prevent the Sandinistas of interfering in their neighbor's boiling revolutions, especially in El Salvador. The goal was also to keep relations good, thus keeping the Sandinistas from seeking Soviet and Cuban help. Evidence suggests that the administration believed that a confrontational U.S. approach would lead to a communist Nicaragua. Moreover if the relationship was good, U.S. hoped to have a minimum of influence in securing a pluralistic democracy. The administration thus decided to help out financially. Nicaragua was in ruins after the civil war, where 45.000 were presumed dead and around 500.000 people were refugees. So it was natural that the first step for the U.S. was to provide food relief, and the next step was to set up a long-term aid program.²⁴

However the administration did not at any point really trust the Sandinistas, but tried to get the best out of an unwanted situation. In September 1979 Carter met with three of the leading Sandinistas in the White House. One of the reasons behind was because Eisenhower had refused to meet with Castro in 1959. This meeting could maybe have avoided the later Cuban-American crisis.²⁵ In the meeting with the Sandinistas, Carter

²¹Stohl, Michael, David Carleton, Steven E. Johnson, (1984) *Human Rights and U. S. Foreign Assistance from Nixon to Carter: Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Sep.

²²Pflüger, Friedbert, (1989) *Human Rights Unbound: Carter's Human Rights Policy Reassessed*. Presidential Studies Quarterly, Vol. 19, No. 4, Fall,.

²³Drumbell, John, *American Foreign Policy, Carter to Clinton*, MacMillan Press LTD, 1997, p.39

²⁴Pastor, Robert(1987) *Condemned to Repetition*, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, p. 194-195

²⁵Ibid p. 206

stressed that aid was conditional on Nicaragua's non-interference and attention to human rights and democracy, thus emphasizing his administration's moral principles.

The Congress

During Carter's presidency there was a Democratic majority in Congress, even though Carter was also from the Democratic Party, they did not go easy on him. Congress were used to being in opposition and carried on being so instead of cooperating. Furthermore, a large faction of Congress, e.g. Senator Edward Kennedy, wanted an even greater emphasis on human rights than Carter did. In his presidential memoirs, *Keeping Faith*, Carter writes: *"Most of the Democratic members had never served with a President of their own political party, and their attitude was one of competition rather than cooperation with the White House."* The opposition from his fellow party members meant that Carter had a hard time defending keeping a dictator like Somoza in place, even if he had wanted to.

Carter did not only get opposition from his fellow Democrats, many Republican congress members were very much against human rights dictating foreign policy. They believed it overshadowed the real issue of containing the Soviet Union and saw the removal of right-leaning dictators as a sure way to open up for Cuban-Soviet influence in Latin America²⁶. Congress was almost equally divided on the subject of Nicaragua's dictator Somoza, and this left some free space for the administration to follow their own convictions on what was the right approach.²⁷ But they still had to circumvent Somoza's friends in Congress, e.g. Rep. Jack Murphy, who tried to influence the decision making. The Panama Canal treaties ratification furthermore made the administration more reluctant to intervene in Central America. The administration wanted Congress to see the region as stable, in order to eliminate any further congressional opposition against the treaties.²⁸

Congress limited the Carter administration again in November 1979. Here Carter proposed an aid bill, asking for \$75 million to Nicaragua, after the regime change

²⁶ Pastor, Robert, (1987), *Condemned to Repetition*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press. p. 62.

²⁷ *Ibid* p. 99

²⁸ Schoultz, Lars, (1987) *National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America*. New Jersey, Princeton University Press, , p.41

from Somoza to the Sandinistas.²⁹ The aid was severely criticized by Republican and Democratic conservatives in Congress, who believed the Sandinistas were communists, and did not wish to spend U.S. tax-payers' money helping Cuba and Soviet.³⁰ The Aid bill was finally passed months later in May 1980, and only after Congress had added an unprecedented number of amendments to the bill.³¹ The most important amendment was that Nicaragua could not interfere in the politics of other countries.

The agreement came into play just before Carter had to hand over the power to Reagan. In January the CIA had concrete evidence that the Government of Nicaragua was aiding Salvadoran rebels and Carter suspended aid to the Sandinistas in the middle of January 1981, thus ending the effort of maintaining a good relationship to the Sandinistas at all cost.

The administration

With the emphasis on human rights Nicaragua would have been an obvious case for Carter to begin with. Somoza had in many years been criticized for his oppressiveness, but Carter did not differ much from his predecessors' policy toward Nicaragua. Nevertheless, Somoza was apprehensive when Carter took office and felt that he had lost the guaranteed support from the U.S.³²

Neglected conflict

Carter himself did not get involved with the case to case decision making regarding Latin America and human rights. Instead to take care of the Region the Christopher Committee was established in April 1977.³³ This Interagency Group on Human Rights and Foreign Assistance chaired by Warren Christopher, debated the pro and cons for restricting and granting aid, and in April 1977 restricted military and economic aid to Somoza. It was not a complete stop and the cut was not enough to have any

²⁹ Pastor, Robert(1987) *Condemned to Repetition*, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, p. 209

³⁰ Schoultz, Lars, (1987) *National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America..* New Jersey. Princeton University Press, p. 47

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 47

³² *Ibid*, p. 50

³³ *Ibid*, p. 51.

significant effect. Since no top officials were involved in policy making, no big decisions was made.

The neglect of the Central American situation and especially the Nicaraguan meant that the administration passed up opportunities for creating an alternative situation that would have suited U.S. interests better. First the administration could have forced Somoza into harder negotiations or supported him so he could stay in power, instead they imposed sanctions that had no impact, and second the administration could have intervened more directly and tried earlier to turn power over to a moderate government.

One such situation was in February 1979 when the administration had no choice but to publicly denounce Somoza. In a meeting attended by the top of the administration, with among other Brzezinski, it was agreed to impose sanctions, that involved completely terminating the suspended military aid program and calling home most of the U.S. personnel and the Peace Corps. The economic aid was not suspended, as a way, not to be left totally out of leverage, without anything more to take away from Somoza.³⁴ These sanctions could have been imposed much earlier, but had been used to threaten Somoza during negotiations, and then became a reality when he did not act according to the wishes of the United States. The administration now directed their gaze at more important world situations, for example U.S. relations with China and the revolution in Iran, and did not discuss Nicaragua for a whole month.³⁵

First when it was too late in the summer of 1979, an attempt at avoiding complete Sandinista government was pursued unilaterally by U.S. pointing out the second consequence of the Carter's administration's neglect. The administration sent the new Ambassador to Nicaragua, Pezzullo, to Managua with a mission. He had to try to widen the 5 man Junta, the Sandinistas had proposed, or even better, to create a completely different government. He failed and after this attempt, the State Department did not want to pursue anymore solutions. Instead they wanted to accept the Sandinista victory. Moreover the Organization of American States had in June 1979 given legitimacy to the Sandinistas, by equaling them to Somoza's government.

³⁴ Pastor, Robert, *Condemned to Repetition*, Princeton University Press. New Jersey 1987, p. 119

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 120

The U.S. attempt at creating an alternative to the Sandinistas was thus too late and the situation could not be pushed in another direction.³⁶

Different opinions

Within the Carter administration there were different views on foreign policy. National Security advisor Brzezinski was a traditional cold warrior, who believed that containment³⁷ of Communism was the most important issue, and the emergence of leftist regimes were to be avoided. Carter himself and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and many in the administration were modified cold warriors,³⁸ they too saw containment as very important, but did not necessarily see leftist governments as the same threat as the traditional cold warriors and they strived to evaluate each case individually.³⁹

In the summer of 1979 the administration was divided on what to do with the Sandinista takeover of Nicaragua. National Security advisor Brzezinski advocated using U.S. force, also to show the Soviets that the U.S. were strong in their own backyard, but both Carter and Secretary of State Vance strongly rejected the proposal. As an alternative, a different outcome was again pursued through the Organization of American States with other American countries.⁴⁰

Carter handed over a Nicaragua-situation that was worsening when he left office. He had to cancel aid because the Sandinistas still helped insurgents in El Salvador against U.S. will. But it did seem that his policy of avoiding radicalization of the Sandinistas, helped to a certain degree. The Sandinistas slowly stepped up repression during Reagan's presidency, not Carter's. However everything Carter did in his presidency was later tarnished by the utter failure of the Iran hostage crisis, which also cost him reelection. Consequently Reagan followed a very unpopular president, whom he could

³⁶ Pastor, Robert(1987) *Condemned to Repetition*, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, p. 147

³⁷ Containment here means to stop Communism from spreading to more countries.

³⁸ Cottam, Martha L.. (1992)*The Carter Administration's Policy toward Nicaragua: Images, Goals, and Tactics*, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 107, No. 1,

³⁹ Brown, Seyom, (1983), *The Faces of Power*, NY, Columbia University Press, p. 459

⁴⁰ Pastor, Robert(1987) *Condemned to Repetition*, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, p. 147

blame, among other he blamed Carter for being weak and letting communists take over Central America and creating a threat to U.S. national security.

But could Carter have acted differently? If he had tried to push out Somoza earlier before full civil war erupted, it could have been easier to establish a democratic centrist government before the Sandinistas gained too much influence. But on the other hand, if Somoza had held on to the power in spite of U.S. pressure, the ultimate outcome would have been sending in American troops to remove him. This ending would also have been unacceptable for the American people, who were still too emotionally affected by the Vietnam War.

The Ideas and moral beliefs of Ronald Reagan

In the previous chapter it was researched what situation president Carter handed over to Ronald Reagan regarding Nicaragua. This chapter will analyze Ronald Reagan's fear of communism⁴¹ and his urge to encourage democracy worldwide. Neo-conservatives also took a great interest in these two issues⁴². They furthermore shared an opposition the détente. The connection between Reagan and the neo-conservatives will accordingly be accounted for in this chapter. Another factor influencing the thinking of all American politicians is the history between the U.S. and Latin America. The United States has since the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, regarded the western hemisphere as their sphere of influence and have had a tendency to act in the interest of the United States regardless of the welfare of Latin Americans⁴³.

A lot of factors are influential in making policy, one of the factors are ideologies. Perceptions and interpretations of the world are shaped by concepts, ideas and representations that together form the individual's ideology.⁴⁴ When taking office Ronald Reagan proclaimed he came with a script⁴⁵ as a guide for what was to happen during his presidency. But this script was meant metaphorically and there was no written down list of goals. This puts an even greater emphasis on the values and ideologies of Ronald Reagan, because without written guidelines the goals of policy making becomes elusive. Consequently, Reagan's ideology was the only constant factor and it therefore established the foundation for the making of policy toward Nicaragua. This chapter will accordingly explore and outline the ideas and moral beliefs of Ronald Reagan.

⁴¹ Cannon, Lou, (2000) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Public Affairs, ch.13

⁴² Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press. ch. 3 & 4

⁴³ Schoultz, Lars, (1987) *National security and United States Policy toward Latin America*, NJ, Princeton University Press, p.283-292

⁴⁴ Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press, p. 13

⁴⁵ Pach, Chester, (2003) *Sticking to his guns: Reagan and National Security*, U.S., University Press of Kansas, p.85

The Evil Empire

Throughout his life Reagan made strong remarks about communism and the Soviet Union, thus showing his anticommunist feelings.. This can be heard in his many speeches wherein he continually criticized communism. These anti-communist feelings was influential in shaping U.S. policy toward Nicaragua. Reagan was known all over the world for his strong rhetoric about the Soviet Union, among other naming it the Evil Empire in a speech on March, 8 1983. In this speech he warned against a nuclear freeze because of the threat from the Soviet Union.

His anti-communist belief started primarily after World War II and peaked during the first years of his presidency.⁴⁶ Reagan's fears of communism will be discussed in this section, primarily analyzed through the rhetoric in his speeches. Reagan was very involved in the making of his speeches and they therefore show his personal beliefs. Furthermore it has been argued that rhetoric influences reality, emphasizing the importance of the speeches.⁴⁷

Reagan was against Communism and the Soviet Union because of three things. His fears included 1. Communists' perceived dishonesty. 2. Their lack of value in human life and human rights and 3. their expansionist ideology and behavior. Reagan wanted the Sandinistas in Nicaragua removed, because of their ties with communist Cuba and the Soviet Union, thus making them a threat to national security. He furthermore saw the Sandinistas as a threat because of their Marxist-Leninist beliefs which Reagan was sure the Sandinistas would impose on the rest of Central America.⁴⁸

1. Communists and dishonesty

Reagan's primary critique of communism was the lack of ethics that to him made Communism dishonest and deceitful and therefore dangerous.

Reagan was not born with a fear of communists, but through his life experiences his worldwide changed. Communism did not become a part of Reagan's life until he began working in Hollywood in 1937. In the nineteen twenties and thirties, Hollywood had been extremely pro-communist, but in the early nineteen forties, there

⁴⁶ Cannon, Lou, (1991) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p. 282-287

⁴⁷ Carothers, Thomas. (1991) *In the name of democracy*. U.S, University of California Press. p. 244

⁴⁸ Pach, Chester, (2003) *Sticking to his guns: Reagan and National Security*, U.S., University Press of Kansas, p. 96.

were few communists left in Hollywood. They had fled the party after the reality of the Stalinist Regime, which was extremely repressive, surfaced.⁴⁹ Reagan did not, at that time, see communism as a threat, but he did not sympathize with it either.

After World War II, when Communism by many were considered to be the greatest threat to national security, investigations to seek out communists were carried out by HUAC (the House Un-American Activities Committee). As president of the Screen Actors Guild, the actors union, Reagan testified before HUAC in 1947. At this point in time, his view of communism had changed and he now saw it as an abominable philosophy and believed that communists were dishonest. But, he also testified that he did not see communism as a grave threat to national security, because he thought it could and would be defeated by democracy and democratic institutions.⁵⁰

Evidence suggests that Reagan's anti-communist beliefs nevertheless grew in these years. Sources tell that he as a result began his crusade against communists, because they wanted to take control of the movie industry. In 1951 Ronald Reagan was called "*a one man battalion*" against communism. In interviews with Lou Cannon and Laurence Barrett, Reagan has told of his personal encounters with communists in the movie industry and how he believes they damaged his career. Reagan thinks that he deliberately was turned down by producers only because of his firm stand against communism. He concluded on the basis of these experiences that all communists are coldblooded cynics with a complete lack of moral. Reagan referred to this as his personal encounter with communism and on the background of these events Reagan based his resentment and fear of communism, which he carried all the way to his presidency.⁵¹

Speeches in the radio

This critique of Communism was a recurrent theme that Reagan frequently aired in public throughout his life. He had prior to running for president already established ideas on foreign policy that he broadcasted in speeches on the radio. These speeches, that Reagan wrote himself, were broadcasted in the 1970's, after he had served as

⁴⁹ Cannon, Lou, (2000) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Public Affairs, p. 243

⁵⁰ Whole paragraph: Cannon, Lou, (1991) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p. 282-287

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 282.287

Governor of California. Around one third of the speeches are about foreign policy and many of them centers on communism and the dishonesty of the doctrine.

In a radio broadcast in April 1975 Reagan talked about current events in Indochina and how communists did not abide by treaties because they are dishonest⁵² He also donated several speeches to neo-conservatist Eugene Rostow, a fierce antagonist of the Soviet Union. Reagan described how Rostow point by point explained how communists have broken treaties in the past and he strongly criticized U.S. for entering into any negotiations on arms reductions, because USSR, both Rostow and Reagan believed, would never uphold their end of the bargain⁵³.

2. Communism's disrespect for human rights

Another of Ronald Reagan's critiques of communism was the lack of value they put on human life and human rights. An ideological trait, Reagan saw as very different from American and western thinking. It was a great factor explaining why he feared their cruelty and wanted to keep communism out of the western hemisphere. The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, which could have led to a missile attack on American soil, had taught America the consequence of having communism close to home.

In several radio speeches in 1977 Reagan exposed communism's lack of respect for human life, by describing how cruel communism had been in countries like Cambodia. Here the new communist regime carried responsibility for killing a third of the population. In a radio speech Reagan concluded that this killing was directly linked to the Marxist-Leninist teachings, he said: "*What a reminder of Lenin's line that if ¾ of the world population had to die it would be worth it if the remaining ¼ were communist*"⁵⁴. With this unverified Lenin quote Reagan depicted a system that put ideology before humans. Furthermore when commenting on the Soviet's shooting down of a Korean airplane September 1983 he said: "*It was an act of barbarism born of a society which wantonly disregards individual rights and the value of human life*

⁵² Reagan, Ronald, (2001) *Reagan in his own hand*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p. 49.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 92-98

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 40

and seeks constantly to expand and dominate other nations."⁵⁵ Thus again painting a very grim picture of communism and their moral.

Evidence suggests Reagan believed America had a higher respect for human life because of the moral of western ideology. He therefore believed the United States had a bigger 'threshold to step over' before firing the first shot. As Reagan stated in 1983: *"The defense policy of the United States is based on a simple premise: The United States does not start fights. We will never be an aggressor."*⁵⁶ Reagan saw the world as bipolar, and the U.S. was an innocent country in the West which was tyrannized by the Evil Empire of the East.

It has been argued that another reason for fearing the Soviet Union was the conviction that they had surpassed America in military power, which increased the danger they posed against U.S. national security⁵⁷ It was believed that the Soviets had been constructing this military advantage from the sixties and onwards, even though it had put a great strain on their economy.⁵⁸ It had been their reaction to "losing" the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Department of Defense wrote in 1983: *"The Soviet Union poses a greater danger to the American people than any other foreign power in our history"*⁵⁹ because USSR was the only country with enough military power to destroy the United States. Reagan moreover asserted in the 1982 speech to the British Parliament that the military weapon buildup is the fault of "the other side" and called it: *"an arms race in which the West must, for its own protection, be an unwilling participant"*. With the enemy being military superior it was difficult to contain communism without a deterrent. Reagan therefore advocated for the largest increase in defence spending ever in peacetime. In fact *"between 1980 and 1985, defence budget authority*

55 ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON THE SOVIET ATTACK ON A KOREAN CIVILIAN AIRLINER, September 5, 1983, retrieved from http://reagan2020.us/speeches/soviet_attack_on_korean_airliner.asp

56 Ibid

⁵⁷ Pach, Chester, (2003) *Sticking to his guns: Reagan and National Security*, U.S., University Press of Kansas, , p.86

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.87

⁵⁹ Schoultz, Lars, (1987) *National security and United States Policy toward Latin America*, NJ, Princeton University Press, p.109

increased in real terms by approximately 53 per cent".⁶⁰ But this was necessary to hold the Evil Empire in check and ensure America negotiated from strength in dealings with the USSR, one of the cornerstones of Reagan's beliefs.⁶¹

3. Communist expansionism

Reagan often said in his speeches that Communism in its roots was expansionist. This posed the greatest threat of the ideology's dangerous features, since that meant communists wanted to make America and the world 'red'. In a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals on March 8 1983 Reagan said his most famous quotes about the Soviet Union. As mentioned above, in this speech he named the USSR "*the Evil Empire*" and called it "*the focus of evil in the world*". He saw them as malevolent because he believed their goal was to impose their evil system on the rest of the world, in the speech he elaborated: "*...as good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution*".

In a speech on June 8, 1982 held in the British Parliament, Reagan accused totalitarian forces, meaning communism, of supporting revolutions all over the world: "*At the same time we see totalitarian forces in the world who seek subversion and conflict around the globe to further their barbarous assault on the human spirit*". Thinking communism was trying to expand at any opportunity made Reagan confident, as well as many other officials in Washington, that the Soviet Union and Cuba were behind almost all unrest and revolutions in Latin America, due to their plan of getting world domination.⁶² Evidence suggests that the left-leaning Congress members and pragmatists in Reagan's administration counted in others factors as well, one of the most important being poverty. They thought it ludicrous to blame all discontent on Soviet and Cuban influence, when it was obvious that the people of Central America

⁶⁰ Drumbell, John (1997) *American foreign policy, Carter to Clinton*, Hong Kong, Macmillan Press, p.64

⁶¹ Bell, Coral, (1989) *The Reagan Paradox*, UK, Edward Elgar Publishing, p.27

⁶² Pach, Chester, (2003) *Sticking to his guns: Reagan and National Security*, U.S., University Press of Kansas, p. 96.

lived under very poor conditions.⁶³ But Reagan was firm in his conviction. This made it difficult for him to believe that the Sandinistas wanted a revolution because they had been living in poverty under a violent dictator and not as Reagan thought; because Cuban advisors had stirred up trouble.

This conviction that Communism was the origin of all Latin American revolutions led directly to administration policy being; aiding countries in danger of being taken over by communism. In National Security Decision Directive NSDD75 May 1982 under the headline “The Soviet Empire” was written: “*Cuba: The U.S. must also provide economic and military assistance to states in Central America and the Caribbean Basin threatened by Cuban destabilizing activities.*” However the administration had already committed itself to this policy and aid had as early as 1981 been provided to the Contras through CIA⁶⁴

Detente

It is argued that because Reagan saw Communism as deceitful he was against détente, which means an easing of the tensions between East and West. He did not approve of the warmer relationship that had evolved between the two superpowers which had led to arms limitation negotiations like SALT I and II. Since communists could not be trusted, Reagan thought it better to have as little to do with them as possible and especially avoid signing any treaties with the Evil Empire. To prove this point Reagan did not meet with a Soviet official until February 1983, two years into his presidency⁶⁵.

Détente was in particular carried out by Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State under both Nixon and Ford. A decline in American military power had forced Kissinger to seek a less tense relationship with the Soviet Union and to lead the focus away from

⁶³ Schoultz, Lars, (1987) *National security and United States Policy toward Latin America*, NJ, Princeton University Press, p. 111

⁶⁴ Reeves, Richard (2005) *President Reagan, The Triumph of Imagination*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.135

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.138

the difference in ideology that divided the two powers.⁶⁶ For Reagan the conflict with the Soviet Union was a moral and ideological war and he could not accept acting as friends. As a result he greatly opposed the foreign policy of Kissinger under Ford. He criticized it widely in the 1976 campaign, where Reagan sought to be nominated as the Republican presidential candidate instead of Ford.⁶⁷ And when becoming President in 1981 he used his first presidential press conference to again show his disapproval of détente. When asked about the possibility of carrying out détente he answered: "*so far, détente had been a one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims*"⁶⁸ putting to rest any presumptions of him going soft on Communism once in office.

Evidence suggest that Reagan's predecessor, Democrat Jimmy Carter, was also committed to détente, but in a lesser degree than Kissinger. As described in chapter 1 Carter had put a great emphasis on human rights and among others criticized USSR for the treatment of their dissidents. Furthermore he boycotted the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow and imposed an embargo on grains sale to USSR, both in reaction to the Soviet 1979 invasion of Afghanistan.⁶⁹ It was a shift away from détente, but for Reagan this was not enough. He wanted to return to containment, not only carry out symbolic gestures, because otherwise the Soviet Union would eventually dominate all of planet Earth. The definition of Containment is the notion that the United States must "*use its influence to prevent leftist revolutionary movements from coming to power*"⁷⁰ either by coercive diplomacy or by military means as the Vietnam War was the result of.

It has been argued that Reagan was not satisfied with containment either. He sought to roll back Communism. Rollback originally referred to driving Soviet out of Eastern Europe. Later it was applied worldwide and meant converting Communist regimes to

⁶⁶ Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press, p. 99

⁶⁷ Bell, Coral, (1989) *The Reagan Paradox*, UK, Edward Elgar Publishing, p.11-12

⁶⁸ Cannon, Lou (2000) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Public Affairs, p. 241

⁶⁹ Drumbell, John (1997) *American foreign policy, Carter to Clinton*, Hong Kong, Macmillan Press, p. 48-49

⁷⁰ Hamilton, Nora, ed. (1988) *Crisis in Central America*, U.S. Westview Press, p. 3

capitalist democracies. U.S. had sought to rollback Communism with the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba and it is argued that also the Contras in Nicaragua were an expression of rollback.⁷¹

That the Reagan administration provided aid to insurgents in Nicaragua stood in sharp contrast to Carter, who had allocated aid to the Marxist-Leninist Sandinista regime instead.⁷² Carter's policy was the ultimate expression of détente, given in an attempt to keep the government from radicalizing and turning toward Cuba. As mentioned in chapter 2 the Carter administration had hoped it would preserve a constructive relationship between Nicaragua and U.S. This policy was miles away from the ideology of Ronald Reagan. There were many differences between the two presidents; the biggest was how they perceived the level of Soviet threat. As Reagan said about Carter in the 1980 presidential campaign, he is "*totally oblivious to the Soviet drive for world domination*"⁷³

Through his speeches Reagan clearly showed his antipathy towards and fear of communism and the Soviet Union. As a result of this fear Reagan wanted to move away from détente and return to the nineteen fifties containment of communism or even further to the rollback of Communism. This, among other, manifested itself in support for insurgents in Nicaragua and it also amounted to a massive military buildup in the United States. It additionally led to a cool relationship between the two superpowers, and arms reduction negotiations were put on hold in the beginning of Ronald Reagan's presidency.

⁷¹ Walt, Stephen M. (1986) *The Case for Finite Containment: Analyzing U.S. Grand Strategy*. International Security, Vol. 14, No. 1

⁷² LeoGrande, William M. (1998) *Our Own Backyard*, U.S., Chapel Hill & London, p. 30

⁷³ Quoted in *ibid*, p. 52

The Quest for Democracy

The following section will show that one of the reasons America got involved in Nicaraguan policy, was to ensure democracy could be established in the country. Furthermore it will analyze that this interest in democracy was partly inspired by neo-conservatives. The administration defined democracy primarily as free elections.

Democracy was a recurrent theme in Reagan's rhetoric, and through the years he showed that he genuinely believed in this concept with his willingness to risk American lives in its name. It is argued that the reason for the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada was thus primarily, to restore democracy on the island⁷⁴. The dedication to democracy was also apparent in 'Project Democracy', a project the administration started to work on in their first year in office. The intention was to fund projects that would promote democracy worldwide.⁷⁵ Moreover Reagan already revealed his belief in democracy in his testimony to HUAC in 1947, by saying it would win over communism. In the same year, he joined the association; Americans for Democratic Action. He furthermore showed his dedication to the spread of democracy in the before mentioned radio speeches.

Reagan saw the Contras as the only democratic force in Nicaragua, and they had to be supported if communism should not absorb Nicaragua and consequently all of Central America. In a speech on May 9 1984 asking for aid to the Contras, Reagan named them freedom fighters; *"the contras, the freedom fighters in Nicaragua, have offered to lay down their weapons and take part in democratic elections; but there the communist Sandinista government has refused."* In his State of the Union Speech in 1985 he further elaborated when talking about the Contras and stated that: *"Support for freedom fighters is self-defense ... I want to work with you to support the democratic forces whose struggle is tied to our own security."* What Reagan meant by 'our own security' was the threat of communism so close to the American border, as he told reporters on March 10 1986; if Nicaragua is communist it will result in a;

⁷⁴ Pach, Chester, (2003) *Sticking to his guns: Reagan and National Security*, U.S., University Press of Kansas, p. 100

⁷⁵ Carothers, Thomas. (1991) *In the name of democracy*. U.S, University of California Press, p. 201

*“map of Central America covered in a sea of red, eventually lapping at our own borders.”*⁷⁶ The President was again referring to the threat of communist expansionism as discussed above.

Evidence suggests Reagan saw America as unique,⁷⁷ and democracy and personal freedom were some of the things that made the United States special. Reagan’s statements show that U.S. was an example for the rest of the world and in one of his radio broadcasts he invoked the old picture of America as *“the shining city upon a hill”*.⁷⁸ Reagan believed U.S. to be an example the rest of the world’s eyes were drawn to and looked up to. The President’s speeches furthermore suggest his belief in American exceptionalism, and he sought to extend the good things of the United States, like democracy, to the whole world. This manifested itself in his 1985 State of the Union address: *“Our mission is to nourish and defend freedom and democracy, and to communicate these ideals everywhere we can”*.

It is argued that Reagan especially saw communist expansionism in both South and North America as a stain on the United States’ manifest destiny of defending democracy and it was an attack on freedom in its stronghold.⁷⁹ Reagan moreover stated that Americans were extraordinary: *““We the people,” this breed called Americans...special among the nations of the Earth...We will again be the exemplar of freedom and a beacon of hope for those who do not have freedom”*⁸⁰ Reagan wanted Americans to feel good about themselves again, in opposition to Carter that proclaimed the American people should blame themselves for the state of the country. Reagan was consequently happy to be called Dr. Feelgood by his critics and the American people responded well to his optimism. In a 1981 polling 90 per cent of people asked, thought that Reagan would restore the international respect of the United States.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Arnson, Cynthia J., (1989) *Crossroads*, NY, Pantheon Books, p. 192

⁷⁷ Hunt, Michael H. (1987) *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, U.S, Yale University Press, p.186

⁷⁸ Reagan, Ronald (2001) *Reagan in his own hand*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.14

⁷⁹ Drumbell, John (1997) *American foreign policy, Carter to Clinton*, Hong Kong, Macmillan Press, p.88

⁸⁰ Quote taken from: Reeves, Richard (2005) *President Reagan, The Triumph of Imagination*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p. 7.

⁸¹ Cannon, Lou, (2000) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Public Affairs, p.745-746

This corresponded well to Reagan's 1980 campaign slogan "America is Back"⁸². Evidence suggests he wanted to reclaim the golden times just after World War II when America was the reigning power on the world arena. As Reagan's biographer, Cannon, describes him; Reagan saw the world through WWII glasses⁸³. His worldview was settled in the nineteen forties and Reagan carried a finished set of ideas with him to the White House⁸⁴. This parallels with Reagan's revival of the Truman Doctrine from the forties.

In March 12, 1947 Truman asked Congress for aid to Greece, who was fighting against communists insurgents. With this Truman started continuous U.S. help to people all over the world who were fighting communism in their own countries; also named the Truman Doctrine. Reagan's request for supporting the Contras was a continuation of the Truman Doctrine, merely it was to help insurgents fight a communist government instead of the other way around. To show the ties to Truman, Reagan deliberately used language from Truman's famous speech. The purpose of Reagan's speech on May 1984 was to arouse public support for aid to the Contras, in order for Congress to approve the necessary funding.

Reagan had another reason for preferring democratic governments. He was of the persuasion that democracies were more reluctant to go to war than totalitarian states. It has been argued that "*Reagan and his allies[...]embraced the traditional liberal internationalist creed: more democracies mean fewer threats to the United States*".⁸⁵ So when the Sandinista government began a military buildup Reagan was very alarmed: "*Nicaragua's own military forces have grown enormously... Why does Nicaragua need all this power?..The truth is they announced at their first*

⁸² Drumbell, John (1997) *American foreign policy, Carter to Clinton*, Hong Kong, Macmillan Press, p.55

⁸³ Cannon, Lou, *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, Simon & Schuster, NY1991, p.334

⁸⁴ Pach, Chester, (2003) *Sticking to his guns: Reagan and National Security*, U.S., University Press of Kansas, p. 86

⁸⁵ Ikenberry, G. John (1999) *Why Export Democracy?* The Wilson Quarterly Vol. 23, p.5

anniversary, in July 1980, that their revolution was going to spread beyond their own borders.”⁸⁶.

Neo-Conservatism

Neo-conservatism is a concept that evolved over time and it is not an official party affiliation, but an ideology a group of people followed. The movement continues to change; the neo-conservatives of today and of the George W. Bush era are not identical to the neo-cons who were influential in the 1980's. The movement did not get its name before the 1960's and referred to the newly conservatives among Democrats. Evidence shows the shift happened primarily because of the opposition to the Vietnam War that made the Democratic Party take a leftist turn. The Neo-conservatives were a fraction that tried to keep the old values of the Democratic Party and was therefore against détente. They believed communism should be fought all over the world and they supported the Vietnam War putting them in opposition to the majority of Democrats.⁸⁷

Among the first age neo-conservatives was Irving Kristol, who started the journal 'The Public Interest' in 1965. They derived mainly from Trotskyites, a branch of communism that did not believe in the Soviet Union, but preferred a worldwide socialist revolution instead of Stalin's 'Socialism in One Country' strategy. They all attended City College of New York in the nineteen thirties, where they cultivated their Trotskyism. Later the future neo-conservatists became disillusioned with communism and turned against it, thus developing into a kind of social democrats that were very anti-communist.⁸⁸ Second age neo-conservatives emerged in the nineteen seventies and they were the group of neo-conservatives influencing Ronald Reagan.

In 1972 the Democratic Party nominated The New Left faction's candidate George McGovern to run for President against Nixon. The evidence shows that the Cold War Democrats, which among other were against the New Left's isolationism felt they had

⁸⁶ Reagan, Ronald, Address to the Nation on United States Policy in Central America, May 9, 1984, retrieved from <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/50984h.htm>

⁸⁷ Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press, p. 6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid* p. 21-27

lost their party. When McGovern lost to Nixon in a landslide they formed The Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM) in order to fight for the party's return to the real Democratic agenda, which in foreign policy terms meant containment of communism.

The neo-conservatives were not only opposed to the New Left but also to the Republican Party's policy of détente.⁸⁹ Within the party they had a steadfast ally Senator Henry M. 'Scoop' Jackson. He did not commit himself to being a neo-conservative, but the similarities in beliefs were so great that the first name for the neo-conservatives had been 'Scoop Jackson Democrats'. Furthermore his staff was conjured of neo-conservatives like Richard Perle, who later became Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy 1981-1987 in the Reagan administration. The shared beliefs between neo-conservative and Scoop Jackson were a distrust of the UN and arms limitation and support for a strong U.S. defense, everything a part in the fight against the Soviet Union.⁹⁰ Jackson was very much against the cooperative relationship between the two superpowers and in 1973 he sought to destroy it. He somewhat succeeded with the Jackson-Vanik amendment, that conditioned U.S. grain sale to the USSR on exit-visas to Soviet Jews.⁹¹

The before mentioned CDM was a neo-conservative foundation and a Democratic one. As it became more and more involved in foreign policy, the issues shared with right wing hawks increased. As a result the bipartisan Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) was founded in November 1976 by previously mentioned Eugene Rostow. He was the one of the most outspoken antagonists of détente; hence his strong opposition to SALT II that Reagan described in his radio broadcasts. And he had fathered the most influential critique of Kissinger with his 1974 'The Quest for

⁸⁹ *Ibid* ch. 3

⁹⁰ *Ibid* ch. 4

⁹¹ Judis, John B. (1995) *Trotskyism to Anachronism: The Neoconservative Revolution*. Article retrieved from www.foreignaffairs.com.

Détente' and believed that any treaty or interaction with the Soviet Union was considered détente.⁹²

The Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), which Reagan became a member of in 1977, started out with a good relationship to the new Democratic President Carter. But after it became evident that Carter was far away from the CPD's conviction of the level of Soviet threat, they parted with him. This gave an opening for Ronald Reagan who in his second try had won the Republican Party's presidential nomination and was to run against Carter in the 1980 presidential campaign. The neo-conservative Democrat's foreign policy and Reagan's were identical. Reagan, as anti-communist as any neo-conservative, agreed that the fall in defense spending had opened up a 'window of vulnerability' and argued that military spending should increase drastically to stand up to the Soviet Union and they agreed on the United States' mission to spread democracy worldwide, but first and foremost were they both against détente.⁹³

In spite of their Democratic affiliation the neo-conservatives could not endorse Carter and they finally ended up supporting Reagan, thereby turning their backs to the party they had grown up with.⁹⁴ 'Scoop Jackson' who did not much like Carter could not break with the Democratic Party and ended up campaigning for Carter. For the neo-conservatives Ronald Reagan was the only option of ever seeing their foreign policy view carried out in real life. However Podhoretz, an influential neo-conservative, argued that Reagan needed the neo-conservatives as well, he did not believe Reagan would have won without the neo-conservatives.⁹⁵ He needed them because the movement's endorsement helped him win in traditional Democratic constituencies. And the neo-conservatives did not come out of the 1980 presidential election empty handed. Not only did their candidate win, a lot of them were offered positions in the

⁹² Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press, p.100-104

⁹³ Drumbell, John (1997) *American foreign policy, Carter to Clinton*, Hong Kong, Macmillan Press, p. 56

⁹⁴ Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press, p. 110

⁹⁵ Podhoretz, Norman, (1982) *The neo-conservative anguish over Reagan's foreign policy*, NYT Magazine, May 2 1982,.

Reagan administration, 70 out of the 125 members in the CPD were offered a job.⁹⁶ Most notably Kirkpatrick and Perle as mentioned before, but also Rostow and Elliott Abrams who had a lot of influence on the policy in Nicaragua.⁹⁷

As mentioned earlier, there was no overall goal proclaimed by Reagan and his administration about their foreign policy. Nevertheless influential political commentator and neo-conservatist Charles Krauthammer found a pattern in Reagan's foreign policy, the reversed invocation of the Truman Doctrine led Reagan to support-insurgents in Nicaragua, and also in Afghanistan and Angola where they were also fighting a Marxist-Leninist government. In the long tradition of presidents having their own doctrines, Krauthammer named this policy of supporting insurgents 'The Reagan Doctrine'.

The doctrine was pronounced on the basis of Reagan's 1985 State of the Union address where he proclaimed: "*Our mission is to nourish and defend freedom and democracy.... [W]e must not break faith with those who are risking their lives -on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua- to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth*"⁹⁸. It is argued that it was not a significant shift away from prior doctrines, nevertheless it epitomized Reagan's view of America: "*It reflects a continuity of values, embodying ideological themes [...] that is generally characteristic of all American foreign policy doctrines: belief in American uniqueness [...] convictions about the power of the American example, a sense of mission [...]it incorporates the same Wilsonian values as the Truman Doctrine*".⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press, p. 181

⁹⁷ A full list can be found in appendix no.2

⁹⁸ Reagan, Ronald. *State of the Union Address*. February 6, 1985. Retrieved from <http://reagan2020.us/speeches/>

⁹⁹ Johnson, Robert H. (1988) *Misguided Morality: Ethics and the Reagan Doctrine*, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 103, No. 3,

It is argued the Reagan doctrine was a defendant of democracy¹⁰⁰ and it was molded towards communist regimes and not rightwing dictatorships. This derives from the writing of Jeane Kirkpatrick also a neo-conservatist. In her famous article 'Dictatorships and Double Standards' she states that communist countries cannot by themselves evolve into a democracy, insurgents fighting to overthrow these governments were therefore the only solution in moving toward democracy: *"Although there is no instance of a revolutionary 'socialist' or Communist society being democratized, right-wing autocracies do sometimes evolve into democracies-given time,"*¹⁰¹ She moreover writes that whereas autocratic regimes leaves family and religion in place, totalitarian communist regimes are more evil because they take these institutions away.

The overall purpose of the article, published in the neo-conservative magazine Commentary in 1979, was to attack Carter's foreign policy. Kirkpatrick criticized the Carter administration for having double standards because they only demanded human rights improvement from rightwing dictatorships and let leftist totalitarian regimes, like Cuba and Nicaragua, carry on unabated. Reagan agreed and used it in a speech to the British Parliament three years later: *"Some argue that we should encourage democratic change in rightwing dictatorships but not in Communist regimes."*¹⁰² In the article Kirkpatrick furthermore strongly condemned that Nicaragua's dictator Somoza had not been kept in power by the U.S. and consequently had been followed by a regime that was hostile to America. She preferred rightwing dictatorships to totalitarian ones, because it was safer for U.S. national security. This line of thinking was in perfect alignment with reagan's and Kirkpatrick was brought onboard his 1980 presidential campaign as an advisor on foreign policy. She later became his ambassador to the UN and an advisor on national security issues, especially with regard to Latin America.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Muravchik, Joshua, (1991). *Exporting Democracy*, U.S. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, p.145

¹⁰¹ Kirkpatrick, Jeane, (1979) *Dictatorships and Double Standards*, Commentary 68:5, p.37

¹⁰² Reagan, Ronald, Address to British Parliament 1982, retrieved from <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/60882a.htm>

¹⁰³ Cannon, Lou, (2000) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Public Affairs, p. 63

But why was Ronald Reagan not a neo-conservative when he had so much in common with the movement, including the fact that he also had started out as a Democrat? As many similarities as there were in foreign policy, as many differences were there in domestic policy. Evidence shows that the neo-conservatives were far away from Reagan's call for lesser government and cut in welfare programs. Neo-conservatives furthermore believed communism to be thoroughly malevolent and they saw it as a permanent evil in the world. It is argued that Reagan rejected that it was permanent.¹⁰⁴ As an example of the opposite, Rostow was still apprehensive in 1990 about the evils of communism and feared that Gorbachev would take over all Europe and Asia.¹⁰⁵ Later the divide between Ronald Reagan and the neo-conservatives grew bigger when Reagan himself over time moved towards détente and weapon reduction treaties. The neo-conservatives were consequently very disappointed.¹⁰⁶

The influence of neo-conservatism is especially evident in Reagan's foreign policy rhetoric. It is argued that Reagan's biggest speech on democracy, which was held to the British Parliament in 1982, was directly inspired by neo-conservative literature from 1974-80. In this speech Reagan made an immense commitment to democracy "*democracy is not a fragile flower. Still it needs cultivating. If the rest of this century is to witness the gradual growth of freedom and democratic ideals, we must take actions to assist the campaign for democracy*" He further said that the American Political Foundation would soon begin a study "*to determine how the U.S. can best contribute--as a nation--to the global campaign for democracy now gathering force*".¹⁰⁷

Reagan furthermore in his speech held on to the idea that people repressed by leftist totalitarian regimes would eventually claim freedom and democracy: "*the march of freedom and democracy... will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history, as*

¹⁰⁴ Cooper, Danny (2011) *Neo-conservatism and American Foreign Policy*. UK, Rutledge, p. 82.

¹⁰⁵ Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press, p. 201

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 195

¹⁰⁷ Reagan, Ronald, Address to British Parliament 1982,
<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/60882a.htm>

it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people.”¹⁰⁸

There is an affinity between this speech and the establishment of NED, the National Endowment for Democracy¹⁰⁹. The purpose of this bipartisan, non-profit organization was to carry out projects that promoted democracy, for example monitor elections, so fraud was avoided. In the 1990 Nicaraguan election NED directly sponsored the parties in opposition to the Sandinistas.¹¹⁰

This insistence on democracy manifested itself in the negotiations between the United States and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. The United States continually insisted that peace could not be obtained until free elections were held in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas saw this as interference into their internal affairs and it complicated negotiations. However Reagan and the hard-liners in the administration believed the Sandinistas would never agree to elections because they were of a Marxist-Leninist persuasion.¹¹¹ Consequently the conflict could not be solved with the Sandinistas in charge of the Nicaraguan government.

Evidence suggests that for the Carter administration it was unfortunate that Nicaragua fell into the hands of Communism, for the Reagan administration it was a disaster. The difference consisted most in the policy they carried out toward the Soviet Union. Carter carried out détente, and he thus did not see Communism as dangerous to U.S. security as Reagan saw it. Reagan saw roll back as the only option, because he believed détente had led to a weakened U.S. and therefore an increased communist threat.

¹⁰⁸ Quote taken from: (2005) Reeves, Richard, *President Reagan, The Triumph of Imagination*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.10

¹⁰⁹ Information accessed on <http://www.ned.org/about/history>, October 2011

¹¹⁰ Carothers, Thomas. (1991) *In the name of democracy*. U.S, University of California Press, p. 94

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 100

Many other American presidents, mostly Democrats, have endorsed democracy before Reagan.¹¹² The turn toward human rights puzzled those who did not correlate conservatism with democracy. And when it comes down to it, the quest for democracy was carried out in the national self-defense, in order to get rid of communism and create a peaceful world of democracies. This was not far from President Woodrow Wilson's thought behind the League of Nations. However it is argued that for Wilson democracy was a goal in itself, for Reagan, democracy was a means to an end, and the desired end was a world without communism.

Nevertheless, as will be discussed in the next chapter, for the Reagan administration the concern for democracy was at first a cover to get public and congressional support for their policy against the Sandinistas. And it was a much needed shift away from the administration's first claim that the Contras were in Nicaragua to interdict arms to Salvadoran rebels.¹¹³

¹¹² Vaïsse, Jeremy, (2010) *Neo-conservatism, a biography*, U.S, Harvard University Press, p. 137

¹¹³ Carothers, Thomas. (1991) *In the name of democracy*. U.S, University of California Press, p103

Our own backyard

U.S. policy makers have always had an interest in Central America because of geographic closeness. Latin America has furthermore been perceived as dependent on US and is incapable of protecting itself.

Latin America and especially Central America have for the last two hundred years had a special place in U.S. foreign policy. The Monroe doctrine was pronounced in 1823, proclaiming the Western hemisphere as the U.S. sphere of influence. It was aimed at keeping out European monarchies from replacing Spain as a colonizing power.¹¹⁴ Later it came to encompass everything from German imperialists to Fascists. Moreover in 1954 Secretary of State John Foster Dulles used the Monroe Doctrine as a reason to attack communism in Latin America.¹¹⁵

The Monroe Doctrine expressed that U.S. felt entitled to decide Latin American affairs because of the geographic proximity. The Reagan administration followed this view; in a May 1984 speech, Reagan stressed the issue of battling Communism because Central America is “*at our doorstep*” and instability will “*move chaos and anarchy toward the American border.*”¹¹⁶ It is argued that the proximity was important namely because it means a close and direct threat to the United States borders¹¹⁷

It has been argued that Latin America is extremely important in the east-west struggle between Soviet and U.S. After Cuba was lost to ‘the Evil Empire’ it further exacerbated the situation, and it became more important to the United States to appear strong in Latin America, which is often referred to as their own backyard.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Smith, Gaddis (1994). *The last years of the Monroe doctrine 1945-1993*. U.S Hill and Wang, p. 10-11

¹¹⁵ Schoultz, Lars, (1987)*National security and United States Policy toward Latin America*, NJ, Princeton University Press, p.37, p.118-120

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.38

¹¹⁷ Jentleson, Bruce W. (1992) The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force. *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 1, March.,

¹¹⁸ Schoultz, Lars, (1987)*National security and United States Policy toward Latin America*, NJ, Princeton University Press, p.275

Moreover, with the Monroe Doctrine in mind, Soviet interest in the western hemisphere was not only Soviet expansion as elsewhere in the world. Policy makers conceived it as a contest to 200 years where the U.S. had been geographically isolated which had made it unnecessary to defend U.S. borders.¹¹⁹

According to the theory on cognitive images as mentioned in chapter 1 there is an affinity between policy makers' image of a country as a dependent and the policy made toward this country. A country can also be seen as an enemy or as neutral, but it is argued that during the Reagan administration Latin America was thought of only as a dependent. This means U.S. policy makers have seen Latin Americans as incapable of 'taking care' of themselves, and the United States has been forced to protect Latin Americans against outside interference.¹²⁰

Officials that have dealt with Latin America through the years have had a tendency to have a stereotypical image of Latinos.¹²¹ And see it as a region of "*gun slinging guerrilleros, and moral degenerates*" that would rather solve their political problems by violence than by voting.¹²² This is also exemplified by Reagan's first Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American affairs, Thomas O. Enders who meant about Latin America that "*bloodshed, terrorism and guerilla warfare have been comparatively common there since premodern times.*"¹²³

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.122

¹²⁰ Cottam, Martha L. (1994). *Images and intervention: U.S. policies in Latin America*. U.S. University of Pittsburgh Press, p.11-12.

¹²¹ Dent, David W.(1999). *The legacy of the Monroe Doctrine*. U.S. Greenwood Press, preface ix

¹²² Schoultz, Lars, (1987)*National security and United States Policy toward Latin America*, NJ, Princeton University Press, p.126

¹²³ *Ibid*, p.127

Internal strife in the administration.

In the former chapter my analysis showed that the underlying foundation for the policy vis-à-vis Nicaragua was anti-communism and the quest for democracy. This chapter will investigate the internal struggles within the Reagan administration that led to policy toward Nicaragua and why this rivalry was spurred by the leadership style of Ronald Reagan. However, first I will analyze the two different factions that existed within the administration.

Hard-liners and pragmatist

There were two dominant factions on foreign policy within the Reagan administration; the pragmatists and the hard-liners.

Hard-liners

Reagan himself resembled a hard-liner on many issues. Also the neo-conservatives views on foreign policy, as discussed in chapter 3, were equal to the hard-liners, and many of them considered themselves to be a hard-liner.

In 1985 authors Anderson and Kernek defined a hard-liner to be a person who believed that;

1. World affairs were based on conflict and it was important to have both economic and military strength to maintain a position of power.
2. Negotiations were the same as defeat, because countries had to be tough in international relations, so as not to appear weak.
3. Communism was evil and wanted to expand their ideology to the rest of the world, especially in Central America.
4. Because it was vital for national security to contain Communism, hard-liners were willing to circumvent Congress to carry out policy.¹²⁴

The hard-liners often felt they portrayed the true essence of what Reagan believed ideologically. However, the Reagan administration's second Secretary of State,

¹²⁴ Anderson, William D. and Kernek, Sterling J. (1985) *How "Realistic" Is Reagan's Diplomacy?* Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 100, No. 3, P.14

George P. Shultz, credited Reagan for departing with the hard-liners on one issue, as stated in his memoirs: “*Ronald Reagan was a hard-liner, but with a major difference from most of his hard-line supporters: he was willing to negotiate with his adversaries and was confident in his ability to do so effectively.*”¹²⁵

There were a lot of hard-liners in as top officials in the administration. They included first Secretary of State Al Haig, Secretary of defense Casper Weinberger, UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, CIA Director William Casey, also National Security Advisors (NSA) Richard Allen, William Clark and John Poindexter. Furthermore, lower level officials like National Security Council (NSC) aide Oliver North.¹²⁶

As mentioned above the hard-liners had little time for winning congressional support and believed in carrying out policies even though Congress disapproved. They saw Central America as essential in the East-West conflict with the Soviet Union and were willing to go a long way to keep communist influence out of the region.¹²⁷ The hard-liners perceived the Sandinistas as not only Marxist-Leninist, but hardcore communist. They were certain communism would spread to the rest of Central America and thus saw the situation in Nicaragua as a threat to national security. The Sandinistas enhanced the hard-liners fear by aiding the socialist rebels in El Salvador.¹²⁸ After Reagan eased up towards the Soviets from the mid-eighties and onwards, the hard-liners still saw it as equally important to defeat communism in Nicaragua.¹²⁹

It is argued that the hard-liners during the course of the nineteen eighties had come to see a military victory for the Contras, as the only solution to the Nicaraguan problem, because they believed the Sandinistas would never hold free elections. Whereas Secretary of State Shultz saw the Contras as a tool to pressure the Sandinistas to the negotiating table. The hard-liners did therefore fight any policy that included negotiations with the Sandinistas because that could lead to an agreement that would

¹²⁵ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p. 964

¹²⁶ Carothers, Thomas (1991) *In the Name of Democracy*, U.S., University of California Press, p. 18

¹²⁷ *ibid*, p. 18

¹²⁸ *Ibid* p. 100

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 243

end funding for the Contras, which then would destroy the hard-liners plan of getting the Contras to govern Nicaragua.¹³⁰

Pragmatists

The other faction within the administration was the pragmatists, also called moderates, as they tended to do things with pragmatic moderation.

The pragmatists were:

1. Also conservatives and against Communism, but not blind followers of anti-communist beliefs.
2. Dedicated to getting congressional support for the administration's policies.
3. Focused on negotiations and diplomacy as solutions to international relations problems.
4. Certain that the pressure from the Contras would force Sandinistas to negotiate, and therefore supported the Contras.
5. Committed to combining economic and social reforms with military assistance to take away the reasons for revolution in third world countries. And did not think Soviet and Cuba were behind revolutions in Central America.
6. For them the situation in Nicaragua was more of a concern because the Sandinistas helped insurgents in El Salvador and not because of their Marxist-Leninist ideology.¹³¹

The pragmatists were less visible during the first years of Reagan's presidency, but with the entrance of George P. Shultz as Secretary of State in 1982 they got an influential front figure. Furthermore, assistant Secretary of State Thomas O. Enders (1981-1983) and his deputies were inexperienced with Central America and relied heavily on the State Department staff that was pragmatist. The Bureau of Inter-American Affairs in the State Department was dominated by pragmatist because many had survived the shift from President Carter to President Reagan, despite the usual 'housecleaning' when a new president takes office. Other pragmatist in the

¹³⁰ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.961

¹³¹ Carothers, Thomas (1991) *In the Name of Democracy*, U.S., University of California Press, p. 18

administration included Vice President George Bush, White House Chief of Staff James Baker (1981-1985) and his deputy Michael Deaver.¹³²

Internal discord

Both the hard-liners and the pragmatists were supportive of the Contras, but perceived their purpose differently. The primary point of conflict between the two factions was whether or not to negotiate with the Sandinistas. The clashes between the pragmatists and the hard-liners developed into a fight with the State Department on one side and The Defense Department and National Security Council (NSC) on the other side. It has been argued that Secretary of State Shultz and Secretary of Defense Weinberger were old rivals, which intensified the conflict.¹³³ On some occasions the hard-liners shaped Nicaraguan policy, and on others the pragmatists won the battle and consequently decided the policy.

The internal discord was over whether or not to negotiate with the Sandinistas. Consequently Shultz and his State department had to fight hard-liners in NSC to carry out negotiations and many had to pay the price with their job. According to Shultz, assistant secretary of State Thomas O. Enders, his successor Tony Motley and special envoys; Richard Stone and Phil Habib were forced out because they fought for negotiations.¹³⁴

Pragmatists decide the policy

In 1981 Thomas O. Enders operated independently from the discord in the administration and took the first initiative to negotiations with the Sandinistas. He failed to reach an agreement and the hard-liners were happy, now they could take control. The pragmatists kept on trying and negotiations started again in 1982, however, as mentioned below, hard-liners found a way to obstruct the bilateral talks.

When the Contras were cut off from American funding, the hard-liners realized that congressional support was necessary and one way to smooth Congress was to begin

¹³² Carothers, Thomas (1991) *In the Name of Democracy*, U.S., University of California Press, p.19

¹³³ Cannon, Lou (2000) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, U.S., Public Affairs, p.267

¹³⁴ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.961

negotiations. The pragmatists thus won a small victory in 1984 when Defense Secretary Weinberger and CIA Director Casey reluctantly agreed to letting Shultz have a secret meeting with Ortega in Managua.¹³⁵ Evidence suggests that Shultz's influence in the administration corresponded with the support of the other pragmatists. Shultz was affirmed by messages from White House Chief of Staff Baker that he, Michael Deaver and very importantly the First Lady, Nancy Reagan, were all on his side.¹³⁶

Hard-liners decide the policy

In the attempt to start bilateral talks in 1982, hard-liners insisted on adding a demand for internal democratization of Nicaragua. The pragmatists knew that adding a demand for democracy would lead nowhere, except to offend the Sandinistas and end talks. However, the hard-liners won the battle and a claim for having elections was added to the list of demands, and the Sandinistas walked away from the negotiations angry.¹³⁷ According to Secretary of State Shultz the hard-liners did not want negotiations to succeed. He writes that CIA Director Casey and NSA Clark wanted to avoid all diplomatic efforts, because they saw them as an avenue to accommodation.¹³⁸

The hard-liners were so set on carrying out their policy that they took advantage of Secretary of State Shultz' trips abroad. For instance, they tried in his absence to rearrange that, Richard Stone, negotiator on Central American issues, should work under the NSC instead of under the State Department. With this move the hard-liners attempted to take complete control of the Central American policy. It was ironic that the opponents of negotiations wanted to supervise the negotiator. However Shultz fought back and through his good connection to Reagan he made sure Stone stayed under State Department.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.401

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p.423

¹³⁷ Carothers, Thomas (1991) *In the Name of Democracy*, U.S., University of California Press, p. 87 and p.100

¹³⁸ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.305

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p.302

Secretary of State Shultz was, furthermore, also left in the dark concerning the decision to carry out military exercise Big pine II in 1983, which was directed at intimidating the Sandinistas. The decision was made between the Defense Department and NSC and approved by Reagan without informing the Secretary of State. The military exercise complicated matters for e.g. Richard Stone in Central America. He too had not been told about the military exercise and it made his mission difficult. It moreover heightened congressional fears of another Vietnam War and the House of Representatives consequently voted against Contra aid in July 1983.¹⁴⁰ This was, however, as much a blow to the pragmatists and the hard-liners. Seen as top pragmatist Secretary of State Shultz strongly supported the Contras. He namely believed the Contras were one of the tools that could pressure the Sandinistas to hold elections.¹⁴¹

But for the hard-liners, congressional approval and negotiations were not part of their concern. Even though Secretary of State Shultz went to Managua in 1984 the rest of the administration was still opposed to negotiations in any form. And Jeane Kirkpatrick expressed the reason why in a NSC meeting July 1984: “*Communists win negotiations, they don’t honor agreements.*” It was therefore best to stand firm on issues instead of compromising.¹⁴² However, in 1984 the pragmatists had Reagan’s support and NSA Bud MacFarlane even tried to convince Reagan to oppose negotiations, but according to Deaver “*The President didn’t buy it*”.¹⁴³

The rationale of Democracy

Both pragmatists and hard-liners could support the quest for democracy. It was a way to obtain congressional approval and it furthermore provided a framework for the administration to work within. Nevertheless the two factions viewed the quest differently. Pragmatists thought democracy would be established if the Sandinistas held elections, which would lead to a pluralistic democracy. The hard-liners thought

¹⁴⁰ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.310-312

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p.289

¹⁴² As quoted in Ibid, p.419

¹⁴³ As quoted in Ibid, p.414

the Contras were the only way to establish democracy in Nicaragua. Because even though the Sandinistas held elections, they would cheat themselves to power.

For the administration democracy started with free elections.¹⁴⁴ But for the hard-liners free elections (with U.S. observing) meant no Communism because they thought it impossible that people could vote for the communist ideology if they had a real choice. Reagan agreed on this point, often reiterating his joke; that even if the Soviet Union allowed an opposition party, the country would still be a one-party system, because everyone would vote for the opposition.¹⁴⁵

The differences between pragmatists and hard-liners were also evident in regards to policy toward El Salvador. In this case it was the pragmatists that insisted on promoting democracy to change the government. Whereas the hard-liners preferred to keep the authoritarian regime in power for as long as possible and did not want elections. It was a different matter in Nicaragua, where it was the hard-liners that wanted a different government. Because in Nicaragua, promoting democracy was a means to get rid of Communism.¹⁴⁶

For the hard-liners the democracy justification started out as a way of rationalizing their policy in Central America. It had worked before, as it is argued that the Truman doctrine's invocation of principle (a country's right to self-determination), helped generate domestic political support in the late nineteen forties and fifties. In the same way the call for democracy in Nicaragua in the nineteen eighties facilitated congressional and public support for the administration's Contra policy.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, by placing security issues in a moral setting, it is argued that policy makers have fewer difficulties making decisions.¹⁴⁸ The rationale worked in talking congress into funding 'the democratic force' in Nicaragua. The principled quest for democracy took away the opposing Democratic liberals' arguments, because they

¹⁴⁴ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.318

¹⁴⁵ Cannon, Lou (2000) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, U.S., Public Affairs, p.247

¹⁴⁶ Carothers, Thomas (1991) *In the Name of Democracy*, U.S., University of California Press, p. 87 and p.101

¹⁴⁷ Robert H. Johnson (1988) *Misguided Morality: Ethics and the Reagan Doctrine*. Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 103, no. 3, p.5

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid* p.22

normally supported Human Rights and democracy. This made it more difficult to say that they, as liberals, opposed the Contras, whom the administration claimed was a democratic alternative to the Sandinistas. The emphasis on democratic change in Nicaragua did moreover prove itself useful in criticizing the bilateral and multilateral peace agreements for not demanding this change¹⁴⁹.

As shown in chapter 3, Ronald Reagan believed in the quest for democracy. But for the hard-liners it has nevertheless been argued that the democracy rationale in the early nineteen eighties was just a cynical cover. However in the mid-eighties it began to take on some real meaning and transformed into a genuine prodemocracy concern.¹⁵⁰ There is an affinity between democracy becoming a real concern and the fact that rhetoric influence reality. In promoting the policy, senior officials in the administration publicly pronounced the demand for democratization. Evidence suggests that the press and Congress in holding the officials to their word have asked what have been done to achieve democracy. The officials are then forced to go back to their offices and demand that their subordinates practice democracy in reality as well.

Furthermore, promoting democracy provided a focal point for the administration to work under, even though the two factions wanted it for two different reasons. Moreover, it put a principled face on a military oriented policy, which made the issue less complex.¹⁵¹

The leadership style of Reagan

The Reagan administration had no blueprint with stated goals for foreign policy, so the staff had nothing to guide them. And most of them were inexperienced within foreign policy.¹⁵² Coupled with Reagan's loose managerial style it left the administration officials to their own devices. The lack of leadership left more room

¹⁴⁹ Carothers, Thomas (1991) *In the Name of Democracy*, U.S., University of California Press, p.101

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.103

¹⁵¹ Carothers, Thomas (1991) *In the Name of Democracy*, U.S., University of California Press, p.244

¹⁵² Cannon, Lou (1991) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.307

for the internal strife between the hard-liners and the pragmatists who struggled for Reagan's attention.

Evidence suggests that it was difficult for aides in the white house to decipher what Reagan wanted. Often they tried to analyze whether a story he told or a nod with the head meant Reagan approved their position.¹⁵³ It is argued that Reagan never gave any clear signals as to what he wanted. White House aide Martin Anderson said of him: "*he made no demands and gave almost no instructions*".¹⁵⁴ His staff was therefore forced to find out by themselves what to do. Moreover, Reagan did not become attached to his staff. Longtime aide George Steffes tells of a boss, who was always pleasant and in control of himself, but who did not involve himself with people. If he remembered your name, you were lucky.¹⁵⁵ With this comes to mind the frequent changes in the NSA position, which Reagan changed six times in eight years. Additionally while Reagan was still in office, former staff members wrote memoirs. They all depicts a picture of "*presidential detachment and of a chaotic administration led by an enigmatic monarch who reigned rather than ruled.*"¹⁵⁶

The lack of a presidential presence led first Secretary of State Alexander Haig, after his resignation, to give his account of the Reagan White House as being without guidance from the top, he wrote: "*You didn't know who was at the helm in the White House*".¹⁵⁷ Alexander Haig should have known who was in charge in the White House. Seen as his replacement Secretary of State Shultz writes that Haig was forced out of office because of clashes with Reagan's closest staff. Furthermore, Haig was made to resign because of his harsh rhetoric in public appearances, which made Reagan appear as a warmonger. This removed focus from the economy, which was the administration's number one priority the first year of his presidency.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Pach, Chester (2003) *Sticking to his guns: Reagan and National Security*, U.S., University Press of Kansas, p.97

¹⁵⁴ As quoted in: Cannon, Lou (1991) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.187

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p.174

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p.176

¹⁵⁷ Haig, Alexander Jr.,(1984) *Caveat*, NY. MacMillan Publishing Company p.85

¹⁵⁸ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.12

Lou Cannon, well-known journalist who followed Reagan for many years, writes that Reagan governed through his Cabinet staff. It was long time personal aide Ed Meese, Chief of Staff Baker and his deputy Deaver. Together with the First Lady Nancy Reagan they guarded the president closely. No one had full access to be alone with Reagan except Vice President Bush.¹⁵⁹ The White House staff found that Reagan responded to certain keywords that caught his attention. They learned how to frame questions to get attention and the desired reaction. They were afraid that others could do the same, and they were especially alert to NSA Clark not arousing the darker side of Reagan by encouraging hardline policy choices.¹⁶⁰ The White House staff was pragmatists and therefore wanted the hard-liners kept away from Reagan.

Secretary of State Shultz had the impression that Ronald Reagan had great ideas and showed determination in pursuing them, but *“he could fall prey to a serious weakness: a tendency to rely on his staff and friends to the point of accepting uncritically –even wishfully- advice that was sometimes amateurish and even irresponsible.”*¹⁶¹ In 1982 the media also portrayed Reagan as being dragged around by his advisors. Reagan was forced to fight back the rumors in a public letter where he stated *“I’m in charge and my people are helping to carry out the policies I set”*.¹⁶²

However, Secretary of State Shultz further elaborated in his autobiography that he was concerned about Reagan breaking away from his staff. When Reagan admitted that he didn’t want Shultz telling White House staff and NSA Clark that he had met with the Soviet ambassador, Shultz writes: *“His remark reinforced my growing sense that the president was a prisoner of his own staff”*¹⁶³ and he also writes of another incident that: *“Bill Clark and others at the White House were uneasy about how the president would perform. [in meetings with Soviet officials] They didn’t trust him to act on his own”*.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Cannon, Lou (1991) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.195

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.292

¹⁶¹ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.263

¹⁶² As quoted in: Pach, Chester J. (2003) *Sticking to His Guns: Reagan and National Security*. U.S., University Press of Kansas, p.85

¹⁶³ Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p.267

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p.165

Lou Cannon describes how officials manipulated the president.¹⁶⁵ Secretary of defense Weinberger knew Reagan disliked choosing sides between his aides, and to convince the president to agree on his proposal on arms reduction he put it forward as a compromise between the Defense and State department, even though it was only cleared in Defense.¹⁶⁶

In a 1986 interview with Fortune Magazine, Reagan described his management style as the following: *"Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere."*¹⁶⁷ However, with no clear directions the administration quarreled among themselves and it could not be solved by Reagan. He refused to choose between his people, because he preferred the factions in his administration stopped their rivalry, and strove to make everyone he worked with happy.¹⁶⁸ He furthermore added more confusion to policy making by being *"simultaneously a conservative and a pragmatist"* according to Lou Cannon, which meant Reagan changed between endorsing hard-liners policy and pragmatist policy.¹⁶⁹

Another example of Reagan's subordinates taking charge comes from Second Chief of Staff Don Regan. He writes about Reagan in his memoirs, that: *"his failure to master a detailed foreign policy brief "gave some of his subordinates the idea that they had the duty to save him from himself" "*¹⁷⁰ Cannon also writes that Reagan had a lack of interest in foreign affairs substance and processes.¹⁷¹ But Secretary of State Shultz retorts in his memoirs. In his opinion Reagan wanted to be engaged in foreign policy, but didn't know how to come about it. Shultz elaborates that he was a person that did not like to act without his staff, with whom he preferred to talk things through. Furthermore in meetings he did not like people to disagree. His staff did therefore not consider him capable of making decisions on his own and therefore ended going around him, making decisions on their own, cutting off the president. Shultz also writes that he felt Reagan was held back by his own rhetoric on the Soviet

¹⁶⁵ Cannon, Lou (1991) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.187

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p.303

¹⁶⁷ As quoted in: Ibid, p.182

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p.373

¹⁶⁹ Cannon, Lou (1991) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.307

¹⁷⁰ Drumbell, John (1997) *American Foreign Policy, Carter to Clinton*, London, MacMillan Press LTD, p.59

¹⁷¹ Cannon, Lou (1991) *President Reagan, the role of a lifetime*, NY, Simon & Schuster, p.305

Union and also by the people that had been chosen for his administration, meaning the hard-liners.¹⁷²

For instance CIA Director Casey worked against Reagan in pursuing a relaxation in U.S. – Soviet relations. The administration, in general, was against détente and did not want negotiations with communists, which is clear in the hard-liners approach to Nicaraguan policy.¹⁷³ However, Reagan gained control of his administration and in the end he fought the hard-liners, loosening up the relationship to Soviet and he did not apply troops in Central America. His fight against the hard-liners policy in Nicaragua is stated in the following 1988 Reagan quote: “*Those sonofbitches won’t be happy until we have 25.000 troops in Managua*”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Shultz, George P. (1993) *Turmoil and Triumph*. NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, p. 164-66

¹⁷³ Ibid, p.164

¹⁷⁴ As quoted in: Pach, Chester J. (2003) *Sticking to His Guns: Reagan and National Security*. U.S, University Press of Kansas, p.98

How Congress influenced U.S. policy making

My research in chapter 4 on the Reagan administration showed that Nicaraguan policy making started without involving the Congress, by a presidential finding in March 1981. Thereby creating a situation difficult for Congress to change. However as this chapter will analyze, Congress still influenced administration policy. The reasons why Congress influenced policy are each analyzed in an individual section in this chapter. What policy Congress succeeded in changing will be addressed under the relevant section.

The United States Congress did not automatically approve of the Reagan administration's policy, which predominantly consisted of covert support for the Contras and Congress succeeded in changing U.S. policy in Nicaragua by;

1. Putting a hold on funding for the Contras on two occasions. The Boland amendments I and II in respectively 1982 and 1984, which are further elaborated under the bipartisanship section. However, the administration circumvented a complete stop for money to the Contras by seeking third country funding, known as the Iran-Contra affair.¹⁷⁵
2. Forcing the administration to change their justification for aiding the Contras. As discussed in chapter 4 the administration used a rationale for democracy in order to acquire support for their policy.
3. Forcing the administration to negotiate with the Sandinistas on reaching a peace agreement.

The main reason Congress was against administration policy was the fear that the conflict could evolve and U.S. troops would be sent in, because this had been the case with the Vietnam War. This is analyzed further in chapter 6. Other reasons for Congress to work against the administration was:

- Moral reasons
- Political reasons

¹⁷⁵ For a description on the Iran-Contra affair see appendix 3.

However, how Congress in the end shaped the policy making were through

- Bipartisanship
- Partisanship or the lack thereof
- Administration tactics and a very popular President

Checks and balance

The American Constitution states how the U.S. political system functions, there is a separation of powers divided into the Executive (the President), Legislative (Congress) and the Judicial branch (Supreme Court). The system of Checks and Balances ensures that none of the three branches of government abuse their authority. Each branch has different entitlements; the President is in charge of foreign policy and is Commander in Chief of the armed forces. But it is only Congress that can declare war. Congress furthermore has the power of the purse and decides, through appropriations, what to spend money on. Through this Congress has the power to close down foreign policy initiated by the President, by refusing to approve the necessary funding.¹⁷⁶

Moral reasons

The Democrats in Congress continually tried to shut down economic aid to the contras during Ronald Reagan's presidency, because they, as one factor out of many, were morally against it.

It was in particular Democratic liberals in the House of Representatives that committed themselves to values different from the administration. With the liberal tendency to prefer foreign policy being carried out with accept from international organizations, their values were in sharp contrast to the President that, as discussed in chapter 3, adhered to neo-conservative principles of American unilateral action and U.S. omnipotence in foreign affairs. Statements from liberals in Congress suggest that they believed the United States could not unilaterally remove a sovereign country's internationally acknowledged government, which they already in 1982 suspected was

¹⁷⁶ U.S legal definitions, *Checks and balance*. Accessed November 2011 from <http://definitions.uslegal.com/c/checks-and-balances/>

the real motif of the Contras. They believed U.S. should follow international law and have faith in diplomacy and always attempt negotiations before moving on to sharper measures.¹⁷⁷

But the liberals were not alone in their critique of the Contra policy, the majority of the Congress agreed that the United States should not overthrow other countries' governments. Moderate Democrat David Bonior, member of the House, was against the Contra policy because he found it "*illegal and immoral.*"¹⁷⁸ Moreover, in the early eighties the administration was not able to persuade Congress of the justification for stepping in and creating an opposition to the Sandinistas,¹⁷⁹ also because the administration did not identify or help the moderate opposition of Nicaraguans that already existed. Instead the President and his aides supported former members of Somoza's National Guard in forming an army.¹⁸⁰ Up until 1985 Congress had difficulty getting clarity over the aim of the administration's policy.¹⁸¹

The 1982 Boland amendment followed along the same line in its opposition to the Contra rebels. It stated an approval for support of the Contras as long as they did not try to overthrow the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. The administration's official objective for the Contras was at this point to intercept arms going to the insurgents in El Salvador, and this purpose was sanctioned by Congress and the Boland amendment.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books. p.102.

¹⁷⁸ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p.486

¹⁷⁹ Arnson, Cynthia J., *Crossroads*, Pantheon Books, NY 1989, p.100

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p.103

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.101

¹⁸² LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p.304

Political reasons

The political issue of being reelected is tied to both the congressmen that supported the Contras and the ones that were against the Contras. Both support and dissent of American policy in Nicaraguan was a part of Congress members' political strategy.

Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill was known for advising his fellow congressmen to attend carefully to their constituents and frequently said; "*All politics is local*".¹⁸³ Central American policy was not on the top of the priority list in the beginning of the nineteen eighties. This meant that if other issues were more important to their electorate, Congress members who were opposed to the Contra army would stay out of the debate because Congress members have to choose their battles. As an example, Tip O'Neil himself avoided taking a stand on El Salvadoran policy in 1982. He stayed out of it, because he needed to save the energy and alliances for votes on the budget, which was an essential issue to him and his voters in 1982.¹⁸⁴

As a study has shown that public opinion influences foreign policy making in the United States.¹⁸⁵ The Contras were continuously unpopular with the U.S. population.¹⁸⁶ This dislike gave some Congress members the assurance that they could vote against the administration and impose a ban on Contra aid. Accordingly, in Reagan's first term many moderates voted against Contra aid in July and November 1983 and in October 1984. Congress members are moreover regularly in the need of votes and funding for their next reelection campaign, and are thus inclined to vote according to their electorate.¹⁸⁷ Letter writing campaigns against the Contras and pressure from Human Rights and Church groups suggest that the liberal Congress

¹⁸³ Tolchin, Martin (1994). *Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., a Democratic Power in the House for Decades, Dies at 81*. NYTimes. Retrieved November 2011 from

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/1209.html>

¹⁸⁴ LeoGrande, William M., *Our Own Backyard*, The University of North Carolina Press, U.S 1998, p. 92

¹⁸⁵ Risse-Kappen, Thomas (1991). *Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies*, World Politics, Vol. 43, No. 4. P.3

¹⁸⁶ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.21

¹⁸⁷ Souva, Mark and Rohde, David (2007). *Elite Opinion Differences and Partisanship in Congressional Foreign Policy 1975-1996*, Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 60, No.1, p.2

members' voters were concerned with ending aid for the Contras. Liberal Democrats consequently voted against the Contras to accommodate their electorate.¹⁸⁸

However, not all Congress members had a constituency that was against Contra aid. To add further pressure on the Democrats during the nineteen eighties the 1980 election, where Reagan got elected as President in a landslide, did also mean a big victory for the Republican Party. For the first time in years they controlled the Senate. The evidence suggests that the public had in part turned against the Democrats because of the Iran hostage case where Carter did not succeed in getting the hostages released in time to secure a reelection. The hostages were released when Reagan was inaugurated.¹⁸⁹ Consequently the Democrats suffered their worst defeat since 1946.¹⁹⁰

The Democratic Party's great downfall had its consequences. One of them was that the Democrat Congress members that survived the 1980 election became more apprehensive of speaking out against the popular administration. Even though around 70 % of the population in 1985 opposed to the United States being involved in overthrowing the government of Nicaragua.¹⁹¹ It has been argued that some Democrats thought it safer to let the administration make their mistakes. Afterwards the public would hopefully recognize the error of their ways and return to the Democratic Party.¹⁹² One can imagine that the moderates were more affected by this than the liberal Democrats, seen as they were closer in ideology to the Republicans. The jump to the Republican Party was not as big for the moderate voters, and they were thus more likely to do it. Especially in Reagan's second term (1985-1989), where he and the Republicans again won a landslide victory.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.22

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p.55-56

¹⁹⁰ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 91

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 433

¹⁹² Ibid, p. 92

¹⁹³ Kagan, Robert (1996). *"The Reagan Doctrine" from A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977-1990*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p.1.

After the second big defeat the Democratic Party began to look inwards as to why they were losing so many voters. The conclusion for the moderates and especially the Southern Democrats was that the public saw them as doves on defense instead of hawks.¹⁹⁴ It is argued that the electorate became wary of Congress members being 'soft on Communism' and Democrat Dan Daniel from Virginia concluded: "*We can no longer temporize or compromise with Communism on our doorstep*"¹⁹⁵ A subsequent outcome was more Democrats supporting Contra aid in 1985, where Congress approved \$27 million in non-lethal aid, reversing the complete ban from 1984. Contras were fighting a Marxist-Leninist regime and could therefore earn some merits with anti-communist voters.

Bipartisanship

Occasionally Republicans and Democrats put aside their differences and worked together, both to support and restrain the administration. And the final policy outcome was often born out of compromise. Furthermore, a faction of senior Congress members worked to preserve the old bipartisanship consensus on foreign policy that had existed before the Vietnam War.

Edward Boland was a moderate Democrat that was able to work in the political center. He is known for orchestrating the two amendments that carry his name Boland I and II. The first Boland amendment originated in the House Intelligence Committee, in which Boland presided as chairman. After the Intelligence Committee learned of the huge increase in Contra forces, liberal Democrats optioned to close down the program altogether. As an alternative and to preserve bipartisan unity, a prohibition on using funds other than on arms interception was agreed upon. The Senate Intelligence Committee was in unison and the bill became law in September 1982.¹⁹⁶ After continuous revelations in the press about U.S. covert operations in

¹⁹⁴ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.187. Hawks and doves is a frequently used expression in U.S. foreign policy rhetoric and illustrate being respectively confrontational or compliant toward other countries.

¹⁹⁵ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 433

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 301

Nicaragua, Liberals in the House of Representatives became increasingly concerned of U.S. involvement in Nicaragua and Congressman Harkin proposed to stop funding for the Contras. He believed, contrary to the official goal, that the Contras' aim was to change the government of Nicaragua. He moreover argued that their existence forced the Sandinistas to step up repression of their population.¹⁹⁷ A majority of the House agreed. Therefore, to avoid a total cutoff of funds, Boland stepped forward and explained that there already existed language to avoid an overthrow of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and proposed to make it an amendment. To sidestep Harkin's proposal the Republicans voted with the Democrats to adopt Boland's amendment, and the Senate also accepted it in conference committee with the House. Afterwards the Boland amendment was signed into law December 1982. Accordingly prohibiting U.S. funds to be used in the overthrow of the Nicaraguan government.¹⁹⁸

In 1983 a compromise between the two Houses of Congress led to money being granted to the Contras. The House of Representatives voted down bills proposing Contra funding in both July and October 1983. But the Defense appropriations bill for 1984 had to be passed, otherwise there would be no money for the Defense Department. The bill, which included the requested funding for the insurgents fighting in Nicaragua, had already been approved by the Senate. Consequently the Senate and the House of Representatives met in conference to work out a compromise between the two Houses.¹⁹⁹ The House of Representatives eventually had to bend to the demand for Contra aid, and the Contras were appropriated \$24 million in aid in November 1983, half of what the administration had asked for. The compromise consisted of money for the Contras in exchange for a ban on the use of CIA contingency funds. This ban gave the House a chance to control more potential funding for the Contras, because it meant that a new proposal had to be passed by both the House and Senate.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.106

¹⁹⁸ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 304

¹⁹⁹ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.138

²⁰⁰ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 324

It is argued that the Congressmen who had been longest in Senate and the House, the senior members, tried to maintain the traditional bipartisan consensus in Congress. Even though the seventies had seen the passing of laws that enhanced the legislative's involvement in the making of foreign policy, the seniors still had a tendency to view this area as the domain of the President. Many senior members were part of the two Intelligence Committees that carried out congressional oversight of CIA, and evidence suggest that they were picked for their traditional view and unwillingness to challenge the President on his prerogative. It is argued that the Senate, in spring 1984, approved the administration's proposal for \$21 million in Contra aid in order to keep the bipartisan consensus on the Contra program. Republican Goldwater and Democrat Moynihan, Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee fought to get the \$21 million approved, to avoid Democratic Liberals in the Senate putting restrictions on the administration's program.²⁰¹ The effort did not work because the \$21 million was never approved in the House.²⁰²

Later in 1984 a bipartisan, dual-chamber agreement assured a complete stop for money for the Contras. After Congress learned of CIA's involvement in the mining of Nicaragua's harbors, the administration's supporters could no longer defend the Contra policy. Consequently both Houses passed the second Boland amendment, which was signed into law October 1984. It stated *"During fiscal year 1985, no funds available to the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, or any other agency or entity of the United States involved in intelligence activities may be obligated or expended for the purpose or which would have the effect of supporting, directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua by any nation, group, organization, movement or individual."*²⁰³

Partisanship or lack thereof.

The Democrats and the Republicans were further ideologically apart after the Vietnam War. The two parties moved further apart because they changed internally

²⁰¹ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.158-59

²⁰² *Ibid*, p. 162

²⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 165-68

and because ideology became more important. From 1981-1986 the Republicans had the majority in the Senate and the Democrats the majority in the House. This meant disagreements in Congress were frequently a contest between the two Houses, because members voted with their party. But a clear pattern cannot be established, hence in some cases Congress members voted based on partisanship, and in others it was based on ideology.

Partisanship; the division between the parties:

The increased emphasis on ideology, both in foreign affairs and in Congress drove a wedge between the two parties, because they moved further to the outer political wings. The Democrats got more liberal and the Republicans more conservative.²⁰⁴

In 1976 there was still some ideological overlap and a majority in both Houses of Congress voted no to aiding Angola against communist rebels. However, when Ronald Reagan with his anti-communist rhetoric, came into office 1981, evidence suggests that the Republicans moved further to the right. They consequently voted yes to aiding anti-communist rebels in Nicaragua, whereas a majority of Democrats voted against.²⁰⁵

The background for the increased partisanship in voting may have an association to policy-oriented activists having a growing influence in the political parties. They have direct links with the voters and the politicians adopt the activists' views when campaigning for reelection. Furthermore it is argued that the public look to party-leaders for answers on issues they themselves lack knowledge of, e.g. foreign policy, encouraging Congress members to vote in accordance with one's party affiliation. Moreover, as a last incentive to vote in conjunction with the opinion of the party-leaders, is that Congress members need the support of the core voters of the party,

²⁰⁴ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p.7

²⁰⁵ Souva, Mark and Rohde, David (2007). *Elite Opinion Differences and Partisanship in Congressional Foreign Policy 1975-1996*, Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 60, No.1, p.2

who adheres to the party-leaders.²⁰⁶ Moreover the greater the distance between the two parties' elite on a specific issue, the more Congress members vote with their party.²⁰⁷ In the case of funding for the Contras, the Republican and Democratic leadership disagreed profoundly and the votes were as a result partisan.

The lack of partisanship; the division within the parties.

For some members of the Democratic Party, partisanship was not always as important as ideology. Conservative Democrats from the South voted alongside Republicans in supporting the Contras. Thus the Reagan administration had not been able to carry out their policy in Nicaragua without the support of Conservative Democrats. There were likewise ideological differences within the Republican Party. Especially Senators from the North-East, e.g. from the State of New York, had a tendency to be more liberal than the majority of Republicans nationwide. At times also Republicans disagreed with their party leadership and voted against Contra aid.²⁰⁸ The vote in the Senate April 23 1985 on Contra aid is an example of party divisions. Here nine Republicans voted against the aid and ten Democrats voted for.²⁰⁹

Differences between Senate and the House.

The House of Representatives' 435 members are only elected for a two year term, evidence suggests this makes them more vulnerable to the electorate's opinion on specific issues. In contrast, Senators are elected for six years at a time. Their constituencies are larger and consist of a more diversified electorate. They are accordingly more likely to seek a middle ground on issues in order to please as many voters as possible. And they are furthermore less likely to be intimidated by interest groups lobbying a particular case. Moreover, the difference between the House and

²⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 4

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p.5

²⁰⁸ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p. 20

²⁰⁹ Ibid, p.182

Senate is that in the House, the majority party can force its will on the minority, whereas the Senate is more individualistic because of institutional rules.²¹⁰

During Ronald Reagan's presidency it is argued that the administration perceived the Senate as partner and the House of Representatives as an adversary. Among other this expressed itself in how the two different Intelligence Committees reacted to the briefings from the administration. The House Intelligence Committee with Edward Boland as chairman was controlled by the Democrats. During the briefings they asked a lot of critical questions to CIA Director William Casey. They furthermore demanded to be briefed regularly, to keep better track of the covert operations. The Senate Intelligence committee, with Reagan's old mentor Barry Goldwater as chairman, was controlled by Republicans. During these intelligence briefings there were fewer in depth questions, but there were still some critical voices from members. But they trusted the administration and furthermore believed the rationale that the Contras were only supported by the U.S. to keep the Sandinistas out of the civil war in El Salvador.²¹¹

Democratic Party

How could it be that President Reagan's Nicaraguan policy only passed with the help of Congress members from the opposing party? The reason was the before mentioned division within Democratic Party, where the factions voted differently on Central American policy. As mentioned in chapter two, in the nineteen sixties, the Democratic Party moved away from the center and became more liberal, leaving behind a group of Conservatives. As argued in chapter 3, some of them became neo-conservatives, and others just conservative Democrats.

Author Souva and Rohde write that in the nineteen sixties the Congress and the society went through a lot of changes that transformed the constituency. In the South

²¹⁰ Souva, Mark and Rohde, David (2007). *Elite Opinion Differences and Partisanship in Congressional Foreign Policy 1975-1996*, Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 60, No.1, p.10

²¹¹ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p.286-87

of the United States the Democratic Party attracted many African-American voters after branding itself as the party that defended civil rights. In 1964, Barry Goldwater, who had voted against the Civil Rights Act, was nominated as the Republican presidential candidate, making it an easy choice for African-American to choose the Democratic Party. These changes made the majority of the Southern Democrats' voters, who traditionally had been very conservative, to mostly liberals. This reduced the ideological gap between the northern and the southern Democrats, and made the party more homogeneous with a large liberal majority.²¹²

But the shift toward liberalism also repelled a lot of voters and by the nineteen eighties, in the 1984 election, southern states had become a new Republican stronghold.²¹³ However, some Democrats from the southern states still held traditions and maintained a conservative-democratic philosophy. What especially split the Democrats was the view on Communism and to what extent the U.S. needed to fight against it. Evidence suggests that the Conservative Democrats were equally as anti-communist as Reagan's rhetoric portrayed him. Consequently they supported a program like the Contras because they were fighting against a Marxist-Leninist regime. The Reagan administration knew this and in 1983 asked Democrat McCurdy for help. He was to create a majority for the administration's Nicaraguan policy in the House of Representatives; it did however not work.²¹⁴ Later in 1983 McCurdy again voted along party lines, with a no to more Contra aid.²¹⁵

The Democratic Party consisted of several factions and the Conservatives were only a minority, nevertheless an important one, and it is argued that the Democratic leadership in the House worked hard to break their connection to the Republicans.²¹⁶ But the Democratic leadership was not always successful in making members vote along party lines. They had lost influence after the restructuring of power after the 1974 election. In the aftermath of Watergate many seats in Congress changed members; the new members were called the Watergate babies. The large influx of

²¹² Souva, Mark and Rohde, David (2007). *Elite Opinion Differences and Partisanship in Congressional Foreign Policy 1975-1996*, Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 60, No.1, p. 4

²¹³ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.172

²¹⁴ Ibid, p.124

²¹⁵ Ibid, p.128

²¹⁶ Halpert, Leon. (1991). Presidential Leadership of Congress: Evaluating President Reagan's Success in the House of Representatives, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 4. P.5

inexperienced members, who did not feel obliged to listen to the senior members, resulted in loss of authority for the party leadership.²¹⁷

Nonetheless, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill was very influential and he tried to guide the members of his party to vote against Contra aid. The biggest regret of his career, he proclaimed, was to vote in favor of the Tonkin Resolution²¹⁸ that led to the Vietnam War. It is argued that O'Neill was certain that the real goal of administration policy in Nicaragua was to overthrow the Sandinistas, even if it meant using U.S. troops. This time around O'Neill wanted to make sure Americans would never fight in an unpopular war again.²¹⁹ He therefore rolled out every play in the book, among other calling undecided swing voters to his office for a personal talk, in order for them to turn against the administration policy.²²⁰

Administration tactics and a very popular President

Evidence shows that the executive branch used its powers to circumvent Congress on Nicaraguan policy making. By using presidential findings, programs could get funding through CIA or the Department of Defense. The President could also apply money from the special emergency fund, which Congress had no control over.²²¹ But in the end the administration needed congressional approval and consequently tried everything to get it.

A fait accompli

It is argued that the administration was certain that Congress would not support the Contra policy in 1981. Covert action, which Congress had no control over, was therefore preferable for White House staff and for CIA director Casey. For Casey, because it meant he could control the policy and for Reagan's closet advisors in his first term, e.g. Chief of Staff James Baker, it was mostly because they were concerned

²¹⁷ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.11

²¹⁸ The Tonkin resolution allowed the President to use troops in the Tonkin Bay in Vietnam.

²¹⁹ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 454-455

²²⁰ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p. 181

²²¹ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p.143

with getting congressional approval for the administration's economic policy. Therefore to provoke a battle with Congress over Central American policy could destroy congressional support for the economic initiatives.²²² Subsequently to avoid the influence and obstruction of the Congress, Ronald Reagan used his presidential emergency powers, to assure economic support for the Contras by signing a Presidential Finding March 1981.²²³

The Contras were thus created without involving Congress and the administration had thereby generated a *fait accompli*. The Contras were an accomplished fact before Congress got the chance to object because they had already begun their counterrevolution with the help of the CIA. These facts made it difficult for Congress to reverse what was already a complete policy. It has been argued that the same had happened in the beginning of the Vietnam War. The situation had escalated slowly, and in the end American troops had been sent into war, even though no one wanted them in Vietnam.²²⁴

Furthermore, the administration circumvented Congress on a number of occasions. A military exercise in Honduras called Big Pine II was decided in a National Security Council meeting on July 8 1983. The aim was to show the Sandinistas the strength of American military power and also to build runways for the Contras. After the exercise the Contras received supplies on runways paid by the U.S. Defense Department.²²⁵ The most severe case of circumventing Congress was carried out by National Security Advisor Poindexter and aide Oliver North in the Iran-Contra affair.²²⁶

Make Congress members scared

Nonetheless, the administration could not keep on evading congressional approval, because they needed official funding for the Contra program. In foreign affairs the executive branch has the advantage of access to intelligence that Congress never sees.

²²² Ibid, p.142

²²³ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 89

²²⁴ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p. 109.

²²⁵ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 314-18

²²⁶ See appendix 3

It is argued that Reagan and his team used this advantage to create a crisis atmosphere. They did this by invoking a sense of threat to U.S. national security posed by the Sandinistas.²²⁷ By exaggerating the levels of Soviet influence in Nicaragua and Sandinista oppression, it was believed that Congress members could be scared into voting for the insurgents fighting in Nicaragua.²²⁸ The President himself tried to alarm Congress in a speech about the Nicaraguan ties to Cuba and Soviet, he said that: "*Nicaragua, supported by weapons and military resources provided by the communist bloc, represses its own people, refuses to make peace, and sponsors a guerrilla war against El Salvador.*"²²⁹ As a contrast to this portrait of the Sandinistas he continuously described the Contras as "our brothers" and "freedom fighters".²³⁰ Furthermore, Republicans and the administration red-baited Democrat opponents by calling them pro-communist, unpatriotic²³¹ and blamed them for the future loss of Central America to Communism.²³²

Compromising

However, to create a fait accompli or scare Congress did only work to a certain degree. To achieve the necessary funding the administration also had to compromise and make concessions. The primary change in administration policy was the rationale for democracy, as discussed in chapter 4, and furthermore the effort to make the Contras into a democratic force. This amounted in creating a political leadership for the Contras and giving seminars on democracy.²³³

One of the concessions was to open up for negotiations. As a part of this effort a special envoy, Phil Habib, was assigned to Central America in 1986, to send the message that the administration was ready to negotiate.²³⁴ Prior to this, the

²²⁷ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p. 109.

²²⁸ Ibid, p. 73 and 101

²²⁹ Scott, James M. (1997). *Interbranch Rivalry and the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua*, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 112, No. 2, p.11

²³⁰ Ibid, p.14

²³¹ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p. 141

²³² LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p.321

²³³ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p.105

²³⁴ Ibid, p. 113

administration's strategy had involved creating a bipartisan consensus. To achieve this, the Kissinger Commission was established in 1983, comprising of members from both parties. The purpose for the Commission was to recommend policy choices on Central America that both parties could support.²³⁵ Furthermore, the administration created a media offensive to win public and congressional support for the Contras. The Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean was started under the State department and managed by National Security Council staff.²³⁶

A popular President

Other reasons behind Reagan's success in carrying out his Central American policies, in spite of congressional opposition, include his own personal involvement. He held numerous speeches on the subject and dedicated his time to contact Congress members personally. Before the Contra aid vote in summer 1986, Reagan called 20 Congress members on the phone²³⁷ and met with others in person. Moreover, it is argued that persuasion of members involved deals that included federal funding for a project in the Congress members' district, offered in exchange for Contra support.²³⁸

The Congress was more involved in the making of foreign policy after the Vietnam War, but they lacked the will to go against a popular president. Congress members felt they could act, because public opinion was against the Contra policy²³⁹ and their dissent started slowly, by timidly opposing the administration's policy.²⁴⁰ But Reagan had a high public approval rating during his entire presidency and his commitment to the Contra case paid off in the end. Especially in 1986, when the House of Representatives finally approved \$100 million for the Contras, White House pollster Wirthlin measured a record of "70% favorable rating in May"²⁴¹. When it came down

²³⁵ Scott, James M. (1997). *Interbranch Rivalry and the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua*, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 112, No. 2, p.11

²³⁶ As quoted in: *Ibid*, p.15

²³⁷ Reeves, Richard (2005). *President Reagan, The Triumph of Imagination*. NY: Simon & Schuster p.324

²³⁸ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*, NY: Pantheon Books, p. 197

²³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 19

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 218

²⁴¹ Reeves, Richard (2005). *President Reagan, The Triumph of Imagination*. NY: Simon & Schuster p.324

to it, there was a lack of interest from the public in Central American policy and coupled with Reagan's popularity, the opponents had no choice but to give in.

The Reagan administration at first avoided congressional influence by approving funds to the Contras from the presidential emergency fund, creating a fait accompli. When the reality of the Contra program slowly manifested itself, and Congress realized that the goal was to overthrow the Sandinistas, they could only damage control. And in an unusual display of bipartisanship both Houses came together in an effort to curtail administration policy by approving the two Boland amendments. As the conflict evolved, the administration convinced, with propaganda and persuasion, the Republicans that the Contras was necessary to fight Communism in Central America. Conservative Democrats was also convinced and enabled the administration to obtain the majority they needed to get Contra funding.

The Ghost of Vietnam.

In the previous chapter it was established that Congress to some extent managed to influence administration policy. In this chapter I analyze why both the public, Congress and the administration were marked by the Vietnam War. The two biggest consequences were 1. that the Reagan administration carried out a war by proxy instead of sending in American troops in Vietnam. And 2. that Congress voted against Contra aid because they were afraid it would lead to the use of American troops and thus a second Vietnam.

The Vietnam Syndrome

The Vietnam Syndrome is the emergence of a new isolationist trend that shows in a disinclination to apply American troops to conflicts abroad. After the defeat in Vietnam in the seventies the public and the politicians questioned America's former role as the policeman of the world. Furthermore they thought containment was obsolete. Former president Richard M. Nixon called the neo-isolationist tendency 'the Vietnam syndrome'.²⁴²

Also the Reagan administration learned on El Salvadoran policy, that it was not just "coward" liberals that had felt the impact of the defeat in Vietnam, the war had left a deep scar in the entire population.²⁴³ If presidents afterwards decided to go to war, they needed to assure that there was a moral reason for the use of American troops, because it helps the public to accept the need for risking U.S. soldier's lives. The lack of moral legitimacy during the Vietnam War was one of the causes for public opposition. So to avoid getting in another Vietnam, policy makers had to make sure that they did not use force unless there was a moral and just cause. That the public agreed that it was important to employ troops furthermore that enough power was used to assure a quick victory with few dead soldiers.²⁴⁴

²⁴² Whiteclay, John, Ed., (1999). *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*. Chambers II. New York: Oxford University Press

²⁴³ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*. NY: Pantheon Books, p.7

²⁴⁴ Encyclopedia of the New American Nation (2011). The Vietnam syndrome and American exceptionalism. Accessed December 2011, <http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/E-N/Exceptionalism-The-vietnam-syndrome-and-american-exceptionalism.html>

Nonetheless something deep in the American nation was hurt after the defeat in Vietnam. Henry Kissinger has argued that losing the Vietnam War meant losing American exceptionalism. Because Americans could no longer emphasize their values worldwide and impose them on other countries. They consequently did not know what to do with the dominant position they held in the international relations.²⁴⁵

The post-Vietnam Congress

After the Vietnam War, Congress passed resolutions and amendments to curtail the power of the Executive Branch. It is also argued that the former bipartisan consensus on foreign policy gave way for an increased emphasis on ideology that led to partisanship instead as discussed in chapter 4.²⁴⁶ Evidence suggests that one of the most important contexts that shaped Nicaraguan policy was the Vietnam War. Because it made liberals in Congress fight the administration hard, in an effort to avoid what they thought would be another Vietnam.²⁴⁷

Post-Vietnam legislation started in 1973 when Congress passed the War Powers Resolution. It demanded that the president inform Congress in writing within forty-eight hours of introducing troops abroad.²⁴⁸ Furthermore the Hughes-Ryan Amendment was passed in 1974. It required that the president report covert operations to congressional committees. And in 1976 and 1977 the Select Intelligence Committees in the Senate and House was put in place.²⁴⁹ As seen in the previous chapters these committees played a key role in forming Nicaraguan policy. For instance the Boland amendment had its origin in the House Intelligence Committee. These initiatives show Congress' newfound commitment to follow the executive's foreign policy activities more closely. Especially the Democrats had learned not to

²⁴⁵ Kane, John (2003). *American Values or Human Rights? U.S. Foreign Policy and the Fractured Myth of Virtuous Power*. Presidential Studies Quarterly, Vol. 33, No. 4, p. 5

²⁴⁶ Souva, Mark and Rohde, David (2007). Elite Opinion Differences and Partisanship in Congressional Foreign Policy 1975-1996, Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 60, No.1., p.2

²⁴⁷ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*. NY: Pantheon Books, p.4

²⁴⁸ Sharpe, Kenneth E. (Winter, 1987-1988). *The Post-Vietnam Formula under Siege: The Imperial Presidency and Central America*, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 102, No. 4 p. 6

²⁴⁹ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*. NY: Pantheon Books, p.12-13

follow the president blindly²⁵⁰, instead they sought to be critical and use the powers the Constitution had invested to Congress.²⁵¹

However, even though the legislative branch wanted to keep check of the president's actions in the post-Vietnam years, the president still had possibilities to avoid congressional influence. As described in chapter 5, the Reagan administration managed to create a *fait accompli* in Nicaragua, by starting funding for the Contras via a presidential finding thus avoiding congressional approval. Congress had been in this situation twice before (In Korea and in Vietnam) where it had led to war, under the rationale that the troops could not be abandoned.²⁵²

It has been argued that the effect of the Vietnam War was less bipartisanship in Congress, because there had opened a greater divide between Republicans and Democrats. Also ideology became more important than partisanship because of the new division within the parties, especially within the Democratic Party.²⁵³

The Vietnam Syndrome and the Reagan administration.

The conservative Republicans and the Reagan administration felt that the Vietnam Syndrome was endangering national security because it held America back from world affairs by putting a restraint on intervention.²⁵⁴ Nevertheless the administration intervened militarily in other countries. The 1983 invasion of Grenada was a great public success. It also held to the principles mentioned above, which was necessary to avoid the Vietnam Syndrome. Because the moral rationale for the invasion was a rescue mission of U.S. citizens and the war was swift with very few casualties.²⁵⁵

It has been argued that it is more precise to talk of a Vietnam Syndrome in general, than to talk of a post-Vietnam Congress. The unwillingness to embark in another war

²⁵⁰ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p.102

²⁵¹ Sharpe, Kenneth E. (Winter, 1987-1988). *The Post-Vietnam Formula under Siege: The Imperial Presidency and Central America*, Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 102, No. 4 p. 7

²⁵² Ibid, p. 6

²⁵³ Pastor, Robert (1994). *Disagreeing on Latin America*. U.S.: University of Oklahoma Press, p.223

²⁵⁴ LeoGrande, William M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard*. U.S: The University of North Carolina Press, p.586

²⁵⁵ Amson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*. NY: Pantheon Books, p.138

can also be seen in the Weinberger Doctrine, expressed by The Secretary of Defense. It was a commitment to never again enter an unpopular war.²⁵⁶ Also the former Carter administration had learned from the Vietnam War that it was useless to support regimes that lacked public support from their citizens. And Carter consequently let Somoza go. Carter furthermore refused to intervene abroad and to overthrow the government of small nations, which was called the Carter Doctrine.²⁵⁷

Reagan on the other hand, expressed just the opposite of non-intervention. And his victory in 1980 gave conservatives hope that the Vietnam Syndrome was over.²⁵⁸ But Nicaraguan policy was still seen in the light of Vietnam. Congress was therefore afraid that supporting the Contras would lead to U.S. troops being applied. Reagan himself was responsible for this fear by expressing a wish to fight communism in his speeches.²⁵⁹ On the other hand, even though Watergate and the Vietnam War had weakened the presidency, the immense popularity of Ronald Reagan had an affinity to the recurrence of the strong president. It is argued that some members of Congress believed it was the President's prerogative to be in charge of the foreign policy. And they did not want to challenge this prerogative, unless they thought the President was heading in the wrong direction.²⁶⁰

Evidence suggests Reagan was not bound by the Vietnam Syndrome because he did not suffer from it. He did not believe the war was a mistake; the only mistake was the way it had been fought with not enough resources. He proclaimed that the officials had not had the sufficient will to win the war.²⁶¹ However he had to carry out his policy according to the Vietnam Syndrome to maintain high public approval. Which led to the proxy war, where the Contras fought instead of American troops.

Reagan was in the end a politician and not just an ideologue, especially after coming into office. It is furthermore argued that Reagan wanted to be the peacemaker, and not

²⁵⁶ Pastor, Robert (1994). *Disagreeing on Latin America*. U.S.: University of Oklahoma Press, p.224

²⁵⁷ Arnson, Cynthia J. (1989). *Crossroads*. NY: Pantheon Books, p.25

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p.22

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p.7

²⁶⁰ Ibid, p.19

²⁶¹ Pach, Chester J. (2003). *Sticking to His Guns: Reagan and National Security*. U.S.: University Press of Kansas, p.96

the warmonger that many perceived him to be, and he was therefore reluctant to send troops abroad.²⁶²

The Vietnam Syndrome influenced both the public, Congress and the executive branch. Moreover it influenced Reagan's Nicaraguan policy by creating a Congress that were scared to use U.S. troops and through legislation in the seventies had more insight into presidential foreign policy actions. Nevertheless both liberals and conservatives were opposed to a communist takeover of Central America. They disagreed mostly about the means, not ends. Liberals believed that revolution was caused by poverty and social inequality, whereas the conservatives believed Central American revolutions were started by the Soviet Union and Cuba and consequently argued for military intervention.²⁶³

²⁶² Cooper, Danny (2011). *Neo-conservatism and American Foreign Policy*. UK: Rutledge, p.84

²⁶³ Sharpe, Kenneth E. (Winter, 1987-1988). *The Post-Vietnam Formula under Siege: The Imperial Presidency and Central America*, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 102, No. 4 p. 21

A Discussion of the Five Variables

In this chapter I will discuss the five different answers to my problem statement, the five variables. I will discuss how each of them has shaped American policy toward Nicaragua and in the end determine which variable was most significant based on the two theories in chapter 1.

What situation the Carter administration passed on

The Carter administration shaped Reagan's policy because it created and passed on a situation Reagan never would have put himself in. By entering the scene when it was too late, the Reagan administration had fewer options on how to solve the situation.

Carter's principle of non-intervention allowed the Sandinistas to take over Nicaragua. This was then viewed as a threat to U.S. national security by the next president. It is clear that the Carter administration should have been more involved before it came to an actual civil war in Nicaragua. If they had intervened they could either have kept Somoza in power or paved the way for a peaceful regime change and inserted a centrist government, which would have posed no threat to the United States. But Carter followed his ideology of non-intervention and consequently Reagan inherited an unwanted situation.

On the other hand, the Reagan administration could have refrained from intensifying the situation and continued Carter's non-confrontational approach. The Carter administration's aim was to keep the Sandinistas from turning Nicaragua into another Cuba. This resulted in avoiding putting pressure on the Sandinistas that could drive them to radicalization. The Reagan administration was also anxious to avoid another Cuba. However, decided to go about it very differently, because of ideology.

Ronald Reagan's ideology.

It is clear that Reagan and his staff were very anti-communist and thus perceived international relations to play out within the battle of the East-West framework. Because of their view of Communism they saw themselves in the middle of a battle being fought between USSR and U.S.

Consequently every conflict was evidence of the rivalry between the two superpowers, thus also the situation in Nicaragua. The administration thought that USSR was the orchestrator of Marxist-Leninist revolutions, because Communism's aim was to spread the ideology all over the world. Seeing the world as bipolar influenced all foreign policy decisions within the Reagan administration.

As seen in chapter 3 Reagan's anti-communism ran deep. He used many speeches and interviews denouncing the Marxist-Leninist ideology and he proclaimed that all communists were evil, deceitful, had no respect for human life. In addition to the above mentioned urge to turn the whole world's population into communists.

Exactly the last part was the most worrisome in the Nicaraguan conflict. The Sandinistas helped insurgents in El Salvador fight a non-communist government. This made U.S. pictured one country after the other falling like dominoes and bringing the communist threat to the American border. It is clear from Reagan's rhetoric that he believed strongly in fighting Communism for world domination. A fight Reagan was sure would be lost if U.S. continued to ease up their relationship with USSR. As stated in chapter 3, Reagan and his administration was against détente. He would not be satisfied with containment, only a complete rollback of Communism.

The neo-conservatives mostly influenced U.S. policy making by supporting Reagan in his anti-communist belief and inspired him to believe in the spread of democracy, the resistance to détente and the importance of a strong U.S. military.

The Reagan administration thus believed that in standing up to the Soviet Union it was necessary to portray the image of a strong country. Reagan therefore advocated for the largest military buildup in peacetime ever. Furthermore it meant showing no weakness by backing down in confrontations. The Sandinistas were caught in the middle of this and the amount of resources used in Nicaragua by the U.S. is partly explained by this motivation.

Nicaragua was moreover important because it was situated in America's 'own backyard'. The geographic proximity made the country more important to the United States. Both because it was close to U.S. borders, but also because it was perceived as U.S. sphere of influence. If the Soviet had access to one more country in the United

States 'backyard', besides Cuba, it would signal that U.S. was weak even within their own part of the world.

Ronald Reagan's ideology was shaped by anti-communism. It could be argued that he was blinded by his ideology in world affairs. The Sandinistas did never pronounce that they were against the U.S. and gladly received the aid the Carter administration donated in 1979. Furthermore, the countries of Western Europe, the United States' own allies, did not perceive of the Sandinistas as evil communists or as a threat. So why did the U.S? The Reagan administration saw Western Europe as committed to détente, whereas Reagan and his staff's goal was a world without Communism and they therefore wanted to replace the Sandinistas with a non-communist government.

Anti-communism manifested itself in the policy and in the administration, because Reagan had hired hard-liners that wanted tough policies on foreign issues.

Administration

As mentioned in chapter 3 the two factions within the administration the hard-liners and pragmatists worked against each other. It is clear that Reagan did not pay enough attention to solve the arguing in his administration; in fact he made the arguing worse by not stating a clear view on foreign policy. Even though Reagan was very set in his views on foreign policy he did not get involved with how these opinions went from views to policies. As both pragmatists and hard-liners agreed that Communism was the enemy, what they mostly differed on were in their approach to e.g. solving the conflict with Nicaragua.

However both factions could compromise on pursuing democracy as a solution to the Sandinistas. Both factions wanted democracy, but for different reasons. Pragmatists wanted free elections and a pluralistic open political environment because they were convinced a moderate government could be voted in. Hard-liners the Contras to govern in Nicaragua because they were against Communism and this would eliminate the threat to national security.

The administration's biggest impact on the shaping on U.S. policy toward Nicaragua was keeping the Contras going for too long and not making a real effort to get negotiations between Sandinistas and U.S. to work.

Reagan's inattentive form of management generated room for the hard-liners in the administration to circumvent Congress, besides making room from arguing. If Reagan had had more of an eye on his staff, the Iran-Contra affair could maybe have been avoided.

Congress

The administration was opposed by the Democratic liberals in Congress, who primarily opposed administration policies because of their own and their electorate's ideology.

Because of ideology they therefore forced the administration to take part in negotiations. Moreover, the continuous pressure on the administration translated into a justification of democracy for the Contra policy. With the two Boland amendments Congress tried to cut off funding for the Contras. It did however not work because administration officials broke the law to circumvent Congress and find funding for the Contras.

Negotiation was a point of disagreement all the years during the Reagan presidency. Congress together with pragmatists in the administration argued for negotiations as a solution to end the threat Nicaragua posed towards U.S. However, the hard-liners did not believe negotiating could lead to a peace agreement that both U.S. and the Sandinistas would sign. It was again the hard-liners ideological beliefs about Communism that led to the opposition towards negotiating. They believed that because communists are dishonest one could only lose by negotiating with them.

Vietnam War

The Vietnam War was influential on the choice of policy that could be used in Nicaragua. If the Sandinistas had taken over in the sixties, it is very likely that U.S. troops had been applied to keep Somoza in power. Because of the Vietnam Syndrome Reagan knew it would have been political suicide to put in troops. The reason he

could use troops in Grenada in 1983 was primarily because it was certain to be a quick war. The Sandinistas had fought against Somoza's National Guard and won, and would not have been easily conquered, and U.S. would have been dragged into another unpopular war. Therefore the Contras were the only answer to a military solution, which the Reagan administration insisted on carrying out.

Social constructivism and Cognitive Images

The ideology that shapes the identity of the policy makers is what determines how a state conducts itself in foreign policy. The Soviet Union's policy makers' change of identity had an impact on the end of the cold war. In the same way as the ideology of Reagan, and the people around him impacted U.S. policy toward Nicaragua. All U.S. decisions on policy toward Nicaragua were accordingly made on the basis of anti-communism. Ideology also impacted liberal Democrats in Congress to oppose the administration, because they were not as anti-communist.

Within the theory of Cognitive Images the perception of Nicaragua as a dependent, made it impossible for the country to be perceived as neutral, which they would have preferred. Instead if Nicaragua was not on the same side of the east-west conflict as U.S. it was perceived as the enemy's dependent. Nicaragua was caught on the 'wrong side' of the conflict because it had already been categorized in the minds of U.S. policy makers as a dependent. It could only get on the 'good side' of the United States again if it returned as a U.S. dependent instead of turning into a dependent of the enemy, the Soviet Union.

All five variables had an impact on U.S. policy, but it is clear that anti-communism was the most dominant, because the ideology of the policy makers determines policy outcomes. Based on this hypothesis it is clear that what shaped U.S. foreign policy during Ronald Reagan's presidency was Reagan and his administration's fear of Communism.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have discussed five different reasons that shaped U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

The reasons were:

- That the Reagan administration inherited a situation in Nicaragua that was too far along to change according to their ideological wishes.
- That Reagan and his administration were anti-communist and therefore saw the Sandinistas as a threat to national security that had to be removed from Nicaragua.
- The administration's biggest impact on the shaping of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua was keeping the Contras going for too long and not making a real effort to get negotiations between Sandinistas and U.S. to work.
- That Congressional pressure made the administration take part in negotiations and forced on the justification of democracy for the Contra policy. Furthermore, Congress cut off funding for the Contras by enforcing the two Boland amendments.
- The Vietnam War shaped U.S. policy in Nicaragua because it influenced the choice within a military solution. After the defeat in Vietnam it was out of the question to apply U.S. troops to a prolonged war. Consequently, the only option for the administration was a war by proxy, carried out by the Contras.

It is evident from the discussion in the previous chapter that the world would have looked very different if it had not been for the Cold War. Because of the Cold War every conflict was seen as the U.S against the Soviet Union. Consequently The Sandinistas was seen as a threat to the United States, because of their Marxist-Leninist ideology that made them an enemy. To keep both the North and South of America safe, it was imperative for the Reagan administration to replace the Sandinistas with a government that was not communist in order to keep the United States free from harm. If the Sandinistas had had a centrist or right-leaning ideology, Nicaragua would never have been of interest to U.S. foreign policy while Reagan was President.

Subsequently all policy during Ronald Reagan's presidency toward Nicaragua were made from this position of anti-communism.

This stance is furthermore supported by the theory on Social Constructivism, which proves that the ideology of the policy makers shapes the country's policy.

Referat

Dette speciale omhandler amerikansk udenrigspolitik i Nicaragua i 1980'erne. Problemformuleringen er følgende:

Hvilke faktorer stod bag amerikansk politik i Nicaragua, mens Ronald Reagan var præsident?

Reagan og hans regerings politik bestod først og fremmest i at støtte bevæbnede oprørere, Contra bevægelsen, der var imod Nicaraguas regering der var styret af Sandinista bevægelsen. På grund af den Nicaraguanske regerings tro på kommunismen frygtede Reagan Sandinistaerne. Han ville have dem erstattet af et styre, der ikke var kommunistisk for at undgå at Sovjetunionen fik en magtbase i Central Amerika.

Teorien om Social Konstruktivisme indenfor International Relations teori, underbygger at politikeres tro, i det her tilfælde, en tro på at kommunismen er farlig for USA's sikkerhed, er det, der skaber landets politik.

Reagan og hans embedsmænds frygt for kommunismen var derfor den primære grund til, at USA blandede sig i Nicaraguas interne politiske opbygning. Der var dog også andre faktorer der førte til at amerikansk politik udmøntede sig, som den gjorde.

Efterdønningerne af Vietnam krigen betød blandt andet, at USA tænkte sig bedre om før de satte tropper ind i et fremmed land. På grund af dette var det udelukket, at Reagan kunne bruge militær magt imod det Nicaraguanske styre. I stedet kæmpede Contra bevægelsen krigen for USA.

I Washington forsøgte den amerikanske kongres at påvirke Reagan regeringen. To gange forbød de at penge kunne bruges på Contra bevægelsen, ved at vedtage Boland I og II som tilføjelser til loven. Ydermere blev Reagans regering gennem kongressens pres påvirket til at ændre begrundelsen for deres politik i Nicaragua. Målet blev derfor at indføre demokrati.

Endvidere, havde Reagan været ved magten, da regeringsskiftet i Nicaragua skete i 1979, havde han sandsynligvis sørget for, at den gamle amerikansk støttede diktator, Somoza, var blevet på magten. Men i 1979 var James Carter præsident og han nægtede at fravige fra sit princip om ikke at gribe ind i andre landes interne politik.

Appendix 1: Timeline for U.S.-Nicaraguan relations

1821 Nicaraguan independence from Spain

1853-1933 United States intervenes 13 times in Nicaragua. Furthermore U.S. Marines occupy Nicaragua 1911-1925

1979

July 1979, Sandinistas takes over power in Nicaragua after long civil war against dictator Somoza.

July 17 - September 30 1979, Carter administration delivers \$26.3 million in quick disbursing aid. (\$13.3 million for food)

September 24 1979, Carter meets with Sandinistas; Daniel Ortega, Sergio Ramirez and Alfonzo Robelo.

November 1979, Representative Dante Pascal leads a group of Congress members to Nicaragua, provide favorable report on conditions to Carter.

November 1979, Carter asks for \$140 million in economic and military aid for Latin America, \$75 million in economic aid for Nicaragua.

1980

July 1980, Congress authorizes the \$75 million in economic aid only after adding tough restrictions about a ban on Nicaraguan weapons to El Salvador.

September 12 1980, Carter certifies aid.

1981

January 19 1981, Carter informally stops aid to Nicaragua because evidence is found of arms transfers from Nicaragua to El Salvador.

January 20 Reagan takes office. New Republican majority in Senate.

March 9 1981, Presidential finding authorizing covert operations in Nicaragua to interdict arms to Marxist guerrillas.

March 1981, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua, Pezzullo, reports that intelligence evidence shows that the Sandinistas have stopped arms flow to El Salvador. But administration believes that Nicaraguans have found other hidden arms transfer routes.

April 1 1981, Reagan administration officially stops economic aid to Nicaragua.

Summer 1981, Clarridge, Chief of Latin Operations for CIA, meets with Honduran Officer about getting Contras started. Honduras has provided assistance to ex-Somoza National guardsmen since 1980

August 1981- October 1981, Thomas O. Enders, assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American affairs, Meets 5 times and negotiates with Sandinistas, without putting forward demands for democracy, but e.g. expressing concern over Nicaraguan ties to the Soviets.

August 1981, U.S. military exercise off the coast of Nicaraguan neighbor Honduras.

16 November 1981, National Security Council meeting. Enders and others are making a case for Contra aid.

17 November 1981, presidential finding about \$19 million covert aid to Contras. Primarily to help the Argentinians train them.

1982

1982 – July 83, Contra force grows from 500 to 10.000 men

March 14 1982, first real Contra attack: Destroying two bridges in Northern Nicaragua. The Sandinistas in response declare a state of emergency, e.g, imposing direct censorship and arrest moderate leaders.

March 1982, New U.S. Ambassador Quainton arrives in Nicaragua.

Spring 1982, The press starts publishing stories of counterrevolutionary activities in Nicaragua

April 1982, House Intelligence Committee adopts language to the covert actions in Nicaragua that later evolves into the Boland amendment.

1982, Talks between Sandinistas and U.S. administration. Now democracy is one of the U.S. demands.

1982 and 1983, U.S. begins economic pressure; lobbying multilateral development banks and West European governments to stop giving loans and aid to Nicaragua. U.S. also steps up verbal attacks on Sandinistas and tries to isolate them diplomatically from the rest of Central America.

Late 1982, First Boland amendment. Congress votes against covert aid to the Contras, unless it is used to interdict arms from Nicaragua to El Salvador.

1983

Early 1983, the Contadora Peace initiative begun. Central American effort of a peace agreement.

April 27 1983, Reagan gives speech to joint session of Congress, identifying Nicaragua as the principal threat to Central America and to U.S. interests.

Spring 1983, U.S. military exercise Big Pine II carried out to intimidate Sandinistas.

July and November 1983 House of Representatives votes to end all funding for covert operations in Nicaragua on the Intelligence appropriations bill. Republican controlled Senate turns down House votes.

September 1983, on the basis of pressure from Senate Intelligence Committee Reagan signed a new presidential finding on Contras: To interdict arms shipments to El Salvador **and** pressure Sandinistas to negotiate.

October 1983, U.S. invades Grenada, which is regarded as a big success in U.S.

November 1983, Congressional compromise; \$24million in military assistance for Contras, but no CIA funds to be used in Nicaragua.

December 1983, Reagan approves mining of Nicaraguan harbors, Congress intelligence committees not briefed properly.

1984

January 5 1984, CIA starts mining Nicaraguan harbors.

January 11 1984, Kissinger Commission issued report that supported the Contras but also recommended negotiations.

Early 1984, administration officials obtains illegal third country aid to Contras from Israel, South Africa and Saudi Arabia.

April 1984, Congress learns of CIA mining and both houses pass resolution condemning the mining. Later find out that they had in fact been informed in March and April 1984

April 9, 1984, Nicaragua takes U.S. to the international court of justice, because of their support to the Contras and the CIA mining. U.S. later walks out of court.

May 9 1984, Reagan gives his first speech about the Contras on national television

May 31, 1984, Shultz goes to Managua, Nicaragua. New negotiations scheduled to take place in Mexico.

October 1984, the second Boland Amendment. Cutting off assistance to Contras completely.

November 1984, elections in both U.S. and Nicaragua. Reagan reelected. Daniel Ortega elected for president. International organizations deem it a fair election, but U.S. does not acknowledge it because Nicaraguan opposition does not participate.

During 1984, Contadora peace talks fall apart.

1985

January 1985, U.S. – Nicaraguan peace talks fail to amount to a deal. U.S. insistence on meddling in Nicaraguan sovereign affairs, by demanding elections, becomes too much for the Sandinistas.

May 1985, U.S. imposes trade embargo on Nicaragua.

June 1985, Ortega takes trip to Moscow.

June 1985, (lobbying by administration turns into) Congress approving \$27 million nonlethal aid for the Contras.

1986

March 1986 Phil Habib appointed special envoy to Central America, to strengthen diplomatic relations with the region.

March 1986, House of Representatives turn down administration's proposal for \$100 million in aid to the Contras.

March 1986, The Sandinista army enters far into Honduras in pursuit of Contras, thus violating international law and almost starts war with Honduras.

Summer 1986, Congress approves \$100 million in aid to Contras (\$70 million in military aid and \$30 million in nonlethal aid).

June 1986, International court announces verdict on U.S.- Nicaraguan case, U.S. should cease immediately with Contra support and pay for damages done in Nicaragua.

October 5 1986, American, Eugene Hasenfus' plane is shot down over Nicaragua and he is captured by the Sandinistas. This began revelations of secret assistance organized by the National Security Council aide Oliver North and National Security advisor Poindexter, later named the Iran-Contra affair.

November 1986, Poindexter and North resigns.

1987

May 5, 1987, Congressional hearings on the Iran-Contra-affair begins.

June 1987 House voted to keep the ban on the use of the CIA's contingency fund, ensuring that any new Contra aid would have to be openly debated.

July 1987, administration seeks help from house-speaker James Wright to develop a cease fire between Contras and Sandinistas and later free elections.

August 5 1987, Reagan-Wright plan officially proposed.

August 7 1987, Esquipulas II, proposed by Arias, a regional security accord signed by all 5 Central American presidents, demanding cease-fires with insurgents. Wright endorses it as a replacement for his plan. Administration is against the plan.

September 1987, administration asks for \$270 million in aid to the Contras. Congressional support is very small.

1988

January 1988, proposal is cut down to \$36,2 million but Congress refuses all military aid and only approves \$14 million of nonlethal aid for the Contras.

March 23 1988, Contras and Sandinistas sign a cease-fire.

1989

February 1989, Tesoro Beach accord; Nicaragua agrees to have national elections before 1990

1990

February 1990. Election won by opposition party UNO.

April 25 1990, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro from UNO takes office as president of Nicaragua.

Appendix 2: List of CDM and CDP members

This appendix shows how many neo-conservatives Reagan appointed to his administration

The Committee for a Democratic Majority

Main CDM members	Endorsement of Reagan during the campaign / vote / partisan affiliation	Functions in the Reagan administration
Peter Rosenblatt	No endorsement / votes for Reagan / remains a Democrat	None
Joshua Muravchik	No endorsement / votes for Reagan / remains a Democrat	None
Penn Kemble	No endorsement / votes for Reagan / remains a Democrat	None (turns down one offer)
Ben Wattenberg	No endorsement / votes for Reagan / remains a Democrat	Vice president of Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty
Max Kampelman	Endorses Reagan at the end of the campaign / votes for Reagan / remains a Democrat	Ambassador to CSCE in Madrid
Richard Schifter	Endorses Reagan at the end of the campaign / votes for Reagan / remains a Democrat	Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (1985-1992)
Eugene Rostow	Endorses Reagan at the end of the campaign / votes for Reagan / remains a Democrat	Director of ACDA
Michael Novak	Endorses Reagan at the end of the campaign / votes for Reagan / remains a Democrat	None
Jeane Kirkpatrick	Endorses Reagan at the end of the campaign / votes for Reagan / becomes a Republican soon thereafter	Ambassador to the United Nations
Elliott Abrams	Actively campaigns for Reagan in Florida / votes for Reagan / immediately registers as a Republican	Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (1981-1985)

The Committee for the Present Danger, the position members had in the Reagan administration:

Name	Functions at CPD / political affiliation	Functions in the Reagan administration
Ronald Reagan	Board member / Republican	President of the United States
George Shultz	Board member / Republican	Secretary of State (1982-1988)
Richard Allen	Member of the Executive Board / Republican	National Security Adviser (1981-1982)
Jeane Kirkpatrick	Board member / Democrat	Ambassador to the United Nations (1981-1985)
William Casey	Board member / Republican	Director of the CIA (1981-1987)
John Lehman	Board member / Republican	Secretary of the Navy (1981-1987)
Richard Pipes	Member of the	Director of East European and Soviet Affairs

	Executive Board / Democrat	(1981-1982)
Geoffrey Kemp	Board member / Republican	Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs (1981-1986)
Martin Anderson	Board member / Republican	Chief domestic policy adviser to the President (1981-1982)
Paul Nitze	Member of the Executive Board / Democrat	Chairman of the US delegation to the INF negotiations (1981-1984); special adviser to the President and Secretary of State on Arms Control (1984-1988)
Eugene Rostow	Chairman of the Executive Committee / Democrat	Director of ACDA (1981-1983)
Kenneth Adelman	Member of the Executive Board / Republican	Deputy Ambassador to the UN under Jeane Kirkpatrick (1981-1983) ; Director of ACDA (1983-1987)
Max Kampelman	Board member / Democrat	Chairman of the US delegation to the Madrid meeting of the CSCE (1981-1983) ; Chairman of the US Delegation to the Negotiations on Nuclear and Space Arms (1985-1987)
Donald Rumsfeld	Board member / Republican	Special Envoy to the Middle East
Fred Iklé	Board member / Republican	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy(1981-1988)
Wilson Allen Wallis	Board member / Republican	Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (1982-89)
James L. Buckley	Board member / Republican	Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs (1981-82); President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (1982-85)
Richard Schifter	Member of the Executive Board / Democrat	Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (1985-1992)
Richard Perle	Board member / Democrat	Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy (1981-1987)
Richard G. Stilwell	Board member / Republican	Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (1981-85)
Robert Strausz-Hupé	Board member / Republican	Ambassador to Turkey (1981-1988)
David Jordan	Board member / affiliation unknown	Ambassador to Peru (1984-1986)
Richard Stone	Board member / Democrat	Ambassador at Large and Special Envoy to Central America (1983-84)
W. Scott Thompson	Board member / affiliation unknown	Associate Director, Policy and Programs, USIA (1982-84)
Joseph Douglass	Board member / affiliation unknown	Deputy Director, ACDA
Michael Novak	Board member / Democrat	Ambassador of the U.S. Delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva (1981-82); head of the U.S. Delegation to the CSCE, 1986
Amoretta Hoeber	Board member / Republican	Deputy Under Secretary of the Army, then Principal Deputy Assistant, then Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research and Development

Appendix 3. The Iran-Contra Affair

The Iran-Contra Affair was a covert operation not approved by the United States Congress. It began in 1985, when the Reagan administration supplied weapons to Iran, in hopes of securing the release of American hostages held in Lebanon by Khomeini. The U.S. took millions of dollars from the weapons sale and routed them and guns to the Contras in Nicaragua.

Part of the deal was that, in July 1985, the United States would send 508 American-made TOW anti-tank missiles from Israel to Iran for the safe exchange of a hostage, the Reverend Benjamin Weir. With the success of this transfer, the Israelis offered to send 500 surface-to-air missiles to Iran in November 1985. The deal was, that in exchange the rest of the American hostages in Iran should be released. The arms were sold with a profit and the proceeds went to the contras, and the hostages were released.

The affair is exposed

It was not until 1986 that word had gotten out about the secret transactions. The Lebanese magazine *Ash-Shiraa* published a series of articles in November 1986, which exposed the weapons-for-hostages deal. The Contra involvement became evident when a CIA plane, carrying supplies for the Contras, was shot down over Nicaragua. Only survivor Eugene Hasenfuss was captured by the Sandinistas and revealed enough details to get the United States press interested. The scandal began to unravel.

A review board was appointed, named for its chairman, former Republican Senator John Tower. The Tower Commission's report concluded that the president had been inefficient in controlling the National Security Council, where the Iran-Contra policy had started and was orchestrated from. However, it could not be discovered in hearings if the president had known about the Contra support.

Court hearings and convictions

The hearings of the Tower Commission were shown on live television from May to August in 1987. Military aide to the National Security Council Marine Lt. Colonel Oliver North, former CIA chief William J. Casey, National Security Advisor John Poindexter, former defense secretary Caspar Weinberger, and many other high-ranking government officials were publicly investigated.

It was finally found that National Security Advisor Poindexter had personally authorized the diversion of money to the Contra rebels; all the while withholding the information from President Reagan. The CIA's William J. Casey played a part in the conspiracy, but he died during the hearings.

As a military aide to the National Security Council, North had been the main negotiator. In May 1989, he was convicted of obstructing Congress and unlawfully destroying government documents. Poindexter was convicted in April 1990 on five counts of deceiving Congress and sentenced to six months in prison.

On Christmas Eve 1992, President Bush issued presidential pardons to all indicted in the scandal. The Iran-Contra Affair was ended.

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