

# *The Carter Administration and Latin America: A Test of Principle*

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### ***Introduction***

#### **Moral Rebirth and the Cold War Revisited**

Within a single year, two events unprecedented in the history of the United States shook the nation's confidence in itself as the moral leader of the Free World. In August 1974, the president resigned under a pall of scandal, and eight months later, the United States suffered the humiliation of military defeat as it watched the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam fold the American flag under his arm and flee his post by helicopter.

The constitutional crisis and this first loss in war made Americans yearn for a moral rebirth, a replenishment of virtue. In the presidential campaign of 1976, no candidate better captured and articulated this need than Jimmy Carter. The United States wanted an "outsider," someone untainted by Lyndon Johnson's war, Richard Nixon's cover-up, or Gerald Ford's pardon, and of all the

candidates, Carter was the most removed from Washington. A one-term governor of Georgia, Carter lived in his hometown of some 600 people in a remote part of the state. A born-again Christian, Carter promised never to lie, that government should be "as good as its people," and that the United States would once again be a spiritual beacon of human rights and idealism in the world. These promises seemed shrewd, cynical, or naive in Washington, but they resonated with sincerity throughout most of the country. An engineer who had trained to command a nuclear submarine, Carter promised competence and a nonpolitical approach to government.

The times suited his message, and within a year, Carter went from relative political obscurity to the White House. His administration's mission, he would later describe to his supporters, was nothing short of restoring faith in the United States at home and abroad:

*"In the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate and the C.I.A. revelations, our nation's reputation was soiled. Many Americans turned away from our own government, and said: 'It embarrasses me.' The vision, the ideals, the commitments that were there 200 years ago when our nation was formed, have somehow been lost. One of the great responsibilities that I share with you is to restore that vision and that degree of cleanness and decency and honesty and truth and principle to our country."*<sup>1</sup>

In the presidential campaign of 1976, as in most campaigns, issues were important primarily in the way that they related to overarching themes that the candidates sought to develop. In the course of developing his message of idealism, Carter criticized Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for the amorality of their foreign policy and mentioned, in particular, their support for the repressive regime of Augusto Pinochet in Chile. In the Republican primaries, Ronald Reagan expressed his opposition to new Panama Canal Treaties so

effectively that neither Ford nor Carter could escape the issue. With the exception of these issues, Latin America did not figure in the campaign, nor was it central to Carter's presidency. Nonetheless, he devoted substantial time in the White House to guiding the development and the implementation of his administration's policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean, and his themes of human rights and respect for the developing world had a profound impact on the region and on the region's image of the United States.

Since President James Monroe's famous message to Congress - later called the "Monroe Doctrine" - in 1823 opposing the recolonization of Latin America, the principal objective of the United States in the Western Hemisphere has been to prevent any foreign rivals from gaining a foothold. In the post-World War II period, the United States sought to minimize the influence of the Soviet Union and Communism. When the threat seemed most intense in the world or the hemisphere, the United States was most aggressive in trying to prevent Soviet or Communist expansion. When the threat was diminished, the United States tended to pay greater attention to other regions or interests. The emphasis that Carter gave to human rights as a goal was not unrelated to the detente that the Nixon Ford administration had begun to forge with the Soviet leadership, although the principal motive was more the result of a more respectful vision of the way the United States ought to relate to Latin America.

The seeds of Carter's subsequent unpopularity were sown in the fact that the Soviet Union and its allies did not reciprocate the new tolerance and respect that his administration attempted to embody in its foreign policies, in part because the human rights policy was a challenge to the Soviet regime. Instead, the Soviets seemed to try to take advantage of the United States - by modernizing and expanding intermediate missiles in Europe, by intervening with Cuba in the Horn of Africa, and finally, by invading Afghanistan. In addition, by 1979, events like the rise of a fundamentalist Iran and the surge in oil prices reinforced the

impression that Carter and the United States were losing control of events. The global environment that initially made Carter's moral message so pertinent and his new policies so necessary had changed.

Soviet expansionism represented the old fare of balance-of-power politics, and Carter was faced with a choice of shifting his emphasis to defense and containment or continuing to stress human rights and cooperative multilateralism. He sought to adapt to the changes in the world even while retaining his original emphasis. But the human rights image that carried him into the White House was not suited for a cold world of realpolitik, and the disjunction caused discomfort and uncertainty among certain elements of the American populace.

Conservatives felt he remained too wedded to human rights while liberals feared his increased defense budget reflected an abandoning of his principles. His public rating sunk. <sup>2</sup> With the hindsight permitted by perestroika, Carter's policies can be viewed as trying to define a post-Cold War world a decade too soon. Carter had the misfortune to face Leonid Brezhnev instead of Mikhail Gorbachev at the beginning of what proved to be the last tense gasp of the Cold War.

The Carter administration's policy toward Latin America can be divided into two parts, reflecting the changes in the regional and international agenda. During its first two years, the administration addressed an extensive "new world agenda of interdependence" and formulated a new approach to the region based on a set of principles. By the end of 1978, the administration had implemented most of the initiatives begun the previous year. In its last two years (1979-80), the "old world revisited," and the administration was compelled to address a traditional security agenda, to focus its attention on the Caribbean Basin, and to manage crises rather than develop longer-term policies. During the latter period, the principles that Carter had outlined at the beginning of his term were tested by hard choices.

Obviously, the four years were not as neatly divided as this classification suggests. Attention shifted to security issues in late 1977 as Cuba expanded its military presence in Africa, and in the latter period, the administration was still trying to implement some elements of its initial agenda, such as legislation to implement the Canal treaties and democratization in the Andean countries. Nevertheless, there was a discernable division between the nature of the agenda and the global concerns faced by the administration in the first two years and those that preoccupied it in its last two years.

In this paper, I will begin by describing the background to the administration's policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean. Then, the two periods of the administration's policy are discussed. Finally, I conclude with an assessment of the continuity and change that connected and distinguished the Carter administration's policy from those of its predecessors and an evaluation of Carter's successes and failures.

## **Background**

Like its predecessors, the Carter administration did not have a policy toward Latin America when it took office, but it did have a predisposition toward a new approach, based on the views and experiences of the senior decision-makers and the issues that it had to face in the region. Jimmy Carter had a deeper interest in Latin America and the Caribbean than either of his two principal foreign policy advisers, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance or National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brezezinski. This was partly because Carter had much less experience in other areas of the world than they had, but also because he spoke some Spanish, the first president to do so since Thomas Jefferson, and he had travelled with his family or as governor to Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, and Costa Rica.

Carter's emphasis on human rights was a central element of his policy toward Latin America because of a deep personal commitment, the massive human rights violations in the region, and the apparent lack of interest by the two previous administrations. Even before his election, Carter had already shaped this concern for human rights into a framework for policy, and he outlined it in a speech on September 8, 1976:

*"I do not say to you that we can remake the world in our own image. I recognize the limits on our power, but the present administration - our government - has been so obsessed with balance of power politics that it has often ignored basic American values and a common and proper concern for human rights.*

*"Ours is a great and a powerful nation, committed to certain enduring ideals, and those ideals must be reflected not only in our domestic policy but also in our foreign policy. There are practical, effective ways in which our power can be used to alleviate human suffering around the world. We should begin by having it understood that if any nation...deprives its own people of basic human rights, that fact will help shape our own people's attitude toward that nation's repressive government...Now we must be realistic...we do not and should not insist on identical standards...We can live with diversity in governmental systems, but we cannot look away when a government tortures people or jails them for their beliefs."<sup>3</sup>*

Although Washington expected an immediate clash between Carter's two main advisers, this did not occur. Vance and Brzezinski entered the administration with almost the same substantive agenda and no important differences on the key issues of U.S. policy toward Latin America.<sup>4</sup> But the two men differed markedly in personality, temperament, and background, and their new positions reinforced

those differences. Vance, the respected corporate lawyer, was a careful, patient, and skilled negotiator, who was almost everyone's candidate - including Brzezinski's - to be secretary of state. As national security adviser and as a Polish-born professor of Soviet politics, Brzezinski was more apt to evaluate an event in terms of its implications for the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship than was Vance, and he was generally more conservative, although not on all issues. Brzezinski's Polish background led him to view some events in anti-Soviet terms, but it also made him more sensitive to Latin America's need for self-respect and its view of the United States, which had much in common with Poland's view of Russia. Brzezinski had an acute appreciation for Latin American nationalism. The differences that emerged between the two men in early 1978 largely centered on the question of how to respond to Soviet-Cuban expansionism in Africa. In 1979 and 1980, their arguments on the Soviet Union, China, and Iran grew more truculent, but these had an ironic effect because in order to maintain their overall relationship, Vance and Brzezinski sought to minimize their differences in other areas, such as Latin America. <sup>5</sup> A second reason why the rivalry rarely spilled over into Latin American policy was that Vance tended to delegate most of his responsibilities on Latin American policy to his deputy, Warren Christopher, who was also directed by Carter to be the administration's coordinator on human rights policy.

*A New York Times editorial endorsing the Linowitz Commission's report on U.S.-Latin American relations. The report was the most important source of influence on the Carter administration's policy in the region.*

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## Policy for the Americas

President-elect Carter could ask for no better set of recommendations for United States policies and priorities in Latin America than the one issued yesterday by the distinguished private commission headed by former Ambassador Sol N. Lifowitz.

This is the second report in little over two years by the Commission on United States-Latin American Relations; and its timing, a month before the new Administration is installed in Washington, is not accidental.

Even more than did the first report, this document does not merely shun the traditional rhetoric about this country's links to its sister republics to the south; it calls on Washington to reject "outmoded policies based on domination and paternalism," and urges the incoming Administration to resist casting its hemisphere policies in the dubious contexts of "special relationship" or "regional community." This is no call for a resuscitated Alliance for Progress but an identification of tough problems that demand priority attention.

The most urgent of these is a new Panama Canal treaty—not merely a hemisphere question but one of the most important of all the foreign policy issues confronting the United States in 1977. It is imperative to conclude a treaty that will insure uninterrupted access to the canal while restoring control of the Canal Zone to the Republic of Panama, eliminating what the report accurately calls "a colonial enclave," offensive to all Latin Americans and highly damaging to the United States.

The commission rightly emphasizes that to insure a successful negotiation and ratification of a new treaty, the Carter Administration must consult regularly with

leaders of both parties in Congress and educate the public on the urgent need for this historic step.

On another emotive hemisphere issue, the Linowitz commission is equally blunt, if less specific. It believes the basic interests of both the United States and Cuba would be served by an end to their "long estrangement," despite complications raised by Havana's military involvement in Angola. It urges the new Administration to seek ways to normalize relations with Fidel Castro, beginning with the expressed determination to prevent terrorist actions against Cuba by Cuban exiles living in this country.

The commission sharply criticizes the Ford Administration for ignoring gross violations of human rights in Latin-American countries and for bypassing restrictions voted by Congress on aid to Chile.

An incoming President who has emphasized the necessity for a morality in the conduct of foreign policy ought to be receptive to the commission's recommendations for intensive monitoring of human rights infringements and for barring military aid and the sales of arms or peace equipment to countries guilty of repeated violations.

As the Linowitz commission recognizes, most of its recommendations concerning control of arms and nuclear technology as well as economic assistance to developing nations involve global problems requiring global solution; but these problems also directly affect the well-being of Latin-American countries and inevitably their relations with the United States. This is clearly a part of the world the new Administration will not be able to ignore, even if the "special relationship" has been bypassed by history.

This is not to suggest that there were no differences between the State Department and the National Security Council (NSC) - the two key institutional actors with respect to Latin American policy during the Carter administration. But the differences between Vance and Brzezinski were negligible at the beginning when the administration was shaping its new approach to Latin America, and later, they were not significant. Even on the issue of Cuba, which evoked the widest differences in their temperaments, the two agreed on the basic outline of

policy, to begin unconditional talks in 1977 and to halt progress toward normalization when the Cubans expanded their military presence in Africa. Much of the debate on U.S. policy between the staffs of State and the NSC stemmed from the natural bureaucratic tension between the State Department, which emphasizes diplomacy and good relations with other governments, and the NSC, whose outlook is more political and strategic (in the sense of having to integrate diplomacy, defense, and intelligence) and is more assertive of the specific interests that the president considers to be of the highest priority.

In converting its predisposition into a policy, the new administration had the benefit of the research done by two private commissions. Carter, Vance, and Brzezinski were members of the Trilateral Commission, which provided a conceptual framework for collaboration among the industrialized countries in approaching the full gamut of international issues. With regard to setting an agenda and an approach to Latin America, the most important source of influence on the Carter administration was the Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations, chaired by Sol M. Linowitz, a former ambassador to the Organization of American States (O.A.S.) under Lyndon Johnson. A private, bipartisan group of 20 distinguished leaders, the commission was established in 1974 under the auspices of the Center for Inter-American Relations in New York, and it issued two reports recommending both general and specific changes in U.S. policy. <sup>6</sup>

The commission analyzed the changes that had occurred in Latin America in the previous decade and concluded that U.S. policy should adapt to take into account "an increasingly interdependent world in which Latin American nations seek to be active and independent participants." The group urged the new administration to remain "sensitive to the unique qualities of inter-American relations" but to approach the region with "a consistent pattern of global economic policies." <sup>7</sup> Soon after he was appointed secretary of state, Vance met

with Linowitz to discuss the report and to ask him to join Ellsworth Bunker as co-negotiators for new Panama Canal Treaties.

Michael Blumenthal, another member of the commission, became secretary of the treasury. Other commission staff were appointed to key positions in the Treasury Department and the National Security Council staff. The reports helped the administration define a new relationship with Latin America, and 27 of the 28 specific recommendations in the second report became U.S. policy. Panama, the commission recommended, was "the most urgent issue" in inter-American relations. No policy toward the region was possible without resolving that country's long-standing and just demand to assume responsibility for the Canal on its territory.

### **Carter's New World Agenda**

A multitude of difficult issues had accumulated by 1977 because of Watergate and the transition from Nixon to Ford. By the time Ford began to address some of the issues, including Panama and Cuba, he felt the chill of conservatives who opposed any change in U.S. policy. Their spokesman, Ronald Reagan, challenged Ford for the Republican nomination, and Ford decided to suspend negotiations with Panama on the Canal issue and halt preliminary talks with Cuba until after the election. Other sensitive political matters including energy, civil service reform, the Middle East, SALT talks, also had to await the next president.

After his election, one of Carter's first decisions was whether to confront all these issues, some of them, or pursue an entirely different agenda. Carter, a man who delighted in trying to accomplish more than anyone thought possible, was also averse to setting priorities. He decided to tackle virtually all of the issues at once. He also took pride in not taking into account the political dimension of the issues, although some political consultants viewed this as a serious flaw. "I can tell you

with complete candor that we didn't assess the adverse political consequences of pursuing [all] these goals," acknowledged Carter. "But I was not under any misapprehension about the adverse consequences of...getting involved with the Middle East...or moving toward the Panama Canal Treaties." The political consequence of dealing with so many controversial issues at the same time was that he unintentionally facilitated a coalescing of opponents of each of his policies. <sup>8</sup>

The foreign policy process that the administration would use in converting its predisposition and priorities into policy was largely built around the National Security Council system. Carter disliked complicated organizational schemes, and he replaced the numerous committees of the Nixon-Ford NSC with just two NSC committees. He and Brzezinski then reduced the size of the NSC staff, initially by almost half. Carter's management preferences were contradictory in that he liked to both delegate responsibility to the Cabinet and centralize decision-making in the Oval Office. By reducing the size of the NSC staff, however, he made it more difficult to ensure that important decisions were sent to the president or monitored by his staff.

No organizational mechanism could resolve the contradiction between Cabinet and White House governance, but one answer was to give the chair of one of the NSC committees to a Cabinet member and the other to the NSC adviser. That's what the Carter system did. The Policy Review Committee (PRC) managed long-term foreign policy, defense, and international economic issues and was chaired mostly by the secretary of state but occasionally by other Cabinet members (e.g. the secretary of Defense on military issues; the secretary of the Treasury on economic). The Special Coordination Committee (SCC) dealt with arms control and crisismanagement and was chaired by the national security adviser. An important vehicle for decision-making was the Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM), which was a memorandum sent by the president to the

Cabinet members of the National Security Council identifying the key questions and issues to be addressed. In response to the terms of reference in a PRM, an interagency group drafted an options paper to be discussed by either the PRC or the SCC. A summary of the discussion and a set of recommendations was sent to the president, who then either signed a Presidential Directive (PD) or had the NSC adviser communicate his decision to the bureaucracy. The responsibility of the NSC staff was to help define the agenda, coordinate the advice to the president, and make sure that the president's decisions were fully implemented. <sup>9</sup> As time went on, the deputy of Vance or Brzezinski would chair a "mini-PRC" or a "mini-SCC;" these meetings proved very effective in thinking through or fleshing out the options to be discussed at the senior-level meetings. Another important mechanism for decision-making became the "Friday Morning Breakfast" between Carter and his senior foreign policy advisers. This became an excellent opportunity for the small group to debate candidly the key foreign policy issues of the week, but the meetings rarely provided sufficient guidance to the bureaucracy or the NSC staff as to the president's views, and the terse, specific decisions that emerged from the meeting often missed the heart of the issue that needed to be addressed.

The new administration addressed Panama first. Then, it considered the full gamut of U.S.-Latin American issues including human rights and democratization, North-South economic issues, multilateral collaboration, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Cuba.

## **Panama**

The campaign had made Carter aware of the political sensitivity of the Canal issue, but he was persuaded that hard decisions could no longer be postponed. During the transition, he received a cable from seven Latin American presidents, including those from Venezuela and Mexico, urging him to expedite negotiations for new Canal treaties. The cable described the treaties as "the crucial test of the

degree of sincerity of a good inter-American policy of the United States...The Panamanian cause is no longer the cause of that nation alone. Its intrinsic merits have made it the cause of all Latin America." The Latins emphasized that failure to negotiate new treaties would create a barrier to good relations. Omar Torrijos, Panama's leader, described the situation more graphically, saying that "Panama's patience machine" was running out of fuel, and he feared that an act of range by certain Panamanian groups could jeopardize the Canal.

In a five-hour conversation with Cyrus Vance on November 30, as Carter was deciding whether to select him as secretary of state, Vance insisted that negotiating a new Panama Canal treaty was an urgent issue, and Carter agreed. <sup>10</sup> Carter then asked Vice President Walter Mondale to chair a small meeting of the new administration's senior appointees on January 5 to prepare a foreign policy agenda. The group placed Panama at the top. Three days later, Brzezinski asked me if I would leave my position as staff director of the Linowitz commission to take charge of Latin American affairs on the NSC. I accepted. My first task was to draft two Presidential Review Memorandums (PRMs) - PRM-1 on Panama and PRM-17 on all other Latin American issues.

The president formally signed PRM-1 on the Canal issue on January 21, 1977. By that time, the interagency group had almost completed the paper for the administration's first meeting of the Policy Review Committee. The PRC met on January 27 and recommended to the president that Vance meet with the Panamanian foreign minister soon to declare the U.S. intent to negotiate a new treaty in good faith and rapidly. <sup>11</sup> The PRC also recommended that if Panama were forthcoming on the combined issues of the defense and neutrality of the Canal, then the United States should accept the year 2000 as a termination date for the new treaties.

When the negotiators reported to the president on March 2, they discussed different ways to address the key defense issues of how the United States would be able to defend the Canal after Panama assumed control. Some suggested the need for ambiguous language, like that used in the Shanghai Communique or in U.N. Resolution 242 on the Middle East. But Mondale argued persuasively that ratification of the treaties by the Senate would require clarity on these issues. In May, the two sides agreed to terms that would permit the United States to defend the Canal beyond the duration of the Canal treaty. The formula for resolving this problem was based on two separate treaties. The basic Panama Canal Treaty would require the United States to eliminate the Canal Zone and gradually transfer property and responsibilities to operate the Canal to Panama until the year 2000, when Panama would be solely responsible. The Treaty on the Permanent Neutrality of the Canal would grant the United States and Panama the right and responsibility to defend the Canal and keep it open and neutral.

Still, there remained difficult questions related to the timing of the transfer of lands and waters in the Canal Zone and the amount and nature of benefits that Panama would receive. Negotiating both sets of issues was laborious, but on August 10, 1977, the final day of Linowitz's six-month appointment, the two sides announced agreement on the two treaties.

After consulting with Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd, Carter decided to sign the treaties in a formal ceremony in Washington in September, shortly after Congress returned from recess. At my suggestion, Brzezinski recommended that instead of inviting all the Latin American presidents, which would include General Augusto Pinochet of Chile and Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua, Carter should only invite the four democratic Latin American presidents, who had advised Torrijos, and the foreign ministers of the other countries. Carter rejected Brzezinski's recommendation, saying that the point of the ceremony was for the

American people to see that the treaties enjoyed complete support by all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the presence of all of the presidents would demonstrate that.

Torrijos preferred a ceremony at the White House, but Carter convinced him to sign the two treaties at the Organization of American States, which they did on September 7, 1977. In exchange, Carter agreed to go to Panama for the exchange of the instruments of ratification after the Senate ratified the treaties. Describing the treaties as unpopular would be an understatement. David McCullough, the author of an outstanding book on the building of the Canal, explained that many people felt that relinquishing the Canal was saying "we have reached a turning point in our growth as a nation." [12](#)

But a new treaty was needed because the old paternalistic relationship treated Panamanians as second-class citizens in their own country. The Canal was extremely vulnerable to sabotage; a suitcase of dynamite placed near one of the locks would shut the Canal for at least two years. This could occur because of the kind of nationalistic rage that led to the riots of 1964. Ronald Reagan called this blackmail and insisted that the United States not retreat one step. [13](#).

Carter said that the old treaty endangered the Canal, and a new relationship with Panama would protect it; he described the treaties as a sign of "confidence in ourselves now and in the future... We do not have to show our strength as a nation by running over a small nation." [14](#) But the administration's public relations problem stemmed from the fact that its central argument was counter-intuitive: that we could defend the Canal better if we gave up control. The best way to prevent extremists from closing the Canal was to end U.S. dominance, make Panama a partner, and give it a stake in the Canal's defense.

The Neutrality Treaty was voted on first. The administration's political strategists - primarily Mondale, Hamilton Jordan, and Robert Beckel - judged that the treaty would not pass without an amendment (technically a "condition"), asserting the U.S. right to intervene in Panama's internal affairs, introduced by a freshman senator from Arizona, Dennis DeConcini. The amended treaty passed 68 to 32 on March 16, 1978, but the Panamanians were unwilling to accept the treaty with DeConcini's provision. Carter pledged to Torrijos to try to neutralize that provision in the second treaty. On the administration's behalf, Senator Robert Byrd submitted an amendment that restated the U.S. commitment to nonintervention. That was approved, but the administration feared the treaties might lose. The National Security Council and the Pentagon were instructed to develop contingency plans. Many in the administration believed that if the Senate rejected the treaty, the Canal would be closed by sabotage or riots and U.S. embassies in a number of Latin American countries would be vulnerable to attack. To considerable relief, on April 18, the Senate voted exactly as it had for the first treaty, 68-32 in favor.

### **PRM-17 on Latin America**

On January 26, 1977, Brzezinski signed and sent PRM-17 on U.S. policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean to the Departments of State, Defense, and the Treasury and every agency with a program that touched the region. The terms of reference were as broad as inter-American relations; analyses and policy recommendations were requested on economic issues, human rights, nonproliferation, arms sales, territorial disputes, and illegal migration. The memorandum also requested papers on special country or subregional concerns, including Cuba, Mexico, and the Caribbean. The bureaucracy rarely responds constructively or creatively to such a request, but in this and most cases, it provided sufficient raw material for staff in the State Department, which was charged with coordinating the exercise, and the NSC to assemble an options paper for the PRC.

The main conceptual issue was whether the United States should assert a "special relationship" with Latin America or adopt a single global policy for the developing world that could be adapted to the unique characteristics of the region's past relationship with the United States. Since the Monroe Doctrine, U.S. policy had been premised on the existence of a special relationship, or what Arthur Whitaker called, "the Western Hemisphere idea." <sup>15</sup> A certain mythology grew up around this idea, but in essence the special relationship was premised on special U.S. security interests due to proximity.

The Monroe Doctrine was initially welcomed by Latin America, which saw the United States as a partner in preventing European intervention. In the twentieth century, however, Latin America became far more concerned about U.S. than about European intervention. President Franklin D. Roosevelt acknowledged this concern, pledged to respect the principle of nonintervention that the Latin Americans had championed, and worked with Latin American leaders to develop a collective response to security threats. Roosevelt was the first to sculpt a tacit hemispheric bargain: The United States would assist Latin America in exchange for Latin American support for U.S. security interests in opposing the Axis powers. In the 1930s and 1940s, Roosevelt's instruments for assisting Latin America were reciprocal trade treaties, Lend-Lease, and Export-Import bank credits.

The Alliance for Progress during the Kennedy administration expanded on this bargain, but the instrument was aid rather than trade. Bilateral aid, however, was inherently paternalistic: for its generosity, the United States expected special behavior. "Charity," Senator J. William Fulbright would later write, "corrodes both the rich and the poor, breeding an exaggerated sense of authority on the part of the donor and a destructive loss of self-esteem on the part of the recipient." <sup>16</sup> Since the aid was substantial and U.S. goals were broader - including political

and land reform - the United States' "special relationship" came to mean a larger degree of interference in the region's internal affairs.

From the U.S. perspective, there was also a sentimental attachment to the region and the term "special relationship;" to some it meant that the United States wanted a close and harmonious relationship. According to this view, failure to use the term implied a lack of interest in the hemisphere. In the U.S. government, the major institutional bastion of the "special relationship" was the Bureau of American Republic Affairs (ARA) in the Department of State. The career foreign service officers who manned ARA readied for the debate on this issue that they knew would occur at the PRC. They argued that the rhetoric of a "special relationship" remained important to Latin America, and if that were abandoned, Latin Americans would desert the United States during a security crisis.

Those in favor of the global approach, which had been proposed by the Linowitz Commission, argued that Latin America had already gone its own way; the rhetoric no longer bound anyone but OAS historians (and ARA). The key issues of concern to Latin America were economic, and beginning in the mid-1960s, the region's leaders had brought their concerns to global forums. Raúl Prebisch, an Argentine, who was the first director of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), believed that Latin America would make a major error in seeking preferential access to only the U.S. market; he argued that Latin America ought to take the lead in pressing all the industrialized countries - not just the United States - to open their markets on a preferential basis to the products of all the developing world. Venezuela, the originator of the idea behind OPEC, then pressed for a world-wide North-South dialogue, not just one between the United States and Latin America. The United States, according to the "globalists," ought to aim for more balanced and respectful relationships with Latin America, and this could not be achieved within the context of an inherently paternalistic special relationship.

These were essentially the arguments made at the PRC meeting on March 24, 1977, with the foreign service officers of ARA and some of the career people in the Defense Department arguing for the special relationship, and the new Carter administration appointees - led by Brzezinski and Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher but including General George Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and officials of the Treasury Department - arguing for a new approach. Carter accepted the latter recommendation to concentrate on North-South economic issues, but at the same time, give relatively greater attention to Latin America within that framework.

The debate had potentially significant implications for policy. If one accepted the "special relationship," then one would give more aid and special trade preferences to Latin America to the exclusion of other poor countries. If one pursued the "North-South" concept, one would focus on providing special concessions to all the developing countries. On the other hand, the debate had an unrealistic, theological quality because one could argue that in the postwar period the United States always tilted global policies to favor Latin America, and this did not change.

The PRC discussed the other abstract issue of inter-American relations, nonintervention. Franklin D. Roosevelt's acceptance in 1934 of the principle of nonintervention enshrined him in Latin America as one of the most respected U.S. presidents. Since then, every U.S. president pledged his support for the principle, but few, if any, took it seriously when they perceived U.S. security interests to be threatened. Carter was not exceptional in this regard, having said repeatedly that he opposed intervention in the internal affairs of other countries unless U.S. security interests were directly threatened. <sup>17</sup> The line that divided presidents was not whether to affirm the principle of nonintervention, but whether that pledge should constrain a president during a crisis. The Red Sea that separated the interventionist presidents from those who refrained from

intervention was their different perceptions of threats in the hemisphere. Those who saw threats intensely discarded their pledge; those who saw threats as more distant and less serious kept their pledge.

Nevertheless, the PRC discussed this issue and concluded that since Latin American governments had a good sense of their own independence, the prospect for intervention was not great, and U.S. policy should be contingent on the way other Latin American governments, particularly the democracies, responded. The recommendation seemed ambiguous, but in stressing the importance of Latin American views on security problems, it actually provided the guide that would frame U.S. policy during the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran crises. The PRC discussed all the key issues, and Carter largely accepted the recommendations and articulated them in his second foreign-policy speech, an address to the Organization of American States on Pan American Day, April 14, 1977. Carter began by explaining the rationale for his new approach: "As nations of the `New World,' we once believed that we could prosper in isolation from the `Old World.' But since the Second World War, in particular, all of us have taken such vital roles in the world community that isolation would now be harmful to our own best interests and to other countries." After describing the dramatic changes in inter-American relations, Carter concluded that "a single United States policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean makes little sense. What we need is a wider and a more flexible approach, worked out in close consultation with you." In those sentences, Carter opened the hemispheric envelope.

Whereas the previous administration had been equivocal or hostile toward a North-South dialogue, Carter was encouraging: "We count on you to contribute your constructive leadership and help guide us in this North-South dialogue." He pledged "a positive and open attitude" and regular consultations on "the great issues which affect the relations between the developed and developing nations," including negotiating commodity agreements and increasing funding by the

international development banks. He promised an effort "to provide special and more favorable treatment" to developing nations in the multilateral trade negotiations, and he expressed interest in exploring new modes of cooperation in the areas of science and technology for the middle-income Latin American countries, which had graduated from concessional aid. On private investment, instead of defending U.S. corporations, he encouraged them to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the region.

Human rights, of course, was the center of his message: "Our own concern for these values [of human rights] will naturally influence our relations with the countries of this hemisphere and throughout the world. You will find the United States eager to stand beside those nations which respect human rights and which promote democratic ideals." He announced that he would sign the American Convention on Human Rights and urged other governments to join the United States in increasing its support for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and for assisting political refugees.

Finally, Carter addressed the long-term security agenda, by promising rapid progress on negotiating new Canal Treaties and by expressing his willingness to improve relations with Cuba "on a measured and reciprocal basis." He announced his support for conventional armscontrol initiatives and said the United States would show restraint in its own arms sales. He declared that he would sign Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which banned the placement of nuclear weapons in Latin America. <sup>18</sup> An indication that speeches are often better vehicles for making policy than formal meetings of the Cabinet was that the two specific decisions announced by Carter at the OAS - to sign the American Convention on Human Rights and Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco - had not been discussed at the PRC meeting; they had been proposed by me two days before the speech in a memorandum describing the positions of the different departments.

## Consultations

After a decade of disinterest by the United States, Latin Americans generally were encouraged by the energy and ideas of the new administration, but they were still skeptical about whether the United States would really consult them on key economic issues. To try to dispel this skepticism, Carter dispatched personal emissaries to explain his approach and to seek comments and advice on how common goals - in human rights, economic development, and peace - could best be implemented.

He undertook the first consultation himself. On May 3, two days before his departure for the Summit of Industrialized Countries, Carter met with the ambassadors of five major Latin America and Caribbean sugar producers - Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Costa Rica, and Trinidad and Tobago - to discuss decisions that he had to make on whether to help the ailing U.S. sugar industry and if so, how. Although briefed beforehand, the ambassadors were still so surprised by the meeting that they failed to make their case for opening the U.S. market on sugar. Nevertheless, in preparing for the meeting Carter was sensitized to the impact of U.S. sugar policy on these and other Latin American countries, and his decisions reflected that. He decided to reject the International Trade Commission's recommendations for import quotas on sugar and the American Farm Bureau Federation's petition for dropping sugar from the U.S. tariff preferences. Instead, the day after his meeting, the White House announced that the United States would vigorously pursue an international sugar agreement as the best means for helping the U.S. and Latin American sugar industries. [19](#)

At the meeting with the Latin ambassadors, Carter also informed the press that he was sending his wife to seven nations in Latin America and the Caribbean to conduct "substantive talks with the leaders and to report" to him. The idea of sending Rosalynn Carter as the president's personal emissary was inspired,

although this was not the way it was described then. <sup>20</sup> Carter's election and subsequent statements and decisions had raised expectations in Latin America to unrealistic levels. The decision to send Mrs. Carter lowered those expectations. Her performance then exceeded them.

In her travels from May 30 to June 12, Mrs. Carter used her public statements and private conversations to repeat and expand the main themes in Carter's Pan American Day Speech. She also asked each leader to sign or ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the American Convention on Human Rights and to encourage others toward the same end. In Jamaica, she assured Michael Manley, who thought the Republican administrations had tried to destabilize him, that the Carter administration was prepared to support a social democratic experiment. In Peru and Ecuador, she used every opportunity to reinforce the democratization process promised by the military governments, and in Brazil, she sought the same objective, although more delicately.

On her return, she briefed the president and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who then departed for the OAS General Assembly meeting scheduled in Grenada. That meeting was dominated by the human rights issue, marking, as a *Washington Post* reporter put it, "a new phase in U.S.-Latin American relations." <sup>21</sup> Instead of a lack of interest or a resistance to Latin American resolutions, the United States assumed joint leadership with its democratic friends. One OAS diplomat said it was "the first time a U.S. representative was both positive and publicly and privately consistent." The United States joined with Venezuela, Costa Rica, and the Caribbean to pass narrowly a resolution that strengthened the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and affirmed that "there are no circumstances that justify torture, summary execution, or prolonged detention without trial contrary to law." When the military governments of the southern cone tried to change the resolution to justify violations against terrorism, their amendment was rejected. <sup>22</sup>

Probably the most energetic and determined president of a democratic Latin American government was Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela, and Carter decided to cultivate him, much as President John F. Kennedy had with Pérez's predecessor and mentor, Rómulo Betancourt. Pérez was a credible and independent third world leader, and his positions on human rights, North-South economic issues, arms control, and nonproliferation were critical to making progress on these issues. Pérez also played a central role in helping both the United States and Panama to reach agreement on new Canal treaties. Carter wrote to him regularly and met with him in June and September 1977 in Washington and in March 1978 in Caracas. He described Pérez as his "counsellor" on Latin American and North-South issues and as a person with whom he had a "kinship of purpose," and Pérez reciprocated, by calling Carter "a receptive and sincere listener and a person willing to dialogue," and he added: "Many years have passed since small and weak nations heard a voice rise from a great nation to tell the world that human values are paramount." <sup>23</sup> The sentiments were deeply felt, and the relationship often advanced their shared agenda. In February 1978, when the Uruguayan military government tried to obtain the 13 votes in the OAS needed to host the next General Assembly, Venezuela joined the United States to block that effort. This decision contrasts with the acquiescence by the United States and Latin America to Chile's initiative in 1976 to host the General Assembly. <sup>24</sup>

### **Human Rights and Democratization**

While the decision to abandon the rhetoric of the special relationship in favor of a more openly internationalist approach probably represented the sharpest conceptual break from past policy, and the Canal treaties were the most difficult aspect of Carter's policy for the American people to accept, the policies that came to dominate the public's perception of Carter's approach toward Latin America were his commitment to human rights and democratization. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. commented that "nothing the Carter administration has done has

excited more hope." But he also noted that it generated considerable confusion as well. [25](#)

By and large, the confusion was in the United States, where critics either found the policy too punitive, too soft, or simply inconsistent. Most Third World dictators pretended to be confused, but in their constant complaints about being singled out for criticism, they unwittingly acknowledged that they understood Carter was serious. Haitian president-for-life Jean Claude Duvalier, to take one example, released political prisoners and improved the atrocious conditions in his jails shortly after the election of Carter, even before he was inaugurated. And he rearrested them in late November 1980 after Carter's defeat. [26](#)

A National Security Council directive established an Inter-Agency Committee chaired by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher to ensure that human rights criteria were incorporated into U.S. foreign policy and foreign aid decisions. One of the administration's first decisions was to modify the Ford budget for the 1977 fiscal year by reducing aid to three countries for human rights reasons; two of the three - Argentina and Uruguay - were in Latin America. Some career officials in the State Department opposed this decision, arguing that it would be better to discuss the issue privately with the governments first. [27](#)

Carter and Christopher believed that it was more important for the administration to send a clear, early signal that it was prepared to pay a price to pursue human rights. Private approaches would be made later to these and other countries and would be more effective because dictators would know that the United States was not bluffing. Richard Fagen, a scholar, recognized the point of the decision: "The amounts involved were not large, but symbolically the initiative was important, for it marked the end of an executive branch undercutting of legislative intent, as well as a partial declaration of independence by the Carter administration from past policies." [28](#)

Another way of demonstrating support for democratization was high-level meetings with democratic opposition leaders. Such meetings, for example between Vice President Walter Mondale and former Chilean president Eduardo Frei on May 25, 1977, seem tame in retrospect. But at the time, the White House meeting was criticized severely by ARA and the Chilean government for being counter-productive.

The administration also sent candid human rights reports on each country to Congress. Congress had passed a law requiring these reports after the Ford administration balked about doing them. Several military governments - those of Brazil, Argentina, El Salvador, and Guatemala - protested the new policy by ending their military assistance agreements with the United States. Such actions aroused their American conservative defenders like Ronald Reagan, who wrote: "Little wonder that friendly nations such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador have been dismayed by Carter's policies." <sup>29</sup> Every one of these governments was then a military dictatorship.

Carter also sought opportunities to strengthen the trend toward democracy in the hemisphere. In May 1978, he issued a strong public statement directed at Dominican President Joaquín Balaguer that U.S. relations with his government depended on his noninterference in the election results. At the same time, he sent the U.S. ambassador to see Balaguer with an equally firm private message, and there is evidence that this involvement may have been decisive in compelling Balaguer to permit the election to go forward. <sup>30</sup> Similarly, through letters and special emissaries, Carter reinforced the democratization process in Ecuador, Peru, and other countries in the region.

### **North-South Relations and Multilateral Cooperation**

During the first six months of 1978, Carter personally devoted more time to ensuring the ratification of the Canal treaties than to any other issue, and he also

made two trips to Latin America. In March 1978, as a demonstration of his commitment to the developing world, Carter undertook a tour to Latin America (Venezuela and Brazil) and Africa (Nigeria). He spoke on North-South relations before the Venezuelan Congress, stressing the need for the developing world to participate more fully in decisions that shaped the global economy:

*"Just as all people should participate in the government decisions that affect their own lives, so should all nations participate in the international decisions that affect their own well-being. The United States is eager to work with you, as we have in the past, to shape a more just international economic and political order."*<sup>31</sup>

He also used the opportunity of his visit to Caracas to announce a new fellowship program, named after the late Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, for young professionals from the developing world to come to the United States for one year of postgraduate study.

Carter's visit to Brazil in March 1978 was much more awkward than to Venezuela. Concerned that Brazil's nuclear agreement with Germany could facilitate, whether intentionally or not, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Carter administration had encouraged both governments to alter the agreement. The Brazilians were extremely angry about U.S. efforts, partly because of well-known Latin sensitivity to U.S. interference, but mostly because Carter's concerns were legitimate. A decade later, a Brazilian democratic government acknowledged what the military government in 1978 denied; Brazil was trying to build a nuclear weapon.<sup>32</sup> At the time, few suspected this, and Carter used his visit to assuage bruised feelings and offer new forms of cooperation in the areas of science and technology, particularly as they related to energy. A U.S.-Brazilian committee was established to pursue this issue, and as AID began to develop new programs in science and technology, the administration chose to focus on Latin America and the Caribbean as the first region to implement them. In 1979,

Frank Press, the president's science adviser, led a large delegation of U.S. scientists and government officials to Brazil and several other Latin American countries to negotiate cooperative agreements.

The culmination of Carter's effort to seek a multilateral consensus on his goals occurred, appropriately enough, in Panama on June 16 and 17, 1978, on the occasion of the exchange of the Canal treaties. Omar Torrijos and Carter invited the presidents of Venezuela, Colombia, and Costa Rica, and the prime minister of Jamaica - all democratic nations that had helped in the Canal negotiations - to Panama to discuss the North-South agenda. They all agreed on the central objectives in inter-American relations, and the group focused on what it could do individually and collectively to achieve these objectives. When Carlos Andrés Pérez recommended at the end of the first day's conversation that the presidents issue a joint declaration, all readily agreed in principle, and the next morning they accepted the U.S. draft with minor changes.

The "Joint Declaration of Panama" praised the treaties as "an historic step forward in inter-American relations." The declaration then listed three goals and set out specific steps that the leaders decided to take and urged others to take. To promote world peace, the leaders recommended ratification of Tlatelolco, strengthening peacekeeping machinery in the OAS, limiting arms sales and expenditures, and resolving territorial disputes. To promote human rights, the leaders pledged to bring the American Convention into force, strengthen the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, reinforce democratic trends, and "speak out for human rights and fundamental freedoms everywhere." To develop a more just and equitable international economic system, the leaders promised to complete multilateral negotiations on the Common Fund (a mechanism for stabilizing commodity prices), debt, and trade and to support the multilateral development banks and the World Bank-led Caribbean Group. This was as clear a statement of support for U.S. policy toward Latin America as one is likely to find

in inter-American relations in the postwar period, and it was endorsed by four independent, democratic leaders.

Four days after his return from Panama, Carter addressed the opening session of the OAS General Assembly in Washington. He summarized the Panama Declaration and urged other governments to contribute to realizing its common goals. He encouraged countries with territorial disputes to follow the example of the Canal treaties in seeking a peaceful resolution: "Just as the nations of this hemisphere offered support to Panama and the United States during the Canal negotiations, I pledge today my government's willingness to join in the effort to find peaceful and just solutions to other problems." <sup>33</sup>

A new, unanticipated agenda in the last two years of his administration deprived Carter of the time he would have liked to have spent negotiating boundary disputes and conventional arms control agreements. Instead, he encouraged Pope John Paul II to take the lead in mediating the Beagle Channel dispute and the Peruvian president to play a similar role in a territorial dispute between El Salvador and Honduras. On arms control, the administration gave strong political and staff support to two regional initiatives (by Mexico and Venezuela), and it made a preliminary effort to discuss the issue with the Soviets. Of these efforts, the Pope succeeded in resolving the Beagle Channel dispute; the other initiatives made limited progress.

### **Mexico**

One month before Carter's inauguration, José López Portillo took office. Mexico's financial and political situation was desperate. Carter recognized the importance of Mexico's political stability and development for the United States, and one of his purposes in inviting the new president as his first state visitor in February 1977, was to help restore the financial community's confidence in Mexico. The conversations went exceedingly well, and both presidents decided to establish a

U.S.-Mexican consultative mechanism to track the numerous issues in the relationship and to ensure that these issues would receive the attention of both presidents.

Kind words by Carter did less to restore the confidence of the international financial community in Mexico than the announcement of new oil discoveries. Mexico's oil industry had deteriorated so much since its nationalization in 1938 that it was importing oil by 1974. The rise in oil prices that year, however, led to new exploration, and by 1976, rumors of sensational new oil and gas basins began to spread and were soon confirmed.

Despite criticism by the left, López Portillo decided to build a gas pipeline to the United States. He began negotiations with several U.S. gas companies. Carter administration officials informed Mexico that it needed to negotiate an agreement with the U.S. government before talking to the gas companies for three reasons. First, the interests of the gas companies were different from those of the U.S. government; the companies did not mind paying a high price for gas since that would permit them to raise their domestically regulated price. Second, any deal would have to be approved by regulatory agencies, which would probably reject an agreement that inflated gas prices or exceeded the price of Canadian gas. Third, the administration feared that it would not be able to persuade Congress to pass its energy bill and deregulate natural gas prices if Mexico received a higher price than domestic gas producers were likely to get.

One month before López Portillo chose to ignore the warnings of the Carter administration. His memoirs shed no light on his decision-making, but others have speculated that either he or his energy minister was convinced - perhaps with some material inducements - by the gas companies that Carter would have no choice but to approve the deal. <sup>34</sup> This assessment was wrong, but having staked his political prestige on the deal, López Portillo did not forgive Carter for

not accepting it. This incident might have been ameliorated or prevented if López Portillo had attended the Canal treaties signing ceremony in September 1977 and met with Carter, but despite Carter's phone call (only one of two he made to try to secure the attendance of a head of state), López Portillo said he could not come. <sup>35</sup> Moreover, he did not convey his concerns to Carter or the White House at this time when there was still a chance of negotiating a face-saving compromise. In January 1978, Mondale visited Mexico, but by then, it was too late.

In August 1978, Carter initiated a major review of U.S.-Mexican Relations (PRM 41), which would culminate with three cabinet-level discussions prior to Carter's visit to Mexico in February 1979. During that trip, both presidents decided to resume gas negotiations - this time between the governments - and an agreement was signed in 1980.

The personal relationship between the two presidents was strained almost to the breaking point when López Portillo broke his word and denied the Shah of Iran re-entry to Mexico after his operation in the United States. Carter, in his words, "was outraged" by López Portillo, who had broken faith. The Mexican president had been persuaded by his foreign minister that there was no reason to help the Yankees on this issue, and it would lose him support in the third world. It was a short-sighted, serious mistake, but typical of many López Portillo would make in his term. <sup>36</sup>

There were few areas in which the initial high expectations were dashed as thoroughly as in U.S.-Mexican relations during the Carter administration. Carter recalled his family's three-week automobile trip throughout Mexico in 1965 as one of the most enjoyable and rewarding foreign trips that he made. He had deliberately invited López Portillo as his first state visitor in order to impress on the Mexican leader the importance he attached to the relationship and his

interest in resolving outstanding issues. Although the two presidents had a very good meeting, their personal and the binational relationship deteriorated during the next four years.

There were structural and psychological reasons why Mexico historically tried to keep the United States at arms length, limiting the friendship in order to contain U.S. influence in Mexico. Mexico's own capacity to project its influence abroad expanded during the oil boom that coincided with Carter's tenure. Mexico and the United States historically competed for influence in Central America, and differences between the two governments on policy toward Nicaragua and El Salvador in the late 1970s strained relations. The gas negotiations adversely affected López Portillo's perception of Carter and the decision by the Mexico government to prevent the Shah's return after his operation marred Carter's view of his Mexican counterpart. By the end of 1980, the relationship that Carter had hoped to build with Mexico had become a casualty to miscalculations, divergent perceptions, and some policy differences.

### **The Caribbean**

One of the recommendations from Mrs. Carter's trip to Latin America was to send Andrew Young, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, to the Caribbean to consult on the best way for the United States to assist in the region's development. Young visited ten countries in August 1977, and based on his report, the National Security Council staff sent Carter a memorandum recommending the establishment of a new organization to coordinate the region's economic development.

The proposal was to establish the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development. Under World Bank direction, the Caribbean Group would include 31 nations and 15 international institutions. In order to reduce the dependency of the small nations of the Caribbean, the group would be multilateral at both the

donor and the recipient ends, encouraging regional projects and cooperation. After consulting with Caribbean and other leaders during the time of the signing of the Canal treaties, Carter asked his wife to unveil the plan in a speech at the UPI editor's conference in Puerto Rico on October 11, 1977. The plan was well received, and in December the World Bank hosted a conference, which voted to establish the group. By 1980 the group coordinated and quadrupled foreign aid to the region to about \$1 billion. It also produced over 100 separate development reports for the countries and for the region.

## **Cuba**

The Carter administration sent a clear signal to Cuba that it was prepared to negotiate the terms of a more normal relationship. In his confirmation hearings on January 11, 1977, Cyrus Vance said that "if Cuba is willing to live within the international system, then we ought to seek ways to find whether we can eliminate the impediments which exist between us and try to move toward normalization." <sup>37</sup> The administration initially considered Cuba within the terms of PRM-17, but then decided to address it in a separate PRC on March 9. The PRC recommended an approach along the lines that Carter had sketched four days before in response to a question during a telephone call-in program moderated by Walter Cronkite:

*"I would like to do what I can to ease tensions with Cuba... Before any full normalization of relationships can take place, though, Cuba would have to make some fairly substantial changes in their attitude. I would like to insist, for instance, that they not interfere in the internal affairs of countries in this hemisphere, and that they decrease their military involvement in Africa, and that they reinforce a commitment to human rights by releasing political prisoners that have been in jail now in Cuba for 17 or 18 years, things of that kind.*

*"But I think before we can reach that point, we'll have to have discussions with them. And I do intend to see discussions initiated with Cuba quite early on reestablishing the anti-hijacking agreement, arriving at a fishing agreement... since our 200-mile limits do overlap... and I would not be averse in the future to seeing our visitation rights permitted as well."* [38](#)

Cronkite pursued Carter, asking whether his concerns were preconditions to discussions. "No," said Carter, breaking with the position of the Ford administration, which had suspended talks with Cuba after its intervention in Angola. Carter then defined the terms of the negotiations: "The preconditions that I describe would be prior to full normalization of relationships, the establishment of embassies in both our countries, the complete freedom of trade between the two countries."

In response to similar questions asked during his first nine months in office, Carter would repeat his interest in talks, but insist that normalization could occur only after Cuba reduced its military presence in Africa, among other steps. He left no doubt as to his concern: "The Cubans ought to withdraw their forces from Africa." But he also wanted to leave Castro some room to begin the process of withdrawal from Africa and the improvement of human rights, and so he said that Cuba's "attitude" was key, and he was not saying "every Cuban from other nations" needed to be withdrawn before considering normalization - "I would rather not be pinned down so specifically on it." [39](#)

An initial round of talks produced a quick agreement on fisheries and maritime boundaries, and the two governments decided to establish interests sections - rather than open embassies, which would have signified diplomatic relations - in each other's capitals on September 1, 1977. Both sides took several other steps, but on the central issue of security, Cuban President Fidel Castro suggested he would not back away from his position:

*"They [the U.S. officials] say we must stop giving our solidarity to the revolutionary movements in Africa. We feel these issues are not matters for negotiation.... We haven't organized subversion against or sent mercenary invaders to the U.S. They are the ones... they must lift the blockade.... We will not make any concessions on matters of principle in order to improve relations with the United States."* [40](#)

At the beginning of 1977, the issue was whether to change Ford's policy and begin talks with Cuba before it withdrew from Angola, and Carter chose to start the talks. By the fall, however, the issue had changed. There were reports of more Cuban troops and military advisors in several countries in Africa. On Nov. 11, 1977, Carter publicly criticized Cuba for its continued large presence in Angola and expansion into other countries in Africa:

"The Cubans have, in effect, taken on the colonial aspect that the Portuguese gave up in months gone by...[They] are now spreading into other countries in Africa, like Mozambique. Recently, they are building up their so-called advisers in Ethiopia. We consider this to be a threat to the permanent peace in Africa." [41](#) Castro gave higher priority to his foreign activities in Africa than to normalizing relations with the United States. By the end of the year, Castro railed against Carter's precondition:

*"The ruling circles in the United States are wasting their time by obstinately making an improvement in state relations... dependent on the withdrawal of the international Cuban troops in Angola...Cuba's solidarity with the African peoples is not negotiable...If the U.S. government believes that in order for relations to improve, our people must give up their internationalist principles, then in the same manner that in the past, we fought*

*against five presidents of the United States, we will now fight against the sixth..."* [42](#)

In November 1977 there were 400 Cuban military advisers in Ethiopia; by April 1978 there were 17,000 Cuban troops there serving under a Soviet general. The line had been crossed. Carter's hopes for a major improvement in relations with Cuba were dashed, and he said so publicly: "There is no possibility that we would see any substantial improvement in our relationship with Cuba as long as he's [Castro] committed to this military intrusion policy in the internal affairs of African people." [43](#)

The Cuban and U.S. governments had begun to talk to each other, but they found their interests incompatible. Wayne Smith, who was the Director of Cuban Affairs in the State Department at the time, argues that the cause of the breakdown in normalization was Brzezinski's publicizing of the Cuban military presence in Africa, [44](#) but this ignores Carter's many public statements connecting normalization with Cuban expansion. The problem was simply that the United States viewed Cuban-Soviet expansionism in Africa as contrary to its national interest, and Castro valued his role in Africa more than normalization.

Rhetoric aside, Castro might have thought he could change Carter's mind on normalization if he changed his policy on political prisoners. In the summer of 1978, Castro informed U.S. officials that he was prepared to release as many as 3,900 political prisoners to the United States. (He released about 3,600; 1,000 immigrated to the United States.) During the next year he also released all U.S. prisoners - both political and criminal - and people with dual citizenship. This represented a reversal from a position he had taken in an interview with Barbara Walters one year before. [45](#) Castro also tried to do the impossible: to transform the Cuban-American community from his enemy to his lobbyist. He invited a group to Havana in November 1978 and left them believing they had persuaded him to release the prisoners.

The United States and Cuba continued to talk through its diplomats and by a secret channel that involved several visits by Peter Tarnoff, Vance's executive secretary, and me to Havana to meet with Castro. There were no breakthroughs, but both sides came to understand the other's position more clearly. Some cooperation remained on matters of mutual interest. The U.S. Coast Guard and its Cuban counterpart coordinated their search-and-rescue and anti-drug efforts, and Cuba lifted its 17-year ban on the use of Cuban water and air space by the U.S. Coast Guard. <sup>46</sup> But Cuba's military cooperation with the U.S.S.R. in Africa was an insurmountable obstacle to normalization, and as it expanded, it also began to affect American relations with the Soviet Union.

### **The Old World Revisited**

In 1977, the Carter administration decided to alter its approach to Latin America because it concluded that U.S. policy toward the region could no longer be made as if in a vacuum. By 1979, the international political climate darkened and intruded on the administration's enlightened approach. American conservatives argued that Carter was too weak to stand up to a resurgent Soviet-bloc anti-American foreign policy. The expansion of Soviet-Cuban activities abroad, together with the emergence of an anti-American fundamentalist regime in Iran, left many Americans with a feeling of disquiet and strengthened the conservatives' arguments. One symptom of this change in mood was that the Senate in 1979, for the first time in a decade, voted a 10 percent increase over the administration's defense budget.

Compared to events in the rest of the world, events in Latin America had little impact on these trends; still, the trends did affect America's view of the world and of Latin America and the Caribbean. While the Carter administration continued to pursue its same approach toward Latin America, most of its energy in its last two years was consumed in managing a series of crises - Nicaragua, Grenada, Cuba (the Soviet brigade and the Mariel boatlift), and El Salvador.

The first major security crisis in the region faced by the administration occurred in Nicaragua. The crisis was anticipated, and policies were developed to manage the problem, but they failed. <sup>47</sup> Since the mid-1930s, Nicaragua had been run by the Somoza family almost like a fiefdom. By the mid-1970s, the Somozas' greed and repression had alienated every group in the country not under their control, and the children of the middle class began joining the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), a guerrilla group inspired by the Cuban revolution and established in 1961.

Anastasio Somoza was impelled by Carter's human rights policy to lift the state of siege in September 1977. The middle class, encouraged by the U.S. policy, took advantage of the political opening. Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the leader of the opposition and the editor of *La Prensa*, published scathing editorials on the corruption of the Somoza dictatorship. On January 10, 1978, Chamorro was assassinated, and Managua was shut down by a general strike led by businessmen, who demanded Somoza's resignation. In a daring effort to leap in front of the middle class opposition to Somoza, Sandinista leader Eden Pastora seized the National Palace in August 1978 with 1,500 people in it. The spontaneous cheering he received on the way to the airport surprised and awakened the Carter administration to the realization that opposition to Somoza could easily be transformed into support for the Sandinistas.

There was a consensus in the administration that if the United States did nothing, Somoza would try to repress the popular movement against him, the country would polarize even further, and the Sandinistas would eventually win a military victory. While the Carter administration recognized that the Sandinistas had broadened their base of support, it viewed the key leaders as Marxist-Leninists, who looked to Cuba and the Soviet Union as allies and saw the United States as the enemy. Caught between a dictator it refused to defend and a guerrilla movement that it would not support, the administration accelerated its efforts to

facilitate a democratic transition in Nicaragua, subject to two conditions. First, Carter believed that he should not ask a sitting president to step down, nor should he try to overthrow him. Second, Carter insisted that U.S. policy should not be unilateral. A solution would have to emerge from a cooperative effort involving the United States and democratic governments in Latin America. The OAS decided to dispatch a North American and two Latin emissaries to try to bring the opposition and the Somoza government to an agreement on a transitional process. The group recommended a plebiscite on Somoza's tenure, but the negotiations collapsed in late January 1979 when Somoza rejected the conditions that would have permitted a free election. The United States had warned Somoza that it would impose sanctions against his regime if he blocked the plebiscite, and as promised, on February 8, 1979, the United States reduced its embassy by half, ended the small economic aid program, and terminated its AID and military missions.

Somoza pretended the sanctions had no effect on him. He doubled the size of the National Guard and evidently believed he was secure. However, by May 1979, with Cuban President Fidel Castro's help, the three Sandinista factions had united and established a secure and ample arms flow from Cuba through Panama and Costa Rica. The United States tried to end all arms transfers to both sides. It urged Torrijos and Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo to cooperate; both pretended not to be involved. Public opinion in both countries viewed Somoza as the threat to their nations' security and the Sandinistas as the solution to the crisis. The United States did not know the magnitude of the arms flows nor did it have conclusive evidence of the involvement of Costa Rica, Panama, or Cuba.

In early June, the FSLN launched a military offensive and mounted a political initiative supported by Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, and the Andean Pact aimed to strip Somoza of formal legitimacy and transfer it to them. As the fighting grew

worse, Somoza realized that his end was near. The question for the United States was whether it had sufficient influence and time to forge a post-Somoza moderate government.

After consultations in the region, the United States called for a meeting of the OAS and proposed a ceasefire between the FSLN and the National Guard that would coincide with Somoza's departure and then lead toward a negotiated coalition government. An inter-American Force would oversee the ceasefire and facilitate the integration of the armed forces. Nicaraguan moderates failed to see this proposal as a way to strengthen their position, and they rejected it. The Sandinistas correctly saw it as an attempt to deny them exclusive power, and with the help of Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Venezuela, they blocked the U.S. proposal. Carter had no intention of undertaking unilateral action when democratic friends in the region were so clearly aligned against the U.S. position. On July 17, 1979, Somoza fled Nicaragua for Miami, and the Sandinistas arrived to a joyous welcome two days later.

Having failed to create a democratic center or to prevent a military victory by the Sandinistas, the United States shifted its strategy once the Sandinistas came to power. The United States was determined to avoid in Nicaragua the mutual hostility that had characterized early U.S.-Cuban relations and had led to a break in the relationship. At some political cost, Carter met with the Sandinista leadership in the White House and subsequently asked Congress for \$75 million for the new government. With the rising power of conservatives in Congress and the Sandinistas' anti-American rhetoric, the issue of aid to Nicaragua was debated at great length and with considerable heat.

The administration obtained the funding, but only after a delay and the imposition of conditions on the use of the aid. The principal condition was that the president could disburse aid only after he submitted a certification to Congress that the

Nicaraguan government was not assisting any foreign insurgency. Both Congress and the executive were concerned about the impact of the Nicaraguan revolution on the rest of Central America and the Caribbean, with good reason. As a result of the revolution, Central America's guerrillas became emboldened; the military and the right, more intransigent; and the middle, more precarious. The principal U.S. security interest was to try to prevent Nicaragua from pouring gasoline on its increasingly combustible neighbors.

In the spring of 1979, before the climax of the Nicaraguan revolution, the Carter administration began to intensify its efforts in the rest of Central America. The administration's approach was based on its view that the status quo in Central America was neither defensible nor sustainable; the only way to avoid violent revolution, which the United States judged to be in neither its own nor in Central America's best interest, was to encourage the opening up of the political process. Honduras, Nicaragua's northern neighbor, seemed most willing to try elections, and therefore, the administration decided to put its aid and support there as an example to the other countries. El Salvador and Guatemala had repressive military governments. Assistant Secretary of State Viron Vaky was sent on a special mission to communicate to these military regimes that the United States shared their concerns about revolution, but U.S. support was impossible until they ended the repression and permitted a genuine political opening.

The Carter administration had no discernible impact on the Guatemalan regime, but after numerous efforts, on Oct. 15, 1979, the Salvadoran political door began to creak open. A group of young army officers seized power and invited several moderate and leftist civilians to help them implement a full range of social, economic, and political reforms. The administration viewed the coup as a breakthrough, but Carter personally decided that U.S. support would depend on the new governments' progress in implementing the reforms - particularly an agrarian reform - and stopping the repression.

In 1979, revolution also came to the Caribbean. On March 13, about 50 members of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) seized power in a nearly bloodless coup on the small island of Grenada. It was the first unconstitutional change of government in the English-speaking Caribbean, and it unsettled the region. The leaders of other Caribbean governments held an emergency meeting in Barbados to discuss what to do. The NJM reassured its neighbors of its moderate and constitutional intentions, and based on these assurances, the other Caribbean governments accepted the new regime and advised the United States to do the same. Washington agreed, and sent its ambassador to meet the regime's leaders and discuss existing aid programs and the possibility of a Peace Corps project. [48](#)

Within a couple of weeks, however, the new regime invited Cuba to help build a people's revolutionary army, and it postponed elections indefinitely. After the U.S. ambassador delivered a message of concern to the leaders of the new regime about its growing military relations with Cuba, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop publicly denounced the United States for trying to dictate Grenada's destiny. Relations deteriorated. The NJM regime flaunted its relationship with Cuba and the Soviet bloc, but it continued to conceal that it was Marxist-Leninist.

The administration adopted a very different strategy toward Grenada than it had toward Nicaragua, although, paradoxically, for the same reason. In both cases, the administration consulted and placed great weight on the views it received from friendly democratic neighbors. The Latin American democracies advised the administration to support the nationalist revolution in Nicaragua to keep it from being seized by Marxists. Caribbean democracies encouraged the United States to help the other islands instead of Grenada, arguing that aid to Grenada might unintentionally encourage local radicals on the other islands to seize power and confront the United States. Therefore, the main thrust of U.S. policy in the Caribbean was neither to help nor confront Grenada, but rather to assist the

democratic governments in the area in their economic development and regional security.

When Fidel Castro hosted the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in September 1979, he was flanked by the leaders of the two new revolutionary governments of Nicaragua and Grenada. Together, the three tried to steer the NAM toward a "natural alliance" with the Soviet Union. The Carter administration took the NAM seriously and devoted about six months to consultations with NAM governments before the Summit. Rather than encourage moderate leaders to remain outside the debate on the future of the NAM, the United States encouraged them to participate and try to prevent Cuba from seizing control. Whether U.S. consultations helped or not, the moderate leaders were decisive in preventing Cuba from shifting the NAM's direction. However, from the perspective of American public opinion, the overall impression of the Summit was that of a large group of leaders who had journeyed to Havana to condemn the United States.

Michael Manley, the democratic prime minister of Jamaica, gave a speech that condemned every U.S. intervention and overlooked every Soviet or Cuban intervention. His underlying theme was decidedly favorable to the Soviet Union and Cuba. "All anti-imperialists know," he said, "that the balance of forces in the world shifted irrevocably in 1917 when there was a movement and a man in the October Revolution, and Lenin was the man." He praised Castro as "always humane" and credited him with the fact that "the forces committed to the struggle against imperialism [in the Western Hemisphere] were stronger today than ever before." [49](#)

The NAM summit coincided with the "discovery" by Washington of a Soviet brigade in Cuba. Castro thought the United States had concocted the entire incident to embarrass him at the Summit, but the incident was more

embarrassing and politically costly to the Carter administration. As with each of the strategic confrontations in Cuba, the Soviet brigade issue had almost nothing to do with Cuba and almost everything to do with the perceived balance of power between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Six months before the brigade's "discovery" by U.S. intelligence, Carter and Brezhnev signed the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II). Conservatives in the United States claimed that the only effect of an arms agreement would be to sap the will of the United States. This view was attracting support, and many senators facing reelection in 1980 were worried about the political consequence of voting for the treaty. In the spring of 1979, Senator Richard Stone of Florida queried the administration about reports that the Soviets had sent soldiers to Cuba. Based on the latest intelligence reports, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance denied any evidence of this in a letter to Stone. At that time, most U.S. officials discounted the report because it was implausible that the Soviets would send soldiers to Cuba on the eve of the NAM Summit.

Nonetheless, the administration promised to conduct more extensive surveillance, and in August, it detected a Soviet combat unit. Most of the administration's senior officials were on vacation at the time, and the information leaked to the press before the government was able to ascertain the nature and origin of the reported brigade or to try to negotiate privately with the Soviets. Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was in a tough fight for reelection at the time. Upon learning of the report, he announced that SALT II would not pass the Senate unless the brigade was withdrawn. The incident occurred at a time when the differences between Vance and Brzezinski had become significant. A genuine crisis would have united the administration, but the brigade issue was only a political dilemma. As such, it exacerbated the contradictions within the administration. Vance believed the brigade issue required some face-saving gesture from the Soviet Union but that it

was "definitely not a reason to interfere with the ratification of the SALT Treaty," which was his highest priority. Moreover, by this time, the CIA had realized that a Soviet brigade had been in Cuba since the 1960s. Brzezinski saw SALT as only one element in a wider strategic relationship; he thought the brigade issue should be used to "stress Cuban adventurism worldwide on behalf of the Soviet Union." To Brzezinski, this was "the main problem."<sup>50</sup> Neither wanted the issue to interfere with ratification of SALT, but Vance thought prospects for ratification would be improved if the United States played down the brigade, while Brzezinski thought the administration's position would be strengthened if it played up the issue and showed that it understood the increasing threat of Soviet-Cuban expansionism.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd told Carter that the only way the treaty would be approved by the Senate was for Carter to explain that the brigade was of relatively little consequence, and Carter took his advice. On October 1, 1979, Carter explained the issue to the nation. Noting Brezhnev's assurances that it was a training unit and that the Soviets would not change its structure, Carter tried to persuade the nation of the need to ratify SALT II. He did so by splicing the arguments of his principal advisers, playing down the brigade as Vance and Byrd recommended, but criticizing Soviet-Cuban adventurism as Brzezinski suggested. He also called for expanding the U.S. security presence in the Caribbean, and announced the establishment of a new Caribbean Joint Task Force in Florida.

There was a special poignancy to the fact that Carter delivered the speech on the same date that the Canal treaties came into force. Mondale was in Panama at that moment with several other democratic presidents from the region to celebrate the passing of an old era in inter-American relations, and yet Carter's speech served as a powerful reminder that the old era was not entirely history. The administration's internal divisions also prevented it from consulting with

these governments before announcing the Caribbean Task Force. One of the Latin presidents commented to Mondale about the unfortunate symbolism. If the domestic or global political environment had been sunny, these regional events - the Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions, the Havana summit, the Soviet brigade - would have been less troubling and less trouble. However, the opposite was the case. In July 1979, at the moment that the Sandinistas were coming to power in Managua, the United States felt the domestic impact of the Shah's fall with the second oil shock. The price of gas soared, the supply declined, and the nation saw the longest lines of cars waiting for gas since World War II.

In the same month, Carter's popularity fell below that of Nixon's in the two months before he resigned. To assess the reasons for the decline and decide how to proceed, Carter left Washington for Camp David for nearly two weeks of consultations. His energy speech on July 15 helped him recoup some of his popularity, but he lost it again with the subsequent dismissal of four members of his Cabinet. Inflation, which began to climb into double-digits, contributed to the perception that Carter had lost control, and other international events reinforced that perception. In November, the staff of the U.S. embassy in Teheran were taken hostage, and one month later, more than 10,000 Soviet troops marched into Afghanistan. Carter realized that the SALT treaty would be defeated if the Senate voted on it, and he therefore requested that the Senate postpone debate or a decision. He also imposed numerous sanctions against the Soviet Union.

With the domestic, political, regional, and international trends all so ominous, and the presidential election approaching, the Carter administration's focus on the Caribbean Basin gravitated to security issues. The administration did not alter its basic approach, but it did expand its efforts to respond to changes in the world and to domestic criticism that it could not cope with a hostile world. Among other things, the United States significantly increased its aid program to the region and

began exploring ways either to widen the Caribbean Group to include Central America and Mexico or encourage the formation of a parallel group for Central America. Drawing from his own personal experience, Carter also proposed a new people-to-people program in the Caribbean Basin. He encouraged the establishment of Caribbean/Central American Action in April 1980 under the leadership of Governor Bob Graham of Florida with the hope that it would represent the gamut of nongovernmental groups in the United States and the region - business, religious groups, labor, and others. Carter believed that, in the long run, such contacts were the best way to reduce misunderstandings and promote good relationships.

In El Salvador, the war worsened. With all the leverage the United States and Venezuela could muster, the government managed to decree and implement an agrarian reform and the nationalization of the banking and export trading sectors. But responding to a newtonian principle of political violence, each positive reformist step in El Salvador was followed by grotesque murders by right-wing death squads. After the land reform came the murder of Archbishop Romero. The murder of four U.S. religious workers in November 1980 was the last straw, and Carter suspended all economic and military aid in order to support the ultimatum given to the military by José Napoleón Duarte, the Christian Democratic leader of the junta. A major leftist attack was expected in January 1981, but Carter did not release any of the aid until the military agreed to take specific steps to pursue the investigation of the murders, dismiss several officers from the security forces, and strengthen Duarte's position. Most of these steps were implemented. [51](#)

After the election of Ronald Reagan, but before his inauguration, the Salvadoran guerrillas persuaded the Nicaraguan government to support their final offensive in January. This proved a major error for both. The final offensive was a fiasco, and the evidence of Nicaraguan support for it was conclusive, destroying the

relationship that the Carter administration had been trying to nurture and providing a reason for the Reagan administration to confront the Sandinistas. While Central America was unsettled by the Nicaraguan revolution, democracy in the eastern Caribbean was, if anything, strengthened after the Grenadian revolution. Not only did elections occur as scheduled in six countries, but moderates defeated radicals by large margins. The only country in the Caribbean to experience instability in 1980 was Cuba. As a result of the Carter administration's dismantling of the embargo on travel between the United States and Cuba, more than 110,000 Cuban-Americans visited the island in 1979. They brought money, presents, and success stories, and left in their wake the first visible signs of discontent Cuba had seen in a generation. In a speech in December 1979, Castro acknowledged the discontent and its link to the more open relationship developed during the previous two years:

*"Nowadays, the counter-revolution...has begun to appear ...[Why?] Is it because we let down our guard?... Is it because the absence of the enemy has caused us to lose our faculties? Is it because we have felt...too much at ease? Perhaps, in a certain way, we have been needing an enemy; because when we have a clearly defined enemy, engaged in hard-fought combat, we are more united, energetic, stimulated." [52](#)*

In late 1979, Cubans began breaking into Latin American embassies in Havana seeking asylum. After an incident leading to the deaths of two Cubans at the Peruvian embassy in early April 1980, Castro decided to teach Peru a lesson by removing the guard from the embassy and informing the people of Havana that they were free to go there if they wished. Within 24 hours, more than 10,000 Cubans crowded into the small embassy compound of a poorer nation than Cuba. Castro was surprised and embarrassed.

Charter flights began taking the Cubans to Peru via Costa Rica. When television recorded their joy of being free, Castro stopped the flights. He then invited Cuban-Americans to Mariel Harbor outside Havana to pick up their relatives. Within a few days, thousands of boats of all sizes were sailing to Mariel. The Carter administration tried but failed to discourage the Cuban-Americans from falling into Castro's trap, and decided not to stop the boats when the Coast Guard said that could lead to a significant loss of lives. The boats returned with a few relatives and many others, including mental patients and criminals, whom Castro decided to deposit in the United States. By the time the boat lift halted on September 25, more than 125,000 Cubans had arrived in Florida. [53](#)

## An Assessment

One could say that in a symbolic way the Carter administration arrived pursuing the Panama Canal and left escaping from Mariel. It arrived with a preferred agenda that reflected its view of what inter-American relations should become. The agenda contained those issues that the Carter administration judged most important - the Canal treaties, human rights, democratization, a North-South dialogue, nonproliferation, arms control, and conflict resolution. Carter also chose to pursue these ends differently from most of his predecessors: instead of unilateral or covert actions, he insisted on openness and multilateral cooperation. Yet in its last two years, the administration was impelled to address a traditional security agenda - war, revolution, instability in the Caribbean Basin, and Soviet-Cuban expansion. This was an uncomfortable agenda, and it divided the administration, although this was due more to disturbing events in the rest of the world and the popular reaction to those in the United States. By 1980, according to two public opinion analysts, the American public "felt bullied by OPEC, humiliated by the Ayatollah Khomeini, tricked by Castro, out-traded by Japan, and out-gunned by the Russians. By the time of the 1980 Presidential election, fearing that America was losing control over its foreign affairs, voters were more than ready to exorcise the ghost of Vietnam and replace it with a new posture of

American assertiveness." <sup>54</sup> It was hard to conceive of a more different mood than in 1976.

No administration leaves office the same as it arrives. It must adapt, as the Carter administration did, to changes in the region and in the global landscape. U.S. foreign policy is the product of what an administration sets out to achieve, what Congress (articulating U.S. public opinion) accepts, and what the world will permit. Congress forces each administration to give greater weight to certain national interests that it perceives the administration is ignoring; as such, it functions as a kind of compensator, a balancer of the national interest. <sup>55</sup> In the late 1970s, Congress largely placed its "weight" on the side of security interests, insisting that Carter give more attention and resources to such concerns. This reflected a conservative trend in the country. Its full force only became evident in the 1980 election. At the same time, there was a battle within the Democratic Party that increasingly preoccupied the Carter administration. Although conservatives criticized Carter for not doing enough to resist Communism in the world, some liberal Democrats thought he gave too much attention to East-West concerns. Senator Edward Kennedy challenged him for the soul of the party, while other liberals, like Representative Tom Harkin, argued that Carter's efforts in the area of human rights were inadequate. <sup>56</sup> But the national struggle was with the conservatives, and that was evident in the nature of congressional influence on the major Latin American issues.

The congressional imprint on the Canal Treaties was felt during the administration's negotiations and, most clearly, during the ratification debate. In anticipation of congressional reaction, the executive insisted on permanent rights to protect the Canal and resisted Panama's efforts to receive compensation for prior use of the Canal. During the ratification, the Senate eliminated any ambiguity and tightened two elements in the treaties, on the U.S. right, unilaterally if necessary, to protect the Canal, and on the right of U.S. warships to

go to the front of the line in times of emergency. On the debate on aid to the Sandinista government, Congress imposed a Sears-Roebuck catalogue of restrictions and compelled the president to certify to Congress that the Nicaraguan government was not assisting any insurgents before he could disburse aid.

While Congress might have influenced the pace and tone of the administration's policy toward Latin America, Carter defined the agenda and the direction. His two greatest achievements were the Panama Canal Treaties and the promotion and protection of human rights. The Panama Canal Treaties were his most difficult political challenge, and they probably hurt his standing in the nation and helped it in Latin America more than any other decision he took. (Iran hostages and inflation had a cumulatively heavier adverse affect on Carter's popularity, but neither was a conscious decision.) Panama was ripe for explosion, and Carter did not have the luxury of waiting for a second term to complete negotiations. Had Reagan succeeded in defeating the Canal Treaties, the Canal probably would have been closed by the time he became president.

With Carter's personal leadership and Warren Christopher's skill in translating the president's priority into government policy, the United States became identified with a global movement for freedom and democracy. What was the impact of the Carter human rights policy? First, the consciousness of the world was raised with regard to violations of human rights, and leaders came to recognize that there was an international cost to be paid for repression and a corresponding benefit to be gained by those governments that respected human rights. Second, international norms and institutions were strengthened. In large part because of the Carter administration's lobbying, the American Convention on Human Rights was transformed from a moribund treaty that only two nations had ratified by 1977 to one which came into force with 14 ratifications by 1980. (Ironically, the Carter administration had more success convincing other governments to ratify

the treaty than it had in persuading the Senate, where conservatives blocked ratification.) The budget and staff of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights quadrupled, and its activities expanded commensurately.

Third, violations of the most basic human rights - the "integrity of the person" - dropped precipitously throughout the hemisphere. Fewer disappearances occurred in Argentina, from 500 in 1978 to less than 50 in 1979; and there were no confirmed disappearances in Chile or Uruguay after 1978. Political prisoners were released in substantial numbers in many countries - including 3,900 from Cuba and all those previously held in Paraguay. The use of torture declined markedly or ended.

By the end of the Carter years, many continued to criticize the administration's human rights policy for its inconsistency, and some doubted its impact, but no one questioned its commitment. Consistency, however, was not an appropriate criterion to judge a human rights policy because it assumed that all cases were similar and that other U.S. interests were subordinate to human rights, and neither presumption was correct. [57](#)

Some, like William F. Buckley, Jr., who had criticized Carter's policies and particularly his efforts to publicly criticize governments such as Argentina, later reexamined their original positions as new evidence emerged. After learning of the trials of the Argentine military leaders in 1985, Buckley admitted he had been wrong, that "the advertisement by American agencies official and nonofficial, of the plight of missing persons as often as not had concrete results. Pressure was felt by the criminal abductors. The man scheduled for execution was, often, merely kept in jail." [58](#)

Omar Torrijos made the same point in his unique way in a conversation with Yugoslav President Marshal Tito. Torrijos explained that Carter's human rights

policies forced military dictators "to moderate their practices - to count to ten before killing someone. Before, they would not have hesitated." Tito admitted that he had not viewed the issue from that angle before.

Latin America felt the impact of this movement quite intensely, and within ten years, military governments were swept from power in every nation in South America. Carter compelled the world to give greater attention and respect to human rights. Although Ronald Reagan criticized him for it, he could not ignore the force of the idea when he took office. Within one year of his inauguration, Reagan was compelled to withdraw his nominee for assistant secretary of state for human rights and modify his approach to the issue.

The Carter administration's decision to deliberately set U.S. policies in a global context was significant theoretically but was unknown to the general public. To the public, the concept "special relationship" was redundant at best since all relationships are "special." But to those who read symbols like astrologers read stars, the term is laden with meaning. At his first meeting with Carter, Mexico's President Ló pez Portillo criticized the idea of a special relationship. The Americans did not realize that the protest was really directed at former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who had used the term in 1976 to refer to Brazil. Carter administration officials thought they would eliminate the paternalism of the past merely by not using the term, and Carter therefore agreed with Ló pez Portillo, without realizing that they meant different things, and therefore did not agree at all.

The administration prided itself on not having a slogan, but in retrospect this was probably a handicap, depriving analysts of a handle to describe the policy. Without a slogan, the administration's approach became known not by its principles but by its salient features - human rights and democracy by those who

were sympathetic to the administration, and the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada and the problem of Cuban refugees by those who were not.

The Carter administration did not achieve nearly as much on a North-South agenda as many had hoped, but it accomplished more than Congress would support. The United States negotiated an agreement on a Common Fund, replenishment of the international development banks, and new cooperative programs in science and technology. Congress, however, passed only a single foreign aid bill during the four years of the administration and that was in 1977; the other bills were approved as continuing resolutions. Not only in the United States but in the rest of the developed world, interest in the developing world seemed to decline, and by the end of the term, the North-South dialogue was virtually mute. [59](#)

Despite the oil price rise, the late 1970s were a period of economic growth for most of Latin America, averaging about 5.5 percent. [60](#) Although Americans answered "no" to Reagan's famous question - are you better off in 1980 than you were in 1976? - most in Latin America would have answered positively. The debt crises of the 1980s would lead the region to wax nostalgic for the growth of the two previous decades.

The Carter administration broke new ground on nonproliferation and arms control policies, but as with any complicated edifice, it would take more than one term and the right environment to complete the structure. Carter's decision to sign Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Latin America's nonproliferation treaty, on May 26, 1977 gave the treaty a boost. France and the Soviet Union signed Protocol I. The Senate finally ratified it on November 13, 1981. The other elements of the nonproliferation policy caused tensions in U.S. relations with Argentina and Brazil, but they also made it more difficult for these nations to pursue their nuclear ambitions.

Carter's arms control initiatives probably restrained some arms purchases in Latin America, but they also accelerated the degree to which the region turned to the Soviet Union and Europe for arms. While U.S. arms sales agreements to the developing world declined from \$7.2 billion in 1978 to \$6.6 billion in 1980, Soviet sales grew from \$2.9 billion to \$14.8 billion. The French also sold more than the United States. <sup>61</sup> It was simply not possible to transform U.S. restraint into an effective arms control agreement without a global agreement between sellers, including both the United States and the Soviet Union, and buyers.

Jeane Kirkpatrick argued that the Carter administration's human rights policy in the first two years created the security problems of the last two, but this argument distracts from the main issue. <sup>62</sup> Undoubtedly, people in repressive societies - whether Nicaragua, Argentina, or Cuba - were encouraged by Carter's human rights policy and made new demands on their governments. In my view, this is a credit to the United States. The issue, which Kirkpatrick sidesteps, is whether the United States should pressure or defend the dictators. The Carter administration believed that dictators were the problem and that human rights was the solution, whereas Kirkpatrick's argument implied the opposite was the case.

Others criticized the Carter administration for retreating under pressure to the traditional Cold War agenda in its last two years. <sup>63</sup> This implies that either the United States should have been unconcerned about Soviet-Cuban expansion or that the administration abandoned its principles as it responded to the region's crises. No administration could have been or was unconcerned about Communist advances.

A similar argument made from the other end of the political spectrum by Elliott Abrams was that Carter abandoned his third world quest and confronted the Communists at the end, and he was right to do that. His examples were Carter's decision to give aid to the Salvadoran military and cut it to the Sandinistas during

his last month in office. <sup>64</sup> It is true that as the administration tried to adjust to a changing agenda, Carter's commitment to his principles was tested. Ironically, both liberals and conservatives agree that he failed the test and adopted a cold warrior approach; the only difference is that liberals were sad and conservatives delighted with this outcome. But both sides projected their fears and hopes; the facts suggest that Carter did not abandon his original principles in Latin America. In the case of Nicaragua, when the administration realized that its democratic friends there and in the region preferred the Sandinistas to the U.S. strategy of seeking an alternative to them or Somoza, Carter decided against unilateral intervention. In the case of El Salvador, although the left grew stronger, and the prospects for revolution seemed more real, Carter resisted pressures to offer unconditional support to the government. The United States, he said, would provide economic and military aid only if the government implemented land reform and took steps to end repression. Even his final decision in January 1981 to approve \$5 million in military aid to El Salvador was taken because the military had responded to most of the specific demands made by Duarte and backed by Carter. Carter did not hesitate to suspend aid to the Sandinistas when the administration obtained conclusive proof that they were transferring weapons to the Salvadoran guerrillas. From the beginning, the administration opposed covert arms transfers to overthrow governments, and it had no intention of condoning such actions by the Sandinistas. If the judgment on Carter's policy depends on whether he adhered to his three principles - human rights, nonintervention, and multilateral cooperation - during these crises, he passed the test.

Despite continuous consultations, the administration's effort to forge a coalition of like-minded democracies to pursue a common policy in the Caribbean Basin did not bear fruit. Carter's personal attempt to invigorate the Organization of American States failed, probably for the same reasons. His approach was so different from past U.S. policies, which were unilateral or which wore a mask of multilateralism, that Latin American governments were skeptical. Moreover, at

that moment, many Latin American governments did not want to use the OAS because that would have required compromises with the United States. There were serious domestic political costs from either agreeing or disagreeing with Washington. If Latin American leaders sided with the United States on a critical vote, they would have been denounced by leftists and nationalists as unpatriotic. But Latin American leaders were also reluctant to confront the United States because other groups in their countries are friendly toward or anxious about the North Americans. The only way to avoid associating with or challenging the United States is to stay away from international forums.

With democratic governments in the hemisphere reluctant to ally with the United States and authoritarian regimes under assault by U.S. human rights policies, there was not much prospect for forging multilateral approaches. Time was necessary for divergent conceptions of national security to come together and for democracy to spread. Carter believed it was worth the time and the investment, even though the benefits would accrue to future generations and administrations. If one accepts Carter's goal to work most closely with America's democratic friends in the region, then perhaps the final judgment on his policy should come from them. Henry Forde, the foreign minister of Barbados, offered such a judgment at the OAS General Assembly in Washington on November 19, 1980, after Carter's loss to Reagan. First, Forde listed the many criticisms leveled at Carter's human rights policy and then he said:

*"It is our view that it has been the single most creative act of policy in the hemisphere in many a long year. It has raised the consciousness and stirred the consciences of many a leader in this region; it has given hope to many an oppressed citizen; it has helped, perhaps more than any other element of policy, to correct the image of the United States as an unfeeling giant, casting its shadow over its neighbors."* <sup>65</sup>

## **Endnotes**

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In his memoirs, President Carter reflects back on his presidency. He devotes a chapter to the Panama Canal treaties.

#### **Rosalynn Carter - First Lady**

Carter, Rosalynn. *First Lady from Plains*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984.

In Chapter 7 of her autobiography, "Envoy to Latin America," Mrs. Carter describes her official trip to Latin America in May-June, 1977 and her meetings with different leaders of the region.

#### **Zbigniew Brezinski, National Security Adviser**

Brezinski, Zbigniew. *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983.

Dr. Brzezinski recounts his experiences under the Carter Administration. Part of Chapter 4 is focused on the administration's attitude toward Latin America with special attention given to the Panama Canal negotiations.

#### **Hamilton Jordan - Chief of Staff**

*Crisis: The Last Year of The Carter Presidency.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Son, 1982.

Hamilton Jordan recounts almost chronologically the impact the hostages held in Tehran had on the country. The Panama Canal treaties are mentioned in various passages in this book.

### **Accounts by Cabinet and Other Administration Officials**

#### **Cyrus R. Vance - Secretary of State (1977-1980)**

Vance, Cyrus. *Hard Choices: Critical Years in American Foreign Policy.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

Mr. Vance's book focuses on his experiences as secretary of state under the Carter administration. Chapter 8 recounts his involvement in the Panama Canal Treaty negotiations.

#### **Harold Brown - Secretary of Defense (1977-1981)**

Brown, Harold. *Thinking About National Security: Defense and Foreign Policy in a Dangerous World.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1983.

This book is a comprehensive analysis of national security policy making in the United States. President Carter's approach to the Soviet-American arms race is discussed briefly (pp. 81-82), with part of Chapter 6 devoted to the general strategy pursued by American presidents toward Latin America.

#### **Stansfield Turner - Director of CIA (1977-1981)**

Turner, Stansfield. *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985.

The author discusses the difficult issues that face a democracy in trying to collect intelligence and influence other governments covertly.

#### **Frank J. Devine - U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador (1977-1980)**

Devine, Frank J. *El Salvador: Embassy Under Attack.* New York: Vantage Press, 1981.

This memoir by a career foreign service officer describes the awkward position of the U.S. ambassador to a country that was imploding with massive human rights

violations. The ambassador is critical of the administration's human rights policies.

**William J. Jorden, Ambassador to Panama**

Jorden, William. *Panama Odyssey*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984.

This book examines the Panama Canal Treaties negotiations. It considers the different players in both the U.S. and Panama and the impact they had in negotiating these agreements. There is a brief discussion of the history of the Panama Canal.

**Anthony Lake, Director of Policy Planning, Department of State (1977-1981)**

Lake, Anthony. *Somoza Falling: The Nicaraguan Dilemma: A Portrait of Washington At Work*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1989.

The author uses the case study of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua from 1977-79, and examines the policy process from the perspectives of the U.S. Embassy, the Department of State, the White House, the intelligence community, and the press corps and how all interact to make policy.

**Sol M. Linowitz, Negotiator of Panama Canal Treaties (1977-78)**

Linowitz, Sol M. *The Making of a Public Man: A Memoir*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1985.

Linowitz's memoir discusses his career as a businessman, ambassador to the OAS (1966-69), Director of a private Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations (1974-77), negotiator of the Panama Canal Treaties (1977-78).

**Robert A. Pastor - Director of Latin American Affairs, National Security Council Staff (1977-1981)**

Pastor, Robert. *Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

The author gives a historical account of the development of relations between the United States and Nicaragua. Part II focuses on the Carter administration's policy toward Somoza and Part III on its policies toward the Sandinistas.

Pastor, Robert. *Limits to Friendship: The United States and Mexico*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1988. With Jorge Castañeda.

The two authors - an American and a Mexican - explore the U.S.-Mexican relationship from both national perspectives. Chapters 3 and 4 provide detail on U.S. policy toward Mexico during the Carter and other administrations.

Pastor, Robert. "Does the U.S. Push Revolutions to Cuba? The Case of Grenada." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 28, 1 (Spring 1986): 1-34.

The author analyzes United States-Grenadian relations between 1979 and 1983.

Pastor, Robert. "Continuity and Change in U.S. Foreign Policy: Carter and Reagan on El Salvador." *Journal of Policy and Management* 3, 2 (1984): 175-190.

This essay compares and contrasts the Carter administration's and the Reagan administration's approach to El Salvador. The author points out continuity and changes between the two administrations.

**Wayne S. Smith, Department of State, Director of Cuban Affairs (1977-79), Chief of U.S. Interest Section in Cuba (1979-1982)**

*The Closest of Enemies: A Personal and Diplomatic Account of U.S.-Cuban Relations since 1957.* New York: W. W. Norton, 1987.

The memoir covers his experience as a career foreign service officer working on Cuba. The book is critical of U.S. policy toward Cuba during both the Carter and Reagan administrations.

**David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs**

Newsom, David D. *The Soviet Brigade in Cuba: A Study in Political Diplomacy.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. With a foreword by Stansfield Turner.

The author discusses the Carter administration's handling of the "discovery" of the so-called Soviet combat brigade in Cuba in the fall of 1979. Monograph includes some of the documents that have been made public on the affair.

### **Studies of Carter and of U.S. Foreign Policy During his Administration**

Bourne, Peter, "Jimmy Carter: A Profile," *The Yale Review* (1982): 124-140.

A brief, but extraordinarily insightful psychological portrait of Carter by a psychiatrist, who has known Carter for many years and was Carter's Special Assistant for Mental Health and Director of Drug Abuse Policy in the White House

Bull, Hedley. "Consistency under Pressure." *Foreign Affairs* 57, 3 (1979): 441-462.

Bull discusses Carter's foreign policy goals in the context of a globalist vision rather than an East-West perspective.

Glad, Betty. *Jimmy Carter: In Search of the Great White House*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1980.

Through many interviews, the author traces President Carter's life from his roots to the White House in an attempt to explain how and what moved a man from Plains to become president.

Hargrove, Erwin C. *Jimmy Carter as President: Leadership and the Politics of Public Good*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1988.

The author studies policy making under the Carter administration with special attention given to Carter's presidential style. There is a brief discussion of the Panama Canal Treaties as an example of his skills as a policy maker.

Hoffmann, Stanley. "A View from at Home: The Perils of Incoherence," *Foreign Affairs* 57, 3 (1979): 463-491.

Hoffmann discusses the seeming fragmentation of Carter's foreign policy as a function of the "roots of American diplomacy" and changes in the world polity.

Johnson, Haynes. *In the Absence of Power: Governing America*. New York: Viking Press, 1980.

The author departs from a personal perspective and examines Carter's rise to the presidency, as well as his rise and decline in U.s. public opinion.

Jones, Charles O. *The Trusteeship Presidency: Jimmy Carter and the United States Congress*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.

President Carter's tenure in office and the policies made under his administration are described in terms of executive-legislative relations during his administration. The Panama Canal Treaties negotiations are covered in part of Chapter 6.

Lasky, Victor. *Jimmy Carter: The Man & the Myth*. New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1979.

The author considers the factors that led Jimmy Carter to the presidency in 1976, and how the image constructed around him contributed to his election.

Lynn, Laurence E., Jr. and Davis de F. Whitman. *The President as Policymaker: Jimmy Carter and Welfare Reforms*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981.

The authors studied the leadership role of the executive in domestic policy making. Some of President Carter's domestic proposals to Congress and their difficulties are covered in Chapter 11.

Mazlish, Bruce and Edwin Diamond. *Jimmy Carter: A Character Portrait*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.

The authors analyze the personality of Carter and how personal contradictions affected his character and policy views.

Moens, Alexander. *Foreign Policy Under Carter: Testing Multiple Advocacy Decision-Making*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990.

Author uses the model by Alexander George to look at the foreign policy process using several cases during the Carter administration.

Reichard, Gary W. "Early Returns: Assessing Jimmy Carter," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 20, 3 (Summer 1990): 603-620.

This essay attempts to assess the scholarly literature on the Carter presidency and provides additional questions that should be addressed in future research.

Rosati, Jerel A. *The Carter Administration's Quest for Global Community: Beliefs and Their Impact on Behavior*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987.

This study discusses the particular characteristics that differentiated the Carter administration from past administrations and how the beliefs of decision makers affected policy.

Rozell, Mark J. *The Press and the Carter Presidency*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1989.

Rozell examines the role of political journalists as public educators of the presidency. Attention is also given to foreign policy coverage.

Sarkesian, Sam C., ed. *Defense Policy and the Presidency: Carter's First Years*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1979.

A compilation of essays written by different scholars assessing President Carter's approach to national security and defense policy issues during 1977-78.

Shogan, Robert. *Promises to Keep: Carter's First Hundred Days*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1977.

This book attempts compares Carter's candidacy and his performance as president in his first hundred days.

Shoup, Laurence H. *The Carter Presidency and Beyond: Power and Politics in the 1980s*. Palo Alto: Ramparts Press, 1980.

The author examines the rise of Jimmy Carter from the governorship to the presidency and the development of his administration's policies.

### **U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America**

Dumbrell, John. "Case-Study: President Carter's human rights policy with special reference to Argentina," in *The Making of U.S. Foreign Policy*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990.

Discusses the difficulties of Carter's human rights policy in general and with reference to the Argentine case.

Fagen, Richard R. "The Carter Administration and Latin America: Business as Usual?" *Foreign Affairs* 57, 3 (1978): 652-669.

This article examines the Carter administration's policies toward Latin America. It addresses what was accomplished by the "new approach" put forth by the administration.

Fontaine, Roger. "The End of a Beautiful Relationship." *Foreign Policy* 28 (Fall 1977): 166-174.

This essay examines the Carter administration's early policies toward Brazil. It offers a conservative critique of the impact of the human rights and the nonproliferation policies on Brazil under President Carter's tenure.

Kirkpatrick, Jeane. "Dictators and Double Standards." *Commentary* 68 (November 1979): 34-49.

Kirkpatrick, Jeane. "United States Security and Latin America." *Commentary* 71 (January 1981): 28-40.

Two critical essays of Carter's policy toward Latin America and the third world that argue that his human rights policy and overall weakness led to the expansion of Soviet influence.

Kryzaneck, Michael J. "The 1978 Election in the Dominican Republic: Opposition Politics, Intervention and the Carter Administration." *Caribbean Studies* 19 (April-July, 1979): 51-73.

This essay is an examination of the political state of affairs in the Dominican Republic during the 1978 elections. President Carter's policies toward Latin America are reviewed in the context of this election.

Lowenthal, Abraham F. "Jimmy Carter and Latin America: A New Era or Small Change?" in Kenneth Oye, Donald Rothchild, and Robert J. Lieber, eds., *Eagle Entangled: U.S. Foreign Policy in a Complex World*. New York: Longman, 1979. This article surveys the first two years of the Carter Administration's policy toward Latin America and concludes that there was a major gap between the rhetorical promises and the results and this has to do with the way the United States makes foreign policy toward the region.

O'Flaherty, J. Daniel. "Finding Jamaica's Way," *Foreign Policy* 31 (Summer 1978): 137-158.

This article analyzes the relationship between Jamaica and the United States under the Carter Administration. The author examines some tensions in U.S.-Jamaican relations and how they improved under President Carter.

Millet, Richard. "Central American Paralysis." *Foreign Policy* 39 (Summer 1980): 99-117.

Millet discusses the transformation experienced in the United States-Central American relationship under Carter's presidency.

Reagan, Ronald. "The Canal As Opportunity: A New Relationship With Latin America." *Orbis* 21 (Fall 1977).

A conservative critique of Carter's human rights and non-proliferation policies by the man who would replace them.

Schoultz, Lars. *National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

A study of the beliefs that have underlain U.S. policy toward Latin America, focusing on the importance of security during the Reagan years but also discusses the Carter administration's views as well.

Sigmund, Paul. "U.S.-Latin American Relations from Carter to Reagan: Change or Continuity?" in Jennie Lincoln and Elizabeth Ferris, eds., *The Dynamics of Latin American Foreign Policies*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984.

Continuities and differences in policy between Reagan and Carter are emphasized in this essay.

Smith, Gaddis, "Ideals Under Siege: Carter's Foreign Policy," *Yale Review* 73 (Spring 1984): 354-366.

Carter's foreign policy stance is discussed by reference to the contrasting perspectives of National Security Adviser Brzezinski and Secretary of State Vance.

Spencer, Donald S. *The Carter Implosion: Jimmy Carter and the Amateur Style of Diplomacy*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988.

In a critical examination, the author looks at the Carter Administration's policies in terms of Carter's inexperience. Chapter six focuses on Carter's policy toward Nicaragua and the rise of the Sandinistas.

**Issues: Human Rights Policies**

Bloomfield, Lincoln. "From Ideology to Program to Policy," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 2, 1 (Fall 1982): 1-12.

Bloomfield discusses how the human rights principles were adapted to existing realities and transformed into foreign policy.

Brown, Peter G. and Douglas MacLean, ed. *Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1979.

Essays on U.S. human rights policy, particularly during the Carter Administration, and the problems and opportunities of improving human rights in the world.

Cohen, Roberta. "Human Rights Diplomacy: The Carter Administration and the Southern Cone," *Human Rights Quarterly* 4, 2, (1982): 212-242.

The diplomatic costs and benefits of human rights policy is examined through case studies of U.S. foreign policy toward the Southern Cone states during the Carter Administration.

Fossedal, Gregory, *The Democratic Imperative: Exporting the American Revolution*. New York: New Republic Books, 1989.

Describes how the different human rights policies of Carter and Reagan have both influenced the spread of democracy and how a bipartisan approach can do even more to promote democracy.

Haas, Ernst B. "Human Rights: To Act or Not to Act?" in Kenneth Oye, Donald Rothchild, and Robert J. Lieber, eds., *Eagle Entangled: U.S. Foreign Policy in a Complex World*. New York: Longman, 1979.

An analysis of the dilemmas of making human rights policy and some recommendations on how to do it better.

Hevener, Natalie Kaufman, ed. *The Dynamics of Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1981.

A compilation of essays discuss the rise of human rights issues in American foreign policy. Carter's administration is the principal subject, with Chapter 11 focusing on Latin America.

Johansen, Robert C. *The National Interest and the Human Interest: An Analysis of U.S. Foreign Policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.

The author discusses the relationship between foreign policy making and the question of human rights in American politics during the twentieth century. Chapter four examines Carter's policy toward Chile.

Kryzaneck, Michael J. "The 1978 Election in the Dominican Republic: Opposition Politics, Intervention and the Carter Administration." *Caribbean Studies* 19 (April-July, 1979): 51-73.

This essay describes how the Carter Administration prevented the stealing of the election in the Dominican Republic in 1978.

Lemoine, Patrick and Erich Goode. "Living Hell in Haiti." *Inquiry* (March 3, 1980).

An extremely moving account of the affect of Carter's human rights policy in an isolated, forgotten prison in Haiti by a political prisoner, Patrick Lemoine.

Morrell, Jim. "Achievement of the 1970s: U.S. Human Rights Laws and Policy." *International Policy Report*. Washington, D.C.: Center for International Policy, November 1981.

This article looks at the evolution of human rights policies by Congress and the Carter administration.

Muravchik, Joshua. *The Uncertain Crusade: Jimmy Carter and the Dilemma of Human Rights Policy*. Lanham: Hamilton Press, 1986.

This book examines the dilemmas faced by the Carter Administration in designing and implementing human rights policies with a particular look at Chile and Nicaragua.

Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M. "Human Rights and the American Tradition." *Foreign Affairs* 57, 3 (1979): 503-526.

The concept of human rights is discussed and the Carter Administration's policy is also evaluated.

Rossiter, Caleb. "Human Rights: The Carter Record, The Reagan Reaction." *International Policy Report*. Washington, D.C.: Center for International Policy, September 1984.

This study describes both the decision process and the impact of Carter's and Reagan's human rights policies.

Schoultz, Lars. *Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

An in-depth analysis of Carter's human rights policy toward Latin America.

Schoultz, Lars. "United States Foreign Policy and Human Rights Violations in Latin America: A Comparative Analysis of Foreign Aid Distributions." *Comparative Politics* 13, 2 (January 1981): 149-170.

Schoultz analyzes the relationship between U.S. aid to Latin American governments and their human rights records.

Timerman, Jacobo. *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.

A memoir by an Argentine journalist who was arrested and tortured in the 1970s. He describes the personal impact of Carter's human rights policies on his case.

Volgelsang, Sandy. *American Dream, Global Nightmare: The Dilemma of U.S. Human Rights Policy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1980.

The author examines the issue of human rights in contemporary American politics and society. Carter's role in raising this issue is assessed.

U.S. Senate, *Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Assistance* (Washington, D.C., 1979).

This was written by the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division of the Congressional Research Service under the guidance of Stanley Heginbotham. It describes the Carter administration's human rights policy and evaluates several case studies.

Wilson, Larman C. "Human Rights in United States Policy: The Rhetoric and the Practice," in Don C. Piper and Ronald J. Terchek eds., *Interaction: Foreign Policy and Public Policy*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1983.

This essay explores the role of human rights in U.S. foreign policy. The Carter administration's record is evaluated.

### **Issues: Panama Canal**

(See William Jordan under accounts by administration officials)

Furlong, William L. and Margaret E. Scranton. *The Dynamics of Foreign Policymaking*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984.

Furlong and Scranton explore the role of the executive in negotiating the canal treaties. The opportunities of Nixon and Ford are contrasted with Carter.

Hogan, J. Michael. *The Panama Canal in American Politics: Domestic Advocacy and Evolution of Policy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.

This book examines American foreign policy through the Panama Canal treaties negotiations. Special emphasis is given to the leading role played by President Carter in securing ratification of the treaties and in shaping public opinion.

LaFeber, Walter F. *The Panama Canal*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

The Canal negotiations are put in historical perspective and Chapter 6 examines the efforts the Carter Administration made in gaining treaty ratification.

Moffett, George D. III. *The Limits of Victory: The Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Historical account of the Panama canal with attention paid to the role of U.S. public opinion in the negotiation and ratification of new treaties.

Pastor, Robert A. "The Canal Treaties: The Other Debate on Central America." *Caribbean Review* 25 (1987): 25-28.

The author places the debate on the Canal Treaties in historical context and compares it to the debate on aid to the contras in Nicaragua.

Ropp, Steve. "Negotiating the 1978 Panama Canal Treaties: Contending Theoretical Perspectives" in John D. Martz, ed., *U.S. Policy in Latin America: A Quarter Century of Crisis and Challenge*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

Ropp gives a thorough account of the canal negotiations and applies a theoretical explanation for Carter's push for ratification.

Smith, Craig Allen. "Leadership, Orientation, and Rhetorical Vision: Jimmy Carter, the 'New Right' and the Panama Canal." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 16 (Spring 1986): 317-328.

This essay presents two contrasting views on the issue of the Panama Canal treaties, President Carter's and Rep. Philip Crane.

**Issues: Cuba**

(See also Smith and Newsom under accounts by administration officials)

Dominguez, Jorge I. *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

The best overall description and analysis of Cuba's foreign policy during the revolution.

Duffey, Gloria. "Crisis Mangling and the Cuban Brigade," *International Security* 8, 1 (Summer 1983): 67-87.

Duffey argues that the administration reaction to the "supposed brigade of Soviet combat troops" was mismanaged and discusses the miscommunications that contributed to it.

Larzelere, Alex. *The 1980 Cuban Boatlift: Castro's Ploy- America's Dilemma* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1988).

A comprehensive review of the Mariel boatlift that brought over 124,000 Cuban refugees to the United States in 1980 and Carter's response.

**Issues: Mexico**

(See also Pastor under accounts by administration officials)

Fagen, Richard R. "Mexican Petroleum and US National Security," *International Security* 4, 1 (Summer 1979): 39-53.

The role that Mexican oil could have played in Carter's energy policy is critically evaluated.

Fagen, Richard R. "The Realities of U.S.-Mexican Relations." *Foreign Affairs* 55, 4 (1977): 685-700.

This essay examines the interaction between Carter and Mexican President López Portillo. The study reviews the long history of friction between the United States and the Mexican governments in context of Carter's presidency.

Grayson, George. *The United States and Mexico: Patterns of Influence*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984.

Grayson concentrates on U.S.-Mexican relations during the 1970s and early 1980s. An excellent chapter is devoted to the natural gas negotiations of the late 1970s.

Grayson, George. "The U.S. Mexican Natural Gas Deal and What We Can Learn From It," *Orbis* 24, 3 (Fall 1980): 573-607.

This essay looks at the natural gas negotiations in depth and as a microcosm of problems in U.S.-Mexico relations.

### **Issues: Nicaragua**

(See Pastor and Lake under accounts by administration officials)

Booth, John A. *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution*. Second Revised Edition. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985.

This volume concentrates primarily on the domestic dimension of the Nicaraguan Revolution, but devotes one chapter to the role of the U.S. and the Carter Administration in the revolution.

Christian, Shirley. *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*. New York: Random House, 1985.

An analysis of the first phase of the revolution and description of U.S. policy during the Carter and Reagan administrations.

Fagen, Richard. "Dateline Nicaragua: The End of the Affair," *Foreign Policy* 36 (Fall 1979): 178-191.

The author discusses the Carter Administration's policy during the Nicaraguan revolution, emphasizing how the history of U.S.-Nicaraguan relations and geostrategic concerns contributed to misperceptions by both sides.

LeoGrande, William. "The Revolution in Nicaragua: Another Cuba?" *Foreign Affairs* 58, 1 (1979): 28-50.

In addition to a detailed account of the fall of Somoza, LeoGrande argues that the Carter Administration failed to assess accurately the dynamics of Somoza's fall.

Somoza, Jr., Anastasio. *Nicaragua Betrayed*. As told to Jack Cox. Boston: Western Islands, 1980.

Somoza's account of how the Carter administration betrayed him despite his many years of loyalty to the United States.

## **About the Author**

### **Robert A. Pastor**

*Latin American and Caribbean Fellow*

Robert A. Pastor has been director of The Carter Center of Emory University's Latin American and Caribbean Program and professor of political science at Emory University since 1985. He has also taught at El Colegio de Mexico as a Fulbright Professor, at the University of Maryland, and at Harvard University, where he received his Ph.D. He was the director of Latin American and Caribbean Affairs on the National Security Council from 1977-81 and executive director of the Linowitz Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations from 1975-76. Dr. Pastor's most recent book is *Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean* (Princeton University Press, 1992). He is the author or editor of six other books, including *Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua* (Princeton University Press, 1987); *Limits to Friendship: The U.S. and Mexico* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1988) with Jorge Castañeda; and *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum* (Holmes and Meier, 1989).

As director of the Latin American Program at The Carter Center of Emory University, Dr. Pastor has organized conferences on the Debt Crisis, U.S.-Mexican Relations, Cuba, the Hemispheric Agenda, and Democracy in the Americas. Fourteen current and former heads of government in the Americas participated in the conference on democracy, and at its conclusion, they decided to establish the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government. Former President Jimmy Carter is chairman of the Council, and Dr. Pastor is executive secretary.

Dr. Pastor has organized the Council's missions to observe the electoral process in Panama (May 1989), Nicaragua (July 1989-April 1990), Haiti (August 1990-February 1991), and Guyana (September 1990-1992). In all of these cases, the Council was invited by the government and opposition political parties, and in Nicaragua and Haiti, the Council played a key role in mediating the rules of the election game so that all sides viewed it as the first free election ever held in the country.

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**Note 1:** "Address to a Democratic Party Campaign Luncheon, September 20, 1978," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter*, 1978, Vol. 2., p. 1554 [hereafter cited as *Public Papers, Carter*]. [Back](#).

**Note 2:** Fred I. Greenstein (ed.), *Leadership in the Modern Presidency* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 322. [Back](#).

**Note 3:** The speech is reprinted in *Jimmy Carter, A Government as Good as its People* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977), pp. 166-71. [Back](#).

**Note 4:** Robert Kaiser, "Brzezinski, Vance Are Watched for Hint of a Policy Struggle," *Washington Post*, March 28, 1977, p. A2. Both Vance and Brzezinski had read and agreed with the Lenowitz Commission's reports. Vance's memorandum to Carter in October 1976 reflects the influence of these reports. See his *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), pp. 444, 451-53. Brzezinski had earlier developed

some of these ideas. He had proposed that the United States abandon the Monroe Doctrine and the "special relationship" with Latin America, place U.S. relations with the region "on the same level as its relations with the rest of the world," and approach revolutionary change in "the developing countries with a great deal of patience." *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), p. 288. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** This was my view of the interaction, and in the course of an interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski (Washington, D.C., July 18, 1985), he acknowledged that he and Vance often tried to keep their differences limited to a few areas. Excluding the issue of Cuba, during the entire administration, Vance and his deputy, Warren Christopher seemed to me to differ less with Brzezinski on Latin American policy than they did with the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs in the Department of State. [Back.](#)

**Note 6:** Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations, *The Americas in a Changing World*, October 1974; and *The United States and Latin America: Next Steps*, December 20, 1976. Both were published by the Center for Inter-American Relations in New York. [Back.](#)

**Note 7:** Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations, *The United States and Latin America: Next Steps*, p. 1. [Back.](#)

**Note 8:** Erwin Hargrove cited a White House aide, who said that Carter "seemed to like sometimes going against the grain [of what was popular] to do what was right." ["Jimmy Carter: The Politics of Public Goods," in Fred I. Greenstein (ed.), *Leadership in the Modern Presidency* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 231.] Hargrove and Charles O. Jones [*The Trusteeship Presidency: Jimmy Carter and the United States Congress* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988)], two of the best scholars of Carter's presidency, argue that Carter deliberately ignored the political dimension of his policies initially because of his concept of the presidency as a "trusteeship." By the time he focused on politics, his opponents were much stronger. [Back.](#)

**Note 9:** For a fuller discussion of the NSC decision-making process under Carter, see Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), pp. 51-63.

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**Note 10:** Vance, *Hard Choices*, p. 33. [Back.](#)

**Note 11:** For two superb narratives and analyses of the Canal treaty negotiations within the administration, with Panama, and with the Senate, see William J. Jordan, *Panama Odyssey* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), and George D. Moffett III, *The Limits of Victory: The Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985). [Back.](#)

**Note 12:** "Ceding the Canal, Slowly," *Time*, August 22, 1977, p. 13. McCullough's book is *The Path Between the Seas* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977).

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**Note 13:** For Reagan's comments and a description of the conservative's strategy on the treaties, see William J. Lanouette, "The Panama Canal Treaties - Playing in Peoria and in the Senate," *National Journal*, October 8, 1977, pp. 1556-62. [Back.](#)

**Note 14:** *Public Papers, Carter*, 1977, vol. 2., pp. 1889-90. [Back.](#)

**Note 15:** Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Western hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954). [Back.](#)

**Note 16:** J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 225. [Back.](#)

**Note 17:** In an interview with Bill Moyers on November 13, 1978, Carter said, "We don't have any inclination to be involved in the internal affairs of another country unless our security should be directly threatened." *Public Papers, Carter*, 1978, vol. 2, p. 2019. But in his Pan American Day speech on April 14, 1977, Carter had redefined the principle of nonintervention in a way that connected Latin America with the United States: "We will not act abroad in ways that we would not tolerate at home." [Back.](#)

**Note 18:** For the entire Pan American Day speech, see *Public Papers, Carter*, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 611-16. [Back.](#)

**Note 19:** He also instructed the secretary of agriculture to institute an income support program for sugar farmers. *Public Papers, Carter*, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 797-801. [Back.](#)

**Note 20:** One diplomat was quoted in the *U.S. News and World Report* as saying: "I don't think any Latin American statesman will take her seriously." She mentions this and describes the trip in some detail in her memoirs, *First Lady from Plains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), Chapter 7. [Back.](#)

**Note 21:** Karen DeYoung, "Human Rights Motion Passes, Underlines Divisions in O.A.S.," *Washington Post*, June 23, 1977, p. A20. [Back.](#)

**Note 22:** Fourteen governments voted for the U.S. resolution, eight abstained, and three were absent. Thirteen votes are necessary for passage of a resolution. Karen DeYoung, "Human Rights Motion Passes, Underlines Divisions in O.A.S.," *Washington Post*, June 23, 1977, p. A20. [Back.](#)

**Note 23:** For Perez's comments, "Oil and Abrazos in Washington," *Time*, July 11, 1977; and for the other comments by both, see *Presidential Papers, Carter*, 1978, Vol. I, pp. 613-618. [Back.](#)

**Note 24:** Lewis Diuguid, "O.A.S Refuses to Meet in Uruguay," *Washington Post*, February 3, 1978, p. A23. [Back.](#)

**Note 25:** Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. "Human Rights and the American Tradition," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, 1978, vol. 57, no. 3, p. 503. [Back.](#)

**Note 26:** For a compelling description of the personal impact of Carter's human rights policy on Haiti, see Patrick Lemoine and Erich Goode, "Living Hell in Haiti," *Inquiry*, March 3, 1980, pp. 12-19. In late 1976 the treatment of political prisoners improved dramatically, according to Lemoine, who was arrested in 1971 and released in February 1977. By September 1977, after a visit to the island by the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Andrew Young, all 104 political prisoners were released and granted amnesty. U.S. Ambassador Ernest Preeg later wrote that the political opening begun in November 1976 closed on 28 November 1980

because Duvalier and most Haitians expected Reagan to give "a lower priority to human rights." *Haiti and the CBI: A Time of Change and Opportunity* (Miami: University of Miami Graduate School of International Studies, 1985), pp. 17-21.

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**Note 27:** Wayne S. Smith, a foreign service officer working on Cuba at the time, argued that it was unwise to publicly reduce aid at the beginning of the Carter administration. See his *The Closest of Enemies: A Personal and Diplomatic Account of U.S.-Cuban Relations Since 1957* (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1987), p. 130.

Frank Devine, a career ambassador to El Salvador during the Carter administration, also was critical of the policy in his *El Salvador: Embassy Under Attack* (N.Y.: Vantage Press, 1981). [Back.](#) "Abrazos in Washington," *Time*, July 11, 1977; a

**Note 28:** Richard R. Fagen, "The Carter Administration and Latin America: Business as Usual?" *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, 1978, vol. 57, no. 3, p. 658. [Back.](#)

**Note 29:** Ronald Reagan, "The Canal As Opportunity: A New Relationship with Latin America," *Orbis* 21 (Fall 1977): 560. [Back.](#)

**Note 30:** See Michael J. Kryzaneck, "The 1978 Election in the Dominican Republic: Opposition Politics, Intervention, and the Carter Administration," *Caribbean Studies* 19 (April-July, 1979): 51-73. [Back.](#)

**Note 31:** Jimmy Carter, "A Just International Order," Department of State News Release, March 29, 1978. [Back.](#)

**Note 32:** James Brooke, "Brazil Unveils Plan by Military to Build Atomic Bomb and Stops It," *New York Times*, October 9, 1990, pp. 1, 4. The project had begun in 1975, and was ended when President Fernando Collor de Mello learned of it in September 1990. [Back.](#)

**Note 33:** For the Panama Declaration and Carter's address at the OAS, see *Public Papers, Carter*, 1978, vol. 1, pp. 1123-25, 1141-46. [Back.](#)

**Note 34:** José López Portillo, *Mis Tiempos* (Mexico: Fernández Editores, 1988), pp. 603, 681, 758, 811-15. For a more complete description of this event - and of

both U.S. and Mexican interpretations - see George Grayson, "The U.S.-Mexican Natural Gas Deal and What We Can Learn From It," *Orbis* (Fall 1980). López Portillo's administration is widely viewed as the most corrupt in recent Mexican history, and his oil minister went to jail on charges of corruption. [Back](#).

**Note 35:** When Carter called, López Portillo told him that he could not come because the signing coincided with the week of the "Informe," Mexico's State of the Nation address, but in his memoirs, López Portillo admits that the real reason he declined was because he thought the treaties had not adequately safeguarded Panama's sovereignty. *Mis Tiempos*, p. 625. [Back](#).

**Note 36:** For a fuller discussion of this development and U.S. policy toward Mexico during the Carter-López Portillo years, see Robert Pastor and Jorge Castañeda, *Limits to Friendship: The United States and Mexico* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), Chapter 3 and pp. 111-112. [Back](#).

**Note 37:** U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Nomination of Hon. Cyrus R. Vance to Be Secretary of State*, January 11, 1977, p. 17 [Back](#).

**Note 38:** *Public Papers, Carter*, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 293-94. [Back](#).

**Note 39:** See his interviews on April 15 and May 30, 1977, *Public Papers, Carter*, 1977, Vol. I, pp. 647-648, 1042-43. [Back](#).

**Note 40:** Castro's statement was at a press conference in Tanzania on March 21, 1977. It was cited in an article by Edward Gonzalez in Cole Blasier and Carmelo Mesa-Lago, eds., *Cuba in the World* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979), p. 29. [Back](#).

**Note 41:** *Public Papers, Carter*, 1977, vol. 2, p. 2011. [Back](#).

**Note 42:** Cited in U.S. House of Representatives, Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Military and Political Affairs, *Impact of Cuban-Soviet Ties in the Western Hemisphere*, 95th Congress, 2nd session, March-April 1978, p. 88. [Back](#).

**Note 43:** *Public Papers, Carter*, 1978, vol. 1, pp. 903-9. [Back](#).

**Note 44:** Five days after Carter's statement on November 11, 1977, Brzezinski released a chart of the number of Cubans in African countries and said, on

background, that a Cuban buildup would make normalization of relations impossible. In a rather bizarre interpretation, Wayne Smith wrote that Brzezinski's comment actually increased the likelihood of a Cuban buildup. [Wayne S. Smith, *The Closest of Enemies* (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1987, pp. 122-127] [Back](#).

**Note 45:** Castro had said that he would not take any of these human rights steps until the United States freed all of its prisoners, since they were all victims of capitalism. He also said he would not release U.S. political prisoners because "some of them are important C.I.A. agents." Excerpts from Barbara Walters' interview with Castro in May 1977, in *Foreign Policy* 28, (Fall 1977):929. [Back](#).

**Note 46:** For a summary of these activities, see Jorge Dominguez, *To Make The World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). [Back](#).

**Note 47:** This subject is developed more fully in my book *Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987). See also Anthony Lake, *Somoza Falling* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1989). [Back](#).

**Note 48:** For a discussion of U.S.-Grenadian relations during the Carter and Reagan years, see Chapter 8 of Robert A. Pastor, *Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). [Back](#).

**Note 49:** *Foreign Broadcasting Information Service*, "Speeches at the Sixth Non-Aligned Summit Meetings, Part I, Supplement, 18 September 1979, Speech by Michael Manley on September 5, 1979," pp. 43-46. [Back](#).

**Note 50:** This section reflects my own perceptions as a participant in the decision-making process at the time, but it also borrows from the memoirs of Vance, Brzezinski, and Carter. See Vance, *Hard Choices*, pp. 358-64; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), pp. 346-52; and Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York: Bantam, 1982), pp. 262-64. [Back](#).

**Note 51:** For a description of the steps taken at that time, see Robert Pastor, "Continuity and Change in U.S. Foreign Policy: Carter and Reagan on El Salvador," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 3, (Winter 1984): 179-80. [Back.](#)

**Note 52:** Fidel Castro, "Address to the National People's Government Assembly," December 27, 1979, mimeographed., pp. 49-55. (This secret speech became available in the United States and was the subject of a number of articles in the *Miami Herald*.) [Back.](#)

**Note 53:** For a comprehensive review of the Mariel boatlift, see Alex Larzelere, *The 1980 Cuban Boatlift: Castro's Ploy, America's Dilemma* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1988). [Back.](#)

**Note 54:** Daniel Yankelovich and Larry Kaagan, "Assertive America," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, 1980, vol. 60, p. 696. [Back.](#)

**Note 55:** Congress's influence varies with the degree to which the president must obtain its support for administrative policies. Congress therefore has less influence on the president when foreign policy relies on diplomacy (as in Nicaragua from 1978 to July 1979) than when the administration needs aid (as for Nicaragua in 1980) or the ratification of a treaty (as in Panama). For a more complete development of this thesis, see Robert Pastor, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Economic Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), chapter 2. [Back.](#)

**Note 56:** Harkin introduced an amendment that would tie the administration's hands and require it to vote "no" in the international development banks on loans to countries that violate human rights. Carter personally opposed Harkin's effort: "To have a frozen mandatory prohibition against our nation voting for any loan simply removes my ability to bargain with a foreign leader whom we think might be willing to [improve] human rights.... We need to have the flexibility." (*Public Papers, Carter, 1977*, p. 636) Because Congress judged that Carter would use the flexibility in pursuit of these goals, most congressional human rights amendments during his administration failed. [Back.](#)

**Note 57:** See Abraham M. Serkin, "Can A Human Rights Policy Be Consistent?" in Peter G. Brown and Douglas MacLean, eds., *Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1980). [Back.](#)

**Note 58:** William F. Buckley, Jr. "Lessons from Argentina," *Washington Post*, June 9, 1985, p. D7. [Back.](#)

**Note 59:** See Roger D. Hansen, "North-South Policy: What is the Problem?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 5 (Summer 1980): 1104-1128. [Back.](#)

**Note 60:** Inter-American Development Bank, *Economic and Social Progress in Latin America*, 1982 (Washington, D.C.), p. xv. [Back.](#)

**Note 61:** "Multilateral Arms Transfer Trends in the Third World," report printed in U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Proposed Sale of F-16s To Venezuela*, February 5, 1982, pp. 26-27. [Back.](#)

**Note 62:** Jeane Kirkpatrick, "United States Security and Latin America," *Commentary* 71 (January 1981). [Back.](#)

**Note 63:** See, for example, William LeoGrande, "The Revolution in Nicaragua: Another Cuba?" *Foreign Affairs* 58 (Fall 1979): 28-50; and Abraham Lowenthal, "Jimmy Carter and Latin America" in Kenneth Oye, Donald Rothschild, and Robert Lieber, eds., *Eagle Entangled: U.S. Foreign Policy in a Complex World* (New York: Little, Brown, 1979). [Back.](#)

**Note 64:** See Elliott Abrams, "The Deal in Central America," *Commentary* 87 (May 1989), pp. 29-32: "By January 1981, his last month in office, Jimmy Carter faced facts....Carter, reversing his Central American policy, suspended all U.S. economic aid to Nicaragua, and reinstated arms shipments to the government of El Salvador." This argument - that Carter's final policy was closer to Reagan's - was a departure from Reagan's initial rhetoric which criticized Carter for defeatism. The change occurred in 1983 when the Reagan administration realized that it needed democratic support for its Central American policy, and it started to stress bipartisanship. [Back.](#)

**Note 65:** Address to the OAS General Assembly by the Hon. Henry deB. Forde of Barbados, November 19, 1980, Washington, D.C. [Back.](#)

