CHAPTER V

"NEW THINKING AND SOVIET POLICY IN CENTRAL AMERICA, 1985-1991"
This chapter focuses on the evolution of Gorbachev's policy of "new thinking". It also highlights the weaknesses of revolutionary activities vis-a-vis Soviet Union in the Central American region. Finally, the impact of the changing Soviet policy toward Central American region has been analysed.

**Locked in Crisis:**

The beginning of the eighties was marked by a crisis situation for the Soviet foreign policy. The West had turned hostile again. Almost all the developing countries were either unhappy or critical of Soviet action in Afghanistan. The USA took the lead in cancelling major disarmament negotiations, reimposed trade embargo on the USSR and stepped up its arms supply to the Afghan rebels with active connivance of Pakistan. The situation came to such a pass that almost all Western countries and many developing countries boycotted the Moscow Olympics (1980). And finally, for the first time in the post-World War II period, the Soviet army was rocked in battles inside a foreign country, e.g. Afghanistan.

The immediate casualty was the possible prospects for agreements on limitations of nuclear arms with the West. Though the Soviet Union showed its reluctance to enter into further negotiations on nuclear issues with the West, both President Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Gromyko had
firmly reiterated that the Soviet Union was ready to continue the policy of detente. As Brezhnev said in February 1980, "For us any road is acceptable and welcome, as long as it leads to enduring peace". Hence inspite of its reluctance the Soviet foreign policy continued its efforts to salvage detente in international politics. But all the efforts had proved finally futile. In 1984, the Soviet Union announced that it would not enter into any negotiations with the USA on nuclear disarmament as long as the USA continued to undertake underground nuclear tests.

The Western attitude in dealing with the nuclear issues had once again turned Soviet policy inflexible and rigid. On the whole, it was seized with a paralysis and acted defensively even in dealing with the friendly developing countries. Certainly, the Soviet policy had lost their earlier look, where it was ready to extend her help to these countries, now they were engaged in negotiation and compromise.

Another major reason for the growing difficulties for the Soviet foreign policy was the unfavourable domestic


developments. Between the late 1982 and early 1985 the Soviet Union had to pass through a quick succession of transitory leadership. On the death of Leonid Brezhnev in 1982 Yurii Andropov became the new General Secretary of the Party and President of the Supreme Soviet. But he passed away soon and was succeeded by K. Chernenko. Unfortunately Chernenko also did not live long. Finally, in March 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev became the new party General Secretary with whom a new era in Soviet domestic and international politics began.

By the close of 1985 the new Soviet leadership under Gorbachev started giving indications for change in both the domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet Union. The new leadership lost no time in reassessing the parameters of the Soviet foreign policy and the role the Soviet Union was playing in the increasing complex international politics of the eighties.

As far as America was concerned the end of "Vietnam Syndrome" in its foreign policy, as demonstrated by its invasion to Grenada had sent a very clear signal to Moscow. The United States under Ronald Reagan had, once again, revived the 'Truman doctrine' of communist containment on a global scale\(^3\). The so called 'Star War'

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3. Reagan Doctrine; In his political campaign during his first election, he said, "rolling back communism". ......contd.
programme, the proposal to instal Pershing and Cruise missiles in Europe and the renewed and vigorous support given to counter revolutionaries from Latin America to Asia and Africa were the significant manifestation of the new US belligerence. Moreover, the Americans had highly accurate information about the mess in which the problem ridden Soviet economy was increasingly sinking. They were clear in their perception that the Soviet Union would no longer be in a position to match the combined pressure of the West. It was, therefore, a very well thought out move on their part to push Soviet Union on the impossible path of gigantic militarization. The West had also been quite convinced that the Soviet Union had lost the race of technological development with it and that for its fast economic recovery the latter needed the cooperation of the former in the form of aid, assistance, capital investment and transfer of advanced technology etc. Thus, the U.S. and Western pressure on the Soviet Union in the late

President Regan proved himself determined to redeem his responsibility to make Central America as major issue in East-West relations to stampout "Communism" from American backyard - Nicola Millar, Soviet relations with Latin America 1959-1987 (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 192.

seventies and eighties was the part of the ground strategy of defeating communism.

In this background, the new leadership under Gorbachev quickly began taking initiatives for improving relations with the USA, which had practically been frozen since the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. By mid-1985, Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) were resumed in Geneva, while a series of concrete proposals for nuclear disarmament began to pour out of Moscow, though the USA responded to these proposals rather cautiously.

In domestic field, Gorbachev leadership, by the end of 1985, had prepared necessary grounds for launching its programmes of "Perestroika" and "Glasnost". By early 1986 he had formally launched a programme of "P and G". It was the programme of overhauling Soviet society, anew, indeed a kind of revolution as Gorbachev put it. In many ways the foreign policy agenda set anew by Gorbachev was an inseparable part of his "Perestroika" programme. His foreign policy initiatives were given, the interesting name of 'New Thinking'. In his address to the delegates to the 27th CPSU Congress, Gorbachev said that:

"We have gathered at a crucial turning point in the life of the country and the contemporary world as a whole..... The situation called for change...... The situation has reached a turning point not only in internal but also in external affairs...... The situation created by the nuclear confrontation calls for new approaches methods,
and forms of relation between the different social systems, states and regions...."

To respond effectively to the difficult international situation, as outlined above, the new Soviet programme was actually launched in 1986. According to it the hitherto fundamental principles of the Soviet foreign policy were reassessed and new priorities were set forth under the well known rubric of "New Thinking".

The 'New Thinking' in international relations, as propounded by Gorbachev was a fundamental development of the 1980s, the primary aim of which was to change the world for better. It would be in order here to outline the essential characteristics of such an epochmaking policy pronouncement of the Soviet leadership. Firstly, Gorbachev argued that military confrontation with the capitalist-imperialist system of the West was an outdated concept, it was a kind of zero-sum game. Secondly, the guiding principle of the 'New Thinking' was the balance and not class of interests of all states, big, or small as the basic determinant of what Gorbachev called, 'contemporary


6. They were first made public a year earlier in the winter of 1985 in a revised version of 1961 Party programme. The Congress formally adopted the programme in March 1986.

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international politics. The implication of such an assertion was the rejection of the Marxist-Leninist understanding of international politics as the expression of contradiction of two main antagonistic social forces. The examples offered in support of such a notable ideological departure was the INF treaty the so called realism and business like approach of the West the deideologization of the military-industrial complex in the West and consensus and compromise among the left and communist movement in the West. Thirdly, the 'New Thinking' laid emphasis on the development of state-to-state relations of peaceful co-existence based on the principle of free choice and equality, and not expediency. Fourthly, it aimed at creating a nuclear-free world by the end of the century. Finally, one of the consistent ideological commitments of the Soviet foreign policy from the very beginning had been to support and encourage national liberation movements in the East. The 'New Thinking' abandoned this commitment almost entirely. In fact, the very basis of the Soviet role in the Third World was being questioned: Why must the Soviet Union support the aspirations of the Third World? Did it gain anything from it? According to an authoritative Soviet position, "The myth that the class interests of socialist and developing countries coincide in resisting imperialism
does not hold up to criticism at all". It was, therefore, argued that the Soviet foreign policy, in the Third World must pursue within the paradigm of bilateralism based on balance of interests and mutually advantageous relations, and not against the traditional background of international politics as class war. Such an approach was also expected to remove a major irritant in East-West relation. In any case, the 'New Thinking' made the Soviet foreign policy more pragmatic, flexible, resilient and, above all, responsive to domestic needs and compulsions more than ever before.

The impact of 'New Thinking' on international politics, especially on the Third World countries, was far-reaching. This can be summarised as follows:

- The catalytic role, that the Soviet Union consistently played in strengthening the national liberation movement on a global scale, was given up altogether.

The qualitative change in Soviet foreign policy towards the Third World deprived them of their traditional source of support. The ruling class in the Third World which had assiduously built a

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relationship with the Soviet Union over the years found itself increasingly losing its bargaining power both internally and externally.

- As neo-colonialism once again began to regain its favourite hunting ground, the non-aligned states in the Third world felt the adverse impact of the change of Soviet position more than others.

- The communist and left forces in the Third World, wherever they were operative found themselves bereft of support and confused. They not only lost their traditional propensity to look to Moscow for guidance and support, but also began to learn to stand on their own and to face their own battles. Obviously, the halo of the Soviet Union as a revolutionary State poised against imperialism and capitalism eventually paled into insignificance.

The pronouncement of "new thinking" was quickly followed by major changes in the USSR's international behaviour which created a favourable impact on the public opinion in the USA and West Europe. As Sharyl Cross has written:

"In an unprecedented fashion, the Soviets advanced proposals for massive conventional and nuclear force reductions, sought reconciliation with the United States and nations in Eastern Europe and Asia, and retreated from military involvement in the developing world. Both statements and actions indicated that the
tendency to rely on military force and the typically belligerent posture that had characterised Soviet behaviour in the past were abandoned in favour of promoting diplomatic cooperation as the desired *modus operandi* to manage relations among nations"\(^8\).

A congenial environment was thus tried to be created in order to provide a much needed ground for better relations between the two Super-powers and for further talks on nuclear arms reduction. A series of summits\(^9\) between the US and the Soviet leaders were held which, no doubt, reduced substantially the threat of nuclear war and largely relaxed the international tensions. The INF treaty of 1987 for the reduction of Nuclear arms signified that the total destruction of nuclear weapons was no longer a utopian dream.

Finally, through slow and gradual process, the Soviet Union was pulling off her hand of support and commitment to the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Quite clearly the Soviet Union was expressing its inability to sustain any longer the gigantic economic and military burden due to the continued commitment to the

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Third World. At the same time, the Soviet Union was rather anxious to improve her relations with the United States.

The operationalization of 'New Thinking' brought several vital policy declaration from the Soviet leadership through which it made its intentions of seriously reassessing the traditional foreign policy instruments in pursuit of new Soviet goals clear. In order to unburden the Soviet economy from the mounting pressure of international commitments the new leadership decided to slash down the economic aid and arms supplies to the Third World countries. The economic pain being suffered by the Soviet Union was, indeed, unbearable. It may be underlined that the supply of arms to the developing countries particularly had been curtailed and limited to very exceptional circumstances or largely restricted to the fulfilment of treaty obligations with some of them. It was obvious that the Soviet Union had become extremely cautious in giving arms in the name of "progressive causes" or in its traditional pursuit of proletarian internationalism.

Thus, the 'New Thinking' in international relations certainly sought to add some new dimensions to the very framework of Soviet foreign policy by its novel ideas and concepts. Its aims and objectives did not constitute any mid-course corrections and adjustments, they rather
indicated the total replacements of the traditional framework of the Soviet foreign policy. The primary objective, as also the serious compulsion, of this thorough overhauling was to subordinate the Soviet foreign policy goals to the dictates of her domestic needs. Hence, the impact of 'New Thinking' on the Soviet policy towards Central America from 1985 onwards needs to be understood in the light of the foregoing analysis.

The 'New Thinking': Changing Soviet Policy in Central America:

"The area of greatest conflict" - Central America had never been an area of Soviet foreign policy priority. Rather, it was considered historically, on a "soft part of American under-belly". Before the Cuban revolution, the Soviet Union considered, Latin America as an area of U.S. hegemonic concern. But Cuba broke the chain of US hegemony and it emerged as a new ally of the Soviet Union in the Western Hemisphere.

Cuba was not only considered a potential asset to the Soviet Union but also projected as revolutionary model for other Central and Caribbean countries. Soon, many countries of Central American revolutionary groups followed the dictates of Fidel Castro and triggered off their revolutionary activities in other countries of the region, i.e., Nicaragua, Grenada, El Salvador, Guatemala.
and Honduras etc.

The Soviet Union had supported these revolutionary activities which were engaged in "guerrilla warfare". The Soviet help came mainly through Cuba which was largely in the form of tactical guidance and military support, in the sense that the Soviet Union wanted to restrict the U.S. global activism largely to the confines of the South and Central American region, its strategy was quite successful. By providing assistance, primarily in military equipment, the USSR was able to exacerbate conflict in Central America and to divert the US attention and resources from other areas of the world which was deemed more vital to their global interests. At the same time, prior to Gorbachev's 'New Thinking', the socialist experience had only been realized in two countries, in Central America namely Cuba and Nicaragua. Obviously, to sustain themselves on their revolutionary path, both of these countries were demanding increasing levels of Soviet assistance at a time when the Soviet ability to do so had become gross limited. The policy framework advanced by Gorbachev from 1985 onwards basically reflected this accumulated experience of the Soviet Union in South and


11. Ibid., p. 279.
Central America.

Now the Soviet-Latin American specialist candidly admitted that the Soviet Union had contributed to the militarization in Nicaragua, something they were not willing to admit during the Brezhnev era. The New Soviet Policy in Latin America, Caribbean and Central America, was defined by Vladimir Sudarev in the following words:

"The confrontation has come to an end, and it is time to give up the search for 'weak links', the effort to take advantage of conflicts, and the simple desire to 'make trouble' for the other side. The notion that 'when things are worse for the United States, they are better for us', by which the makers of Soviet foreign policy were guided for decades...... no longer corresponds to the realities of the increasingly multi-dimensional and interdependent world...."12.

Furthermore, Gorbachev himself stated that the charge that the Soviet Union still sought to promote "socialist revolution" in Latin America was "at odds with what we are really doing"13. He refuted the charges and said, "it runs counter to our theory, our principles, the new mode of thinking, and the entire foreign policy concept to which we adhere".

Gorbachev's new foreign policy programme also entailed reversing the sacrosanct Leninist tenet of


"proletarian internationalism" or rendering aid to revolutionary forces, and called-off the hitherto interventionist in the name of revolution. In identifying major aspects of this new Soviet policy in Latin America, Mikoyan stated:

"In the case of violent internal conflict in a Latin American country, other states should assist the parties in conflict in search for a peaceful solution through national reconciliation. No intervention of great powers, in any form, including the training and arming of the parties in conflict, can be considered correct or justified..... No export of revolution or of counter-revolution can be approved."  

The Soviet commentators now reversed the tactical preferences of the past. Previously, a virtual consensus had existed among Soviet officials and scholars regarding the appropriateness of support to the armed struggle, particularly following the Nicaraguan revolution. In Soviet writings, as in Jean from statement of Mikoyan in 1970, the Nicaraguan revolution "affirms what had been considered refuted by some after the death of the Guevara and the defeat of a number of guerrilla movements" and that there was" not a single example of a victorious revolution carried out peacefully on the continent.  


However, in accordance with the subsequent pragmatic approach, the use of violence to achieve social change was frequently renounced. An article of Pravda in 1986 stated:

"...violence on that continent [Latin America] can easily become transformed from the midwife to the gravedigger of history...... In the present situation any local conflict may escalate into regional and even world conflict...... the nuclear age demands of revolutionary forces the most serious consideration of decisions over armed struggle and the definitive rejection of actions characteristic of leftist extremism."\(^{16}\)

Furthermore, official statements suggested that the region would occupy a more significant position among global priorities. In his first speech after being-sworn in as President of the Congress of Soviet Deputies in July 1986; Gorbachev stated that Latin America was "becoming more important in the Soviet foreign relation", and that "possibilities existed to strengthen international links with the region."\(^{17}\) Furthermore, the Soviet emphasis on the interrelated global system, Soviet Union began to argue that "geographic distance should no longer impede cooperation with these countries."\(^{18}\)


The Soviet Union, expressed reluctance to "continue to bankroll the Socialist or Communist economies" of the Third World\textsuperscript{19}. Discussion began to appear in the Press asserting that Moscow's relations with its Marxist-oriented beneficiaries like Cuba must be conducted on a "mutually advantageous" basis\textsuperscript{20}. The Soviet Union explicitly called for the cultivation of mutually profitable economic relations with all countries of Latin America, irrespective of their political orientation. One Soviet scholar, writing in \textit{New Times} in 1990, described the new strategy in Latin America as follows:

"The Cold War is over. In the new conditions the Soviet Union needs a new Latin American policy. The current tendencies seem to suggest the ideological determinism of the past is being replace by an economic one. The priority is being given to establishment of mutually profitable economic relations\textsuperscript{21}.

In nutshell, the 'New Thinking' represented a more pragmatic and positive orientation of Soviet foreign policy as well as a realistic adaptation to changing

\textsuperscript{19} Pravda, 29 November 1987, p.4; Reprint in CDSP, vol. 39, no. 49, p.7.


national priorities. Soviet admission of their ailing economic performance and inability to continue with massive global commitments necessitated the need of new principles to guide international behaviour. For Latin American countries, the Soviet statements reflected a realization that they would have more to gain by cultivating relations with regionally influential Capitalist and industrialized nations, than to provide material support to any revolution in the region.

The 'New Thinking' in Soviet foreign policy towards Central America was initially influenced by several important objectives. Firstly, the Soviet Union displayed less enthusiasm in providing economic assistance to Socialist/Communist-oriented nations, and on the other hand, tried to promote peaceful resolution of conflict as well as withdraw military assistance to revolutionary forces. Concomitantly, Moscow stepped up efforts to establish diplomatic ties with the non-communist countries of Latin America. The Soviet Union also signed many new trade agreements and further explored innovative forms of economic cooperation with the big Capitalist and industrialized countries. Finally, the Soviet Union

sought to engage these countries in collaborative efforts to reduce the global proliferation of weapons and to deal with economic problems.

In the past the Soviet relation with Central American countries had mainly been conducted through her Marxist-Leninist client Cuba. As Cuba was the first socialist country in the Western Hemisphere and most experienced in promoting the revolutionary activities elsewhere in the region, it was natural for Moscow to repose greater confidence in the former's capacity to serve the latter's global interests. As a result, Cuba played a successful role of military adventurism in Angola and Ethiopia in Africa with Soviet support. It tried to play the same role in the Latin American countries also. In return, Castro was rewarded with greater Soviet military and economic assistance. But in the early 1980s, the ideological or strategic cooperation between Moscow and Havana exhibited difficulties at a time the two countries should have better coordinated their activities to promote radical movements in Central America and the Carribean.

In April 1989, Gorbachev went to Cuba. He signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Fidel Castro.  

The treaty had incorporated many new obligations and responsibilities on the part of the two countries. Regarding relations with Cuba-Gorbachev said:

"We value our friendship with this country and we plan to develop further our historically established links with it."24

Concerning the US trade and economic blockade of Cuba, he said, "the Soviets continue to be the main support for the Cuban people in the area of economic development, although there have been miscalculations and mistakes in that regard. Our economic relations with Cuba will be streamlined to ensure maximum mutual benefits for both parties.... Soviet military cooperation with Cuba is a consequence of the external threat to the security of that country. That is why the nature and the scope of our military assistance to Havana will depend on the degree to which this threat will decrease."25

Nevertheless, the Soviet-Cuban relation became increasingly strained throughout Gorbachev's tenure. Gorbachev and his colleagues knew the priorities of the Soviet foreign policy. They also assessed the problems in the fulfilment of these priorities. Under the new international environment, the integration of the Soviet

24. Ibid.

Union into the World economy created favourable conditions
for economic and financial cooperation between various
groups of states and for Soviet-Latin American
cooperation. In such a background, the continued Soviet
association with Castro regime might fuel the suspicion
among world community, especially USA, with whom the
Soviet Union was now willing to have an increased level of
military and economic cooperations. The Soviet policy
makers now emphasized that the hostility in US-Cuban
bilateral relations stood as an impediment to improving
ties in the Western Hemisphere. The Soviet Union
encouraged the opening of dialogue between the two, but
the US-Cuban relations, remained deadlocked.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union and Cuba were no
longer pursuing a mutually complementary strategy in Latin
America. As earlier pointed out, finally, adopted "a
policy for the termination of arms supplies to the various
revolutionary groups in Central America and Caribbean to
facilitate peaceful resolution of the regional
conflict."26. But Castro was not so enthusiastic to
cooperate with the Soviet Union's efforts for peaceful
negotiation and help in the solution of Central American

in Douglas W. Payne Cuba in the Nineties, (Washington

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crisis. In out-right opposition to Moscow's renunciation of regional violence, "the Cubans continued to render support for armed insurgency". It was the guiding philosophy of the Castro regime to oppose the United States in the liberation of Latin America from its hegemonic control. Thus, it was obvious to Cuba that to dance to the tune of Gorbachev's music would mean compromising a fundamental principle of the Cuban revolutionary ideal.

Hence Castro responded to the democratization wave enveloping the Communist world by proclaiming "socialism or death". He alleged that Gorbachev was leading the Soviet Union to a stage of development which would be lower than Cuba. Castro openly rejected Gorbachev's policy of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost'. Instead he preferred adhering to a policy of 'domestic rectification' with such featuring as increasing party control, centralization of the economy, and a return to moral rather than material incentives in production.

27. For example, during Gorbachev's 1989 visit, Cuba's Deputy Foreign Minister, Raul Roa stated that there would be "no change in Cuba's policy of support towards revolutionary movements and countries", Ibid, (see page 20).


In the wave of glasnost within the Soviet Union, aid to socialist Cuba cause under strict scrutiny. Public opinions started to criticize Castro's economic model, and scholars recommended new methods for improving economic performance. Many congress members argued that Soviet aid and resources could be utilized more efficiently in other areas besides supporting the Castro regime.

In 1989, under strong pressure from Congress, the Soviets began to reduce the oil supplies to Cuba which was for her a major source of hard currency saving. By next year, oil shipments were reduced by one fifth, contributing to a declining GDP and rationing of oil and other commodities. Additionally, in 1991, the USSR agreed to pay only 25 cents per pound for Cuban sugar whereas they had paid approximately 42 cents per pound from 1979 to 1987.

In spite of losing warmth between the countries their relation remained stable till the end of Gorbachev's tenure. During the days of August coup in 1991, which shook the world for 72 hours, the Cubans abstained from taking any position on it. Taking an ambivalent position had a definite underlying expectation on the part of Cuba.


31. Cross, n.8, p. 326.

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that the hardliner would be more sympathetic to her and would be willing to maintain her a privileged traditional client of the Soviet Union. One of Gorbachev’s last foreign policy initiatives, the proposal to remove the Soviet brigade that had been stationed in Cuba since 1963, demonstrated just how far Moscow had come in reversing its long standing commitment to Castro. The announcement of Soviet withdrawal from Cuban generated immediate outrage in Havana. Castro was especially angered because Gorbachev had not cared to consult him before taking such decision. The anxiety to improve her relations with the United States was increasingly becoming or predominant factor in Soviet foreign policy towards Central America, as elsewhere.

The Soviet action was demonstrative of its determination to push through a policy which was from all ideological predilections and historical compulsions, no matter how sharply Cuba reacted to that. This also marked a departure from the traditional Soviet policy towards Cuba and rest of the Central American countries.

The pragmatic changes in the Soviet approach was also visible in the policy toward Nicaragua and other neighbouring Central American countries, especially, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica. Though, during Brezhnev regime, the Soviet Union had played much
influential role in Nicaragua, it was not willing to take up the burden of supporting the latter's economy as in Cuba. They had, however, supplied plenty of military equipment along with other economic development aid to Managua. Initially, Moscow had started assuming responsibility for supplying Nicaragua's oil needs following cutbacks by Mexico and Venezuela in 1984\textsuperscript{32}. But, the Soviet began to openly criticize Nicaraguan economic performance in 1987, and putting "mismanagement" as a major cause for economic inefficiency\textsuperscript{33}. They decided to reduce oil supplies to Nicaragua in 1987 but agreed to restore the earlier level of supply only after the Sandinista were unable to secure alternative sources of supply.

Moreover, the Soviet willingness to have a better understanding with the West, had obliged her to cooperate with the US in support of the electoral process in Nicaragua in 1990. The Bush administration had made several statements implying that curtailment of Soviet assistance to Nicaragua would be linked to achieving cooperation with the United States\textsuperscript{34}.


\textsuperscript{34} Y. Bay, "Anger, Bluff and Cooperation", \textit{Time} (Magazine), June 4, 1990, p.18 [The US and Soviet leadership statements regarding steps taken to .... contd..\textellipsis]
The peaceful settlement of Nicaraguan crisis was a 'test case' for the US Administration. This was indicative of genuinely how eager the Soviet Union was to ensure a peaceful resolution of the conflict, as Gorbachev had advocated in his various speeches. The Soviet Union cooperated rather enthusiastically by calling for the suspension of arms shipments to Nicaragua. As a result Managua was left with no choice but to go far the battle of ballot. In the mean time, just before to the election, the Sandinistas requested to Soviet Union for emergency assistance which was required to increase the availability of consumer goods to attract the voters. The demand was turned down by the Moscow. Finally, the Soviets endorsed the electoral process in Nicaragua and the peaceful transfer of power from the Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega to his moderate opponent Violetta Chamorro.

The Sandinista were defeated in electoral battle which greatly relieved Moscow of the burden of supporting an ailing Marxist oriented client state that was becoming

achieve the Nicaraguan settlement are contained in this article. US Secretary of State, James Baker, and former Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, provided this information to TIME, and became Key participants involve in the negotiating process.

35. Yuri Pavlov, Soviet Foreign Ministry Chief on Latin America stated with regard to this Sandinista appeal for assistance: "We did not think it was a good investment".
increasingly unstable. Peaceful resolution of the Nicaraguan crisis provided an additional opportunity to Soviet Union to show to the West, particularly the US, that "New Thinking" constituted more than mere words.

By the end of 1990, the Soviet Union had almost abruptly stopped giving assistance to Nicaragua, a decision which probably might have been prompted by the results of recent general elections. The Soviet abandonment of this Marxist-oriented client state was aimed at gaining further relaxation of the ongoing tension to facilitate both the reduction in military expenditure and to receive more economic assistance from the West which was vital to carry out domestic reform. But it was not only Nicaragua towards which the old Soviet Union's policy had been reversed; in the case of other parts of the region the soviet approach was not quite encouraging.

The Soviet had provided a large amount of weapons to the Salvadoran rebels during the time of Brezhnev and his successors. But, in spite of that the government forces, backed by the United States, almost ruined the Salvadoran rebels. A CNN Radio news service stated that almost 1,35,000 civilians as well as the rebels were eliminated by the government forces\textsuperscript{36}. It happened during El Salvador's "Civil War" during in 1981-86. The Fighting

\textsuperscript{36.} CNN Radio New Services - 1994 (August).
continued till the middle of eighties. And for the first time in 1988, the Soviet arms shipments to the FMLN guerillas had been suspended. Perhaps it was tactical move by the Soviet side to facilitate the peace process in the country. Further, the Soviet Union had also called for a ceasefire in El Salvador and tried to promote reconciliation between the Alfredo Cristian's government and the FMLN forces. This new move towards the FMLN guerrillas, was again a compulsion on the part of the Soviet Union for improving its relations with the U.S. Furthermore, after general election, the Soviet leadership expressed a desire to establish diplomatic relations with the newly elected government of El Salvador. This was its last move which brought the Soviet Union's relations with the FMLN to an end.

Relations of the Soviet Union with other Central American countries, mainly Guatemala and Honduras also met same treatment. Though both Guatemalan Communist Party (PCG) and the Honduran Communist Party (PCH) were traditionally good friends of the CPSU, the latter did not help them to sustain their struggles in their respective


the PCH were illegal and had the minimum level of influence within masses. Politically, by no means they were helpful to Soviet Union's policy in Central America. When the 'New Thinking' was proclaimed in foreign policy, both the parties had reacted strongly and rejected Glasnost and Perestroika. Obviously, this and rejection was not only typical these two tiny Communist parties but it was a global phenomenon of those days. However, quite unmindful of these adverse reactions from fellow Communist parties and radical movements the Soviet continued to lay stronger emphasis on cultivating state to state relations, a strategy which filter well into the framework of the transformation then taking place in the USSR.

The only country where Communist party had a legal status and which was working according to the country's constitution was Costa Rica. Apart from this, the Soviet "New Thinking" had also highlighted a number of international issues. On such prominent issue which had attracted international attention was the debt problem of Latin America. The Soviet government frequently made appeals for the urgent solution of this problem. Though such Soviet moves a background was eventually created bringing both the Soviet Union and the Latin American countries together and offering support for the Contadora initiatives for peaceful resolution of the Central
American Crisis.

In general, Gorbachev’s "New Thinking" had brought an end to Cold War between two mutually hostile military powers. As a result, Latin America, especially Central America, was no longer serving as a battleground between them. Rather irrespective of the political character of each of these countries a new era of cooperation had begun in the region. The Soviet Union had departed from her traditional policy of aggressive globalism of the Brezhnev era in order to achieve peaceful resolution of conflict improvement of relations with the US. Moscow no longer wanted any irritants (regarding Latin America) in US-Soviet relations. Cuba, the only Marxist state in the hemisphere, had been left alone and the Soviet support to her had come a cropper. On the contrary, the Soviet Union now appeared more concerned with building diplomatic and economic ties, and developing profitable exchanges with other countries of Latin America aimed at solving her own pressing problems at home. The Central America was no longer a chessboard of great power rivalry.