Necessary Illusions

Thought Control in Democratic Societies

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Preface

The five chapters that follow are modified versions of the five 1988 Massey lectures I delivered over Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio in November 1988. These lectures suggest certain conclusions about the functioning of the most advanced democratic systems of the modern era, and particularly, about the ways in which thought and understanding are shaped in the interests of domestic privilege. Following these five chapters are appendices that are intended to serve, in effect, as extended footnotes amplifying some of the points raised, separated from the text so as not to obscure too much the continuity of the discussion. There is an appendix, divided into sections, for each chapter. Each section is identified by the part of the text to which it serves as an addendum. These appendices should be regarded merely as a sample. As references indicate, some of the topics touched upon in the text and appendices are explored in further detail elsewhere. Many of them merit serious research projects.

The issues that arise are rooted in the nature of Western industrial societies and have been debated since their origins. In capitalist democracies there is a certain tension with regard to the locus of power. In a democracy the people rule, in principle. But decision-making power over central areas of life resides in private hands, with large-scale effects throughout the social order. One way to resolve the tension would be to extend the democratic system to investment, the organization of work, and so on. That would constitute a major social revolution, which, in my view at least, would consummate the political revolutions of an earlier era and realize some of the libertarian principles on which they were partly based. Or the tension could be resolved, and sometimes is, by forcefully eliminating public interference with state and private power. In the advanced industrial societies the problem is typically approached by a variety of measures to deprive democratic political structures of substantive content, while leaving them formally intact. A large part of this task is assumed by ideological institutions that channel thought and attitudes within acceptable bounds, deflecting any potential challenge to established privilege and authority before it can take form and gather strength. The enterprise has many facets and agents. I will be primarily concerned with one aspect: thought control, as conducted through the agency of the national media and related elements of the elite intellectual culture.

There is, in my opinion, much too little inquiry into these matters. My personal feeling is that citizens of the democratic societies should undertake a course of intellectual self-defense to protect themselves from manipulation and control, and to lay the basis for more meaningful democracy. It is this concern that motivates the material that follows, and much of the work cited in the course of the discussion.

Chapter One

Democracy and the Media

Under the heading "Brazilian bishops support plan to democratize media," a church-based South American journal describes a proposal being debated in the constituent assembly that "would open up Brazil's powerful and highly concentrated media to citizen participation." "Brazil's Catholic bishops are among the principal advocates [of this]...legislative proposal to democratize the country's communications media," the report continues, noting that "Brazilian TV is in the hands of five big networks [while]...eight huge multinational corporations and various state enterprises account for the majority of all communications advertising." The proposal "envisions the creation of a National Communications Council made up of civilian and government representatives [that]...would develop a democratic communications policy and grant licenses to radio and television operations." "The Brazilian Conference of Catholic Bishops has repeatedly stressed the importance of the communications media and pushed for grassroots participation. It has chosen communications as the theme of its 1989 Lenten campaign," an annual "parish-level campaign of reflection about some social issue" initiated by the Bishops' Conference.[1]

The questions raised by the Brazilian bishops are being seriously discussed in many parts of the world. Projects exploring them are under way in several Latin American countries and elsewhere. There has been discussion of a "New World Information Order" that would diversify media access and encourage alternatives to the global media system dominated by the Western industrial powers. A UNESCO inquiry into such possibilities elicited an extremely hostile reaction in the United States.[2] The alleged concern was freedom of the press. Among the questions I would like to raise as we proceed are: just how serious is this concern, and what is its substantive content? Further questions that lie in the background have to do with a democratic communications policy: what it might be, whether it is a desideratum, and if so, whether it is attainable. And, more generally, just what kind of democratic order is it to which we aspire?

The concept of "democratizing the media" has no real meaning within the terms of political discourse in the United States. In fact, the phrase has a paradoxical or even vaguely subversive ring to it. Citizen participation would be considered an infringement on freedom of the press, a blow struck against the independence of the media that would distort the mission they have undertaken to inform the public without fear or favor. The reaction merits some thought. Underlying it are beliefs about how the media do function and how they should function within our democratic systems, and also certain implicit conceptions of the nature of democracy. Let us consider these topics in turn.

The standard image of media performance, as expressed by Judge Gurfein in a decision rejecting government efforts to bar publication of the *Pentagon Papers,* is that we have "a cantankerous press, an obstinate press, a ubiquitous press," and that these tribunes of the people "must be suffered by those in authority in order to preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know." Commenting on this decision, Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* observes that the media were not always as independent, vigilant, and defiant of authority as they are today, but in the Vietnam and Watergate eras they learned to exercise "the power to root about in our national life, exposing what they deem right for exposure," without regard to external pressures or the demands of state or private power. This too is a commonly held belief.[3]

There has been much debate over the media during this period, but it does not deal with the problem of "democratizing the media" and freeing them from the constraints of state and private power. Rather, the issue debated is whether the media have not exceeded proper bounds in escaping such constraints, even threatening the existence of democratic institutions in their contentious and irresponsible defiance of authority. A 1975 study on "governability of democracies" by the Trilateral Commission concluded that the media have become a "notable new source of national power," one aspect of an "excess of democracy" that contributes to "the reduction of governmental authority" at home and a consequent "decline in the influence of democracy abroad." This general "crisis of democracy," the commission held, resulted from the efforts of previously marginalized sectors of the population to organize and press their demands, thereby creating an overload that prevents the democratic process from functioning properly. In earlier times, "Truman had been able to govern the country with the cooperation of a relatively small number of Wall Street lawyers and bankers," so the American *rapporteur*, Samuel Huntington of Harvard University, reflected. In that period there was no crisis of democracy, but in the 1960s, the crisis developed and reached serious proportions. The study therefore urged more "moderation in democracy" to mitigate the excess of democracy and overcome the crisis.[4]

Putting it in plain terms, the general public must be reduced to its traditional apathy and obedience, and driven from the arena of political debate and action, if democracy is to survive.

The Trilateral Commission study reflects the perceptions and values of liberal elites from the United States, Europe, and Japan, including the leading figures of the Carter administration. On the right, the perception is that democracy is threatened by the organizing efforts of those called the "special interests," a concept of contemporary political rhetoric that refers to workers, farmers, women, youth, the elderly, the handicapped, ethnic minorities, and so on -- in short, the general population. In the U.S. presidential campaigns of the 1980s, the Democrats were accused of being the instrument of these special interests and thus undermining "the national interest," tacitly assumed to be represented by the one sector notably omitted from the list of special interests: corporations, financial institutions, and other

business elites.

The charge that the Democrats represent the special interests has little merit. Rather, they represent other elements of the "national interest," and participated with few qualms in the right turn of the post-Vietnam era among elite groups, including the dismantling of limited state programs designed to protect the poor and deprived; the transfer of resources to the wealthy; the conversion of the state, even more than before, to a welfare state for the privileged; and the expansion of state power and the protected state sector of the economy through the military system -- domestically, a device for compelling the public to subsidize high-technology industry and provide a state-guaranteed market for its waste production. A related element of the right turn was a more "activist" foreign policy to extend U.S. power through subversion, international terrorism, and aggression: the Reagan Doctrine, which the media characterize as the vigorous defense of democracy worldwide, sometimes criticizing the Reaganites for their excesses in this noble cause. In general, the Democratic opposition offered qualified support to these programs of the Reagan administration, which, in fact, were largely an extrapolation of initiatives of the Carter years and, as polls clearly indicate, with few exceptions were strongly opposed by the general population.[5]

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[1] José Pedro S. Martins, *Latinamerica Press* (Lima), March 17, 1988.

[2] See Philip Lee, ed., *Communication for All* (Orbis, 1985); William Preston, Edward S. Herman, and Herbert Schiller, *Hope and Folly: the United States and UNESCO, 1945-1985* (U. of Minnesota, forthcoming).

[3] "Freedom of the Press -- Anthony Lewis distinguishes between Britain and America," *London Review of Books,* Nov. 26, 1987.

[4] M. P. Crozier, S. J. Huntington, and J. Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission* (New York University, 1975).

[5] See my *Turning the Tide* (South End, 1985, chapter 5) and *On Power and Ideology* (South End, 1987, lecture 5). For detailed examination of these matters, see Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, *Right Turn* (Hill & Wang, 1986). For a summary of the domestic consequences, see Emma Rothschild, "The Real Reagan Economy" and "The Reagan Economic Legacy," *New York Review of Books,* June 30, July 21, 1988.

Challenging journalists at the Democratic Convention in July 1988 on the constant reference to Michael Dukakis as "too liberal" to win, the media watch organization Fairness and Accurary In Reporting (FAIR) cited a December 1987 *New York Times*/CBS poll showing overwhelming popular support for government guarantees of full employment, medical and day care, and a 3-to-1 margin in favor of reduction of military expenses among the 50 percent of the population who approve of a change. But the choice of a Reagan-style Democrat for vice president elicited only praise from the media for the pragmatism of the Democrats in resisting the left-wing extremists who called for policies supported by a large majority of the population. Popular attitudes, in fact, continued to move towards a kind of New Deal-style liberalism through the 1980s, while "liberal" became an unspeakable word in political rhetoric. Polls show that almost half the population believe that the U.S. Constitution -- a sacred document -- is the source of Marx's phrase "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need," so obviously right does the sentiment seem.[6]

One should not be misled by Reagan's "landslide" electoral victories. Reagan won the votes of less than a third of the electorate; of those who voted, a clear majority hoped that his legislative programs would not be enacted, while half the population continues to believe that the government is run "by a few big interests looking out for themselves."[7] Given a choice between the Reaganite program of damn-the-consequences Keynesian growth accompanied by jingoist flag-waving on the one hand, and the Democratic alternative of fiscal conservatism and "we approve of your goals but fear that the costs will be too high" on the other, those who took the trouble to vote preferred the former -- not too surprisingly. Elite groups have the task of putting on a bold face and extolling the brilliant successes of our system: "a

model democracy and a society that provides exceptionally well for the needs of its citizens," as Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance proclaim in outlining "Bipartisan Objectives for Foreign Policy" in the post-Reagan era. But apart from educated elites, much of the population appears to regard the government as an instrument of power beyond their influence and control; and if their experience does not suffice, a look at some comparative statistics will show how magnificently the richest society in the world, with incomparable advantages, "provides for the needs of its citizens."[8]

The Reagan phenomenon, in fact, may offer a foretaste of the directions in which capitalist democracy is heading, with the progressive elimination of labor unions, independent media, political associations, and, more generally, forms of popular organization that interfere with domination of the state by concentrated private power. Much of the outside world may have viewed Reagan as a "bizarre cowboy leader" who engaged in acts of "madness" in organizing a "band of cutthroats" to attack Nicaragua, among other exploits (in the words of Toronto *Globe and Mail* editorials),[9] but U.S. public opinion seemed to regard him as hardly more than a symbol of national unity, something like the flag, or the Queen of England. The Queen opens Parliament by reading a political program, but no one asks whether she believes it or even understands it. Correspondingly, the public seemed unconcerned over the evidence, difficult to suppress, that President Reagan had only the vaguest conception of the policies enacted in his name, or the fact that when not properly programmed by his staff, he regularly came out with statements so outlandish as to be an embarrassment, if one were to take them seriously.[10] The process of barring public interference with important matters takes a step forward when elections do not even enable the public to select among programs that originate elsewhere, but become merely a procedure for selecting a symbolic figure. It is therefore of some interest that the United States functioned virtually without a chief executive for eight years.

Returning to the media, which are charged with having fanned the ominous flames of "excess of democracy," the Trilateral Commission concluded that "broader interests of society and government" require that if journalists do not impose "standards of professionalism," "the alternative could well be regulation by the government" to the end of "restoring a balance between government and media." Reflecting similar concerns, the executive-director of Freedom House, Leonard Sussman, asked: "Must free institutions be overthrown because of the very freedom they sustain?" And John Roche, intellectual-in-residence during the Johnson administration, answered by calling for congressional investigation of "the workings of these private governments" which distorted the record so grossly in their "anti-Johnson mission," though he feared that Congress would be too "terrified of the media" to take on this urgent task.[11]

Sussman and Roche were commenting on Peter Braestrup's two-volume study, sponsored by Freedom House, of media coverage of the Tet Offensive of 1968.[12] This study was widely hailed as a landmark contribution, offering definitive proof of the irresponsibility of this "notable new source of national power." Roche described it as "one of the major pieces of investigative reporting and first-rate scholarship of the past quarter century," a "meticulous case-study of media incompetence, if not malevolence." This classic of modern scholarship was alleged to have demonstrated that in their incompetent and biased coverage reflecting the "adversary culture" of the sixties, the media in effect lost the war in Vietnam, thus harming the cause of democracy and freedom for which the United States fought in vain. The Freedom House study concluded that these failures reflect "the more volatile journalistic style -- spurred by managerial exhortation or complaisance -- that has become so popular since the late 1960s." The new journalism is accompanied by "an often mindless readiness to seek out conflict, to believe the worst of the government or of authority in general, and on that basis to divide up the actors on any issue into the `good' and the `bad'." The "bad" actors included the U.S. forces in Vietnam, the "military-industrial complex," the CIA and the U.S. government generally; and the "good," in the eyes of the media, were presumably the Communists, who, the study alleged, were consistently overpraised and protected. The study envisioned "a continuation of the current volatile styles, always with the dark possibility that, if the managers do not themselves take action, then outsiders -- the courts, the Federal Communications Commission, or Congress -- will seek to apply remedies of their own."

It is by now an established truth that "we tend to flagellate ourselves as Americans about various aspects of our own policies and actions we disapprove of" and that, as revealed by the Vietnam experience, "it is

almost inescapable that such broad coverage will undermine support for the war effort," particularly "the often-gory pictorial reportage by television" (Landrum Bolling, at a conference he directed on the question of whether there is indeed "no way to effect some kind of balance between the advantages a totalitarian government enjoys because of its ability to control or black out unfavorable news in warfare and the disadvantages for the free society of allowing open coverage of all the wartime events").[13] The Watergate affair, in which investigative reporting "helped force a President from office" (Anthony Lewis), reinforced these dire images of impending destruction of democracy by the free-wheeling, independent, and adversarial media, as did the Iran-contra scandal. Ringing defenses of freedom of the press, such as those of Judge Gurfein and Anthony Lewis, are a response to attempts to control media excesses and impose upon them standards of responsibility.

Two kinds of questions arise in connection with these vigorous debates about the media and democracy: questions of fact and questions of value. The basic question of fact is whether the media have indeed adopted an adversarial stance, perhaps with excessive zeal; whether, in particular, they undermine the defense of freedom in wartime and threaten free institutions by "flagellating ourselves" and those in power. If so, we may then ask whether it would be proper to impose some external constraints to ensure that they keep to the bounds of responsibility, or whether we should adopt the principle expressed by Justice Holmes, in a classic dissent, that "the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market" through "free trade in ideas."[14]

[6] FAIR, Press Release, July 19, 1988. Poll on Constitution, *Boston Globe Magazine,* Sept. 13, 1987, cited by Julius Lobel, in Julius Lobel, ed., *A Less than Perfect Union* (Monthly Review, 1988, 3).

[7] *New York Times*-CBS poll; Adam Clymer, *NYT*, Nov. 19, 1985.

[8] Kissinger and Vance, *Foreign Affairs,* Summer 1988. As one example, among twenty industrialized countries the U.S. ranks 20th in infant mortality rates, with rates higher than East Germany, Ireland, Spain, etc. *Wall Street Journal,* Oct. 19, 1988. For a survey of the deepening poverty, particularly under the Reagan administration, see Fred R. Harris and Roger Wilkins, eds., *Quiet Riots* (Pantheon, 1988).

[9] *Globe and Mail,* March 28, 18, 5, 1986.

[10] For a sample, see Mark Green and Gail MacColl, *Reagan's Reign of Error* (Pantheon, 1987).

[11] John P. Roche, *Washington Star,* Oct. 26, 1977.

[12] Peter Braestrup, *Big Story* (Westview, 1977).

[13] Landrum Bolling, ed., *Reporters under Fire: U.S. Media Coverage of Conflicts in Lebanon and Central America* (Westview, 1985, 35, 2-3).

[14] Justice Holmes, dissenting in *Abrams v. United States,* 1919.

The question of fact is rarely argued; the case is assumed to have been proven. Some, however, have held that the factual premises are simply false. Beginning with the broadest claims, let us consider the functioning of the free market of ideas. In his study of the mobilization of popular opinion to promote state power, Benjamin Ginsberg maintains that

> western governments have used market mechanisms to regulate popular perspectives and sentiments. The "marketplace of ideas," built during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, effectively disseminates the beliefs and ideas of the upper classes while subverting the ideological and cultural independence of the lower classes. Through the construction of this marketplace, western governments forged firm and enduring links between socioeconomic position and ideological power, permitting upper classes to use each to buttress the other... In the United States, in particular, the ability of the upper and upper-middle classes to dominate the

> marketplace of ideas has generally allowed these strata to shape the entire society's perception of political reality and the range of realistic political and social possibilities. While westerners usually equate the marketplace with freedom of opinion, the hidden hand of the market can be almost as potent an instrument of control as the iron fist of the state.[15]

Ginsberg's conclusion has some initial plausibility, on assumptions about the functioning of a guided free market that are not particularly controversial. Those segments of the media that can reach a substantial audience are major corporations and are closely integrated with even larger conglomerates. Like other businesses, they sell a product to buyers. Their market is advertisers, and the "product" is audiences, with a bias towards more wealthy audiences, which improve advertising rates.[16] Over a century ago, British Liberals observed that the market would promote those journals "enjoying the preference of the advertising public"; and today, Paul Johnson, noting the demise of a new journal of the left, blandly comments that it deserved its fate: "The market pronounced an accurate verdict at the start by declining to subscribe all the issue capital," and surely no right-thinking person could doubt that the market represents the public will.[17]

In short, the major media -- particularly, the elite media that set the agenda that others generally follow -- are corporations "selling" privileged audiences to other businesses. It would hardly come as a surprise if the picture of the world they present were to reflect the perspectives and interests of the sellers, the buyers, and the product. Concentration of ownership of the media is high and increasing.[18] Furthermore, those who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests as well. Journalists entering the system are unlikely to make their way unless they conform to these ideological pressures, generally by internalizing the values; it is not easy to say one thing and believe another, and those who fail to conform will tend to be weeded out by familiar mechanisms.

The influence of advertisers is sometimes far more direct. "Projects unsuitable for corporate sponsorship tend to die on the vine," the London *Economist* observes, noting that "stations have learned to be sympathetic to the most delicate sympathies of corporations." The journal cites the case of public TV station WNET, which "lost its corporate underwriting from Gulf+Western as a result of a documentary called `Hunger for Profit', about multinationals buying up huge tracts of land in the third world." These actions "had not been those of a friend," Gulf's chief executive wrote to the station, adding that the documentary was "virulently anti-business, if not anti-American." "Most people believe that WNET would not make the same mistake today," the *Economist* concludes.[19] Nor would others. The warning need only be implicit.

Many other factors induce the media to conform to the requirements of the state-corporate nexus.[20] To confront power is costly and difficult; high standards of evidence and argument are imposed, and critical analysis is naturally not welcomed by those who are in a position to react vigorously and to determine the array of rewards and punishments. Conformity to a "patriotic agenda," in contrast, imposes no such costs. Charges against official enemies barely require substantiation; they are, furthermore, protected from correction, which can be dismissed as apologetics for the criminals or as missing the forest for the trees. The system protects itself with indignation against a challenge to the right of deceit in the service of power, and the very idea of subjecting the ideological system to rational inquiry elicits incomprehension or outrage, though it is often masked in other terms.[21] One who attributes the best intentions to the U.S. government, while perhaps deploring failure and ineptitude, requires no evidence for this stance, as when we ask why "success has continued to elude us" in the Middle East and Central America, why "a nation of such vast wealth, power and good intentions [cannot] accomplish its purposes more promptly and more effectively" (Landrum Bolling).[22] Standards are radically different when we observe that "good intentions" are not properties of states, and that the United States, like every other state past and present, pursues policies that reflect the interests of those who control the state by virtue of their domestic power, truisms that are hardly expressible in the mainstream, surprising as this fact may be.

One needs no evidence to condemn the Soviet Union for aggression in Afghanistan and support for

repression in Poland; it is quite a different matter when one turns to U.S. aggression in Indochina or its efforts to prevent a political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict over many years, readily documented, but unwelcome and therefore a non-fact. No argument is demanded for a condemnation of Iran or Libya for state-supported terrorism; discussion of the prominent -- arguably dominant -- role of the United States and its clients in organizing and conducting this plague of the modern era elicits only horror and contempt for this view point; supporting evidence, however compelling, is dismissed as irrelevant. As a matter of course, the media and intellectual journals either praise the U.S. government for dedicating itself to the struggle for democracy in Nicaragua or criticize it for the means it has employed to pursue this laudable objective, offering no evidence that this is indeed the goal of policy. A challenge to the underlying patriotic assumption is virtually unthinkable within the mainstream and, if permitted expression, would be dismissed as a variety of ideological fanaticism, an absurdity, even if backed by overwhelming evidence -- not a difficult task in this case.

Case by case, we find that conformity is the easy way, and the path to privilege and prestige; dissidence carries personal costs that may be severe, even in a society that lacks such means of control as death squads, psychiatric prisons, or extermination camps. The very structure of the media is designed to induce conformity to established doctrine. In a three-minute stretch between commercials, or in seven hundred words, it is impossible to present unfamiliar thoughts or surprising conclusions with the argument and evidence required to afford them some credibility. Regurgitation of welcome pieties faces no such problem.

It is a natural expectation, on uncontroversial assumptions, that the major media and other ideological institutions will generally reflect the perspectives and interests of established power. That this expectation is fulfilled has been argued by a number of analysts. Edward Herman and I have published extensive documentation, separately and jointly, to support a conception of how the media function that differs sharply from the standard version.[23] According to this "propaganda model" -- which has prior plausibility for such reasons as those just briefly reviewed -- the media serve the interests of state and corporate power, which are closely interlinked, framing their reporting and analysis in a manner supportive of established privilege and limiting debate and discussion accordingly. We have studied a wide range of examples, including those that provide the most severe test for a propaganda model, namely, the cases that critics of alleged anti-establishment excesses of the media offer as their strongest ground: the coverage of the Indochina wars, the Watergate affair, and others drawn from the period when the media are said to have overcome the conformism of the past and taken on a crusading role. To subject the model to a fair test, we have systematically selected examples that are as closely paired as history allows: crimes attributable to official enemies versus those for which the United States and its clients bear responsibility; good deeds, specifically elections conducted by official enemies versus those in U.S. client states. Other methods have also been pursued, yielding further confirmation.

[15] Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Captive Public* (Basic Books, 1986, 86, 89). Ginsberg's study is short on evidence and the logic is often weak: for example, his belief that there is a contradiction in holding both that Star Wars "could not protect the United States from a nuclear attack" and that it might "increase the probability that such an attack would occur," part of his argument that the advocacy of their causes by "liberal political forces" is motivated by "political interest"; but there is plainly no contradiction, whatever the merits of his conclusion about liberal political forces. He also believes that "student demonstrators and the like <193 have little difficulty securing favorable publicity for themselves and their causes," particularly anti-Vietnam war protestors, and accepts uncritically familiar claims about "the adversary posture adopted by the media during the sixties and seventies," among other untenable assumptions.

[16] Putting the point slightly differently, V. O. Key observes that "newspaper publishers are essentially people who sell white space on newsprint to advertisers." Cited by Jerome A. Barron, "Access to the Press -- a New First Amendment Right," *Harvard Law Review,* vol. 80, 1967; from Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*.

[17] Sir George Lewis, cited in James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility* (Methuen,

1985, 31); Paul Johnson, *Spectator,* Nov. 28, 1987.

[18] A panel of media critics organized annually by Carl Jensen, who select the "ten most censored stories" of the year, gave the first prize for 1987 to a study of these issues by Ben Bagdikian, referring of course not to literal state censorship but to media evasion or distortion of critical issues.

[19] *Economist,* Dec. 5, 1987.

[20] For more extensive study of these matters, see Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Pantheon, 1988), chapter 1.

[21] For some discussion, see appendix I, section 1.

[22] Bolling, *op. cit.,* 8.

[23] Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*; Chomsky, *The Culture of Terrorism* (South End, 1988). See also our two-volume *Political Economy of Human Rights* (South End, 1979), an extension of an earlier study that was suppressed by the conglomerate that owned the publisher; see the author's preface for details. See also Herman, *The Real Terror Network* (South End, 1982); my *Pirates and Emperors* (Claremont, 1986; Amana, 1988); and much other work over the past twenty years. Also James Aronson, *The Press and the Cold War* (Beacon, 1970); Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality* (St. Martin's, 1986).

There are, by now, thousands of pages of documentation supporting the conclusions of the propaganda model. By the standards of the social sciences, it is very well confirmed, and its predictions are often considerably surpassed. If there is a serious challenge to this conclusion, I am unaware of it. The nature of the arguments presented against it, on the rare occasions when the topic can even be addressed in the mainstream, suggest that the model is indeed robust. The highly regarded Freedom House study, which is held to have provided the conclusive demonstration of the adversarial character of the media and its threat to democracy, collapses upon analysis, and when innumerable errors and misrepresentations are corrected, amounts to little more than a complaint that the media were too pessimistic in their pursuit of a righteous cause; I know of no other studies that fare better.[24]

There are, to be sure, other factors that influence the performance of social institutions as complex as the media, and one can find exceptions to the general pattern that the propaganda model predicts. Nevertheless, it has, I believe, been shown to provide a reasonably close first approximation, which captures essential properties of the media and the dominant intellectual culture more generally.

One prediction of the model is that it will be effectively excluded from discussion, for it questions a factual assumption that is most serviceable to the interests of established power: namely, that the media are adversarial and cantankerous, perhaps excessively so. However well-confirmed the model may be, then, it is inadmissible, and, the model predicts, should remain outside the spectrum of debate over the media. This conclusion too is empirically well-confirmed. Note that the model has a rather disconcerting feature. Plainly, it is either valid or invalid. If invalid, it may be dismissed; if valid, it *will* be dismissed. As in the case of eighteenth-century doctrine on seditious libel, truth is no defense; rather, it heightens the enormity of the crime of calling authority into disrepute.

If the conclusions drawn in the propaganda model are correct, then the criticisms of the media for their adversarial stance can only be understood as a demand that the media should not even reflect the range of debate over tactical questions among dominant elites, but should serve only those segments that happen to manage the state at a particular moment, and should do so with proper enthusiasm and optimism about the causes -- noble by definition -- in which state power is engaged. It would not have surprised George Orwell that this should be the import of the critique of the media by an organization that calls itself "Freedom House."[25]

Journalists often meet a high standard of professionalism in their work, exhibiting courage, integrity,

and enterprise, including many of those who report for media that adhere closely to the predictions of the propaganda model. There is no contradiction here. What is at issue is not the honesty of the opinions expressed or the integrity of those who seek the facts but rather the choice of topics and highlighting of issues, the range of opinion permitted expression, the unquestioned premises that guide reporting and commentary, and the general framework imposed for the presentation of a certain view of the world. We need not, incidentally, tarry over such statements as the following, emblazoned on the cover of the *New Republic* during Israel's invasion of Lebanon: "Much of what you have read in the newspapers and newsmagazines about the war in Lebanon -- and even more of what you have seen and heard on television -- is simply not true."[26] Such performances can be consigned to the dismal archives of apologetics for the atrocities of other favored states.

I will present examples to illustrate the workings of the propaganda model, but will assume the basic case to have been credibly established by the extensive material already in print. This work has elicited much outrage and falsification (some of which Herman and I review in *Manufacturing Consent,* some elsewhere), and also puzzlement and misunderstanding. But, to my knowledge, there is no serious effort to respond to these and other similar critiques. Rather, they are simply dismissed, in conformity to the predictions of the propaganda model.[27] Typically, debate over media performance within the mainstream includes criticism of the adversarial stance of the media and response by their defenders, but no critique of the media for adhering to the predictions of the propaganda model, or recognition that this might be a conceivable position. In the case of the Indochina wars, for example, U.S. public television presented a retrospective series in 1985 followed by a denunciation produced by the right-wing media-monitoring organization Accuracy in Media and a discussion limited to critics of the alleged adversarial excesses of the series and its defenders. No one argued that the series conforms to the expectations of the propaganda model -- as it does. The study of media coverage of conflicts in the Third World mentioned earlier follows a similar pattern, which is quite consistent, though the public regards the media as too conformist.[28]

The media cheerfully publish condemnations of their "breathtaking lack of balance or even the appearance of fair-mindedness" and "the ills and dangers of today's wayward press."[29] But only when, as in this case, the critic is condemning the "media elite" for being "in thrall to liberal views of politics and human nature" and for the "evident difficulty most liberals have in using the word dictatorship to describe even the most flagrant dictatorships of the left"; surely one would never find Fidel Castro described as a dictator in the mainstream press, always so soft on Communism and given to self-flagellation.[30] Such diatribes are not expected to meet even minimal standards of evidence; this one contains exactly one reference to what conceivably might be a fact, a vague allusion to alleged juggling of statistics by the *New York Times* "to obscure the decline of interest rates during Ronald Reagan's first term," as though the matter had not been fully reported. Charges of this nature are often not unwelcome, first, because response is simple or superfluous; and second, because debate over this issue helps entrench the belief that the media are either independent and objective, with high standards of professional integrity and openness to all reasonable views, or, alternatively, that they are biased towards stylishly leftish flouting of authority. Either conclusion is quite acceptable to established power and privilege -- even to the media elites themselves, who are not averse to the charge that they may have gone too far in pursuing their cantankerous and obstreperous ways in defiance of orthodoxy and power. The spectrum of discussion reflects what a propaganda model would predict: condemnation of "liberal bias" and defense against this charge, but no recognition of the possibility that "liberal bias" might simply be an expression of one variant of the narrow state-corporate ideology -- as, demonstrably, it is -- and a particularly useful variant, bearing the implicit message: thus far, and no further.

Returning to the proposals of the Brazilian bishops, one reason they would appear superfluous or wrong-headed if raised in our political context is that the media are assumed to be dedicated to service to the public good, if not too extreme in their independence of authority. They are thus performing their proper social role, as explained by Supreme Court Justice Powell in words quoted by Anthony Lewis in his defense of freedom of the press: "No individual can obtain for himself the information needed for the intelligent discharge of his political responsibilities... By enabling the public to assert meaningful control over the political process, the press performs a crucial function in effecting the societal purpose of the First Amendment."

[24] For some further comments on these topics, discussed more extensively in the references of the preceding footnote, see appendix I, section 1.

[25] On the role of Freedom House as a virtual propaganda arm of the government and international right wing, see Edward S. Herman and Frank Brodhead, *Demonstration Elections* (South End, 1984, appendix I), and *Manufacturing Consent*. According to a memo of NSC official Walter Raymond, Freedom House was one of the recipients of money raised by the Reagan administration propaganda apparatus (see note 45, below), a charge denied by Sussman, speaking for Freedom House. See Robert Parry and Peter Kornbluh, "Iran-Contra's Untold Story," *Foreign Policy,* Fall 1988; correspondence, Winter 1988-89. To demonstrate the impartiality and *bona fides* of Freedom House, Sussman states that "we cited the deplorable human rights record of the Sandinistas, as we publicize violators of human rights in many other countries, such as Chile and Paraguay." Nicaragua, Chile, and Paraguay are the three Latin American countries that the Reagan administration officially condemns for human rights violations, and, to the surprise of no one familiar with its record, Freedom House selects these three examples. Sussman does not, however, select El Salvador and Guatemala, where human rights violations are vastly beyond anything attributable to the Sandinistas, but are not deplored by the Reagan administration, which bears much of the responsibility for them. The fact that Freedom House is taken seriously, in the light of its record, is startling.

[26] Martin Peretz, *New Republic,* Aug. 2, 1982. See my *Fateful Triangle* (South End, 1983), for more on this curious document and others like it; and appendix I, section 2.

[27] See appendix I, section 1, for some comment.

[28] Bolling, *op. cit.*. See appendix I, section 2, and *Manufacturing Consent* on the Vietnam war TV retrospective and others. On public attitudes towards the media as not critical enough of government and too readily influenced by power generally, see Mark Hertsgaard, *On Bended Knee* (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1988, 84-85).

[29] Former *Time* senior editor Timothy Foote, who asserts that "any attentive reader" of that journal will know that its bias is sometimes "as obvious as the faces of Mount Rushmore" (Review of William Rusher, *The Coming Battle for the Media, WP Weekly,* June 27, 1988). Rusher condemns the "media elite" for distorting the news with their liberal bias. Press critic David Shaw of the *Los Angeles Times,* reviewing the same book in the *New York Times Book Review,* responds with the equally conventional view that "journalists love to challenge the status quo," and are "critics, nitpickers, malcontents" who "complain about everything."

[30] For detailed analysis of media coverage of Cuba, see Tony Platt, ed., *Tropical Gulag* (Global Options, 1987). Wayne Smith, formerly head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana and a leading Cuba specialist, describes the study as offering "devastating" confirmation of the "overwhelmingly negative" treatment of Cuba in the media, in conformity with "the Department of State's version," citing additional examples of "lack of balance" and refusal to cover significant evidence refuting Reaganite charges; *Social Justice,* Summer 1988. See also appendix I, section 1.

An alternative view, which I believe is valid, is that the media indeed serve a "societal purpose," but quite a different one. It is the societal purpose served by state education as conceived by James Mill in the early days of the establishment of this system: to "train the minds of the people to a virtuous attachment to their government," and to the arrangements of the social, economic, and political order more generally.[31] Far from contributing to a "crisis of democracy" of the sort feared by the liberal establishment, the media are vigilant guardians protecting privilege from the threat of public understanding and participation. If these conclusions are correct, the first objection to democratizing the media is based on factual and analytic error.

A second basis for objection is more substantial, and not without warrant: the call for democratizing the

media could mask highly unwelcome efforts to limit intellectual independence through popular pressures, a variant of concerns familiar in political theory. The problem is not easily dismissed, but it is not an inherent property of democratization of the media.[32]

The basic issue seems to me to be a different one. Our political culture has a conception of democracy that differs from that of the Brazilian bishops. For them, democracy means that citizens should have the opportunity to inform themselves, to take part in inquiry and discussion and policy formation, and to advance their programs through political action. For us, democracy is more narrowly conceived: the citizen is a consumer, an observer but not a participant. The public has the right to ratify policies that originate elsewhere, but if these limits are exceeded, we have not democracy, but a "crisis of democracy," which must somehow be resolved.

This concept is based on doctrines laid down by the Founding Fathers. The Federalists, historian Joyce Appleby writes, expected "that the new American political institutions would continue to function within the old assumptions about a politically active elite and a deferential, compliant electorate," and "George Washington had hoped that his enormous prestige would bring that great, sober, commonsensical citizenry politicians are always addressing to see the dangers of self-created societies."[33] Despite their electoral defeat, their conception prevailed, though in a different form as industrial capitalism took shape. It was expressed by John Jay, the president of the Continental Congress and the first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, in what his biographer calls one of his favorite maxims: "The people who own the country ought to govern it." And they need not be too gentle in the mode of governance. Alluding to rising disaffection, Gouverneur Morris wrote in a dispatch to John Jay in 1783 that although "it is probable that much of Convulsion will ensue," there need be no real concern: "The People are well prepared" for the government to assume "that Power without which Government is but a Name... Wearied with the War, their Acquiescence may be depended on with absolute Certainty, and you and I, my friend, know by Experience that when a few Men of sense and spirit get together and declare that they are the Authority, such few as are of a different opinion may easily be convinced of their Mistake by that powerful Argument the Halter." By "the People," constitutional historian Richard Morris observes, "he meant a small nationalist elite, whom he was too cautious to name" -- the white propertied males for whom the constitutional order was established. The "vast exodus of Loyalists and blacks" to Canada and elsewhere reflected in part their insight into these realities.[34]

Elsewhere, Morris observes that in the post-revolutionary society, "what one had in effect was a political democracy manipulated by an elite," and in states where "egalitarian democracy" might appear to have prevailed (as in Virginia), in reality "dominance of the aristocracy was implicitly accepted." The same is true of the dominance of the rising business classes in later periods that are held to reflect the triumph of popular democracy.[35]

John Jay's maxim is, in fact, the principle on which the Republic was founded and maintained, and in its very nature capitalist democracy cannot stray far from this pattern for reasons that are readily perceived.[36]

At home, this principle requires that politics reduce, in effect, to interactions among groups of investors who compete for control of the state, in accordance with what Thomas Ferguson calls the "investment theory of politics," which, he argues plausibly, explains a large part of U.S. political history.[37] For our dependencies, the same basic principle entails that democracy is achieved when the society is under the control of local oligarchies, business-based elements linked to U.S. investors, the military under our control, and professionals who can be trusted to follow orders and serve the interests of U.S. power and privilege. If there is any popular challenge to their rule, the United States is entitled to resort to violence to "restore democracy" -- to adopt the term conventionally used in reference to the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua. The media contrast the "democrats" with the "Communists," the former being those who serve the interests of U.S. power, the latter those afflicted with the disease called "ultranationalism" in secret planning documents, which explain, forthrightly, that the threat to our interests is "nationalistic regimes" that respond to domestic pressures for improvement of living standards and social reform, with insufficient regard for the needs of U.S. investors.

The media are only following the rules of the game when they contrast the "fledgling democracies" of

Central America, under military and business control, with "Communist Nicaragua." And we can appreciate why they suppressed the 1987 polls in El Salvador that revealed that a mere 10 percent of the population "believe that there is a process of democracy and freedom in the country at present." The benighted Salvadorans doubtless fail to comprehend our concept of democracy. And the same must be true of the editors of Honduras's leading journal *El Tiempo.* They see in their country a "democracy" that offers "unemployment and repression" in a caricature of the democratic process, and write that there can be no democracy in a country under "occupation of North American troops and contras," where "vital national interests are abandoned in order to serve the objectives of foreigners," while repression and illegal arrests continue, and the death squads of the military lurk ominously in the background.[38]

In accordance with the prevailing conceptions in the U.S., there is no infringement on democracy if a few corporations control the information system: in fact, that is the essence of democracy. In the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* the leading figure of the public relations industry, Edward Bernays, explains that "the very essence of the democratic process" is "the freedom to persuade and suggest," what he calls "the engineering of consent." "A leader," he continues, "frequently cannot wait for the people to arrive at even general understanding... Democratic leaders must play their part in...engineering...consent to socially constructive goals and values," applying "scientific principles and tried practices to the task of getting people to support ideas and programs"; and although it remains unsaid, it is evident enough that those who control resources will be in a position to judge what is "socially constructive," to engineer consent through the media, and to implement policy through the mechanisms of the state. If the freedom to persuade happens to be concentrated in a few hands, we must recognize that such is the nature of a free society. The public relations industry expends vast resources "educating the American people about the economic facts of life" to ensure a favorable climate for business. Its task is to control "the public mind," which is "the only serious danger confronting the company," an AT&T executive observed eighty years ago.[39]

[31] Cited by Ginsberg, *Captive Mind,* 34.

[32] Distaste for democracy sometimes reaches such extremes that state control is taken to be the only imaginable alternative to domination by concentrated private wealth. It must be this tacit assumption that impels Nicholas Lemann (*New Republic,* Jan. 9, 1989) to assert that in our book *Manufacturing Consent,* Herman and I advocate "more state control" over the media, basing this claim on our statement that "In the long run, a democratic political order requires far wider control of and access to the media" on the part of the general public (p. 307). This quoted statement follows a review of some of the possible modalities, including the proliferation of public-access TV channels that "have weakened the power of the network oligopoly" and have "a potential for enhanced local-group access," "local nonprofit radio and television stations," ownership of radio stations by "community institutions" (a small cooperative in France is mentioned as an example), listener-supported radio in local communities, and so on. Such options indeed challenge corporate oligopoly and the rule of the wealthy generally. Therefore, they can only be interpreted as "state control" by someone who regards it as unthinkable that the general public might, or should, gain access to the media as a step towards shaping their own affairs.

[33] Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order* (NYU, 1984, 73). On the absurd George Washington cult contrived as part of the effort "to cultivate the ideological loyalties of the citizenry" and thus create a sense of "viable nationhood," see Lawrence J. Friedman, *Inventors of the Promised Land* (Knopf, 1975, chapter 2). Washington was a "perfect man" of "unparalleled perfection," who was raised "above the level of mankind," and so on. This Kim Il Sung-ism persists among the intellectuals, for example, in the reverence for FDR and his "grandeur," "majesty," etc., in the *New York Review of Books* (see *Fateful Triangle,* 175, for some scarcely believable quotes), and in the Camelot cult. Sometimes a foreign leader ascends to the same semi-divinity, and may be described as "a Promethean figure" with "colossal external strength" and "colossal powers," as in the more ludicrous moments of the Stalin era, or in the accolade to Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir by Martin Peretz from which the quotes just given are taken (*New Republic,* Aug. 10, 1987).

[34] Frank Monaghan, *John Jay* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1935); Richard B. Morris, *The Forging of the Union*

(Harper & Row, 1987, 46-47, 173, 12f.). See *Political Economy of Human Rights,* II, 41ff. on the flight of refugees after the American revolution, including boat people fleeing in terror from perhaps the richest country in the world to suffer and die in Nova Scotia in mid-winter; relative to the population, the numbers compare to the refugee flight from ravaged Vietnam. For a recent estimate, including 80,000-100,000 Loyalists, see Morris, 13, 17.

[35] *The American Revolution Reconsidered* (Harper & Row, 1967, 57-58).

[36] See Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy* (Penguin, 1983), for a perceptive analysis, and next chapter for some further comments.

[37] For some discussion and further references, see *Turning the Tide,* 232f.

[38] Editorials, *El Tiempo,* May 5, 10; translated in *Hondupress* (Managua), May 18, 1988, a journal of Honduran exiles who fear to return to the "fledgling democracy" because of the threat of assassination and disappearance. For more on the Salvadoran polls, see *Culture of Terrorism,* 102, and appendix IV, section 5. I found no reference in the media, though there is a regular chorus of praise for the progress of this noble experiment in democracy under U.S. tutelage.

[39] Alex Carey, "Reshaping the Truth," *Meanjin Quarterly* (Australia), 35.4, 1976; Gabriel Kolko, *Main Currents in American History* (Pantheon, 1984, 284). For extensive discussion, see Alex Carey, "Managing Public Opinion: The Corporate Offensive," ms., U. of New South Wales, 1986.

Similar ideas are standard across the political spectrum. The dean of U.S. journalists, Walter Lippmann, described a "revolution" in "the practice of democracy" as "the manufacture of consent" has become "a self-conscious art and a regular organ of popular government." This is a natural development when "the common interests very largely elude public opinion entirely, and can be managed only by a specialized class whose personal interests reach beyond the locality." He was writing shortly after World War I, when the liberal intellectual community was much impressed with its success in serving as "the faithful and helpful interpreters of what seems to be one of the greatest enterprises ever undertaken by an American president" (*New Republic*). The enterprise was Woodrow Wilson's interpretation of his electoral mandate for "peace without victory" as the occasion for pursuing victory without peace, with the assistance of the liberal intellectuals, who later praised themselves for having "impose[d] their will upon a reluctant or indifferent majority," with the aid of propaganda fabrications about Hun atrocities and other such devices.

Fifteen years later, Harold Lasswell explained in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* that we should not succumb to "democratic dogmatisms about men being the best judges of their own interests." They are not; the best judges are the elites, who must, therefore, be ensured the means to impose their will, for the common good. When social arrangements deny them the requisite force to compel obedience, it is necessary to turn to "a whole new technique of control, largely through propaganda" because of the "ignorance and superstition [of]...the masses." In the same years, Reinhold Niebuhr argued that "rationality belongs to the cool observers," while "the proletarian" follows not reason but faith, based upon a crucial element of "necessary illusion." Without such illusion, the ordinary person will descend to "inertia." Then in his Marxist phase, Niebuhr urged that those he addressed -- presumably, the cool observers -- recognize "the stupidity of the average man" and provide the "emotionally potent oversimplifications" required to keep the proletarian on course to create a new society; the basic conceptions underwent little change as Niebuhr became "the official establishment theologian" (Richard Rovere), offering counsel to those who "face the responsibilities of power."[40]

After World War II, as the ignorant public reverted to their slothful pacifism at a time when elites understood the need to mobilize for renewed global conflict, historian Thomas Bailey observed that "because the masses are notoriously short-sighted and generally cannot see danger until it is at their throats, our statesmen are forced to deceive them into an awareness of their own long-run interests. Deception of the people may in fact become increasingly necessary, unless we are willing to give our

leaders in Washington a freer hand." Commenting on the same problem as a renewed crusade was being launched in 1981, Samuel Huntington made the point that "you may have to sell [intervention or other military action] in such a way as to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the United States has done ever since the Truman Doctrine" -- an acute observation, which explains one essential function of the Cold War.[41]

At another point on the spectrum, the conservative contempt for democracy is succinctly articulated by Sir Lewis Namier, who writes that "there is no free will in the thinking and actions of the masses, any more than in the revolutions of planets, in the migrations of birds, and in the plunging of hordes of lemmings into the sea."[42] Only disaster would ensue if the masses were permitted to enter the arena of decision-making in a meaningful way.

Some are admirably forthright in their defense of the doctrine: for example, the Dutch Minister of Defense writes that "whoever turns against manufacture of consent resists any form of effective authority."[43] Any commissar would nod his head in appreciation and understanding.

At its root, the logic is that of the Grand Inquisitor, who bitterly assailed Christ for offering people freedom and thus condemning them to misery. The Church must correct the evil work of Christ by offering the miserable mass of humanity the gift they most desire and need: absolute submission. It must "vanquish freedom" so as "to make men happy" and provide the total "community of worship" that they avidly seek. In the modern secular age, this means worship of the state religion, which in the Western democracies incorporates the doctrine of submission to the masters of the system of public subsidy, private profit, called free enterprise. The people must be kept in ignorance, reduced to jingoist incantations, for their own good. And like the Grand Inquisitor, who employs the forces of miracle, mystery, and authority "to conquer and hold captive for ever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness" and to deny them the freedom of choice they so fear and despise, so the "cool observers" must create the "necessary illusions" and "emotionally potent oversimplifications" that keep the ignorant and stupid masses disciplined and content.[44]

Despite the frank acknowledgment of the need to deceive the public, it would be an error to suppose that practitioners of the art are typically engaged in *conscious* deceit; few reach the level of sophistication of the Grand Inquisitor or maintain such insights for long. On the contrary, as the intellectuals pursue their grim and demanding vocation, they readily adopt beliefs that serve institutional needs; those who do not will have to seek employment elsewhere. The chairman of the board may sincerely believe that his every waking moment is dedicated to serving human needs. Were he to act on these delusions instead of pursuing profit and market share, he would no longer be chairman of the board. It is probable that the most inhuman monsters, even the Himmlers and the Mengeles, convince themselves that they are engaged in noble and courageous acts. The psychology of leaders is a topic of little interest. The institutional factors that constrain their actions and beliefs are what merit attention.

Across a broad spectrum of articulate opinion, the fact that the voice of the people is heard in democratic societies is considered a problem to be overcome by ensuring that the public voice speaks the right words. The general conception is that leaders control us, not that we control them. If the population is out of control and propaganda doesn't work, then the state is forced underground, to clandestine operations and secret wars; the scale of covert operations is often a good measure of popular dissidence, as it was during the Reagan period. Among this group of self-styled "conservatives," the commitment to untrammeled executive power and the contempt for democracy reached unusual heights. Accordingly, so did the resort to propaganda campaigns targeting the media and the general population: for example, the establishment of the State Department Office of Latin American Public Diplomacy dedicated to such projects as Operation Truth, which one high government official described as "a huge psychological operation of the kind the military conducts to influence a population in denied or enemy territory."[45] The terms express lucidly the attitude towards the errant public: enemy territory, which must be conquered and subdued.

In its dependencies, the United States must often turn to violence to "restore democracy." At home, more subtle means are required: the manufacture of consent, deceiving the stupid masses with "necessary illusions," covert operations that the media and Congress pretend not to see until it all becomes too

obvious to be suppressed. We then shift to the phase of damage control to ensure that public attention is diverted to overzealous patriots or to the personality defects of leaders who have strayed from our noble commitments, but not to the institutional factors that determine the persistent and substantive content of these commitments. The task of the Free Press, in such circumstances, is to take the proceedings seriously and to describe them as a tribute to the soundness of our self-correcting institutions, which they carefully protect from public scrutiny.

More generally, the media and the educated classes must fulfill their "societal purpose," carrying out their necessary tasks in accord with the prevailing conception of democracy.

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[40] For references, see my *Towards a New Cold War* (Pantheon, 1982, chapter 1). Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (Scribners, 1952, 221-23, 21; reprint of 1932 edition); also Richard Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr* (Pantheon, 1985, 138-39). For more on his ideas, and their reception, see my review of several books by and on Niebuhr in *Grand Street,* Winter 1987.

[41] Bailey, cited by Jesse Lemisch, *On Active Service in War and Peace: Politics and Ideology in the American Historical Profession* (New Hogtown Press, Toronto, 1975). Huntington, *International Security,* Summer 1981.

[42] *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (Macmillan, 1961, 40); cited by Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune* (Norton, 1988, 471).

[43] Defense Minister Frits Bolkestein, *NRC Handelsblad,* Oct. 11, 1988. He is commenting (indignantly) on material I presented on this topic as a Huizinga lecture in Leiden in 1977, reprinted in *Towards a New Cold War,* chapter 1.

[44] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (Random House, 1950).

[45] Alfonso Chardy, *Miami Herald,* July 19, 1987. The State Department Office of Public Diplomacy operated under CIA-NSC direction to organize support for the contras and to intimidate and manipulate the media and Congress. On its activities, condemned as illegal in September 1987 by the Comptroller General of the GAO, see Staff Report, *State Department and Intelligence Community Involvement in Domestic Activities Related to the Iran/Contra Affair,* Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, Sept. 7, 1988; Parry and Kornbluh, *op. cit.* Also *Culture of Terrorism,* chapter 10, referring to Chardy's earlier exposures in two outstanding though generally neglected articles in the *Miami Herald*.

Chapter Two

Containing the Enemy

In the first chapter, I mentioned three models of media organization: (1) corporate oligopoly; (2) state-controlled; (3) a democratic communications policy as advanced by the Brazilian bishops. The first model reduces democratic participation in the media to zero, just as other corporations are, in principle, exempt from popular control by work force or community. In the case of state-controlled media, democratic participation might vary, depending on how the political system functions; in practice, the state media are generally kept in line by the forces that have the power to dominate the state, and by an apparatus of cultural managers who cannot stray far from the bounds these forces set. The third model is largely untried in practice, just as a sociopolitical system with significant popular engagement remains a concern for the future: a hope or a fear, depending on one's evaluation of the right of the public to shape its own affairs.

The model of media as corporate oligopoly is the natural system for capitalist democracy. It has,

accordingly, reached its highest form in the most advanced of these societies, particularly the United States, where media concentration is high, public radio and television are limited in scope, and elements of the radical democratic model exist only at the margins, in such phenomena as listener-supported community radio and the alternative or local press, often with a noteworthy effect on the social and political culture and the sense of empowerment in the communities that benefit from these options.[1] In this respect, the United States represents the form towards which capitalist democracy is tending; related tendencies include the progressive elimination of unions and other popular organizations that interfere with private power, an electoral system that is increasingly stage-managed as a public relations exercise, avoidance of welfare measures such as national health insurance that also impinge on the prerogatives of the privileged, and so on. From this perspective, it is reasonable for Cyrus Vance and Henry Kissinger to describe the United States as "a model democracy," democracy being understood as a system of business control of political as well as other major institutions.

Other Western democracies are generally a few steps behind in these respects. Most have not yet achieved the U.S. system of one political party, with two factions controlled by shifting segments of the business community. They still retain parties based on working people and the poor which to some extent represent their interests. But these are declining, along with cultural institutions that sustain different values and concerns, and organizational forms that provide isolated individuals with the means to think and to act outside the framework imposed by private power.

This is the natural course of events under capitalist democracy, because of what Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers call "the resource constraint" and "the demand constraint."[2] The former is straightforward: control over resources is narrowly concentrated, with predictable effects for every aspect of social and political life. The demand constraint is a more subtle means of control, one whose effects are rarely observed directly in a properly functioning capitalist democracy such as the United States, though they are evident, for example, in Latin America, where the political system sometimes permits a broader range of policy options, including programs of social reform. The consequences are well known: capital flight, loss of business and investor confidence, and general social decline as those who "own the country" lose the capacity to govern it -- or simply a military coup, typically backed by the hemispheric guardian of order and good form. The more benign response to reform programs illustrates the demand constraint -- the requirement that the interests of those with effective power be satisfied if the society is to function.

In brief, it is necessary to ensure that those who own the country are happy, or else all will suffer, for they control investment and determine what is produced and distributed and what benefits will trickle down to those who rent themselves to the owners when they can. For the homeless in the streets, then, the highest priority must be to ensure that the dwellers in the mansions are reasonably content. Given the options available within the system and the cultural values it reinforces, maximization of short-term individual gain appears to be the rational course, along with submissiveness, obedience, and abandonment of the public arena. The bounds on political action are correspondingly limited. Once the forms of capitalist democracy are in place, they remain very stable, whatever suffering ensues -- a fact that has long been understood by U.S. planners.

One consequence of the distribution of resources and decision-making power in the society at large is that the political class and the cultural managers typically associate themselves with the sectors that dominate the private economy; they are either drawn directly from those sectors or expect to join them. The radical democrats of the seventeenth-century English revolution held that "it will never be a good world while knights and gentlemen make us laws, that are chosen for fear and do but oppress us, and do not know the people's sores. It will never be well with us till we have Parliaments of countrymen like ourselves, that know our wants." But Parliament and the preachers had a different vision: "when we mention the people, we do not mean the confused promiscuous body of the people," they held. With the resounding defeat of the democrats, the remaining question, in the words of a Leveller pamphlet, was "whose slaves the poor shall be," the King's or Parliament's.[3]

The same controversy arose in the early days of the American Revolution. "Framers of the state constitutions," Edward Countryman observes, "had insisted that the representative assemblies should

closely reflect the people of the state itself"; they objected to a "separate caste" of political leaders insulated from the people. But the Federal Constitution guaranteed that "representatives, senators, and the president all would know that exceptional was just what they were." Under the Confederation, artisans, farmers, and others of the common people had demanded that they be represented by "men of their own kind," having learned from the revolutionary experience that they were "as capable as anyone of deciding what was wrong in their lives and of organizing themselves so they could do something about it." This was not to be. "The last gasp of the original spirit of the Revolution, with all its belief in community and cooperation, came from the Massachusetts farmers" during Shay's rebellion in 1786. "The resolutions and addresses of their county committees in the year or two before the rebellion said exactly what all sorts of people had been saying in 1776." Their failure taught the painful lesson that "the old ways no longer worked," and "they found themselves forced to grovel and beg forgiveness from rulers who claimed to be the people's servants." So it has remained. With the rarest of exceptions, the representatives of the people do not come from or return to the workplace; rather, law offices catering to business interests, executive suites, and other places of privilege.[4]

[1] See chapter 1, note 32. There are various complexities and qualifications, of course, when we turn from very general features of the system to fine details and minor effects. It should be understood that these are features of the analysis of any complex system.

[2] See their *On Democracy,* where more wide-ranging consequences are elaborated.

[3] Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (Penguin, 1984, 60, 71), quoting contemporary authors.

[4] Edward Countryman, *The American Revolution* (Hill and Wang, 1985, 200, 224ff.)

As for the media, in England a lively labor-oriented press reaching a broad public existed into the 1960s, when it was finally eliminated through the workings of the market. At the time of its demise in 1964, the *Daily Herald* had over five times as many readers as *The Times* and "almost double the readership of *The Times,* the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian* combined," James Curran observes, citing survey research showing that its readers "were also exceptionally devoted to their paper." But this journal, partially owned by the unions and reaching a largely working-class audience, "appealed to the wrong people," Curran continues. The same was true of other elements of the social democratic press that died at the same time, in large part because they were "deprived of the same level of subsidy" through advertising and private capital as sustained "the quality press," which "not only reflects the values and interests of its middle-class readers" but also "gives them force, clarity and coherence" and "plays an important ideological role in amplifying and renewing the dominant political consensus."[5]

The consequences are significant. For the media, Curran concludes, there is "a remarkable growth in advertising-related editorial features" and a "growing convergence between editorial and advertising content" reflecting "the increasing accommodation of national newspaper managements to the selective needs of advertisers" and the business community generally; the same is likely true of news coverage and interpretation. For society at large, Curran continues, "the loss of the only social democratic papers with a large readership which devoted serious attention to current affairs," including sectors of the working class that had remained "remarkably radical in their attitudes to a wide range of economic and political issues," contributed to "the progressive erosion in post-war Britain of a popular radical tradition" and to the disintegration of "the cultural base that has sustained active participation within the Labour movement," which "has ceased to exist as a mass movement in most parts of the country." The effects are readily apparent. With the elimination of the "selection and treatment of news" and "relatively detailed political commentary and analysis [that] helped daily to sustain a social democratic sub-culture within the working class," there is no longer an articulate alternative to the picture of "a world where the subordination of working people [is] accepted as natural and inevitable," and no continuing expression of the view that working people are "morally entitled to a greater share of the

wealth they created and a greater say in its allocation." The same tendencies are evident elsewhere in the industrial capitalist societies.

There are, then, natural processes at work to facilitate the control of "enemy territory" at home. Similarly, the global planning undertaken by U.S. elites during and after World War II assumed that principles of liberal internationalism would generally serve to satisfy what had been described as the "requirement of the United States in a world in which it proposes to hold unquestioned power."[6] The global policy goes under the name "containment." The manufacture of consent at home is its domestic counterpart. The two policies are, in fact, closely intertwined, since the domestic population must be mobilized to pay the costs of "containment," which may be severe -- both material and moral costs.

The rhetoric of containment is designed to give a defensive cast to the project of global management, and it thus serves as part of the domestic system of thought control. It is remarkable that the terminology is so easily adopted, given the questions that it begs. Looking more closely, we find that the concept conceals a good deal.[7]

The underlying assumption is that there is a stable international order that the United States must defend. The general contours of this international order were developed by U.S. planners during and after World War II. Recognizing the extraordinary scale of U.S. power, they proposed to construct a global system that the United States would dominate and within which U.S. business interests would thrive. As much of the world as possible would constitute a Grand Area, as it was called, which would be subordinated to the needs of the U.S. economy. Within the Grand Area, other capitalist societies would be encouraged to develop, but without protective devices that would interfere with U.S. prerogatives.[8] In particular, only the United States would be permitted to dominate regional systems. The United States moved to take effective control of world energy production and to organize a world system in which its various components would fulfill their functions as industrial centers, as markets and sources of raw materials, or as dependent states pursuing their "regional interests" within the "overall framework of order" managed by the United States (as Henry Kissinger was later to explain).

The Soviet Union has been considered the major threat to the planned international order, for good reason. In part this follows from its very existence as a great power controlling an imperial system that could not be incorporated within the Grand Area; in part from its occasional efforts to expand the domains of its power, as in Afghanistan, and the alleged threat of invasion of Western Europe, if not world conquest, a prospect regularly discounted by more serious analysts in public and in internal documents. But it is necessary to understand how broadly the concept of "defense" is construed if we wish to evaluate the assessment of Soviet crimes. Thus the Soviet Union is a threat to world order if it supports people opposing U.S. designs, for example, the South Vietnamese engaging in "internal aggression" against their selfless American defenders (as explained by the Kennedy liberals), or Nicaraguans illegimately combating the depredations of the U.S.-run "democratic resistance." Such actions prove that Soviet leaders are not serious about détente and cannot be trusted, statesmen and commentators soberly observe. Thus, "Nicaragua will be a prime place to test the sanguine forecast that [Gorbachev] is now turning down the heat in the Third World," the *Washington Post* editors explain, placing the onus for the U.S. attack against Nicaragua on the Russians while warning of the threat of this Soviet outpost to "overwhelm and terrorize" its neighbors.[9] The United States will have "won the Cold War," from this point of view, when it is free to exercise its will in the rest of the world without Soviet interference.

Though "containing the Soviet Union" has been the dominant theme of U.S. foreign policy only since the United States became a truly global power after World War II, the Soviet Union had been considered an intolerable threat to order since the Bolshevik revolution. Accordingly, it has been the main enemy of the independent media.

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[5] James Curran, "Advertising and the Press," in Curran, ed., *The British Press: A Manifesto* (London: MacMillan, 1978).

[6] Lawrence Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust* (Monthly Review, 1977, 130), a study of the War and Peace Studies Project of the Council on Foreign Relations and the State Department from 1939 to 1945.

[7] See appendix II, section 1, for further discussion.

[8] Exceptions were tolerated in the early years because of the special need for recovery of the centers of industrial capitalism by exploiting their former colonies, but this was understood to be a temporary expedient. For details, see William S. Borden, *The Pacific Alliance: United States Foreign Economic Policy and Japanese Trade Recovery, 1947-1955* (Wisconsin, 1984); Andrew J. Rotter, *The Path to Vietnam: Origins of the American Commitment to Southeast Asia* (Cornell, 1987).

[9] *WP Weekly,* Dec. 28, 1987.

In 1920 Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz produced a critical study of *New York Times* coverage of the Bolshevik revolution, describing it as "nothing short of a disaster...from the point of view of professional journalism." Editorial policy, deeply hostile, "profoundly and crassly influenced their news columns." "For subjective reasons," the *Times* staff "accepted and believed most of what they were told" by the U.S. government and "the agents and adherents of the old regime." They dismissed Soviet peace offers as merely a tactic to enable the Bolsheviks to "concentrate their energies for a renewed drive toward world-wide revolution" and the imminent "Red invasion of Europe." The Bolsheviks, Lippmann and Merz wrote, were portrayed as "simultaneously...both cadaver and world-wide menace," and the Red Peril "appeared at every turn to obstruct the restoration of peace in Eastern Europe and Asia and to frustrate the resumption of economic life." When President Wilson called for intervention, the *New York Times* responded by urging that we drive "the Bolsheviki out of Petrograd and Moscow."[10]

Change a few names and dates, and we have a rather fair appraisal of the treatment of Indochina yesterday and Central America today by the national media. Similar assumptions about the Soviet Union are reiterated by contemporary diplomatic historians who regard the development of an alternative social model as in itself an intolerable form of intervention in the affairs of others, against which the West has been fully entitled to defend itself by forceful action in retaliation, including the defense of the West by military intervention in the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik revolution.[11] Under these assumptions, widely held and respected, aggression easily becomes self-defense.

Returning to post-World War II policy and ideology, it is, of course, unnecessary to *contrive* reasons to oppose the brutality of the Soviet leaders in dominating their internal empire and their dependencies while cheerfully assisting such contemporary monsters as the Ethiopian military junta or the neo-Nazi generals in Argentina. But an honest review will show that the primary enemies have been the indigenous populations within the Grand Area, who fall prey to the wrong ideas. It then becomes necessary to overcome these deviations by economic, ideological, or military warfare, or by terror and subversion. The domestic population must be rallied to the cause, in defense against "Communism."

These are the basic elements of containment in practice abroad, and of its domestic counterpart within. With regard to the Soviet Union, the concept has had two variants over the years. The doves were reconciled to a form of containment in which the Soviet Union would dominate roughly the areas occupied by the Red Army in the war against Hitler. The hawks had much broader aspirations, as expressed in the "rollback strategy" outlined in NSC 68 of April 1950, shortly before the Korean war. This crucial document, made public in 1975, interpreted containment as intended to "foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system" and make it possible to "negotiate a settlement with the Soviet Union (or a successor state or states)." In the early postwar years, the United States supported armies established by Hitler in the Ukraine and Eastern Europe, with the assistance of such figures as Reinhard Gehlen, who headed Nazi military intelligence on the Eastern front and was placed in charge of the espionage service of West Germany under close CIA supervision, assigned the task of developing a "secret army" of thousands of SS men to assist the forces fighting within the Soviet Union. So remote are these facts from conventional understanding that a highly knowledgeable foreign affairs specialist at

the liberal *Boston Globe* could condemn tacit U.S. support for the Khmer Rouge by offering the following analogy, as the ultimate absurdity: "It is as if the United States had winked at the presence of a Nazi guerrilla movement to harass the Soviets in 1945" -- exactly what the United States was doing into the early 1950s, and not just winking.[12]

It is also considered entirely natural that the Soviet Union should be surrounded by hostile powers, facing with equanimity major NATO bases with missiles on alert status as in Turkey, while if Nicaragua obtains jet planes to defend its airspace against regular U.S. penetration, this is considered by doves and hawks alike to warrant U.S. military action to protect ourselves from this grave threat to our security, in accordance with the doctrine of "containment."

Establishment of Grand Area principles abroad and necessary illusions at home does not simply await the hidden hand of the market. Liberal internationalism must be supplemented by the periodic resort to forceful intervention.[13] At home, the state has often employed force to curb dissent, and there have been been regular and quite self-conscious campaigns by business to control "the public mind" and suppress challenges to private power when implicit controls do not suffice. The ideology of "anti-Communism" has served this purpose since World War I, with intermittent exceptions. In earlier years, the United States was defending itself from other evil forces: the Huns, the British, the Spanish, the Mexicans, the Canadian Papists, and the "merciless Indian savages" of the Declaration of Independence. But since the Bolshevik revolution, and particularly in the era of bipolar world power that emerged from the ashes of World War II, a more credible enemy has been the "monolithic and ruthless conspiracy" that seeks to subvert our noble endeavors, in John F. Kennedy's phrase: Ronald Reagan's "Evil Empire."

In the early Cold War years, Dean Acheson and Paul Nitze planned to "bludgeon the mass mind of `top government'," as Acheson put it with reference to NSC 68. They presented "a frightening portrayal of the Communist threat, in order to overcome public, business, and congressional desires for peace, low taxes, and `sound' fiscal policies" and to mobilize popular support for the full-scale rearmament that they felt was necessary "to overcome Communist ideology and Western economic vulnerability," William Borden observes in a study of postwar planning. The Korean War served these purposes admirably. The ambiguous and complex interactions that led to the war were ignored in favor of the more useful image of a Kremlin campaign of world conquest. Dean Acheson, meanwhile, remarked that in the Korean hostilities "an excellent opportunity is here offered to disrupt the Soviet peace offensive, which...is assuming serious proportions and having a certain effect on public opinion." The structure of much of the subsequent era was determined by these manipulations, which also provided a standard for later practice.[14]

In earlier years, Woodrow Wilson's Red Scare demolished unions and other dissident elements. A prominent feature was the suppression of independent politics and free speech, on the principle that the state is entitled to prevent improper thought and its expression. Wilson's Creel Commission, dedicated to creating war fever among the generally pacifist population, had demonstrated the efficacy of organized propaganda with the cooperation of the loyal media and the intellectuals, who devoted themselves to such tasks as "historical engineering," the term devised by historian Frederic Paxson, one of the founders of the National Board for Historical Service established by U.S. historians to serve the state by "explaining the issues of the war that we might the better win it." The lesson was learned by those in a position to employ it. Two lasting institutional consequences were the rise of the public relations industry, one of whose leading figures, Edward Bernays, had served on the wartime propaganda commission, and the establishment of the FBI as, in effect, a national political police. This is a primary function it has continued to serve as illustrated, for example, by its criminal acts to undermine the rising "crisis of democracy" in the 1960s and the surveillance and disruption of popular opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America twenty years later.[15]

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[10] Lippmann and Merz, "A Test of the News," Supplement, *New Republic,* Aug. 4, 1920. Quotes here from citations in Aronson, *The Press and the Cold War,* 25f.

[11] See appendix II, section 1.

[12] H. D. S. Greenway, *Boston Globe,* July 8, 1988. On the backgrounds, see *Turning the Tide,* 194f., and sources cited; Christopher Simpson, *Blowback* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988).

[13] By the late 1960s, it was already clear that these were the basic factors behind the U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia, which, in U.S. global planning, was to be reconstituted as a "co-prosperity sphere" for Japan, within the U.S.-dominated Grand Area, while also serving as a market and source of raw materials and recycled dollars for the reconstruction of Western European capitalism. See my *At War with Asia* (Pantheon, 1970, introduction); *For Reasons of State* (Pantheon, 1973); Chomsky and Howard Zinn, eds., *Critical Essays*. vol. 5 of the *Pentagon Papers* (Beacon, 1972); and other work of the period. See also, among others, Borden, *Pacific Alliance*; Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan* (Oxford, 1985); Rotter, *Path to Vietnam*.

[14] Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (Norton, 1969, 374, 489); Borden, *op. cit.,* 44, 144.

[15] See appendix II, section 2.

The effectiveness of the state-corporate propaganda system is illustrated by the fate of May Day, a workers' holiday throughout the world that originated in response to the judicial murder of several anarchists after the Haymarket affair of May 1886, in a campaign of international solidarity with U.S. workers struggling for an eight-hour day. In the United States, all has been forgotten. May Day has become "Law Day," a jingoist celebration of our "200-year-old partnership between law and liberty" as Ronald Reagan declared while designating May 1 as Law Day 1984, adding that without law there can be only "chaos and disorder." The day before, he had announced that the United States would disregard the proceedings of the International Court of Justice that later condemned the U.S. government for its "unlawful use of force" and violation of treaties in its attack against Nicaragua. "Law Day" also served as the occasion for Reagan's declaration of May 1, 1985, announcing an embargo against Nicaragua "in response to the emergency situation created by the Nicaraguan Government's aggressive activities in Central America," actually declaring a "national emergency," since renewed annually, because "the policies and actions of the Government of Nicaragua constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States" -- all with the approbation of Congress, the media, and the intellectual community generally; or, in some circles, embarrassed silence.

The submissiveness of the society to business dominance, secured by Wilson's Red Scare, began to erode during the Great Depression. In 1938 the board of directors of the National Association of Manufacturers, adopting the Marxist rhetoric that is common in the internal records of business and government documents, described the "hazard facing industrialists" in "the newly realized political power of the masses"; "Unless their thinking is directed," it warned, "we are definitely headed for adversity." No less threatening was the rise of labor organization, in part with the support of industrialists who perceived it as a means to regularize labor markets. But too much is too much, and business soon rallied to overcome the threat by the device of "employer mobilization of the public" to crush strikes, as an academic study of the 1937 Johnstown steel strike observed. This "formula," the business community exulted, was one that "business has hoped for, dreamed of, and prayed for." Combined with strongarm methods, propaganda campaigns were used effectively to subdue the labor movement in subsequent years. These campaigns spent millions of dollars "to tell the public that nothing was wrong and that grave dangers lurked in the proposed remedies" of the unions, the La Follette Committee of the Senate observed in its study of business propaganda.[16]

In the postwar period the public relations campaign intensified, employing the media and other devices to identify so-called free enterprise -- meaning state-subsidized private profit with no infringement on managerial prerogatives -- as "the American way," threatened by dangerous subversives. In 1954, Daniel Bell, then an editor of *Fortune* magazine, wrote that

> It has been industry's prime concern, in the post war years, to change the climate of opinion ushered in by...the depression. This `free enterprise' campaign has two essential aims: to rewin the loyalty of the worker which now goes to the union and to halt creeping socialism,

that is, the mildly reformist capitalism of the New Deal. The scale of business public relations campaigns, Bell continued, was "staggering," through advertising in press and radio and other means.[17] The effects were seen in legislation to constrain union activity, the attack on independent thought often mislabeled McCarthyism, and the elimination of any articulate challenge to business domination. The media and intellectual community cooperated with enthusiasm. The universities, in particular, were purged, and remained so until the "crisis of democracy" dawned and students and younger faculty began to ask the wrong kinds of questions. That elicited a renewed though less effective purge, while in a further resort to "necessary illusion," it was claimed, and still is, that the universities were virtually taken over by left-wing totalitarians -- meaning that the grip of orthodoxy was somewhat relaxed.[18]

As early as 1947 a State Department public relations officer remarked that "smart public relations [has] paid off as it has before and will again." Public opinion "is not moving to the right, it has been moved -- cleverly -- to the right." "While the rest of the world has moved to the left, has admitted labor into government, has passed liberalized legislation, the United States has become anti-social change, anti-economic change, anti-labor."[19]

By that time, "the rest of the world" was being subjected to similar pressures, as the Truman administration, reflecting the concerns of the business community, acted vigorously to arrest such tendencies in Europe, Japan, and elsewhere, through means ranging from extreme violence to control of desperately needed food, diplomatic pressures, and a wide range of other devices.[20]

All of this is much too little understood, but I cannot pursue it properly here. Throughout the modern period, measures to control "the public mind" have been employed to enhance the natural pressures of the "free market," the domestic counterpart to intervention in the global system.

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[16] Carey, "Managing Public Opinion."

[17] *Ibid.,* citing Bell, "Industrial Conflict and Public Opinion," in A. R. Dubin and A. Ross, eds., *Industrial Conflict* (McGraw-Hill, 1954).

[18] See appendix V, section 5.

[19] Carey, "Managing Public Opinion." On the purge of the universities in the 1950s, see Ellen Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower* (Oxford, 1986). For a small sample of the later purge, see several essays in Philip J. Meranto, Oneida J. Meranto, and Matthew R. Lippman, *Guarding the Ivory Tower* (Lucha publications, Denver, 1985).

[20] For some discussion, see my article "Democracy in the Industrial Societies" in *Z Magazine,* Jan. 1989.

It is worthy of note that with all the talk of liberal free trade policies, the two major sectors of the U.S. economy that remain competitive in world trade -- high-technology industry and capital-intensive agriculture -- both rely heavily on state subsidy and a state-guaranteed market.[21] As in other industrial societies, the U.S. economy had developed in earlier years through protectionist measures. In the postwar period, the United States grandly proclaimed liberal principles on the assumption that U.S. investors would prevail in any competition, a plausible expectation in the light of the economic realities of the time, and one that was fulfilled for many years. For similar reasons, Great Britain had been a passionate advocate of free trade during the period of its hegemony, abandoning these doctrines and the lofty rhetoric that accompanied them in the interwar period, when it could not withstand competition from Japan. The United States is pursuing much the same course today in the face of similar challenges, which were quite unexpected forty years ago, indeed until the Vietnam War. Its unanticipated costs weakened the U.S. economy while strengthening its industrial rivals, who enriched themselves through their participation in the destruction of Indochina. South Korea owes its economic take-off to these opportunities, which also provided an important stimulus to the Japanese economy, just as the Korean War launched Japan's economic recovery and made a major contribution to Europe's. Another example

is Canada, which became the world's largest per capita exporter of war materiel during the Vietnam years, while deploring the immorality of the U.S. war to which it was enthusiastically contributing.

Operations of domestic thought control are commonly undertaken in the wake of wars and other crises. Such turmoil tends to encourage the "crisis of democracy" that is the persistent fear of privileged elites, requiring measures to reverse the thrust of popular democracy that threatens established power. Wilson's Red Scare served the purpose after World War I, and the pattern was re-enacted when World War II ended. It was necessary not only to overcome the popular mobilization that took place during the Great Depression but also "to bring people up to [the] realization that the war isn't over by any means," as presidential adviser Clark Clifford observed when the Truman Doctrine was announced in 1947, "the opening gun in [this] campaign."

The Vietnam war and the popular movements of the 1960s elicited similar concerns. The inhabitants of "enemy territory" at home had to be controlled and suppressed, so as to restore the ability of U.S. corporations to compete in the more diverse world market by reducing real wages and welfare benefits and weakening working-class organization. Young people in particular had to be convinced that they must be concerned only for themselves, in a "culture of narcissism"; every person may know, in private, that the assumptions are not true for them, but at a time of life when one is insecure about personal identity and social place, it is all too tempting to adapt to what the propaganda system asserts to be the norm. Other newly mobilized sectors of the "special interests" also had to be restrained or dissolved, tasks that sometimes required a degree of force, as in the programs of the FBI to undermine the ethnic movements and other elements of the rising dissident culture by instigating violence or its direct exercise, and by other means of intimidation and harassment. Another task was to overcome the dread "Vietnam syndrome," which impeded the resort to forceful means to control the dependencies; as explained by *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, the task was to overcome "the sickly inhibitions against the use of military force" that developed in revulsion against the Indochina wars,[22] a problem that was resolved, he hoped, in the glorious conquest of Grenada, when 6,000 elite troops succeeded in overcoming the resistance of several dozen Cubans and some Grenadan militiamen, winning 8,000 medals of honor for their prowess.

To overcome the Vietnam syndrome, it was necessary to present the United States as the aggrieved party and the Vietnamese as the aggressors -- a difficult task, it might be thought by those unfamiliar with the measures available for controlling the public mind, or at least those elements of it that count. By the late stages of the war, the general population was out of control, with a large majority regarding the war as "fundamentally wrong and immoral" and not "a mistake," as polls reveal up to the present. Educated elites, in contrast, posed no serious problem. Contrary to the retrospective necessary illusion fostered by those who now declare themselves "early opponents of the war," in reality there was only the most scattered opposition to the war among these circles, apart from concern over the prospects for success and the rising costs. Even the harshest critics of the war within the mainstream rarely went beyond agonizing over good intentions gone awry, reaching even that level of dissent well after corporate America had determined that the enterprise was proving too costly and should be liquidated, a fact that I have documented elsewhere.

The mechanisms by which a more satisfactory version of history was established have also been reviewed elsewhere,[23] but a few words are in order as to their remarkable success. By 1977 President Carter was able to explain in a news conference that Americans have no need "to apologize or to castigate ourselves or to assume the status of culpability" and do not "owe a debt," because our intentions were "to defend the freedom of the South Vietnamese" (by destroying their country and massacring the population), and because "the destruction was mutual" -- a pronouncement that, to my knowledge, passed without comment, apparently being considered quite reasonable.[24] Such balanced judgments are, incidentally, not limited to soulful advocates of human rights. They are produced regularly, evoking no comment. To take a recent case, after the U.S. warship *Vincennes* shot down an Iranian civilian airliner over Iranian territorial waters, the *Boston Globe* ran a column by political scientist Jerry Hough of Duke University and the Brookings Institute in which he explained:

> If the disaster in the downing of the Iranian airliner leads this country to move away from its

> obsession with symbolic nuclear-arms control and to concentrate on the problems of war-fighting, command-and-control of the military and limitations on conventional weapons (certainly including the fleet), then 290 people will not have died in vain

-- an assessment that differs slightly from the media barrage after the downing of KAL 007. A few months later, the *Vincennes* returned to its home port to "a boisterous flag-waving welcome...complete with balloons and a Navy band playing upbeat songs" while the ship's "loudspeaker blared the theme from the movie `Chariots of Fire' and nearby Navy ships saluted with gunfire." Navy officials did not want the ship "to sneak into port," a public affairs officer said.[25] So much for the 290 Iranians.

A *New York Times* editorial obliquely took exception to President Carter's interesting moral judgment. Under the heading "The Indochina Debt that Lingers," the editors observed that "no debate over who owes whom how much can be allowed to obscure the worst horrors [of]...our involvement in Southeast Asia," referring to the "horrors experienced by many of those in flight" from the Communist monsters -- at the time, a small fraction of the many hundreds of thousands fleeing their homes in Asia, including over 100,000 boat people from the Philippines in 1977 and thousands fleeing U.S.-backed terror in Timor, not to speak of tens of thousands more escaping the U.S.-backed terror states of Latin America, none of whom merited such concern or even more than cursory notice in the news columns, if that.[26] Other horrors in the wreckage of Indochina are unmentioned, and surely impose no lingering debt.

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[21] The Food for Peace program (PL 480) is a notable example. Described by Ronald Reagan as "one of the greatest humanitarian acts ever performed by one nation for the needy of other nations," PL 480 has effectively served the purposes for which it was designed: subsidizing U.S. agribusiness; inducing people to "become dependent on us for food" (Senator Hubert Humphrey, one of its architects in the interest of his Minnesota farming constituency); contributing to counterinsurgency operations; and financing "the creation of a global military network to prop up Western and Third World capitalist governments" by requiring that local currency counterpart funds be used for rearmament (William Borden), thus also providing an indirect subsidy to U.S. military producers. The U.S. employs such "export subsidies (universally considered an `unfair' trading practice) to preserve its huge Japanese market," among other cases (Borden). The effect on Third World agriculture and survival has often been devastating. See Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, *The Soft War* (Grove, 1988, 67f.); Borden, *Pacific Alliance,* 182f.; and other sources.

[22] *NYT,* Oct. 30, 1985.

[23] See *Political Economy of Human Rights* and *Manufacturing Consent*.

[24] *NYT,* March 25, 1977; transcript of news conference.

[25] *Los Angeles Times,* Oct. 25, 1988; Robert Reinhold, *NYT,* same day.

[26] For comparative estimates at the time, see *Political Economy of Human Rights,* II, chapter 3.

A few years later, concerns mounted that "The Debt to the Indochinese Is Becoming a Fiscal Drain," in the words of a *Times* headline, referring to the "moral debt" incurred through our "involvement on the losing side in Indochina"; by the same logic, had the Russians won the war in Afghanistan, they would owe no debt at all. But now our debt is fully "paid," a State Department official explained. We had settled the moral account by taking in Vietnamese refugees fleeing the lands we ravaged, "one of the largest, most dramatic humanitarian efforts in history," according to Roger Winter, director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees. But "despite the pride," *Times* diplomatic correspondent Bernard Gwertzman continues, "some voices in the Reagan Administration and in Congress are once again asking whether the war debt has now been paid."[27]

It is beyond imagining in responsible circles that we might have some culpability for mass slaughter and

destruction, or owe some debt to the millions of maimed and orphaned, or to the peasants who still die from exploding ordnance left from the U.S. assault, while the Pentagon, when asked whether there is any way to remove the hundreds of thousands of anti-personnel bomblets that kill children today in such areas as the Plain of Jars in Laos, comments helpfully that "people should not live in those areas. They know the problem." The United States has refused even to give its mine maps of Indochina to civilian mine-deactivation teams. Ex-marines who visited Vietnam in 1989 to help remove mines they had laid report that many remain in areas were people try to farm and plant trees, and were informed that many people are still being injured and killed as of January 1989.[28] None of this merits comment or concern.

The situation is of course quite different when we turn to Afghanistan -- where, incidentally, the Soviet-installed regime *has* released its mine maps. In this case, headlines read: "Soviets Leave Deadly Legacy for Afghans," "Mines Put Afghans in Peril on Return," "U.S. Rebukes Soviets on Afghan Mine Clearing," "U.S. to Help Train Refugees To Destroy Afghan Mines," "Mines Left by Departing Soviets Are Maiming Afghans," and so on. The difference is that these are Soviet mines, so it is only natural for the United States to call for "an international effort to provide the refugees with training and equipment to destroy or dismantle" them and to denounce the Russians for their lack of cooperation in this worthy endeavor. "The Soviets will not acknowledge the problem they have created or help solve it," Assistant Secretary of State Richard Williamson observed sadly; "We are disappointed." The press responds with the usual selective humanitarian zeal.[29]

The media are not satisfied with "mutual destruction" that effaces all responsibility for major war crimes. Rather, the burden of guilt must be shifted to the victims. Under the heading "Vietnam, Trying to be Nicer, Still has a Long Way to Go," *Times* Asia correspondent Barbara Crossette quotes Charles Printz of Human Rights Advocates International, who said that "It's about time the Vietnamese demonstrated some good will." Printz was referring to negotiations about the Amerasian children who constitute a tiny fraction of the victims of U.S. aggression in Indochina. Crossette adds that the Vietnamese have also not been sufficiently forthcoming on the matter of remains of American soldiers, though their behavior may be improving: "There has been progress, albeit slow, on the missing Americans." But the Vietnamese have not yet paid their debt to us, so humanitarian concerns left by the war remain unresolved.[30]

Returning to the same matter, Crossette explains that the Vietnamese do not comprehend their "irrelevance" to Americans, apart from the moral issues that are still outstanding -- specifically, Vietnamese recalcitrance "on the issue of American servicemen missing since the end of the war." Dismissing Vietnamese "laments" about U.S. unwillingness to improve relations, Crossette quotes an "Asian official" who said that "if Hanoi's leaders are serious about building their country, the Vietnamese will have to deal fairly with the United States." She also quotes a Pentagon statement expressing the hope that Hanoi will take action "to resolve this long-standing humanitarian issue" of the remains of U.S. servicemen shot down over North Vietnam by the evil Communists -- the only humanitarian issue that comes to mind, apparently, when we consider the legacy of a war that left many millions of dead and wounded in Indochina and three countries in utter ruins. Another report deplores Vietnamese refusal to cooperate "in key humanitarian areas," quoting liberal congressmen on Hanoi's "horrible and cruel" behavior and Hanoi's responsibility for lack of progress on humanitarian issues, namely, the matter of U.S. servicemen "still missing from the Vietnam war." Hanoi's recalcitrance "brought back the bitter memories that Vietnam can still evoke" among the suffering Americans.[31]

The nature of the concern "to resolve this long-standing humanitarian issue" of the American servicemen missing in action (MIAs) is illuminated by some statistics cited by historian (and Vietnam veteran) Terry Anderson:

> The French still have 20,000 MIAs from their war in Indochina, and the Vietnamese list over 200,000. Furthermore, the United States still has 80,000 MIAs from World War II and 8,000 from the Korean War, figures that represent 20 and 15 percent, respectively, of the confirmed dead in those conflicts; the percentage is 4 percent for the Vietnam War.[32]

The French have established diplomatic relations with Vietnam, as the Americans did with Germany and Japan, Anderson observes, adding: "We won in 1945, of course, so it seems that MIAs only are

important when the United States loses the war. The real `noble cause' for [the Reagan] administration is not the former war but its emotional and impossible crusade to retrieve `all recoverable remains'." More precisely, the "noble cause" is to exploit personal tragedy for political ends: to overcome the Vietnam syndrome at home, and to "bleed Vietnam."

The influential House Democrat Lee Hamilton writes that "almost 15 years after the Vietnam war, Southeast Asia remains a region of major humanitarian, strategic, and economic concern to the United States." The humanitarian concern includes two cases: (1) "Nearly 2,400 American servicemen are unaccounted for in Indochina"; (2) "More than 1 million Cambodians died under Pol Pot's ruthless Khmer Rouge regime." The far greater numbers of Indochinese who died under Washington's ruthless attack, and who still do die, fall below the threshold. We should, Hamilton continues, "reassess our relations with Vietnam" and seek a "new relationship," though not abandoning our humanitarian concerns: "This may be an opportune time for policies that mix continued pressure with rewards for progress on missing US servicemen and diplomatic concessions in Cambodia." At the left-liberal end of the spectrum, in the journal of the Center for International Policy, a project of the Fund for Peace, a senior associate of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace calls for reconciliation with Vietnam, urging that we put aside "the agony of the Vietnam experience" and "the injuries of the past, " and overcome the "hatred, anger, and frustration" caused us by the Vietnamese, though we must not forget "the humanitarian issues left over from the war": the MIAs, those qualified to emigrate to the United States, and the remaining inmates of reeducation camps. So profound are the humanitarian impulses that guide this deeply moral society that even the right-wing Senator John McCain is now calling for diplomatic relations with Vietnam. He says that he holds "no hatred" for the Vietnamese even though he is "a former Navy pilot who spent 5 1/2 years as an unwilling guest in the Hanoi Hilton," editor David Greenway of the *Boston Globe* comments, adding that "If McCain can put aside his bitterness, so can we all."[33] Greenway knows Vietnam well, having compiled an outstanding record as a war correspondent there. But in the prevailing moral climate, the educated community he addresses would not find it odd to urge that we overcome our natural bitterness against the Vietnamese for what they did to us.

"In history," Francis Jennings observes, "the man in the ruffled shirt and gold-laced waistcoat somehow levitates above the blood he has ordered to be spilled by dirty-handed underlings."[34]

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[27] *NYT,* March 3, 1985.

[28] T. Hunter Wilson, *Indochina Newsletter* (Asia Resource Center), Nov.-Dec. 1987. Mary Williams Walsh, *Wall Street Journal,* Jan. 3; George Esper, AP, Jan. 18; *Boston Globe,* picture caption, Jan. 20, 1989.

[29] Walsh, *Wall Street Journal,* Jan. 3, 1989. Robert Pear, *NYT,* Aug. 14; Elaine Sciolino, *NYT,* Aug. 17; Paul Lewis, *NYT,* Oct. 8; Mary Williams Walsh, *Wall Street Journal,* Sept. 1, 1988. In her Jan. 3, 1989 article, Walsh notes, a touch ruefully, that "the release of the Afghan maps could even count as a small propaganda victory for the Kabul regime, since its enemies in Washington" have yet to do as much fourteen years after their departure. The propaganda victory will be extremely small, since there is no recognition that the U.S. has failed to provide this information, or has any responsibility to do so.

[30] Barbara Crossette, *NYT,* Nov. 10, 1985.

[31] Crossette, *NYT,* Feb. 28; E. W. Wayne, *Christian Science Monitor,* Aug. 24, 1988.

[32] Anderson, "The Light at the End of the Tunnel," *Diplomatic History,* Fall 1988.

[33] Lee H. Hamilton, "Time for a new American relationship with Vietnam," *Christian Science Monitor,* Dec. 12, 1988; Frederick Z. Brown, *Indochina Issues* 85, Nov. 1988; *Boston Globe,* July 8, 1988.

[34] Jennings, *Empire of Fortune,* 215.

These examples illustrate the power of the system that manufactures necessary illusions, at least among the educated elites who are the prime targets of propaganda, and its purveyors. It would be difficult to conjure up an achievement that might lie beyond the reach of mechanisms of indoctrination that can portray the United States as an innocent victim of Vietnam, while at the same time pondering the nation's excesses of self-flagellation.

Journalists not subject to the same influences and requirements see a somewhat different picture. In an Israeli mass-circulation daily, Amnon Kapeliouk published a series of thoughtful and sympathetic articles on a 1988 visit to Vietnam. One is headlined "Thousands of Vietnamese still die from the effects of American chemical warfare." He reports estimates of one-quarter of a million victims in South Vietnam in addition to the thousands killed by unexploded ordnance -- 3,700 since 1975 in the Danang area alone. Kapeliouk describes the "terrifying" scenes in hospitals in the south with children dying of cancer and hideous birth deformities; it was South Vietnam, of course, that was targeted for chemical warfare, not the North, where these consequences are not found, he reports. There is little hope for amelioration in the coming years, Vietnamese doctors fear, as the effects linger on in the devastated southern region of this "bereaved country," with its millions of dead and millions more widows and orphans, and where one hears "hair-raising stories that remind me of what we heard during the trials of Eichmann and Demjanjuk" from victims who, remarkably, "express no hatred against the American people." In this case, of course, the perpetrators are not tried, but are honored for their crimes in the civilized Western world.[35]

Here too, some have been concerned over the effects of the chemical warfare that sprayed millions of gallons of Agent Orange and other poisonous chemicals over an area the size of Massachusetts in South Vietnam, more in Laos and Cambodia. Dr. Grace Ziem, a specialist on chemical exposure and disease who teaches at the University of Maryland Medical School, addressed the topic after a two-week visit to Vietnam, where she had worked as a doctor in the 1960s. She too described visits to hospitals in the south, where she inspected the sealed transparent containers with hideously malformed babies and the many patients from heavily sprayed areas, women with extremely rare malignant tumors and children with deformities found far beyond the norm. But her account appeared far from the mainstream, where the story, when reported at all, has quite a different cast and focus. Thus, in an article on how the Japanese are attempting to conceal their World War II crimes, we read that one Japanese apologist referred to U.S. troops who scattered poisons by helicopter; "presumably," the reporter explains, he was referring to "Agent Orange, a defoliant suspected to have caused birth defects among Vietnamese and the children of American servicemen." No further reflections are suggested, in this context. And we can read about "the $180 million in chemical companies' compensation to Agent Orange victims" -- U.S. soldiers, that is, not the Vietnamese civilians whose suffering is vastly greater. And somehow, these matters scarcely arose as indignation swelled in 1988 over alleged plans by Libya to develop chemical weapons.[36]

The right turn among elites took political shape during the latter years of the Carter administration and in the Reagan years, when the proposed policies were implemented and extended with a bipartisan consensus. But, as the Reaganite state managers discovered, the "Vietnam syndrome" proved to be a tough nut to crack; hence the vast increase in clandestine operations as the state was driven underground by the domestic enemy.

As it became necessary by the mid-1980s to face the costs of Reaganite military Keynesian policies, including the huge budget and trade deficits and foreign debt, it was predictable, and predicted, that the "Evil Empire" would become less threatening and the plague of international terrorism would subside, not so much because the world was all that different, but because of the new problems faced by the state management. Several years later, the results are apparent. Among the very ideologues who were ranting about the ineradicable evil of the Soviet barbarians and their minions, the statesmanlike approach is now mandatory, along with summitry and arms negotiations. But the basic long-term problems remain, and will have to be addressed.

Throughout this period of U.S. global hegemony, exalted rhetoric aside, there has been no hesitation to

resort to force if the welfare of U.S. elites is threatened by what secret documents describe as the threat of "nationalistic regimes" that are responsive to popular demands for "improvement in the low living standards of the masses" and production for domestic needs, and that seek to control their own resources. To counter such threats, high-level planning documents explain, the United States must encourage "a political and economic climate conducive to private investment of both foreign and domestic capital," including the "opportunity to earn and in the case of foreign capital to repatriate a reasonable return."[37] The means, it is frankly explained, must ultimately be force, since such policies somehow fail to gain much popular support and are constantly threatened by the subversive elements called "Communist."

In the Third World, we must ensure "the protection of our raw materials" (as George Kennan put it) and encourage export-oriented production, maintaining a framework of liberal internationalism -- at least insofar as it serves the needs of U.S. investors. Internationally, as at home, the free market is an ideal to be lauded if its outcome accords with the perceived needs of domestic power and privilege; if not, the market must be guided by efficient use of state power.

If the media, and the respectable intellectual community generally, are to serve their "societal purpose," such matters as these must be kept beyond the pale, remote from public awareness, and the massive evidence provided by the documentary record and evolving history must be consigned to dusty archives or marginal publications. We may speak in retrospect of blunders, misinterpretation, exaggeration of the Communist threat, faulty assessments of national security, personal failings, even corruption and deceit on the part of leaders gone astray; but the study of institutions and how they function must be scrupulously ignored, apart from fringe elements or a relatively obscure scholarly literature. These results have been quite satisfactorily achieved.

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[35] Kapeliouk, *Yediot Ahronot,* April 7, 1988; also April 1, 15.

[36] Ziem, *Indochina Newsletter* (Asia Resource Center), July-August 1988; Susan Chira, *NYT,* Oct. 5, 1988; *Wall Street Journal,* April 4, 1985. See *Manufacturing Consent* on how the tenth anniversary retrospectives (1985) evaded the effects of the war on the South Vietnamese, the main victims of the U.S. attack.

[37] NSC 144/1, 1953; NSC 5432, 1954; and many others. For more detailed discussion, see *On Power and Ideology*. The basic principles are reiterated constantly, often in the same words.

In capitalist democracies of the Third World, the situation is often much the same. Costa Rica, for example, is rightly regarded as the model democracy of Latin America. The press is firmly in the hands of the ultra-right, so there need be no concern over freedom of the press in Costa Rica, and none is expressed. In this case, the result was achieved not by force but rather by the free market assisted by legal measures to control "Communists," and, it appears, by an influx of North American capital in the 1960s.

Where such means have not sufficed to enforce the approved version of democracy and freedom of the press, others are readily available and are apparently considered right and proper, so long as they succeed. El Salvador in the past decade provides a dramatic illustration. In the 1970s there was a proliferation of "popular organizations," many sponsored by the Church, including peasant associations, self-help groups, unions, and so on. The reaction was a violent outburst of state terror, organized by the United States with bipartisan backing and general media support as well. Any residual qualms dissolved after "demonstration elections" had been conducted for the benefit of the home front,[38] while the Reagan administration ordered a reduction in the more visible atrocities when the population was judged to be sufficiently traumatized and it was feared that reports of torture, murder, mutilation, and disappearance might endanger funding and support for the lower levels of state terror still deemed necessary.

There had been an independent press in El Salvador: two small newspapers, *La Crónica del Pueblo* and

El Independiente. Both were destroyed in 1980-81 by the security forces. After a series of bombings, an editor of *La Crónica* and a photographer were taken from a San Salvador coffee shop and hacked to pieces with machetes; the offices were raided, bombed, and burned down by death squads, and the publisher fled to the United States. The publisher of *El Independiente,* Jorge Pinto, fled to Mexico when his paper's premises were attacked and equipment smashed by troops. Concern over these matters was so high in the United States that there was not one word in the *New York Times* news columns and not one editorial comment on the destruction of the journals, and no word in the years since, though Pinto was permitted a statement on the opinion page, in which he condemned the "Duarte junta" for having "succeeded in extinguishing the expression of any dissident opinion" and expressed his belief that the so-called death squads are "nothing more nor less than the military itself" -- a conclusion endorsed by the Church and international human rights monitors.

In the year before the final destruction of *El Independiente,* the offices were bombed twice, an office boy was killed when the plant was machine-gunned, Pinto's car was sprayed with machine-gun fire, there were two other attempts on his life, and army troops in tanks and armored trucks arrived at his offices to search for him two days before the paper was finally destroyed. These events received no mention. Shortly before it was finally destroyed, there had been four bombings of *La Crónica* in six months; one of these, the last, received forty words in the *New York Times*.[39]

It is not that the U.S. media are unconcerned with freedom of the press in Central America. Contrasting sharply with the silence over the two Salvadoran newspapers is the case of the opposition journal *La Prensa* in Nicaragua. Media critic Francisco Goldman counted 263 references to its tribulations in the *New York Times* in four years.[40] The distinguishing criterion is not obscure: the Salvadoran newspapers were independent voices stilled by the murderous violence of U.S. clients; *La Prensa* is an agency of the U.S. campaign to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, therefore a "worthy victim," whose harassment calls forth anguish and outrage. We return to further evidence that this is indeed the operative criterion.

Several months before his paper was destroyed, Dr. Jorge Napoleón Gonzales, the publisher of *La Crónica,* visited New York to plead for international pressure to "deter terrorists from destroying his paper." He cited right-wing threats and "what [his paper] calls Government repression," the *Times* noted judiciously. He reported that he had received threats from a death squad "that undoubtedly enjoys the support of the military," that two bombs had been found in his house, that the paper's offices were machine-gunned and set afire and his home surrounded by soldiers. These problems began, he said, when his paper "began to demand reforms in landholdings," angering "the dominant classes." No international pressure developed, and the security forces completed their work.[41]

In the same years, the Church radio station in El Salvador was repeatedly bombed and troops occupied the Archdiocese building, destroying the radio station and ransacking the newspaper offices. Again, this elicited no media reaction.

These matters did not arise in the enthusiastic reporting of El Salvador's "free elections" in 1982 and 1984. Later we were regularly informed by *Times* Central America correspondent James LeMoyne that the country enjoyed greater freedom than enemy Nicaragua, where nothing remotely comparable to the Salvadoran atrocities had taken place, and opposition leaders and media that are funded by the U.S. government and openly support its attack against Nicaragua complain of harassment, but not terror and assassination. Nor would the *Times* Central America correspondents report that leading Church figures who fled from El Salvador (including a close associate of the assassinated Archbishop Romero), well-known Salvadoran writers, and others who are by no stretch of the imagination political activists, and who are well-known to *Times* correspondents, cannot return to the death squad democracy they praise and protect, for fear of assassination. *Times* editors call upon the Reagan administration to use "its pressure on behalf of peace and pluralism in Nicaragua," where the government had a "dreadful record" of "harassing those who dare to exercise...free speech," and where there had never been "a free, contested election."[42] No such strictures apply to El Salvador.

In such ways, the Free Press labors to implant the illusions that are necessary to contain the domestic enemy.

[38] On this propaganda device, aimed at the home front, see Herman and Brodhead, *Demonstration Elections*.

[39] Jorge Pinto, *NYT* Op-Ed, May 6, 1981; Ricardo Castañeda, Senior Partner of a Salvadoran law firm, Edward Mason Fellow, Kennedy School, Harvard University, p.c.; "Salvador Groups Attack Paper and U.S. Plant," World News Briefs, *NYT,* April 19, 1980. The information on *Times* coverage is based on a search of the *Times* index by Chris Burke of FAIR.

[40] "Sad Tales of La Libertad de Prensa," *Harper's Magazine,* Aug. 1988. See appendix V, section 6, for further discussion.

[41] Deirdre Carmody, *NYT,* Feb. 14, 1980. Perhaps we might regard the brief notice of April 19, cited above, as a response to his plea.

[42] *NYT,* Editorial, March 25, 1988.

Chapter Three

The Bounds of the Expressible

While recognizing that there is rarely anything strictly new under the sun, still we can identify some moments when traditional ideas are reshaped, a new consciousness crystallizes, and the opportunities that lie ahead appear in a new light. Fabrication of necessary illusions for social management is as old as history, but the year 1917 might be seen as a transition point in the modern period. The Bolshevik revolution gave concrete expression to the Leninist conception of the radical intelligentsia as the vanguard of social progress, exploiting popular struggles to gain state power and to impose the rule of the "Red bureaucracy" of Bakunin's forebodings. This they proceeded at once to do, dismantling factory councils, Soviets, and other forms of popular organization so that the population could be effectively mobilized into a "labor army" under the control of far-sighted leaders who would drive the society forward -- with the best intentions, of course. To this end, the mechanisms of Agitprop are fundamental; even a totalitarian state of the Hitler or Stalin variety relies on mass mobilization and voluntary submission.

One notable doctrine of Soviet propaganda is that the elimination by Lenin and Trotsky of any vestige of control over production by producers and of popular involvement in determining social policy constitutes a triumph of socialism. The purpose of this exercise in Newspeak is to exploit the moral appeal of the ideals that were being successfully demolished. Western propaganda leaped to the same opportunity, identifying the dismantling of socialist forms as the establishment of socialism, so as to undermine left-libertarian ideals by associating them with the practices of the grim Red bureaucracy. To this day, both systems of propaganda adopt the terminology, for their different purposes. When both major world systems of propaganda are in accord, it is unusually difficult for the individual to escape their tentacles. The blow to freedom and democracy throughout the world has been immense.

In the same year, 1917, John Dewey's circle of liberal pragmatists took credit for guiding a pacifist population to war "under the influence of a moral verdict reached after the utmost deliberation by the more thoughtful members of the community,...a class which must be comprehensively but loosely described as the `intellectuals'," who, they held, had "accomplished...the effective and decisive work on behalf of the war."[1] This achievement, or at least the self-perception articulated, had broad consequences. Dewey, the intellectual mentor, explained that this "psychological and educational lesson" had proven "that it is possible for human beings to take hold of human affairs and manage them." The "human beings" who had learned the lesson were "the intelligent men of the community," Lippmann's "specialized class," Niebuhr's "cool observers." They must now apply their talents and understanding "to bring about a better reorganized social order," by planning, persuasion, or force where

necessary; but, Dewey insisted, only the "refined, subtle and indirect use of force," not the "coarse, obvious and direct methods" employed prior to the "advance of knowledge." The sophisticated resort to force is justified if it satisfies the requirement of "comparative efficiency and economy in its use." The newly articulated doctrines of "manufacture of consent" were a natural concomitant, and in later years we were to hear much of "technocratic and policy-oriented intellectuals" who transcend ideology and will solve the remaining social problems by rational application of scientific principles.[2]

Since that time, the main body of articulate intellectuals have tended towards one or the other of these poles, avoiding "democratic dogmatisms" about people understanding their own interests and remaining cognizant of the "stupidity of the average man" and his need to be led to the better world that his superiors plan for him. A move from one to the other pole can be quite rapid and painless, since no fundamental change of doctrine or value is at stake, only an assessment of the opportunities for attaining power and privilege: riding a wave of popular struggle, or serving established authority as social or ideological manager. The conventional "God that failed" transition from Leninist enthusiasms to service to state capitalism can, I believe, be explained in substantial measure in these terms. Though there were authentic elements in the early stages, it has long since degenerated to ritualistic farce. Particularly welcome, and a sure ticket to success, is the fabrication of an evil past. Thus, the confessed sinner might describe how he cheered the tanks in the streets of Prague, supported Kim Il Sung, denounced Martin Luther King as a sellout, and so on, so that those who have not seen the light are implicitly tarred with the brush.[3] With the transition accomplished, the path to prestige and privilege is open, for the system values highly those who have seen the error of their ways and can now condemn independent minds as Stalinist-style apologists, on the basis of the superior insight gained from their misspent youth. Some may choose to become "experts" in the style candidly articulated by Henry Kissinger, who defined the "expert" as a person skilled in "elaborating and defining [the]...consensus [of]...his constituency," those who "have a vested interest in commonly held opinions: elaborating and defining its consensus at a high level has, after all, made him an expert."[4]

A generation later, the United States and the Soviet Union had become the superpowers of the first truly global system, realizing the expectations of Alexander Herzen and others a century before, though the dimensions of their power were never comparable and both have been declining in their capacity to influence and coerce for some years. The two models of the role of the intellectuals persist, similar at their root, adapted to the two prevailing systems of hierarchy and domination. Correspondingly, systems of indoctrination vary, depending on the capacity of the state to coerce and the modalities of effective control. The more interesting system is that of capitalist democracy, relying on the free market -- guided by direct intervention where necessary -- to establish conformity and marginalize the "special interests."

The primary targets of the manufacture of consent are those who regard themselves as "the more thoughtful members of the community," the "intellectuals," the "opinion leaders." An official of the Truman administration remarked that "It doesn't make too much difference to the general public what the details of a program are. What counts is how the plan is viewed by the leaders of the community"; he "who mobilizes the elite, mobilizes the public," one scholarly study of public opinion concludes. The "`public opinion' that Truman and his advisers took seriously, and diligently sought to cultivate," was that of the elite of "opinion leaders," the "foreign policy public," diplomatic historian Thomas Paterson observes[5]; and the same is true consistently, apart from moments when a "crisis of democracy" must be overcome and more vigorous measures are required to relegate the general public to its proper place. At other times they can be satisfied, it is hoped, with diversions and a regular dose of patriotic propaganda, and fulminations against assorted enemies who endanger their lives and homes unless their leaders stand fast against the threat.

In the democratic system, the necessary illusions cannot be imposed by force. Rather, they must be instilled in the public mind by more subtle means. A totalitarian state can be satisfied with lesser degrees of allegiance to required truths. It is sufficient that people obey; what they think is a secondary concern. But in a democratic political order, there is always the danger that independent thought might be translated into political action, so it is important to eliminate the threat at its root.

Debate cannot be stilled, and indeed, in a properly functioning system of propaganda, it should not be,

because it has a system-reinforcing character if constrained within proper bounds. What is essential is to set the bounds firmly. Controversy may rage as long as it adheres to the presuppositions that define the consensus of elites, and it should furthermore be encouraged within these bounds, thus helping to establish these doctrines as the very condition of thinkable thought while reinforcing the belief that freedom reigns.

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[1] *New Republic,* April 7, 1917.

[2] For quotes, references, and background, see my *Towards a New Cold War,* chapter 1, and sources cited.

[3] For some examples, see *Manufacturing Consent,* 343n.

[4] *American Foreign Policy* (Norton, 1969).

[5] Thomas Paterson, *Meeting the Communist Threat* (Oxford, 1988, 82-83), quoting a Truman official and political scientist Gabriel Almond.

In short, what is essential is the power to set the agenda. If controversy over the Cold War can be focused on containment of the Soviet Union -- the proper mix of force, diplomacy, and other measures -- then the propaganda system has already won its victory, whatever conclusions are reached. The basic assumption has already been established: the Cold War is a confrontation between two superpowers, one aggressive and expansionist, the other defending the status quo and civilized values. Off the agenda is the problem of containing the United States, and the question whether the issue has been properly formulated at all, whether the Cold War does not rather derive from the efforts of the superpowers to secure for themselves international systems that they can dominate and control -- systems that differ greatly in scale, reflecting enormous differences in wealth and power. Soviet violations of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements are the topic of a large literature and are well established in the general consciousness; we then proceed to debate their scale and importance. But it would require a careful search to find discussion of U.S. violations of the wartime agreements and their consequences, though the judgment of the best current scholarship, years later, is that "In fact, the Soviet pattern of adherence [to Yalta, Potsdam, and other wartime agreements] was not qualitatively different from the American pattern."[6] If the agenda can be restricted to the ambiguities of Arafat, the abuses and failures of the Sandinistas, the terrorism of Iran and Libya, and other properly framed issues, then the game is basically over; excluded from discussion is the unambiguous rejectionism of the United States and Israel, and the terrorism and other crimes of the United States and its clients, not only far greater in scale but also incomparably more significant on any moral dimension for American citizens, who are in a position to mitigate or terminate these crimes. The same considerations hold whatever questions we address.

One crucial doctrine, standard throughout history, is that the state is adopting a defensive stance, resisting challenges to order and to its noble principles. Thus, the United States is invariably resisting aggression, sometimes "internal aggression." Leading scholars assure us that the war in Vietnam was "undertaken in defense of a free people resisting communist aggression" as the United States attacked South Vietnam in the early 1960s to defend the client dictatorship against the South Vietnamese aggressors who were about to overthrow it; no justification need be offered to establish such an obvious truth, and none is. Some even refer blandly to "the Eisenhower administration's strategy of deterring aggression by threatening the use of nuclear weapons" in Indochina in 1954, "where French forces found themselves facing defeat" at Dienbienphu "at the hands of the Communist Viet Minh," the aggressors who attacked our French ally defending Indochina (from its population).[7] Cultivated opinion generally has internalized this stance. Accordingly, it is a logical impossibility that one should oppose U.S. aggression, a category that cannot exist. Whatever pretense they adopt, the critics must be "partisans of Hanoi" or "apologists for Communism" elsewhere, defending the "aggressors," perhaps attempting to conceal their "hidden agendas."[8]

A related doctrine is that "the yearning to see American-style democracy duplicated throughout the world has been a persistent theme in American foreign policy," as a *New York Times* diplomatic correspondent proclaimed after the U.S.-backed military government suppressed the Haitian elections by violence, widely predicted to be the likely consequence of U.S. support for the junta. These sad events, he observed, are "the latest reminder of the difficulty American policy-makers face in trying to work their will, no matter how benevolent, on other nations."[9] These doctrines require no argument and resist mountains of counter-evidence. On occasion, the pretense collapses under its manifest absurdity. It is then permissible to recognize that we were not always so benevolent and so profoundly dedicated to democracy as we are today. The regular appeal to this convenient technique of "change of course" over many years elicits not ridicule, but odes to our unfailing benevolence, as we set forth on some new campaign to "defend democracy."

We have no problem in perceiving the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as brutal aggression, though many would balk at describing the Afghan guerrillas as "democratic resistance forces" (*New Republic* editor Andrew Sullivan).[10] But the U.S. invasion of South Vietnam in the early 1960s, when the Latin American-style terror state imposed by U.S. force could no longer control the domestic population by violence, cannot be perceived as what it was. True, U.S. forces were directly engaged in large-scale bombing and defoliation in an effort to drive the population into concentration camps where they could be "protected" from the enemy whom, it was conceded, they willingly supported. True, a huge U.S. expeditionary force later invaded and ravaged the country, and its neighbors, with the explicit aim of destroying what was clearly recognized to be the only mass-based political force and eliminating the danger of political settlement that was sought on all sides. But throughout, the United States was resisting aggression in its yearning for democracy. When the United States established the murderous Diem dictatorship as part of its effort to undermine the Geneva accords and to block the promised elections because the wrong side was expected to win, it was defending democracy. "The country is divided into the Communist regime in the north and a democratic government in the south," the *New York Times* reported, commenting on the allegation that "the Communist Vietminh was importing guns and soldiers from Red China `in the most blatant fashion,'" threatening "free Vietnam" after having "sold their country to Peiping."[11] In later years, as the "defense of democracy" went awry, there was vigorous debate between the hawks, who felt that with sufficient dedication the enemy could be demolished, and the doves, who feared that the resort to violence to attain our noble ends might prove too costly; some preferred to be owls, distancing themselves from the two extremes.

Throughout the war, it was taken for granted within the mainstream that the United States was defending South Vietnam; unwisely, the doves came to believe. Years later, the doctrine remains beyond challenge. This is not only true of those who parodied the most disgraceful commissars as atrocities mounted, seeing nothing more in saturation bombing of densely populated areas than the "unfortunate loss of life incurred by the efforts of American military forces to help the South Vietnamese repel the incursion of North Vietnam and its partisans" -- for example, in the Mekong Delta, where there were no North Vietnamese troops even long after the United States had expanded its aggression to North Vietnam, and where local people resisting the U.S. invaders and their clients evidently do not qualify as "South Vietnamese." It is perhaps not surprising that from such sources we should still read today, with all that is now known, that "the people of South Vietnam desired their freedom from domination by the communist country on their northern border" and that "the United States intervened in Vietnam...to establish the principle that changes in Asia were not to be precipitated by outside force."[12] Far more interesting is the fact that, even though many would be repelled by the vulgarity of the apologetics for large-scale atrocities, a great many educated people would find little surprising in this assessment of the history, a most remarkable demonstration of the effectiveness of democratic systems of thought control.

Similarly, in Central America today, the United States is dedicated to the defense of freedom in the "fledgling democracies" and to "restoring democracy" to Nicaragua -- a reference to the Somoza period, if words have meaning. At the extreme of expressible dissent, in a bitter condemnation of the U.S. attack on Nicaragua that went so far as to invoke the judgment of Nuremberg, *Atlantic Monthly* editor Jack Beatty wrote that "Democracy has been our goal in Nicaragua, and to reach it we have sponsored the killing of thousands of Nicaraguans. But killing for democracy -- even killing by proxy for democracy -- is not a good enough reason to prosecute a war."[13] One could hardly find a more consistent critic of the

U.S. war in the corporate media than columnist Tom Wicker of the *New York Times,* who condemned the application of the Reagan Doctrine to Nicaragua because "the United States has no historic or God-given right to bring democracy to other nations."[14] Critics adopt without a second thought the assumption that our traditional "yearning for democracy" has indeed guided U.S. policy towards Nicaragua since July 19, 1979, when the U.S. client Somoza was overthrown, though admittedly not before the miraculous and curiously timed transformation took place, by some mysterious process. A diligent search through all the media would unearth an occasional exception to this pattern, but such exceptions are rare, another tribute to the effectiveness of indoctrination.[15]

"Central America has an evident self-interest in hounding" the Sandinistas "to honor their pledges to democratize"; and "those Americans who have repeatedly urged others `to give peace a chance' now have an obligation to turn their attention and their passion to ensuring democracy a chance as well," the editors of the *Washington Post* admonished, directly below the masthead that proudly labels theirs "an Independent Newspaper."[16] There is no problem of "ensuring democracy" in the U.S.-backed terror states, firmly under military rule behind a thin civilian façade.

The same editorial warned that "from the incursions into Honduras [in March 1988], it is plain what Nicaragua's threats to Honduras are." The reference was to military operations in northern Nicaragua near an unmarked border, in which Nicaraguan forces in hot pursuit of contra invaders penetrated a few kilometers into areas of Honduras that had long been ceded to the U.S. "proxy force" -- as they are described by contra lobbyists in internal documents circulated in the White House, and by their own official spokesman.[17] In the United States, these actions elicited renewed outrage over the threat of the Sandinistas to overrun their neighbors in the service of their Soviet master.

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[6] Melvyn Leffler, "Adherence to Agreements: Yalta and the Experiences of the Early Cold War," *International Security,* Summer 1986.

[7] Robert W. Tucker, "Reagan's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, "America and the World 1988/89," Winter 1989, featured lead article. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace* (Oxford, 1987, 129). The effort to liberate Indochina from the U.S.-backed French forces was in part a civil war, as is generally true of struggles against foreign occupation and colonial rule -- the American revolution, for example. It should be clear that this fact adds no credibility to the bizarre notion that the U.S. was "deterring aggression" by aiding the French effort to reconquer Indochina, even contemplating the use of nuclear weapons for this purpose.

[8] See appendix V, section 8, for an example, though one beyond the norm.

[9] Neil Lewis, *NYT,* Dec. 6, 1987.

[10] *Daily Telegraph* (London), Jan. 28, 1988.

[11] *NYT,* June 2, 1956. The charge was made by Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson. We can still read of "the south's memory of democracy" (Clayton Jones, *Christian Science Monitor,* Jan. 19, 1989) -- under the military dictatorships imposed by U.S. violence.

[12] Sidney Hook, "Lord Russell and the War Crimes `Trial'," *New Leader,* Oct. 24, 1966; "Politics Tests Philosophy's Meaning," Review of Alan Ryan, *Bertrand Russell: A Political Life, Insight* (published by the *Washington Times*), Oct. 3, 1988. Hook's commentary on Russell will be familiar to anyone acquainted with attacks on dissidents in the Communist Party press in the Stalinist years.

[13] *Boston Globe,* Jan. 15, 1988.

[14] *NYT,* Aug. 6, 1987.

[15] For one forthright exception, see "Talk of the Town," *New Yorker,* Feb. 1, 1988.

[16] Editorial, *WP Weekly,* April 4, 1988.

[17] Bruce Cameron and Penn Kemble, "From a Proxy Force to a National Liberation Movement," ms., Feb. 1986, outlining how the U.S. should act to effect this transition. Edgar Chamorro, *Packaging the Contras: A Case of CIA Disinformation,* Institute for Media Analysis Monograph Series, No. 2 (New York, 1987, 49); Chamorro was the CIA-selected spokesman for the contra directorate from December 1982 until he quit the organization in December 1984.

This heartfelt concern over the sanctity of borders is most impressive -- even if somewhat tainted by the curious conception of a border as a kind of one-way mirror, so that its sanctity is not violated by CIA supply flights to the proxy forces who invade Nicaragua from their Honduran bases, or by U.S. surveillance flights over Nicaraguan territory to guide and direct them, among other crimes. Putting aside these matters, we can assess the seriousness of the concern by turning to the results of a controlled experiment that history obligingly constructed. Just at the time that the Free Press was consumed with rage over this latest proof of the aggressiveness of the violent Communist totalitarians, with major stories and angry commentary, the U.S. client state of Israel launched another series of its periodic operations in Lebanon. These operations were north of the sector of southern Lebanon that Israel has "virtually annexed" as a "security zone," integrating the area with Israel's economy and "compelling" its 200,000 Lebanese inhabitants "to provide soldiers for the South Lebanon army," an Israeli mercenary force, by means of an array of punishments and inducements.[18] The Israeli operations included bombing of Palestinian refugee camps and Lebanese towns and villages with large-scale destruction, dozens killed and many wounded, including many civilians. These operations were barely reported, and there was no noticeable reaction.

The only rational conclusion is that the outrage over the vastly less serious and far more justified Nicaraguan incursion was entirely unprincipled, mere fraud.

The U.S. government is happy to explain why it supports Israeli violence deep inside Lebanon: the grounds are the sacred inherent right of self-defense, which may legitimately be invoked by the United States and its clients, under quite a broad interpretation -- though not, of course, by others, in particular, by victims of U.S. terror. In December 1988, just as Yasser Arafat's every gesture was being closely scrutinized to determine whether he had met the exacting U.S. standards on terrorism, to which we return, Israel launched its twenty-sixth raid of the year on Lebanon, attacking a base of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine near Beirut. As is common, there was no attempt to provide a plausible pretext. "The Israelis were not in hot pursuit of terrorists," the London *Guardian* observed, "nor did they have their usual excuse of instant vengeance: they just went ahead and staged a demo" to prove that "the iron fist is in full working order." "The motive for the demonstration was obviously a show of strength." This "spectacular display," complete with "paratroops, helicopters, and gunboats," was "a militarily unjustifiable (and therefore politically motivated) combined operation." The timing explains the political motivation: the raid was carried out on the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, where Israel imposed "a massive military presence, a curfew and strict censorship" to block "a commemorative general strike." In addition to this obvious political motivation, "one may also discern a calculated attempt to undermine Mr Arafat" and his unwelcome moves towards political accommodation, by strengthening the hand of militants within the PLO.[19]

The Israeli attack was brought to the U.N. Security Council, which voted 14 to 1, with no abstentions, for a resolution that "strongly deplored" it. Ambassador Patricia Byrne justified the U.S. veto on the grounds that the "resolution would deny to Israel its inherent right to defend itself" from "attacks and reprisals that have originated on the other side" of the border. *A fortiori,* Nicaragua is entitled to carry out massive and regular attacks deep inside Honduras, and indeed to set off bombs in Washington. Note that such actions would be far more justified than those that the United States defends in the case of its client, as is obvious from comparison of the level of the provocation. Needless to say, this truth is inexpressible, indeed unthinkable. We therefore conclude that media commentary concerning Nicaragua is just as hypocritical as the pretense of the state authorities, from whom one expects nothing else.[20]

The absence of comment on the Israeli actions or even serious reporting is perhaps understandable. These operations were, after all, rather muted by Israeli standards. Thus, they did not compare with the

murderous "Iron Fist" operations in Lebanon in 1985; or the bombing of villages in the Bekaa valley in January 1984, with 100 killed and 400 wounded in one raid, mostly civilians, including 150 children in a bombed-out schoolhouse; or the attack on an UNRWA school in Damour in May 1979 by an Israeli F-16 that dropped cluster bombs, leaving forty-one children dead or wounded. These were reported, but without affecting the elevated status of "this tiny nation, symbol of human decency," as the editors of the *New York Times* described Israel during a peak period of the repression of the Palestinian uprising with beatings, killings, gassing, and collective punishment, "a country that cares for human life," in the admiring words of the *Washington Post* editors in the wake of the Iron Fist atrocities.[21] The fact that Israel maintains a "security zone" in southern Lebanon controlled by a terrorist mercenary army backed by Israeli might also passes without notice, as does Israel's regular hijacking of ships in international waters and other actions that are rarely even reported, and might perhaps arouse a whisper of protest in the case of "worthy victims."[22] If Soviet Jews were to suffer the treatment meted out regularly to Arabs, or if some official enemy such as Nicaragua were to impose repressive measures approaching those that are standard in this "symbol of human decency," the outcry would be deafening.

I will return to some further observations on the extraordinary protection the media have provided Israel while depicting its enemies, particularly the PLO, as evil incarnate, committed only to terror and destruction; and to the remarkable feats of "historical engineering" that have been performed, year by year, to maintain the required image.[23]

During Israel's March 1988 operations, there was no question of hot pursuit, and Israel is not an impoverished country attempting to survive the terrorist attack of a superpower and its lethal economic warfare. But Israel is a U.S. client, and therefore inherits the right of aggression. Nicaragua, in contrast, is denied the right even to drive attacking forces out of its own territory, on the tacit assumption that no state has the right to defend itself from U.S. attack, another crucial doctrine that underlies responsible debate.

It is remarkable to see how deeply the latter doctrine is entrenched. Thus, nothing arouses greater hysteria in the United States than reports that Nicaragua is planning to obtain MiG fighters. When the Reaganites floated such reports as part of the campaign to eliminate the minimal danger of honest reporting of the unwanted Nicaraguan elections in November 1984, even outspoken doves warned that the U.S. would have to bomb Nicaragua to destroy the invented MiGs, because "they're also capable against the United States," a dire threat to our security (Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas).[24] In another propaganda coup of December 1987, a Sandinista defector was produced with elaborate accompanying fanfare in the media on his "revelations" about Sandinista intentions, the most stunning of which was that Nicaragua was hoping to obtain jet planes to defend its territory from U.S. attack, an intolerable outrage. It is, of course, well understood that Nicaragua had no other way to prevent the CIA from supplying the forces it directs within Nicaragua, or to interfere with the U.S. surveillance flights to provide these forces with up-to-the-minute intelligence on Nicaraguan troop deployments so that they could safely attack "soft targets" (i.e., barely defended civilian targets) in accordance with Pentagon and State Department directives. But no such reflections disturbed the display of indignation over this latest proof of Communist aggressiveness.[25]

The logic is clear: Nicaragua has no right of self-defense. It is intolerable, tantamount to aggression, for Nicaragua to interfere with U.S. violence and terror by presuming to protect its airspace, or by defending the population against the U.S. proxy forces, "the democratic resistance" of public rhetoric. For the same reason, the report by the Sandinista defector that Nicaragua intended to reduce its military forces while providing light arms to the population for defense against possible U.S. invasion elicited further outrage as it was transmuted by the Free Press into a threat to conquer the hemisphere.

This doctrine of the elite consensus is, again, highly revealing, as is the fact that its meaning cannot be perceived. We might imagine the reaction if the Soviet Union were to respond in a similar way to the far more serious threat to its security posed by Denmark or Luxembourg.

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[18] *Davar,* July 8, 1988. For a detailed record of the reporting of these operations, see appendix III.

[19] *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (London), Dec. 18, 1988. Julie Flint reports from Lebanon in the same issue that this "bizarre and probably bungled operation" left no visible effects except for the remnants of human bodies and "two dead mastiffs strapped with explosives." An Israeli officer was killed, elite commandoes had to be rescued clinging to helicopter skids after they abandoned their equipment and arms (which were proudly exhibited in Lebanon), and there is "no evidence that the Israelis destroyed a single ammunition dump -- and these hills are littered with them -- or inflicted casualties that would justify the size of the attack force." The failure of the raid may reflect the decline in combat effectiveness of the Israeli forces that has been a source of much concern in military circles for some years, and that has probably accelerated as the military forces have been assigned the mission of terrorizing defenseless civilians in the territories.

[20] AP, Dec. 14; *NYT,* Dec. 15, 1988. The brief *Times* report quotes the Lebanese ambassador as saying that Israel "attaches no concern or importance to non-Israeli peoples." What he actually said is that Israel could hardly be expected to "show any mercy to animals" given that it attaches no importance to non-Israeli people. He had repeated the charge that Israeli forces used dogs strapped with explosives and tear gas canisters to attack people hidden in underground tunnels, then adding the comment of which a few words reached print. Dead Dobermans with explosives strapped to their body had been displayed by guerrillas (William Tuohy, *Los Angeles Times,* Dec. 10, 1988; see preceding note).

[21] *NYT,* Feb. 19, 1988; *WP,* June 30, 1985. On the attack on the school in Damour, see Liston Pope, *City Sun,* June 1-7, 1988; Pope, who was teaching English at the school, writes that the attack, one of many, received 20 words in the *New York Times*. See my *Pirates and Emperors,* chapter 2, on the Iron Fist operations and the Bekaa valley bombings.

[22] See chapter 5, below, and *Pirates and Emperors,* chapter 2, for many details.

[23] *Ibid.,* chapters 1, 2, and *Fateful Triangle,* on media protection of Israel. For updates, see my articles in *Z Magazine,* May, June 1988, and "The U.S. and the Middle East," talk given at Tel Aviv university in April 1988, to appear in Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin, eds., *Intifada: the Palestinian Uprising against Israeli Occupation* (South End, 1989).

[24] *Boston Globe,* Nov. 9, 1984.

[25] For details, see my article in *Z Magazine,* March 1988.

It is interesting that, in the midst of the furor over the Sandinista plans to obtain means to defend themselves, the United States began shipping advanced F-5 jet planes to Honduras on December 15, 1987, unreported by the *New York Times*.[26] Since only the United States and its allies have security concerns, obviously Nicaragua could have no legitimate objection to this development, and it would be superfluous, surely, to report the protests in the Honduran press over the "debts unfairly imposed upon us by pressure from the United States" that force us to "pay the bill for the F-5 fighters that do nothing to feed our hungry people," though they please the military rulers.[27]

One might ask why Nicaragua was so intent on obtaining *Soviet* planes. Why not French Mirage jets instead? In fact, the Sandinistas would have been quite happy to obtain jet interceptors from France, and openly say so. They could not, because U.S. pressure had blocked supply from any non-Communist source. All of this is unreportable, because it would give the game away. Thus Stephen Kinzer and James LeMoyne of the *New York Times* would never disturb their efforts to fan hysteria over the Sandinista threat by reporting such facts, nor would they dwell on the reasons why the Sandinistas might be attempting to obtain jet interceptors.[28] Such inquiry escapes the bounds of propriety, for it would undermine the campaign to portray U.S. aggression and terror as legitimate defense.

The point is more general. Attack against those designated "Communists" will normally compel them to rely on the Soviet Union for defense, particularly when the United States pressures its allies and international lending institutions to refrain from offering assistance, as in the case of contemporary Nicaragua, where it was clear enough in early 1981 that "Nicaragua will sooner or later become another

Soviet client, as the U.S. imposes a stranglehold on its reconstruction and development, rebuffs efforts to maintain decent relations, and supports harassment and intervention -- the pattern of China, Cuba, Guatemala's Arbenz, Allende's Chile, Vietnam in the 1940s and the post-1975 period, etc."[29] This predictable consequence of policy can then be taken as retrospective proof that we are, indeed, simply engaged in defense against the Kremlin design for world conquest, and well-behaved journalists may refer to the "Soviet-supplied Sandinistas" in properly ominous tones, as they regularly do, carefully avoiding the reasons. An additional benefit is that we now test the sincerity of the Soviet Union in their professions about détente, asking whether they will withhold aid from Nicaragua if we reduce aid to the contras. The idea that U.S. sincerity could be tested by withholding aid from Turkey or El Salvador is too outlandish to merit discussion.

A corollary to the principle that official enemies do not have the right of self-defense is that if Nicaragua attacks contra forces within its territory after they break off negotiations, the United States plainly has the right to provide further military aid to its proxies. The Byrd Amendment on "Assistance for the Nicaraguan Resistance," passed in August 1988 with the effusive support of leading senatorial doves, permitted military aid to the proxy forces within Nicaragua upon "Sandinista initiation of an unprovoked military attack and any other hostile action directed against the forces of the Nicaraguan Resistance" or "a continued unacceptable level of military assistance by Soviet-bloc countries, including Cuba" (all other sources having been barred, and U.S. authorities being accorded the right to determine what is "acceptable").[30] The media had taken for granted throughout that it would be outrageous, another display of Communist intransigence, if the army of Nicaragua were to attack terrorist forces within their own country. Months earlier, the press had reported a letter by House Democrats to President Ortega expressing their "grave concern" over the possibility of a military offensive against the contras, which would lead to consideration of "a renewal of military aid to the resistance forces."[31] The prohibition against self-defense remained in force after the U.S. clients had undermined negotiations with last-minute demands contrived to this end, to which we return.

The media reaction is understandable, on the conventional assumption that the "resistance" and the political opposition that supports it within Nicaragua are the more legitimate of the "two Nicaraguan factions," as the *Times* described the contras and the government.[32] The bipartisan consensus on these matters, including outspoken congressional doves, reflects the understanding that Nicaragua has no right to resist U.S. terrorist forces implanted in its territory or attacking it from abroad; U.S. clients are immune from such constraints, and may even hijack ships, bomb civilian targets in other countries, and so on, in "legitimate self-defense."

The August 5 Senate debate on the Byrd amendment gains heightened significance from its timing. Three days earlier, the "resistance," after allowing an army patrol boat to pass by, had attacked the crowded passenger vessel *Mission of Peace,* killing two people and wounding twenty-seven, including a Baptist minister from New Jersey, Rev. Lucius Walker, who headed a U.S. religious delegation. All the victims were civilians. Senators Byrd and Dodd, and other doves, who bitterly condemned the Sandinistas while praising the "courageous leadership" of the "Democratic Presidents" of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, made no mention of this event; perhaps they had missed the tiny notice it received the day before in the *New York Times,* tacked on to a column reporting their deliberations.[33] There was no subsequent commentary. The logic is again clear. If the Sandinistas seek to root out the U.S.-run terrorists who carried out the attack, that proves they are Communist totalitarians, and the United States is entitled to send military as well as "humanitarian" aid to the "resistance" so that it can pursue such tasks more effectively. Given the enthusiastic support for the Senate proceedings by the Senate's leading liberal voices -- Harkin, Kennedy, Kerry, Mitchell, Pell, and others -- we may assume that they accept these principles.

It is frankly recognized that the principal argument for U.S. violence is that "a longer war of attrition will so weaken the regime, provoke such a radical hardening of repression, and win sufficient support from Nicaragua's discontented population that sooner or later the regime will be overthrown by popular revolt, self-destruct by means of internal coups or leadership splits, or simply capitulate to salvage what it can." This formulation by Viron Vaky, Assistant Secretary of State for Interamerican Affairs under the Carter administration, merely reiterates the thrust of the 1981 CIA program outlined by CIA analyst

David MacMichael in World Court testimony. As a dove, Vaky regards the scenario as "flawed" and the strategy unworkable, the contras having been unable to gain military successes despite the extraordinary advantages conferred upon them by their sponsor, or "to elicit significant political support within Nicaragua." "However reasonable or idealistic" the U.S. demand that the Sandinistas "turn over power" to U.S. favorites lacking political support, he continues, the goal is beyond our reach. He therefore urges "positive containment" instead of "rollback" to prevent "Nicaragua from posing a military threat to the United States" and to induce it to observe human rights and move towards a "less virulent...internal system." Since force is not feasible, the United States should seek "other strategies" to pursue "the objective of promoting Nicaraguan self-determination" that it has so idealistically pursued. It should seek a diplomatic settlement with "border inspections, neutral observers," and other devices that Nicaragua had been requesting for seven years (a fact unmentioned), though "the United States frankly will have to bear the major share of enforcement." The United States must be prepared to use force if it detects a violation, while assisting "the Central American democracies" that are threatened by Nicaraguan subversion and aggression.[34]

Recall that these are the thoughts of a leading dove, and that they seem unremarkable to liberal American opinion, important facts about the political culture. These thoughts fall squarely within the conception of U.S. policy outlined by another Carter administration Latin American specialist, Robert Pastor, at the dovish extreme of the political and ideological spectrum -- by now, perhaps well beyond it. Defending U.S. policy over many years, Pastor writes that "the United States did not want to control Nicaragua or other nations in the region, but it also did not want to allow developments to get out of control. It wanted Nicaraguans to act independently, *except* when doing so would affect U.S. interests adversely."[35] In short, Nicaragua and other countries should be free -- to do what we want them to do -- and should choose their course independently, as long as their choice conforms to our interests. If they use the freedom we accord them unwisely, then naturally we are entitled to respond in self-defense. Note that these ideas are a close counterpart to the domestic conception of democracy as a form of population control.

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[26] *Ibid*., for details, including subsequent reference in quotes from Ortega and Arias buried in articles on other matters.

[27] Editorial, *El Tiempo,* May 5, 1988; reprinted in *Hondupress,* May 18, 1988.

[28] They know, of course, as an occasional throw-away line indicates.

[29] *Towards a New Cold War,* 51.

[30] *Congressional Record,* Senate, Aug. 5, 1988, S 11002; Susan Rasky, *NYT,* Aug. 11, 1988.

[31] Robert Pear, *NYT,* May 25, 1988.

[32] See appendix IV, section 4; and section 5, on public support for the political opposition. On opposition backing for the contras, see appendix V, section 6.

[33] *Congressional Record,* Aug. 5, 1988, S 10969f.; AP, *NYT,* Aug. 4; Bryna Brennan, AP, *WP,* Aug. 4, a much fuller account; *Barricada* (Managua), Aug. 3; Julie Light, *Guardian* (New York), Aug. 17, 1988. The *Boston Globe* ran a tiny item featuring a contra denial, Aug. 4.

[34] Vaky, *Foreign Policy,* Fall 1987. On support for the political opposition within Nicaragua, see appendix IV, section 5.

[35] Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition* (Princeton, 1987, 32), his emphasis.

The basic presuppositions of discourse include those just reviewed: U.S. foreign policy is guided by a "yearning for democracy" and general benevolent intent; history and the secret planning record may tell

a rather different story, but they are off the media agenda. It follows that the use of force can only be an exercise in self-defense and that those who try to resist must be aggressors, even in their own lands. What is more, no country has the right of self-defense against U.S. attack, and the United States has the natural right to impose its will, by force if necessary and feasible. These doctrines need not be expressed, apart from periodic odes to our awesome nobility of purpose. Rather, they are simply presupposed, setting the bounds of discourse, and among the properly educated, the bounds of thinkable thought.

In the first chapter, I mentioned some of the ways of approaching the study of the media and evaluating models of media performance. One appropriate method is to consider the spectrum of opinion allowed expression. According to the propaganda model, one would expect the spectrum to be bounded by the consensus of powerful elites while encouraging tactical debate within it. Again, the model is well confirmed.

Consider U.S. policy with regard to Nicaragua, a topic that has probably elicited more controversy and impassioned rhetoric than any other during the past several years. There is debate between the hawks and the doves. The position of the hawks is expressed by a joint declaration of the State and Defense Departments on International Human Rights Day in December 1986: "in the American continent, there is no regime more barbaric and bloody, no regime that violates human rights in a manner more constant and permanent, than the Sandinista regime." Similar sentiments are voiced in the media and political system, and it follows that we should support the "democratic resistance" to Communist terror. At the other extreme, the doves generally agree that we should dismiss the World Court, the United Nations, and other "hostile forums" that pander to Communists and pathological Third World anti-Americanism. They offer their support for the "noble objective" of the Reagan administration -- "to somehow `democratize' Nicaragua" -- but they feel that the contras "are not the instrument that will achieve that objective" (Representative Michael Barnes, one of the most outspoken critics of the contra option).[36] A leading Senate dove, Alan Cranston, recognizes that "the Contra effort is woefully inadequate to achieve...democracy in Nicaragua," so we should find other means to "isolate" the "reprehensible" government in Managua and "leave it to fester in its own juices" while blocking Sandinista efforts "to export violent revolution."[37]

Media doves observe that "Mr. Reagan's policy of supporting [the contras] is a clear failure," so we should "acquiesce in some negotiated regional arrangement that would be enforced by Nicaragua's neighbors" (Tom Wicker).[38] Expressing the same thought, the editors of the *Washington Post* see the contras as "an imperfect instrument," so we must find other means to "fit Nicaragua back into a Central American mode" and impose "reasonable conduct by a regional standard." We must also recognize that "the Sandinistas are communists of the Cuban or Soviet school" and "a serious menace -- to civil peace and democracy in Nicaragua and the stability and security of the region." We must "contain...the Sandinistas' aggressive thrust" and demand "credible evidence of reduced Sandinista support for El Salvador's guerrillas."[39] None of this is debatable: it "is a given; it is true," the editors proclaim. It is therefore irrelevant, for example, that Reagan administration efforts to provide evidence for their charges of Nicaraguan support for El Salvador's guerrillas were dismissed as without merit by the World Court, and in fact barely merit derision. At the outer limits of dissent, *Nation* columnist Jefferson Morley wrote in the *New York Times* that we should recognize that Nicaragua may be "beyond the reach of our good intentions."[40]

Other doves feel that we should not too quickly reject the State Department argument that agricultural cooperatives are legitimate targets for contra attacks, because "in a Marxist society geared up for war, there are no clear lines separating officials, soldiers and civilians"; what is required is careful "cost-benefit analysis," a determination of "the amount of blood and misery that will be poured in, and the likelihood that democracy will emerge at the other end" (*New Republic* editor Michael Kinsley).[41] Neither Kinsley nor the State Department explain why similar arguments do not justify attacks by Abu Nidal on Israeli kibbutzim, far better defended against an incomparably lesser threat. And it is naturally taken to be our right, as rulers of the world, to carry out the cost-benefit analysis and to pour in blood and misery if we determine that the likelihood of "democracy" is sufficiently high.

Notice that for the doves it is obvious without comment that there is no need to impose "regional arrangements" on our Salvadoran and Guatemalan friends, who have slaughtered perhaps 150,000 people during this period, or our clients in Honduras, who kill fewer outright but have left hundreds of thousands to starve to death while the country exports food for the profit of agribusiness. We need not "isolate" these admirable figures or "leave them to fester in their own juices." Their countries already conform to the "Central American mode" of repression, exploitation, and rule by privileged elements that accede to the demands of U.S. power ("democracy"), so even hideous atrocities are of no account; and they merit aid and enthusiastic backing, accompanied by occasional sighs of regret over the violent tendencies in these backward societies if the terror, torture, and mutilation that we organize and support become too visible to ignore or attack the wrong targets (Christian Democrat political figures rather than union and peasant organizers, for example).

By 1986, the contra option was opposed by 80 percent of "leaders," polls report.[42] The propaganda model would therefore predict debate over contra aid but near unanimity in opposition to the Sandinistas. To test the hypothesis, consider the period of maximum intensity of debate over Nicaragua policy, the first three months of 1986, when attention was focused on the issue of contra aid. During these months, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* ran no fewer than eighty-five opinion columns on the matter (including regular columnists). As expected, they were divided over contra aid. But of the eighty-five columns, eighty-five were critical of the Sandinistas, the overwhelming majority harshly so; thus close to 100 percent conformity was achieved on the major issue.

It is not that more sympathetic voices are lacking in the mainstream. There are many who would easily qualify for admission to the forum if they had the right things to say,[43] including Latin American scholars whose opinion pieces are regularly rejected, or the charitable development agency Oxfam, with long experience in the region, which found Nicaragua's record to be "exceptional" among the seventy-six developing countries in which it works in the commitment of the political leadership "to improving the condition of the people and encouraging their active participation in the development process."

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[36] See *Culture of Terrorism* for references on Barnes and many similar examples. Barnes was regarded as "the ring leader" of the congressional opposition to the illegal Reagan administration programs of domestic propaganda and contra terror. He had to be "destroyed" politically as an "object lesson to others," according to memos of one of the "private" affiliates of these operations (run by Carl Channell, who pleaded guilty for serving as a conduit for tax-exempt money for contra weapons). Barnes was defeated after an ad campaign run by Channell depicting him as a Sandinista sympathizer, a message not lost on Congress. See Parry and Kornbluh, *op. cit.*

[37] U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Feb. 27, 1986.

[38] *NYT,* March 14, 1986.

[39] Editorial, *WP Weekly,* March 1, 1986.

[40] *New York Times Book Review,* April 12, 1987. See letters, *Z Magazine,* January 1989, for Morley's interpretation of the quoted phrase.

[41] *Wall Street Journal,* March 26, 1987.

[42] John E. Rielly, ed., *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1987,* Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, March 1987. "Leaders" are defined as "prominent individuals in the United States from government, business, labor, academia, the mass media, religious institutions, private foreign policy organizations and special interest groups."

[43] For a sample, see *Culture of Terrorism,* chapter 11.

Or consider the founder of Costa Rican democracy, José Figueres, who, just at that time, described

himself in an interview as "pro-Sandinista" and "quite friendly toward the Sandinistas," though Costa Rica generally is not, because public opinion is "heavily influenced" by "the Costa Rican oligarchy" which "owns the newspapers and the radio stations." He added that the 2-to-1 margin in favor of the Sandinistas in the 1984 elections, which he witnessed as an observer, "certainly seemed to reflect what you find in the streets." Figueres condemned "Washington's incredible policies of persecuting the Sandinistas" and its efforts "to undo Costa Rica's social institutions" and to "turn our whole economy over to the businesspeople,...to the local oligarchy or to U.S. or European companies," though as a dedicated supporter of the United States, he found these efforts "no doubt well-intentioned." The United States is "turning most Central Americans into mercenaries" for its attack against Nicaragua, he continued. "I've been familiar with Nicaragua all my life," "and never before have I seen as I do now a Nicaraguan government that cares for its people." In another interview, he reiterated that "for the first time, Nicaragua has a government that cares for its people." Commenting on a recent visit, he said that he found "a surprising amount of support for the government" in this "invaded country," adding that the United States should allow the Sandinistas "to finish what they started in peace; they deserve it."[44]

Such comments lack ideological serviceability, as does Figueres's statement that he "understands why" *La Prensa* was closed, having censored the press himself when Costa Rica was under attack by Somoza. Hence, Central America's leading democratic figure must be censored out of the media, though his name may still be invoked for the anti-Sandinista crusade. Thus *New York Times* Central America correspondent James LeMoyne, in one of his anti-Sandinista diatribes, refers to Figueres as "the man who is widely considered the father of Costa Rican democracy," but does not tell us, nor would he or his colleagues ever tell us, what Figueres has to say about the Sandinistas.[45]

The front pages of the *New York Times* present a picture of Nicaragua as seen through the eyes of James LeMoyne as he passed through: a brutal and repressive state under "one-party rule" with "crowds of pot-bellied urchins in the streets," state security agents "ubiquitous" and the army "everywhere," growing support for the "peasant army" struggling against Sandinista oppression and the population reduced to "bitterness and apathy," though somehow resisting a foreign attack under which any other state in the region, and most elsewhere, would have quickly crumbled. They do not present the picture seen by Figueres, or by the CIA-appointed press spokesman for the contras, Edgar Chamorro, on a three-week visit just before LeMoyne's. Speaking to "dozens of people" in the streets after a Sandinista rally, Chamorro found them "very aware, very politically educated, very committed. They thought for themselves; they were there because they wanted to be there." "The days are gone when a dictator can get up and harangue people." "What I have seen here is very, very positive, people are walking on their own two feet," regaining the "dignity and nationalism" they had lost under Somoza. The contras are "like the Gurkhas in India," with the "colonial mentality" of those "fighting for the empire." He spoke on radio and television in Managua, saying "whatever I thought," criticizing Marxism-Leninism. He saw "very little militarization" and "a deep sense of equality," "one of the accomplishments of the revolution." "I didn't see people hungry"; "most people look very healthy, strong, alive," and he saw few beggars, unlike Honduras "or even in city streets in the US." The opposition are the old oligarchy, "reliant on the United States." The war has led to a sense of "nationalism, patriotism" on the part of the youth who are drafted. The Sandinistas continue to be a "people's party," with commitments and goals "that inspire so many people." They are "Nicaraguan nationalists, revolutionaries," who "want a more egalitarian model, to improve the lives of the majority." The elections were "good," the government is "legitimate," and we should "try and change from inside." After leaving the contras, Chamorro adds elsewhere, he lost the easy media access of his contra days.[46]

Readers of the *New York Times* do not receive a range of perceptions such as these, but only one: the one that accords with the needs of the state.

A year after these visits, severe malnutrition began to appear in Managua and parts of the countryside, as U.S. terror and economic warfare continued to take their bitter toll in a pathetically poor country, which, for obvious historical and geopolitical reasons, is utterly dependent on economic relations with the United States. George Shultz, Elliott Abrams, and their cohorts may not have overthrown the government, but they can take pride in having vanquished the programs of development, preventive medical care, and welfare that had offered hope to the poor majority for the first time. Their

achievements can be measured by the significant increase in dying infants, epidemics, and other normal features of the "Central American mode" to which Nicaragua is to be "restored" by U.S. benevolence.[47] The propaganda system may cover their tracks today, but history will render a different judgment.

Returning to the eighty-five opinion columns in the *Times* and the *Post,* even more interesting than the uniform hostility to the Sandinistas was the choice of topics. There are two very striking differences between the Sandinistas and the U.S. favorites who adhere to "regional standards." The first is that the Sandinistas, whatever their sins, had not conducted campaigns of mass slaughter, torture, mutilation, and general terror to traumatize the population. In the eighty-five columns, there is not a single phrase referring to this matter, an illustration of its importance in American political culture. The second major difference is that the Sandinistas diverted resources to the poor majority and attempted measures of meaningful social reform -- quite successfully, in fact, until U.S. economic and military warfare succeeded in reversing the unwelcome improvement in health and welfare standards, literacy, and development. These facts merit two passing phrases in eighty-five columns, one in a bitter condemnation of the "generally appalling leadership" in this "repressive society." There is no word on the fact that, unlike U.S. clients, the Sandinistas had protected the poor from starvation, eliciting much scorn about their economic mismanagement -- scorn that is withheld from Honduras, which permits peasants to starve en masse while exporting specialty crops and beef to the United States, and from U.S. policymakers, who imposed development policies on Central America that produced statistical growth (eliciting much self-congratulation) and starvation (about which we hear much less). There is also no mention of Sandinista efforts to maintain a neutralist posture -- for example, of the trade figures at the time of the U.S. embargo that virtually wiped out private business and helped reduce the economy to bare survival: Nicaraguan trade with the Soviet bloc was then at the same level as U.S. trade with these countries and well below that of Europe and most of the Third World.[48]

Such matters are unhelpful for required doctrine, thus better ignored.

More generally, all of the eighty-five columns stay safely within the approved bounds. Even the few contributors who elsewhere have taken an independent stance do not do so here.[49]

A reader brought the published study of the spectrum of expressible opinion to the attention of *Times* dove Tom Wicker, who devoted part of a column to denouncing it.[50] He gave two reasons for dismissing the study. First, he saw "no reason why I have to praise the Sandinistas," which is quite true, and entirely irrelevant. As was clear and explicit, the individual contributions were not at issue but rather the range of permitted views; the question is not whether Wicker should be granted the opportunity to express his opinion that a "regional arrangement" must be imposed on Nicaragua alone and enforced by the U.S. terror states, but whether, in a free press, the spectrum of opinion should be bounded by this position, as the extreme of permissible dissent from government policy. Wicker's second reason was that "criticism by foot-rule and calculator is often as simplistic as the reportage it purports to measure." Curious to learn whether Wicker had some methodological or other critique to support this judgment, I wrote him a series of letters of inquiry, eliciting no response, from which I can only conclude that his objection is to the very idea of conducting a rational inquiry into the functioning of the media. Note that his reaction, and the general dismissal of the extensive documentation supporting the propaganda model, is quite in accord with its predictions.[51]

Perhaps, nevertheless, this sample of the major journals at the peak period of debate is misleading. Let us turn then to another sample a year later. In the first six months of 1987, the same two journals ran sixty-one columns and editorials relevant to U.S. policy in Nicaragua. Of these, thirteen favored diplomatic measures over contra aid, saying nothing about the Sandinistas. Of the forty-eight that expressed an opinion, forty-six were anti-Sandinista, again, most of them bitterly so. Of these, eighteen were pro-contra and twenty-eight anti-contra, primarily on the grounds that the contras were inept and could not win, or that the U.S. goal of "forc[ing] the Sandinista revolution into the American democratic mold" might not be worth "the risk" (John Oakes of the *New York Times,* at the dissident extreme[52]). Of the two columns that expressed some sympathy for the Sandinistas, one was by Nicaraguan ambassador Carlos Tunnerman, the other by Dr. Kevin Cahill, director of the tropical disease center at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, the only non-Nicaraguan commentator who could draw upon personal experience

in Nicaragua and elsewhere in the Third World[53]; his was also the only column that took note of the successful Nicaraguan health and literacy measures and the "struggle against oppression and corruption" waged under conditions of extreme adversity imposed by U.S. terror and economic warfare. Cahill's is one of the two contributions among sixty-one that mention the World Court decision and international law; two others, one by Tunnerman, refer to them obliquely. These facts reflect the attitude towards the rule of law in the dominant intellectual culture. We read that the United States "is working through the contras to restore democracy to Nicaragua and break the Sandinistas' Cuban and Soviet ties" and that Washington's role is "to help contain the spread of the Sandinista revolution beyond Nicaragua" (the editors of the *Washington Post,* who suggest that the United States test the Latin American consensus that "there is a better chance of reining in the Sandinistas by political envelopment than by military assault"). And we are treated to charges of "genocide" of the Miskito Indians (William Buckley, who concedes that the Sandinistas have not yet reached the level of Pol Pot, though they are plainly heading that way). But apart from Cahill, we read not a word about the constructive policies that were successfully pursued, and that, in the real world, elicited U.S. terror to "rein in the Sandinistas" -- another inexpressible thought.[54]

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[44] Andrew Reding, interview with Figueres, *World Policy Review,* Spring 1986; *Culture of Terrorism,* 206-7, for longer excerpts from an interview published by COHA, *Washington Report on the Hemisphere,* Oct. 1, 1986.

[45] *NYT Magazine,* Jan. 10, 1988.

[46] James LeMoyne, "Bitterness and Apathy in Nicaragua," *NYT,* Dec. 29, 1987. Chamorro, *Update,* Central American Historical Institute, Georgetown University, Nov. 13, 1987; *Extra!* (FAIR), Oct./Nov. 1987. Having been in Managua at just the time that LeMoyne stopped by briefly, I am personally aware of how distorted his rendition was. Others with personal experience will draw their own conclusions. The point, however, is that it is LeMoyne's version, not other reactions, that can reach the general public. Only certain kinds of responses -- in fact, those that conform to the conditions of the propaganda model -- pass through the media filter, with only occasional exceptions.

[47] Mary Speck, "Nicaragua's Economic Decline Takes Toll on Health," *Miami Herald,* Sept. 15, 1988; William Branigin, "Let Them Eat Fruit Rinds," *Washington Post Weekly,* Oct. 10-16, 1988. Consistent with the media policy of downplaying the U.S. role in Nicaragua's distress, Branigin alleges that a June 1988 poll shows that only 19 percent of Managua residents regard "U.S. aggression in any of its forms" as "the main cause" of the economic problems. But, relying on a secondary source, he misread the poll results (see appendix IV, section 5). The question asked was to identify "the country's main economic problems." Two-thirds of respondents selected inflation, shortage of goods, low wages, deficient production, and "other"; 8 percent selected "bad government"; and Branigin's 19 percent chose "war," "economic blockade," or "aggression." Plainly, the responses were heterogeneous. Doubtless many of the 67 percent who identified specific economic problems would have agreed that they were attributable to U.S. intervention and economic warfare; even right-wing pro-Somoza businessmen are clear about this matter.

[48] Thomas W. Walker, *Nicaragua* (Westview, 1986, 67).

[49] See my introduction to Morris Morley and James Petras, *The Reagan Administration and Nicaragua,* Institute of Media Analysis, Monograph Series No. 1 (New York, 1987), for a detailed survey, noting some marginal exceptions and nuances and also discussing one of the more outlandish contributions, that of Ronald Radosh, now in his "God that failed" phase and therefore with ready access to the media, previously denied. Also my chapter "U.S. Polity and Society: the Lessons of Nicaragua" in Thomas Walker, ed., *Reagan versus the Sandinistas* (Westview, 1987).

[50] *NYT,* Dec. 31, 1987.

[51] See Appendix I for discussion of these predictions.

[52] *NYT,* Feb. 10.

[53] *NYT,* Feb. 14.

[54] Editorials, *WP,* Jan. 9, March ll; Buckley, *WP,* May 21, 1987.

Once again, not a single phrase refers to the fact that, unlike the U.S. clients in the "fledgling democracies," the Sandinistas had not launched a campaign of terror and slaughter to traumatize their populations. Rather, as a huge mass of generally ignored documentation demonstrates, this task had been assigned to the U.S. proxy forces; this inconvenient fact is placed in proper perspective by former *Times* executive editor A.M. Rosenthal, who writes that "James LeMoyne's carefully reported, sensitive accounts in the *Times* of rebel troops inside Nicaragua indicate growing self-confidence and skill." The totalitarian Sandinistas are contrasted with the "struggling democracies of Central America": the "imperfect but working" democracies of Guatemala and Honduras, and El Salvador, which, though "under communist guerrilla siege," is "an imperfect democracy but a democracy with an elected government" (*Post* columnist Stephen Rosenfeld), unlike Nicaragua, where there were no elections, so Washington has decreed.[55]

The assumptions revealed in these samples of expressible opinion are the very foundations of discourse, beyond challenge.

The effectiveness of the state doctrine that there were no elections in Nicaragua, in contrast to the U.S. terror states, provides useful lessons for future commissars. It confirms the judgment of Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information (the Creel Commission) "that one of the best means of controlling news was flooding news channels with `facts,' or what amounted to official information."[56] By dint of endless repetition, combined with media election coverage conforming to Washington dictates, the required doctrine has become established truth. Virtually no deviations are to be found. Even human rights groups that have made a real effort to steer an even course fall prey to these impressive achievements of state-media propaganda. Thus the Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch criticizes the Reaganites for inconsistency: they "have been loath to speak out [about]...abuses under elected governments" (he mentions El Salvador and Guatemala), but they condemn "human rights abuses by the hemisphere's left-wing regimes -- Cuba and Nicaragua." On the one hand, we have the "elected governments" of El Salvador and Guatemala, and on the other, Nicaragua, left-wing and therefore lacking an "elected government." At the outer reaches of dissidence in the media, the liberal *Boston Globe* contrasts El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras ("unstable democratic") with Cuba, Nicaragua, Guyana, and Suriname ("socialist"). The "democratic" governments have "civilian presidents" who were "elected," though they are "battling the army for political control"; but in Nicaragua, we have only a "socialist junta in power since 1979 revolution" -- no elections, no "democracy" as in the U.S. clients.[57]

To escape the impact of a well-functioning system of propaganda that bars dissent and unwanted fact while fostering lively debate within the permitted bounds is remarkably difficult.

In recognition of the importance of preventing the free flow of ideas, the U.S. government has long sought to impress upon its clients the need to monitor and control travel and published materials. Thus, President Kennedy met with seven Central American presidents in San José, Costa Rica, in March 1963, where the seven agreed to an April meeting in Somoza's Nicaragua "To develop and put into immediate effect common measures to restrict the movement of subversive nationals to and from Cuba, and the flow of materials, propaganda and funds from that country." In secret internal documents, the Kennedy liberals were concerned over the excessive liberalism of Latin American regimes, in particular, "the reluctance of governments to establish bilateral or multilateral arrangements for the control of travelers," such as exist and are extensively applied in the United States.[58] For similar reasons, there is no concern here when the independent media are destroyed by violence in U.S. dependencies or are securely in the hands of reliable right-wing elements, or when censorship is imposed by government terror, assassination, or imprisonment of journalists. At home, such measures are obviously inappropriate.

More delicate ones are required, more sophisticated procedures of manufacture of consent.

The commitment to block the free flow of ideas reflects deeper concerns. For global planners, much of the Third World has been assigned the role of service to the industrial capitalist centers. Its various regions must "fulfill their functions" as sources of raw materials and markets, and must be "exploited" for the reconstruction and development of Western capitalism, as secret documents frankly explain. It is, of course, understood that such policies leave the United States "politically weak" though "militarily strong," the constant lament of government specialists and other commentators, and a fact recognized by the victims as well, in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. Although banning of improper thoughts, free travel, and "subversive nationals" can perhaps compensate in part for the political weakness of the United States and its clients, planners have clearly and explicitly recognized that the United States will ultimately have to rely on force, the local security forces if possible, to contain dissidence and popular movements. The basic commitments explain not only the regular reliance on military and state terror, but also the hostility to democracy (in the sense of popular participation in public affairs) that is such a striking feature of U.S. policy in the Third World -- sometimes becoming a real passion, as under the Reagan administration.

For the same reasons, the Kennedy administration shifted the mission of the Latin American military from "hemispheric defense" to "internal security," and the United States lent support to the National Security States that spread throughout the region in subsequent years. Latin Americanist Lars Schoultz observes that these new forms of "military authoritarianism" developed in response to "increased popular political participation" and aimed "to destroy permanently a perceived threat to the existing structure of socioeconomic privilege by eliminating the political participation of the numerical majority, principally the working or (to use a broader, more accurate term) popular classes."[59] It is only when the threat of popular participation is overcome that democratic forms can be safely contemplated.

The same considerations explain why it is necessary to block dangerous ideas and "anti-U.S. subversion," indeed anything that might appeal to the "popular classes" who are to be excluded from the political system. This combination of political weakness and military strength underlies State Department concerns that the government of Guatemala in the early 1950s was too democratic, treating the Communist Party "as an authentic domestic political party and not as part of the world-wide Soviet Communist conspiracy."[60] It also explains why, in the early postwar period, the United States undertook a worldwide campaign to undermine the anti-fascist resistance, suppressing unions and other popular organizations and blocking democratic politics in Japan, Europe, and much of the Third World until proper outcomes were assured, while its junior partner in global management established its harsh rule in its own narrower domains.[61]

One of the bases for maintaining stability in client states of the Latin American variety is a symbiotic relationship between domestic liberalism and political figures in the dependencies who provide a façade for military rule. The conditions of the relationship are that the "democrats" in Central America pursue their task of preserving privilege and U.S. interests, while American liberals laud the encouraging growth of the tender plant of democracy while providing the means for the continuing terrorist assault against the population by the state security services and the death squads closely linked to them.

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[55] Rosenthal, *NYT,* March 8; Rosenfeld, *WP,* April 24, 1987.

[56] Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines* (U. of North Carolina, 1980, 194).

[57] Kenneth Roth, letter, *NYT,* Aug. 17, 1988; *BG,* Dec. 26, 1988. Advocates of U.S. violence condemn Americas Watch because its careful and judicious reporting does not satisfy their standards of loyalty to state doctrine. Thus *New Republic* editor Morton Kondracke charges that Americas Watch and State Department propagandists "deserve each other," each exaggerating and distorting in their partisan endeavors, protecting Nicaragua and the U.S. clients, respectively ("Broken Watch", *The New Republic,* Aug. 22, 1988; for some examples of Kondracke's appreciation for successful violence, and other views, see *Culture of Terrorism*; also appendix I, section 2). In fact, Americas Watch has bent over backwards

to detect and denounce Nicaraguan abuses, devoting far more attention to them than the comparative facts would warrant. It has gone so far as to say that it would oppose support for Nicaragua if that were at issue, because of its abuses, though it has not proposed that the U.S. terminate aid to El Salvador, where the abuses are vastly worse; nor have the Watch groups called for termination of aid to Israel and other major violators of human rights (see Americas Watch, *Human Rights in Nicaragua,* March 1986). But Americas Watch has kept to the determinable facts, scandalizing assorted commissars.

[58] Bernard Diederich, *Somoza* (E.P. Dutton, 1981, 74). *Memorandum* from Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to McGeorge Bundy, June 11, 1965; for further details, see *On Power and Ideology,* 22f. and bibliography.

[59] Schoultz, *Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America* (Princeton, 1981, 7).

[60] Cited by F. Parkinson, *Latin America, The Cold War, and The World Powers* (London, 1974), 40.

[61] See my article "Democracy in the Industrial Societies" in *Z Magazine,* Jan. 1989, for discussion and references.

Well after the 1984 elections that established "democracy" in El Salvador to the applause of the Free Press, the human rights organization Socorro Juridico, operating under the protection of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, observed that the continuing terror is still conducted by

> the same members of the armed forces who enjoy official approval and are adequately trained to carry out these acts of collective suffering... Salvadoran society, affected by terror and panic, a result of the persistent violation of basic human rights, shows the following traits: collective intimidation and generalized fear, on the one hand, and on the other the internalized acceptance of the terror because of the daily and frequent use of violent means. In general, society accepts the frequent appearance of tortured bodies, because basic rights, the right to life, has absolutely no overriding value for society.[62]

The last comment also applies to the supervisors of these operations, as underscored by George Shultz in one of his lamentations on terrorism, a talk delivered just as the United States was carrying out the terror bombing of Libya. In El Salvador, he declared, "the results are something all Americans can be proud of" -- at least, all Americans who enjoy the sight of tortured bodies, starving children, terror and panic, and generalized fear. And James LeMoyne, in one of his "carefully reported, sensitive accounts," concludes that "American support for elected governments [in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras] has been a relative success." No doubt true, by some standards.[63]

The observations of Socorro Juridico on Salvadoran society under "democracy" were presented at the First International Seminar on Torture in Latin America, held at Buenos Aires in December 1985, a conference devoted to "the repressive system" that "has at its disposal knowledge and a multinational technology of terror, developed in specialized centers whose purpose is to perfect methods of exploitation, oppression and dependence of individuals and entire peoples" by the use of "state terrorism inspired by the Doctrine of National Security." This doctrine can be traced to the historic decision of the Kennedy administration to shift the mission of the Latin American military to "internal security," with consequences that are -- or should be -- well known.

The conference passed without notice in the U.S. media. None of this falls within the canon of terrorism as conceived in the civilized world or has the slightest bearing on the noble efforts of the United States to defend the imperfect but advancing democracies and to "restore democracy" to Nicaragua. Similarly, no celebration of the passionate U.S. commitment to human rights would be sullied by mention of the striking correlation between U.S. aid and torture worldwide documented in several studies, particularly in Latin America, where the leading academic specialist on human rights in the region concludes that U.S. aid "has tended to flow disproportionately to Latin American governments which torture their citizens,...to the hemisphere's relatively egregious violators of fundamental human rights." This was prior to the Reagan administration, with its dedicated commitment to terror and torture.[64]

In one of their commentaries during the period we have been reviewing, the *Times* editors declared that "the Sandinistas have to understand that their neighbors and Washington rightly see a connection between internal and external behavior."[65] It must be, then, that the behavior of "their neighbors and Washington" illustrates this deep commitment to human rights. The editors also asked whether the Reagan administration could "bring itself to take [the calculated risk of a political settlement] and tolerate a Marxist neighbor, if it is boxed in by treaties and commitments to rudimentary human rights," commitments unnecessary for the "fledgling democracies" or their sponsor. They urged that the United States test the possibility of "securing Sandinista agreement to keep Soviet and Cuban bases, advisers and missiles out of Nicaragua" and agree not to "export revolution across Nicaragua's borders." The missiles and Soviet and Cuban bases are presumably added for dramatic effect, and Nicaragua's repeated offers to eliminate foreign advisers and installations are unmentioned, and are regularly unreported, just as no notice is merited when Cuba's foreign minister in early 1988 "reiterated his country's offer to withdraw its military advisers from Nicaragua once the U.S.-backed contra campaign against the Sandinista government ends."[66] The perceived problem throughout has been to find some way to "rein in the Sandinistas" and "contain their aggressive thrust" (*Washington Post*), to compel Nicaragua to "rein in its revolutionary army," as Democratic Senator Terry Sanford demands, an army that is illegitimately rampaging in Nicaragua when it seeks to defend the country from U.S. attack.[67] That Nicaragua might face some security problem remains beyond imagining.

Apart from regular unsupported allegations of Sandinista aid to the Salvadoran guerrillas, to which I return, the proclaimed basis for these fears concerning the Sandinista threat to the hemisphere is another coup of the State Department's Operation Truth, based upon a speech by commandante Tomás Borge. In it, he expressed his hopes that Nicaragua would be an example that others would follow, explaining that Nicaragua cannot "export our revolution" but can only "export our example" while "the people themselves of these countries...must make their revolutions"; in this sense, he said, the Nicaraguan revolution "transcends national boundaries." In a conscious and purposeful fraud, State Department Psychological Operations converted these words into the threat of military conquest in pursuit of a "revolution without borders." The phrase was used as the title of the pathetic September 1985 State Department White Paper on alleged Nicaraguan subversion,[68] and repeatedly since, sometimes accompanied by the claim that this is a Sandinista *Mein Kampf,* as George Shultz warned Congress. The same fabrication served as the climax for Reagan's successful effort to obtain $100 million from Congress for the proxy army just as the World Court called upon the United States to terminate its aggression, and it remains a media staple in news columns and commentary, as I have reviewed elsewhere. The hoax was exposed at once by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, and even received marginal notice in a review of State Department "public diplomacy" in the *Washington Post*. But none of this deterred media Agitprop in service of the worthy project "to demonize the Sandinista government" and "to turn it into a real enemy and threat in the minds of the American people," as a Reagan administration official phrased the goal.[69] Nor are these exercises of "perception management" deterred by the evident absurdity of the idea that Nicaragua *could* pose a threat of aggression while the U.S. stands by in helpless impotence. Again, a most impressive demonstration of what can be achieved by a mobilized independent press.

There was, to be sure, a basis for the perception that Nicaragua posed a threat. The real fear was that Borge's hopes might be realized. As Oxfam observed, Nicaragua posed "the threat of a good example." Like Arévalo and Arbenz in Guatemala, Allende in Chile, and many others, Nicaragua was perceived as a "rotten apple" that might "infect the barrel," a "virus" that might infect others, a "cancer" that might spread, in the terminology constantly used by planners when they contemplate the dread prospect of independent development geared to domestic needs. The real fear was expressed by Secretary of State Shultz in March 1986, when he warned that if the Sandinistas "succeed in consolidating their power," then "*all* the countries in Latin America, who *all* face serious internal economic problems, will see radical forces emboldened to exploit these problems."[70] It is therefore necessary to destroy the virus and inoculate the surrounding regions by terror, a persistent feature of U.S. foreign policy, based on the same concerns that animated Metternich and the Czar with regard to the threat to civilized order posed by American democracy. But these truths too lie far beyond the bounds of what can be expressed or imagined.

Returning to the range of expressible opinion, the second sample of opinion columns, like the first, confirms the expectations of the propaganda model, as do others. News reporting satisfies the same conditions, as has been documented in many investigations, ensuring that public opinion will not stray from proper bounds, at least among those segments of the population that count.

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[62] *Torture in Latin America,* LADOC (Latin American Documentation), Lima, 1987.

[63] Secretary Shultz, "Moral Principles and Strategic Interests: The Worldwide Movement Toward Democracy," State Dept. Bureau of Public Affairs, *Current Policy* no. 820, address at Kansas State University, April 14, 1986; LeMoyne, *NYT,* Feb. 7, 1988.

[64] See *The Political Economy of Human Rights,* vol. I; Lars Schoultz, *Comparative Politics,* Jan. 1981. See also his *Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America*.

[65] *NYT,* March 15, 1987.

[66] AP, Feb. 1, 1988.

[67] Editorial, *WP Weekly,* March 31, 1986; Pamela Constable, *BG,* March 15, 1987.

[68] For a detailed analysis, see Morley and Petras, *op. cit.*

[69] See my article in Walker, *Reagan vs. the Sandinistas*; *Culture of Terrorism,* 219f.; *WP,* Oct. 15, 1985; Peter Kornbluh, *Nicaragua* (Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, 1987).

[70] *Ibid.*

Chapter Four

Adjuncts of Government

"It is very interesting," Senator William Fulbright observed in Senate hearings on government and the media in 1966, "that so many of our prominent newspapers have become almost agents or adjuncts of the government; that they do not contest or even raise questions about government policy."[1] These remarks are not precisely accurate: the media do contest and raise questions about government policy, but they do so almost exclusively within the framework determined by the essentially shared interests of state-corporate power. Divisions among elites are reflected in media debate,[2] but departure from their narrow consensus is rare. It is true that the incumbent state managers commonly set the media agenda. But if policy fails, or is perceived to be harmful to powerful interests, the media will often "contest government policy" and urge different means to achieve goals that remain beyond challenge or, quite often, even awareness.

To illustrate, I have reviewed a few samples of the media's contributions to the government project of "demonizing the Sandinistas" while praising the violent terror states backed or directly installed by the United States in the region. With all the skepticism I have personally developed through studying media performance over many years, I had not expected that they would rise to this challenge. When writing in 1985 about the Reaganite disinformation programs concerning Central America, I did not compare Nicaragua to El Salvador and Guatemala to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the charges (where they were not outright lies); that seemed an insult to the reader's intelligence. Instead, I compared the allegations concerning Nicaragua with the behavior of the "model democracy" of Israel during the same period and that of the United States itself in wartime conditions, showing that the Sandinista record was respectable by these -- admittedly, not very impressive -- standards.[3] But my assessment of the media was naive. Within a year they had succeeded in portraying the murderous U.S. clients as progressive if flawed democracies, while the Sandinistas, guilty of no crime that even begins to approach those of Washington's favorites, had become the very embodiment of evil.

The review in the last chapter of two periods of intense debate over U.S. policy towards Nicaragua kept to the spectrum of expressible opinion. News reporting conforms to the same implicit premises. The dichotomous treatment of the elections in El Salvador and Nicaragua provides one example, studied in detail elsewhere. The periods reviewed in the last chapter provide another. Political scientist Jack Spence studied 181 *New York Times* articles on Nicaragua during the first six months of 1986; the conclusions are similar to those drawn from the editorial and opinion columns.[4]

Spence observes that Central America was virtually ignored until U.S. control faced a challenge in 1978. From 1969 through 1977, the TV networks devoted a total of one hour to Nicaragua, all on the 1972 earthquake. They ignored the 1972 election in El Salvador, when the apparent victory of the Duarte-Ungo reformist ticket was overturned by blatant fraud and intervention by the U.S. clients in Nicaragua and Guatemala, guaranteeing the military rule that continues until the present. There being no challenge to U.S. domination, the problem of establishing "democracy" did not arise, just as it did not arise in 1984 in Panama when the notorious drug dealer General Noriega, then still a U.S. favorite, ran a fraudulent election legitimized by the attendance of George Shultz at the inauguration, where he "praised the vote as a triumph for democracy, taunting Nicaragua to do the same," after having been briefed by the CIA and the U.S. ambassador "that Noriega had stolen upwards of 50,000 ballots in order to ensure the election" of his candidates.[5]

Through the 1970s, the media ignored the growing crisis of access to land in Central America that lies at the roots of the current turmoil.[6] In the first six months of 1986, Spence observes, the "crucial issue" of "access to land and land ownership patterns" in Nicaragua received one sentence in the 181 articles, and agrarian policy was also virtually ignored in coverage of El Salvador, except for occasional mention of El Salvador's "progressive" reforms without serious analysis. Similarly, "Nicaraguan issues such as the effects of the war on Nicaragua, Sandinista programs, popularity, and support were not part of the news agenda." Most of the stories "emanated from Washington" and presented Reagan administration doctrine without challenge or analysis, including the laments about freedom fighters forced to fight with only "boots and bandages" against advanced Soviet armaments and Cuban-piloted helicopters, brutal repression in this "cancer, right here on our land mass" (George Shultz), guns to Colombian terrorists and subversion from Chile to Guatemala, Cuban troops "swarming the streets of Managua by the scores" in this terrorism sanctuary two days' drive from Texas, a second Libya, and so on through the familiar litany. In its news columns, Spence observes, "the *Times* tacitly accepted [the Reaganite] views, seeking out no others, thus contributing to a drastic narrowing for public debate." "Regarding the charges leveled against the Sandinistas, almost no contrary view could be found in the *Times* [and]...supporting evidence was never present." "Four times the Nicaraguan Embassy was given a buried line or two," and in a few stories "the reporter added a background balance line": "it was as if the *Times* had a software program that, at rare and odd intervals, automatically kicked in a boilerplate `balancing' graf beyond that story's halfway point." Critics of Reaganite *tactics* were cited, but virtually nothing beyond these limits.

As is well known, choice of sources can shield extreme bias behind a façade of objectivity. A study organized by media specialist Lance Bennett of the University of Washington investigated the distribution of attributed news sources for the month of September 1985 in the *New York Times* and the Seattle press. In *Times* coverage of El Salvador, over 80 percent of the sources were supportive of the government of El Salvador; 10 percent were drawn from the opposition. In *Times* coverage of Nicaragua, the pattern was reversed: more than two-thirds of sources selected were hostile to the government of Nicaragua, under 20 percent were from that government. The local media were similar. In fact, despite the apparent difference, the two patterns reflect the same criterion of source selection: in both cases, the primary sources were the U.S. government and its allies and clients (the government of El Salvador, the Nicaraguan political opposition and the contras). The study observes that in both countries, "the vast majority of Central Americans, the ordinary peasants, urban dwellers, workers and merchants, are virtually mute in U.S. news coverage of their lives." They account for 9 percent of attributed news sources, of which one-third are "U.S. individuals."

The study suggests that the reasons for these discrepancies may lie in the tendency to rely on "easily available `official' sources" and other such "institutional factors." That is plausible, but one should not be misled. Opposition sources are, of course, easy to find in Nicaragua, where they operate freely and

openly despite government harassment, while in El Salvador and Guatemala, most were murdered by the U.S.-backed security forces or fled; a nontrivial distinction that the media manage to suppress, indeed to reverse. In coverage of Afghanistan, the Kremlin is a more "easily available" source than guerrillas in the hills, but coverage is radically biased in the other direction (as it should be). Similarly, great efforts have been made to report the war in Nicaragua from the point of view of the contras. Reporting from the point of view of the Salvadoran or Guatemalan guerrillas, or the Viet Cong, has been next to nonexistent, and important sources that exist are often simply suppressed.[7] The same is true of publication of refugee studies, which typically reflects political priorities, not ease of access.[8] The "institutional factors" are doubtless real, but throughout there are conscious choices that flow from doctrinal needs.[9]

Spence found the same tendencies in his study of news reporting on Nicaragua in early 1986. Top priority was given to the U.S. government. Ranking second were the U.S. proxy forces. The contras received 727 column inches as compared to 417 for the Nicaraguan government, a discrepancy that was increased by 109 inches devoted to the U.S.-backed internal opposition in Nicaragua, overwhelmingly those who had refused to participate in the 1984 elections as the U.S. government had demanded. There were extensive reports of the concerns of the businessmen's association COSEP, harassment of the U.S.-funded journal *La Prensa,* one of whose owners was issuing thinly veiled calls for contra aid in Washington at the time, and other abuses. Coverage of the U.S. clients was largely favorable; only one of thirty-three stories on the contras focused on human rights abuses, and there were a few other references to atrocities that were by then reaching a remarkable scale. Like the State Department and Congress, the media preferred what human rights investigators described as "intentional ignorance."[10]

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[1] Hearings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, August 31, 1966; cited by Aronson, *The Press and the Cold War,* 226.

[2] There are exceptions when interfering factors distort the operation of the system. Even powerful segments of the corporate world may be barred from ready access to the public forum; for one case, see the next chapter.

[3] *Turning the Tide,* 72f., and my article in Walker, *Reagan versus the Sandinistas*. See also Michael Parenti, "Afterword," in Morley and Petras, *The Reagan Administration in Nicaragua,* and Michael Linfield, *Human Rights in Times of War,* ms., 1988.

[4] Spence, "The U.S. Media: Covering (Over) Nicaragua," in Walker, *Reagan vs. the Sandinistas*. On the election coverage, see appendix I, section 1, and sources cited.

[5] Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), "News and Analysis," Feb. 29, 1988.

[6] More generally, it would be very difficult to find in the media any discussion of the impact of the Alliance for Progress in intensifying the crisis, with its emphasis on development programs that increased both GNP and human suffering (for example, by shifting production from subsistence crops to beef for export), led to serious ecological damage, and in general were a human catastrophe even where they were a statistical success.

[7] For example, Katsuichi Honda published in the Japanese press extensive studies of life in villages controlled by South Vietnamese resistance forces and under U.S. attack, but the English translation found no takers. Cambodia specialist Serge Thion reported his visit to Cambodian guerrillas in 1972 in *Le Monde,* but the *Washington Post* turned it down. *Le Monde* southeast Asia specialist Jacques Decornoy published first-hand reports of the devastating U.S. bombing of Laos in 1968, but despite repeated efforts, no U.S. journal was willing to reprint his articles or even to mention the facts. Reports on the atrocities of U.S.-backed Salvadoran forces by foreign journalists and even direct testimony by House members were ignored. See *For Reasons of State, Towards a New Cold War, Manufacturing Consent,* on these and other examples.

[8] Cambodian refugees on the Thai border in the late 1970s were not more accessible than Cambodia

refugees in Phnom Penh a few years earlier, but the former had a useful tale to tell and the latter did not, and were therefore ignored. The Thai border camps were also not more accessible than Lisbon or Australia despite some remarkable claims by journalists who surely know better, but what the Timorese refugees had to say conflicted with the requirements of U.S. power, as distinct from those who fled Pol Pot atrocities. See *Political Economy of Human Rights* and *Manufacturing Consent* for discussion and details, in these and other cases.

[9] Seattle Central America Media Project, *Out of Balance,* n.d. See also appendix V, section 6, on *Times* choice of sources within Nicaragua.

[10] Donald Fox and Michael J. Glennon, "Report to the International Human Rights Law Group and the Washington Office on Latin America," Washington D.C., April 1985, 21, referring to the State Department reaction to their revelation of contra atrocities. Most studies were, like this one, ignored or dismissed.

Turning to El Salvador, we find that the pattern is sharply reversed. Here, the guerrillas were castigated as Marxist terrorists, and the official line, as laid forth in *New York Times* editorials, was that things were improving under the democratic government of "the honorable Mr. Duarte," "the honest, reform-minded Christian Democrat," who is desperately trying to lead his people to a better life while "beset by implacable extremes," though he may have been "less than rigorous in bringing death squad operatives to judicial account" (in translation: he has done nothing to curb the security forces he praises for their "valiant service alongside the people against subversion" while conceding quietly that "the masses were with the guerrillas" when he assumed the role of front man for the war against the population). News reporting was similar in style. Duarte was portrayed in the major media as a victim, not as the willing agent whose role was to ensure adequate congressional funding for the state terrorists whom he protected. Analyzing over 800 articles in the major dailies from March 1984 through October 1985, journalist Marc Cooper found a consistent pattern of suppressing massive atrocities and "singing the praise of Administration policy." There were hundreds of column inches lauding Duarte's *promises* to end the rampant state terror conducted under his aegis, but virtually nothing on his actual record of apologetics for state terror and service to it, and not a single article "analyzing the nature of Duarte's alliance with the military establishment," the effective rulers.[11]

In the editorials reviewed over six and a half years, the *Times* never mentioned such matters as the assassination of Archbishop Romero or the raid by the security forces on the legal aid office of the archbishopric to destroy evidence implicating them in the assassination; the destruction and closure of the university by the army, with many killed; the physical destruction of the independent media and the murder and expulsion of their editors and publishers; or the Salvadoran state of siege from March 1980 when Duarte joined the junta, under which the atrocities were conducted with his backing and constant apologetics. In contrast, when Nicaragua declared a state of siege on October 15, 1985, the *Times* bitterly condemned this demonstration of Nicaragua's lack of "respect for democracy and human rights," dismissing with contempt "President Ortega's claim that the crackdown is the fault of `the brutal aggression by North America and its internal allies'"; the *renewal* of El Salvador's far more draconian state of siege two days later received no mention. The events ignored in the editorials were also largely suppressed or falsified in the news columns.

There was no hint or concern in the editorials, and little (if any) reporting, about the fact that "since 1981 the Salvadoran press has either supported the government or criticized it from a right-wing perspective," avoiding "stories critical of government forces from a human rights standpoint," as observed in an Americas Watch review of freedom of the press. The political opposition had been murdered by Duarte's security forces or had fled the country, so there was no need to report or comment on their problems.[12] Similarly, no second thoughts were aroused by the fact that one of the leading murderers was selected to be Duarte's Minister of Defense, having completed his service as director of the National Guard. Earlier, he had coolly explained that "the armed forces are prepared to kill 200,000-300,000, if that's what it takes to stop a Communist takeover," and he had acted accordingly as the Guard under his command administered its "pedagogy of terror." When he was named Defense Minister,

this mass murderer and torturer was described by the *New York Times* as "a soft-spoken, amiable man who has a reputation as an excellent administrator." Conceding that the Guard under his command had been responsible for horrible atrocities, including the rape and murder of four American churchwomen and the assassination of two U.S. labor advisors, the *Times* adds that "in his defense, others contend that under his command the National Guard's reputation has improved to the point where it is no longer considered the most abusive of Salvador's three security forces" -- an impressive achievement, doubtless.[13]

With regard to Nicaragua, in contrast, the typical pattern was for the state propaganda services to concoct some charge that the media would then prominently and uncritically relay. Occasionally, when the charges were recognized to be too outlandish, a mild disclaimer might appear on the inside pages. Often the charges persisted even when they were acknowledged to be groundless or even sheer fabrication, a pattern that has also been well documented in the case of other official enemies.[14]

To fully appreciate the dichotomous treatment, we must bear in mind what had been happening in Nicaragua and El Salvador during these years, facts that I presume are familiar and so will not review here.[15] The disgrace of the Free Press could hardly be more dramatic.

It is worth stressing that far more is at issue here than dereliction of duty, incompetence, or service to power. The protection afforded to state terrorists in the "fledgling democracies" provides a veil behind which they can pursue their atrocities with crucial U.S. support, while the indignant focus on far lesser abuses in Nicaragua has facilitated the Reagan programs of terror and economic warfare that reversed social and economic progress in Nicaragua and reduced the economy to ruins, permitting regular media gloating over "Sandinista incompetence" and malevolence. The media were willing accomplices in an extraordinary outburst of violence and repression.

The point is more general. The U.S. government has been able to provide crucial support for mass slaughter by its Indonesian client in Timor (with the help of other Western powers) because the media simply refused to investigate the facts or report what they knew. The same was true of the destruction of the peasant societies of northern Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam, among many other cases. To mention only one current example, Israel has been emboldened to conduct its pogroms in the occupied territories by the same indulgence, knowing that all would be explained away as regrettable exceptions by its U.S. apologists: the editorial staff of the *New York Times,* the U.S. labor bureaucracy, or Elie Wiesel, the noted apostle of the obligation of silence in the face of atrocities by the state one loves, among many others.[16]

To raise the level of public understanding of Central American affairs during the critical early 1986 period, the *Times* devoted the cover story in the Sunday Magazine to an analysis by James LeMoyne of the deeper issues behind the rise of the "guerrilla network."[17] LeMoyne observes that "virtually every study of the region...has concluded that the revolutions of Central America primarily have been caused by decades of poverty, bloody repression and frustrated efforts at bringing about political reform." Furthermore, every serious study has concluded that the United States bears a certain responsibility for these conditions, hence for the rise of "the guerrilla network," but no hint of that will be discovered in LeMoyne's discussion. He considers the role of Cuba, the Soviet Union, North Korea, the PLO, Vietnam, and so on, but one participant in the drama is missing, except for the statement that in El Salvador, "the United States bolstered the Salvadoran Army, insisted on elections and called for some reforms." Also missing is the fact that the army we "bolstered" conducted a program of slaughter and torture to destroy "the people's organizations fighting to defend their most fundamental human rights," to borrow the words of Archbishop Romero shortly before his assassination as he vainly pleaded with President Carter not to "bolster" these forces, which "know only how to repress the people and defend the interests of the Salvadorean oligarchy."

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[11] For a review of *New York Times* editorials on El Salvador and Nicaragua from 1980 through mid-1986, see my article in Walker, *Reagan vs. the Sandinistas*. For comparison of the image of Duarte here and in Latin America, including El Salvador, see *Culture of Terrorism,* 101f. On Duarte's record and

media appreciation for it, see *Turning the Tide,* chapter 3, sec. 5.2; Cooper, "Whitewashing Duarte," U.S. Reporting on El Salvador, *NACLA Report on the Americas,* Jan./March 1986.

[12] See sources cited above for explicit references and further detail, here and below; appendix V, section 6, on the Central American media.

[13] Lydia Chavez, *NYT,* April 24, 1983. Defense Minister Gen. Vides Casanova cited by Ray Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit* (Times Books, 1984, 106).

[14] See appendix IV, section 1, for a few of the many examples. For many other cases, see *Political Economy of Human Rights* and other sources cited earlier.

[15] For a review of media performance in El Salvador as the terror mounted in 1980 and early 1981, see *Towards a New Cold War,* introduction; reprinted in part in *The Chomsky Reader*. For more on the refusal of the media to report government atrocities, see Ed Harriman, *Hack: Home Truths about Foreign News* (Zed, 1987); Harriman covered El Salvador for British media. There followed a brief period of serious reporting as atrocities reached extreme levels, but when it seemed that U.S.-organized terror might well succeed and demonstration elections were held, the pattern returned to the earlier norm of apologetics and neglect, with sporadic exceptions. The withdrawal of Ray Bonner by the *Times* was also important. "U.S. embassy officials boasted in 1982 that they had forced [Bonner] out of the country because of his unfavorable [and accurate] reporting on the Salvadoran government," Parry and Kornbluh report (*op. cit.*).

[16] See appendix IV, section 2.

[17] *NYT Magazine,* April 6, 1986.

This combination of convenient historical ignorance and praise for the benevolence of our intentions is typical of media and other commentary. To cite only one more example, in an earlier *Times Magazine* cover story, Tad Szulc discussed the "radical winds of the Caribbean," noting that "the roots of the Caribbean problems are not entirely Cuban"; the "Soviet offensive" is also to blame along with the consequences of "colonial greed and mismanagement" by European powers. The United States is blamed only for "indifference" to the brewing problems. Few seem willing to comprehend the observation by former Costa Rican president Daniel Oduber that the "thugs" who threaten "the lives of Central Americans and their families...are not the Leninist commissars but the armed sergeants trained in the United States."[18]

Spence observes that "the obviously relevant pending World Court decision was not mentioned in the 171 [news] stories that preceded the World Court decision itself" on June 27, 1986. In this decision, the court condemned the United States for its support for the contras and illegal economic warfare and ordered it to desist from its violations of international law and valid treaties and to pay reparations. The decision was reported, but dismissed as a minor annoyance. Its contents were suppressed or falsified, the World Court -- not the United States -- was portrayed as the criminal, and the rule of law was held inapplicable to the United States.

In its editorial response on July 1, the *Times* dismissed the court as a "hostile forum"; the editors had voiced no criticism when this same "hostile forum" ruled in favor of the United States in the matter of the Iran hostage crisis. They stated that "even the majority [of the court] acknowledged that prior attacks against El Salvador from Nicaragua made `collective defense' a possible justification for America's retaliation." The editors assumed without comment that the United States was "retaliating" against Nicaraguan aggression and failed to mention that the court had explicitly *rejected* the claim of "collective self-defense" as a justification, even if the United States could establish the charges against Nicaragua that the court rejected as groundless after examining the evidence in official U.S. government documents; the court also noted, rather sardonically, that El Salvador had not even charged "armed attack" until August 1984, four months after Nicaragua had brought its claim to the court. In a July 17 op-ed, Thomas Franck of New York University Law School, a noted advocate of world order, argued

that the United States should dismiss the World Court ruling because "America -- acting alone or with its allies -- still needs the freedom to protect freedom"; as in Nicaragua, for example.[19]

The U.S. government and the media are surpassed by none in their appeals to the august rule of law and the call for diplomacy rather than violence -- when the derelictions of official enemies are at issue. Hence the events of summer 1986 called for some careful "perception management." Until June, Nicaragua's failure to accept the Contadora treaty draft was a major story. In May, the *New York Times* published a lengthy report by Stephen Kinzer headlined "Nica¨ragua Balks at Latin Peace Accord," criticizing Ortega for his unwillingness to sign the agreement without some commitment from the United States. "Nicaragua appears to be the only Central American nation reluctant to sign the draft agreement," Kinzer wrote.[20] A few weeks later, Contadora was off the agenda. In mid-June the U.S. client states rejected the treaty draft under U.S. pressure. This fact was excluded from the national press, though reported abroad. Nicaragua declared its readiness to sign the treaty on June 21. The *Washington Post* ignored the unwelcome fact, but it received oblique mention in two tiny items in the *New York Times* under the headings "Nicaragua Makes Offer to Limit Some Weapons" and "U.S. Condemns Offer by Nicaragua on Treaty" (June 22, 23), focusing on the Reagan administration rejection of the move as "propagandistic." Both items appeared in the "Around the World" roundup of marginal news.

For adjuncts of government, news value is determined by utility for ideological warfare.

A few days after Nicaragua's acceptance of the treaty draft blocked by the United States and its clients, the World Court condemned the United States for its "unlawful use of force" and called for termination of U.S. aid to the contras. Congress responded by voting $100 million of military aid to implement the unlawful use of force, while government officials commented happily, "This is for real. This is a real war."[21]

Still pursuing the peaceful means that all states are obliged to follow under international (and U.S.) law, Nicaragua brought the matter to the U.N. Security Council, where the United States vetoed a resolution (11 to 1, 3 abstentions) calling on all states to observe international law. Nicaragua then turned to the General Assembly, which passed a resolution 94 to 3 calling for compliance with the World Court ruling. Two client states, Israel and El Salvador, joined the United States in opposition. The Security Council vote merited a brief note in the Newspaper of Record, but the General Assembly endorsement passed unmentioned; the *Times* U.N. correspondent preferred a story that day on overly high U.N. salaries. At the same session, Nicaragua called upon the U.N. to send an independent fact-finding mission to the border after a conflict there; the proposal was rejected by Honduras with U.S. backing, and was unreported, the general fate of Nicaraguan efforts to secure international monitoring of the borders -- which would, of course, curb the Sandinista aggression that so terrifies U.S. leaders and ideological managers. A year later, on November 12, 1987, the General Assembly again called for "full and immediate compliance" with the World Court decision. This time only Israel joined the United States in opposing adherence to international law, another blow to the Central American accords, which had been signed in August much to the discomfiture of Washington. The vote was not reported by the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* or the three TV networks. Subsequent World Court proceedings on the matter of reparations to Nicaragua for U.S. crimes have also rarely reached the threshold; thus the August 1988 World Court announcement that the United States had failed to meet the court's deadline on determining war reparations passed virtually without notice.[22]

Not all U.N. resolutions are ignored. The day before the unreported 1987 General Assembly resolution again calling on the United States to comply with international law, the *Times* ran a substantial story headlined "U.N. Urges Soviet to Pull Forces from Afghanistan," reporting that the General Assembly voted "overwhelmingly today for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, brushing aside Moscow's first concerted attempt to deflect such criticism from the United Nations" in this "annual resolution." A *Times* review of the General Assembly session on December 26 is headlined "General Assembly delivers setbacks to U.S. and Soviet," subheaded "Washington Loses on Budget, Moscow on Afghanistan and Cambodia issues." The report mentioned nothing about the 94-to-2 vote on the World Court decision, in which the majority included U.S. allies Australia, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Spain, as well as major Latin American countries (Argentina,

Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela), along with Sweden, Finland, and others.[23]

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[18] *NYT Magazine,* May 25, 1980. Oduber, in Kenneth M. Coleman and George C. Herring, eds., *The Central American Crisis* (Scholarly Resources Inc., 1985, 196).

[19] There were exceptions, but the media reaction was generally similar, sometimes reaching surprising extremes. Thus the *Washington Post* turned for comment to contra lobbyist Robert Leiken, who "blamed the court, which he said suffers from the `increasing perception' of having close ties to the Soviet Union"; the Soviet judge had withdrawn from the case, but evidently his subjects performed their assigned tasks (Jonathan Karp, *WP,* June 28, 1986). For more on the appeal of Leiken's Maoist line and his interesting media role as the Latin American specialists largely refused to join the cause, see *Culture of Terrorism,* 205f.

[20] *NYT,* May 12, 1986.

[21] *NYT,* June 29, 1986.

[22] *Extra!,* journal of the press monitoring organization FAIR, Dec. 1987. World Court announcement, AP, *WP,* Aug. 4, 1988, a brief item; *Boston Globe,* 29 words.

[23] U.N. Press Release GA/7572, Nov. 12; AP, Nov. 12; Paul Lewis, *NYT,* Nov. 11, 13, Dec. 26, 1987.

The reaction of the U.S. government and the media to world opinion as expressed through international institutions deserves closer attention. The same U.N. session provides a number of interesting examples. While all eyes were focused on the Washington summit, the INF treaty, and Reagan's achievements as a peacemaker,[24] the U.N. voted on a series of disarmament resolutions. The General Assembly voted 154 to 1, with no abstentions, opposing the buildup of weapons in outer space, a resolution clearly aimed at Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars). It voted 135 to 1 against developing new weapons of mass destruction. In both cases, the United States was alone in opposition. The United States was joined by France in opposing a resolution, passed 143 to 2, calling for a comprehensive test ban treaty. Another vote calling for a halt to all nuclear test explosions passed by a vote of 137 to 3, with the United States joined by France and Britain in opposition. A week later, the *New York Times Magazine* published a review of the Star Wars program by its correspondent William Broad, observing that "since the dawn of the space age, many people have felt that man's final frontier, the edge of the universe, should be a preserve used exclusively for peaceful purposes" and raising the question of whether space "should be armed." But the expression of opinion on the matter by the world community merited no comment. All of these votes were unreported, and unmentioned in the review of "Setbacks to U.S. and Soviet" at the United Nations.[25]

Other *New York Times* reports on the same U.N. session provide further insight into the style of coverage of world opinion. Two days after the overwhelming U.N. votes in favor of the unreported disarmament resolutions that the United States opposed virtually alone, a *Times* story reported a vote on a resolution that "reaffirms the United Nations' previous strong condemnation of international terrorism in all its forms," calls "on all countries to cooperate in eradicating terrorism," and "invites the Secretary General to seek the views of member states on terrorism and on `the ways and means' of combating it." The resolution passed 128 to 1, Israel alone in opposition, with the United States abstaining and "the other 128 members present vot[ing] in favor." The headline reads: "Syria, Isolated at U.N., Drops Terrorism Plan."[26]

Five days later, the General Assembly passed a resolution condemning "Terrorism Wherever and by Whomever Committed." The vote was 153 to 2, with Israel and the United States opposed and Honduras alone abstaining. In particular, all NATO countries voted for it. This vote was unreported, and unmentioned in the December 26 review of the session. The U.S.-Israeli objection was presumably

based on the statement that "nothing in the resolution would prejudice the right of peoples, particularly those under colonial or racist regimes, or under foreign occupation or other forms of domination, to struggle for self-determination, freedom and independence, or to seek and receive support for that end."[27]

Media refusal to report the isolation of the United States and Israel on these matters is of no small importance, as was illustrated a year later, when the Palestine National Council met in Algiers in November 1988 and passed an important political resolution which centered upon a declaration of Palestinian independence, issued on November 15. The resolution opened by stating that "This session [of the PNC] was crowned by the declaration of a Palestinian state on our Palestinian territory." This, however, was not to the taste of U.S. policymakers so that the matter quickly moved to the margins of media discussion. The PNC resolution went on to suggest modalities for implementing a political settlement that would include an independent national state for the Palestinians and "arrangements of security and peace for all the states of the region." Here we enter into areas that the U.S. government is willing to consider, so these issues quickly became the focus of media attention.[28]

The PNC resolution called for an international conference "on the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the assurance of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and, first and foremost, their right to self-determination." In its statement the PNC "again declares its rejection of terror in all its forms, including state terror," and "renews its commitment to the United Nations resolutions that affirm the right of peoples to resist foreign occupation, colonialism and racial discrimination and their right to struggle for their independence." The latter phrases reiterate the content and wording of the unreported General Assembly resolution on terrorism. The rejection and denunciation of terrorism was nothing new. Thus, the PLO journal *Shu'un Filastiniyya,* May-June 1986, presents the text of a PLO proposal which calls for an international conference including "the Israeli government" and aimed at reaching "a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem on the basis of the pertinent United Nations resolutions including Security Council resolutions 242 and 338." The text continues: "The PLO declares its rejection and denunciation of terrorism, which had been assured in the Cairo Declaration of November, 1985."[29]

The U.S. government declared the PNC declaration unacceptable. The "crowning" achievement was of course dismissed. Turning to matters that Washington was willing to take seriously, first, the PNC acceptance of U.N. 242 was too "ambiguous," because it was accompanied by a call for recognition of the rights of the Palestinians alongside of those of Israel, and therefore failed to meet the demands of U.S.-Israeli rejectionism, in which the two countries are largely isolated.[30] Second, the PNC did not meet U.S. conditions on renunciation of terror; that is, the PNC adopted the position of the international community, which the United States and Israel alone reject.

One can imagine two ways in which these events might be presented in the media. One would be to report that the highest Palestinian authority has issued a declaration of independence, officially accepting the principle of partition. Furthermore, the PNC has, even more clearly than before, expressed PLO support for the broad international consensus in favor of a political settlement that recognizes the rights of Israel and the Palestinians to self-determination and security, and has officially reaffirmed its support for the stand of the international community, including the NATO powers, on the matter of terrorism. Meanwhile, the United States and Israel remain largely isolated on the first issue, keeping to their rejectionist position and again barring the peace process, and are entirely isolated in their opposition to the right of people to struggle for freedom and self-determination against racist and colonial regimes and foreign occupation. And Israel alone refuses to accept U.N. 242; see below.

A second alternative would be to dismiss the declaration of independence as an irrelevance, to ignore completely the isolation of the United States and Israel on the other issues, and to accept the U.S. position as by definition correct, as the "moderate stance" and the basis for any further discussion. Then we conduct a debate over whether the Palestinians should be encouraged to progress further towards moderation now that, under our tutelage, they have taken these halting steps, or whether their stern mentor should simply dismiss these moves and demand that the PLO begin to be serious, or disappear.

[24] On coverage of the December 1987 and June 1988 summit meetings, see appendix IV, section 3.

[25] U.N. Press Release GA/7591, 30 November; AP, Nov. 30; William Broad, "Star Wars is Coming, but Where is it Going?," *NYT Magazine,* Dec. 6, 1987.

[26] Paul Lewis, *NYT,* Dec. 2, 1987.

[27] U.N. Press release GA/7603, Dec. 7, 1987.

[28] Excerpts from the U.S. Government translation appear in the *New York Times,* Nov. 17, 1988.

[29] Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Israel's Fateful Hour* (Harper and Row, 1988, 31).

[30] See appendix V, section 4.

The first version, which would have the merit of truth, is not to be found in the U.S. media. The second alternative not only prevailed, but was close to exceptionless. In the *New York Times,* the editors quoted the statement on terrorism, describing it as "the old Arafat hedge" and failing to note that it reiterates the U.N. resolutions that the United States and Israel alone reject. Anthony Lewis, who is virtually alone in the mainstream in his efforts to escape the bounds of dogma on these issues, deplored the failure to reward the PLO for its progress towards the U.S. stand, adding that it still must become more "clear" in its political pronouncements and that "the United States says correctly that the PLO must unambiguously renounce all terrorism before it can take part in negotiations." He raises no question about the "clarity" of the rejectionist U.S. stance, and holds that the United States is right not to be fooled by "the old Arafat hedge," that is, the position accepted by the entire world community apart from the United States and Israel (and, of course, South Africa). If Arafat does not join us off the spectrum of world opinion, plainly he cannot be taken seriously. Elsewhere, the same bounds were observed, often even more narrowly.[31]

In short, the world does not agree with us, so it follows, by simple logic, that the world is wrong; that is all there is to the matter. No alternative possibility can be discussed, even conceived. Still more strikingly, even the fact that the world does not agree with us cannot be acknowledged. Since it fails to see the light, the world outside our borders does not exist (Israel aside). We see here the grip of doctrine in a form that would have deeply impressed the medieval Church, or the mullahs in Qum today.

Once again, the consequences should not be disregarded. Media self-censorship over many years has enabled the United States and Israel to block what has long been a possible political settlement of one of the world's most explosive and threatening issues. That continued to be the case as the United States changed its increasingly untenable position on discussions with the PLO under a fraudulent pretext while maintaining its commitment to obstruct the peace process.[32] Senator Fulbright's observation is both pertinent and of much significance.

Returning to coverage of the United Nations, a March 1988 story, headlined "U.N. to Study Rights in Cuba: U.S. Sees Diplomatic Victory," reported Cuba's invitation to the U.N. Human Rights Commission for an on-the-scene investigation, undercutting a U.S. campaign for a resolution condemning Cuba. The first thirteen paragraphs present Washington's point of view, turning the failure into a great triumph of U.S. diplomacy; the last paragraph quotes a Cuban official stating that "the outcome shows our continent's growing political unity" in rejecting the U.S. effort. Another *Times* article reports a visit of American human rights specialists to Cuban prisons, with a line in the final paragraph noting, with no comment, that the State Department has denied visas to Cuban officials for a reciprocal visit to U.S. prisons, just as Reagan launched his human rights drive in Moscow.[33]

Unreported is a resolution on the Middle East passed by the Human Rights Commission on the same day as its rejection of the U.S. initiative on Cuba. The resolution, passed 26 to 1 with the United States alone in opposition, expressed grave concern at "the continuation of acts of aggression and the arbitrary practices of the Israeli occupation forces in southern Lebanon which constitute a flagrant violation" of

international law, and called upon Israel's allies to pressure it to end "its aggressive and expansionist policy in southern Lebanon."[34]

World opinion must pass through the same filters that set the bounds of respectability at home. Failing to meet these standards, it is ignored, or subjected to puzzled inquiry as to just why the world is out of step. The pattern, again, is pervasive.[35]

The government-media campaign to "demonize the Sandinistas" faced a new challenge when the Central American presidents reached a peace agreement in August 1987. The Reagan administration had long sought to undercut diplomatic initiatives. After bitterly condemning the Sandinistas for refusing to sign the Contadora draft of 1984, the administration quickly changed its tune when Nicaragua unexpectedly announced that it would sign, at which point the draft became a deception and a fraud and the United States proceeded to undermine it with further denunciations of the treacherous Sandinistas. "Washington tried by all means available to block the signing of the Contadora Peace Act," Costa Rican vice-foreign affairs minister Gerardo Trejos Salas observed in an unreported interview, reviewing how the United States "strongly pressured" Costa Rica and its client states during 1985-86 when he was "a first-hand witness."[36] Events followed the same course in June 1986, as we have seen.

The Arias initiatives of 1987 were also most unwelcome to the Reagan administration. In June its "peace emissary," Philip Habib, informed "high ranking Senators" that "if the administration felt its views and interests were not reflected in the regional arrangements it would continue to fund the Nicaraguan contra rebels despite agreements reached by the [Central American] leaders," an advance notice that elicited little attention. In the same month, the administration pressured President Duarte to block a scheduled meeting of Central American presidents in Guatemala. A Guatemalan official reported that Duarte "personally told Guatemala's president the reason he asked for the postponement was because of US pressure," applied by Habib.[37] The Guatemalan and Honduran press published the dialogue between Habib and Duarte, as reported by Salvadoran officials to the Guatemalan government (then to the Guatemalan Congress). In the talks, Habib pressed Duarte to reject the Arias peace plan, informing him that the requirement that El Salvador negotiate with the unarmed opposition would destroy "democracy in El Salvador." Duarte acceded and insisted upon postponement of the June meeting.[38]

The U.S. media were uninterested. Habib is regularly depicted as a forthright advocate of diplomacy and peace.

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[31] Editorial, *NYT,* Nov. 16; Lewis, *NYT,* Dec. 1, 1988. In the liberal *Boston Globe,* for example, when the U.S. government agreed to talk to the PLO on the pretense that they had accepted U.S. demands, two columns appeared to reveal the diversity of opinion on the topic, under the heading "Taking Arafat's `yes' for an answer" (*BG,* Dec. 24, 1988). The hawks were represented by a leader of the Boston Jewish community, Philip Perlmutter, warning of Arafat's deception and duplicity; the doves, by former Israeli ambassador Benno Weiser Varon, who declared "I am no peacenik, and disliked viscerally `Breira,' `The New Agenda' and `Peace Now'" -- but Israel's interests require recognition of reality (Breira and the New Jewish Agenda are dovish Zionist groups, the former driven out of existence by effective defamation; Peace Now has ambiguous credentials as an Israeli peace group). See next chapter and appendix V, section 4, for further detail.

[32] See appendix V, section 4, for further comment.

[33] Paul Lewis, *NYT,* March 11; Joseph Treaster, *NYT,* May 31, 1988. See Karen Wald, *Z Magazine,* July-August 1988, for a different view on the U.N. Cuba debate.

[34] AP, March 11, 1988.

[35] For further comment, see appendix IV, section 4.

[36] See *Culture of Terrorism,* chapter 7, for a longer excerpt, and further details on the diplomatic maneuverings and the peace plan, through October 1987. See my articles in *Z Magazine,* January and

March 1988, for discussion of the events and the services of the media through February 1988. See these sources for references, where not cited below.

[37] Dennis Volman, *Christian Science Monitor,* June 26, 1987.

[38] *El Tiempo,* July 3, 1987, citing the journal of the Guatemalan Latinamerican Agency of Special Information Services (ALASEI).

In a last-ditch effort to undermine the peace agreement, Washington put forth the Reagan-Wright plan on August 5, calling for dismantling the political system in Nicaragua, an end to arms aid to Nicaragua, and demobilization of Sandinista forces. In return the United States would *pledge* to halt shipments of arms to the contras. This proposal received wide media acclaim as fair and just; the Iran-contra hearings that had concluded two days earlier had passed into ancient history, along with their suggestion that a U.S. pledge might be worth less than gold. Nevertheless, to the surprise and annoyance of the administration, the Central American presidents reached an agreement on August 7.

Government propaganda then shifted, predictably, to the demolition of the unacceptable accords. The media followed faithfully along. I have reviewed the details elsewhere, so I will only summarize this most remarkable campaign.[39]

The problem to be addressed was a familiar one: a great power has been unable to impose its will and finds itself confronted with conditions and circumstances that it refuses to accept. A state that commands unusual power, such as the United States, has a variety of ways to deal with the problem. One is to pretend that the adversary has capitulated, accepting the U.S. stand. This option can be pursued only if the information system can be trusted to fall into line, presenting the U.S. government version as if it were true, however outlandish the pretense. If the media meet their responsibilities in this way, then the adversary must indeed accept U.S. terms, or else suffer retribution for violating the alleged solemn commitment to adhere to them.

One striking example of this technique was the treatment of the Paris peace treaty of January 1973, which the United States was compelled to sign after the failure of its attempt to bludgeon North Vietnam into submission by the Christmas B-52 bombings of populated areas. The U.S. government at once offered a version of the treaty that was diametrically opposed to its terms on every crucial point. This version was uniformly accepted and promulgated by the media, so that the actual terms of the peace treaty had been dismissed to the memory hole literally within a few days. The United States and its South Vietnamese client then proceeded with massive violations of the actual treaty in an effort to attain their long-sought goals by violence, and when the Vietnamese adversaries finally responded in kind, they were universally denounced for the breakdown of the agreements and compelled to suffer for their crime.[40] The case of the Central America peace accords was similar. It was necessary to refashion them to conform to U.S. dictates, a task that was accomplished with the anticipated cooperation of the media, though it took a little longer than the overnight victory at the time of the Paris peace accords -- perhaps an indication that the media really have become more "adversarial" than in the past.

The first requirement of the demolition campaign was to establish that it was U.S. support for the contras that had forced the Sandinistas to negotiate. This is always an important doctrine, since it can be exploited to justify subsequent resort to armed force and terror. The thesis hardly withstands the evidence of history: Nicaragua's effort to pursue the peaceful means required by international law through the World Court, the United Nations, and the Contadora process, and Washington's success in "trumping" these initiatives.[41] Such problems were readily overcome by dismissal of the facts to the memory hole. The required doctrinal truth then became the merest cliché. The *New York Times* editors could therefore criticize Michael Dukakis during the 1988 election campaign because he "undervalues the role of force in bringing the Sandinistas to the bargaining table."[42] It would be unreasonable to expect troublesome facts to stand in the way of a principle that authorizes continued reliance on violence as the necessary means for bringing peace. More generally, what is useful is True. Period.

The first task was accomplished with dispatch. The next problem was to dismantle the accords themselves. Their first phase ran from the signing in August 1987 to January 1988, when the Central American presidents were to receive the report of the International Verification Commission (CIVS), which was charged with monitoring the accords. The goal of the Reagan administration was to focus all attention on the Sandinistas, thus ensuring that the United States could maintain the attack by its proxy forces and exclude the U.S. client states from the provisions of the accords. The media at once dedicated themselves to these further tasks, and by January the last shreds of the original accords disappeared, replaced by the initial U.S. terms. Henceforth, the irrelevant facts become of interest only to archivists. It is the necessary illusions that prevail.

The peace plan specified one "indispensable element" for peace, namely, a termination of open or covert aid of any form ("military, logistical, financial, propagandistic") to "irregular forces" (the contras) or "insurrectionist movements" (indigenous guerrillas). In response, the United States at once stepped up its illegal CIA supply flights, which had already reached the phenomenal level of one a day in an effort to keep the proxy forces in the field. These doubled in September and virtually tripled in the months that followed. Surveillance flights also increased. Successes were immediately evident as contra attacks on civilians doubled in intensity, including ambushes, murders, attacks on farm cooperatives, and kidnappings.[43] The CIA also offered bribes to Miskito leaders to prevent them from joining the peace process.

The peace agreements were thus effectively dead from the first moment. These were, by far, the most significant developments during the August-January phase of the accords.

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[39] Cf. appendix IV, section 5, for further documentation and references. For reasons of space, I will largely keep to the Newspaper of Record. For further details, see the references of note 36, including some exceptions to the general pattern, primarily in the *Christian Science Monitor* and *Los Angeles Times,* and editorials in the *Boston Globe*.

[40] See *Manufacturing Consent,* chapter 5, and sources cited. A variant of this diplomatic strategy was called "the Trollope ploy" by the Kennedy intellectuals during the Cuban missile crisis, when they sought to evade a proposal by Khrushchev that they recognized would be regarded generally as a reasonable way to terminate the crisis; the "ploy" was to attribute to Khrushchev a different and more acceptable stand, just as the heroine of a Trollope novel interprets a meaningless gesture as an offer of marriage. The December 1988 reversal on speaking to the PLO is another example; see appendix V, section 4.

[41] A classified background paper for the National Security Council after the U.S. had scuttled the 1984 opportunities exulted that "we have trumped the latest Nicaraguan/Mexican effort to rush signature of an unsatisfactory Contadora agreement," namely the one that the U.S. had been vigorously advocating until Nicaragua announced its support for it. See Kornbluh, *Nicaragua,* 181f.

[42] A further Dukakis flaw is that he "would now deny the Nicaraguan rebels even economic aid" (as required by the 1987 peace accords, the editors neglect to add; these accords they constantly applaud -- when they can be employed as an anti-Sandinista weapon). Editorial, *NYT,* Aug. 28, 1988.

[43] AP, Jan. 29, 1988, reporting a Witness for Peace study. There is a mention by Julia Preston, *WP,* Feb. 4.

The media responded to these unacceptable facts by suppressing them. The United States was of course not a signatory, so technically speaking it could not "violate" the accords. An honest accounting, however, would have noted -- indeed, emphasized -- that the United States acted at once to render the accords nugatory. Nothing of the sort is to be found. Apart from marginal groups with access to alternative media, not subject to the code of discipline, even the most assiduous media addict could hardly have been more than minimally aware of these crucial facts. The behavior of the *New York Times*

was particularly remarkable, including outright falsification along with scrupulous suppression.

Suppression of evidence concerning U.S. supply flights persisted after the accords were finally demolished in January 1988. Nicaraguan reports, which had been accurate and ignored in the past, continued to be ignored by the media, as inconsistent with the images they seek to convey. In December 1988, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega alleged that the Reagan administration was continuing supply flights to contras inside Nicaragua in violation of the congressional ban (not to speak of the forgotten peace accords and the even more profoundly irrelevant terms of international law). He claimed that Nicaraguan radar detected ten clandestine supply flights into Nicaragua from Ilopango air base near San Salvador in November -- the "Hasenfus route" -- adding that "We are talking about CIA flights; we do not know if they have the approval of the Salvadoran government." Apart from faith in the doctrine of miraculous "change of course," there was little reason to doubt that the report might be true. It was as usual ignored, and no investigation, commentary, or conclusions followed. These quite significant reports from Nicaragua were available to readers of the English language *Barricada Interna-cional* (Managua), but not those of the *New York Times,* or elsewhere to my knowledge. Attacks by the U.S.-run terrorist forces on civilians also continued, unreported, in accordance with the general pattern for years.[44]

The accords called for "justice, freedom and democracy" and guarantees for "the inviolability of all forms of life and liberty" and "the safety of the people," for "an authentic pluralistic and participatory democratic process to promote social justice" and "respect for human rights." These provisions were also unacceptable to the United States, because they plainly could not be met or even approached in the U.S. client states without the dismantling of the governmental structure, dominated by the armed forces and security services. Having eliminated the provisions applying to the United States, the media therefore faced a second task: to remove the practices of the client states from the agenda. This problem was readily overcome by the same means: simple refusal to report the facts, or marginalization and distortion when they were too visible to ignore entirely. State terror in the U.S. client states escalated, but no matter. The laser-like focus of the media was on Nicaragua, which received far more coverage than the other countries combined -- virtually all of it concentrating on departures from the accords as interpreted in Washington.

Another unacceptable feature of the accords was the role given to international monitors, the CIVS. The United States brooks no interference in its domains; hence the longstanding U.S. opposition to the peace efforts of the Latin American democracies, and now to the CIVS as well. Furthermore, the CIVS presence would inhibit violation of the accords, thus interfering with U.S. intentions. The first phase of the accords ended in January with a report by the CIVS, which had the bad taste to condemn the United States and its clients while praising steps taken by Nicaragua. Obviously it had to go. The *Times* cooperated by virtually suppressing the CIVS report, and under U.S. pressure the monitoring commission was abolished.

The victory was complete: not a shred of the original agreements remained. Nicaragua responded by announcing that it would satisfy the terms of the former accords unilaterally, requesting international supervision to monitor its agreement alone. The loyal media responded by announcing that finally Nicaragua had agreed to comply with the peace accords, though of course Communists cannot be trusted.

Meanwhile state terror escalated in the client states, without, however, influencing the judgment that Nicaragua bore prime responsibility for violating the accords; the correct response, given that the United States and its clients were now exempt, by Washington-media edict. In the *Times,* the terror was barely noted, apart from *guerrilla* terror in El Salvador, to which the government sometimes "responded," James LeMoyne commented with regret. In October 1988, Amnesty International released a report on the sharp increase in death squad killings, abduction, torture, and mutilation, tracing the terror to the government security forces. The *Times* ignored the story, while the Senate passed a resolution warning Nicaragua that new military aid would be sent to the contras if the *Sandinistas* continued to violate the peace accords.[45]

Returning to January 1988, with the accords now restricted to the question of Nicaraguan compliance

with Washington's dictates, the crucial issue became the willingness of the Sandinistas to negotiate with the CIA-established civilian front for Washington's proxy forces. The accords themselves required no such negotiations, as was occasionally noted in the small print, but they had long since been dismissed to oblivion. In early 1988, Nicaragua did agree to this U.S. condition, reaching an unexpected cease-fire agreement with the contras. Meanwhile the indigenous guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala were consistently rebuffed in their efforts to negotiate, but these facts were suppressed as irrelevant, in conformity with the Washington-media version of the accords. Where not suppressed, the facts were simply denied, as when Jeane Kirkpatrick wrote in June that "Duarte has seen his generous offers of amnesty and negotiations rejected by the FMLN [guerrillas], one by one." This pronouncement followed Duarte's rejection of a series of efforts by the FMLN, the political opposition, and the Church to arrange negotiations; the generous offer of amnesty, as Kirkpatrick fully understands, would be an offer to be slaughtered by the death squads, quite apart from the fact that the Duarte government -- unlike the Sandinistas -- was refusing amnesty for guerrilla leaders.[46]

The Nicaraguan cease-fire was signed on March 23. The agreement stated that "only humanitarian aid will be negotiated and accepted in accordance with article 5" of the August 1987 accords, to "be channeled through neutral organizations." Organization of American States (OAS) secretary general Jo<176o Clemente Baena Soares was entrusted with ensuring compliance with the agreement. Congress responded by voting overwhelmingly to violate the terms of the cease-fire, approving $47.9 million in aid to the contras, to be administered by the State Department through the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). The aid would be delivered in Honduras and within Nicaragua by a "private company," James LeMoyne reported, quoting contra leader Alfredo César; the phrase "private company" is a euphemism for the CIA, for which AID has admittedly served as a front in the past. Contra leader Aldolfo Calero stated that the cease-fire agreement allowed for delivery of aid to the Nicaraguan border by the CIA, and Democratic Congressperson David Bonior added that the rebels would select "the private carrier." By no stretch of the imagination can AID be considered a "neutral organization."[47]

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[44] Ortega, *Barricada Internacional,* Dec. 22, 1988, Review of 1988 (POB 410150, San Francisco CA 94103); also AP, Dec. 15, 1988 (since the information was on the wires, it was readily available to every segment of the mass media). On one contra attack in November, see Ellen V.P. Wells, letter, *NYT,* Dec. 31, 1988. Commenting on a *Times* report that the contras had passed into history, Wells reports her experience as a Witness for Peace observer living with farmers in Jinotega province. On November 18, contras raided their cooperative, killing two, destroying houses, supplies, harvested coffee, and a health clinic (a prime target for many years). In an August 17 raid, four children had been killed.

[45] See appendix IV, section 5, for further details on these matters.

[46] Kirkpatrick, *WP,* June 6, 1988. See appendix IV, section 5, for details.

[47] LeMoyne, *NYT,* March 26; Susan Rasky, *NYT,* March 29, 30, 1988.

The congressional legislation stipulated that all aid must be administered in a manner consistent with the March 23 cease-fire agreement and in accord with the decisions of the Verification Commission established by that agreement, for which Secretary General Soares was the responsible authority. In a letter to George Shultz on April 25, Soares drew his attention to this passage of the congressional legislation and stated that reliance on AID was in clear violation of the cease-fire agreement, expressing his "deep concern about this whole situation." He emphasized further that article 5 of the peace accords, which determines how aid shall be delivered under the cease-fire agreement, quite explicitly rules out any assistance whatsoever to the contras except for repatriation or resettlement. Aid can be sent to contras within Nicaragua by means agreed by both sides, as a means towards their "reintegration into normal life," but for no other end. The objections of the official in charge of monitoring the agreement were disregarded -- in fact unreported to my knowledge -- and the illegal operations continued.[48]

It would be interesting to learn whether any reference appeared in the U.S. media to the decision of the World Court concerning "humanitarian aid" (paragraph 243). If such aid is "to escape condemnation" as illegal intervention, the court declared, "not only must it be limited to the purposes hallowed in the practice of the Red Cross, namely, `to prevent and alleviate human suffering', and `to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being'; it must also, and above all, be given without discrimination to all in need in Nicaragua, not merely to the *contras* and their dependents." "An essential feature of truly humanitarian aid is that it is given `without discrimination' of any kind." Even the most imaginative commentator would have some difficulty rendering that judgment compatible with the congressional legislation. Best, then, to suppress the matter, an easy matter in an intellectual culture that disdains the rule of law as a childish absurdity (when it applies to us) and that conforms to the requirements of the powerful virtually as a reflex.

The *Times* report on the decision of Congress to fund the contras in violation of the cease-fire agreement, the peace accords, and international law cited views ranging from hawks who condemned the sellout of the contras "as a low point in United States history" (Senator John McCain), to Senator Brock Adams, who voted against the aid proposal on the grounds that "the United States attempt to create a government through the contras is a historic mistake, similar to our trying to create a government in Southeast Asia. We are in a position again of supporting military force without victory." These two quotes also appeared in "Quotations of the Day."[49] Appropriately, the highlighted opinion falls well within the acceptable bounds of mere tactical disagreement.

AID head Alan Woods said that the aid would have to be delivered by "private American aircraft" and that there was no assurance that the Sandinistas would permit such airdrops to the contras within Nicaragua -- in violation of the cease-fire agreement, as Secretary General Soares had determined. The *Times* article reporting this is headed "Official Sees Problems on Contra Aid: The big hurdle is Sandinista mistrust." AID then began delivering supplies to contras in Honduras, violating the congressional legislation that stipulated that the aid was to be delivered "in cease-fire zones," all of which are in Nicaragua, and violating the cease-fire agreement for the reasons already spelled out; for one, because "AID, a U.S. agency, clearly is not...[a] neutral organization," the Council on Hemispheric Affairs pointed out, noting the protest by Soares, and the Nicaraguan complaint "that weapons originating from the CIA base at Swan Island, Honduras, had been concealed in the banned shipments." Wire services reported that Nicaragua had offered to have supplies sent to the contras through the Red Cross or other neutral agencies and that representatives of rebel Indian groups "agreed with the government that the International Red Cross should handle distribution of humanitarian aid to them," offers rejected or ignored by the U.S. government and its proxies.[50]

The Democratic Study Group of Congress issued a report condemning the administration for numerous violations of the cease-fire agreement and the congressional legislation. It noted that the Sandinistas had proposed the Red Cross, UNICEF, and other recognized relief agencies as delivery agents, but that all but one of them had been rejected by AID, which proposed several organizations with right-wing political ties and no experience in Latin America. The Study Group reported also that the Sandinistas had "invited the contras to propose another agency," receiving no response from the contras -- not surprisingly, since they were being supplied in violation of the cease-fire agreement. The report also noted that while sending aid illegally to the contras, the administration had refused to provide assistance to the families of Indian rebels and would only supply fighters based in Honduras, using a company that had carried supplies to the contras.[51]

The facts were largely ignored by the *Times,* which offered a different version. James LeMoyne reported that "because the Sandinistas have managed to obstruct efforts to resupply the rebels, as called for under the cease-fire terms, they may attack them at a moment of maximum weakness when the cease-fire ends." Robert Pear alleged that President Ortega "has blocked deliveries" of the aid authorized by Congress on grounds "that the deliveries would violate the cease-fire agreement." Unmentioned was the fact that this was also the conclusion of the official in charge of monitoring the agreement; his name did appear in the article, but only in the context of the Reagan administration decision that he had not met their financial "accountability standards," so they had not disbursed the $10 million provided by Congress for the commission to verify compliance with the cease-fire agreement -- an understandable

reaction to verification mechanisms when the U.S. government is intent on violating agreements and international law with the protection of the media.[52]

In further violation of both the cease-fire agreement and the congressional legislation, the Reagan administration sent funds to the contras to spend as they wished, a method "regarded by AID as sufficient accounting," congressperson Tony Coelho commented sardonically. AID officials announced that in addition to food aid, "more than $1 million in materiel -- military equipment and supplies -- also was delivered," though not weapons and ammunition, the *Washington Times* reported. Congress had legislated the delivery of aid to Nicaraguan children, stipulating, however, that "no assistance may be provided to or through the government of Nicaragua," which operates most medical facilities and hospitals. AID predictably gave the condition the narrowest interpretation, thus effectively restricting this rather cynical gesture on the part of those funding the "unlawful use of force" against Nicaragua. AID also rejected offers by nonpartisan humanitarian organizations to deliver aid to Nicaraguan children. A letter from Brown University Medical School offering to submit a detailed proposal to distribute this aid was not even acknowledged. The Nicaraguan government later refused all such aid as long as the United States supports the contras, on grounds that "it makes no sense to receive aid for children from the same body that is responsible for their injuries," the Embassy press officer said. "It's like someone giving you a beating and then, to relieve his conscience, he gives you a Band-Aid. Then he gives you another beating."[53]

The national media remained unperturbed throughout, in accordance with the doctrine that the United States stands above any law or international agreement -- and needless to say, above any moral principle.

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[48] Letter of the Secretary General of the OAS to George Shultz, April 25, 1988.

[49] *NYT,* April 1. Susan Rasky reported that Adams also "said that even humanitarian aid for the rebels amounted to support of a fighting force," perhaps an oblique reference to the World Court decision.

[50] Robert Pear, *NYT,* April 6; COHA *Washington Report on the Hemisphere,* May 11; AP, May 12, 11; Reuters, *BG,* May 13, 1988.

[51] "Special Report," DSG, May 16, 1988.

[52] LeMoyne, *NYT,* May 12; Pear, *NYT,* May 10, 1988.

[53] John Goshko, *WP,* May 14; John McCaslin, *WT,* June 14, 1988; COHA press release, May 12, 1988; Don Podesta, *WP,* Sept. 21, 1988.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Treasury Department announced a new ruling that barred import of Nicaraguan coffee processed in a third country, which "will not be considered sufficiently transformed to lose its Nicaraguan identity." It suffices to replace "Nicaraguan" with "Jewish" to know to which phase of history this edict belongs. "The language echoes definitions of ethnic purity in the Third Reich," the *Boston Globe* observed.[54]

During the same months, negotiations on a political settlement broke down through the device of demand escalation by the contras, no doubt following the State Department script. Each new government agreement, going far beyond the terms of the long-forgotten peace accords, simply led to new demands. In their final effort to prevent an agreement, the contras submitted a new list of demands on June 9, 1988, including: immediate freeing of all people imprisoned for political or related common crimes; the right of draftees to leave the army as they choose; forced resignation of the Supreme Court Justices (to be replaced by decision of the contras, the opposition, and the government, thus ensuring Washington's clients a 2-to-1 majority); restoration of or compensation for seized contra property distributed to smallholders and cooperatives (benefiting mainly Somoza supporters); suspension of

government military recruitment; opening of contra offices in Managua and licensing of "independent" television stations (which means, in effect, stations run by the United States, which will quickly dominate the airwaves for obvious reasons of resource access). All of these actions, some unconstitutional, were to be taken by the government while the contra forces remain armed and in the field. Reviewing the record, the Center for International Policy observed that the goal could only have been "to torpedo the negotiations and throw the issue back once more to a divided U.S. Congress." Julia Preston commented that "the contras' six-page proposal appeared to be a farewell gesture rather than a negotiating document," with its "sweeping new demands" followed by their quick departure from Managua before negotiations were possible.[55]

The government of Nicaragua urged resumption of the talks, receiving no response from Washington or the contras, who added new demands. Even Cardinal Obando, who barely conceals his sympathy for the contras, urged them to return to the talks, to no avail. There followed what the Council on Hemispheric Affairs described as "a CIA-managed campaign of provocation and internal disruption inside Nicaragua," which "established a false crisis atmosphere" in which Congress could turn to new aid for the contras. Congressional doves implemented legislation providing renewed aid, while warning the Sandinistas that military aid would follow if Nicaragua continued to stand alone in the way of peace and democracy or attacked the contra forces, who reject negotiations and carry out atrocities in Nicaragua.[56] The media trailed happily along.

As the Reagan administration drew to a close, it was becoming less realistic, and less necessary, to rely on contra terror as an instrument to punish Nicaragua for its efforts to direct resources to the poor majority, to improve health and welfare standards, and to pursue the path of independent development and neutralism. Despite levels and forms of military support unheard of in authentic insurgencies and domination of large areas of Nicaragua by U.S. propaganda, the United States had failed to create a viable guerrilla force, quite a remarkable fact. A new administration, less intent on punishing disobedience by sheer terror, would be likely to join the elite consensus of the preceding years, which recognized that there are more cost-effective ways to strangle and destroy a small country in a region so dependent on relations with the United States for survival. They are capable of understanding the assessment of a World Bank Mission in October 1980, which concluded that economic disaster might ensue if Nicaragua did not receive extensive foreign assistance to overcome the effects of the destruction and robbery of the last Somoza years: "Per capita income levels of 1977 will not be attained, in the best of circumstances, until the 1990s. [57] With private enterprise wrecked and the economy ruined probably beyond repair by U.S. economic warfare, the resort to violence -- costly to the United States in world opinion and disruptive at home -- had lost much of its appeal for those who do not see inflicting pain and suffering as ends in themselves. There are, surely, other and more efficient ways to eliminate the danger of successful independent development in a weak and tiny country.

We can, then, become a "kinder, gentler nation" pursuing more "pragmatic" policies to attain our ends.

Furthermore, although the government-media campaign succeeded in wrecking the peace accords of 1987 and their promise, nevertheless forces were set in motion that the administration could not control. Illegal clandestine support for the contras became more difficult after the partial exposures during the Iran-contra affair, and it was no longer possible to organize overt congressional support for the contras at the extraordinary level required to keep them in the field. As the level of supply flights reduced in early 1988 along with prospects for renewed official aid, the proxy forces fled to Honduras and might well have been wiped out had it not been for the dispatch of elite U.S. military units -- the "invasion" of Honduras by the United States, as the mainstream media there described it, the defense of Honduras from Sandinista aggression in the terms of U.S. discourse.

Elements of the contras can and presumably will be maintained within Nicaragua as a terrorist force, to ensure that Nicaragua cannot demobilize and divert its pitifully limited resources to reconstruction from the ruins left by Somoza and Reagan. A persistent U.S. threat of invasion can also be maintained to guarantee that Nicaragua must keep up its guard, at great cost, while commentators ridicule Sandinista paranoia, Jeane Kirkpatrick-style. But it will no longer be necessary to depict the contras as the people, united, rising against their tormentors, sturdy peasants struggling against Soviet "hegemonism," as the

media's favorite experts had soberly explained. By early 1989, we read that "Sandinista claims that the contras were merely U.S. mercenaries gained new credence among Nicaraguans... The contras are viewed as an army of Nicaraguans who thought they would get well-paid, secure jobs from the United States but guessed wrong."[58] Low-level terror, "perception management," and "containment" will compel the Nicaraguan government to maintain a high level of military preparation and internal controls, and along with economic and ideological warfare, should suffice to secure the achievements of Reaganite violence, even if the further goal of restoring Nicaragua to the "Central American mode" must be ruefully abandoned. That is what the future holds, if the domestic population of the United States permits it. The task of the media is to ensure that they do.

The devastating hurricane of October 1988, with its welcome prospects of mass starvation and vast long-term ecological damage, reinforced this understanding. The United States naturally refused any aid. Even the inhabitants of the demolished town of Bluefields on the Atlantic Coast, with longstanding links to the United States and deep resentment over Sandinista methods of extending Nicaraguan sovereignty over the region, must be deprived of sustenance or building materials; they must starve without roofs to shield them from the rain, to punish the Sandinistas. At the outer reaches of mainstream criticism of Reagan administration policies, the *Boston Globe* explained in a Christmas message why the United States is sending no assistance after the hurricane. Under a picture of Daniel Ortega, the caption reads: "Nicaragua has received little US humanitarian aid because of policies of President Daniel Ortega."[59] The U.S. allies, intimidated by the global enforcer and far more subject to U.S. propaganda than they like to believe, also refused to send more than very limited aid. Some professed distaste for Sandinista repression, pure hypocrisy, as we see at once from the fact that the far more brutal regimes of El Salvador and Guatemala do not offend their sensibilities.

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[54] *NYT,* Peter Kilborn, April 5; editorial, *BG,* April 17, 1988.

[55] Center for International Policy, "The Nicaraguan Cease-Fire Talks: a Documentary Survey," June 13, 1988; see also *Cease-Fire Primer, International Policy Report,* CIP; Julia Preston, *WP,* June 10, 1988.

[56] COHA, "A Critique of the Dole Amendment," Aug. 1, 1988, referring to the events of July; see appendix IV, section 5, also chapter 3.

[57] Cited by Michael Conroy, in Thomas Walker, ed., *Nicaragua: The First Years* (Praeger, 1985, 232f).

[58] Julia Preston, *WP Weekly,* Jan. 2-8, 1989; the latter comment referring to Jalapa in the far north. On the curious amalgam of Maoism and right-wing jingoism that was concocted in the early 1980s when authentic Latin America specialists refused to perform the services expected of them by government and media, see *Culture of Terrorism,* 205f. On Kirkpatrick's psychiatric insights into Sandinista paranoia as she spun a web of lies about U.S. policies, see Holly Sklar, *Washington's War on Nicaragua* (South End, 1988, 114f.).

[59] *BG,* Dec. 25, 1988.

Under these circumstances, the task for the media is clear. First, they must apply the standard technique of historical amnesia and "change of course," which obliterates all memory of U.S. policies and their effects. Virtually a reflex, this device can be applied instantaneously. With the record and effects of U.S. violence removed from consciousness, along with the nature and consequences of U.S. economic warfare that have always been downplayed, we turn to the next phase. All suffering, discontent, and disruption are now plainly attributable to the evil Sandinistas. It is also useful to imply that Nicaraguans see the matter the same way, by careful selection of sources or misinterpretation of polls, for example.[60] A fine model is presented in a three-part series on Nicaragua by Edward Sheehan in the liberal *Boston Globe,* headlined "A country still in agony." The three lengthy articles, bitterly denouncing the Sandinistas throughout, contain exactly *one phrase* that notes in passing that "the United States is partially to blame for Nicaragua's sorrow and the wrecked economy."[61] For Nicaragua's agony, the

Sandinistas are responsible. Apart from all else, the moral cowardice remains astonishing, however often the record is replayed.

For intelligent U.S. planners, it would be sensible to avoid the total destruction of Nicaragua or even its reincorporation within the "Central American mode," as liberal opinion prefers. It can then serve as "an object lesson" to poor countries that might be tempted to "[go] berserk with fanatical nationalism," as the *New York Times* editors thundered when the CIA successfully overthrew the parliamentary regime in Iran.[62] In a conflict with a Third World country, a violent superpower with only limited internal constraints can hardly fail to achieve the goal of destroying any hope.

The U.S. achievements in Central America in the past decade are a major tragedy, not only because of the appalling human cost, but because a decade ago there were incipient and promising steps throughout the region towards popular organization and confronting basic human needs, with early successes that might have taught useful lessons to others plagued with similar problems -- exactly the fear of U.S. planners. These steps have been successfully aborted, and may never be attempted again.

The achievements of the Reagan administration in Nicaragua, revealed in the cold statistics of corpses, malnutrition, childhood epidemics, and the like, take on a more human cast in the occasional glimpse at the lives of the victims. Julia Preston provides one of the rare examples in the mainstream media under the headline: "In Jalapa, War-Induced Hardships Are Bolstering the Sandinista Cause." Jalapa, Preston writes, is a tiny town in "a vulnerable finger of land poking into hostile Honduras," an area readily accessible to the "Sons of Reagan" in their Honduran bases and largely dominated by hostile propaganda from powerful U.S.-run radio stations in Honduras. Here, if anywhere, the contras could apply the lessons imparted to them by their CIA trainers and exhibit the "growing self-confidence and skill" that so impressed A.M. Rosenthal as he read "James LeMoyne's carefully reported, sensitive accounts."[63]

In Jalapa, the contras are an object of contempt, Preston writes, mercenaries who "guessed wrong" about the "well-paid, secure jobs" they would get from the United States (see above). But "the contra war has left Jalapans enduring penury far worse than any they have ever known before." Severe hunger is rampant. The hospital, built in 1982 as "a symbol of the Sandinistas' commitment to improving social conditions" is nearly empty because people doubt it "will have the means to take care of them," thanks to the diversion of resources to the war and "away from this kind of social project" -- an achievement of which U.S. citizens can feel proud. Nevertheless, "the immense hardship has not turned Jalapa against the Sandinista revolution." Even anti-Sandinista townspeople "view the war as a new stage in a history of U.S. bullying of everyday Nicaraguans, of which the Somoza family dynasty was an indelible example." The literacy campaigns and "educational explosion," sharply curtailed by U.S. violence, "attract abiding loyalty" in Jalapa, if not in the United States, where they have been much derided as an instrument of totalitarianism. Many residents of the town see "a more informal, egalitarian society today." Peasants are no longer "servile" and landowners "superior," as under the Somoza regime and the U.S. model generally. "The Sandinistas made bank credit available for the first time to small farmers," and today, "everyone shares the same poverty," though with "a cry of frustration" over Reagan's success in having "delayed the revolution," a "gaunt peasant farmer says."

The long-term goals of the Reagan administration for Central America were clear from the outset. While Shultz, Abrams, Kirkpatrick, and company occupy an extreme position on the political spectrum in their enthusiasm for terror and violence, the general policy goals are conventional and deeply rooted in U.S. tradition, policy planning, and institutions, which is why they have received little attention or criticism within the mainstream. For the same reasons, they can be expected to persist. It is necessary to demolish "the people's organizations fighting to defend their most fundamental human rights" (Archbishop Romero) and to eliminate any threat of "ultranationalism" in the "fledgling democracies." As for Nicaragua, if it cannot be restored by violence to the "Central American mode" of repression and exploitation, then at least the United States must implement the reported boast of a State Department insider in 1981: to "`turn Nicaragua into the Albania of Central America,' that is, poor, isolated, and radical." The U.S. government must ensure that Nicaragua will "become a sort of Latin American Albania," so that "the Sandinista dream of creating a new, more exemplary political model for Latin America would be in ruins" (British journalist John Carlin).[64]

The goals have for the most part been achieved. The independent media deserve a large share of the credit, serving as adjuncts of government.

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[60] See chapter 3, note 47.

[61] *BG,* Oct. 30, 31, Nov. 1, 1988. The series also contains many distortions and outright lies, for example, the claim that in December 1987 Defense Minister Ortega "announced his objective of military forces of 600,000 men by 1995," which will add to those "legions of troops [that] produce nothing." As Sheehan and the editors know full well, Ortega announced a planned *reduction* of the military forces, with light arms to be distributed to the general working population. Useful propaganda fabrications are not readily abandoned.

[62] See appendix V, section 3, for reference and background.

[63] Preston, *WP Weekly,* Jan. 2-8, 1989. On U.S. dominance of the information system in large areas of Nicaragua, see Howard Frederick, "Electronic Penetration," in Walker, *Reagan vs. the Sandinistas*.

[64] Thomas Walker, in Coleman and Herring, *The Central American Crisis*; Carlin, *Independent* (London), Feb. 1, 1988.

Chapter Five

The Utility of Interpretations

Hypocrisy, Milton wrote, is "the only evil that walks Invisible, except to God alone." To ensure that "neither Man nor Angel can discern" the evil is, nonetheless, a demanding vocation. Pascal had discussed it a few years earlier while recording "how the casuists reconcile the contrarieties between their opinions and the decisions of the popes, the councils, and the Scripture." "One of the methods in which we reconcile these contradictions," his casuist interlocutor explains, "is by the interpretation of some phrase." Thus, if the Gospel says, "Give alms of your superfluity," and the task is "to discharge the wealthiest from the obligation of alms-giving," "the matter is easily put to rights by giving such an interpretation to the word *superfluity* that it will seldom or never happen that any one is troubled with such an article." Learned scholars demonstrate that "what men of the world lay up to improve their circumstances, or those of their relatives, cannot be termed *superfluity*; and accordingly, such a thing as superfluity is seldom to be found among men of the world, not even excepting kings" -- nowadays, we call it tax reform. We may, then, adhere faithfully to the preachings of the Gospel that "the rich are bound to give alms of their superfluity,...[though] it will seldom or never happen to be obligatory in practice." "There you see the utility of interpretations," he concludes.[1]

In our own times, the device, thanks to Orwell, is called Newspeak; the casuists are no less accomplished, though less forthcoming about the practice than Pascal's monk.

In the last two chapters, noting the recommendation of the liberal intellectuals that with the "advance of knowledge" we should keep to "subtle" and "refined" methods of social control, avoiding "coarse, obvious and direct methods," I discussed some of the modalities of thought control developed in democratic societies. The most effective device is the bounding of the thinkable, achieved by tolerating debate, even encouraging it, though only within proper limits. But democratic systems also resort to cruder means, the method of "interpretation of some phrase" being a notable instrument. Thus aggression and state terror in the Third World become "defense of democracy and human rights"; and "democracy" is successfully achieved when the government is safely in the hands of "the rich men dwelling at peace within their habitations," as in Winston Churchill's prescription for world order.[2] At home the rule of the privileged must be guaranteed and the population reduced to the status of passive observers, while in the dependencies stern measures may be needed to eliminate any challenge to the

natural rulers. Under the proper interpretation of the phrase, it is indeed true that "the yearning to see American-style democracy duplicated throughout the world has been a persistent theme in American foreign policy," as *Times* correspondent Neil Lewis declared.[3]

There is, accordingly, no "contrariety" when we yearn for democracy and independence for South Vietnam while demolishing the country to eradicate the National Liberation Front (NLF), then turning to the destruction of the politically organized Buddhists before permitting stage-managed "elections." Casuistry even permits us to proceed on this course while recognizing that until compelled by U.S. terror "to use counter-force to survive," the indigenous enemy insisted that its contest with the United States and its clients "should be fought out at the political level and that the use of massed military might was in itself illegitimate." Our rejection of politics in favor of military might is natural, because we also recognized that the NLF was the only "truly mass-based political party in South Vietnam," and no one, "with the possible exception of the Buddhists, thought themselves equal in size and power to risk entering a coalition, fearing that if they did the whale would swallow the minnow."[4] With the same reasoning, it was only proper to subvert the first and last free election in the history of Laos, because the wrong people won; to organize or support the overthrow of elected governments in Guatemala, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Chile, and Nicaragua; to support or directly organize large-scale terror to bar the threat of democracy, social reform, and independence in Central America in the 1980s; to take strong measures to ensure that the postwar world would return to proper hands; and much else -- all in our "yearning for democracy."

From the same perspective, we can understand why, in December 1965, the *New York Times* editors should praise Washington for having "wisely stayed in the background during the recent upheavals" in Indonesia. In these "recent upheavals," the Indonesian military had "de-fused the country's political time-bomb, the powerful Indonesian Communist party (P.K.I.)" by eliminating "virtually all the top- and second-level leaders of the P.K.I." in one or another manner -- and, incidentally, slaughtering hundreds of thousands of people, mostly landless peasants, while Washington "wisely" observed in silence, the editors choose to believe.[5] This concomitant of a welcome victory for freedom was not mentioned, though the editors did warn that the social conditions that enabled the PKI to organize 14 million people persisted. They urged Washington to remain cautious about providing aid to the perpetrators of the slaughter, for fear that the nationalist leader Sukarno and the remnants of the PKI might yet benefit, despite the encouraging achievements of the friends and allies of the United States in conducting the largest slaughter since the Holocaust.

Similarly, it is natural that the *New York Times* should praise the government of the Shah of Iran, restored to power by the CIA, for its "highly successful campaign against subversive elements" and its "long record of success in defeating subversion without suppressing democracy." The subversives, now thankfully suppressed without suppressing democracy, include the "pro-Soviet Tudeh party," formerly "a real menace" but "considered now to have been completely liquidated," and the "extreme nationalists" who had been almost as subversive as the Communists.[6] And few, apparently, find it jarring to read an upbeat report on "the return of full democracy" in the Philippines under the headline "Aquino's decree bans Communist Party," with a lead paragraph explaining that a presidential decree stipulated penalties of imprisonment for membership in the party, which had been legalized under the Marcos dictatorship.[7] Not long before, Marcos himself had been a model democrat, a man "pledged to democracy," as Ronald Reagan explained; "we love your adherence to democratic principle and to the democratic processes" and your "service to freedom," his vice president, George Bush, proclaimed in Manila.[8] That, however, was before Marcos had lost control, and with it his credentials as a freedom-loving democrat.

On the same principles, we can recall with nostalgia the days of "democracy" under the Diem and Thieu-Ky dictatorships in South Vietnam (see chapter 3). And what is more natural than to observe proudly that "democracy is on the ideological march" because the experience of the last several decades shows that it leads to prosperity and development: "As an economic mechanism, democracy demonstrably works," James Markham writes in the lead article in the *Times Week in Review*. Economic growth has indeed occurred in the "newly industrializing countries," notably South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. We are to understand, then, that "democracy" is a system that rejects democratic forms so as to facilitate reduced consumption and superexploitation, with state control over

the economy in coordination with domestic conglomerates and international corporations, a pattern closer to traditional fascism than to democracy. All makes sense, however, when we take the term "democracy" to mean domination of the economy and social and political life by domestic elements that are properly sensitive to the needs of corporations and the U.S. government.[9]

These are constant themes in the media and political system, reflecting broader norms. There are no contrarieties here, as long as we understand the proper interpretation of the term "democracy."

All of this is quite in accord with the doctrine that other countries should control their own destinies, unless "developments...get out of control" and "affect U.S. interests adversely" (see p. 59). The logic is similar when a National Intelligence Estimate of 1955 discusses the quandary the United States faced in Guatemala after the successful overthrow of the democratic capitalist regime. "Many Guatemalans are passionately attached to the democratic-nationalist ideals of the 1944 revolution," particularly to "the social and economic programs" of the regime overthrown in the CIA coup, the study observes with some distress; but few Guatemalans "understand the processes and responsibilities of democracy," so that "responsible democratic government is therefore difficult to achieve."[10] The apparent contradiction is dispelled when we give the proper interpretation to "democracy." It is the task of the media, and the specialized class generally, to ensure that the hypocrisy "walks Invisible, except to God alone."

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[1] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* Bk. III, 682-84; Pascal, *Provincial Letters,* Letter VI. For a perceptive account of how the wealthy and the business community transmute tax reform to serve their interests, using the device of "confusion of the public" to make this happen "while appearing not to happen," see Linda McQuaig, *Behind Closed Doors: How the Rich Won Control of Canada's Tax System* (Penguin, 1987). Her study deals specifically with Canada, but the conclusions are more general.

[2] Churchill, *The Second World War,* vol. 5 (Houghton Mifflin, 1951, 382).

[3] See p. 49.

[4] U.S. government scholar Douglas Pike, *Viet Cong* (MIT, 1966).

[5] Editorial, *NYT,* Dec. 22, 1965. Washington took credit for helping to prepare the ground for the military coup, and a more direct U.S. role in the coup and its aftermath is hardly unlikely; see *Culture of Terrorism,* 181, and an important study by Peter Dale Scott, "The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-1967," *Pacific Affairs,* Summer 1985. Lyndon Johnson's National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy commented in retrospect that "our effort" in Vietnam was "excessive" after these events in Indonesia, which helped inoculate the region against Vietnamese-inspired nationalism, a perceptive insight into the backgrounds for the Vietnam war, amply supported by other evidence; *Manufacturing Consent,* 174.

[6] Sam Pope Brewer, "Iran is Reported Subversion Free," *NYT,* Dec. 2, 1956; *NYT,* Aug. 30, 1960. Cited by William A. Dorman and Mansour Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran* (California, 1987, 77, 72).

[7] UPI, *BG,* July 27, 1987.

[8] See *Turning the Tide,* 161.

[9] *NYT,* Sept. 25, 1988. Apart from the efficacy of quasi-fascist measures, the economic successes reflect the crucial priming effect of America's Asian wars and the lingering impact of Japanese colonialism, which exploited its colonies in a different manner from the West, "bringing industry to the labor and raw materials rather than vice versa," Bruce Cumings observes, commenting on the renewal of the industrial development that had been initiated under Japanese imperialism with state-corporate guidance ("The origins and development of the Northeast Asian political economy," *International Organization* 38.1, Winter 1984).

[10] *FRUS,* 1955-57, Vol. VII, 88f., NIE 82-85. For more on this enlightening document, reflecting intelligence analysis at the highest level, see my "Agenda of the Doves," *Z Magazine,* September 1988.

As we see from these and many other examples, a solicitous concern for democracy and human rights may go hand in hand with tolerance for large-scale slaughter, or direct participation in it. The *Christian Science Monitor* observed approvingly -- and accurately -- that after General Suharto's impressive achievement in eliminating the political threat in Indonesia by mass murder, "many in the West were keen to cultivate Jakarta's new moderate leader, Suharto"; here the term "moderate" is used with an appropriate casuistic interpretation. Suharto's subsequent achievements include extraordinary human rights violations at home and slaughter in the course of aggression in East Timor that bears comparison to Pol Pot in the same years, backed enthusiastically by the United States, with the effective support of Canada, Britain, France, and other guardians of morality. The media cooperated by simply eliminating the issue; *New York Times* coverage, for example, declined as atrocities increased along with U.S. participation, reaching zero as the atrocities peaked in 1978; and the few comments by its noted Southeast Asia correspondent Henry Kamm assured us, on the authority of the Indonesian generals, that the army was protecting the people fleeing from the control of the guerrillas. Scrupulously excluded was the testimony of refugees, Church officials, and others who might have interfered with public acquiescence in what appears to be the largest massacre, relative to the population, since the Holocaust. In retrospect, the London *Economist,* in an ode to Indonesia under General Suharto's rule, describes him as "at heart benign," referring, perhaps, to his kindness to international corporations.[11]

In accord with the same principles, it is natural that vast outrage should be evoked by the terror of the Pol Pot regime, while reporters in Phnom Penh in 1973, when the U.S. bombing of populated areas of rural Cambodia had reached its peak, should ignore the testimony of the hundreds of thousands of refugees before their eyes.[12] Such selective perception guarantees that little is known about the scale and character of these U.S. atrocities, though enough to indicate that they may have been comparable to those attributable to the Khmer Rouge at the time when the chorus of indignation swept the West in 1977, and that they contributed significantly to the rise, and probably the brutality, of the Khmer Rouge.[13]

These achievements of "historical engineering" allow the editors of the *New York Times* to observe that "when America's eyes turned away from Indochina in 1975, Cambodia's misery had just begun," with "the infamous barbarities of the Khmer Rouge, then dreary occupation by Vietnam" (incidentally, expelling the Khmer Rouge). "After long indifference," they continue, "Washington can [now] play an important role as honest broker" and "heal a long-ignored wound in Cambodia." The misery began in 1975, not before, under "America's eyes," and the editors do not remind us that during the period of "indifference" Washington offered indirect support to the Khmer Rouge while backing the coalition in which it was the major element because of its "continuity" with the Pol Pot regime.[14]

U.S. relations with the Khmer Rouge require some careful maneuvering. The Khmer Rouge were, and remain, utterly evil insofar as they can be associated with the Communist threat, perhaps because of their origins in Jean-Paul Sartre's left-wing Paris circles. Even more evil, evidently, are the Vietnamese, who finally reacted to brutal and murderous border incidents by invading Cambodia and driving out the Khmer Rouge, terminating their slaughters. We therefore must back our Thai and Chinese allies who support Pol Pot. All of this requires commentators to step warily. The *New York Times* reports the "reluctance in Washington to push too hard" to pressure China to end its support for Pol Pot -- with the goal of bleeding Vietnam, as our Chinese allies have forthrightly explained. The Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs rejected a congressional plea to call for a cutoff of aid to Pol Pot because the situation was "delicate." U.S. pressure on China "might irritate relations unnecessarily," the *Times* explained, and this consideration overcomes our passionate concern over the fate of Cambodians exposed to Khmer Rouge terror. The press explains further that while naturally the United States is "one of the nations most concerned about a Khmer Rouge return," nevertheless "the US and its allies have decided that without some sign of compromise by Vietnam toward a political settlement [on U.S. terms], the Khmer Rouge forces must be allowed to serve as military pressure on Vietnam, despite their past" -- and despite what the population may think about "a Khmer Rouge return." Not only relations with China, but also the tasks of propagandists are "delicate" under these demanding conditions.[15]

An appropriate casuistic interpretation of the concept of democracy solves only half the problem; we also need a phrase for the enemies of democracy in some country where we yearn to establish or maintain it. The reflex device is to label the indigenous enemy "Communists," whatever their social commitments and political allegiances may be. They must be eliminated in favor of the "democrats" who are not "out of control." José Napoleón Duarte and his Defense Minister Vides Casanova are therefore "democrats," defending civilization against "Communists," such as the hundreds murdered by the security forces as they tried to flee to Honduras across the Rio Sumpul in May 1980. They were all "Communist guerrillas," Duarte explained, including, presumably, the infants sliced to pieces with machetes; the U.S. media took the simpler path of suppressing the massacre, one of the opening shots in the terrorist campaign for which Duarte provided legitimacy, to much acclaim.[16]

The U.S. attitude towards "American-style" democracies illustrates the prevailing conception in more subtle ways. Europe and Japan provide interesting examples, particularly in the early postwar years when it was necessary to restore traditional elites to power and undermine the anti-fascist resistance and its supporters, many of them imbued with unacceptable radical democratic commitments.[17]

The Third World provides a few similar illustrations, standing alongside the many cases where people with the wrong ideas are controlled by violence or liquidated "without suppressing democracy." Consider Costa Rica, the one functioning parliamentary democracy in Central America through the post-World War II period. It is sometimes argued, even by scholars who should know better, that U.S. support for Costa Rica undermines the thesis that a primary policy goal is to bar "nationalistic regimes" that do not adequately guarantee the rights of business,[18] a thesis well supported by the documentary and historical records. This argument reflects a serious misunderstanding. The United States has no principled opposition to democratic forms, as long as the climate for business operations is preserved. As accurately observed by Gordon Connell-Smith in his study of the inter-American system for the Royal Institute of International Affairs,[19] the U.S. "concept of democracy" is "closely identified with private, capitalistic enterprise," and it is only when this is threatened by what is regularly called "Communism" that action is taken to "restore democracy"; the "United States concern for representative democracy in Latin America [as elsewhere] is a facet of her anti-communist policy," or more accurately, the policy of opposing any threat to U.S. economic penetration and political control. And when these interests are safeguarded, democratic forms are not only tolerated, but approved, if only for public relations reasons. Costa Rica fits the model closely, and provides interesting insight into the "yearning for democracy" that is alleged to guide U.S. foreign policy.

In Costa Rica the system established under the leadership of José (Don Pepe) Figueres after the 1948 coup remains in place. It has always provided a warm welcome to foreign investment and has promoted a form of class collaboration that often "sacrificed the rights of labor," Don Pepe's biographer observes,[20] while establishing a welfare system that continues to function thanks to U.S. subsidies, with one of the highest per capita debts in the world. Don Pepe's 1949 constitution outlawed Communism. With the most militant unions suppressed, labor rights declined. "Minimum wage laws were not enforced," and workers "lost every collective-bargaining contract except one that covered a single group of banana workers," Walter LaFeber notes. By the 1960s "it was almost as if the entire labor movement had ceased to exist," an academic study concludes. The United Fruit Company prospered, nearly tripling its profits and facing no threat of expropriation. Meanwhile, Figueres declared in 1953 that "we consider the United States as the standard-bearer of our cause."[21] As the United States tried to line up Latin American states behind its planned overthrow of the Guatemalan government, Costa Rica and Bolivia were the only two elected governments to join the Latin American dictatorships in giving full support to the State Department draft resolution authorizing the United States to violate international law by detaining and inspecting "vessels, aircraft and other means of conveyance moving to and from the Republic of Guatemala" so as to block arms shipments for defense of Guatemala from the impending U.S. attack and "travel by agents of International Communism."[22]

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[11] John Murray Brown, *CSM,* Feb. 6, 1987; *Economist,* Aug. 15, 1987. On media coverage of East Timor, see *Political Economy of Human Rights, Towards a New Cold War,* and *The Chomsky Reader,*

the latter including some discussion of the remarkable subsequent apologetics by Western journalists. There is a great deal to add about later efforts to cover up this dismal record, but I will not pursue it here. Though at a lesser scale, the terror and repression continue, with little notice.

[12] For a record, see *Manufacturing Consent,* chapter 6. The U.S. bombings of rural Laos shortly before were also suppressed during the worst period; *ibid.,* and sources cited.

[13] *Ibid.,* and sources cited; Ben Kiernan, "The American Bombardment of Kampuchea," *Vietnam Generation* 1.1, Winter 1989.

[14] Editorial, *NYT,* July 16, 1988. On the U.S. role during the period of "indifference," see *Manufacturing Consent,* chapter 6.

[15] Elaine Sciolino, *NYT,* Oct. 16; Clayton Jones, *CSM,* Aug. 24, 1988. On what he properly calls the "hypocrisy" of the West on this issue, see Peter Carey, *Far Eastern Economic Review,* Dec. 22, 1988. He points out that thanks to "generous supplies of Chinese arms and money" and "Western food aid" sent via the U.N., "the Khmer Rouge has become a formidable fighting force," well established in parts of Cambodia. Thai military authorities play a crucial role in allowing Khmer Rouge bases and "terror enclaves" to operate within Thailand. Much of the fighting has been between the Khmer Rouge and its non-Communist coalition partners that the U.S. claims to support, one of which (Son Sann's KPNLF) has been "almost eliminated" and the other (Sihanouk's army) "badly mauled." With the aid of the Thai and Chinese allies of the United States, the Khmer Rouge may be able to take over after the Vietnamese withdrawal that is the alleged goal of U.S. policy. These developments have been clear enough for several years. See *Manufacturing Consent* for earlier references.

[16] For references, see *Turning the Tide,* chapter 3, section 5.2.

[17] See my article "Democracy in the Industrial Societies," *Z Magazine,* January 1989.

[18] See Victor Bulmer-Thomas, review of *On Power and Ideology, Third World Quarterly,* January 1988.

[19] Connell-Smith, *The Inter-American System* (Oxford, 1966).

[20] Charles Ameringer, *Don Pepe* (U. of New Mexico, 1978, 114).

[21] LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions* (Norton 1983, 187, 105); Charles F. Denton and Preston Lee Lawrence, *Latin American Politics: a Functional Approach* (San Francisco, 1972), quoted by LaFeber; Ameringer, *op. cit.,* 105.

[22] *FRUS,* 1952-54, vol. IV, 1170, notes of meeting of Guatemala group, at State Dept., June 16, 1954; See pp. 1157f. for the text of the resolution. Guatemala would, it was hoped, be compelled to turn to the Soviet bloc for arms, other sources having been barred by the United States. As explained by Guatemala City embassy officer John Hill, stopping ships in international waters might "disrupt Guatemala's economy." This would in turn "encourage the Army or some other non-Communist elements to seize power," or else "the Communists will exploit the situation to extend their control," which would "justify the American community, or if they won't go along, the U.S. to take strong measures" (Bryce Wood, *The Dismantling of the Good Neighbor Policy* (Texas, 1985, 177).) We thus compel Guatemala to defend itself from our threatened attack, thereby creating a threat to our security which we exploit by destroying the Guatemalan economy so as to provoke a military coup or an actual Communist takeover which will justify our violent response, in self-defense. Here we see the real meaning of the phrase "security threat," spelled out with much insight.

By aligning itself unequivocally with the United States, fostering foreign investment, guaranteeing the domestic predominance of business interests, and maintaining a basis for repression of labor and political dissidence, the democratic government satisfied the basic conditions demanded by the United States. Correspondingly, it has received a measure of U.S. support. Thus in 1955, when a small force of Costa Ricans attacked border areas from Nicaragua, Figueres suspended individual rights and

constitutional guarantees, and repelled the incursion with U.S. aid -- thus not forfeiting his democratic credentials by the repressive measures he instituted, permitted for U.S clients.

Nevertheless, concerns over Costa Rica did not abate. State Department intelligence warned in 1953 that Figueres had turned his country into "a haven for exiles from the dictatorships" and was toying with ideas about "a broad program of economic development and firmer control over foreign investment." He hoped to finance development "preferably by domestic capital" and "does not look with favor upon capital organized beyond the individual or family level. Large private corporations, such as those in the United States, are an anathema in his opinion." He also sought "to increase the bargaining power of the small, undeveloped countries vis-à-vis the large manufacturing nations." He was dangerous, LaFeber comments, "because he hoped to use government powers to free Costa Rica's internal development as much as possible from foreign control," thus undermining "the Good Neighbor policy's assumption that Latin America could be kept in line merely through economic pressure."[23]

The U.S. government was particularly concerned that the Costa Rican constitution, while outlawing Communism, still provided civil libertarian guarantees that impeded the kind of persecution of dissidents that is mandatory in a well-functioning democracy. And despite Don Pepe's cooperation with U.S. corporations and the CIA, support for U.S. interventions in the region, and general loyalty to the United States over the years, he has continued to exhibit an unacceptable degree of independence, so much so that the leading representative of capitalist democracy in Central America must be excluded from the media, as we have seen.[24]

If the enemies of democracy are not "Communists," then they are "terrorists"; still better, "Communist terrorists," or terrorists supported by International Communism. The rise and decline of international terrorism in the 1980s provides much insight into "the utility of interpretations."[25]

What Ronald Reagan and George Shultz call "the evil scourge of terrorism," a plague spread by "depraved opponents of civilization itself" in "a return to barbarism in the modern age," was placed on the agenda of concern by the Reagan administration. From its first days, the administration proclaimed that "international terrorism" would replace Carter's human rights crusade as "the Soul of our foreign policy." The Reaganites would dedicate themselves to defense of the civilized world against the program of international terrorism outlined most prominently in Claire Sterling's influential book *The Terror Network*. Here, the Soviet Union was identified as the source of the plague, with the endorsement of a new scholarly discipline, whose practitioners were particularly impressed with Sterling's major insight, which provides an irrefutable proof of Soviet guilt. The clinching evidence, as Walter Laqueur phrased it in a review of Sterling's book, is that terrorism occurs "almost exclusively in democratic or relatively democratic countries." By 1985, terrorism in the Middle East/Mediterranean region was selected as the top story of the year in an Associated Press poll of editors and broadcasters, and concern reached fever pitch in subsequent months. The U.S. bombing of Libya in April 1986 largely tamed the monster, and in the following years the plague subsided to more manageable proportions as the Soviet Union and its clients retreated in the face of American courage and determination, according to the preferred account.

The rise and decline of the plague had little relation to anything happening in the world, with one exception: its rise coincided with the need to mobilize the U.S. population to support the Reaganite commitment to state power and violence, and its decline with rising concern over the need to face the costs of Reaganite military Keynesian excesses with their technique of writing "hot checks for $200 billion a year" to create the illusion of prosperity, as vice-presidential candidate Lloyd Bentsen phrased the perception of conservative business elements at the 1988 Democratic convention.

The public relations apparatus -- surely the most sophisticated component of the Reagan administration -- was faced with a dual problem in 1981: to frighten the domestic enemy (the general population at home) sufficiently so that they would bear the costs of programs to which they were opposed, while avoiding direct confrontations with the Evil Empire itself, as far too dangerous for us. The solution to the dilemma was to concoct an array of little Satans, tentacles of the Great Satan poised to destroy us, but weak and defenseless so that they could be attacked with impunity: in short, Kremlin-directed international terrorism. The farce proceeded perfectly, with the cooperation of the casuists, whose task was to give a proper interpretation to the term "terrorism," protecting the doctrine that its victims are

primarily the democratic countries of the West.

To conduct this campaign of ideological warfare successfully, it was necessary to obscure the central role of the United States in organizing and directing state terror, and to conceal its extensive involvement in international terrorism in earlier years, as in the attack against Cuba, the prime example of "the evil scourge of terrorism" from the early 1960s. Some "historical engineering" was also required with regard to terrorism in the Middle East/Mediterranean region, the primary focus of concern within the propaganda operations. Here, it was necessary to suppress the role of the United States and its Israeli client.

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[23] LaFeber, *op. cit.,* 105-6.

[24] Cf. p. 63. For further details, see appendix V, section 1.

[25] For an account of the origins and progress of this propaganda campaign, see, among others, Herman, *The Real Terror Network,* and my *Towards a New Cold War* (introduction), *Fateful Triangle,* and *Pirates and Emperors*; see these for references, where not cited below.

These tasks have been well within the capacity of the media and the terrorologists.[26] The U.S. role is easily excised; after all, the phrase "U.S. terrorism" is an oxymoron, on a par with "thunderous silence" or "U.S. aggression." Israeli state terrorism escapes under the same literary convention, Israel being a client state, though it is recognized that there were Jewish terrorists in a distant and forgotten past. This fact can be placed in proper perspective by following the suggestion of the editor of a collection of scholarly essays, who invokes the plausible distinction between "morally unacceptable terrorist attacks" on civilians and more ambiguous attacks on agents of authority and persecution. "We would therefore distinguish sharply between the Irgun Zvai Leumi's attacks on British soldiers and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's violence against airline passengers traveling to Israel."[27]

One can imagine a different formulation, for example, a sharp distinction between the attacks against Israeli and U.S. soldiers by Arabs who are termed "terrorists," and the many murderous attacks on Arab civilians by the Irgun Zvai Leumi, and the Israeli army in later years. But that would hardly create a proper image for a sound and sober analysis of "the consequences of political violence."

The great significance of international terrorism as an ideological instrument is illustrated by the reaction when someone breaks ranks and documents the part that the United States and its clients have played in conducting, organizing, and supporting international terrorism. If such work cannot simply be ignored, it elicits virtual frenzy -- "deranged," "absurd," and "fantasies" are some phrases drawn from 1988 commentary, unaccompanied by even a semblance of an argument. Such reactions are not without interest, and merit some thought.

There are three positions that one might take with regard to terrorism: (1) We can attribute it to official enemies, whatever the facts. (2) We can dismiss the entire discussion of terrorism as ideologically motivated nonsense, not worthy of attention. (3) We can take the phenomenon seriously, agree that terrorism warrants concern and condemnation, investigate it, and let the chips fall where they may. On rational assumptions, we dismiss the first and accept the third. The second position is at least arguable, though in my judgment wrong; I think there is every reason to take terrorism seriously, and the concept is as clear as most that enter into political discourse.

But considerations of rationality are not pertinent. The first and wholly irrational position is the standard one in the media and the literature of terrorology, overwhelmingly dominant. The second position is regarded as more or less tolerable, since it absolves the United States and its clients from blame apart from their attempts at ideological manipulation. The third position, in contrast, is utterly beyond the pale, for when we pursue it, we quickly reach entirely unacceptable conclusions, discovering, for example, that Miami and Washington have been among the major world centers of international

terrorism from the Kennedy period until today, under any definition of terrorism -- whether that of the U.S. Code, international conventions, military manuals, or whatever.

A variant of the first position, still tolerable though less so than the pure form, is to argue that it is unfair to condemn Palestinians, Lebanese kidnappers, etc., without considering the factors that led them to these crimes. This position has the merit of tacitly accepting -- hence reinforcing -- the approved premises as to the origins of the plague. The second position can be made still more palatable by restricting it to a psychocultural analysis of the Western obsession with terrorism, avoiding the institutional factors that led to the choice of this marvellously successful public relations device in the 1980s (an analysis of such institutional factors, readily discernible, can be dismissed with the label "conspiracy theory," another familiar reflex when it is necessary to prevent thought and protect institutions from scrutiny). The idea that talk of terrorism is mere confusion provides a useful fall-back position in case the role of the United States is exposed. One can, in short, adopt this device to dismiss those who pursue the unacceptable third option as hopeless fanatics and conspiracy theorists, and then return to the favored first position for the interpretation of ongoing events.

The first position, simple and unsubtle, completely dominates public discussion, the media, and what is regarded as the scholarly literature. Its dominance and utility are obvious at every turn. To select an example from late 1988, consider the refusal of the State Department to permit Yasser Arafat to address the United Nations in November. The official grounds were that his visit posed a threat to U.S. security, but no one pretended to take that seriously; even George Shultz did not believe that Arafat's bodyguards were going to hijack a taxi in New York or take over the Pentagon (it is, perhaps, of some interest that no one cared that the official rationale was unworthy even of refutation, but let us put that aside). What *was* taken seriously was the story that accompanied the spurious reasons offered: that Arafat was not permitted to set foot on U.S. soil because of the abhorrence for terrorism on the part of the organizers and supporters of the contra war, government-run death squads in El Salvador and Guatemala, the bombing of Tripoli, and other notable exercises in violence -- all of which qualify as international terrorism, or worse, if we are willing to adopt the third position on the matter of terrorism, that is, the position that is honest, rational, and hence utterly unthinkable.

As the invitation to Arafat was being considered, Senator Christopher Dodd warned that if Arafat were permitted to address the General Assembly, Congress would cut off U.S. funding for the United Nations. "I think you can't underestimate the strong feeling in this country about terrorism," Dodd informed the press; a leading dove, Dodd has ample knowledge of Central America and the agency of terror there. Explaining "Shultz's `No' to Arafat," the front-page *New York Times* headline reads: "Personal Disgust for Terrorism Is at Root of Secretary's Decision to Rebuff the P.L.O." The article goes on to describe Shultz's "visceral contempt for terrorism." *Times* Washington correspondent R.W. Apple added that Mr. Shultz "has waged something of a personal crusade against terrorism," which "has always mattered so intensely to Mr. Shultz."[28] The press, television, and radio either expressed their admiration for Shultz for taking such a forthright stand against the plague of terrorism, or criticized him for allowing his understandable and meritorious rage to overcome his statesmanlike reserve.

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[26] See appendix V, section 2.

[27] Martha Crenshaw, ed., introduction, *Terrorism, Legitimacy and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence* (Wesleyan, 1983).

[28] Dodd, AP, Nov. 25; Shultz, Robert Pear, *NYT,* Nov. 28, 1988. An accompanying article by Alan Cowell refers to the "protestations of outrage" on the part of the Arab nations after Arafat was excluded. Shultz feels genuine "visceral outrage"; Arabs produce "protestations," perhaps merely for show. Apple, Dec. 15, 1988.

The news reports and commentary did not call upon witnesses from Nicaragua, El Salvador and

Guatemala, Angola, southern Lebanon, Gaza, and elsewhere to share their insights into Shultz's "visceral contempt for terrorism" and the "strong feelings" in Congress about the resort to violence. Rather, the media warned soberly that "Yasser Arafat is not your ordinary politically controversial visa applicant: his group kills people."[29] Arafat is thus quite unlike Adolfo Calero, José Napoleón Duarte and his cohorts, or Yitzhak Shamir, among the many leaders whom we welcome from abroad because, one must assume, they do not "kill people."

Those who might have expected the media to take the occasion to review George Shultz's record of advocacy and support for terrorism, perhaps raising the question of whether there might be a note of hypocrisy in his "personal statement" or the media interpretation of it, would have been sorely disappointed. As in totalitarian states, however, cartoonists had greater latitude, and were able to depict the leaders who Shultz may have had in mind when he lamented that "people are forgetting what a threat international terrorism is": France's Mitterand, who "forgot when we sank the Greenpeace ship"; Britain's Thatcher, who "forgot when we had those IRA blokes shot at Gibraltar"; the USSR's Gorbachev, who "forgot how we mine bombed all those children in Afghanistan"; and the United States' Shultz, who "forgot about all the civilians our friends, the contras, murdered in Nicaragua."[30]

Other examples can readily be added. That Arafat and the PLO have engaged in terrorist acts is not in doubt; nor is it in doubt that they are minor actors in the arena of international terrorism.[31]

One of the acts of PLO terror that most outraged the Secretary of State and his admirers in Congress and the media was the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* and the murder of Leon Klinghoffer, doubtless a vile terrorist act. Their sensibilities were not aroused, however, by the Israeli bombing of Tunis a week earlier, killing twenty Tunisians and fifty-five Palestinians with smart bombs that tore people to shreds beyond recognition, among other horrors described by Israeli journalist Amnon Kapeliouk on the scene. U.S. journals had little interest, the victims being Arabs and the killers U.S. clients. Secretary Shultz was definitely interested, however. The United States had cooperated in the massacre by refusing to warn its ally Tunisia that the bombers were on their way, and Shultz telephoned Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, a noted terrorist himself from the early 1940s, to inform him that the U.S. administration "had considerable sympathy for the Israeli action," the press reported. Shultz drew back from this public approbation when the U.N. Security Council unanimously denounced the bombing as an "act of armed aggression" (the United States abstaining). Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was welcomed to Washington a few days later as a man of peace, while the press solemnly discussed his consultations with President Reagan on "the evil scourge of terrorism" and what can be done to counter it.[32]

The outrage over hijacking does not extend to *Israeli* hijackings that have been carried out in international waters for many years, including civilian ferries travelling from Cyprus to Lebanon, with large numbers of people kidnapped, over 100 kept in Israeli prisons without trial, and many killed, some by Israeli gunners while they tried to stay afloat after their ship was sunk, according to survivors interviewed in prison. The strong feelings of Congress and the media were also not aroused by the case of Na'il Amin Fatayir, deported from the West Bank in July 1987. After serving eighteen months in prison on the charge of membership in a banned organization, he was released and returned to his home in Nablus. Shortly after, the government ordered him deported. When he appealed to the courts, the prosecutor argued that the deportation was legitimate because he had entered the country illegally -- having been kidnapped by the Israeli navy while travelling from Lebanon to Cyprus on the ship *Hamdallah* in July 1985. The High Court accepted this elegant reasoning as valid.[33]

The visceral outrage over terrorism is restricted to worthy victims, meeting a criterion that is all too obvious.

The hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* was in retaliation for the bombing of Tunis, but the West properly dismissed this justification for a terrorist act. The bombing of Tunis, in turn, was in retaliation for a terrorist murder of three Israelis in Cyprus by a group which, as Israel conceded, had probable connections to Damascus but none to Tunis, which was selected as a target rather than Damascus because it was defenseless; the Reagan administration selected Libyan cities as a bombing target a few months later in part for the same reason. The bombing of Tunis, with its many civilian casualties, was described by Secretary Shultz as a "a legitimate response" to "terrorist attacks," to general approbation.

The terrorist murders in Cyprus were, in turn, justified by their perpetrators as retaliation for the Israeli hijackings over the preceding decade. Had this plea even been heard, it would have been dismissed with scorn. The term "retaliation" too must be given an appropriate interpretation, as any casuist would understand.

The same is true of other terms. Take, for example, the notion of "preventing" or "reducing" violence. A report headlined "Palestinian casualties nearly double" opens by quoting the Israeli army chief of staff, who says "that the number of Palestinians wounded in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has almost doubled in recent weeks but that the army has failed to reduce violence in the occupied areas." The statement makes no sense, but a look at the background allows it to be decoded. Shortly before, Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin had authorized the use of plastic bullets, stating that "more casualties...is precisely our aim": "our purpose is to increase the number of (wounded) among those who take part in violent activities." He also explained the notion of "violent activities": "We want to get rid of the illusion of some people in remote villages that they have liberated themselves," he said, explaining that army raids "make it clear to them where they live and within which framework." Palestinians must "understand that the solution can be achieved only by peaceful means," not by illusions of self-government. The army is therefore stepping up raids on remote villages that have declared themselves "liberated zones," with a resulting increase in injuries, the report continues. In a typical example, "Israeli troops raided more than a dozen West Bank villages and wounded 22 Palestinians yesterday"; an army spokeswoman explained that a strike had been called and the army wanted to "prevent violence" by an "increased presence and by making more arrests."[34]

We can now return to the original Newspeak: "the number of Palestinians wounded in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has almost doubled in recent weeks but...the army has failed to reduce violence in the occupied areas." Translating to intelligible English, the army has doubled the violence in the occupied territories by aggressive actions with the specific intent of increasing casualties, and by expanding its violent attacks to remote and peaceful villages that were attempting to run their own affairs. But it has so far failed to rid the people of illusions of self-government. For the Israeli authorities and the U.S. media, an attempt by villagers to run their own affairs is "violence," and a brutal attack to teach them who rules is "preventing violence." Orwell would have been impressed.

A report a few days later, headlined "Israelis kill three in West Bank, Gaza clashes," describes how soldiers shot and wounded three Palestinians in a "remote town rarely visited by soldiers" and "generally ignored by the military." "Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said two weeks ago the army would step up its actions in such villages to remind the inhabitants where they live and who is in control." This was one of thirty villages raided "in an offensive aimed at preventing violence," the report continues. And one can see the point; *after* the Israeli soldiers shot three Palestinians in the village in their "offensive aimed at preventing violence," "angry residents later stoned vehicles in the area." An accompanying story is devoted to the question of whether the PLO will really "renounce terror," quoting officials from Rabin's Labor Party and others in disbelief.[35]

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[29] Editorial, *WP Weekly,* Dec. 5-11, 1988.

[30] Szep, *BG,* Dec. 4, 1988. In print, allusions to the same matters in a column by *Globe* editor Randolph Ryan, Dec. 2, are the only questioning note I detected, though the point is so transparent that there must have been some others among the flood of obedient reports and commentary.

[31] For some comparative assessments, see the sources cited earlier in note 25.

[32] See *Pirates & Emperors,* chapter 2.

[33] *Ibid*., 87f.; *Al-Fajr,* Aug. 2, 1987; Danny Rubinstein, *Ha'aretz,* Aug. 29, 1987; Committee against State Terrorism at Sea, *State Terrorism at Sea* (Jerusalem, n.d.); Joseph Schechla, "Israel's Piracy on the High Seas," *The Return* (September 1988); Joost Hiltermann, *Middle East International,* Oct. 10, 1987.

[34] Wire services, *BG,* Oct. 5, 4; Joel Greenberg, *Jerusalem Post,* Sept. 28; Mary Curtius, *BG,* Sept. 28,

1988.

[35] *BG,* Oct. 10, 1988.

With appropriate interpretations, then, we can rest content that the United States and its clients defend democracy, social reform, and self-determination against Communists, terrorists, and violent elements of all kinds. It is the responsibility of the media to laud the "democrats" and demonize the official enemy: the Sandinistas, the PLO, or whoever gets in the way. On occasion this requires some fancy footwork, but the challenge has generally been successfully met.[36]

Our "yearning for democracy" is accompanied by a no less profound yearning for peace, and the media also face the task of "historical engineering" to establish this required truth. We therefore have phenomena called "peace missions" and "the peace process," terms that apply to whatever the United States happens to be doing or advocating at some moment. In the media or responsible scholarship, one will therefore find no such statement as "the United States opposes the peace process" or "Washington has to be induced to join the peace process." The reason is that such statements would be logical contradictions. Through the years, when the United States was "trumping" the Contadora process, undermining the Central America peace accords, and deflecting the threat of peace in the Middle East, it never opposed the peace process in acceptable commentary, but always supported the peace process and tried to advance it. One might imagine that even a great power that is sublime beyond imagination might sometimes be standing in the way of some peace process, perhaps because of misunderstanding or faulty judgment. Not so the United States, however -- by definition.

A headline in the *Los Angeles Times* in late January 1988 reads: "Latin Peace Trip by Shultz Planned." The subheading describes the contents of the "peace trip": "Mission Would Be Last-Ditch Effort to Defuse Opposition on Contra Aid."[37] The article quotes administration officials who describe the "peace mission" as "the only way to save" contra aid in the face of "growing congressional opposition." In plain English, the "peace mission" was a last-ditch effort to block peace and mobilize Congress for the "unlawful use of force" now that Washington and its loyal media had succeeded in completely dismantling the unwanted Central American peace plan and Ortega had agreed that its provisions should apply to Nicaragua alone, foiling the hope that Nicaragua would reject these U.S. conditions so that they could be depicted as the spoilers.

A further goal of the "peace mission," the article continues, was to "relegate Nicaragua's four democratic neighbors to the sidelines in peace talks," with the United States taking command; the "democracies," though pliable, still show an annoying streak of independence. A few months later, the *New York Times* reported further efforts by the administration "to `keep pressure' on the Sandinistas by continuing to provide support for the contras," including "more military aid," while urging U.S. allies to "join the United States in efforts to isolate Nicaragua diplomatically and revive the peace process..."; George Shultz is quoted as reflecting that perhaps he might have become "involved in the peace process" still earlier. The *Los Angeles Times* described these renewed administration efforts "to build support for the resumption of U.S. military aid to Nicaragua's Contras" under the headline: "Shultz Will Try to Revive Latin Peace Process."[38]

In short, War is Peace.

The task of "historical engineering" has been accomplished with no less efficiency in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The problem has been to present the United States and Israel as yearning for peace and pursuing the peace process while in fact, since the early 1970s, they have led the rejectionist camp and have been blocking peace initiatives that have had broad international and regional support. The technique has been the usual one: the "peace process" is, by definition, whatever the United States proposes. The desired conclusion now follows, whatever the facts. U.S. policy is also by definition "moderate," so that those who oppose it are "extremist" and "uncompromising." History has been stood on its head in a most intriguing manner, as I have documented elsewhere.[39]

There are actually two factors that operate to yield the remarkable distortion of the record concerning "peace," "terrorism," and related matters in the Middle East. One is the societal function of the media in serving U.S. elite interests; the other, the special protection afforded Israel since it became "the symbol of human decency" by virtue of the smashing military victory in 1967 that established it as a worthy strategic asset.

The interplay of these factors has led to some departure from the usual media pattern. Typically, as discussed throughout, the media encourage debate over tactical issues within the general framework of the elite consensus concerning goals and strategy. In the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, however, the spectrum has been even narrower. Substantial segments of elite opinion, including major corporations with Middle East interests, have joined most of the world in favor of the political settlement that the United States and Israel have been able to block for many years. But their position has largely been excluded from the media, which have adhered to the consensus of Israel's two major political groupings, generally taking Labor Party rejectionism to represent the "peace option."

A problem develops when U.S. and Israeli positions diverge. One such case arose in October 1977, when a Soviet-American statement was issued calling for "termination of the state of war and establishment of normal peaceful relations" between Israel and its neighbors, as well as for internationally guaranteed borders and demilitarized zones. The statement was endorsed by the PLO but bitterly denounced by Israel and its domestic U.S. lobby. The media reaction was instructive. The media normally adopt the stand of their leader in the White House in the event of conflict with some foreign state. The administration is allowed to frame the issues and is given the most prominent coverage, with its adversaries sometimes permitted a line here and there in rebuttal, in the interest of objectivity and fairness. In this case, however, the pattern was reversed. As described in Montague Kern's detailed analysis of TV coverage, the media highlighted the Israeli position, treating the Carter administration in the manner of some official enemy. Israeli premises framed the issues, and Israeli sources generally dominated coverage and interpretation. Arab sources, in particular the PLO, were largely dismissed or treated with contempt. "Israel was able to make its case on television," Kern concludes, while "this was not so for the [U.S.] administration, which trailed the Israelis in terms of all the indicators" of media access and influence.[40] Carter soon backed down. With the threat of a peaceful settlement deflected, the "peace process" could resume on its rejectionist course.

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[36] For one informative case, see appendix V, section 3.

[37] Michael Wines and James Gerstenzang, *LAT,* Jan. 26, 1988.

[38] Robert Pear, *NYT,* July 3, 1988; *LAT,* July 17, 1988.

[39] See appendix V, section 4, for further comment.

[40] Montague Kern, *Television and Middle East Diplomacy: President Carter's Fall 1977 Peace Initiative* (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown, Occasional Papers Series, 1983).

Nevertheless, the media are bitterly condemned as "pro-PLO" and as imposing an unfair "double standard" on Israel. We then debate the sources of this strange malady. As in other cases, attack is the best defense, particularly when dominance over the media and exclusion of contrary views has reached a sufficient level so that any criticism, however outlandish, will be treated with respect.[41]

Reinhold Niebuhr once remarked that "perhaps the most significant moral characteristic of a nation is its hypocrisy."[42] The point is well taken. There is a simple measure of hypocrisy, which we properly apply to our enemies. When peace groups, government figures, media, and loyal intellectuals in the Soviet sphere deplore brutal and repressive acts of the United States and its clients, we test their sincerity by asking what they say about their own responsibilities. Upon ascertaining the answer, we dismiss their condemnations, however accurate, as the sheerest hypocrisy. Minimal honesty requires that we apply the

same standards to ourselves.

Freedom of the press, for example, is a prime concern for the media and the intellectual community. The major issue of freedom of the press in the 1980s has surely been the harassment of *La Prensa* in Nicaragua. Coverage of its tribulations probably exceeds all other reporting and commentary on freedom of the press throughout the world combined, and is unique in the passion of rhetoric. No crime of the Sandinistas has elicited more outrage than their censorship of *La Prensa* and its suspension in 1986, immediately after the congressional vote of $100 million for the contras, a vote that amounted to a virtual declaration of war by the United States, as the Reaganites happily proclaimed, and a sharp rebuff to the World Court. *La Prensa* publisher Violeta Chamorro was at once given an award by the Nieman Journalism Foundation at Harvard for her courageous battle for freedom of speech. In the *New York Review of Books,* Murray Kempton appealed to all those committed to free expression to provide financial aid for the brave struggle of the owners and editors to maintain their staff and equipment; such gifts would supplement the funding provided by the U.S. government, which began shortly after the Sandinista victory, when President Carter authorized the CIA to support *La Prensa* and the anti-Sandinista opposition. Under the heading "A Newspaper of Valor," the *Washington Post* lauded Violeta Chamorro, commenting that she and her newspaper "deserve 10 awards." Other media commentary has been abundant and no less effusive, while the Sandinistas have been bitterly condemned for harassing or silencing this Tribune of the People.[43]

We now ask whether these sentiments reflect libertarian values or service to power, applying the standard test of sincerity. How, for example, did the same people and institutions react when the security forces of the Duarte government that we support eliminated the independent media in the U.S. client state of El Salvador -- not by intermittent censorship and suspension, but by murder, mutilation, and physical destruction? We have already seen the answer. There was silence. The *New York Times* had nothing to say about these atrocities in its news columns or editorials, then or since, and others who profess their indignation over the treatment of *La Prensa* are no different. This extreme contempt for freedom of the press remains in force as we applaud our achievements in bringing "democracy" to El Salvador.

We conclude that, among the articulate intellectuals, those who believe in freedom of the press could easily fit in someone's living room, and would include few of those who proclaim libertarian values while assailing the enemy of the state.

To test this conclusion further, we may turn to Guatemala. No censorship was required in Guatemala while the United States was supporting the terror at its height; the murder of dozens of journalists sufficed. There was little notice in the United States. With the "democratic renewal" that we proudly hail, there were some halting efforts to explore the "political space" that perhaps had opened. In February 1988, two journalists who had returned from exile opened the center-left weekly *La Epoca,* testing Guatemalan "democracy." A communiqué of the Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA) had warned returning journalists: "We will make sure they either leave the country or die inside it."[44] No notice was taken in the United States.

In April great indignation was aroused when *La Prensa* could not publish during a newsprint shortage. For the *Washington Post,* this was another "pointed lesson in arbitrary power...by denying La Prensa the newsprint." There were renewed cries of outrage when *La Prensa* was suspended for two weeks in July after what the government alleged to be fabricated and inflammatory accounts of violence that had erupted at demonstrations.[45]

Meanwhile, on June 10, fifteen heavily armed men broke into the offices of *La Epoca,* stole valuable equipment, and firebombed the offices, destroying them. They also kidnapped the night watchman, releasing him later under threat of death if he were to speak about the attack. Eyewitness testimony and other sources left little doubt that it was an operation of the security forces. The editor held a press conference on June 14 to announce that the journal would shut down "because there are not conditions in the country to guarantee the exercise of free and independent journalism." After a circular appeared threatening "traitor journalists" including "communists and those who have returned from exile," warning them to flee the country or find themselves "dead within," he returned to exile, accompanied to

the airport by a Western diplomat. Another journalist also left. The destruction of *La Epoca* "signalled not only the end of an independent media voice in Guatemala, but it served as a warning as well that future press independence would not be tolerated by the government or security forces," Americas Watch commented.[46]

These events elicited no public response from the guardians of free expression. The facts were not even reported in the *New York Times* or *Washington Post,* though not from ignorance, surely.[47] It is simply that the violent destruction of independent media is not important when it takes place in a "fledgling democracy" backed by the United States. There was, however, a congressional reaction, NACLA reported: "In Washington, liberal Democratic Senators responded by adding $4 million onto the Administration's request for military aid. With Sen. Inouye leading the way, these erstwhile freedom-of-the-press junkies have offered the brass $9 million plus some $137 million in economic aid, including $80 million cash, much of which goes to swell the army's coffers," while *La Epoca* editor Bryan Barrera "is back in Mexico" and "Guatemala's press is again confined to rightwing muckraking and army propaganda."[48] The vigilant guardians of freedom of the press observed in silence.

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[41] See appendix V, section 5.

[42] Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society,* 95.

[43] Kempton, *NYRB,* Nov. 26, 1986; Bob Woodward, *Veil* (Simon & Schuster, 1987, 113); editorial, *WP,* March 29, 1987. See John Spicer Nichols, *Columbia Journalism Review,* July/August 1988, on the funding for *La Prensa* by the U.S. government, the North network, and other sources linked to the U.S. government and the contras; also letters, *CJR,* Sept./Oct. According to sources reported by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, Violeta Chamorro was paid a CIA stipend and the journal received at least $500,000 from the CIA and other U.S. sources; *Washington Report on the Hemisphere,* March 16, 1988.

[44] *South,* Oct. 1988.

[45] Editorial, *WP,* April 25, 1988. See chapter 4 and appendix IV, section 5.

[46] *Central America Report* (Guatemala City), June 10, 17, 1988; Jean-Marie Simon, ed., *Guatemala News in Brief,* no. 23, May 11-July 1988, Americas Watch; Human Rights Watch, *The Persecution of Human Rights Monitors,* Dec. 1988.

[47] A month later, the seventeenth paragraph of a story on Guatemala by Stephen Kinzer mentions the bombing of *La Epoca,* which "some diplomats attributed to the security forces," and it was mentioned again in August in the *Times* book review in a report on a conference of Central American writers. Kinzer, *NYT,* July 6, 1988; David Unger, *NYT Weekly Book Review,* Aug. 7, 1988. The home of the TASS correspondent had been firebombed shortly before the destruction of *La Epoca,* and the correspondents for TASS and the Cuban *Prensa Latina* had been forced to leave the country after death threats; two traditional death squads, linked to the security forces, took credit.

[48] "Freedom of the Press," NACLA *Report on the Americas,* May/June 1988.

A few weeks later, Israeli security forces raided the offices of a leading Jerusalem daily, *Al-Fajr,* arresting its managing editor Hatem Abdel-Qader and jailing him for six months without trial on unspecified security grounds.[49] There were no ringing editorial denunciations or calls for retribution; in fact, these trivialities were not even reported in the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*. Unlike Violeta Chamorro, to whom nothing of the sort has happened, Abdel-Qader does not "deserve 10 awards," or even one, or even a line.

Once again, the facts are clear: the alleged concern for freedom of the press in Nicaragua is sheer fraud.

Perhaps one might argue that censorship of *La Prensa* is more important than the murder of an editor by

U.S.-backed security forces and the destruction of offices by the army or its terrorist squads, because *La Prensa* is a journal of such significance, having courageously opposed our ally Somoza under the leadership of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, assassinated by the dictator in 1978. That would be a poor argument at best; freedom of the press means little if it only serves powerful institutions. But there are further flaws. One is that the post-1980 *La Prensa* bears virtually no relation to the journal that opposed Somoza. After the murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, his brother Xavier became editor and remained so until the owners ousted him in 1980; 80 percent of the staff left with him and founded *El Nuevo Diario,* which is the successor to the old *La Prensa* if we consider a journal to be constituted of its editor and staff, not its owners and equipment. The new editor of *La Prensa,* son of the assassinated editor, had previously been selling advertising; later, he joined the CIA-run contra directorate, remaining co-editor of the journal, which publicly supports his stand.[50]

These facts are not be found in the media tributes to the brave tradition of *La Prensa*; they are either unmentioned in the course of lamentations over the fate of this "newspaper of valor," or treated in the style of Stephen Kinzer, who writes that *El Nuevo Diario* "was founded...by a breakaway group of employees of La Prensa sympathetic to the Sandinista cause" -- a "breakaway group" that included 80 percent of the staff and the editor, who opposed the new line of the CIA-supported journal.[51]

The extent of the hypocrisy becomes still more obvious when we consider the "newspaper of valor" more closely. The journal has quite openly supported the attack against Nicaragua. In April 1986, as the campaign to provide military aid to the contras was heating up, one of the owners, Jaime Chamorro, wrote an Op-Ed in the *Washington Post* calling for aid to "those Nicaraguans who are fighting for democracy" (the standard reference to the U.S. proxy forces). In the weeks preceding the summer congressional votes, "a host of articles by five different *La Prensa* staff members denounced the Sandinistas in major newspapers throughout the United States," John Spicer Nichols observes, including a series of Op-Eds signed by *La Prensa* editors in the *Washington Post* as they traveled to the United States under the auspices of front organizations of the North contra-funding network. Under its new regime, *La Prensa* has barely pretended to be a newspaper; rather, it is a propaganda journal devoted to undermining the government and supporting the attack against Nicaragua by a foreign power. Since its reopening in October 1987 the commitments are quite open and transparent.[52] To my knowledge, there is no precedent for the survival and continued publication of such a journal during a period of crisis in any Western democracy, surely not the United States.[53]

Advocates of libertarian values should, nonetheless, insist that Nicaragua break precedent in this area, despite its dire straits, and deplore its failure to do so. As already mentioned, however, such advocates are not easy to discover, as the most elementary test of sincerity demonstrates.

It could be argued that comparison with the United States is inadequate, given the dismal U.S. record. We might take that to be the import of remarks by Supreme Court Justice William Brennan in a speech delivered at Hebrew University Law School in December 1987, where he observed that the United States "has a long history of failing to preserve civil liberties when it perceived its national security threatened" -- as during World War I, when there was not even a remote threat. "It may well be Israel, not the United States, that provides the best hope for building a jurisprudence that can protect civil liberties against the demands of national security," Brennan said, adding that "the nations of the world, faced with sudden threats to their own security, will look to Israel's experience in handling its continuing security crisis, and may well find in that experience the expertise to reject the security claims that Israel has exposed as baseless and the courage to preserve the civil liberties that Israel has preserved without detriment to its security." If we can draw lessons from Israel's stellar record, "adversity may yet be the handmaiden of liberty."[54]

Following the precepts of this characteristic accolade to the "symbol of human decency" -- and not coincidentally, loyal U.S. ally and client -- we derive a further test of the sincerity of those who denounce the totalitarian Sandinistas for their treatment of *La Prensa* and the political opposition. Let us proceed to apply it.

Just at the time that *La Prensa* was suspended in 1986 after the virtual U.S. declaration of war against Nicaragua, Israel permanently closed two Jerusalem newspapers, *Al-Mithaq* and *Al-Ahd,* on the grounds

that "although we offer them freedom of expression,...it is forbidden to permit them to exploit this freedom in order to harm the State of Israel." The Interior Ministry declared that it was compelled to act "in the interest of state security and public welfare." We believe in freedom of the press, the Ministry asserted, but "one has to properly balance freedom of expression and the welfare of the state." The closure was upheld by the High Court on the grounds that "it is inconceivable that the State of Israel should allow terrorist organizations which seek to destroy it to set up businesses in its territory, legitimate as they may be"; the government had accused these two Arab newspapers of receiving support from hostile groups.[55] To my knowledge, the only mention of these facts in a U.S. newspaper was in a letter of mine to the *Boston Globe*.

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[49] Wire services, *Boston Globe,* Sept. 5, 1988.

[50] See appendix V, section 6.

[51] Kinzer, *NYT,* April 20, 1987. Elsewhere, Kinzer writes that "In 1980, La Prensa was shaken by internal conflict when a group of employees objected to its increasingly anti-Sandinista line. The dissident employees, led by Xavier Chamorro Cardenal, a brother of the late publisher, quit and founded their own paper, Nuevo Diario" (*NYT,* Oct. 2, 1987). Omitted is the fact that Xavier Chamorro was the editor and that the "dissident employees" constituted 80 percent of the staff.

[52] Chamorro, *WP,* April 3, 1986; Nichols, *op. cit.*; see appendix V, section 6.

[53] For comparison of Nicaraguan practices with those of the U.S. and Israel, see references of chapter 4, note 3.

[54] AP, Dec. 22, 1987; Cal Thomas, *BG,* Jan. 3, 1988.

[55] *Al-Hamishmar,* July 25, Aug. 13; *Jerusalem Post,* Aug. 12, 24; *Al-Hamishmar,* July 25, Aug. 13, 1986.

As *La Prensa* was reopened in 1987, the Israeli press reported the closing of a Nazareth political journal (within Israel proper) on grounds of its "extreme nationalist editorial line" and an Arab-owned news office in Nablus was shut down for two years; its owner had by then been imprisoned for six months without trial on the charge of "membership in an illegal organization," and a military communiqué stated that his wife had maintained the ties of the office to the PLO. Such repressive actions are "legal" under the state of emergency that has been in force since the state was founded in 1948. The High Court upheld the closing of the Nazareth journal, alleging that the security services had provided evidence of a connection between the journal and "terrorist organizations" and dismissing as irrelevant the plea of its publisher that everything that had appeared in the journal had passed through Israeli censorship.[56] None of this appears to have been reported here; *New York Times* correspondent Thomas Friedman chose the day of the closing of the Nablus office to produce one of his regular odes to freedom of expression in Israel.[57] There was no outcry of protest among American civil libertarians, no denunciation or even comment on acts that far exceed the harassment and temporary suspension of the U.S.-funded journal in Nicaragua that openly supports the overthrow of the government, no call for organizing a terrorist army to enforce our high standards, so grievously offended. Silence continued to reign as the Nazareth weekly *Al-Raia* was closed by order of the Ministry of Interior, after its editor had been jailed for three months without trial.[58]

Once again, history has devised a controlled experiment to demonstrate the utter contempt for freedom of speech on the part of professed civil libertarians. Critics of Nicaraguan abuses of press freedom who pass the most elementary test of sincerity could fit into a very small living room indeed, perhaps even a telephone booth.[59]

As for the jurisprudence that so impressed Justice Brennan, the Hebrew press observes that "Israeli

journalism lacks any guarantees, even the slightest, for its freedom. The state is armed with weapons that have no parallel in any democratic society in the world," deriving from colonial British regulations that were reinstituted by Israel as soon as the state was established. These draconian regulations include measures to forbid and punish publications that might encourage "disobedience or displeasure among the inhabitants of the country" or "unpleasantness to the authorities." The law authorizes the Interior Ministry "to terminate the appearance of a journal, for any period that he will deem appropriate, if it has published lies or false rumors that are likely, in his opinion, to enhance panic or despair." The measures are held in reserve, sometimes applied, and they contribute to fear and an "atmosphere of McCarthyism" that enhances the self-censorship normally practiced by editors. This voluntary self-censorship, Israeli legal analyst Moshe Negbi writes, adds substantially to the effects of the "rich and unusual array of tools for crushing press freedom" in the hands of the government. The censor has the legal authority to forbid any information "which might, in his view, harm the defense of the country, public safety or public order." The military censor is "immune to public scrutiny" and "the law forbids the press from publishing any hint that the censor ordered any changes, additions or deletions," though often the fact is obvious, as when the lead editorial is blanked out in Israel's most respected newspaper, *Ha'aretz*. The censor also has the authority to punish, without trial, any newspaper he deems to have violated his orders. The Declaration of Independence of 1948, which expressed Israel's obligations with regard to freedom and civil rights, "makes no mention of freedom of expression," Negbi continues, adding that it was not an accidental omission, but rather reflected the attitudes of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, who "vigorously opposed reference to these rights," adhering, along with his associates, to the "Leninist doctrine" that the state should suffer no criticism for actions it regards as right. The state is even authorized to refuse to register a journal (so that it cannot be published) or to terminate it, "without providing any motivation for its refusal."[60]

This authority is used: for example, in barring an Arabic-language social and political journal in Israel edited by an Israeli Arab lecturer at the Hebrew University in 1982, a decision approved by the High Court for unstated "security reasons"; or the arrest of an Arab from Nazareth a few months later "for publishing a newspaper without permission," namely, four informational leaflets. The courts offer no protection when the state produces the magic word "security."[61]

While Arab citizens are the usual targets, Jews are not immune from these principles of jurisprudence. When the dovish Progressive List, one of whose leaders is General Matti Peled (retired), sought to broadcast a campaign advertisement showing an interview with Arafat announcing that he accepts U.N. resolutions 242 and 338, High Court Justice Goldberg ruled it illegal, stating: "From the time when the government declared that the PLO is a terrorist organization, television is permitted to produce only broadcasts that conform to this declaration and present the PLO in a negative manner as a terrorist organization. It is forbidden to broadcast anything that contradicts the declaration and presents the PLO as a political organization." Commenting, attorney Avigdor Feldman writes: "The logic is iron-clad. State television [there is no other] is not permitted to broadcast a reality inconsistent with government decision, and if the facts are not consistent with the government stand, then not in our school, please."[62]

In the United States, one will discover very little reference to the severe constraints on free expression in Israel over many years. It was not until the violent reaction to the Palestinian uprising from December 1987 that even cursory notice was taken of these practices. In the *New York Times* there has been virtually nothing; it requires considerable audacity for former chief editor A.M. Rosenthal to assert in May 1988 that censorship in Israel "deserves and gets Western criticism."[63] Furthermore, the rare exceptions[64] do not lead to condemnations for these departures from our high ideals or a call for some action on the part of Israel's leading patron.

The reaction of the U.S. media and the American intellectual community to Israeli law and practices provides further dramatic evidence that the show of concern for civil liberties and human rights in Nicaragua is cynical pretense, serving other ends.

The standard test of sincerity yields similar results wherever we turn. These conclusions are well enough documented by now, in such a wide range of cases, as to raise some serious questions among people willing to consider fact and reason. The answers to these questions will not be pleasant to face, so we

can be confident that the questions will not be asked.

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[56] *Yediot Ahronot,* Aug. 16, 1987, translated in *The Other Israel* (Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace), Sept. 1987; *Ha'aretz,* Jan 1, 1988; AP, Oct. 25, 26. On the state of emergency, see Avigdor Feldman, B. Michael, *Hadashot,* Aug. 14, 1987.

[57] *NYT,* Oct. 26, 1987.

[58] Simon Edge, *Middle East International,* Jan. 20, 1989.

[59] The plea that we did not know is valid for passive consumers who believe that the media present the world as it actually is. It is not valid for those who have any familiarity with the ideological institutions or participate in them, and who therefore must surely be aware that it takes effort and enterprise to find important and unwelcome facts.

[60] Leah Enbal, *Koteret Rashit,* June 8, 1988, also citing a series of recent cases of state repression of Israeli Jews. Moshe Negbi, *Politika,* Sept. 1986; "Press in Chains," *Shomer Hanitzotz,* May 1988 (published in protest over the suppression of the Hebrew newspaper *Derech Hanitzotz* and the arrest of its editors); "Paper Tiger: The Struggle for Press Freedom in Israel," *Jerusalem Quarterly,* #39, 1986. *Ha'aretz,* September 29, 1986.

[61] *Fateful Triangle,* 139.

[62] Avigdor Feldman, *Hadashot,* Nov. 18, 1988. See appendix V, section 7, for further comments.

[63] Rosenthal, *NYT,* May 27, 1988.

[64] For example, Dan Fisher, *Los Angeles Times,* Oct. 5, 1985.

Discussing "our un-free press" half a century ago, John Dewey observed that criticism of "specific abuses" has only limited value:

> The only really fundamental approach to the problem is to inquire concerning the necessary effect of the present economic system upon the whole system of publicity; upon the judgment of what news is, upon the selection and elimination of matter that is published, upon the treatment of news in both editorial and news columns. The question, under this mode of approach, is not how many specific abuses there are and how they may be remedied, but how far genuine intellectual freedom and social responsibility are possible on any large scale under the existing economic regime.

Publishers and editors, with their commitments to "the public and social order" of which they are the beneficiaries, will often prove to be among the "chief enemies" of true "liberty of the press," Dewey continued. It is unreasonable to expect "the managers of this business enterprise to do otherwise than as the leaders and henchmen of big business," and to "select and treat *their* special wares from this standpoint." Insofar as the ideological managers are "giving the public what it `wants'," that is because of "the effect of the present economic system in generating intellectual indifference and apathy, in creating a demand for distraction and diversion, and almost a love for crime provided it pays" among a public "debauched by the ideal of getting away with whatever it can."[65]

To these apt reflections we may add the intimate relations between private and state power, the institutionally determined need to accommodate to the interests of those who control basic social decisions, and the success of established power in steadily disintegrating any independent culture that fosters values other than greed, personal gain, and subordination to authority, and any popular structures that sustain independent thought and action. The importance of these factors is highlighted by the fact that even the formal right to freedom of speech was gained only by unremitting popular struggle that

challenged existing social arrangements.[66]

Within the reigning social order, the general public must remain an object of manipulation, not a participant in thought, debate, and decision. As the privileged have long understood, it is necessary to ward off recurrent "crises of democracy." In earlier chapters, I have discussed some of the ways these principles have been expressed in the modern period, but the concerns are natural and have arisen from the very origins of the modern democratic thrust. Condemning the radical democrats who had threatened to "turn the world upside down" during the English revolution of the seventeenth century, historian Clement Walker, in 1661, complained:

> They have cast all the mysteries and secrets of government...before the vulgar (like pearls before swine), and have taught both the soldiery and people to look so far into them as to ravel back all governments to the first principles of nature... They have made the people thereby so curious and so arrogant that they will never find humility enough to submit to a civil rule.[67]

Walker's concerns were soon overcome, as an orderly world was restored and the "political defeat" of the democrats "was total and irreversible," Christopher Hill observes. By 1695 censorship could be abandoned, "not on the radicals' libertarian principles, but because censorship was no longer necessary," for "the opinion-formers" now "censored themselves" and "nothing got into print which frightened the men of property." In the same year, John Locke wrote that "day-labourers and tradesmen, the spinsters and dairymaids" must be told what to believe. "The greatest part cannot know and therefore they must believe." "But at least," Hill comments, "Locke did not intend that priests should do the telling: that was for God himself."[68] With the decline of religious authority in the modern period, the task has fallen to the "secular priesthood," who understand their responsibility with some clarity, as already discussed.

Despite these insights, some have continued to be seduced by the "democratic dogmatisms" that are derided by those dedicated to the art of manipulation. John Stuart Mill wrote: "Not the violent conflict between parts of the truth, but the quiet suppression of half of it, is the formidable evil. There is always hope when people are forced to listen to both sides." Coming to the present, the Code of Professional Conduct of the British National Union of Journalists enjoins the journalist to "eliminate distortion" and "strive to ensure that the information he/she disseminates is fair and accurate, avoid the expression of comment and conjecture as established fact and falsification by distortion, selection, or misrepresentation."[69] The manipulation of the public in the 1960s elicited the concerns expressed in 1966 by Senator Fulbright, quoted earlier. A year later, Jerome Barron proposed "an interpretation of the first amendment which focuses on the idea that restraining the hand of government is quite useless in assuring free speech if a restraint on access is effectively secured by private groups," that is, "the new media of communication": only they "can lay sentiments before the public, and it is they rather than government who can most effectively abridge expression by nullifying the opportunity for an idea to win acceptance. As a constitutional theory for the communication of ideas, laissez faire is manifestly irrelevant" when the media are narrowly controlled by private power.[70]

Many viewed such ideas with alarm. The editors of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* for many years one of the more independent segments of the local quality press, agreed that the newspaper "has an obligation to the community in which it is published to present fairly unpopular as well as popular sides of a question," but "such a dictum" should not be enforced by law. "As a practical matter," they held, "a newspaper which consistently refuses to give expression to viewpoints with which it differs is not likely to succeed, and doesn't deserve to."[71]

The editors were wrong in their factual assessment, though their qualms about legal obligations cannot be lightly dismissed. In reality, only those media that consistently restrict "both sides" to the narrow consensus of the powerful will succeed in the guided free market.

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[65] Jo Ann Boydston, ed., *John Dewey: The Later Works,* vol. II, from *Common Sense,* Nov. 1935.

[66] See appendix V, section 8.

[67] Quoted by Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down,* 72.

[68] *Ibid.,* 385, 353.

[69] See Mark Hollingsworth, *The Press and Political Dissent* (Pluto, London, 1986), for which Mill's statement serves as epigraph.

[70] Barron, "Access to the Press," 1656.

[71] *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* Aug. 24, 1967, cited by Jerome A. Barron, "An Emerging First Amendment Right of Access to the Media?," *George Washington Law Review* (March 1969), 498. See Aronson, *The Press and the Cold War,* 273-74, for discussion.

It is particularly important to understand what stories not to seek, what sources of evidence to avoid. Refugees from Timor or from U.S. bombing in Laos and Cambodia have no useful tales to tell. It is important to stay away from camps on the Honduran border, where refugees report "without exception" that they were "all fleeing from the army that we are supporting" and "every person had a tale of atrocity by government forces, the same ones we are again outfitting with weapons" as they conduct "a systematic campaign of terrorism" with "a combination of murder, torture, rape, the burning of crops in order to create starvation conditions," and vicious atrocities; the report of the congressional delegation that reached these conclusions after their first-hand investigation in early 1981 was excluded from the media, which were avoiding this primary source of evidence on rural El Salvador.[72] It would be bad form to arouse public awareness of Nicaragua's "noteworthy progress in the social sector, which is laying a solid foundation for long-term socio-economic development," reported in 1983 by the Inter-American Development Bank, barred by U.S. pressure from contributing to these achievements.[73] Correspondingly, it is improper to set forth the achievements of the Reagan administration in reversing these early successes, to record the return of disease and malnutrition, illiteracy and dying infants, while the country is driven to the zero grade of life to pay for the sin of independent development. In contrast, it is responsible journalism for James LeMoyne to denounce the Sandinistas for the "bitterness and apathy" he finds in Managua.[74] Those who hope to enter the system must learn that terror traceable to the PLO, Qaddafi, or Khomeini leaves worthy victims who merit compassion and concern; but those targeted by the United States and its allies do not fall within this category. Responsible journalists must understand that a grenade attack on Israeli Army recruits and their families leaving one killed and many wounded deserves a front-page photograph of the victims and a substantial story, while a contra attack on a passenger bus the day before with two killed, two kidnapped, and many wounded merits no report at all.[75] Category by category, the same lessons hold.

There is, in fact, a ready algorithm for those who wish to attain respectability and privilege. It is only necessary to bear in mind the test for sincerity already discussed, and to make sure that you fail it at every turn. The same simple logic explains the characteristic performance of the independent media, and the educated classes generally, for reasons that are hardly obscure.

I have been discussing methods of thought control and the reasons why they gain such prominence in democratic societies in which the general population cannot be driven from the political arena by force. The discussion may leave the impression that the system is all-powerful, but that is far from true. People have the capacity to resist, and sometimes do, with great effect.

Take the case of the Western-backed slaughter in Timor. The media suppressed the terrible events and the complicity of their own governments, but the story nevertheless did finally break through, reaching segments of the public and Congress. This was the achievement of a few dedicated young people, whose names will not be known to history, as is generally true of those whose actions have improved the world. Their efforts did not bring an end to the Indonesian terror or the U.S. support for it, but they did mitigate the violence. Finally, as a result of their work, the Red Cross was allowed limited access. In this and other ways, tens of thousands of lives were saved. There are very few people who can claim to have achieved so much of human consequence. The same is true of many other cases. Internal constraints

within a powerful state provide a margin of survivability for its victims, a fact that should never be forgotten.

The United States is a much more civilized place than it was twenty-five years ago. The crisis of democracy and the intellectual independence that so terrify elites have been real enough, and the effects on the society have been profound, and on balance generally healthy. The impact is readily discernible over a wide range of concerns, including racism, the environment, feminism, forceful intervention, and much else; and also in the media, which have allowed some opening to dissident opinion and critical reporting in recent years, considerably beyond what was imaginable even at the peak of the ferment of the sixties, let alone before. One illustration of the improvement in the moral and cultural level is that it has become possible, for the first time, to confront in a serious way what had been done to Native Americans during the conquest of the continent; and many other necessary illusions were questioned, and quickly crumbled upon inspection, as challenges were raised to orthodoxy and authority. Small wonder that the sixties appear as a period of horror, chaos, and destructive abandon in the reflections of privileged observers who are distressed, even appalled, by intellectual independence and moral integrity on the part of the young.

The same developments have had their impact on state policy. There was no protest when John F. Kennedy sent the U.S. Air Force to attack the rural society of South Vietnam. Twenty years later, the Reagan administration was driven underground, compelled to resort to clandestine terror in Central America. The climate of opinion and concern had changed, outside of elite circles, and the capacity of the state to exercise violence had been correspondingly reduced. The toll of Reaganite terror was awesome: tens of thousands of tortured and mutilated bodies, massive starvation, disease and destruction, hundreds of thousands of miserable refugees. It would have been a great deal worse without the constraints imposed by people who had found ways to escape the system of indoctrination, and the courage and honesty to act. These are no small achievements -- again, on the part of people whose names will be lost to history.

There are ample opportunities to help create a more humane and decent world, if we choose to act upon them.

I began with the questions raised by the Brazilian bishops about the problems of democracy and the media. Perhaps I may close with my own conclusions on these matters. The professed concern for freedom of the press in the West is not very persuasive in the light of the easy dismissal of even extreme violations of the right of free expression in U.S. client states, and the actual performance of the media in serving the powerful and privileged as an agency of manipulation, indoctrination, and control. A "democratic communications policy," in contrast, would seek to develop means of expression and interaction that reflect the interests and concerns of the general population, and to encourage their self-education and their individual and collective action. A policy conceived in these terms would be a desideratum, though there are pitfalls and dangers that should not be overlooked. But the issue is largely academic, when viewed in isolation from the general social scene. The prospects for a democratic communications policy are inevitably constrained by the distribution of effective power to determine the course and functioning of major social institutions. Hence the goal can be approached only as an integral part of the further democratization of the social order. This process, in turn, requires a democratic communications policy as a central component, with an indispensable contribution to make. Serious steps towards more meaningful democracy would aim to dissolve the concentration of decision-making power, which in our societies resides primarily in a state-corporate nexus. Such a conception of democracy, though so familiar from earlier years that it might even merit the much-abused term "conservative," is remote from those that dominate public discourse -- hardly a surprise, given its threat to established privilege.

Human beings are the only species with a history. Whether they also have a future is not so obvious. The answer will lie in the prospects for popular movements, with firm roots among all sectors of the population, dedicated to values that are suppressed or driven to the margins within the existing social and political order: community, solidarity, concern for a fragile environment that will have to sustain future generations, creative work under voluntary control, independent thought, and true democratic

participation in varied aspects of life.

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[72] See *Towards a New Cold War,* 36-37, 228, for further detail and some very marginal exceptions.

[73] Dianna Melrose, *Nicaragua: The Threat of a Good Example?* (Oxfam, London, 1985).

[74] *NYT,* Dec. 29, 1987.

[75] Thomas Friedman, *NYT,* Oct. 16; photo, p. 1. AP, Oct. 15, 1986.

Appendix II

1. The Containment Doctrine [1]

The project of containing the Soviet Union and its allies is a predominant theme of contemporary history, which merits some comment.

The fact that the rhetoric of "containment" carries with it some rather significant presuppositions has of course been recognized in the scholarly literature. In one of the leading studies of containment, John Lewis Gaddis observes that "the term `containment' poses certain problems, implying as it does a consistently defensive orientation in American policy." He nevertheless finds the term appropriate, because "American leaders consistently *perceived* themselves as responding to rather than initiating challenges to the existing international order" and were in fact concerned with "maintaining a global balance of power with the perceived Muscovite challenge to that equilibrium" in Western Europe.[2] Leaders of other powers have similar perceptions, but we do not permit this fact to guide our interpretation of history.

What was "the existing international order" that had to be "defended"? U.S. planners intended to construct what they called a Grand Area, a global order subordinated to the needs of the U.S. economy and subject to U.S. political control. Regional systems, particularly the British, were to be eliminated, while those under U.S. control were to be extended, on the principle, expressed by Abe Fortas in internal discussion, that these steps were "part of our obligation to the security of the world...what was good for us was good for the world."[3] This altruistic concern was unappreciated by the British Foreign Office. Their perception was that "the economic imperialism of American business interests, which is quite active under the cloak of a benevolent and avuncular internationalism," is "attempting to elbow us out." The Minister of State at the British Foreign Office, Richard Law, commented to his Cabinet colleagues that Americans believe "that the United States stands for something in the world -- something of which the world has need, something which the world is going to like, something, in the final analysis, which the world is going to take, whether it likes it or not."[4] Not an inaccurate perception.

Against which enemies was it necessary to defend the Grand Area, apart from the British and other commercial rivals? At the rhetorical level, the enemy was the Soviet Union, and there is little reason to doubt that the sentiment was genuine, though, as the scholarly literature recognizes, it was exaggerated. But the sincerity of the concern is not very relevant; it is easy to persuade oneself of what it is convenient to believe, and state managers readily accept the reality of the threats they concoct for quite different reasons.

The Soviet Union is indeed a threat to the Grand Area because it has refused to be incorporated within it and assists others equally recalcitrant. But the Soviet threat is regarded as far more profound, justifying stern measures in defense. Woodrow Wilson "and his allies saw their actions in a defensive rather than in an offensive context" when they invaded the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik revolution, John Lewis Gaddis observes approvingly. Wilson was "determined above all else to secure self-determination in Russia," by invading the country and installing what we determine to be its proper rulers; by the same

logic, the U.S. has been devoted to self-determination for Vietnam, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and other beneficiaries of our concern, and the U.S.S.R. is dedicated to self-determination in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan. But more deeply, Gaddis continues, "Intervention in Russia took place in response to a profound and potentially far-reaching intervention by the new Soviet government in the internal affairs, not just of the West, but of virtually every country in the world." This Soviet "intervention" in the internal affairs of others was "the Revolution's challenge -- which could hardly have been more categorical -- to the very survival of the capitalist order." "The security of the United States" was therefore "in danger" in 1917, so defensive actions were entirely warranted; perhaps even the first use ever of gas bombs from aircraft that was considered by the British GHQ to be the primary factor in their early military successes in 1919, the same year when "poisoned gas" was recommended by Secretary of State Winston Churchill for use "against uncivilised tribes" in Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Afghanistan.[5]

The Soviet Union's "self-proclaimed intention to seek the overthrow of capitalist governments throughout the world," Gaddis explains further, justified invasion of the U.S.S.R. in defense against this announced intention, and after World War II "the increasing success of communist parties in Western Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and China" justifiably aroused renewed "suspicion about the Soviet Union's behavior," even though their popularity "grew primarily out of their effectiveness as resistance fighters against the Axis."

Gaddis criticizes Soviet historians who see the Western intervention after the revolution as "shocking, unnatural, and even a violation of the legal norms that should exist between nations." "One cannot have it both ways," he responds, complaining about a Western invasion while "the most profound revolutionary challenge of the century was mounted against the West": by changing the social order in Russia and proclaiming revolutionary intentions.[6]

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[1] Addendum to p. 25.

[2] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York, 1982, viiin), his emphasis; *The Long Peace,* 43.

[3] Wm. Roger Lewis, *Imperialism at Bay: the United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (Oxford, 1978, 481). On Grand Area planning, see Shoup and Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust*. For remarks on this and competing models, and applications in the Far East, see Bruce Cumings, introduction, in Cumings, ed., *Child of Conflict* (Washington, 1983).

[4] Lewis, *op. cit.,* 550; Christopher Thorne, *The Issue of War* (Oxford, 1985, 225, 211).

[5] Gaddis, *The Long Peace,* 10-11, 21; Andy Thomas, *Effects of Chemical Warfare* (SIPRI, Taylor & Francis, 1985, 33f.), reviewing newly released British state archives.

[6] Gaddis, *The Long Peace,* 37, 11.

With such an expansive conception of "defense," here expressed by a highly-regarded diplomatic historian, one could readily construct a justification for Hitler's actions in the late 1930s to "defend" Germany against what the Nazi ideologists called the terror and aggression of the Czechs and Poles and the attempted strangulation of Germany by hostile powers. And by the same logic, it would be legitimate for the U.S.S.R. (or Cuba, etc.) to invade the United States "to secure self-determination" there in defense against the clearly stated U.S. challenge "to the very survival of the Soviet and Cuban sociopolitical order."

U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union has fluctuated over the years between two concepts of "containment": rollback and détente. To a considerable extent, the fluctuations reflect the problem of controlling the far-flung domains "defended" by American power, and the need for a credible threat to induce the public to provide a subsidy to advanced industry through the military system.[7] The latter issue

was recognized in NSC 68. The document estimated the economic power of the Soviet bloc as approximately the same as Western Europe, with Soviet GNP about one quarter that of the United States and its military expenditures about half as great.[8] Nevertheless, it called for a great expansion of military spending, warning that the West would face "a decline in economic activity of serious proportions" without this Keynesian stimulus; the military budget was almost quadrupled shortly after, with the Korean war as a pretext. The document obscures the significance of the figures scattered through it, but it was apparently anticipated that some bureaucrat might perform the calculations and draw the obvious conclusions. The author, Paul Nitze, parried this potential insight by observing that the figures mean nothing because, as a poor and underdeveloped society, "the Soviet world can do more with less" -- their weakness is their strength, a constant refrain in other cases too as we defend the Free World from "internal aggression."[9] One can see how dire is the threat to our existence when the enemy is so wicked as to exploit the advantage of weakness to overwhelm us.

Over the years, fear of Soviet weakness has been almost as intense as concerns over awesome Soviet power. The task assigned to the responsible strategic analyst, after all, is to establish the conclusion that the U.S. is facing a threat to its existence, so that it is necessary to keep up our guard -- and incidentally, to guarantee that the Pentagon system will continue to perform its crucial domestic and international roles. When it is difficult to conjure up bomber gaps, missile gaps, windows of vulnerability, threats to our survival from superpowers such as Grenada, and the like, other means must suffice, such as the idea that the Soviet world can do more with less.

The problem arose again in late 1988, as analysts sought a way to detect a threat to our survival in Gorbachev's unilateral arms reduction initiatives. A U.S. Air Force intelligence conference on Soviet affairs in Washington may have found the key. Commenting on the conference, strategic analyst William V. Kennedy of the U.S. Army War College warns of a terrible discovery revealing that intelligence assessments for the past thirty-five years were far from the mark and severely underestimated the Soviet threat. U.S. intelligence had believed all along that the Soviet Union had "the most elaborate, best organized and equipped civil defense system on earth -- so elaborate that it might provide the Soviet Union with a major, perhaps decisive advantage in a nuclear conflict." But the Armenia earthquake showed that that assessment was wrong. It revealed "inefficiency on so vast a scale that any US state governor or federal official who presided over such chaos would have been lucky to escape lynching by now" -- a great surprise to U.S. intelligence, apparently, though hardly to anyone with a minimal familiarity with the Soviet Union. This discovery, Kennedy continues, "is staggering in its implications." A paper presented at the intelligence conference, six weeks before the earthquake, had warned that "internal Soviet mismanagement and reemergent nationalism may be a greater threat to world peace than the threat of calculated Soviet aggression as it has been portrayed for the past 40 years." The danger is "that a Soviet leadership that saw carefully laid plans going awry and the fires of nationalism spreading throughout the realm could panic into a desperate international venture" -- the "wounded bear" theory, some call it. The Armenia earthquake confirmed our worst fears: the Soviet Union has no civil defense capacity at all, hence no capacity for a first strike with relative impunity as the hawks had been ominously warning for years. Now we are in real danger: the wounded bear may strike. Surely at this moment of grave national crisis we should not succumb to absurd ideas about weakening our "defensive" capacities.[10]

Such arguments are premature at a moment when the immediate task is to face the costs of military Keynesian excesses. Their time will come when it is necessary to undertake more militant foreign adventures to preserve the domains of U.S. power or to provide a shot in the arm to high tech industry. It would be naive to assume, however, that strategic theory is incapable of coming up with arguments to support the conclusion that may be required at the moment, whatever the objective facts may be.

Gaddis observes that "To a remarkable degree, containment has been the product, not so much of what the Russians have done, or of what has happened elsewhere in the world, but of internal forces operating within the United States." "What is surprising," he continues, "is the *primacy* that has been accorded economic considerations [namely, state economic management] in shaping strategies of containment, *to the exclusion of other considerations*."[11] In fact, throughout this period, the policies of military Keynesianism, justified in terms of the Soviet threat, have been instrumental in the growth of high-

technology industry and have served as a mechanism of state industrial management, once again in the early Reagan years, with accompanying inflammatory rhetoric about the "Evil Empire" that is "the focus of evil in our time" and the source of all problems in the world. These crucial matters barely enter public discussion. They will not fade away easily, despite much careless talk about the end of the Cold War.

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[7] In earlier years, military spending was selected as the major device to overcome the "dollar gap" of the U.S. allies and to ensure that they would remain securely within the U.S.-dominated world system, after the failure of aid programs to achieve their ends. See Borden, *Pacific Alliance,* for extensive discussion of these themes, which were given their first comprehensive analysis by Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power* (Harper & Row, 1972).

[8] A closer examination shows that the figures were misrepresented to exaggerate the impression of Soviet military expenditures and Western weakness, also a familiar pattern over the years.

[9] Summarizing an Air Force intelligence conference, strategic analyst William Kennedy warns of the terrible discoveries made by intelligence after the earthquake in Armenia. For years, it had been assumed that the Soviet Union had a magnificent civil defense capacity, so that they could launch a nuclear attack against us and be safe from reprisal. But from the earthquake it was learned -- to the surprise of no one who had any familiarity with the Soviet Union -- that their capabilities are virtually nonexistent. The lack of any civil defense capacity poses "a greater threat to world peace than the threat of calculated Soviet aggression as it has been portrayed for the past 40 years," the intelligence conference concluded gloomily, with an argument that I will not attempt to reproduce. *Christian Science Monitor,* Dec. 28, 1988.

[10] Kennedy, "Tremors that should be felt in Washington," *Christian Science Monitor,* Dec. 28, 1988.

[11] *Strategies of Containment,* 356-57, his emphasis.

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2. The Red Scare [12]

Woodrow Wilson's Red Scare was the earliest and most extreme resort to state power in twentieth-century America to suppress labor, political dissidence, and independent thought. It provided a model for later efforts, and left as one crucial institutional residue the national political police, which has cast a long shadow in the years that followed.

FBI director J. Edgar Hoover rose to national prominence when he was appointed chief of the General Intelligence division of the Justice Department in August 1919. This was just before the "Palmer raids" of January 1920, when thousands of alleged radicals were rounded up in many parts of the country (hundreds of aliens were subsequently deported). Meanwhile, the *Washington Post* editorialized that "there is no time to waste on hairsplitting over infringement of liberty" in the face of the Bolshevik menace, and a *New York Times* editorial declared that "If some or any of us, impatient for the swift confusion of the Reds, have ever questioned the alacrity, resolute will and fruitful, intelligent vigor of the Department of Justice in hunting down these enemies of the United States, the questioners have now cause to approve and applaud... This raid is only the beginning... [The Department's] further activities should be far-reaching and beneficial." "These Communists," the *Times* noted the same day, "are a pernicious gang" who "in many languages...are denouncing the blockade of Russia" as well as calling for better wages and working conditions. The *Times* report of the raids was headlined "Reds Plotted Country-Wide Strike."

The *Washington Post* lauded the House of Representatives for its expulsion of socialist congressman Victor Berger, observing that it could not have given a "finer or more impressive demonstration of Americanism." Reporting the deportation of Emma Goldman, the *Post* praised Hoover's "most painstaking" brief against Goldman, with its proof that she was "instrumental in helping to form the unnatural ideas" of the assassin of President McKinley in 1901. The *Times* described the expulsion of

socialist assemblymen as "an American vote altogether, a patriotic and conservative vote" which "an immense majority of the American people will approve and sanction," whatever the benighted electorate may believe. The editors went on to say that the expulsion "was as clearly and demonstrably a measure of national defense as the declaration of war against Germany," invoking the familiar concept of "defense" in an editorial of January 7, 1920, long after the war had ended. A month earlier the *Times* had endorsed the sedition bill proposed by Attorney General Palmer and his aide Hoover, which called for prosecution of those guilty of aiding or abetting "the making, displaying, writing, printing, or circulating, of any sign, word, speech, picture, design, argument, or teaching, which advises, advocates, teaches, or justifies any act of sedition," "or any act which tends to indicate sedition." Also subject to prosecution were those affiliated in any way with any organization, "whether the same be formally organized or not, which has for its object, in whole or in part, the advising, advocating, teaching or justifying any act of sedition," the latter term defined so broadly as to satisfy many a totalitarian.[13] These ideas have precedents, among them the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 by which "the Federalists sought to suppress political opposition and to stamp out lingering sympathy for the principles of the French Revolution," and the judicial murder of four anarchists for having advocated doctrines that allegedly lay behind the explosion of a bomb in Chicago's Haymarket Square after a striker had been killed by police in May 1886. For the authorities, the "seditious utterances" of the Haymarket anarchists sufficed to attribute "moral responsibility" for the bombing in which they had no part and to justify their prosecution and hanging.[14]

During Wilson's Red Scare, Attorney General Palmer proceeded, as he explained, "to clean up the country almost unaided by any virile legislation." He justified repressive actions on grounds of the failure of Congress "to stamp out these seditious societies in their open defiance of law by various forms of propaganda." He explained that "Upon these two basic certainties, first that the `Reds' were criminal aliens, and secondly that the American Government must prevent crime, it was decided that there could be no nice distinctions drawn between the theoretical ideals of the radicals and their actual violations of our national laws." Palmer went on to say that his "information showed that communism in this country was an organization of thousands of aliens, who were direct allies of [Trotsky]." Thus, "the Government is now sweeping the nation clean of such alien filth." All of this had the overwhelming support of the press, until they perceived that their own interests might be threatened.[15]

To suppress these criminals was surely just, for reasons that Palmer outlined in congressional testimony prepared by Hoover. The leaders of these pernicious movements, he explained, included "idealists with distorted minds, many even insane; many are professional agitators who are plainly self-seekers and a large number are potential or actual criminals whose baseness of character leads them to espouse the unrestrained and gross theories and tactics of these organizations." Any doubt of their criminality will quickly be dispelled by "an examination of their photographs": "Out of the sly and crafty eyes of many of them leap cupidity, cruelty, insanity, and crime; from their lopsided faces, sloping brows, and misshapen features may be recognized the unmistakable criminal type." And they are dangerous. "Like a prairie fire the blaze of revolution was sweeping over every American institution of law and order," Palmer wrote, subverting workers, the churches and schools, even "crawling into the sacred corners of American homes seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws, burning up the foundations of society."[16]

Just think what fun the Office of Public Diplomacy and a host of apparatchiks in government, journalism, and the larger intellectual community could have if only the Sandinistas would oblige with statements remotely similar to those of the U.S. Justice Department and the press at a time of expansive U.S. power, 140 years after the American revolution, and a century after the last credible security threat.

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[12] Addendum to p. 29.

[13] See Murray B. Levin, *Political Hysteria in America* (Basic Books, 1972); Richard G. Powers, *Secrecy and Power* (Free Press, 1987); Aronson, *The Press and the Cold War*.

[14] David Brion Davis, ed., *The Fear of Conspiracy* (Cornell University Press, 1971). A fifth anarchist

committed suicide before the sentence of death could be executed. Three others were sentenced to hanging as well, but were not executed. No proof was offered that any of the eight had been involved in the bomb-throwing. On "moral responsibility," see the excerpt from Michael J. Schaack, *Anarchy and Anarchists* (Chicago, 1889), in Davis's collection. A Chicago police captain, Schaack "was widely credited with having uncovered the anarchist conspiracy" (Davis).

[15] See excerpts from Palmer in Davis, *op. cit.* On the role of the press, see Levin, *op. cit.*

[16] Powers, Aronson, *op. cit.*

Palmer was a liberal and progressive. His intention was "to tear out the radical seeds that have entangled American ideas in their poisonous theories." He was particularly impressed that "the result of the arrests of January 2, 1920, was that there was a marked cessation of radical activities in the United States. For many weeks following the arrests the radical press had nearly gone out of existence in so far as its communistic tendencies were concerned"; and, in general, the organizations "had been completely broken."[17] Among the notable achievements of the period was the sentencing in March 1919 of presidential candidate Eugene Debs to ten years in prison for opposing the draft and "savage sentences for private expressions of criticism" of the war along with "suppression of public debate of the issues of the war and peace," as the ACLU was later to record.[18]

Palmer's belief that the state has the authority to prevent these seeds from germinating is within the general American tradition. The mass media, the schools, and the universities defend ideological orthodoxy in their own, generally successful, ways. When a threat to reigning doctrine is perceived, the state is entitled to act.

After World War I, labor militancy menaced established privilege. J. Edgar Hoover portrayed the 1919 steel strike as a "Red conspiracy." A subsequent miners' strike was described by President Wilson as "one of the gravest steps ever proposed in this country," "a grave moral and legal wrong." Meanwhile the press warned that the miners, "red-soaked in the doctrines of Bolshevism," were "starting a general revolution in America."[19] The Red Scare, Murray Levin observes, "was promoted, in large part, by major business groups which feared their power was threatened by a leftward trend in the labor movement"; and they had "reason to rejoice" at its substantial success, namely, "to weaken and conservatize the labor movement, to dismantle radical parties, and to intimidate liberals." It "was an attempt -- largely successful -- to reaffirm the legitimacy of the power elites of capitalism and to further weaken workers' class consciousness." The Red Scare was strongly backed by the press and elites generally until they came to see that their own interests would be harmed as the right-wing frenzy got out of hand -- in particular, the anti-immigrant hysteria, which threatened the reserve of cheap labor.

The Red Scare also served to buttress an interventionist foreign policy. Diplomatic historian Foster Rhea Dulles observed that "governmental agencies made most of these fears and kept up a barrage of anti-Bolshevik propaganda throughout 1919 which was at least partially inspired by the need to justify the policy of intervention in both Archangel and Siberia." In line with his concept of self-defense, already discussed, John Lewis Gaddis puts the point a bit differently: "the Red Scare, with its suggestion that even the United States might not be immune from the bacillus of revolution," was one of the factors that engendered "American hostility toward Communism." The reasoning is instructive.[20]

The pattern then established has persisted in many ways, until today. In the 1960s, as the effect of post-World War II repression waned and a wide range of popular movements began to develop, the FBI launched one of its major programs of repression (COINTELPRO) to disrupt them by instigating violence in the ghetto, direct participation in the police assassination of a Black Panther organizer, burglaries and harassment of the Socialist Workers Party over many years, and other methods of defamation and disruption.[21]

These programs were exposed just at the time when the nation was scandalized by Nixon's Watergate capers and the press was hailed, or denounced, for its aggressiveness in pursuing his misdeeds, barely a

tea party in comparison with the programs of the nation's leading subversive organization under the direction of the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations. Once again, history was kind enough to contrive a controlled experiment to allow us to evaluate the reaction to Watergate. The conclusions are unequivocal. Attention was limited to the relatively minor infringement of the rights of people and organizations with power and influence; the far more serious crimes against the powerless were scantily reported, and never entered the congressional proceedings.[22]

The lesson of Watergate is stark and clear: the powerful are capable of defending themselves, and the press may offer them some assistance, to the applause of some, the dismay of others, depending on the degree of their commitment to the goverment's right to control the public. The decision to focus attention on Watergate, hailed by the media as their proudest moment, was yet another cynical exercise in the service of power.

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[17] Davis, Powers, *op. cit.*

[18] Robert J. Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America* (Schenkman, 1978).

[19] Levin, *op. cit.*

[20] Dulles, *The Road to Teheran* (Princeton, 1945), cited by Levin, *op. cit*; Gaddis, *The Long Peace,* 37.

[21] On the continuing FBI policies of subversion and repression, often they were allegedly terminated, see Ward Churchill and James Vander Wall *Agents of Repression* (South End, 1988) and *Cointelpro Papers* (South End, 1989).

[22] The bombing of Cambodia did enter the proceedings, though not the final indictment, but in a specific form: not the murder of tens of thousands of people and the destruction of rural Cambodia, but the failure to notify Congress properly. Again, the prerogatives of the powerful are the criterion.

Appendix III

1. The Sanctity of Borders [1]

When the army of Nicaragua attempts to drive U.S. proxy forces from the national territory, sometimes crossing over an unmarked border into the areas of Honduras that have long been ceded to the contras under American dictates, the chorus of abuse over this violation of the sanctity of borders is dramatic in its intensity. We may ask the usual question: is this common refrain based upon a firm commitment to law and the sanctity of borders, or on the doctrine that no country has the right to defend itself from a U.S. assault? The latter is clearly the operative principle. That this is so is demonstrated by the reaction to Nicaragua's efforts since 1981 to pursue the peaceful means required by law to reconcile differences, settle conflicts, and arrange for international supervision of the borders. Other tests yield the same conclusion.

After one such border incident in March 1988, the editors of the Toronto *Globe and Mail* observed that when Nicaraguan forces cross "the border in hot pursuit of the contras," "the United States responds only selectively to this supposed outrage, the deciding factor apparently being whether a contra vote is imminent," as in this case, when "Mr. Reagan was revving up to ask Congress for renewed aid to the rebels." They add that the peace agreement signed by Honduras "forbids Honduras or any other country to give aid to foreign insurgents such as the contras," and it is far from clear that Nicaragua is in violation of international law in "crossing the border in hot pursuit of contras," apparently penetrating a few kilometers into southern Honduras where the contras had established their bases after expelling thousands of Honduran peasants. It is U.S. policy, not Nicaraguan defense of its territory, that "exhausts outrage," or would, the editors continue, "if it were not for the extraordinary suffering U.S. policy causes

in the region."[2] An insight foreign to the Free Press south of the Canadian border, which also cannot permit itself to perceive that what is clearly in violation of international law is the U.S. support for the contra forces attacking Nicaragua from foreign bases. The reigning dogma holds that the United States stands above the law, free to use violence as it pleases, and that this is just and right. Correspondingly, the media avoid repeated Nicaraguan offers to have the border monitored by international authorities, always dismissed by the U.S. for the obvious reasons; and little notice can be given to the World Court's demand that the U.S. cease its aggression and observe its treaty obligations, or its endorsement of Nicaragua's call for reparations from the world's most pious advocate of the rule of law.

The response to the Nicaraguan incursions has been considerably more selective than the *Globe and Mail* indicates, as revealed by Israeli operations in southern Lebanon at exactly the same time (see pp. 00f.). The reaction to these events can be gauged by a review of *New York Times* reports.

On March 12, Israeli planes bombed Palestinian refugee camps near Sidon, unreported. On March 18, a sentence in an article on another topic noted that "Israeli warplanes struck targets in Lebanon southeast of Beirut,...apparently in reprisal for a small-scale rocket attack on northern Israel." A few days later, Israeli troops joined South Lebanon Army mercenaries in attacks north of the "security zone," also unreported. On March 24, the *Times* carried a brief notice of another attack, reporting that fifteen people were killed or wounded according to Lebanese police. Others were "feared buried under the rubble," some killed when "the planes returned and dropped more bombs...while relief workers were digging through the debris" of the first wave of attacks, a standard device to augment casualties. The March 24 report also gave the first passing mention to the March 12 bombing. An Israeli attack the following day near Sidon with five casualties merited twelve lines. On March 31, a brief notice reported five killed and several houses set ablaze in an Israeli attack on another village north of the security zone under cover of a heavy artillery barrage, as Lebanese Muslims were observing a general strike in support of Arabs commemorating Land Day in Israel.[3]

Wire services added a few details to this casual record, reporting that victims of the March 23 attack included four children aged seven to ten who were hospitalized with "critical wounds," and that most casualties were attributed to the third round of bombing, during relief operations. They described the "smoke and dust" that "engulfed" four villages after the raids the following day and reported nine killed, bringing the total killed for the year in Israeli air strikes to forty-seven. In the March 30 attack, at least seven more were killed, including two Egyptians and three Lebanese civilians. "Dozens of mortar shells and rockets crashed in and around the market town of Nabatiyeh" and four nearby villages, badly damaging at least fifteen houses, while "Israeli helicopters strafed the rugged territory with machine guns during the withdrawal."[4]

Nothing remotely comparable happened in Honduras. Israeli forces were not engaged in hot pursuit, but were moving beyond the "security zone" that Israel has virtually annexed in southern Lebanon, controlled by Israeli forces and a terrorist mercenary army. The right of annexation, and of destruction and killing beyond its borders as well, is granted to Israel by virtue of its status as a leading U.S. client state. The significance of the alleged concern over the sanctity of borders is dramatically revealed.

Subsequent developments merely confirmed the point, as have the Israeli bombings in Lebanon since the early 1970s. In October 1988 Israeli bombing attacks killed fifteen and wounded thirty-five, police reported. According to police, most of the twenty wounded in the Bekaa valley town of Mashgara were civilians in a clinic, including Lebanese physicians and nurses. "Wailing women beat their chests while workers pulled victims from the rubble of Hezbollah's clinic." "The raids were apparently to avenge seven Israeli soldiers killed in a suicide car bombing earlier this week" by a Lebanese Shi'ite -- a bombing *inside Lebanon*, where soldiers of the occupying army were providing support for the mercenary force employed to control the so-called security zone. The State Department spokesman "called for an end to violence *between Israel and Lebanon,*" a balanced and judicious assessment.[5]

A few days later, with no pretext, Israeli planes bombed the Mieh Mieh refugee camp near Sidon, wounding forty-one people, according to police; "a family of six and three other persons were missing and feared dead under the rubble." The raid hit a "battered Palestinian shantytown." In the attack on Mieh Mieh and two villages, seventeen were reported killed. Meshgara was again hit by "heavy barrages

of shellfire, from artillery batteries stationed inside Israel." The same villages and others were attacked a few days later, killing four and wounding twenty-two. Palestinian refugee camps and other targets were attacked by Israeli helicopter gunships shortly after, including the shop of a boat dealer who was "thought to have rented two motorboats to Palestinian guerrillas and suspected of selling spare parts to the guerrillas." Israeli bombing of the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp later in November, unreported to my knowledge, killed six Palestinians, including a woman and her four-year-old daughter who were buried in the rubble. "Police said smoke billowed from the teeming camp as ambulances raced from Sidon to evacuate casualties" from this bombing "as the country marked the 45th anniversary of its independence from France." Other raids near Sidon killed five and wounded fifteen, including nine civilians. The last of these, on November 25, was the twenty-third Israeli air strike on Lebanon through November, bringing the toll for 1988 to 119 killed and 333 wounded.[6]

The final police count for the year was 128 killed and 356 wounded in Israeli air attacks on Lebanon in 1988, continuing right through the period when Arafat's every gesture and phrase was being scrutinized to determine whether he really meant to renounce terrorism.[7]

During the same period, Israel stepped up its terrorist activities within the "security zone" as well. Wire services reported that at least 76 people were deported from the region by Israel's terrorist mercenaries in January 1989, and that an "uproar" was caused in Israel when a Norwegian officer of the UN forces patrolling the region compared the Israeli practice of expulsion to the methods used by the Nazis in trying to expel Jews from Norway under occupation; no uproar was caused by the expulsions, either in Israel or in the country that funds the operations. Julie Flint reported in the *Guardian* (London) on the expulsion of dozens of old men, women, and children from the town of Shebaa, because of "their refusal to support the Israeli-controlled South Lebanon Army" (SLA), the victims said. Norwegian troops tried to prevent the expulsion by blocking the main street with a jeep, but it was "crushed" by an SLA armoured car. Israeli troops "stormed the town before dawn, seized 48 people from their beds, drove them out of the region and blockaded the town," informing villagers that "the siege will be lifted only when they agree to form a `co-ordination bureau' and join the SLA." Israeli troops surrounded the town, "depriving its inhabitants of food for refusing to cooperate with the Israeli-sponsored local administration, a UN source said." Ten percent of Shebaa's 15,000 people have been "forced into exile" by such practices. Young men are informed that they "have to be soldiers with the SLA or we will cut off your town." Deportees report that the headmaster of a school was "bruised and beaten" while detained by the Israeli army for refusing to collaborate. Another victim reported electric torture on the fingers and testicles. A woman expelled with her eight children reports that "Israeli troops stormed the house at five in the morning. They took the children out in their night clothes, though it was bitterly cold. They put us in a jeep, covered us with a tarpaulin and drove off. Later, we were all put into a truck. My husband's father and mother were there. He is 90 years old." UN spokesman Timur Goksel reports that "Most of those expelled were women and children" and the Norwegian UNIFIL commander condemned the explusions as "inhuman acts." Israel reacted to the protests only by continuing the expulsions. The director of political affairs at the Lebanese foreign ministry said that the Lebanese "fear that Israeli policy in the occupied south may aim at gradually emptying that area of all those who oppose Israeli hegemony over that zone, and that it may turn into a sort of creeping Israeli colonization."[8]

These events, sometimes reported, elicited no response apart from occasional expressions of regret over the "violence between Israel and Lebanon." The reaction to PLO bombs in Israel, or Nicaraguan efforts to drive U.S. proxy forces from their territory, is slightly different.

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[1] Addendum to p. 52.

[2] Editorial, *Globe and Mail,* March 18, 1988.

[3] AP, March 17; Alan Cowell, Jerusalem, *NYT,* March 18; UPI, *Boston Globe,* March 20; *NYT,* March 24; *NYT,* March 25; AP, March 24; *NYT,* March 31, 1988.

[4] UPI, *BG,* March 24; AP, March 24; UPI, *BG,* March 31, 1988.

[5] AP, *BG,* Oct. 22, 1988 (my emphasis); *NYT,* same day.

[6] AP, *BG,* Oct. 27; *NYT,* Oct. 27, Nov. 2, Nov. 7; AP, Nov. 22, 25, 1988.

[7] AP, *NYT,* Jan. 12, 1989, a brief note reporting new raids "aimed at pre-empting attacks on Israel," the army said.

[8] AP, Feb. 1, 5; Julie Flint, *Guardian* (London), Jan. 26, Feb. 9; Jim Muir, *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 9, 1989.

Appendix IV

1. The Craft of "Historical Engineering" [1]

The vocation of "historical engineering" is as old as history, and was recognized as a professional responsibility as the United States entered World War I. Examples are given in the text and appendices, many others in the references cited. A closer look at particular cases sheds light on how the system works. Two cases will be examined here as illustrations, drawn from a major government-media project of the 1980s: "demonizing the Sandinistas" while defending Washington's terror states.

One of the proofs that Nicaragua is a cancer causing subversion to spread through the hemisphere, as plausible as others, is that the Sandinistas supplied arms for a terrorist attack on the Palace of Justice by M-19 guerrillas in Colombia in November 1985. On January 5 and 6, 1986, the *New York Times* published stories on the Colombian charge against Nicaragua and Nicaragua's denial. The next day, January 7, Colombia officially accepted the Nicaraguan denial. The Colombian foreign minister stated in a news conference that "Colombia accepts Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto's explanation and considers the incident closed." This news made it to page 81 of the *Boston Globe,* in the sports section. The *Times* did not report the fact at all; rather, its editorial the following day asserted that "Colombia's patience has since been strained by evidence -- which Nicaragua disputes -- that the Sandinistas supplied guns to terrorists who staged" the November incident. On January 15, the *Times* reported that "American officials have linked Nicaragua to the Terrorism in Bogota -- a charge denied by the Nicaraguan Government," and published an opinion column by Elliott Abrams repeating the charges that both Abrams and the editors knew to be without merit. These were repeated in a news column of February 26, again ignoring the fact that Colombia had officially rejected the charges and considered the incident closed. The *Washington Post* also failed to report Colombia's acceptance of Nicaragua's disclaimer of responsibility.[2]

On March 18, a *Times* editorial entitled "The Nicaragua Horror Show" discussed Reagan's "appeal for $100 million to help the `contras' against Nicaragua's leftist tyrants." The editorial was critical of a Reagan speech so replete with falsehoods and unsupported allegations that it elicited some discomfort. The editors urged that "Mr. Reagan should have held to [the] undeniable transgressions" of the Sandinistas; he should have asked how they can be "contained and what can the United States do to promote democracy in Nicaragua," raising it to the standards of Washington's terror states. They present a list of "the hemisphere's real grievances," namely Nicaragua's "totalitarian" domestic policies and complication of "the region's security problems" by building the biggest military airfield in Central America and a deep-water port in the Caribbean, with Soviet-bloc aid, and its support for "guerrilla comrades in El Salvador." The list of "undeniable transgressions" concludes as follows: "more than piety explains why Tomás Borge, the Interior Minister, participated in a mass for the M-19 guerrillas who shot up the Palace of Justice in Bogota, Colombia," sure proof of Sandinista complicity in the terrorist attack.

Others too were impressed by this proof of Sandinista iniquity. William Beecher, diplomatic correspondent of the *Boston Globe,* highlighted the attendance of Borge at the "memorial service for the M-19 guerrillas" who used "arms allegedly supplied by Nicaragua"; this is the kind of "mistake" that "serious analysts" hope will be caused by "rising military pressure" against Nicaragua, he observed,

apparently forgetting that, nine days earlier, his newspaper had reported Colombia's dismissal of the allegation.[3]

A reader in Arizona, Dr. James Hamilton, was curious to learn the basis for the renewed charge by the *Times* editors, which he knew had been denied by the Colombian government. He wrote a series of letters to *Times* editor Max Frankel, and after receiving a dismissive form letter from foreign editor Warren Hoge, to him as well. After many attempts to obtain a response to this simple question, he finally received a letter from Hoge in mid-July. "In answer to your question about Tomás Borge," Hoge wrote, "Mr. Borge attended a mass in Managua celebrated by the Rev. Uriel Molina commemorating the first anniversary of the death of Enrique Schmidt, the Minister of Communications, who had been killed in a battle with the contras. During the service, a member of the congregation shouted for prayers for the M-19 and unfurled their flag."[4] Hamilton writes: "Thus, did a memorial service for a former Sandinista cabinet member become, in the hands of an editorial writer, `a mass for the M-19 guerrillas,' permitting the *Times* to misrepresent Borge and imply an affiliation between the Sandinistas and the M-19, using the behavior of one individual in the church on that day as support for this contention." Some tales are just too useful to abandon.[5]

The remainder of the "undeniable transgressions" on the *Times* list fare no better, and are, in fact, of some interest with regard to the hysteria evoked in establishment circles over Nicaragua's unwillingness to follow orders and its unconscionable efforts to survive a U.S. attack.

A more important requirement has been to establish a "symmetry" between the contras and the Salvadoran guerrillas. This "symmetry" was crucial for U.S. government propaganda, hence a media staple. It is readily established by ignoring the scale and character of U.S. aid to the contras and direct involvement in their terror, and by the insistent claim that although rebels in El Salvador deny receiving support from Nicaragua, "ample evidence shows it exists, and it is questionable how long they could survive without it," as James LeMoyne reported after the Central American peace accords were signed in August 1987.[6] LeMoyne presented no evidence, then or ever, to support this claim. He has yet to comment on the failure of the U.S. government, which is not entirely lacking in facilities, to provide any credible evidence since early 1981 -- and little enough then -- as was noted by the World Court, which reviewed the public materials produced by the U.S. government to establish its case, dismissing them as lacking substantive basis.[7] The claim is a propaganda necessity; therefore it is true.

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[1] Addendum to p. 80.

[2] AP, *NYT,* Jan. 5; Stephen Kinzer, *NYT,* Jan. 6; AP, *BG,* Jan. 8; editorial, *NYT,* Jan. 8; Bernard Weinraub, *NYT,* Jan. 15; Abrams, Op-Ed, *NYT,* Jan. 15; David Shipler, *NYT,* Feb. 26, 1986.

[3] Beecher, "Pressuring Nicaragua," Jan. 17, 1986.

[4] Hamilton, ms., 1987.

[5] For extensive documentation on how charges known to be false are maintained for propaganda purposes, and the interesting reaction to the exposure of these facts, see references cited in appendix I, section 1.

[6] *NYT,* Aug. 13, 1987.

[7] For a detailed review of the major State Department allegations, see Morley and Petras, *The Reagan Administration and Nicaragua*.

Times efforts to protect the required fact are illuminating. After LeMoyne's statement appeared, the media monitoring organization FAIR wrote the *Times* asking it to share LeMoyne's "ample evidence" with its readers. Their letter was not published, but they received a private communication from foreign editor Joseph Lelyveld acknowledging that LeMoyne had been "imprecise."[8]

After the September 1987 acknowledgement that the charges were "imprecise," the *Times* had many opportunities to correct the imprecision, and used them -- to repeat the charges that are privately acknowledged to be without merit. Thus, in his contribution to the media barrage organized in December in connection with the Sandinista defector Roger Miranda, LeMoyne announced that in response to Miranda's charges, Defense Minister Ortega "seemed indirectly to confirm the existence of Sandinista assistance to Salvadoran rebels." This is LeMoyne's rendition of Ortega's statement that the Reagan administration had no right to produce such charges given its arming of the contras. What Ortega went on to say, unreported, is that "the Salvadoran guerrillas have some resources and ways to get weapons" and they "are basically armed through their own efforts," not depending "on outside sources; they are self-sufficient." Thus Ortega's denial of Nicaraguan support for Salvadoran guerrillas is neatly converted by LeMoyne and the *Times* into a "confirmation" of such support.[9]

LeMoyne's *Times* colleagues also joined in the fray. Stephen Engelberg wrote that the U.S. government charge "appears to have been confirmed" by Miranda, who "said the Sandinistas were shipping the weapons to El Salvador by sea," that is, via the Gulf of Fonseca.[10] The Gulf is thirty kilometers wide, heavily patrolled by U.S. naval vessels and SEAL teams and covered by a radar facility on Tiger Island in the Gulf that is able to locate and track boats not only in that area but far beyond, as discussed in World Court testimony by David MacMichael, the CIA specialist responsible for analyzing the relevant material during the period to which Engelberg refers. Despite these extensive efforts, no evidence could be produced, though Nicaragua, curiously, has no difficulty providing evidence of CIA supplies in the supposedly "symmetrical" situation. It takes a measure of self-control to refrain from ridicule at this point.

After the peace accords were finally dismantled in January 1988, George Volsky wrote that the provision of the accords calling "for all countries to deny the use of their territories to insurgents in neighboring nations...applies mainly to Nicaragua, which is said to be helping rebels in El Salvador, and to Honduras, whose territory is reportedly an important part of the United States-directed contra supply effort."[11] Surely a fair summary of the available evidence on the support for irregular and insurrectionist forces outlawed by the accords.

Volsky did not explain why the same provision of the accords is inapplicable to El Salvador, which is also "reportedly" involved in the U.S. support structure for the contras, or to Costa Rica, which "has long been the base for the more liberal faction of the Nicaraguan rebels" and where "the Costa-Rican based contras" continue to operate, as we regularly learn when news reports cite a "contra source in Costa Rica," and as we would learn in greater detail if there were some interest in the facts.[12]

LeMoyne later warned that if in the future "the Sandinistas [are] found still to be aiding Salvadoran guerrillas," then the peace accords will collapse; he mentioned no similar problem elsewhere. As for Honduras, LeMoyne cautiously observed several months later that its support for the contras "*appears* to be a direct violation of the accord."[13] His colleague, *Times* military correspondent Bernard Trainor, observed that "To this date, the amount of support provided by the Sandinistas to the Salvadoran guerrillas has never been established conclusively" -- *Times* jargon to express the fact that no credible evidence has been presented since a trickle of aid flowed for a few months seven years earlier, well after the U.S.-backed security forces had launched a "war of extermination and genocide against a defenseless civilian population" (Bishop Rivera y Damas, the successor of the assassinated Archbishop Romero).[14]

So required doctrine is established.

No less interesting is the fact that it is taken for granted by hawks and doves alike that it would have been a major crime to provide the defenseless civilian population with means to defend themselves against a war of extermination and genocide -- at least, when the war is conducted by U.S. clients, with U.S. support and, as it reached its climax, direct organization and participation. To have provided victims of Pol Pot with arms to defend themselves, had this been possible, would have been considered a sign of true nobility. It is enlightening that such simple observations as these, and their obvious import, are next to unintelligible.

In late 1988, LeMoyne completed his four-year assignment as *New York Times* correspondent in El

Salvador, and took the occasion to publish a comprehensive analysis of aid to the Salvadoran guerrillas.[15] Fifteen months had passed since he had written, shortly after the signing of the peace accords, of the "ample evidence" that Nicaraguan aid to the guerrillas in El Salvador was so extensive that "it is questionable how long they could survive without it." Fourteen months had passed since the foreign editor of the *Times* had agreed that the "ample evidence" did not exist, and nine months since he had instructed LeMoyne to devote an entire article to the actual evidence, such as it may be (see note 8). The results of this nine-month inquiry merit a careful look.

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[8] *Extra!,* Oct.-Nov. 1987. In a letter of March 11, 1988, Lelyveld informed FAIR that he had instructed LeMoyne "to devote an entire article to what the current evidence shows on this point" (*Extra!,* Sept./Oct. 1988, pointing out that "six months later, no such article has appeared"). See below.

[9] Humberto Ortega, FBIS-LAT-87-239, Dec. 14, 1987; LeMoyne, Dec. 20, 1987.

[10] *NYT,* Dec. 18, 1987.

[11] *NYT,* Jan. 18, 1988.

[12] J. D. Gannon, *Christian Science Monitor,* Aug. 26, 1988.

[13] *NYT,* Feb. 7, July 4, 1988; my emphasis.

[1] Trainor, *NYT,* April 3, 1988; Rivera y Damas, Oct. 26, 1980, cited by Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit,* 207.

[15] "Salvador Rebels: Where Do They Get the Arms?", *NYT,* Nov. 24, 1988. Whether by accident or not, this article appeared a month after FAIR had made public the failure of the *Times* to deal with the issue despite the promise of the foreign editor; see note 8.

Gone completely is the "ample evidence" of the aid from Nicaragua on which the Salvadoran guerrillas relied for their very existence. LeMoyne makes no reference to his claims of the past, or to the request that he produce his "ample evidence," or to the contribution his unsubstantiated allegations made to the project of "demonizing the Sandinistas," protecting the murderous U.S. clients, and undercutting the peace accords.

It turns out now that the evidence is "largely circumstantial and is open to differing interpretations." It is not "ample," but is rather "limited evidence," of which nothing credible is provided. Furthermore, this "limited evidence" indicates that shipments "are small and probably sporadic," not the large-scale aid that kept the Salvadoran guerrillas alive according to the version of August 1987 and since -- conclusions that will hardly surprise those who have been studying U.S. government propaganda on the matter during the past years. The "limited evidence" has to do with transshipments from the Soviet bloc, primarily Cuba, he asserts -- again without evidence. Reading on, we find that there seems to be at least as much evidence of direct arms transfers from the contras to the Salvadoran guerrillas, and of Honduran army involvement in transshipment of arms to them. This also comes as no surprise to those who have taken the trouble to *read* government propaganda instead of simply reporting the press release; thus a State Department background paper of 1984 presented testimony of a Sandinista defector, who provided no credible evidence of Sandinista arms supply but did allege that arms were coming from Mexico and Guatemala[16] (it is also likely, but not investigated, that when the U.S. proxies broke for the border in February 1988 after their thrice-daily supply flights were curtailed, they began selling their arms to corrupt Honduran officers, who sell them in turn to Salvadoran guerrillas, a matter to which we return directly). The major Sandinista contribution to the Salvadoran guerrillas, LeMoyne now informs the reader, is a "safe haven" in Nicaragua for offices, logistics, and communications, and the opportunity to travel through Nicaragua to other countries. The same is true of many other countries outside of the United States or its dependencies; and all states of the region, including Costa Rica, have always

afforded such support -- indeed far more -- to the U.S. proxy forces attacking Nicaragua.

The careful reader will therefore discover that the whole charade of many years has collapsed. As was always obvious, the tales of "symmetry" hardly merit ridicule. The fraud was successfully maintained as long as support for the contras was an important and viable policy option; then it was necessary to present the U.S. proxy forces as authentic guerrillas, thus to insist upon the "symmetry" between the contras attacking Nicaragua and the indigenous guerrillas in El Salvador, both dependent on outside aid for survival. By late 1988, the contra option was losing its residual appeal, in part because it was no longer needed as a means to achieve the goal of maximizing civilian suffering and discontent in Nicaragua and reducing the country to ruin, in part because it was proving impossible to keep the proxy forces in the field. The tale can therefore be allowed to fade -- without, however, any acknowledgement of what came before. That is to be removed from history, and surely will be.

The rules of the game are that established power sets the terms of debate. The government-media system produces claims about Sandinista aid to the Salvadoran guerrillas and reiterates them insistently, in full knowledge that they are groundless, as long as they are needed for the cause. Occasionally a skeptic is allowed to intrude with the observation that the evidence is meager indeed. The question of Salvadoran aid to the U.S.-run contra forces, however, is off the agenda and is not investigated even though there is no doubt about the use of El Salvador to attack Nicaragua through 1986, and the same sources that told the truth then, but were ignored, allege that the process continues, and are ignored (see p. 92). As long as it was serviceable, the absurd "symmetry" thesis was maintained, and the doctrine of crucial outside sustenance now put aside can be resurrected whenever it may be needed, the basis having been laid in general consciousness despite the quiet retraction.[17] Mainstream discussion is closed to the thought that Nicaragua and other governments -- and individuals, were this possible -- *should* send aid to people trying to defend themselves from the rampaging armies and death squads of a military regime implanted by a foreign power. A closer look at the forbidden question would yield some interesting conclusions about the prevailing moral and intellectual climate, but it would stray so far from the consensus of power that it is unthinkable.

We may note finally that not all defectors enjoy the royal treatment accorded to the Sandinista defector Miranda, critically timed in the final phase of the government-media campaign to demolish the unwanted peace accords. In the use of Miranda, the media barrage began with two long front-page articles in the *Washington Post* (Dec. 13, 1987) and continued for weeks as the media relayed State Department propaganda based upon his testimony, with its ominous warning that Nicaragua might attempt to defend the national territory from CIA supply flights to the U.S. proxy forces; the allegation that Nicaragua was thumbing its nose at the impotent U.S. Navy by merrily sending arms to El Salvador, undetected, via the Gulf of Fonseca; and the report that the Sandinistas were planning to reduce their regular military forces and provide light arms to citizens for defense against a possible U.S. invasion, a report transmuted by the independent media into a threat to "overwhelm and terrorize" their neighbors.[18]

Compare, in contrast, the media reaction to the defection of Horacio Arce, Chief of Intelligence of the FDN (the main contra force) from 1985. After receiving asylum in the Mexican Embassy in Tegucigalpa, Arce left for Mexico City in November 1988, then for Managua under the government amnesty program. While in Mexico City, he was interviewed and had a number of interesting things to say.

The contra Chief of Intelligence provided details of support for the contras by the Pentagon in violation of congressional restrictions, including training by U.S. military instructors through 1986 at a U.S. air base in a southern state, a semi-secret base with 17 airstrips, which they reached in Hercules C-130 transports without passing through immigration or customs, of course. The trainers were from Fort Bragg. After the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war, the contras in Honduras lost their Argentine trainers and advisers, but in the U.S. base where they were being illegally trained (including Arce himself), the instructors included a specialist in psychological warfare from Chile, so the links to the neo-fascist states of the U.S. orbit remained.

[16] See my introduction to Morley and Petras, *Reagan Administration and Nicaragua*.

[17] Others too have put the doctrine aside. *Newsweek* Central America correspondent Charles Lane writes in the *Wall Street Journal* (always irate about Sandinista attempts to overthrow the government of El Salvador and others) that the Salvadoran guerrillas "capture or make most of their own weapons." Still, history has passed them by, he writes, in part because of the "disillusioning Sandinista experiment," a "once-promising revolution" (we now read) that "turned into an embarrassing Cuban-style economic basket case [for unstated reasons] and a U.S.-Soviet battleground" (*WSJ,* Dec. 23, 1988).

[18] On the Miranda testimony and the media-State Department version of it, see my article in *Z Magazine,* March 1988; Sklar, *Washington's War on Nicaragua,* 383f.

Arce was also among those trained at the Ilopango air base near San Salvador by Salvadoran and U.S. instructors. In Honduras, they were trained directly by the Honduran military, who had been providing the essential training and logistics from 1980 and also provided pilots for supply flights into Nicaragua. Honduran immigration authorities also assisted, helping the contras gain access to refugee camps for recruitment, sometimes by force. Miskito recruits were trained separately, by a Japanese officer. Most of the supervisors of training and aid were of Hispanic origin -- Cubans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, South Americans, and some Spaniards. The arms were mainly from Israel, as "everyone knows," much of it captured in the 1982 Lebanon war. "Cubans in the CIA are all over the place," also deeply involved in the extensive corruption. Part of the contra financing came from drug trafficking.

The United States is a global power and is thus capable of constructing elaborate systems of terror and corruption, making use of its client and mercenary states and longstanding relations with international terrorism and criminal syndicates.

U.S. Embassy officials in Tegucigalpa, Arce continues, provided the contras with intelligence information and other aid. His contacts at the U.S. Embassy included "Robert McHorn of the CIA or Alexander Zunnerman who ostensibly is with AID but is CIA also." Arce was also in direct contact with the Tegucigalpa AID warehouse on the premises of the Electropura company. AID has admittedly served as a front for CIA terrorist operations in the past, particularly in Laos during the "clandestine war."

Arce himself had fled Nicaragua with his father, a major in Somoza's National Guard, on the day of the Sandinista victory, July 19, 1979. In 1980, he was recruited for the contras, adopting the *nom de guerre* "Mercenario" ("mercenary"). By January 1981, the operation had become "something serious and something big." He went on to reach the rank of *comandante,* becoming intelligence chief after the former chief, Ricardo Lau, was dismissed (and possibly murdered by the contras, Arce believes). Lau had become an embarrassment in early 1985 when former Salvadoran intelligence chief Roberto Santivañez implicated him in arranging the assassination of Archbishop Romero and in having played a "key role" in organizing and training death squads in El Salvador and Guatemala, as well as in political killings in Honduras. He was "a thief among thieves," Arce reports.

Not all the contras "are rented," *El Mercenario* continues; some have loyalties to their chiefs. They are, however, well paid by regional standards. Without a family, Arce's salary was about $500 a month.

The Honduran armed forces "participate in every operation that takes place close to the border," while also providing intelligence "on military and non-military targets in Nicaragua." The latter service is particularly important, Arce continues, because "We attack a lot of schools, health centers, and those sort of things. We have tried to make it so that the Nicaraguan government cannot provide social services for the peasants, cannot develop its project...that's the idea." Evidently, their U.S. training was successful in getting the basic idea across.

Arce also discussed the vast corruption in the contra organization from commander Enrique Bermúdez on down, and their sales of U.S. arms and supplies, "much of it...probably ending up in the hands of the guerrillas of El Salvador." In cooperation with Honduran officers, who take a cut for themselves, contras

are selling assault rifles and radiocommunications equipment to the FMLN in El Salvador -- who therefore may be receiving aid from Nicaraguans after all, James LeMoyne and the *Times* will be happy to hear.[19]

Arce had far more of significance to report than Miranda, and had a more important role within the contra organization than Miranda did in Nicaragua. Furthermore, as we have seen, the contras were favored with enormous publicity, generally receiving more than the government. But in this case, there was no way to deform the testimony into a weapon for the campaign of "demonizing the Sandinistas" and mobilizing support for the terror states; on the contrary, the message was all wrong. Editors made their choices accordingly.

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[19] Marcio Vargas, Mexico City, interview with Arce, *Central America Information Bulletin,* Dec. 21, 1988; Rubén Montedonico, *El Día* (Mexico City), Nov. 6, 7, 1988, reprinted in translation in *Honduras Update,* Nov./Dec., 1988. On Lau, see *Turning the Tide,* 104.

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2. The Obligation of Silence [20]

As discussed earlier, a doctrine commonly held is that "we tend to flagellate ourselves as Americans about various aspects of our own policies and actions we disapprove of." The reality is rather different.

The prevailing pattern is one of indignant outrage over enemy crimes with much self-congratulatory appeal to high principle, combined with a remarkable ability "not to see" in the case of crimes for which we bear responsibility. In the West, there is an ample literature -- much of it fraudulent -- scornfully denouncing apologists or alleged apologists for the Soviet Union and Third World victims of U.S. intervention, but little about the behavior that is the norm: silence and apologetics about the crimes of one's own state and its clients, when a willingness simply to face the facts might make a substantial difference in limiting or terminating these abuses. This is standard procedure elsewhere as well. In the Soviet sphere, dissidents are condemned as apologists for Western crimes that are bitterly denounced by right-thinking commissars, exactly the pattern mimicked here.

A number of examples have been mentioned, and many have been discussed elsewhere. For evaluating U.S. political culture and the media, the cases to which a serious analyst will immediately turn, apart from the crimes of the United States itself, are those of its major clients; in recent years, El Salvador and Israel. The latter case has been a particularly illuminating one ever since Israel's display of power in 1967 elicited the adulation and awe that has persisted among American intellectuals. The apologetic literature is often little more than a parody of the Stalinist period.[21]

The elaborate campaigns of defamation launched against those who do not satisfy the requirements of the faithful also strike a familiar chord. The effect, as elsewhere, has been to intimidate critics and to facilitate the exercise of violence; and also to erect barriers in the way of a political settlement that has long been feasible.[22]

Israel can be secure that as long as it is perceived as a "strategic asset," it will remain "the symbol of human decency," as the *New York Times* described it while Israeli atrocities in the occupied territories reached such a level that the media briefly took serious notice. Israel can rely upon the American labor movement bureaucracy to justify whatever it does, to explain that although "in their effort to maintain order, Israeli Defense Forces have on occasion resorted to unnecessary force,...no doubt such incidents can be attributed to the inexperience of the Israeli army in riot control and other police functions, and to the frustrations of Israeli soldiers as they confront young Palestinians hurling stones and petrol bombs."[23] To fully appreciate this statement and what it means, one must bear in mind that it followed one of the rare periods when the media actually gave some picture of atrocities of the kind that had been taking place for many years in the occupied territories, at a lesser but still scandalous level. John Kifner's reports in the *New York Times* were particularly good examples of professional journalism, consistent with his outstanding record over many years.

Apologetics of the AFL-CIO variety have served for twenty years to authorize harsh repression and endless humiliation, finally reaching the level of regular pogroms in which soldiers break into houses, smash furniture, break bones, and beat teenagers to death after dragging them from their homes; settler violence conducted with virtual impunity; and collective punishments, deportation, and systematic terror on orders of the Defense Ministry. As fashions change, leading figures in the campaign to protect state violence from scrutiny will doubtless create for themselves a different past, but the record is there for those who choose to see.

There has always been an Elie Wiesel to assure the reader that there are only some "regrettable exceptions -- immediately corrected by Israeli authorities," while he fulminates about the real crime: the condemnation of Israeli atrocities by public opinion. He tells us of the "dreamlike eyes" of the Israeli soldiers, perhaps those who had been described a few weeks earlier by reservists returning from service in the territories. They reported the "acts of humiliation and violence against Palestinian inhabitants that have become the norm, that almost no one seeks to prevent," including "shameful acts" that they personally witnessed, while the military authorities look the other way.[24] Or perhaps Wiesel has in mind the soldiers who caught a ten-year-old boy, and, when he did not respond to their demand that he identify children who had thrown stones, proceeded "to mash his head in," leaving him "looking like a steak," as soldiers put it, also beating the boy's mother when she tried to protect him, only then discovering that the child was deaf, dumb, and mentally retarded. It "didn't bother" the soldiers, one participant in the beating said, and the platoon commander ordered them on to the next chore because "we don't have time for games." Or perhaps Wiesel's point is that "a picture of an Israeli soldier kicking an old Arab woman is no longer news," as the Hebrew press bitterly comments, speaking of those who accept atrocities as readily as the author of *Against Silence,* whose words could actually mitigate suffering and abuse if he were not committed to silence as the proper course.[25] The fact that such consistent behavior over many years is treated with respect, even regarded as saintly, speaks volumes about Western culture.

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[20] Addendum to p. 81.

[21] For discussion of one example, see my review of Saul Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back,* reprinted in *Towards a New Cold War,* a review that aroused such anger that it caused the suspension of the journal in which it originally appeared, so I was informed. For many more examples, see other chapters in the same book, my *Peace in the Middle East?* (Pantheon, 1974, chapter 5), and *Fateful Triangle*.

[22] See appendix V, section 4.

[23] "Statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council on Israel, Feb. 16, 1988.

[24] Wiesel, Op-Ed, *NYT,* June 23; Reuven Padhatzur, *Ha'aretz,* May 16, 1988. On Wiesel's long-held doctrine that it is obligatory to maintain silence in the face of atrocities of the state one loves, and that only those in power are in a position to know so that he must refrain from comment on atrocities, see *Fateful Triangle* and *Turning the Tide*. For his reiteration of the obligation of silence at the peak of the recent repression, see his article in *Yediot Ahronot,* Jan. 22, 1988, where he explains: "I refuse to criticize Israel, I have always refused to do this," among other similar sentiments, familiar from apologists for other states in earlier days. It would be unfair, however, to note Wiesel's practice without reference to those who now condemn him for his silence while effacing their own much worse record over many years. On the unacceptable facts, see the references of note 21. Wiesel, at least, had the integrity to adhere to his long-held position when it became unpopular.

[25] Ze'ev Sachor, "Getting Accustomed to Atrocities," April 1, 1988, *Hotam,* one of many items translated from the Israeli press in the 1988 *Report* of the Israeli League for Human Rights, Tel Aviv, which give the flavor of the pogroms organized by the Defense Ministry to teach the beasts of burden a lesson. This highly informative material is next to unknown in the United States, though it is arguably of some relevance to those who are expected to pay the bills.

Given these dispensations, Israel is free to use its phenomenal U.S. aid to send its military forces to conduct the regular operations described in the Israeli press (but rarely here) at the time when Wiesel's thoughts on "regrettable exceptions" appeared: To bar supplies from refugee camps where there is "a serious lack of food." To beat young prisoners so severely that a military doctor in the Ansar 2 detention camp refuses to admit them, one lying "battered and motionless for an hour and a half, surrounded by soldiers, without receiving any medical treatment," then "dumped" from a jeep on the way to the hospital and "brutally beaten" again "in front of dozens of soldiers" (one was allegedly censured). To break into a home and drag out a seven-year-old boy who had been hiding under his bed, then "beat him up savagely in front of his parents and the family," then to beat his father and brother too because they did not reveal the hiding place of the child, while the other children scream hysterically and "the mother cannot calm them because she is told not to move"; and to mercilessly beat children of age five and up, sometimes three or four soldiers with sticks "until his hands and legs are broken," or to spray gas directly into their eyes; these are among the horror stories that soldiers report from the miserable Jabaliya refugee camp, where the army has "succeeded in breaking them" so that "they are totally crushed, weak and tired." To rake a boy twelve to fifteen years old over barbed wire "in order to injure him" as prisoners arrive at the Dahariya prison, with no reaction by the officer observing, after vicious beatings of prisoners en route with clubs, plastic pipes, and handcuffs while their commanding officer looked on ("Israeli buses have become torture chambers," Knesset member Dedi Zucker reports, citing these and other atrocities). To rampage freely through Jericho, breaking into houses, brutally beating and humiliating residents. To "run amok" through the Amari refugee camp, "knocking down doors, breaking into houses, smashing furniture, and beating residents, including children," then beating an ambulance driver who arrived on the scene after dragging him by his hair -- an elite paratroop unit in this case, marauding with no provocation according to witnesses. To jail a prisoner "in perfect health," leaving him "paralysed and dumb," "apparently the result of severe beatings and torture...he suffered while in detention" at the Jenin interrogation center. To acquit a young Arab imprisoned for setting fire to the car of a suspected police informant when it is discovered that someone else was responsible and that his confession was extracted by torture, but without any reference by the district attorney or the court to the false "confession extracted through severe beating," or what that implies. And on, and on.[26]

There are other variants. The commander of an elite unit, Willy Shlap, described his first week in the El Burj refugee camp near Jabaliya. An eleven-year-old boy was found throwing a stone and taken to his house, where his father was ordered to beat him. The father slapped him but the officer screamed "Is this a beating? Beat him! Beat him!" The tension mounted and the father "became hysterical," starting to beat the child brutally, knocking him on the floor and kicking him in the ribs as hard as he could. The soldiers were apparently satisfied. When atrocities became even more severe in the summer of 1988, as Wiesel published his reflections, the *Jerusalem Post* reported that, according to UNRWA relief workers and doctors at clinics, the victims of the sharp increase in brutal beatings were mostly "men [sic] aged 15 to 30," but the clinics had "also treated 24 boys and five girls aged five and younger" in the past weeks, as well as many older children, such as a seven-year-old boy brought to a clinic "with a bleeding kidney, and bearing club marks." Soldiers routinely beat, kick, and club children, according to doctors and relief officials.[27]

In a case that actually went to trial, and therefore received considerable attention (in Israel, that is), four soldiers of an elite unit of the Givati Brigade were arrested and charged with beating an inhabitant of the Jabaliya camp to death on August 22. The case was first reported in *Ha'aretz* a month later. After children had thrown stones, twenty soldiers broke into a home and began to beat the father of one of the suspected stonethrowers, Hani al-Shami. He was kicked and beaten with clubs and weapons. Soldiers jumped on him from the bed while he was lying on the floor, his head bleeding from blows with clubs. His wife was also beaten up by soldiers. An officer arrived, found the severely wounded man bleeding heavily, and ordered him taken to the Military Administration offices, not to a hospital; that is routine procedure. Later, the family was informed that al-Shami was dead. Two soldiers from the same unit said "it is true that we beat them up and very strongly too, but it is better to break bones than to shoot people," echoing the Minister of Defense. "We have lost our human image," they said.[28]

After the arrests were announced, other atrocities of the Brigade became public: for example, the story of a journalist from the El Bureij refugee camp, hospitalized after soldiers broke into his home, forced him to kneel on hands and knees and bray like a donkey while they beat him on the testicles, stomach, and back with clubs and electric wires for half an hour and smashed his glasses, shouting "now you will be a blind donkey." Soldiers described Givati as "a brigade without law," blaming the commander and the "right-wing orientation," with many units from the Hesder Yeshivot, military-religious training schools known for their ultra-right fanaticism.[29]

The courts released the four soldiers charged with the murder while the trial proceeded, as briefly noted without comment in the *Jerusalem Post*. The Hebrew press told the story that had been omitted from the version offered to the foreign reading public. A soldier testified at the trial that "the humiliation and the beatings were because of the need to pass the time." Another added that al-Shami's protruding belly particularly amused the soldiers and was "a target for the beatings." An officer testified that he had threatened to kill al-Shami because "his groans disturbed me"; "I shouted at him that he should shut up, or I will kill him." He testified further that in the military compound to which al-Shami had been brought after the beatings, he had asked a doctor to treat al-Shami, but the doctor had refused, only giving an order to wipe the blood from his face. On that day, the witness continued, many Arabs arrived at the command post with their hands tied and eyes covered, and were brutally beaten by officers and soldiers. Asked why he had not cared for al-Shami, the witness replied that "the wounded Arab did not interest me, because they are Arabs and want to kill us." Soldiers testified that "the moment you catch a rioter you beat him...even if he doesn't resist. It is to deter him." Troops are ordered "to break their legs so they won't be able to walk and break their hands so they won't throw stones." A company commander reported "unequivocal orders to beat any suspect" so as "to put him out of action for a month or two"; it is "necessary," he testified, because jailing suspects is "like taking them to a PLO training seminar." Beatings inside houses are "a daily matter" in Gaza.

The military court accepted the defense plea, ruling that "there is a basis to the claim that the deceased was beaten up in the military stronghold by soldiers whom to our sorrow the investigation did not succeed in identifying." Furthermore, the fact that the soldiers were detained for eighty-three days brings "a correct balance between the needs of the army and the nature of their innocence and the nature of justice." We are dealing with soldiers who "did their military duty and not with criminals," the court ruled. "Nobody had denied that they had brutally beaten an unarmed Arab inside his own home, that they had broken a club or two over his head in front of his children or jumped on him in their boots," Ziva Yariv commented; but there is no legal liability because these beatings might not have been the actual cause of death, "as if there were no law banning the brutal beating of civilians, or the breaking of a club over the body of an innocent man, as if there were no law against vicious attacks or grievous bodily harm."[30]

The military correspondent of *Ha'aretz* observed that there had been a decline in the number of "exceptions" brought to trial, the reason being that "exceptions have become the norm." The Givati soldiers, like the members of an elite paratrooper unit tried for rampaging in the Kalandia refugee camp, "did not understand what the fuss is about." They had behaved no differently from soldiers in other units and had been following orders, doing exactly what is expected of them. Brutal beating of prisoners or Arab civilians in their homes or on the streets is simply part of daily life, so they were unjustly tried. Evidently, the Court agreed. The Hebrew word "harig," literally "exception," by now seems to be used to mean little other than "atrocity."[31]

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[26] *Ha'aretz,* July 15, 4; *Jerusalem Post,* July 6; Ya'akov Lazar, *Hotam,* July 15, reporting from Jabaliya; William Montalbano, *Los Angeles Times,* May 31, 1988, AP, May 30, on Dahariya, one of the atrocities reported by Dedi Zucker based on testimony by reservists, *Yediot Ahronot,* June 10; *Yerushalayim,* June 17, on Jericho; *JP,* June 24, 22, citing charges by Knesset member Ran Cohen; *JP,* Aug. 3, 1988, on the release of Mohammed Dari after three months in prison. For extensive documentation, see *Punishing a Nation: Human Rights Violations During the Palestinian Uprising, December 1987 December 1988* (Al Haq -- Law in the Service of Man, Ramallah, December 1988).

[27] Yizhar Be'er, *Kol Ha'ir,* Aug. 26, 1988; Joshua Brilliant, *JP,* Aug. 26, 1988.

[28] Eitan Rabin, *Ha'aretz,* Sept. 23, 1988.

[29] Shimon Elkavetz, *Hadashot,* Sept. 28; Tali Zelinger, *Jerusalem Post,* Sept. 29, 1988.

[30] *JP,* Nov. 17; *Ha'aretz,* Dec. 2, Nov. 15, 16; Yariv, *Yediot Ahronot,* Nov. 18, 1988. Michal Sela, *JP*, Jan. 26, Feb. 3; *JP*, Feb. 10, 1989. See also Glenn Frankel, *WP*, Feb. 12; George Moffett, *CSM*, Feb. 15, 1989.

[31] Reuven Padhatzur, *Ha'aretz,* Nov. 30, 1988. See also Eitan Rabin, *Ha'aretz Supplement,* Dec. 2, 1988, making the same points.

Atrocities are regarded as quite routine by the authorities. Dr. Marcus Levin, who was called for military service in the reserves at the Ansar 2 detention camp Medical Center, reports that he was assigned to check the prisoners "before and after interrogation." Asking why they had to be checked "after interrogation," Levin was informed by the doctors in charge that "It is nothing special, sometimes there are some broken limbs. For example, yesterday they brought in a twelve-year-old boy with two broken legs" -- after interrogation. Levin, a sixteen-year army veteran, then went to the commander to tell him that "my name is Marcus Levin and not Joseph Mengele and for reasons of conscience I refuse to serve in a place that reminds me of South American dictatorships." Most, however, find their conscience untroubled, or look the other way. One doctor informed him that "in the beginning you feel like Mengele, but a few days later you become accustomed."[32]

The Israeli writer Dan Almagor recalled a TV film he had seen in England on the thirtieth anniversary of the outbreak of the second World War, in which several German officers who had been released from prison after serving their sentences as war criminals were asked why they had taken such care in filming the atrocities in which they participated. "We didn't film many of them for history," one officer said, but "so that there would be something to play for the children when we went home on weekends. It was very amusing for the children," who were deprived of Mickey Mouse films because of the war. Almagor was reminded of this film when he read the testimony of the Givati soldiers who described the amusement they felt over the "attractive" protruding stomach of Hani al-Shami, which provided such a fine "target for beatings." Almagor went on to describe a visit to the West Bank with a brigade educational officer, a Major, who described with pride how he beats people with a club and joined a group of other officers and enlisted men and women who were convulsed with laughter over stories told by one man from the religious ultra-right with a knitted skull cap about how he had bulldozed homes designated by the secret police, including one that was not marked but was between two that were, and had destroyed a store that was in his way when he wanted to turn the bulldozer. Almagor's bitter words brought back memories to me too, among them, an unforgettable incident forty years ago, when a horrifying Japanese documentary of the Hiroshima bombing was being shown, to much amusement, in the "combat zone" in downtown Boston, as a pornographic film. And a story in the *New York Times* in March 1968, right after the Tet offensive, describing with some annoyance how demonstrators had disrupted an exhibit at the Chicago Museum of Science where children could "enter a helicopter for simulated firing of a machine gun at targets in a diorama of the Vietnam Central Highlands," including a peasant hut, which particularly disturbed the obnoxious peaceniks.[33]

"It is already impossible, it seems, to relate these stories, to ask for an explanation, to seek those responsible. Every other day there is a new story." These are the despairing words of Zvi Gilat, who has been recording the atrocities in the territories with care and dedication as the armed forces resort to ever more savage measures to suppress the Palestinian uprising. He is describing the village of Beita, which gained its notoriety because a Jewish girl was killed there in early April 1988. She was killed by a crazed Israeli guard accompanying hikers, after he had killed two villagers. The sister of one of the murdered men, three-months pregnant, was jailed for throwing a rock at the killer of her brother and kept in prison until days before her child was due to be born; the Israeli guard who had killed three people was not charged because, army spokesman Col. Raanan Gissen said, "I believe the tragic incident

and its result are already a penalty." Other Beita residents have remained in prison for eight months, with no sentence, and only one family member permitted to attend the sessions of the military court. The sentencing of four villagers to three years imprisonment for allegedly throwing stones before the Jewish girl was killed by her guard merited a few words in paragraph eleven of an AP report in the *Times;* ten days earlier, the *Times* reported the sentencing of a Jewish settler to 2 ½ years, the minimum sentence under law, for killing an Arab shepherd he found grazing sheep on land near his settlement. Beita residents were expelled from the country, houses were demolished including many not specifically marked for destruction, property was destroyed, the village was not permitted to export olive oil, its main source of income, to Europe; Israel refuses to purchase it. Two weeks before Gilat visited the village once again, a 12-year-old boy was shot in the back of his head at close range by Israeli soldiers, killed while fleeing from soldiers whom he saw when leaving his house, left to bleed on the ground for at least five hours according to witnesses. But though he has "no more strength, no more will," Gilat goes on with more and more tales of horror, cruelty, and humiliation, while senses become dulled even among those who read them, including very few of those who pay the bills.[34]

I cite only a tiny sample of the "regrettable exceptions" that are "no doubt" attributable to "inexperience" and "frustration," atrocities that mounted through mid-1988 as the U.S. media reduced their coverage under a barrage of criticism for their unfair treatment of defenseless Israel, if not their latent anti-Semitism. Meanwhile there were interspersed with quiet laments over Israel's tribulations, and occasional excesses, by some of those who helped create the basis for what they now fear. The atrocities go on, while the press looks the other way and those who might help mitigate them observe their vow of silence, assure us that nothing serious is happening, or warn of the problems Israel will face unless it takes some steps to recognize the human rights of Palestinians, not heretofore a matter of concern.

The horror stories in the Israeli (mainly Hebrew) press barely skim the surface. An official of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, returning from reserve service, reported that "the overwhelming majority of the severe and violent events in the territories do not reach the public at all." He estimated that about one in ten events reached the public during the escalation of violence that was becoming "a real war" -- one largely kept from the eyes of the American taxpayer who funds it, a further contribution to state terror.[35]

Also largely kept from those who pay the bill are the current proposals that the solution may after all lie in simply "transferring" the recalcitrant population of the occupied territories, a venerable idea now again entering center stage, with opponents often objecting, in mainstream commentary and debate, on grounds that it is unfeasible. By mid-1988, some 40 percent of Israeli Jews favored expulsion of the Arab population, while 45 percent regarded Israel as too democratic and 55 percent opposed granting equal rights to Israeli Arab citizens (contrary to much propaganda, deprivation of equal rights, such as access to most of the country's land, has always been severe). Much Zionist literature has long regarded the Palestinians as temporary visitors in the Land of Israel, perhaps recent immigrants drawn by Jewish rebuilding efforts; this has been a popular tale among American intellectuals as well. The rising ultra-orthodox religious groups, with a strong base in the United States, are hardly likely to object to the removal of people who are inferior to Jews in their essential nature; thus, in the words of the revered Rav Kook, Chief Ashkenazic Rabbi from 1921 to 1935, "the difference between the Israelite soul...and the soul of all non-Jews, at any level, is greater and deeper than the difference between the soul of a human and the soul of an animal, for between the latter [two categories] there is only a quantitative difference but between the former two there is a qualitative one."[36]

Those who believe that even the transfer solution would not find acceptance in some North American quarters are seriously in error. Respected figures of the social democratic left in the U.S. have long ago explained that the indigenous inhabitants of the former Palestine are "marginal to the nation" so that their problems might be "smoothed" by "helping people to leave who have to leave." Not a whisper was heard, Alexander Cockburn noted, when the Republican Party platform of 1988 "went so far as demurely to encourage the notion of transfer" with the words: "More jobs and more opportunities in adjoining countries might draw the energies of more young people into building a world for themselves rather than destroying someone else's"[37] -- by struggling for their rights against a harsh military regime endorsed and funded by the United States.

[32] *Hadaf Hayarok,* supplement to *Al Hamishmar,* Aug. 23, 1988.

[33] Almagor, *Ha'ir,* Dec. 16, 1988; *NYT,* March 18, 1968.

[34] Gilat, *Hadashot,* Dec. 16; Gissen, Joel Brinkley, *NYT*, April 28; AP, *NYT*, Dec. 15; special, *NYT*, Dec. 5, 1988. Eiran Taus, *Al-Hamishmar,* Nov. 19; Judith Green, *News from Within,* Dec. 14, 1988. Green, a Jerusalem architect working with the "Beita Committee" that hopes to reconstruct the houses destroyed by the army, visited the village with a member of the U.S. consulate on the day when the child was killed, and reported this story as well as the destruction caused by rampaging soldiers in a village that was quiet, with almost no villagers on the streets when the soldiers entered with riot control equipment. See my article in *Z Magazine,* July 1988, for more on the background, based in part on a personal visit a week after the incident with the hikers in April, while the village was still under military siege.

[35] Gad Lior, *Yediot Ahronot,* July 10, 1988.

[36] For a few references to current discussion on transfer, see my article in *Z Magazine,* May 1988. Poll, *Ha'aretz,* June 8, 1988; the poll, excluding settlers and kibbutz members, found 41 percent in favor. A poll taken shortly after found 49 percent favoring "transfer" of Arabs from the occupied territories; *JP,* Aug. 12, 1988. Rav Kook, quoted by Eyal Kafkafi, *Davar,* Sept. 26, 1988. See Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Israel's Fateful Hour* (Harper & Row, 1988), the first readily available source to deal with these important matters.

[37] Michael Walzer, "Nationalism, internationalism, and the Jews," in Irving Howe and Carl Gershman, eds., *Israel, the Arabs and the Middle East* (Bantam, 1972); Cockburn, *Nation,* Nov. 21, 1988.

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3. The Summits [38]

In preparation for the Reagan-Gorbachev meetings at the Washington summit of December 1987, the news was carefully shaped to ensure that only proper thoughts would reach the public. Excluded were the overwhelming votes at the United Nations opposing the escalated arms race advocated by the United States in virtual isolation, definitely not a useful message at the moment when all attention was to be focused on Reagan's achievements in bringing about world peace. It was not only world opinion that had to be scrupulously censored from the independent media. The domestic peace movement is no less unworthy. In a summary of media coverage, the monitoring organization FAIR observed that "only rightwing critics of the INF Treaty were considered newsworthy." A sharp critique of the Reagan administration for reckless nuclear deployment by Republican Senator Mark Hatfield was "blacked out of the national media," as was SANE/Freeze, America's largest peace group. Its press conference on the peace movement's role in laying the basis for the INF agreement was ignored, but another the same day called by the Anti-Appeasement Alliance, where Reagan was denounced as a "Kremlin idiot," "became a big news story." Secretary of State George Shultz's denunciation of the peace movement and his call for them "to admit that they were wrong" was reported, but, SANE/Freeze peace secretary Brigid Shea comments, "We aren't even given one inch to tell our side of the story." Soviet charges about U.S. attempts to undermine the ABM treaty in its pursuit of Star Wars were dismissed as "doctrinaire" and "hostile" in TV news reports, which offered a "summit wrap-up" featuring Richard Perle, criticizing the INF Treaty from the hard right, and the hawkish Democrat Sam Nunn playing dove (Tom Brokaw, NBC). As usual, there is a debate, but within proper limits.[39]

The official agenda for the summit included Reagan's role as a peacemaker and his passion for human rights. The task for the media, then, was to emphasize these two notable features of the president's achievements. Proper filtering enabled the first requirement to be satisfied. The second was met with no less aplomb. As Gorbachev stepped onto American soil at the Washington airport before the TV cameras, CBS anchorman Dan Rather commented that Gorbachev will focus on arms reduction, but "Reagan will press the Soviet Union on broader issues such as human rights, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua."[40] Few were so gauche as to raise questions about Reagan's stellar human rights record (in

Central America, for example), though not everyone went as far as Dan Rather, often denounced for his "ultraliberalism," in interpreting what has happened to Nicaragua as a Soviet transgression.[41]

In a front-page news story in the *New York Times,* Philip Taubman observed from Moscow that despite his promise, Gorbachev still has a good deal to learn. He continues to "articulate the orthodox Soviet view of life in the United States: A ruling class, dominated by a military-industrial complex, controls the Government and exploits the vast majority of Americans, creating a society of economic inequity and injustice." This "ideologically slanted" view is inconsistent with the "more sophisticated outlook of Soviet analysts and senior colleagues who are familiar with the United States," and therefore understand how remote this conception is from reality. The same issue of the *Times* includes an article by Adam Walinsky entitled "What It's Like to Be in Hell," describing the reality of life in the Chicago slums in this society free from economic inequity, injustice, and exploitation.[42]

The Moscow summit in June 1988 received similar treatment. With rare exceptions, commentary ranged from admiration of Reagan's courageous defense of human rights (in the Soviet Union) to criticism of his weakness for caving in to the Russians and his curious conversion to Leninism. Reagan's meeting with Soviet dissidents was featured; he is a man who "believes very firmly in a few simple principles, and his missionary work for human rights and the American way taps into his most basic values," the *New York Times* reported. In his "finest oratorical hour," the editors added, his speech to Moscow students "extended the President's persistent, laudable expressions of concern for human rights," a concern revealed, perhaps, by his fervent admiration for the genocidal killers in the Guatemalan military command and his organization of state terror in El Salvador, not to speak of his gentle treatment of the poor at home.[43]

A press conference at the Church Center near the United Nations called by a Human Rights Coalition fared differently. The national media ignored the plea for attention to human rights violations in the United States and countries dependent on U.S. aid, presented by the legal director of the ACLU, representatives of the Center for Constitutional Rights, the American Indian Movement, prison rights groups, and others.[44]

Some elements of the foreign press were more reluctant to adopt Washington's agenda. The Toronto *Globe and Mail* editors observed that just as Reagan "felt it necessary to lecture the Soviet Union on human rights" at the summit, the *New York Times* published some of the "shocking revelations" on the torturers whom the U.S. arms and advises in Honduras and the CIA's preference for inhuman methods that leave no visible trace, though the *Times* story refrained from citing the BBC report six months earlier that U.S. personnel were present at the meeting where the U.S.-trained death squad Battalion 316 ordered that an American priest, Father James Carney, be killed by throwing him from a helicopter.[45] The U.S. role in Honduras and its "quiet go-ahead" for the "dirty war" in Argentina are "not a proud record of respect for human dignity and freedom," the *Globe and Mail* editors observed, selecting some of the lesser examples that illustrate the point.

Note that the *New York Times* was quite capable of publishing this account while -- unlike its Canadian counterpart -- it perceived no conflict here with Reagan's "laudable expressions of concern for human rights," in the Soviet bloc.

The *New Statesman* in London added that "any claim which the American President makes to moral superiority must be accounted the most macabre of hypocrisies," noting the support of this "tribune of human rights" for state terrorists in El Salvador and Guatemala and for the "bloody terrorist campaign" against defenseless civilians in Nicaragua. The editors also commented on the "obvious irony" of Reagan's presentation to Gorbachev of a video-cassette of the film *Friendly Persuasion,* the only film in Hollywood history to be released with no screenplay credit because the scriptwriter was blacklisted in the days when Reagan was president of the Screen Actors Guild- Allied Artists, kicking "subversives" out of the union during the McCarthy witchhunt and later assuring us that "there was no such thing as a Hollywood blacklist." "The western media played Reagan's themes [in Moscow] for all they were worth," the editors observe; "the western media know their place." They are right with regard to the United States, where one would have to search far to find a similar discordant note.[46]

[38] Addendum to p. 84.

[39] *Extra!,* Dec. 1987.

[40] CBS News, 6:30 P.M., Dec. 7, 1987. The phrase in quotes is either an exact quote or a very close paraphrase; I do not have the transcript available.

[41] Many did, however; see chapter 2.

[42] *NYT,* Dec. 4, 1987.

[43] Steven Roberts, *NYT,* May 31; editorial, *NYT,* June 1.

[44] Alexander Cockburn, *Nation,* June 18, 1988.

[45] Editorial, *Globe and Mail,* June 10, 1988; James LeMoyne, *New York Times Magazine,* June 5, 1988. With regard to Father Carney, LeMoyne notes only the report that he was executed. On the follow-up to LeMoyne's account of torture, see appendix V, section 6.

[46] *New Statesman,* June 3, 10, 1988. For some exceptions, see a forthright editorial in the *Boston Globe,* June 1, and Michael Parks, *Los Angeles Times,* May 28, 1988.

4. The Media and International Opinion [47]

The U.N. votes at the time of the December 1987 Washington summit, and the treatment of them noted in the text, illustrate a more general pattern. In recent years, the United States has been far in the lead in vetoing Security Council resolutions. From 1967 through 1981, the United States vetoed seven resolutions condemning Israeli practices in southern Lebanon, affirming Palestinian rights, and deploring Israel's changing of the status of Jerusalem and its establishment of settlements in the occupied territories. Each time, the United States was alone in opposition. There were thirteen additional vetoes by the Reagan administration on similar issues, the U.S. standing alone.[48] The United States has also been alone or in a small minority in opposing or vetoing U.N. resolutions on South Africa, arms issues, and other matters.

These votes are often not reported or only marginally noted. The occasional reports are commonly of the kind one might find in a state-controlled press, as examples already cited illustrate. To mention another, in November 1988 the General Assembly voted 130 to 2 (the United States and Israel) for a resolution that "condemns" Israel for "killing and wounding defenseless Palestinians" in the suppression of the Palestinian uprising and "strongly deplores" its disregard for earlier Security Council resolutions condemning its actions in the occupied territories. This was reported in the *New York Times*. The first three paragraphs stated the basic facts. The rest of the article (ten paragraphs) was devoted to the U.S. and Israeli positions, to the abstainers, and to the "relatively poor showing" of the Arab states on earlier resolutions. From supporters of the resolution, all we hear is reservations of those who found it "unbalanced."[49]

The isolation of the United States has aroused some concern. In 1984, the *New York Times Magazine* devoted a major story to the topic by its U.N. correspondent Richard Bernstein.[50] He observes that "there are many voices" asking "in tones of skepticism and anguish" whether there is any value to the United Nations at all. "There is a growing sense," he continues, "that the United Nations has become repetitive, rhetorical, extremist and antidemocratic, a place where the United States is attacked with apparent impunity even by countries with which it maintains cordial bilateral relations." "There can be little doubt that, over the years, the United Nations has come to be dominated by what might be called a third-world ideology" -- that is, by the views of the majority of its members -- and that its attacks on the United States are "excessive and one-sided."

This judgment holds despite the annual U.N. condemnations of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and the regular U.N. reports on its human rights violations there, and the Security Council vote condemning the Soviet downing of KAL 007 over Soviet territory. The downing by the U.S. Navy of an Iranian civilian plane over Iranian territorial waters with 290 lives lost elicited no such reaction, and the U.S. attack against South Vietnam, later all of Indochina, was neither condemned nor subjected to inquiry; in fact, Shirley Hazzard observes, "throughout these years, the war in Vietnam was never discussed in the United Nations."[51]

Continuing his review of the decline of the United Nations, Bernstein observes that both the Security Council and the General Assembly condemned the U.S. invasion of Grenada, including most NATO countries and other U.S. allies. Even the efforts of U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, "perhaps the most dazzling intellect at the world body" (a comment that must have elicited a few chuckles there), have been unavailing in stemming the tide of "prefabricated jargon about racism, colonialism and fascism" and "ritualistic" attacks on the United States in place of the "reasoned debate" in the good old days when there was "an automatic majority" to support the U.S. positions. "The question," Bernstein concludes,

> is not why American policy has diverged from that of other member states, but why the world's most powerful democracy has failed to win support for its views among the participants in United Nations debates. The answer seems to lie in two underlying factors. The first and dominant one is the very structure and political culture that have evolved at the world body, tending in the process to isolate the United States and to portray it as a kind of ideological villain. The other factor is American failure to play the game of multilateral diplomacy with sufficient skill.

The question, in short, is why the world is out of step, and the answer plainly does not lie in the policies of the United States, which are praiseworthy as a matter of definition, so that argument to establish the point would be superfluous.

A different view was expressed by Senator William Fulbright in 1972, when he had become quite disaffected with U.S. policies: "Having controlled the United Nations for many years as tightly and as easily as a big-city boss controls his party machine," Fulbright remarked, "we had got used to the idea that the United Nations was a place where we could work our will." In his *History of the United Nations,* Evan Luard observes that:

> No doubt, if they had been in a majority, the communist states would have behaved in much the same way. The conduct of the West...was none the less an abuse of power. And it was an abuse that those same [Western] members were to regret more than most when the balance of power changed again and a different majority assumed control of the organization,

leading to "rage, but not, as yet, regret," as Shirley Hazzard comments, reviewing Luard's study.[52]

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[47] Addendum to p. 89.

[48] *American-Arab Affairs,* Winter 1987-88.

[49] Paul Lewis, *NYT,* Nov. 4, 1988.

[50] "The U.N. versus the U.S.," *NYT Magazine,* Jan. 22, 1984.

[51] Shirley Hazzard, *Defeat of an Ideal* (Atlantic Monthly Press, Little, Brown, 1973, 201). The only exceptions, she notes, were a Lao government initiative of 1959 and the Tonkin Gulf incident of 1964, when Adlai Stevenson falsely claimed that the alleged attacks on U.S. naval vessels were "a calculated, a deliberate act of military aggression against the United States."

[52] *Times Literary Supplement* (London), Sept. 17, 1982.

Hazzard goes on to describe how, with the complicity of Secretary General Trygvie Lie, the United States undermined the creation of an "independent international civil service" at the U.N. that "would impartially provide exposure and propose correctives to maintain the precepts to which governments nominally subscribed at San Francisco" when the U.N. was founded. She is referring to the U.S. insistence that the FBI be permitted to conduct a "witchhunt" to control selection of staff, opening "the floodgates...to political appointments" and hopelessly compromising the organization.

In her own study of "the Self-Destruction of the United Nations," Hazzard describes the witchhunt in detail, revealing how "the *majority* of the `international' United Nations Secretariat work force" was made subject to FBI screening and approval in a secret agreement with the State Department for which the only apparent partial precedent was an edict of Mussolini's concerning the League of Nations Secretariat. This secret agreement was "a landmark in United Nations affairs and the ascertainable point at which the international Secretariat delivered itself conclusively, in its earliest years, into the hands of national interest...in direct violation of the United Nations Charter." She observes that had a similar compact been discovered with the Soviet Union, "the international outcry would have been such as, in all probability, to bring down the United Nations itself"; in this case, exposure passed in silence, in accordance with the usual conventions. The U.N. submitted in fear of losing U.S. appropriations. "The United States concept of the `international'," Hazzard concludes, "was -- as it continues to be -- at best a sort of benign unilateralism through which American policies would work uncontested for everybody's benefit."[53]

This judgment explains the attitude of articulate U.S. opinion and the media towards the U.N. over the years. When the U.N. was a docile instrument of the United States, there was much indignation over Soviet negativism while distinguished social scientists reflected upon its sources in Russian culture and child-rearing practices. As the organization fell under "the tyranny of the majority" -- otherwise called "democracy" -- attitudes shifted to the current "skepticism and anguish," with equally profound musings on the cultural failings of the benighted majority.

The same attitudes are expressed towards other international organizations. When Latin American delegates, at a meeting of the Organization of American States, refused to bend to the U.S. will over the ham-handed efforts of the Reaganites to unseat General Noriega in Panama after he had outlived his usefulness, *Times* correspondent Elaine Sciolino observed sadly that "over the years, the O.A.S. has lost much of its authority as the conscience of Latin America" (Feb. 29, 1988) -- in translation, it no longer follows U.S. orders.

Throughout, it is presupposed, beyond question, that what the United States does and stands for is right and good; if others fail to recognize this moral rectitude, plainly they are at fault. The naiveté is not without a certain childlike appeal -- which quickly fades, however, when we recognize how it is converted into an instrument for inflicting suffering and pain.

As the world's richest and most powerful state, the United States continues to wield the lash. The *Times* reports that the O.A.S. "is likely to suspend its aid program for the rest of the year because of the worst financial crisis in its history." Half of the $20 million shortfall for 1988 results from a cut in the U.S. contribution; two-thirds of the $46 million in outstanding dues is owed by the United States, as of November 1988. "It's so serious that the essence of the organization is in danger," the Secretary General stated. O.A.S. officials warn that the fiscal crisis will cause curtailment of all development programs, adding that "the dispute grows out of sharply conflicting visions of the organization's role in the hemisphere," with the United States opposed to development programs that are favored by their beneficiaries. The drug program too "will be inoperative by the end of the year," the head of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the O.A.S. reported, while the Reagan administration lambasted the Latin American countries for their failure to control the flow of drugs to the United States. The U.S. cuts came against the background of criticism of the O.A.S. by administration officials and some members of Congress "for declining to take a more aggressive role against Nicaragua" and General Noriega.[54] A congressman explains that "we were not satisfied that we were getting a dollar's worth of performance for the American taxpayer." Reagan administration bully-boy tactics actually

succeeded in creating hemisphere-wide support for the much-despised Noriega, in annoyance over blatant U.S. interventionism after the sudden turn against him.

The United Nations is facing the same problems now that it no longer has the wit to function as an organ of U.S. power. The United States is by far the largest debtor, owing $412 million as of September 1987; the next largest debtor was Brazil, owing $16 million. The Soviet Union had by then announced that it would pay all of its outstanding debts. In earlier years, when the U.S.S.R. was the culprit, the United States had backed a request to the World Court for a ruling on debt payment and had endorsed the Court ruling that all members must pay their debts. But now the grounds have shifted, and debt payment is no longer a solemn obligation. Unreported is the fact that according to the U.S. mission at the United Nations, the U.N. operation "funnels $400 million to $700 million per year into the U.S. and New York economies."[55]

The institutions of world order do not fare well in the media in other cases as well, when they serve unwanted ends. Efforts to resolve border tensions provide one striking illustration. These are rarely reported when the agent is an enemy state, particularly a victim of U.S. attack. Nicaraguan proposals for border monitoring are a case in point. To cite one additional example, in March 1988, during the Nicaraguan strike against the contras that apparently spilled a few kilometers into contra-held areas of Honduras, there was much indignant commentary about Sandinista aggression and their threat to peaceful Honduras. Nicaragua requested that a U.N. observer force monitor the Nicaragua-Honduras border -- which would have put to rest these fears, had they been serious in the first place. Honduras rejected Nicaragua's call for U.N. observers, the U.N. spokesman told reporters. Nicaragua also asked the International Court of Justice to inquire into alleged Honduran armed incursions. There appears to have been no mention of these facts in the *New York Times,* which preferred to report that three months earlier Honduran Foreign Minister Carlos López Contreras had proposed monitoring of the border.[56]

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[53] *Defeat of an Ideal,* 9, 14ff., 60f., 65, 71.

[54] Here named "General Ortega," in a slip of the pen; David Johnston, *NYT,* June 25, 1988. Lindsey Gruson, *NYT,* Nov. 14, 1988.

[55] Paul Lewis, *NYT,* Oct. 16, 1987; AP, Feb. 28, 1988.

[56] AP, March 22; *Christian Science Monitor,* March 25, 43 words; Treaster, *NYT,* March 27, 1988. See also Mary McGrory, *Boston Globe,* March 23, noting that Honduras refused to admit a U.N. observer team.

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5. Demolishing the Accords [57]

Given the policies it advocates in the Third World, the United States often finds itself politically weak though militarily strong, as commonly conceded on all sides in internal documents. The result is regular opposition to diplomacy and political settlement. Since the facts do not conform to the required image, considerable talent in historical engineering is required.[58] The problem has been a persistent one during the Central American conflicts of recent years.

The United States systematically blocked all efforts to use peaceful means to resolve what *Times* correspondent Shirley Christian calls "*our* Nicaraguan agony," describing our suffering in the course of our "basically idealistic efforts to deal with the situation," in which, "on balance, we may have had the best intentions of all the players."[59] The United States succeeded in blocking the Contadora initiatives, eliminating any recourse to the World Court and United Nations as required by international law and the supreme law of the land, and evading repeated Nicaraguan efforts to satisfy legitimate interests of the Central American countries -- even the alleged U.S. security concerns, ludicrous as they are. The U.S. attempted to block the Arias proposals in 1987, succeeding through July with the cooperation of Salvadoran president Duarte. (See chapter 5.)

The Reagan-Wright proposals of August 5 were a final effort to sabotage any meaningful agreement that might result from the planned meeting of Central American presidents the next day. But this proved "an incredible tactical error," a Guatemalan diplomat observed, arousing "the nationalistic instincts of the Costa Rican and Guatemalan delegations," which felt "insulted" by these strong-arm methods.[60] On August 7, to the dismay of the U.S. administration, the Central American presidents agreed on the Esquipulas II Accord, "inspired by the visionary and permanent desire of the Contadora and the [Latin American] Support Groups."[61]

The unexpected August 7 agreement compelled the media to backtrack quickly from their advocacy of the Reagan-Wright plan as a forthcoming gesture for peace. On August 6, James LeMoyne had reported falsely that apart from Nicaragua, which risked isolation for its intransigence, the Central American presidents "were gratified" by the Reagan-Wright proposal -- which Guatemala and Costa Rica dismissed with considerable irritation as an "insult." A day later, Washington now being isolated by the peace agreement of the Central American presidents, LeMoyne presented their accord as sharing "the central intent of Mr. Reagan's plan, which is to demand internal political changes in Nicaragua"; the Esquipulas Accord made no mention of Nicaragua, but was rather designed to apply simultaneously and comparably to all the Central American countries. The media proceeded to construct an interpretation which gave the United States the credit for having driven Nicaragua to negotiations by the use of force and the Reagan-Wright initiative. The purpose, apart from serving to conceal the consistent U.S. opposition to a peaceful settlement, was to legimitate state violence and thus prepare the ground for its renewal when needed, here or elsewhere.[62]

Some were unable to conceal their dismay with the developments. Former *New York Times* executive editor A.M. Rosenthal, whose regular columns since his retirement provide much insight into the thinking that animated the *Times* during his tenure, denounced "the pro-Sandinistas in press and politics" -- a group that one might detect with a sufficiently powerful microscope -- for their failure to stand by the Reagan-Wright plan after the Esquipulas Accord was signed. He assured the reader that the Central American presidents were "astonished" by this failure to pursue the proposal, which in Rosenthal's world they welcomed, while in the real world they had rejected it with contempt. Opponents of the Reagan-Wright plan, he wrote, are helping to kill "the peace proposals for Nicaragua" -- that is, the Reagan-Wright plan, which, unlike the Esquipulas Accord, applied only to Nicaragua and therefore alone qualifies as a peace proposal for an American jingoist. Extolling the reliance on violence, Rosenthal wrote that "Secretary Shultz and Howard Baker, believing that the Sandinistas had been hurt severely enough to make negotiations feasible, got the President to agree." But now "the pro-Sandinistas in this country" are undercutting the Shultz-Baker achievements by advocacy of the Esquipulas Accord, and even "acted as if it were a damnable sin to suggest that the United States should not immediately destroy the contras, whose existence brought about the opportunity for negotiations."[63]

Most, however, preferred less crude means to convert the peace agreement to the basic structure of the Reagan-Wright plan. The Esquipulas Accord set in motion a U.S. government campaign to dismantle it and maintain the option of further attacks against Nicaragua accompanied with such state terror as might be required to keep the "fledgling democracies" in line. The enthusiastic cooperation of the media ensured the success of this endeavor. The desired result was achieved by January 1988, in a brilliantly executed government-media operation.

As discussed in chapter 4, the first task was to eliminate the provisions applying to the United States, namely, the one "indispensable element" for peace: the termination of any form of aid for indigenous guerrillas or the contras. U.S. aid for the contras attacking Nicaragua from Honduras and Costa Rica was already criminal, even in the technical legal sense, but the Esquipulas Accord raised a new barrier. By August 1987, supply flights to the contras had reached a level of one a day, in addition to the constant surveillance required to assure that barely defended targets can be safely attacked. The U.S. responded to the call for termination of such aid by escalating it. Supply flights doubled in September and virtually tripled in the following months. In late August, the CIA attempted to bribe Miskito leaders to reject Nicaraguan attempts at peaceful reconciliation and continue the war.[64]

These flagrant violations of the "indispensable element" for peace undermined the basis for the

Esquipulas Accord. To assess the role of the media, we therefore ask how they dealt with these crucial facts. I will continue to keep largely to the *New York Times,* the most important newspaper and the one that provides the quasi-official record for history; the pattern elsewhere is generally similar.[65]

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[57] Addendum to p. 90.

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[58] For discussion of how the problem was addressed in the case of Indochina from 1950 until today, see *Manufacturing Consent,* chapters 5, 6. On similar problems with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, see appendix V, section 4.

[59] *New Republic,* Aug. 29, 1988; my emphasis. Christian, regarded as a specialist on Nicaragua, goes on to argue that the contras are a typical Latin American guerrilla movement, "largely a Central American creation," since "aside from a few individual Americans with nebulous government ties the key players were the Argentine colonels" (transmuted into Central Americans), the Honduran military chief Gustavo Alvarez, a noted killer, "and an assortment of former Nicaraguan National Guardsmen." Plainly, "the classic pattern of guerrilla armies in Latin America," even putting aside a few notable omissions. She does not elaborate on the significance of this interesting collection of "key players." Such contributions are apparently taken seriously.

[60] Michael Allen, *Wall Street Journal,* Aug. 10; *Central America Report* (Guatemala City), Aug. 14, 1987. See *Culture of Terrorism,* 141f., 18-19, on the events and the media reaction.

[61] Here and below, I will use the Guatemalan version of the English translation; Special Document, Esquipulas II Accord, *Central America Report,* August 14, 1987.

[62] LeMoyne, *NYT,* Aug. 6, 7. On the actual reaction of Presidents Cerezo and Arias, see *Central America Report,* Aug. 14. See *Culture of Terrorism,* 141f., for further details.

[63] Rosenthal, *NYT,* Aug. 21, 1987.

[64] Brian Barger, UPI, *Philadelphia Inquirer,* Oct. 22, 1987; *Excelsior* (Mexico City), Oct. 22, 1987. On the supply flights and other matters, see the footnoted versions of my articles in *Z Magazine,* January, March, 1988.

[65] For some exceptions, see chapter 4, notes 34, 37.

I was unable to find a single phrase in the *Times* referring to the bribes, the rapid U.S. escalation of supply and surveillance flights, or their success in escalating terrorist attacks against civilians.

The Esquipulas Accord designated the three-month period from August 7 to early November for initial steps to realize its terms, and the period from August 7 to mid-January as the first phase, after which the International Verification and Monitoring Commission (CIVS) was to present its report on what had been achieved. During the first three-month period, *Times* Nicaragua correspondent Stephen Kinzer had forty-one articles dealing with Nicaragua. The crucial events just described were omitted entirely. In fact, there were only two references even to the existence of supply and surveillance flights.[66] On September 23, Kinzer mentioned that "Thousands of contras inside Nicaragua now receive their supplies principally from clandestine airdrops run by the Central Intelligence Agency." On October 15, he wrote that "Planes that fly into Nicaragua at night to drop supplies to contras take off from Honduras." In later months, there are a few scattered references to these flights.[67]

In short, we find total suppression of the most critical facts concerning the fate of the accords, not to speak of the flagrant violation of international law and the dramatic proof of the artificial character of the implanted proxy army -- a conclusion never drawn, as far as I can determine. The record provides impressive evidence of the dedication of the media to state propaganda and violence.

The *Times* was not content with evasion of the supply and surveillance operations and total suppression of the escalation of U.S. aid to its forces in an effort to undermine the Esquipulas Accord. It also resorted to outright falsification. In mid-November, President Ortega attended an OAS meeting in Washington, to which the U.S. brought its CIA-funded contra civilian directorate, much to the annoyance of the Latin American delegates. Ortega denounced the sharp increase in supply flights after they had been banned by the Accord, reporting 140 supply flights from August. Contra leader Adolfo Calero dismissed this estimate as far too low, stating that "his radar is not working very well." The *New York Times* reported the statements by Ortega and Calero, but with an editorial adjustment. Where they spoke of supply flights, the *Times* news report downgraded the reference to "surveillance flights," still a violation of international law and the Accord, but a less serious one, thus apparently less unacceptable.[68]

A few days later, Nicaragua's U.N. Ambassador Nora Astorga reported 275 supply and surveillance flights detected from August 7 to November 3. I found no notice in the press of this not entirely trivial allegation.[69]

By such means, the media succeeded in serving Washington's goal of eliminating two central provisions of the Accord: "Aid halt to irregular forces or insurrectionist movements," and "Non-use of territory to attack other states." With this implicit revision of the Accord, the United States was now free to act as it wished, with the endorsement of President Arias, according to the *Times* version, at least.[70]

The Esquipulas Accord called for "an authentic pluralistic and participatory democratic process to promote social justice, respect for human rights, sovereignty, the territorial integrity of states and the right of each nation to determine, freely and without any kind of external interference, its own economic, political and social model," as well as steps to ensure "justice, freedom and democracy," freedom of expression and political action, and opening of the communication media "for all ideological groups." They also called for "dialogue with all unarmed political opposition groups within the country" and other steps to achieve national reconciliation. Furthermore, "amnesty decrees will be issued setting out the steps to guarantee the inviolability of all forms of life and liberty, material goods and the safety of the people to benefit from said decrees."

El Salvador violated the amnesty condition at once by decreeing an amnesty that freed the state security services and their associates from the unlikely prospect of prosecution for their crimes. Human rights monitors denounced the step, predicting -- accurately, as it turned out -- that it would lead to an increase in state terror. The *Times,* however, lauded the amnesty. With regard to Nicaragua, the Washington-media interpretation was that the amnesty must apply far more broadly than the Accord specifies. We return to these matters.

The required steps towards democracy, social justice, safeguarding of human rights, and so on, plainly could not be enacted in Washington's terror states.[71] Therefore, the provisions had to be eliminated from the operative version of the Accord. The method pursued was, again, to suppress the facts and praise the terror states for their adherence to the accords that they were increasingly violating.

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[66] Note that this review is based on the library edition of the *Times*. The earlier (Boston) edition sometimes differs. Thus in the last paragraph (par. 25) of an October 24 story on contra attacks, omitted in the library edition, Kinzer mentions that the contras are using Redeye missiles and other supplies provided by "clandestine" CIA flights from Honduras, which Nicaragua cannot intercept without jet fighters.

[67] In a December 6 interview with a contra commander, Kinzer quotes him as saying that the contras cannot supply themselves within Nicaragua (the sharp contrast with El Salvador is unmentioned, following standard convention), and have received, intact, 52 CIA supply drops. In a report the following day, he cites a Nicaraguan government report of 82 supply flights and 21 surveillance missions from November 5 to December 5. A January 25 story notes that "clandestine night supply flights into Nicaragua are a vital lifeline for the contras," citing an American official who says that there were more than 350 such flights in 1987. A brief AP report on October 30, 1987, notes the crash of a

contra supply plane in Honduras.

[68] Neil Lewis, *NYT,* Nov. 12, 1987. Others stated the facts correctly. See references cited in note 64.

[69] U.N. General Assembly, A/42/PV.67, Nov. 16, 1987. On the reporting of this U.N. session, see chapter 4.

[70] Stephen Kinzer, *NYT,* Oct. 15, 1987. He claims that President Arias "said Honduras could not be expected to close contra camps and ban clandestine supply flights if the Sandinistas do not negotiate a cease-fire with the contras and issue a broad amnesty." The Esquipulas Accord set no such condition on cessation of contra aid. Neither Arias nor anyone else has held that foreign aid to the guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala is legitimate until the governments negotiate a cease-fire with these indigenous forces or live up to the terms of the accords. If Kinzer's statement is correct, it follows that Arias too was committed to the failure of the accords that are mislabeled "the Arias plan." There are repeated references in the *Times* to alleged positions of Arias which lead to the same conclusion, but it is difficult to know how much is accurate, how much wishful thinking. For more on Arias's role and the reason for his relative acceptability in the United States, see my article in *Z Magazine,* November 1988. For comment on his "shocking record" in "only superficially promoting his own plan" while responding to pressures from Washington and the powerful right-wing elements within Costa Rica, see Council on Hemispheric Affairs, "News and Analysis," Feb. 10, 1989.

[71] Questions also arise about Costa Rica, generally regarded as exempt from the accords. Thus the Spanish-language press is firmly under right-wing control, barring access of "all ideological groups," among other questions that would arise if Costa Rican affairs were reported. See appendix V, section 6. Also, *Culture of Terrorism,* 243, for one critical case.

Growing Honduran concerns over loss of national independence and integrity under U.S. influence have also not been a popular topic. As discussed earlier, the March 1988 Nicaraguan operations against the contras elicited irate denunciations of Sandinista aggressiveness and threat to Honduras in the U.S. media and Congress; also a bipartisan proposal for $48 million in aid, including arms, to the beleaguered freedom fighters so unfairly attacked. When the United States sent an airlift to "defend Honduras" against Sandinista aggression, there was much jingoist fanfare at home, and a reaction in Honduras that received somewhat less attention. Honduran journalists condemned the U.S. "invasion." *El Tiempo* denounced the government call for -- or acquiescence in -- the dispatch of U.S. troops as "not only illegal but shameful. It is telling the world that the state of Honduras does not exist." The journal described the U.S. troops as an "occupation force," while the Christian Democratic Party "said that the U.S. soldiers should fly home immediately" and its leader Rubén Palma "told reporters that Honduran President José Azcona had acted illegally in calling in foreign troops without parliament's authorization."[91]

One could learn little about such matters from the *New York Times,*[92] and not much elsewhere. Media reporting that departed from the U.S. government agenda would have allayed the widespread shock when Hondurans attacked the U.S. Embassy a few weeks later while police stood by, in an explosion of anti-U.S. sentiment.

Apart from the barriers to U.S. terror, overcome with media complicity as discussed earlier, two central features of the Esquipulas Accord were intolerable to Washington: the role given to international monitors, the CIVS, and the "symmetry" condition on which the agreements were based, requiring steps in parallel by all Central American countries. The former condition was unacceptable because it interferes with the U.S. ability to violate the Accord as it wishes; the latter, for the same reason, and because Washington's terror states cannot possibly live up to the provisions on democratization and human rights. The task of the media, then, was to eliminate these two unwanted principles. The agreement as revised by Washington must be focused solely on Nicaragua, with the international monitors dismissed. By these means, the unwanted Esquipulas Accord could be brought into line with the Reagan-Wright plan rejected by the Central American presidents in August.

The problem of international monitoring became serious in January 1988, when the CIVS was to present its findings to the Central American presidents after studying the five countries. Plainly, this was the central diplomatic event of the month; equally plainly, it was unacceptable, particularly when the Commission presented its conclusions. The CIVS singled out the United States for condemnation because of its continued assistance "to the irregular forces operating against the government of Nicaragua," thus violating "an indispensable requirement for the success of the peace efforts and of this Procedure as a whole." A CIVS official informed the press that Latin American representatives were "shocked by the attitudes of patent fear" expressed by trade unionists and opposition figures in El Salvador and Guatemala. He added that the CIVS could not provide details about compliance because of objections from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala -- a clear indication of what the report would have said, had it not been blocked by the United States and its clients. The report praised Nicaragua's "concrete steps" towards democratization despite the difficulties it faced.

The facts were reported by several journals, but eliminated from the *New York Times,* where James LeMoyne, in a dispatch focusing on denunciations of Nicaragua, dismissed the CIVS report in one sentence, stating only that its meeting ended "with little agreement" (the report was adopted unanimously). The condemnation of the United States was briefly noted in an article on another topic nine days later by Stephen Kinzer, who added that "the commission fell out of favor in some circles when it reported that Nicaragua had taken `concrete steps toward the beginning of a democratic process'"; like the O.A.S., the CIVS had thus "lost much of its authority as the conscience of Latin America."[93]

The Commission was disbanded under U.S. pressure, enabling the United States to pursue its terrorist exercises unhampered and permitting Duarte to continue to serve as a front man for repression and murder.

The "symmetry" problem was overcome by focusing virtually all coverage on Nicaragua, along with the constant pretense that whatever may appear in the text of the Esquipulas Accord, "there is no doubt that [the treaty's] main provisions are principally directed at Nicaragua and will affect Nicaragua more than any of the other nations that signed the accord" (James LeMoyne). That is quite true under the conditions dictated by Washington and observed by the press, though the conclusion has no basis in the text. As LeMoyne explained further, the Sandinistas are "in a somewhat exposed position" because they, and they alone, "are under close scrutiny for their efforts to carry out the Central American peace treaty."[94] Again true, on the tacit assumption that the Free Press must follow the marching orders that issue from Washington. His colleague Stephen Kinzer offered the same analysis, as did the media fairly generally.

The Media Alliance in San Francisco studied press samples during two periods of peak coverage of the peace plan (August 5 through September 15, 1987; January 5 through February 7, 1988). The *New York Times* devoted ten times as many stories to Nicaragua as to all the other countries combined in the first period, and eleven times as many in the second. Other media sampled had similar proportions.[95] Efforts to gain mainstream coverage for these reports failed.

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[91] Toronto *Globe and Mail,* March 23, 1988. See appendix III on the integrity of the concerns angrily expressed over the Sandinista border violation. On the aid proposal, see Susan Rasky, *NYT,* March 19, 1988.

[92] From Tegucigalpa, Joseph Treaster reported only that "ordinary Hondurans" generally feel that with the contras out of Honduras, tensions between the two countries will end, referring to the fear in Honduras that they will "get stuck with" the contras; *NYT,* March 21, 27.

[93] See p. 221. Peter Ford, *Christian Science Monitor,* Jan. 15; Richard Boudreaux, *Los Angeles Times,* Jan. 14; LeMoyne, *NYT,* Jan. 16; Kinzer, *NYT,* Jan. 25, 1988.

[94] *NYT,* Nov. 10, 1987.

[95] *San Francisco Bay Guardian,* Jan. 6, April 20, 1988.

The quality of coverage also differed radically. Thus a rock-throwing incident in Nicaragua on January 23 received front-page coverage in the *Washington Post* and prominent attention elsewhere, with the *Times* warning that the incident would "strengthen the argument" of the Reagan administration that Nicaragua is not complying with the peace plan. Similarly, extensive coverage was given to the January 16 detention of four members of the Nicaraguan opposition who had met with contras and the January 19 arrest of five opposition members, all released unharmed after several hours of questioning (in the *Times,* nineteen paragraphs and a headline across the page in the first case, and a front-page above-the-fold story in the second); months later, Roy Gutman, referring to this incident, observed in the *Washington Post* that "No government ordinarily allows a legal political party to negotiate a joint program with armed forces seeking the overthrow of that government." In contrast, the murder in Honduras of a human rights leader and a Christian Democratic Party leader on January 15 received 160 words in an unheadlined story, and no conclusions were drawn about compliance with the Accord. The disruption of a "Mothers of Political Prisoners" gathering by civilian Sandinista supporters warranted a major *Times* story and photo on January 23; the disruption of a "Mothers of Political Prisoners and the Disappeared" march by the Salvadoran riot police on December 21 was ignored.[96] The examples are typical, and again readily explained in terms of a propaganda model.

The readers of the Toronto *Globe and Mail* and the wire services could learn that in a one-week period in January, while compliance with the Accord was front-page news, ten people were found murdered in El Salvador in death squad style with signs of torture, including two women who had been hanged from a tree by their hair with their breasts cut off and their faces painted red. Later in the month, there were more killings, with the tortured bodies found in a traditional death squad dump. Foreign diplomats and Church leaders blamed the Salvadoran armed forces. Auxiliary Archbishop Rosa Chávez stated in his February 7 homily that "According to information compiled by our office [Tutela Legal], the captors [of two tortured and murdered laborers] were men in plain clothes and uniformed soldiers of the 1st Artillery Brigade's counter-insurgency section" (an elite U.S.-trained unit).[97] The readers of the *New York Times* were spared these facts, just as the *Times* had no interest in a televised mass on January 3 in which Archbishop Rivera y Damas once again denounced "the practice of torture used against many Salvadorans by the death squads," stating that bishops in several provinces reported increased death squad murders and calling for an end to assassinations and torture.[98]

A few weeks later, as Duarte's security services and their associates extended their grim work while the *Times* obligingly looked the other way, the House of Representatives passed a resolution commending El Salvador's progress towards democracy. The proposed resolution stated that El Salvador has achieved a system "which respects human liberties," but liberal representative Ted Weiss of New York succeeded in having it changed to say only that the country has "sought to" establish such a system. "Give them a little credit for trying, Ted," said House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Dante Fascell. In December, as the terror was mounting after the signing of the Esquipulas Accord, the House of Representatives had overwhelmingly passed an amendment specifying a long list of "Actions Which Should Be Undertaken" to satisfy the high ideals of Congress -- in Nicaragua. Representative Weiss sought to introduce a few changes, applying the conditions to "all countries in Central America" instead of only Nicaragua. This proposal was rejected by a large majority. Congress and the media share the same agenda.[99]

In subsequent months, state terror in El Salvador escalated, rarely reported. James LeMoyne was much exercised over *guerrilla* terror, devoting stories to the topic with such headlines as "Salvador Rebels Kill 12 in Raid on Town," "Guerrillas in Salvador Step Up Pre-election Terrorism," and "Salvador Rebels Target Civilians, Killing 3," repeatedly referring to the same alleged atrocities.[100] Terror by U.S. clients does not pass entirely unnoticed. Thus, he concludes one story with the words: "Such rebel violence has been reflected in a rise in political killings," its source unnamed. In a "review of the week" column, he describes a guerrilla shift to "terrorist tactics," then adds that "increasingly, the guerrillas and their sympathizers are also the targets of violence." Another report focuses on guerrilla terror, noting also that

"the army appears to be returning to killing suspected leftists as an answer to sharply stepped-up guerrilla assassinations, bombings and other attacks."[101] The message is that the U.S.-installed government may not be perfect, but its deficiencies are a response to guerrilla atrocities. Readers familiar with such journalistic practice can try to read between the lines, and may surmise that the government is perhaps not judiciously observing its commitment to human rights under the accords. But they will learn little about the matter from this source. They may to turn to the foreign press to read, in the mainstream, that Europeans "want to see progress towards civilised politics not just in Nicaragua and Costa Rica, but also in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, which lamentably continue to be bywords for barbarity."[102]

We should again observe that these devices to conceal atrocities provide a shield behind which the state terrorists can continue their work. The contribution of disciplined journalists to murder, torture, and general misery is not small.

The media campaign, only barely sampled here,[103] succeeded in demolishing what remained of the Esquipulas Accord by January. With the CIVS abolished under U.S. pressure, Ortega agreed to go far beyond the terms of the forgotten accords, abandoning the simultaneity condition entirely. The "genius of the Arias plan," the *Times* editors explained, "is that it provides a means for Nicaragua to accommodate to neighbors without appearing to truckle to Washington," not the simultaneity requirement that was recognized to be the "genius" of the plan when it was signed.[104] They may well be correct about what Arias had in mind, to judge by the references and quotes; but if so, that would simply show that he had no more interest in the implementation of the Esquipulas Accord than the *New York Times*.

Recognizing that the powerful make the rules, Ortega agreed that Nicaragua alone would enact the provisions of the accords, even calling for an international commission, including members of both U.S. political parties, to monitor Nicaragua's adherence alone.[105] The media reported that Ortega now promises to "comply with" the accords -- that is, the version fashioned in Washington, which bears little resemblance to the text -- while warning that his promises plainly cannot be trusted. No one else's promises were relevant, now that the accords had been consigned to oblivion. Citing unnamed "officials," LeMoyne portrayed Nicaragua as the villain of the piece, "the country most widely accused of bad faith," now "pressed to the wall by the other four Central American leaders" to implement the peace treaty. Readers could again turn to the foreign press to read that "Nicaragua has done more to comply with the terms of the Central American peace plan than any of the other five signatories, with the exception of Costa Rica," the judgment of the editors of the *Globe and Mail,* plainly accurate, but hidden by the U.S. media barrage with only an occasional glimpse of the unacceptable facts.[106]

Even critics were swept up in the propaganda campaign. Thus a *Nation* editorial (January 30) stated that Ortega "has made significant concessions to the Central American peace plan," namely, by agreeing to abandon it in conformity to U.S. demands. The terror states were now exempt, along with their sponsor.

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[96] *Ibid.,* and FAIR Questionnaire submitted to *Times* editors on their Central America coverage, Jan. 23, 1988. Gutman, *WP,* Aug. 7, 1988.

[97] AP, Feb. 2, 3; *Globe and Mail,* Feb. 3, 1988; Amnesty International, *El Salvador: `Death Squads' -- a Government Strategy* (October 1988). See my article in *Z Magazine,* Jan. 1988, for further details.

[98] Douglas Farah, *WP,* Jan. 4; COHA *Washington Report on the Hemisphere,* Jan. 20, 1988.

[99] AP, Feb. 26, 23, 1988; *Congressional Record,* House, Dec. 8, 1987, H11037f. See *Envío,* Jan. 1988, for a reaction by Jesuits in Nicaragua.

[100] Feb. 18; March 20; April 20, 1988. On the credibility of LeMoyne's reports of guerrilla atrocities, see appendix V, section 4.

[101] March 20; March 20, "Review of the Week"; Feb. 29, 1988. LeMoyne's successor Lindsey Gruson

follows basically the same script. Thus a dispatch with the headline "Rebel Attacks on the Rise in Salvador" begins with ten paragraphs on the violence of the "Marxists committed to redistributing the nation's wealth and overthrowing the American-backed government," including attacks on army headquarters, ambushing police, and two car bombs in a wealthy neighborhood; and in paragraph eleven, we learn that human rights monitors report "a sharp increase in terrorism and massacres attributed to right-wing death squads, the army and the guerrillas" (*NYT,* Oct. 20, 1988).

[102] Editorial, *Observer* (London), Feb. 7, 1988.

[103] For details, see my articles in *Z Magazine,* January, March 1988.

[104] Editorial, *NYT,* Jan. 31.

[105] LeMoyne, *NYT,* Jan. 22, 1988.

[106] LeMoyne, *NYT,* Jan. 18; *Globe and Mail,* Feb. 5, 1988.

Throughout this period, there was a simple algorithm to determine which features of the peace plan count. Violations by the United States and the "fledgling democracies" are off the agenda, as is any requirement to which Nicaragua conformed. For example, a central feature of the accords was establishment of a National Reconciliation Commission. Nicaragua alone complied in a meaningful way, selecting its severest critic, Cardinal Obando, to head the Commission. Duarte, in contrast, selected U.S. presidential candidate Alvaro Magaña as the head of the Commission, which did nothing. In the second U.S. dependency, Honduras, there was barely a show of forming a Commission, though it was not entirely inactive. We learn from the Honduran press that the National Reconciliation Commission was supervising the distribution of U.S. supplies to the contras and thus "helping to subvert" the March 1988 cease-fire.[107]

In accord with the algorithm just presented, the provisions of the Accord with regard to the National Reconciliation Commissions disappeared. Similarly, there is no utility to the unreported conclusion of the U.N. refugee commission (UNHCR) that repatriation of refugees has been more successful in Nicaragua than elsewhere because of the "excellent disposition of the Sandinista government."[108] Off the agenda, then, is the "sense of urgency" with which the Central American presidents committed themselves to the task of refugee repatriation in the Esquipulas Accord. The pattern is close to exceptionless.

Pursuing this procedure, the media, early on, reduced the Central American agreements to "two key points" (Stephen Kinzer): (1) Will Nicaragua offer an amnesty to what the U.S. government and the media call "political prisoners"?[109]; (2) Will Nicaragua agree to negotiate with the contra civilian directorate?

With regard to the first point, few readers would have been aware that in early November, 1987 the CIVS determined that amnesty provisions were to go into effect when the aggression against Nicaragua ceases, and even a real media addict would not have learned that a few weeks later in November, the Nicaraguan National Assembly decreed a complete amnesty and revoked the state of emergency, both laws to "go into effect on the date that the [CIVS certifies] compliance with" the commitments of the accords to terminate the attack against Nicaragua. These laws were formulated in terms of the simultaneity condition of the accords, which Nicaragua, in its naiveté, believed to be operative.[110] Thus, by November, Nicaragua had largely complied with the accords as they are actually written. It was alone in this regard apart from Costa Rica, as remained the case.

The U.S. government version of the accords was, however, quite different from that of the CIVS and the text. We can find it in State Department propaganda, or indirectly, in news reports in the *New York Times,* where Stephen Kinzer describes the contents of the accords as follows: "Under its provisions, no country in the region would be permitted to assist the contras once the Sandinistas establish full political freedom."[111] According to this useful version, as long as Nicaragua falls short of a Scandinavian

democracy in peacetime, the United States is entitled to maintain its proxy army in the field attacking Nicaragua. Since the accords do not single out Nicaragua for special treatment, it also follows that on the *Times*-State Department version of the accords, they entitle the Soviet Union to send arms and supplies to the guerrillas in El Salvador with several flights a day from Cuba until a radical restructuring of Washington's terror state has been completed. This consequence, however, is unmentioned.

As noted earlier, El Salvador also declared an amnesty, though in a form that expressly violated the terms of the Esquipulas Accord. The *New York Times* lauded the decree as the Duarte government's "most concrete step toward complying with the regional peace accord," contrasting this forthcoming move with the refusal of the Sandinistas to comply apart from "tentative" and grudging steps[112] -- steps that met the conditions of the Accord, as we have just seen, though the *Times* never reported the facts. The Toronto *Globe and Mail* chose different words, describing the Salvadoran edict as "an amnesty for the military and the death squads." This noble gesture was bitterly condemned by human rights groups, not only because it freed the assassins of tens of thousands of people from prosecution (hardly likely in any event, with the government under effective military control), but also, as María Julia Hernández of Tutela Legal observed after several more months of atrocities, because "it made the military feel secure that there would be no prosecutions for human rights" violations in the future. The amnesty "chiefly benefited the military-linked death squads," the *Globe and Mail* commented accurately.[113]

With regard to the second "key point," negotiations, the accords did not call for discussions with CIA-created front organizations of the classic Communist Party style. That the contra directorate is exactly that had long been known, and is documented in detail in an important (and unmentionable) monograph by Edgar Chamorro, who was selected by the CIA to serve as spokesman for the front created for the benefit of "enemy territory" at home.[114] In a memo released during the Iran-contra hearings, Robert Owen, Oliver North's liaison with the contras, described the civilian front as "a name only," "a creation of the United States government (USG) to garner support from Congress"; power lies in the hands of the Somozist-run FDN, headed by Adolfo Calero, who "is a creation of the USG and so he is the horse we chose to ride," though he is surrounded by people who are "liars and greed- and power-motivated" for whom the war is "a business" as they hope for the marines to restore them to the power they lost.[115]

Nevertheless, applying the algorithm for interpreting the accords, the media took their key feature to be negotiations between the Sandinistas and Washington's PR creation. The *New York Times* even went so far as to describe the Nicaraguan government and the contras as "the two factions" who must negotiate and reach a settlement, a difficult task because the government "faction" insists upon "an end to all outside support for the contras" -- as the Esquipulas Accord stipulates, a fact unmentioned.[116] Another journalist, surveying the problems of the region, describes the contenders for power in Nicaragua as "the two hostile bands"; in El Salvador, in contrast, the civil war pits "the U.S.-supported government" against the "Marxist guerrillas."[117] Appropriate use of language has its role to play, alongside of careful selection, distortion, and outright falsehood.

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[107] Editorial, *El Tiempo,* May 5, 1988; reprinted in *Hondupress,* May 18.

[108] *Central America Report,* June 17, 1988.

[109] Human rights monitors have repeatedly condemned this technique of ideological warfare, but to no avail. See my article in *Z Magazine,* Jan. 1988, for details.

[110] Reuters, *NYT,* Nov. 9, 1987, citing the CIVS report of November 8 and Latin American officials; Amnesty Law and Bill to suspend the State of Emergency, promulgated in November 1987, Unofficial translation, Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry, given to me in December by Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, who appeared genuinely to believe that the Accord would be permitted to survive.

[111] Nov. 18, 1987.

[112] Lindsey Gruson, *NYT,* Oct. 29; LeMoyne, Nov. 29, 1987.

[113] Chris Norton, *Globe and Mail,* Feb. 10, 1988.

[114] Chamorro, *Packaging the Contras*.

[115] *Harper's,* Oct. 1987.

[116] Lindsey Gruson, *NYT,* Dec. 15, 1987.

[117] Tad Szulc, *Parade Magazine,* Aug. 28, 1988.

The insistence on wide-ranging negotiations with the contra directorate was another part of the longstanding effort to establish the fiction that the proxy army is an indigenous force, comparable to the guerrillas in El Salvador who were largely mobilized by U.S.-backed state terror, have always fought within their country, receive little if any military aid from abroad, have nothing like the extraordinary intelligence and support system provided by the contras' superpower sponsor,[118] and face a military force that, on paper at least, is considerably more powerful than the army of Nicaragua. It is necessary to suppress the astonishing inability of the U.S. to construct a guerrilla army in Nicaragua despite support vastly exceeding anything available to authentic guerrillas, U.S. dominance of the media over much of the country through powerful radio stations, recruitment of mercenaries in Honduras and elsewhere, an economy that has collapsed as a result of U.S. economic warfare and terror, and denial, thanks to U.S. ideological warfare, of the right to employ the domestic measures regularly adopted by Western democracies under far less threatening circumstances. With a fraction of the outside support lavished on the U.S. proxy forces, the Salvadoran guerrillas would have quickly overthrown the U.S.-installed government, and one might suspect that a guerrilla movement could be successfully established in U.S. border regions with a comparable effort by some unimaginable superpower. This failure of the U.S. effort to organize a guerrilla force within Nicaragua or even one that could be sustained from abroad without unprecedented outside support and direction is most remarkable, and very informative, for anyone prepared to think about what it means. Therefore, the facts and their meaning must be scrupulously suppressed, as they are.

The U.S. foreign aid budget for fiscal 1989 contained $2 million to support opposition political groups and media in Nicaragua, the *Congressional Quarterly* (CQ) reported (June 25, 1988), some of which openly identify with the contra attack. None of these "democratic groups in Nicaragua," as *CQ* calls them, has the support of more than 3 percent of the population; combined, they have the support of 9 percent, less than one-third the support for the Sandinistas. These are among the results of polls taken under the auspices of the Centro Interamericano de Investigaciones in Mexico and the Jesuit University (UCA) in Managua. As for President Ortega himself, 42 percent ranked him "good/excellent" and 29 percent "fair." For comparison, in an UCA poll in El Salvador that received little notice, 6 percent of the respondents supported Duarte's Christian Democrats and 10 percent supported ARENA, while 75 percent stated that no party represented them.[119]

Other interesting results of the Salvadoran poll were that 95 percent preferred economic and humanitarian aid over any kind of military aid, 4 percent blamed "guerrilla or communist subversion" for the crisis, and only 13 percent rated Duarte as "good" or "excellent." Recall that only 10 percent of the population see any signs of a democratic process in El Salvador.[120] Another contrast between El Salvador and Nicaragua was that in the former, pollsters have found that

> certain political questions had to be carefully couched in non-incriminating language. A significant number of Salvadorans told us that they do not discuss politics -- period -- not even with their closest friends or relatives. By contrast, in our survey in Nicaragua in June, interviewers judged that 77 percent of some 1,129 respondents in Managua answered poll questions without apparent fear or distrust,

and the interviewers reported that "their biggest problem in the field was the delay caused when respondents amplified their answers," giving explanations of their responses for or against the Sandinista regime. In polls in Honduras in November 1987, 65 percent of respondents "said they believed

Hondurans were afraid of expressing their political opinions in public" and "interviewers judged that only 38 percent of their respondents answered questions without fear or distrust."[121] The difference in climate between Nicaragua and El Salvador has always been obvious, though the media have succeeded in conveying the opposite impression.

Other unreported information on public opinion in El Salvador provides a good deal of insight into U.S. policy and the real concerns of the media. In 1988, the Archbishop of San Salvador organized a national debate to consider the problems facing the country. Over sixty organizations took part, "representing the private sector, professional associations, educational and cultural bodies, labor organizations, humanitarian groups, the displaced, religious institutions and others."[122] There was near-unanimous (95-100 percent) agreement on "the failure of the Reagan Administration's project for El Salvador"; support for negotiated settlement; increasing concern over human rights violations and impoverishment of the majority "while a few have become richer"; identification of the "root cause" of the conflict not in "international communist aggression" but rather "structural injustice, manifested in the unjust concentration of wealth" in land, industry, and commerce and "exhaustion of the capitalist, dependent agro-export model as part of an unjust structure of international commerce."

The same proportions (95-100 percent) condemned:

1. The "subordination of political power to economic power"
2. The "direct, permanent interference by the military in the operation of the state and the society in support of the oligarchy and dominant sectors, and thus in support of North American interests" as the country is "subjugated to the interests of international capital"
3. "Mortgaging the national sovereignty and self-determination and the enormous interference of the U.S. in El Salvador's national affairs"
4. Foreign military aid
5. The "strong opposition by the United States" and its Salvadoran right wing and military allies to the Esquipulas Accord, to which El Salvador should be pressured to conform
6. The Amnesty Law which exculpated "those charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity."

Furthermore, 88 percent see "serious restrictions on the democratic process" and regard "Christian Democracy as a cover while North American interference became more intensified"; attribute principal responsibility for the armed conflict to "foreign intervention, especially that of the U.S."; and describe the armed struggle as a response to "the impossibility of any genuine form of popular participation." Most called for recognition of the FMLN guerrillas as a "representative political force" that emerged in response to violence and injustice (55-59 percent). The highly touted elections were described by 81 percent as "the fundamental instrument of the U.S. counterinsurgency project, legitimizing the war and neutralizing the popular movement."

The document has much to say about "the U.S. counterinsurgency project" and the likely prospects for this tortured country. It was ignored in the United States, as were the polls.

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[118] Julia Preston notes that the Sandinistas have captured "state-of-the-art equipment, so modern that not even all U.S. units have them" (*WP,* Feb. 4, 1988), quite apart from the sheer mass of regular supply and the crucial assistance of U.S. aerial and naval surveillance. On the high quality of contra military and communication systems, extraordinary by the standards of the region, see *Culture of Terrorism*, 91. The illegal "humanitarian" aid sent to the contras in their Honduran bases provides them with a level of sustenance beyond what they could find within Nicaragua, not only food and supplies but even first class sports equipment (see Joe Gannon, *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 13, 1989). The "humanitarian" aid is presumably designed not only to maintain the terrorist forces in the field but also to draw people

from Nicaragua as the economic situation worsens.

[119] *Interamerican's Public Opinion Series,* no. 7, June 4-5, 1988, Interamerican Research Center, Los Angeles. *Alert!* (CISPES), March 1988.

[120] See p. 16.

[121] William Bollinger and David M. Lund, *Latinamerica Press* (Peru), Sept. 22, 1988. Bollinger is the director of the Interamerican Research Center; Lund is chair of the history department at the Universidad Autónoma in Mexico City. Both are involved in polling in Central America, including the polls they discuss.

[122] *Conclusions of the National Debate for Peace in El Salvador,* Called by Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas, Sept. 1988. Distributed by National Agenda for Peace in El Salvador, Box 192, Cardinal Station, Washington DC 20064.

The lack of attention to public opinion in El Salvador provides interesting lessons about U.S. political culture and the societal function of the media. The United States has unleashed an enormous military and repressive apparatus in El Salvador and has poured huge sums of money into the country. If these efforts had even a remote relation to the needs and concerns of Salvadorans, then, quite obviously, their opinions would be front-page news in the U.S. media and the subject of extensive commentary. What we discover, however, is that there is not the slightest interest in their opinions. It would be misleading to say that the information is suppressed; rather, the irrelevance of the people subject to our will is as elementary as the rules of arithmetic; to consider what they think would be as absurd as to try to discover the attitudes of chickens or donkeys.

The conclusion is clear: U.S. planners, and the educated elites that comment and articulate positions on international affairs, care not a whit about the needs and concerns of the people of El Salvador. Their sole concern is the preservation of their own privilege and power. The rhetoric of "benevolence," "good intentions" that misfired, and so on, is mere deception, possibly comforting self-deception as well. The attitudes and opinions of Salvadorans are not only ignored, as of zero significance, but also happen to be diametrically opposed to those of their professed benefactors in Washington, New York, Cambridge, and elsewhere. This is a matter of no concern, not even a level of concern that would lead to attention to the facts. The disdain for subject peoples is merely a background fact, like the air we breathe.

New York Times correspondents regularly allege that polls are illegal in Nicaragua, citing no evidence and not reporting the statement of the respected Jesuit priest who is rector of UCA (which would normally be responsible for polling) that polls are permitted but that facilities are lacking; plausible, given the circumstances. The *Interamerican* report (see note 119) assumes that polls have been permitted since 1984, that the August 1987 accords further legitimize polls, and that "the present poll put that general understanding to the test." The poll was not reported in the *Times*. I noted little mention elsewhere, and that unreliable (see chapter 3, note 47).

Let us return to the fate of the Central American peace negotiations after the effective demolition of the Esquipulas Accord in January 1988. In subsequent discussion, the terms of the Accord are consistently understood in the Washington version, accepted under duress by Nicaragua: the expansive interpretation devised by Washington applies to Nicaragua alone. Thus, it is possible for news columns to assert that "other countries have done somewhat better" than Nicaragua in adhering to the accords with their requirement of "freedom for the press and opposition parties, an end to support for other countries' guerrillas and negotiations with Nicaragua's rebels," as the *Boston Globe* reported in August 1988; indeed, other countries *cannot* violate the accords, whatever the facts, under the conventions of government-media Newspeak.[123]

Putting aside the usual disregard for state terror in the "fledgling democracies" and Honduran support for the contras, the reference here to negotiations appears rather audacious; it was hardly a secret that Nicaragua alone had negotiated a cease-fire agreement. But one must understand the algorithm already

described. When Nicaragua entered into cease-fire negotiations and reached an agreement with the contras, this "key issue" was dropped from the agenda as no longer serviceable.

It was also necessary to eliminate the inconvenient fact that El Salvador and Guatemala, in opposition to the near-unanimous will of the public,[124] were refusing to negotiate with the indigenous guerrillas. The *Times* did not interrupt its daily lambasting of the Sandinistas in January 1988, the crucial month for dismantling the accords, to report that "According to [FDR leader Guillermo] Ungo, talks have not resumed, despite FMLN requests, because of pressure exerted on Duarte by the Reagan administration as well as from the country's security forces."[125] A February 8 appeal for dialogue by Ungo was rejected by the government on grounds that it will "only dialogue with legally registered political parties"; this was reported prominently in the Mexican press, but not in the *Times*.[126] The FMLN/FDR stated that this was Duarte's third rejection of renewed talks since November. Neither this nor Archbishop Rivera y Damas's homily hoping for a Duarte response appears to have been reported. Rather, the *Washington Post* editors, in a fanciful construction, condemned the guerrillas for having "rejected [Duarte's] overtures," which "went substantially beyond the obligations placed on him by the Central American peace plan." There was scant notice of subsequent rebel offers to negotiate, rejected by the government. Jeane Kirkpatrick went so far as to denounce the guerrillas for rejecting all of Duarte's "generous offers" for negotiations.[127] Again, the facts turn into their opposite as they pass through the distorting prism of the media.

In Guatemala, the Bishops' conference called for renewed negotiations on January 29; the guerrillas accepted, the army refused, backed by President Cerezo. In late February, the rebels requested talks again, to be mediated by the Archbishop; the government refused. A rebel offer of negotiations in April, supported by President Arias, who offered his country as a site, was rejected by Cerezo, and a cease-fire proposal in June was dismissed by his government.[128] All of this was unworthy of attention, on the principles already discussed.

The logic was explained further by George Shultz, in a letter objecting to a congressional proposal that the president be required to submit a report on Salvadoran government efforts to achieve a cease-fire before all aid can be released. Its sponsors argued that Congress would thereby be "making clear its support for a negotiated end" to the civil war in El Salvador. Shultz replied that "it is wholly inappropriate to try to pressure the elected government to negotiate or to make concessions to the guerrillas, which would not be acceptable to any democratic government." Since Nicaragua, unlike El Salvador, has not achieved democracy and lacks an elected government, it is quite proper to subject it to terror and economic warfare to pressure it to negotiate with U.S. proxies.[129]

A cease-fire was reached in Nicaragua on March 23, 1988; again, Nicaragua was alone in implementing an element of the accords.[130] The agreement was at once undermined by congressional legislation, and the administration went still further, violating the legislation as well as the cease-fire agreement. The media went along, as discussed in the text. Further negotiations broke down in June as the contras, increasingly under hard-line leadership, followed the U.S. strategy to undermine them by constant demand escalation when agreement seemed near.

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[123] Katherine Ellison, Knight-Ridder Service, *BG,* Aug. 1, 1988. Others understand that "Nicaragua has gone further in complying with the Arias peace plan than Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador," but Nicaragua's ties to the Soviet bloc provide "a reason, if not an excuse," for ignoring the fact, and recognition of it in no way influences continuing news coverage or opinion; editorial, *NYT,* March 11, 1988.

[124] In El Salvador at least; in Guatemala, evidence is not available. Ellison's report is unusual in at least acknowledging that Guatemala "broke off talks" with the guerrillas.

[125] COHA *News and Analysis,* Jan. 14, 1988. The FDR is the political group allied with the FMLN guerrillas.

[126] *Excelsior,* Feb. 9; *Central America Report,* Feb. 26. There were brief notices in *BG,* Feb. 9, 11; *CSM,* Feb. 10, 1988.

[127] *El Sol,* Feb. 22; editorial *WP Weekly,* March 28; AP, May 13; *BG,* May 14; Tad Szulc, *LAT,* May 22, 1988.

[128] *Central America Report,* March 4, June 24; AP, Feb. 24, March 30, 1988.

[129] *Congressional Quarterly,* June 25, 1988.

[130] To be precise, we refer now to the revised accords, modified by the dictates of the U.S. government, and relayed by the media in conformity to these dictates.

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs reported that

> the breakdown of the Nicaraguan talks also implemented the game plan urged several weeks ago by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams: that the administration was urging the contras not to sign a peace agreement with the Sandinistas, but go along with a prolongation of a de facto truce, hoping that some adventitious Sandinista military action, like shooting down a contra supply plane or opening fire on a contra unit, would enable the White House to seek a resumption of lethal military aid from Congress. According to Abrams this was the very least that he was hoping for. When asked what was the most that the United States would do if given such a pretext, he responded, "We'll flatten Managua."

Further elements of the "game plan" were for U.S. intelligence agencies to step up their activities within Nicaragua, "hoping to use internal opposition forces to discredit the Sandinistas and sow discontent," and to lay the basis for further military action; what is commonly and accurately referred to, outside the media, as "the Chilean method," referring to the means employed to replace Chilean democracy by a military dictatorship. As one example, COHA cited the arrest and brief detention of fifteen opposition leaders for demonstrating outside the National Assembly building after they had rejected a request that they obtain a permit. "It is widely believed in Washington," COHA continues, "that the opposition was acting at the behest of their CIA liaison to stage the unauthorized demonstration" and court arrest as proof of Sandinista bad faith.[131]

Reviewing the situation a few weeks later, Stephen Kinzer reported that "Administration officials attributed the collapse of the talks to Sandinista intransigence," mentioning no other possible explanation. The *Times* editors added that "without the war, and the damage to Nicaragua's economy, it's arguable that Managua wouldn't have signed the regional peace plan" of August 1987. They urged the administration "to work with Central Americans" to pressure the Sandinistas to accept "specific targets and timetables," against the threat of further sanctions; no suggestions are offered for other participants in the Central American drama. A few weeks earlier, James LeMoyne had observed that "there is little doubt that the pressure of the guerrillas [in El Salvador] has been the chief stimulus for positive political change here."[132] By the logic of the editors, then, we should support the indigenous guerrillas in El Salvador. Somehow, the logical consequence is not drawn.

As the first anniversary of the Esquipulas Accord approached, violations continued in the states now exempt from their terms. In El Salvador, the Church Human Rights Office documented "a startling increase" in political killings of civilians in 1988. The Archbishop, in a Sunday homily, condemned the "return to the law of the jungle" with increasing death squad violence; and Auxiliary Bishop Rosa Chávez, denouncing on national TV the killing of peasants associated with the labor union UNTS, declared that "All evidence points in only one direction -- to the Salvadoran security forces." Peasants and members of the National Association of Indigenous Salvadorans were reported murdered after torture by soldiers, including a ninety-nine-year old man and his daughter in a recently resettled village. On July 28, Rigoberto Orellana, leader of the newly founded "Movement for Bread, Land, Work and Liberty," was killed, by security forces according to spokespersons of the organization. As the anniversary of the Accord passed, killing continued. On August 21, a Swiss physician, Jurg Weiss, was

detained and then killed by the National Police, shot in the face in an apparent effort to conceal his identity. He was on his way to investigate reports of the bombing of a village. The army claimed he was killed in combat, but his colleagues allege that because of his humanitarian activity, he was targeted by security forces in their campaign of repression against humanitarian and religious volunteers. The murder was condemned in a resolution of the European Parliament on "growing escalation of state terrorism" in El Salvador. On the same day two young men were found shot to death in San Salvador, bringing the number to five for the week; all five victims showed signs of torture, according to the spokesman of the Human Rights Commission CDHES, who described the killings as intended to foster "psychological terror among the population." The attempt to assassinate Col. Majano took place four days later.[133]

There were lesser abuses as well. The army barred the Church from providing supplies to resettled refugee villages. In rural areas, police regularly broke up political meetings (Rubén Zamora). A July 21 demonstration calling for release of an abducted trade unionist was attacked by police, who fired with automatic weapons and tear gas, leaving many wounded. On July 12, troops using tear gas, rifle butts, and clubs had attacked a march of farmers and cooperativists attempting to deliver provisions to striking electrical workers; demonstrators were detained by the police (reports ranged from 1 to 100 detained). Earlier, in efforts to disrupt a May Day rally, the army bombed the UNTS office, and Treasury Police abducted and severely beat the man who operated the sound system after the regular UNTS soundman had kept away under death threat. Many organizers and demonstrators were detained in prison, and a leader of the striking metalworkers' union who had directed chants at the rally "disappeared." In Honduras the army prevented workers from attending May Day demonstrations in Danlí, organized by the major labor union of eastern Honduras; in mid-April, police in Tegucigalpa had shot in the air and used tear gas to prevent a protest march to the U.S. Embassy, and, according to human rights workers, "disappeared" a student, Roger González, arrested as other students were jailed in connection with the April 7 attack on the U.S. consulate while police stood by. In Costa Rica protesting farmers and cooperativists were harassed and detained by the Rural Guard, in one case, tear gas and physical force were used to prevent them from presenting a petition at the city hall.[134]

Neither the continuing atrocities nor the lesser abuses received coverage, apart from an occasional perfunctory notice. But denunciation of Sandinista iniquity continued at a fever pitch, particularly when Nicaragua briefly approached some of the regular lesser abuses of the U.S. client states in mid-July, eliciting a new round of indignant condemnations across the political spectrum and renewed support of congressional liberals for contra aid.

In her review of the first year of the Accord in August, Julia Preston observed that little was achieved apart from Nicaragua. In Honduras, Azcona remains "another caretaker president for the powerful military"; the same is true, though unstated, in El Salvador and Guatemala. She cites an August 4 Americas Watch review of human rights, which reports that "Political murders by military and paramilitary forces continue on a wide scale in Guatemala and El Salvador and on a smaller scale in Honduras," along with several "reported in Nicaragua," Preston adds, "where they had not been common." "Nicaragua initially did far more than any other Central American country to comply" with the Accord until mid-July, ten months after it was signed; a long "initial" period, which terminated after the breakdown of the cease-fire negotiations, when Nicaragua "violently broke up a July 10 opposition rally [at Nandaime] and kept six leaders in jail during long trials, closed the Catholic radio [station] indefinitely, expelled U.S. ambassador Melton and expropriated the largest private sugar plantation in Nicaragua." The last two actions hardly qualify as violations of the Accord. Radio Católica reopened on August 18, leaving only the pro-Sandinista *La Semana Cómica* under government sanction, for publishing material degrading women.[135]

The events of mid-July -- in Nicaragua, that is -- aroused great horror. "Sandinistas will be Sandinistas," a radio commentator observed knowingly in one of the milder reactions when the police broke up the Nandaime rally, using tear gas for the first time -- after having been "pelted...with sticks and rocks," we learn in paragraph thirteen of Stephen Kinzer's report, a fact that disappeared from most later commentary.[136] There were front-page stories and regular reports and editorials on the Sandinista barbarity in breaking up the rally in the standard Salvadoran style, expelling the U.S. Ambassador with

charges that he had been involved in organizing the pro-contra opposition, and nationalizing a private sugar plantation alleged to be nonproductive, a front-page story in the *Times*; references to the use of tear gas to break up the rally and to police violence continued to appear in the press, with appropriate horror, for months. Congress was so enraged that amidst renewed calls for arms for the contras, both Houses passed impassioned condemnations of Managua's "brutal suppression of human rights" by overwhelming margins (91 to 4 in the Senate, 358 to 18 in the House), the press reported approvingly.[137]

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[131] COHA press release, June 11, 1988.

[132] Kinzer and editorial, *NYT,* June 25; LeMoyne, *NYT,* June 7, 1988.

[133] COHA's *Washington Report on the Hemisphere,* July 20, citing Tutela Legal. Archbishop Rivera y Damas, May 29, Bishop Chávez, denouncing April 14 killings; *Alert!* (CISPES), July, June. *El Sol,* Aug. 8. Orellana, *El Sol,* Aug. 1; *Guardian* (New York), Aug. 17. *El Sol,* Aug. 29, 1988. European Parliament, *Excelsior* (Mexico), Oct. 7, 1988; *Central America News Update*.

[134] Brook Larmer, *CSM,* Aug. 16. Zamora, NPR, July 19. *El Sol,* July 25; AP, *BG,* June 22, 100 words. *El Sol,* July 18; AP, *NYT,* July 14, 125 words. Joel Bleifuss, *In These Times,* May 18. *Hondupress,* May 4; editorial, *El Tiempo,* May 4; *Hondupress,* May 18, June 15; *Central America Report,* Nov. 18, 1988. María Verónica Frenkel, reporting on a visit to striking farmers in Costa Rica, *Nicaragua Through Our Eyes* (Americans working in Nicaragua), July 1988.

[135] *WP Weekly,* Aug. 15-21; *NYT,* Aug. 19; COHA's *Washington Report on the Hemisphere,* Aug. 31, 1988.

[136] *NYT,* July 11, 1988.

[137] Robert Pear, *NYT,* July 15, 1988, and many further references.

Recall that the "brutal repression of human rights" by the Sandinistas only began to approach, for a brief moment, some of the *lesser* abuses that are normal practice among the U.S. favorites in the region, and does not even come close to the regular exercise of their "pedagogy of terror." Recall also that as Duarte's security services and their death squads escalated their terror after the Accord was signed, there was no condemnation in Congress, but rather praise for their progress towards a system "which respects human liberties."

Congressional debate over how best to punish the Sandinistas for their July transgressions was no less interesting, even apart from the stirring rhetoric about our exalted libertarian standards and the pain inflicted upon our sensitive souls by any departure from them -- in Nicaragua. The Senate passed the Byrd Amendment setting the conditions for renewed military aid to the contras.[138] Speaking for his colleagues, including some of the most prominent Senate liberals, majority leader Byrd warned the Sandinistas that they "can either fully comply with the requirements for democratization that they agreed to in the Arias peace plan and move into the mainstream of harmonious democratic relations with their neighbors," or they can continue "to blatantly violate the provisions of the peace accords," repress "the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Nicaraguan people" -- and face the consequences: a "return to military pressure," that is, U.S.-sponsored international terrorism. Byrd was also concerned over the failure of the Reaganites "to press the Soviet leadership to cease and desist from its military aid program for the Government of Nicaragua," so that the only country in the region subject to foreign attack will also be the only country completely disarmed. Senator Dodd, perhaps the leading Senatorial dove with regard to Central America, was deeply impressed with these remarks and proposals and asked to "add my voice in praise of our leader," Senator Byrd. He was no less effusive in praising "the courageous leadership of President Arias, of Costa Rica; President Cerezo, of Guatemala; President Azcona, of Honduras; and President Duarte, of El Salvador, a great friend of this Congress" -- if not of the people of El Salvador, who regard him with fear and contempt and see no signs of a democratic process in the

country, as shown by polls that are suppressed as useless. Senator Dodd and other sponsors of the Byrd Amendment are well aware of the achievements of the military regimes of the U.S. terror states, and of the escalation, in response to the Esquipulas Accord, of the terror for which the official "moderates" provide a democratic cover for the benefit of Congress and the media. It simply doesn't matter.

It is "fine" for Congress "to take a good roundhouse swing at the Sandinistas for reverting to dictatorial form" and to "remind them that Americans are not divided over democratic rights and wrongs," the *New York Times* editors commented, admonishing the Democrats "to let the Sandinistas know publicly the dangers of their bad-faith actions." The editors are not "divided over democratic rights and wrongs" in El Salvador; they have utter contempt for democratic rights in El Salvador, as their silence indicates, not to speak of their constant praise for the progress of democracy in this terror state. Stephen Kinzer, who knows Guatemala well, went so far as to quote a senior Guatemalan official on the "palpable unhappiness" of his government over the despicable behavior of the Sandinistas. "There is a liberalizing trend in the whole world, and Nicaragua is practically the only nation that is resisting it," he says, speaking for a government that is indeed liberalizing in that its murders and disappearances are down to a rate of only a few a day according to human rights groups, definitely a marked improvement over earlier years.[139]

The editors of the *Washington Post* called upon the "Central American democracies" and "Democratic critics of contra aid" to join "wholeheartedly" in condemning the Sandinista violation of "their solemnly sworn democracy pledges" as they act "very much the Communist police state, busting heads, tossing people in jail, censoring the media"; imagine what terms would apply to El Salvador or Israel for their actions at the same time, by these standards. It was surely quite proper for the American Ambassador to offer "the extra help required by the opposition," the editors continue. As the Council on Hemispheric Affairs observed, few nations would tolerate such behavior; "Washington would view foreign governmental funding of U.S. dissident entities as an unfriendly if not outright illegal act" and would not be likely to "countenance the Soviet ambassador to Washington's participation in a local leftist group's rally which called for termination of the current government," let alone participation by the German or Japanese ambassador in 1942, to take a closer analogue. It is also less than likely that an Ambassador from a hostile power engaged in hostilities against the United States would have been admitted in the first place, particularly one who had duplicated Melton's performance as he was sworn in as Ambassador in Washington, announcing that "I want to make it crystal clear what America stands for and the values of democracy and how the Sandinistas don't meet even the minimal standards." There would be "no more compromising" with the Sandinistas, according to this protegé of Elliott Abrams, architect of the terrorist attack against Nicaragua.[140] But in the case of an official enemy, unique standards apply.

A few months earlier, Singapore had expelled a U.S. diplomat "on the grounds that he had improperly interfered in the domestic affairs of the country," Owen Harries writes in the right-wing journal he edits.[141] "Under the Vienna Convention governing diplomatic relations, such interference is impermissible," he continues, so "the United States had no option but to comply" when Singapore charged that the diplomat had "encouraged disgruntled Singaporeans in anti-government activities." Harries is writing in defense of Singapore against charges of improper behavior and police-state repression. Singapore is a semi-fascist country that offers a favorable investment climate, so the Vienna Convention applies. Not so, however, in the case of Nicaragua, designated by the authorities as an enemy.

Commenting further, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs observes that although Melton and members of his staff were expelled "for blatant interference in Nicaraguan internal affairs, the use of the U.S. embassy to fund, direct and coordinate disruptive activities by the civil opposition in Nicaragua in harmony with the actions of the contras...continues," including almost $700,000 of U.S. government funds earmarked for opposition elements. The U.S. government "is making a clear effort to create a parallel government in Nicaragua" that might assume power under escalated attack or social collapse.[142]

In October 1988, Amnesty International (AI) released a document entitled *El Salvador: `Death Squads' -- A Government Strategy,* reporting that right-wing death squads had abducted, tortured, and killed hundreds of Salvadorans in the preceding eighteen months, often beheading the victims to spread fear.[143]

The so-called "death squads" are an agency of the security forces of the U.S.-installed government, serving its strategy of intimidating any potential opposition. "Victims are customarily found mutilated, decapitated, dismembered, strangled or showing marks of torture...or rape," AI reported. "The death squad style is to operate in secret but to leave mutilated bodies of victims as a means of terrifying the population." The victims include trade unionists, human rights workers, judges and jurors working on human rights abuse cases, refugees, church members, teachers, and students. "There can be no recourse to the police or military when they themselves carry out death-squad killings." The killings are carried out by plainclothes gunmen and by uniformed police and military units with the apparent acquiescence of the state: "the Salvadoran death squads are simply used to shield the government from accountability for the torture, disappearances and extrajudicial executions committed in their name." Members of the death squads, some living in hiding in the United States, told AI that the squads were drawn from specially trained police units, the Treasury Police and the National Guard. Church and human rights groups estimate that about a dozen bodies bearing the marks of death squad torture and execution were turning up every month on roadsides and in body dumps in 1987, the toll quadrupling in early 1988. AI reported that the resurgence of the death squads could be traced partly to the government amnesty of a year earlier, as had been widely predicted at the time while the *Times* hailed El Salvador's forthcoming steps towards compliance with the peace accord.

The AI report received no notice in the *New York Times*. The Senate passed a resolution, 54 to 12, warning *Nicaragua* "that continued Sandinista violation of regional peace accords would `very likely' cause Congress to approve new military aid next year."[144] We see again the familiar pattern: U.S.-backed atrocities in its client states coupled with stern warnings to Nicaragua to improve its behavior on pain of intensified U.S. terror.

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[138] See p. 57.

[139] Editorials *NYT,* July 18, Aug. 7; Kinzer, *NYT* "Week in Review," July 17, 1988.

[140] *WP Weekly,* July 18-24, 25-31; COHA press release, July 14; *Update,* Central American Historical Institute (Georgetown U., Washington), Aug. 17, 1988.

[141] *The National Interest,* Fall 1988.

[142] COHA, "News and Analysis," Sept. 8, 1988.

[143] Reuter, Toronto *Globe and Mail,* Oct. 26; *Miami Herald,* Oct. 26; a briefer report appears in the *Boston Globe,* AP, same day. See also Americas Watch, *Nightmare Revisited,* September 1988.

[144] Pamela Constable, *BG,* Oct. 27, 1988.

Gruson also notes that no agreement could be reached on a date for the planned Central American summit, for unknown reasons. The veil is lifted by the Mexican press, which reported that the Salvadoran government cancelled the Central American summit scheduled to take place in San Salvador, pleading "lack of economic capacity." The cancellation "came only a few hours after the visit to that country of the U.S. Special Ambassador to Central America, Morris Busby," and his meeting with President Duarte. Analysts are quoted as attributing the summit difficulties to "a boycott by the U.S., in which Morris Busby will not be exempt from `chargeability' and which might have been devised as a reply to Cerezo's refusal to support belligerent action against Nicaragua." For President Cerezo, "it is vital that the presidential summit take place, observers indicate, because with this he is trying to distract attention from the violent problems of his country and to increase the international prestige that he has gained with his policies of active neutrality."[154]

The pattern is one that we have seen repeatedly: U.S. initiatives to obstruct a political settlement, Duarte's compliance, and the silence of the media.

The selection of issues and style of commentary illustrate the means employed to inculcate proper habits of thought. A particularly useful technique is uncritical citation of approved leadership elements. As the government and media sought to revitalize anti-Sandinista fervor in summer 1988, Stephen Kinzer reported a meeting of the United States and its four Central American allies. "All four countries disapprove of the Sandinistas and have urged them to liberalize their regime," he observed, "but they do not agree on how best to exercise such pressure." President Arias is quoted as saying that "Nicaragua has unfortunately failed us," expressing "my disappointment, my pain, my sadness," as he discussed abuses in Nicaragua with his colleagues from the terror states; about their practices he has expressed no disappointment, pain, or sadness, as least so far as the U.S. media report. President Cerezo added that he is "very distressed that the Sandinistas are not following the rules of democracy." George Shultz denounced the "Communist Government of Nicaragua -- and the Communist guerrillas of El Salvador and Guatemala" as "a destructive and destabilizing force in the region," as "the Sandinista regime continues to rely on Soviet arms and to amass a military machine far in excess of its defense needs." "Mr. Shultz and the Foreign Ministers of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica expressed `their respect for the principles of peace, democracy, security, social justice and economic development'," Kinzer reports with no comment, and no detectable shudder.[155]

An accompanying article from Washington describes the consensus of Senators to approve further aid to the contras, and the concern of the Democrats that it would harm "their party's image" if the Sandinistas were to repress the internal opposition or "mount a military offensive against the contras"; "the party's image" is not damaged by its support for continuing atrocities in the terror states. A few days later, senatorial doves passed legislation permitting new military aid if the treacherous Sandinistas were to attack the contras within Nicaragua or receive more military aid than Congress considers appropriate.[156] AP quotes liberal Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, who supports "humanitarian aid to the rebels," with a vote on arms to follow in the event of "continued flow of Soviet weaponry into Nicaragua, violations of last year's regional peace accord by the Sandinistas and any attempt by the Nicaraguan government to militarily `mop up' the rebel forces, Kerry said."[157]

All of this fits the standards for competent reporting. The quotes are presumably accurate, as are the descriptive statements. Lying behind the selection of facts and manner of presentation are certain unquestioned assumptions, including the following. Nicaragua alone is failing to "liberalize" and observe the Esquipulas Accord; the facts are different, but unwelcome, therefore scarcely reported. It is illegitimate for Nicaragua to defend itself from the terrorist attack of U.S. proxy forces based in Honduras by conducting military operations within its own territory, or by receiving arms from the only supplier that the United States will permit; but it is legitimate for the U.S. allies to refuse any dealings with the indigenous guerrillas (generally unreported) and to attempt to destroy them with U.S arms and advisers. The president of Costa Rica, whose business-run democracy survives on a U.S. dole, and who, if quoted accurately, cares little about continuing atrocities in the "fledgling democracies" or their gross violations of the minimal preconditions for democracy and of the peace treaty that bears his name in the media, is the arbiter of adherence to its provisions and of democratic practice. The president of the military-run state of Guatemala, which continues to terrorize and murder its citizens, though on a lesser scale than in earlier years, is in a position to condemn far less repressive and more open societies than his for failure to move towards "democracy." A U.S. official who bears major responsibility for the attack on Nicaragua, for traumatizing El Salvador, and for backing near-genocidal slaughter in Guatemala is, likewise, in a position to determine who is "destabilizing" Central America and what is an appropriate level of defense for the government subjected to U.S. armed attack. Aid to the U.S. proxy forces is "humanitarian," though international conventions, reiterated in the World Court ruling that the U.S. government rejects and the media ignore, are quite explicit in restricting the concept of "humanitarian aid" to aid to *civilians,* and civilians *on both sides,* without discrimination. It is only right and just for a "neutral agency" such as the State Department to administer such "humanitarian aid," and, if Nicaragua attempts measures of self-defense that would be normal and unquestioned in any Western democracy, it is proper for the CIA to supply its terrorist forces in the field within Nicaragua -- unless they prove an "imperfect instrument" and thus contribute to "our Nicaraguan agony."

One can imagine a different style of reporting, not adopting these presuppositions of U.S. propaganda, citing other sources (the World Court, for example), and selecting relevant facts by different criteria

(human rights and needs, democracy and freedom, the rule of law, and other values that are commonly professed). But such will rarely be found in the media. The constant barrage of properly selected material, with hardly a critical word or analytic passage, firmly instills the presuppositions that lie behind it, shaping the perceptions of the audience within the framework of acceptable doctrine more effectively than the productions of any Ministry of Truth. Meanwhile the media can plead that they are only doing their duty honestly -- as they are, though not in exactly the sense they intend.

As throughout this horrifying decade, the worst human rights violators in Central America by a wide margin are the outright U.S. creations -- the government of El Salvador and the contras -- and the U.S.-supported regime of Guatemala. If the obvious significance of these facts has been discussed in the mainstream media and journals, I have not found it. The nature of these regimes is sometimes partially revealed; no conclusions are drawn concerning the U.S. role in Central America, U.S. political culture, and the moral standards of the privileged classes that construct and support these policies.

The conclusions that *are* drawn are quite different. *New York Times* diplomatic correspondent Robert Pear writes of the prospects for a "new policy of diplomacy in Central America" under the Bush administration. This hopeful new policy of President Bush and his pragmatic Secretary of State James Baker will emphasize working "more closely with Congress and with Latin American nations to put political pressure on the Sandinistas to allow elections [there having been none in Nicaragua by Washington edict], freedom of expression and other rights guaranteed under regional peace accords." To ensure that the reader understands the Party Line, Pear adds: "Nicaragua signed those accords in 1987 and 1988, but the United States and other nations say the Sandinistas have flouted many provisions." There is no hint that anything may be awry in the U.S. client states or that the actions of the United States itself might raise some questions.

The performance throughout would impress the rulers of a totalitarian state. The suffering that has resulted, and will yet ensue, is beyond measure.

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[154] *Excelsior,* Oct. 19, 21, 1988; *Central America NewsPak*.

[155] Kinzer, *NYT,* Aug. 2, 1988.

[156] See note 138.

[157] Rasky, *NYT,* Aug. 2; AP, *BG,* Aug. 3, 1988.