CHAPTER - IX

CONCLUSIONS

The declaration in 1823 by US President Monroe that interference by any European power in the affairs of the newly emerging Latin American republics would be considered an unfriendly act toward the United States itself, established the right for the U.S. to "protect" Latin America. It was based on the assumption that the two regions of north and Latin America shared common interests which the northern power had the right to interpret. Thereafter, aggressive expansionism was added to the defensive paternalism of the Monroe Doctrine.

The United States emerged a supreme military, economic and technological power in the world after 1945. It had a nuclear monopoly and the only global navy. But, the Cuban Missile Crisis exposed that two super powers with awesome nuclear arsenals could not go to war with each other and hope to win. Now, the entire international system is a bipolar zero-sum-game between the Two. Both had entered into an era of duopolistic domination of the world.

In fact, international politics is essentially opportunistic. The Latin American affairs can not be an exception. The region which was initially considered outside the threater of cold war had started feeling heat of cold war after the Cuban tangle. Cuba was the first country in Latin America that raised the "triumphant banner of socialism".
The bitter experiences in Vietnam also convinced Americans not to allow any repetition of Cuba or Vietnam at least in their own sphere of influence.

The U.S. policy toward Latin America, as the presidential tenures of Allende in Chile; Campora and Peron in Argentina; Ortega in Nicaragua; and Duarte's in El Salvador revealed, had, at all times, been designed to protect the interests of U.S. monopoly capital. Instead of encouraging the growth of democracy and the spirit of constitutionalism in Latin America, it had provided substantial financial aid and arms to bolster the reactionary regimes offering favourable infra-structure for infiltration of U.S. capital. The U.S. policy had, at times, supported open dictatorships to capture power i.e. Pinochet regime in Chile, and utilised the CIA for this purpose to undermine anti-U.S. regimes in the area. Covert subversive activities of CIA in regional politics as experienced in Chile, one of the last remnants of democracy in Latin America, had been a bipartisan tradition in U.S. foreign policy.

The U.S. policy toward Latin America was one of the painful warfare against the restrictions on investments and nationalisation of foreign-owned enterprises imposed by Latin American governments. The U.S. policy-makers interpreted nationalisation as purely vindictive. Allende in Chile;
Campora and Peron regimes in Argentina, military junta in Peru, and Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, which had political clamour for economic independence against the depredations of U.S. monopoly capital, therefore, received severe U.S. hostility in their relations with the United states.

Chile became hostile to U.S. foreign policy interests. Washington, in immediate response, withheld substantial portions of its contributions to the Chilean economy, thereby precipitated a grave financial crisis in Chile. Allende visualised that Chile's humane and civilised traditions would guard against chilean chronic instability, unlike most of her neighbours, Argentina, for instance, where every military coup was the mere donation of one more bottle for the same old wine. But, at last, U.S. armed Chilean military led by General Pinochet butchered the country's democratic and constitutional political system in the midst of bloody battles in 1973. The actions of the CIA came at a time when the Allende government was facing its worst ever economic crisis unrest. During the three years of Allende regime, U.S. pressure on Chile was relentless.

The CIA-engineered Chilean coup removed the main threat to U.S. hegemony in the western hemisphere. The reestablishment of a dependent regime in Chile immediately received friendly postures of the U.S. The Pinochet regime adopted an open-door policy to foreign investment to stimulate foreign loans,
credits and investments to regain economic recovery.

The Latin American politics and its transitional colours, from the viewpoint of U.S. hegemonistic aspirations, could be epitomised in President Nixon's foreign policy statement to Congress on February 28, 1971, in which he complained, to quote, "There is a great ferment in Latin America and the Caribbean. Modernisation brings extensive, frequently unsettling change, accompanied by growing nationalism.... In virtually all cases, nationalism seeks greater independence from our predominant influence.... a populist brand of nationalism has taken anti-U.S. turn."¹

In addition, after the trauma of Vietnam, the humiliation of Iran and the Soviet intrusion into Afghanistan, the American self-image was consider at its nadir. In a country where conservatism runs strong and deep, a groundswell of reactive resentment began to emerge. The Carter presidency, despite his strenuous efforts to run a humane administration, only aggravated this resentment. Towards the end of his term, he however unsuccessfully tried to assume a more aggressive stance, i.e. the botched rescue attempt of U.S. embassy hostages in Teheran. In contrast, Mr. Reagan exploited his predecessor's ease and invoked prelapsarian American bliss which he promised to restore. Reagan, during his presidency,

refurbished American self-esteem to the point where it's more aggressive manifestations jeopardised global stability.

New cold war era has reached at the doorstep of Central American region. The region is in an irreversible process of change where the emergence of opposition movements are regarded by the U.S. as part and parcel of Soviet expansionism. The Administration believes that the exploitation of Central American unrest by the Soviet Union and Cuba threatens US security interests. It broods about the danger to Caribbean shipping lanes. The U.S. officials uses the domino argument that guerrilla victory in El Salvador would spread Soviet influence, through Central America. They believe that failure in Central America will damage U.S. "credibility" worldwide. The Reagan Administration's determination, therefore, to inflate stakes and invest a civil war with global significance had made El Salvador a "test" of U.S. resolve. The main goal of the large-scale U.S. intervention in El Salvador is to prevent the appearance of a "second Nicaragua". However, El Salvador is also viewed in Washington as a potential bridgehead for an attack on the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, which, the Reagan Administration believes, is exporting revolution to El Salvador.

In fact, the trend in Central American countries have been greatly aggravated by the continuing frustration of political aspirations. A lack of participation in decision
making by the majority of the population, the fact that all
didn't enjoy equal rights, and the absence of a fair
distribution of income and wealth lead to discontent, provoking,
impatient groups in society which attempt to seize power.
Existing socio-political concepts pave the way for a polarisa-
tion of the masses, and this leads in turn to the introduction
of new revolutionary ideas. Since the resulting fragmentation
of the social fabric suits the military regime, its hold on
power poses an increasing danger to the polity. The role
of military in politics and the degree of acceptance of civilian
rule by generals have been a subject of a vigorous debate
in Latin America.

The armed forces in El Salvador were constantly told by
country's civilian-military regime that the anti-government
movement was based on communist ideals and goals with the sole
aim of effecting a change in Salvador through violent means,
and that "subversion" had to be tackled at the military level.
Added to this interpretation of the issue was the constant
reminder from the United States that the Number One threat
to the Salvadoreans came from the "Communists" and that the
military had to be geared to deal with this firmly. The
Nicaraguan government assessed the situation differently,
the root of the revolutionary movement lay in the socio-
economic inequities of the system, compounded by the
disastrous policies of the earstwhile dictators. Consequently,
insurgency, it is argued, can be halted through genuine.
economic reforms and a willingness to talk to the rebels
to come to a political understanding.

The U.S. policy toward regional conflict has been determined by fear of the Cuban example rather than the realities of the conflicts themselves, which have their genesis in decades of economic inequality and political oppression. Thus, Washington has lost sight of the regional dynamics, focusing only on the East-West dimension of the local conflicts. The projection of the East-West conflicts pattern on the region by the U.S. administration, particularly the presentation of El Salvador as a textbook case of indirect armed aggression by the communist powers has jeopardised the common interests of Latin American nations.

Thus, the U.S. Administration views the events in Central America and the Caribbean as a Soviet Union intrigue through their Cuban proxies. The U.S., in response, is blundering deeper into an open-ended military commitment in the area. Nicaraguan harbour has been mined, reportedly by CIA agents. Formulation of a contingency plan to send its troops to Central America to dislodge the sandinista government and to defeat the Salradoraan leftist rebels also can not be ruled out.

The U.S. policy-makers seemed convinced that democratic form of government could not be essentially fruitful for capitalist development in Latin America. History had proved the inability of such governments to offer necessary state
security to foreign investment against radicatism and nationalism. Military dictators, for instance, in Argentina, had more successfully eliminated and suppressed guerrillas, trade unions, strikes, wages demands, and thus, presented themselves more suitable to create capitalist paradise. In Chile also when Frei, a strong US supported rightist, failed to win the 1970 presidential elections, the US government tempted to design a military coup. Interestingly even after the coup, U.S. policy-makers gradually believed that Frei could not favourably face and settled Chilean instability and prevent resurgence of leftism which was organised after the coup, therefore decided to continue the support to military regime in Chile.

In fact, the U.S. has always been ambitious for creation of the conditions for economic expansion through private accumulation in dependent capitalist societies. Economic expansion and accumulation demand two political grounds at the same time, (1) there must be a dominant political elite in the State, capable to utilise government machinery to control the working and peasant classes and thus, minimising their political influence, and (2) creating deliberately a political environment in which the free flow of foreign capital may be regarded logical and essential. In this respect, Allende in Chile, Campora and Peron in Argentina, and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua were an open threat to the U.S. capitalism, therefore, they were ranked as U.S. 'enemy' in the White House.
Indubitably, US domination had clearly resulted in a tremendous bloodletting for the Latin American nations. That's why, the region though rich in foodstuffs and valuable natural resources, has steadily been growing poorer and poorer under the impact of foreign exploitation.

At last, the United States, though always, adhered, in principle, to the policy of encouraging democracy and constitutional government on international platform and in theory, it had been said, that the U.S. policy is on the side of the angels, factually, foreign policy in practice, rarely corresponds fully to its broad statements of aims and principles. It is more appropriate to say that it is based on calculations and compulsions of the national interests in the specific circumstances in which the decisions are made and actions are taken. But at the same time the cold war myth that anti-Americanism is pro-communism must be resisted. The past Latin American affairs reveal that the consummate posture of the nationalist leaders in Latin America, like Allende and Peron and with some reservations Fidel Castro, and their endurance to the presence or entrance of the communism seemed more the outcome of their rejection of the U.S. hegemony rather than the acceptance of the Soviet system. The entire Latin America was and still is desperately groping in the dark for solutions to extremely critical
problems of development. Under developed and developing Latin American nations, therefore, should be nourished by pleasant musical modes and not by death knells.

The U.S. can win war in El Salvador but only at the price of devastating El Salvador, destroy a country in order to save it. The only way to eliminate the danger of a globalisation of the conflict is to propose a form of international politics based on dialogue, rapprochement and negotiations. The sovereignty and inalienable right of Latin American states to freely determine their own political, economic and social systems must be secured.