CHAPTER - IV

U.S. MILITARIZATION OF NICARAGUA
The year 1979 held much significance for the Central America and the Caribbean. In March, Maurice Bishop and New Jewel Movement toppled the Gairy Government in Grenada. In July, the Frente Sandinista de-Liberation National (FSLN) defeated the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua. Ever since the emergence of these revolutionary regimes, both the product of domestic turmoil, and the subsequent cordial political and economic relations between these two countries and Cuba, the Central America has witnessed a spectacle of frenzied preoccupation with security matters and arms development. If we take direct military intervention alone, the Caribbean and Central America have suffered the presence of the U.S. troops on their shores and soils more than any other region. The better-known and longer military occupations of this country (US) include: Panama, 1903-1914; the Dominican Republic, 1903-1905, 1916-1924, 1965-67; Cuba, 1906-1909, 1912; Honduras, 1907; Nicaragua, 1909, 1912-1925, 1926-33; Haiti, 1915-1934 and Grenada, 1983.

Since the Nicaraguan Revolution, Washington has treated the Central American waters as a U.S. territorial Sea and has mounted elaborate shows of sea, air and land forces. The U.S. military assistance to the region increased seven fold between 1979-83.1

The events of 1979 were followed by the U.S. military intervention in Surinam in early 1980 and the coup in Grenada in October, 1983. Today, as in the past, the boundaries of acceptable sovereign action by Caribbean and Central American states have been severely circumscribed by the U.S. economic and security interests. 2

In this Chapter, an endeavour has been made to explore:
(a) the reasons of direct and indirect U.S. military intervention in Central America (and for that matter in the whole Latin American and Caribbean region);
(b) The U.S. military aid to the Contras against Sandinista Government in Nicaragua since 1979-88; and
(c) the increasing militarization of the Central American region due to the repeated U.S. military interventions in the region.

The Reasons of Direct and Indirect U.S. Military Interventions in the Central American Region:

In order to identify the reasons of repeated U.S. interventions, a broad parameter is needed. In other words, if we look into the details, we find the whole Third World undergoing the same experience. In the Third World, authoritarian rule has become the norm; governments are

2. Ibid., pp.107-110.
headed by military men and/or military institutions. Militarization, whether in the Central America or in other parts of the Third World, refers to the tendency of a national military apparatus (armed forces, paramilitary organisations, intelligence and bureaucratic agencies) to assume increasing visibility, involvement, and control over the social lives and behaviour of the citizens. The process of militarization also encompasses military domination of national priorities and objectives at the expense of civilian institutions.³

This definition of militarization is consistent with the reality in the Central American and in other Third World countries where the role of military and paramilitary establishments in national and international affair is growing. The use of forces as an instrument of dominance and political power is increasing, and the influence of military in civilian affairs is escalating. Thus, the process of militarization is not a static but a dynamic condition involving the progressive expansion of the military sphere over the civilian sphere of the neocolonial states.

To comprehend militarization in the Third World, generally requires a conceptual framework that identifies the

combination of internal and external conditions that generates and promotes this phenomenon. 4

**Internal Factors:**

Among the internal factors that generate and foster militarization are as follows:

(a) Maldistribution of wealth: In a given society where a small segment of population owns a disproportionate share of the nation's wealth, that privileged minority is likely to depend on the use of military forces to deter any threat to their status quo.

(b) Racial oppression: Similarly, in any society where the people of one race are politically and/or economically subordinated by the people of another race, the dominant racial group tends to rely on

4. (i) Ibid., pp.201-15.


the use of military force to deter and crush rebellion on the part of the oppressed.

(c) The "national security" obsession: The "national security" obsession is the tendency to expand the concept of national security to include internal security. The national security obsession is oftenly expressed in developmental terms by the military regimes whereby it argues that it is the only institution capable of managing rapid economic growth.

(d) Perceived insecurity in the face of external threats: Countries surrounded by hostile neighbours, whether real or imagined, tend to develop a mentality that views any unusual external move (military exercises, troop movements, arms acquisition, etc.) as an indication of an imminent danger for which appropriate counter-measures must be sought.

(e) Maintenance of or increase in the military's share of national resources: Once a society has created a military apparatus in response to some real or imagined threat, this institution will often seek to maintain and even increase its share of the national resources.
External Factors:

Among the external factors that promote and sustain militarization in the Third World countries are:

(a) Major-Power Intervention: History is replete with examples of major powers that have sought to protect or expand their empires by dislodging leaders and replacing them with local figures (warlords), who agree to serve the imperial cause. This phenomenon was repeated time and again in the case of Nicaragua. Although most formal arrangements of this kind are no longer in vogue, in actuality, the practice still obtains in the efforts of the major powers to promote the creation of friendly military elites in the client states of the Third World. Such efforts have long conditioned the U.S. policy in the countries of the Third World and constitute the core of Ronald Reagan's new military policy in the Central American region. The U.S. support for friendly governments include arms deliveries, military training, and technical assistance. In some instances (Iran, 1953; Guatemala, 1954; Brazil and Dominican Republic, 1965; Chile, 1973; Grenada, 1983), the U.S. aid and troops have been used to help to engineer the collapse of the governments and their replacement by pro-U.S. governments.
(b) Major-power entanglement in indigenous conflicts: The major powers usually view conflict in the Third World, regardless of a conflict's source, as having an impact on their global strategic interests. Consequently the major powers often attempt to influence the outcome of such conflicts by providing their respective clients with arms, training, and advice. However, when such support is provided, other parties of the dispute will invariably seek assistance from a competing great power. This situation tends to intensify the local arms race and increase the risk of great power entanglement in local disputes.

(c) Cross-National Ideological Conflict: As history demonstrates, national leaders often feel constrained by ideological ties to provide military assistance to like-minded governments faced with aggression. The polarization of globe into pro and anti-communist alliance systems was the hallmark of this phenomenon. Such ideological affinities ensure that Third World countries often had ready access to modern military equipments and, as a consequence, the task of negotiating a peaceful settlement to local conflict was further complicated.
International Marketing of arms: Many developed countries export arms to the Third World countries to sustain their own domestic arms-industries. However, an increasing number of nations possess the capacity to produce weapons, and this has resulted in intense competition between the exporters of arms. This competition has therefore given rise to an increase in the warmaking capabilities of the Third World countries.

Collective Security Alliances: Collective security alliances in the Third World countries are often created in response to real or perceived dangers, but these pacts tend to evolve a life of their own after the original dangers have passed.

In the case study of the U.S. militarization of Nicaragua we find the contribution of each factor with varying degrees.

Militarization of Nicaragua - 1980-84:

Since 1979, the year Sandinista revolution broke out; the concern of the U.S. foreign policy planners has been growing on. In his two terms (1981-84) and (1984-88) of Presidentship, Ronald Reagan tried his best to overthrow Sandinista government. In his abortive attempt to overthrow Sandinista government, President Reagan made the peace of the Central American region - a talk of the olden days.
In the eyes of the Reagan administration, the revolutionary triumph in Nicaragua symbolized a loss for the United States and a gain for the Soviet Union, and Cuba. He also perceived this revolution as a threat to the region because this revolution could spread throughout Central America and jeopardize the security of the United States.

If we go into the details of the facts, we find that the blame labelled by the United States are nothing but excuses to intervene in Nicaragua. Moreover, the history of the U.S. intervention in Nicaragua is not a new one. It did not begin with the Sandinista revolution but can be traced back to the year 1856, when the country was invaded and finally captured, though for a short period, by a SanFrancisco based soldier, William Walker. Since then, Nicaragua suffered 14 U.S. armed interventions. With the triumph of Sandinista revolution in 19 July, 1979, the country began pursuing its own future independently. The U.S. administration responded with an unjust and aggressive policy. 5

The United States started making Honduras a base camp from where it planned to attack on Nicaragua. In the early 1980, Carter Administration requested Congress to approve $3.5 million in military sale credits for Honduras, and promised an additional $5.3 million for the following year.

At the same time a fleet of UH-1 Huey helicopters was provided on 'no cost' lease, along with it, 37 U.S. military advisers were sent, to instruct the Honduran army. This was the first step which was followed by the dramatic expansion of the American military presence. 6

In 1979, the ex-Somoza National Guardsmen emigrated from Nicaragua and established their camps in the neighbouring countries. They also established their training centres in the U.S. territory, principally in Florida and California. Between 1979 to 1981, individuals and armed groups emerged, seeking the military overthrow of the revolution but they were not the principal form of confrontation. In 1980 diverse groups of ex-Guardsmen started organising themselves in Guatemala, the United States, and principally in Honduras. This group was known as the Nicaraguan Democratic Revolutionary Association (ADREN). They lacked a definite politico-military strategy but were given financial help by Honduras for their counter revolutionary activities. 7


The first initiative for negotiation was taken by the United States in August, 1981. Thomas Enders, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, arrived in Nicaragua, bringing on Reagan's behalf, the threat of expanding the counter-revolution and the threat of the U.S. military power, if Nicaragua did not cut off relations with the Soviets and the Cubans, stop arming itself, and discontinue the alleged arms flow to El Salvador. Their terms of negotiation were not acceptable to Nicaragua, so the U.S. sanctioned $17 million to the Contras immediately. 8

The Reagan administration gave top priority to the task of overthrowing Sandinista government. President was hellbent to implement his 'rollback' doctrine. He could have attacked Nicaragua directly but the lessons of Vietnam war, and Bay of Pigs fiasco of 1961 were giving a sense of fear of losing another war. In his early days, President Reagan outrightly rejected modus vivendi with FSLN and decided to make Nicaragua a test case. The best method for Reagan was the Proxy war. In fact, it was not a new policy for the United States. In earlier cases also the CIA had selected a group to support their cause, as was done in the case of Arbenz

government of Guatemala in 1954.9

In October–November 1981, the counter revolution reached a new stage, which was manifested in a new form. The different contra groups united under one organisation, known as the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). They were financed and trained by the CIA. The CIA and the Honduran government started joint military exercise in the Honduran territory. Here again the U.S. diplomacy played a very prominent role for the involvement of Honduras in joint military exercise. Honduran government was not willing to make its relations with Nicaragua tense. It was because of this fact that, a senior, Honduran official denied the counter revolutionary attacks, rather he made the Reagan administration responsible for harassing Nicaraguans.10

From 7 to 9 October, 1981, there was a great show of joint military exercise on the Atlantic coast. On 2 December, an attempt to blow up an Aeromica airliner in Mexico was made which resulted in injuries to three crew members.11


The year 1981 was a year of propaganda against the Sandinista government and blames of being a puppet of Soviet Union and Cuba. The U.S. also organised 10 to 20 small organisations under one head (FDN) and manipulated some counter-revolutionary activities which did not bear fruits. On the diplomatic level the U.S. delegations were sent to various countries of Europe and Latin America to accuse the Nicaraguans of supplying arms to the insurgents in El Salvador. The United States was trying to isolate the Sandinista regime, especially from these governments, which in one way or other, had declared solidarity with it. At the same time, the U.S. Department of State published a White Paper on Nicaragua with the intention of demonstrating that the revolutionary regime in Nicaragua was an intermediary for the supply of the Soviet and Cuban arms to the Salvadoran revolutionary groups.12

The campaign did not bear the fruits that the United States had expected to harvest. Although, in some way, it damaged the Nicaraguan image worldwide. In the end, Nicaragua was not isolated and several governments along with the mass media (Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal) questioned the evidence presented against the Sandinista's. In fact the evidences were neither sound nor conclusive.13

12. Harris and Vilas, n. 6, pp. 204-205.
13. Ibid., p. 205.
Piero Gleijeses, an Italian Political Scientist, and Former professor at the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department remarked on the paper in this way:

"This report looked impressive at first, but soon careful observers began to find serious mistakes and incoherences. In its eagerness to provide devastating evidence, the administration manipulated and distorted facts, arriving at conclusions which were unjustified and, at times, contrary to the supporting documents, suddenly placed on the defensive by unexpected inquiries. The answers given by the State Department were clumsy and not very persuasive. In the face of growing evidence to the contrary, the State Department refused to acknowledge serious errors in the presentation of the White Paper and did not offer any explanation for the report's inconsistencies, save for stating that its conclusions were based on a series of other documents which would be published later".14

The Reagan administration was trying to demonstrate that the Sandinistas had become a destabilizing factor and a regional threat because the exportation of revolution is a basic postulate of their foreign policy. To pressurize the

14. (i) Nicaragua, n.11, p.11.
Sandinista governments many attacks were made in the year 1982.

Augusto Cesar Sandino airport in Managua was attacked on 22 February, 1982 which caused four deaths and three injuries. Rio Negro Bridge was damaged badly on 14 March, 1982. An electrical plant, in the department of Chinandega was blown up on 17 April, 1982. At the end of 1982, "Plan C" was conspired. Upto 3000 counter-revolutionaries participated in this plan, which lasted until 1983. It affected the Department of Nueva Segovia, Department Jinotego and Department of Matagalpa. The task forces carried out military activity in the interior of the country but their plan was foiled. 15

The Sandinista revolution can not be called an imported revolution. Because, during the insurrection against Somoza and after the overthrow of his dictatorship, the Sandinista received support from a wide assortment of foreign governments and international organisations of varying political and ideological hues. In contrast to other revolutions, this revolution was not isolated, rather it was supported internationally. The Sandinistas succeeded in varying degrees, in obtaining the support of the governments of Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Panama, Equador, Cuba and Peru, Colombia, Bolivia and Brazil, as well as the governments

of several western European nations. These factors made the US blames baseless.

Still the United States continued financial and military support to the Contras and increased the funds of CIA which was engaged in subversive activities in Nicaragua. Early months of 1983 witnessed increase in the financial support to the Contras, which resulted in the terrorist activities. In the month of May, 1983, a good number of airplane, privately owned trucks and fishing boats were destroyed. In June, 1983, FDN Commandos destroyed the Ministry of Construction Plant (MICONS) at La Dalia. In July FDN increased its subversive activities. It destroyed a bridge at San Fabian, two gas line storage tanks, burned a sawmill and so many other things. Santa Elena bridge, located in the valley of Pantaasma was destroyed by the FDN counter-revolutionaries in the month of August. In the month of September major plants of Nicaragua became the target of CIA. The CIA destroyed signal buoys at Puerto Sandino, one alcohol processing plant, and Augusto Cesar Sandino International Airport was bombed. At the end of September, counter-revolutionary elements from Honduran territory attacked the Nicaraguan customs installations at El Espino and destroyed them totally.16

Several fuel storage tanks were destroyed by the counter-revolutionaries in the month of October. It caused

enormous economic losses to Nicaragua. Pipelines, fuel unloading system, etc. were also destroyed. In addition, a counter-revolutionary group from Honduran territory invaded the village of Pantasma and burnt down the MICONS plant, local health centre, thus killing 29 people.17

Coast Guards of the Honduran Army attacked boats of the Sandinista Navy in the Gulf of Fonseca in the month of November. Concurrently, counter-revolutionary Piranha boats attacked other units at Point Consiguina. Both actions occurred in Nicaraguan territorial waters.

In December 1983, Honduran Coast Guards attacked Nicaraguan fishing boats at Cape Gracias; FDN Counter-revolutionary elements destroyed granaries at Ciudad-Antigua; Piranha boats supported by Honduran Planes attacked units of the Sandinista Navy at Puerto Potosi. Similar actions were carried out in the Gulf of Fonseca, in Nicaragua waters.18

From 1982 onward, the U.S. military presence through air attacks has been felt in Nicaragua. Military presence increased in magnitude between July and September 1983, when Reagan decided to respond to the peace proposal presented by the Nicaraguan government on 19 July, 1983. The United States started military maneuvering within the territorial waters of Nicaragua. Three Navy groups, with numerous warships and

17. Ibid., p. 17-19.
16,484 Marines participated in this maneuvering. Counter-revolutionaries tried to carry out attacks on Nicaragua under 'Plan C' which was later modified to include 'New Task Force' in it. After its frustrating attempts the plan was changed and a new plan, "Plan Siembea" ("Seeding Plan") was put into action. This plan involved the introduction of forces with air support deep into the country in several areas. A new plan, "Big Pine II" was carried out in the month of November which coincided with the U.S. invasion of Grenada. This plan put the country into a real great danger because every possibility of the U.S. direct intervention was shocking the innocent people of Nicaragua.19

The year 1984 was a tough year for Nicaragua. In the beginning of the year, FDN counter-revolutionary forces launched a new attack with forces numbering 6,000 in all the operational areas of regional command. Total Nicaraguan territory was divided into five parts and each area was given to a separate group of counter-revolutionaries. 'Regional Command Nicaraqo' was led by an ex-general, Benito Bravo with its principal base in Honduran territory. Ex-General, Manuel Rugama with its base in Honduras commanded 'Regional Command Segova', 'Regional Command Diriangen' which was led by ex-General, Luis Moreno had its base in Honduras. Encarnacion Valdivia whose main operations were carried out from Honduras, led 'Regional Command Rafael Herrera'. And fifth

'Regional Command Jorge Solazar' region was commanded by ex-General, Juan Raman Rivas. 20

Thus the whole Nicaragua was divided into different regions and these regions were commanded by separate generals. All the regions were attacked simultaneously. But their attempts were thwarted by the alert Nicaraguan forces. CIA provided additional funds to the FDN in 1984. After seeing no concrete results, CIA masterminded "Operation Puento" (Operation Bridge). Under this operation, the Counter-revolutionary forces were infiltrated into the Department of Matagalpa. The main goal of the plan was to aid counter revolutionary detachments that tried to reach the department of Boaco and Chontales in order to join the ARDE forces infiltrating into the south from Costa-Rica.

In the middle of July, infiltration into Nicaraguan territory by major FDN groups from the regional Commands of Segoria and Diriangen began. The major objective of these operations was to reactivate the operational areas and to launch a new offensive.

Meanwhile, ARDE had kept its main groups operating inside the country during April and May. The goal was to carry out a propagandistic action and distract attention from the victories of the Sandinista forces, who were foiling the actions of the counter-revolutionaries. 21


Despite the fact that Reagan's re-election campaign had made his foreign policy even more of a public issue because of criticism by the opposition, he did not decrease his aggressive actions against Nicaragua in 1984. Thrice in 1984, the House of Representatives voted against the request made by the President to give more financial support to the counter revolutionary forces. At this critical moment President Reagan raised $17 million from "private organisations", for the aid to the Contras.\footnote{22 Dixon, n.10, pp.40-49.}

Reagan's act of Contra aid was looked upon with anguish in the international arena. The U.S. bases in Honduras were also severely criticised. By the end of February 1984, there were a total of nine U.S. military air bases in Honduras. The U.S. Senator, James Sasser, a member of the Senate Subcommittee on Military Construction, was reported to have commented that Honduras was fast becoming the country with the most landing strips per capita in the world. Senator Sasser travelled to Honduras in February 1984 and reported to the Senate that unauthorised and excessive military construction was being carried out in Honduras by the United States. Honduran armed forces have benefited from the most rapid and comprehensive U.S. military assistance effort in the history of Latin America. Annual U.S. aid to Honduras increased from $3.5 million in 1980 to $96 million in 1984.
### Table - I

**OFFICIALLY AUTHORIZED UNITED STATES AID**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month-Year</th>
<th>US $ Millions</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov.1981</td>
<td>19.95</td>
<td>Approved by the National Security Council for Covert Operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.1982</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.1983</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Approved by the U.S. Congress for &quot;Direct or Indirect Support for Military actions within Nicaragua&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1985</td>
<td>27 or 32</td>
<td>The House of Representatives and Senate approved different &quot;Humanitarian&quot; aid packages for the Contras.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Statistical Presentation of the Data, Table - 2

OFFICIALLY AUTHORISED U.S. AID TO THE CONTRAS (in million dollars)

Source: The data is based upon the facts collected from: Nicaragua, The Counter revolution: Development and Consequences (Managua: Centre for International Communication, p. 30.)

The year 1984 witnessed a year of elections. In November, 1984, Nicaragua held first free general elections after the revolution in 1979. Seven political parties participated in the election and finally the FSLN party got massive majority in the national Assembly composed of 96 members.23

In the beginning of the year 1985, President Reagan took oath for the second time. This time President Reagan adopted harder stand towards Nicaragua. The U.S. victory in Grenada restored for the country a hegemonistic image which had been shattered in the Vietnam war. However, with the lessons of Vietnam, supposedly well learned, the United States followed "Flexible Response" military strategy.24

During his earlier term, President Reagan relied upon the lines suggested by the 'Santa Fe Document' report which was released in 1980, by the Council for Inter American Security. This report became the blue print for White House policy on Latin America. The report asserted that "Detente is dead". It also criticised the foreign policy of Carter administration.25


25. Ibid., p.2.
Having made Central America a focus of his campaign, Reagan took office in 1981 with a clear political commitment to reverse leftist gains in Central America. Since then, U.S. foreign policy has not tolerated popular movements or regimes it considered "hostile". The U.S. foreign policy's return to a stance of military intervention in the region quickly manifested itself with an unprecedented increase in land and naval manoeuvres in Central America and the Caribbean.  

Combining the policy of "Big Stick" and the "Dollar Diplomacy" the U.S. administration launched a military, political and propaganda offensive on the isthmus. The Washington post described the aims of Reagan policy in these words: "The administration's eyes glitter with political ambition, liquidation of the left wing regime in Central America would provide Reagan with a trump card against international communism".  

During his second term, President Reagan suffered from severe criticism from the Democratic as well as his Republican party. By now, public opinion had become very sceptical towards Reagan's policy towards Central America.  

As stated earlier, the U.S. foreign policy underwent a great change after the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. It led to a reformulation of its strategy of direct military

intervention. In the view of the Pentagon, one of the problems in Vietnam was the "gradualism" of American escalation. Thus a new strategic concept of a "Rapid Deployment of Force" was adopted which consisted of a rapid decision to employ force, followed by a rapid deployment of sufficient forces to carry out specific objectives within geographical and temporal limitations - a strategy first applied in the case of Grenada. 29

This new strategy of American policy required an instantaneous and overwhelming action, capable of defeating the 'enemy' in a short period of time. With this objective in mind, the Pentagon prepared itself to deploy 20,000 combat troops in any part of the world and one lakh more within a period of 7 to 10 days. 30

The strategy of 'Flexible Response' adopted by the Reagan administration comprised of three major levels: (1) Economic aid to allied governments, military aid to national or regional armed forces, and covert actions; (ii) Commitment of U.S. conventional forces; and (iii) Thermonuclear war. 31

Following this policy the Reagan administration sanctioned $ 39 million to Contras in June 1985. 32 In the U.S. Congress President Reagan's policy towards Central America was severely criticised. But the fact remains here

30. Ibid., p. 628.
31. Ibid., 630.
32. Keesings Contemporary Archives (Bristol), p. 33717.
that besides these official figures, the American secret services alone spent about $500 million on subversive activities against Nicaragua in 1982-85. During that period 12,000 Nicaraguans, mostly civilians, fell victims to the U.S. policy of state-sponsored terrorism. 33

In order to get full support of his party as well as from the opposition, President Reagan appointed Kissinger Commission on Central American problem. This report framed the regional problem in the context of East-West vision, and tried to establish the existence of a threat to the U.S. national security and proposed for an increase in military aid to the Contras.

William Leo Grande commented on this report: "It would serve as sugarcoating to Congress to swallow the bitter pill of deeper U.S. involvement". 34 The report did not provide an alternative to the U.S. policy towards Central America, rather it inserted itself neatly within this framework of U.S. military strategy. It is within this context that the commission's proposals for El Salvador and Nicaragua, the most critical countries, must be understood. The report implicitly proposed an increase in destabilizing activities

33. V. Travkin, "USA Escalates Interference in Central America", International Affairs (Moscow), vol. 4, April 1986, pp. 103-11.

against the Sandinista Government and further the U.S. military intervention.35

Nicaraguan government tried its best to solve the problem through negotiations. But serious negotiations were not even considered by the United States, except on a rhetorical level, as a means of achieving the U.S. policy objectives. Indeed the U.S. government played an obstructionist role in the Contadora process - an effort begun in 1983 by the governments of Mexico, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela to negotiate a solution to the conflicts in Central America. The issue was brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 9 April, 1984 by Nicaragua. On 27 June, 1986, the ICJ emitted its final verdict and condemned the U.S. government.36 The year 1986 was an year of success for Reagan’s diplomacy. Kissinger’s report had convinced the Congress of the vulnerability of the Nicaraguan problem. The Reagan administration got success in getting $100 million for aid to Contras. The request was finally approved by the Senate Appropriation Committee.37 Along with this the U.S. administration handed over to CIA, the day-to-day responsibility for managing military operations against Nicaragua.38

In late 1986, the situation in Nicaragua was extremely tense. Washington had blocked all roads to a settlement. It frustrated the signing of the peace treaty worked out by the Contadora Group and refused to comply with the decisions of the ICJ, which had called for an end to the U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. On the contrary, the U.S. House of Representatives endorsed a 100-million-dollar allocation for continuing aggression against Nicaragua.

The Reagan administration sought this allocation from the Congress not for financial considerations, but for the endorsement of his interventionist policy in Central America. He was not disturbed by the fact that the endorsement of the 100-million-dollar aid package to the Contras was in violation of the rules of international law, the Charter of the Organisation of the American States (OAS), and the Inter American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the Rio Pact), which the United States signed in 1947. Commenting on the U.S. position in Nicaragua, the Uruguayan newspaper, "Hora" wrote that the 100-million-dollar for the Contras was only the tip of the iceberg. To continue their terrorist acts inside Nicaragua they can receive far greater sums through secret CIA channels. Thus the exact sum to be allocated by the Congress is not the heart of the matter. The problem is much more serious. 39

Assessing the escalation of the aggression against Nicaragua, the aforementioned Uruguayan 'Hora' wrote that Washington's 'Big Stick' policy has altered in form but

39. Leskin, n.20, pp.43-44.
nevertheless remains imperialistic in nature. If anything, it has become even more frenzied.

In view of this, the paper called on its readers to step up their actions in support of Nicaragua. "Nicaragua's anguish", it wrote, "should become our anguish, for the destiny of all the people of Latin America is at stake. The United States, acting according to the "law of the Jungle", has become an international Criminal, threatening literally everyone. 40

On 12 November, 1986, President Reagan allowed the covert arms sale to Iran. Money earned from the sale was given to Contras through Israel which became open by the investigation of Tower Commission at the end of May, 1987. The Iran-Contra scandal has provided evidence of multimillion-dollar fund diversions. 41

The Iran-Contra Affair was not an aberration in the U.S. foreign policy rather a manifestation of a far deeper problem facing the U.S. foreign policy --- the decline of the U.S. global hegemony. Like the secret bombing of Cambodia and the Watergate scandal, the Iran-Contra affair was the response of the security elites to opposition generated by the unacceptable domestic costs of U.S. policies abroad. The

40. Ibid., p.44.
41. Kessings Contemporary Archives (Bristol), p.35182.
opposition is seen as a threat to the security by elites whose global vision seems to acquire such strategies. 42

A nation cannot tolerate the dictates of another nation for long. The similar case seems to be happening in Honduras. There were ten air bases of Pentagon in Honduras. The bases could be quickly occupied by thousands of soldiers for manoeuvres or serve as a springboard for direct attacks on Nicaragua.

Moreover there were 18,000 men in Honduras along the border with Nicaragua. The Tegucigalpa government is manipulated both with 'carrot and big stick'.

A telling example of this came in 1986 when the U.S. spokesman said that Nicaraguan troops had entered Honduras to attack a Contra base. At first the Honduran government denied the report, but Washington dispatched heliborne troops to the area in question. A few hours later President Jose Azcone Hoyo was forced to accept the U.S. version or else witness the downfall of his fictitious regime. 43

Also, in 1986 after expressing support, for the Contadora groups’ proposals for regional peace, Azcona was pressurised by the United States to raise objections along


with El Salvador and therefore, an agreement could not be signed. 44

In spite of all these, the U.S. State Department sanctioned $10 million for the Contras in the month of January, 1987. 50,000 U.S. servicemen were deputed along the Nicaraguan border and new proposal of $270 million dollars to aid Contras was proposed by President Ronald Reagan. 45

In the year 1988, 47 million dollars were officially given to the Contras on 31 March, 1988. 46

The state of emergency in Nicaragua was lifted on 19 January, 1988. The same year Costa Rican President got success in getting the peace proposal signed. The Agreement was finally signed by all the five Central American countries on 5, 6, and 7 August 1987. 47 President's Reagan's image was shattered by the Tower Commission report on Iran-Contra scandal.

In January 1989, 45 million dollars were sanctioned to the Contras. 48 Other related question i.e. why FSLN President Deniel Ortego could not win the 1990's elections? How far Bush's policy is different from that of Ronald Reagan? etc.

47. Keesings Contemporary Archives (Bristol), 1988, p.35951
48. Keesings Contemporary Archives (Bristol), 1988, p.35894
It becomes pertinent here to analyse briefly the effect of the U.S. policy on all Central American countries.

In recent years the world has watched with growing concern the unprecedented militarization of Central America. All Central American countries are involved in a potentially explosive arms race.

The great power to the north, the United States, had accused Nicaragua, Cuba and Soviet Union of the responsibility for the militarization of the region. The U.S. charged that these three countries had armed subversive movements in the other countries and that the Nicaragua had a military force that was much larger than it needed to defend itself. This in turn, the U.S. claims, had forced the other Central American countries to arm themselves.

The objective facts about the region's armed forces, however present a different picture. Nicaragua's military resources were not structured as an offensive fighting force capable of threatening its neighbours. Secondly, it is the United States who has been providing military help to the Central American countries which in turn has led to the increasing militarization of the region. (See Table-Ⅳ)
Statistical Presentation of the Data, Table - 3

U.S. AID TO THE CONTRAS (in million Dollars)

Source: The data is based upon the facts collected from:
and New York Times.
<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El-Salvador</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>196.5</td>
<td>128.2</td>
<td>132.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The United States has not only armed the counter revolutionaries, but has also dramatically increased and from $10 million in 1980 to $283.2 million in 1984, an increase of more than 2800 per cent. In the beginning of the 1989 this increase was recorded $440 million. 49

Thus we see that the U.S. not only created problem to the Sandinista government of Nicaragua but also to other Central American countries.

49. Keesings Contemporary Archives (Bristol), 1989, p.36521.