

The Impact of President Reagan's Foreign Policy Efforts in Chile and
Nicaragua

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores whether President Ronald Reagan's policies on Chile and Nicaragua met his intended goals of promoting the spread of liberal democracy and countering Soviet influence in the region. Using a case studies approach to analyze Reagan's foreign policies in Chile and Nicaragua, the thesis seeks to inform conclusions about his success and failure in U.S. foreign policy in Latin America. The study examined whether Reagan achieved success in these two countries by using the key tenets of the Reagan Doctrine, the principal expression of the campaign to gain public support for the strengthening of governments and anti-government forces on the side of free democratic capitalism and the weakening of governments and anti-government forces on the side of Marxist-Leninism. The tenets of the Reagan Doctrine include: regimes that were not aligned with communism; national economies that did not rely upon the Soviet Union and that had open trade with the U.S. and stronger private sectors; and regimes that cooperated with the U.S. government. This thesis is both relevant and timely as U.S. presidents continue to involve themselves in the affairs of other nations. It seeks to contribute to the ongoing debate on the necessity and practicality of influencing affairs in countries around the world so that they will align themselves politically and ideologically with the United States and to provide lessons for future U.S. presidents as they create their own foreign policy agendas.

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Chapter 1

President Reagan's Efforts in Chile and Nicaragua

If Central America were to fall, what would the consequences be for our position in Asia and Europe, and for our alliances such as NATO?--Ronald Reagan

When Ronald Reagan entered the Oval Office in January 1981, he feared that the Soviet Union would extend itself far beyond the “natural” limits of its own apparent interests and influence. President Reagan sought to establish the United States as the leader of the free world coalition, and his strategy included diplomatic, political, economic, and informational components built on a foundation of strength to convince the Soviet Union it should not engage in international expansionary moves.¹ Reagan’s strategy—labeled the Reagan Doctrine—was the principal expression of the campaign to gain public support for the strengthening of governments and anti-government forces on the side of free democratic capitalism and the weakening of governments and anti-government forces on the side of Marxist-Leninism. To prevent the spread of communism and promote democracy in the Third World, the Reagan administration provided military equipment to *mujahideen* fighters in Afghanistan, aided freedom fighters in southern Africa, and supported pro-Chinese rebels in Cambodia. But the primary Third World arena for the implementation of the Reagan Doctrine was Latin America which quickly became one of Reagan’s first tests when he became president as events there had engaged him even before he took office.²

Many officials in the Reagan administration, including Reagan himself, lacked expertise in Latin America. But for Reagan, Latin America was the focal point of his foreign policy efforts and the place where Washington would draw the line against the spread of communism in the Third World and where the post-Vietnam decline of U.S. power would be reversed.³ Reagan

said that the U.S. had already lost Cuba to communism, and he was determined not to lose Central America or more of the Caribbean space to the Communists. But he had to tread carefully. One of the first places Reagan turned his attention to was Chile—a country largely ignored by the Carter administration, in a region that Reagan, by his second term, viewed as a priority. This was followed shortly thereafter by Nicaragua where U.S. security concerns quickly overwhelmed other policy consideration in the region.

This thesis will explore whether Reagan's policies in Chile and Nicaragua met his intended goals of promoting the spread of liberal democracy and countering Soviet influence in the region. Using a case studies approach to analyze Reagan's foreign policies in Chile and Nicaragua, the study will examine success from Reagan's perspective to determine whether or not his efforts in these two countries achieved the degree of success that he was hoping for. The findings contribute to current scholarly research discussing Reagan's efforts in Chile and Nicaragua, and it provides lessons for future U.S. presidents as they create their own policies. This chapter outlines the reasons behind Reagan's interest in Chile and Nicaragua and provides information on the Reagan Doctrine. This chapter provides context for readers by discussing Reagan's view of success in Chile and Nicaragua and his strategy in both countries.

Setting the Scene: Conditions in Chile before Reagan Took Office

By the time Reagan took office in early 1981, Chile was dominated by a military junta headed by General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, who assumed power after a brutal military coup ousted the Popular Unity coalition government of socialist president Salvador Allende in September 1973. Allende was elected in a 1970 election in which he received 36 percent of the vote, but the U.S. government, with the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) involvement, had

sought his defeat. U.S. Ambassador to Chile (1971-73) Nathaniel Davis reported, “Chile voted calmly to have a Marxist-Leninist state, the first nation in the world to make this choice freely and knowingly.” The Allende government, however, never attained majority support in the Chilean Congress and quickly proved inept and unable to retain the Chilean people’s support. During the 1973 coup, Allende was killed and Pinochet took over, bringing dictatorship and repression to the political scene.⁴

Until the 1973 coup, Chile was one of Latin America’s most durable democracies, consistently ranked in the top three by a panel of U.S. political scientists. Chile’s stable democracy had followed institutionalized constitutional procedures, upheld the rule of law, promoted civil liberties, tolerated political dissent and held regular elections. Under Pinochet’s harsh authoritarian rule, Chileans lived in an atmosphere of fear based on repression of political opposition, press censorship, summary executions, imprisonment, torture, disappearances, and exile. While Pinochet was in power, nearly 3,000 opponents of the dictatorship were killed and another 1,000 disappeared in the military’s effort to save Chile from communism.⁵

Between 1973 and 1980, the Pinochet promulgated a number of emergency decrees and introduced a number of inconsistent institutional changes throughout the Chilean polity. Pinochet abolished all political parties in March 1977 and in July announced the Chacarilla Plan, which provided a lukewarm framework for gradual transition from military junta rule to a system of authoritarian democracy. The Plan outlined three stages of democratization. During the first stage, which was to end by December 1980, power was to be held entirely by the armed forces with civilian collaboration. The second stage was to last for five years and power would be shared by the armed forces and the civilians and Pinochet would continue as President with the creation of a civilian legislature that would be selected by the military junta. The final stage

would begin by 31 December and at that time the legislative body would elect a new President and power would be exercised directly and predominantly by civilians.⁶ However, the promise of a political opening likely was part of Pinochet's strategy to alleviate pressure from U.S. President Jimmy Carter who placed values like democracy and human rights high on the U.S. foreign policy agenda

In the first week of 1978 Chileans were asked to vote yes or no on a resolution to support Pinochet—the government claimed that more than 75 percent of the electorate said yes; in this mandate Pinochet announced that there would be no further elections for a decade. The Chilean government also implemented a program to modernize Chile's economy and legal system to include seven modernizations focused upon a new labor code; educational, welfare, and health policy reforms; and a restructuring of the system of judicial administration. Pinochet's economic policies were driven by young technocrats and foreign economic advisers called the "Chicago Boys" (many had studied economics at the University of Chicago under the tutelage of Milton Friedman and Arnold Harberger) who pushed free-market economic policies, foreign investment and loans, and denationalization of major sectors of the economy, a reversal of President Allende's social economic solutions to Chile's development problems.⁷ These policies worked and for years Pinochet kept himself entrenched in office.

In September 1980, Pinochet staged a national plebiscite for approval of a new Constitution and a new political system that would include providing him a 16-year term beginning in 1981. Some of his advisers convinced him that he should split the term into two eight-year terms because such a lengthy term would not fit the Chilean people's concept of legality. Pinochet grudgingly accepted the advice and the provisions were included.⁸ According to Pinochet, the new constitution, which was approved by more than two-thirds of the electorate,

would protect Chileans from the threat of internal and international Marxism and eliminate the principal cause of Chile's political crisis of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Constitution institutionalized the concepts of authoritarian democracy, reaffirmed traditional Hispanic values and practices, and emphasized the role of the patriarchal family as the basic political unit. It also greatly expanded the authority of the President and the executive branch and weakened the legislature. The new Constitution made the armed forces the dominant political force in the new political system, prohibited class conflict or violence, proscribed all political party participation by labor leaders, and specified any future congress member or senator who attempted to influence labor negotiations or the administrative proceedings of any government agency could be removed from office.⁹

Setting the Scene: Conditions in Nicaragua before Reagan Took Office

The Soviet offensive in the Third World reaped its most prominent successes in the 1970s, a period when any attempt by the U.S. at an effective counter effort was stifled by the war in Vietnam and its subsequent consequences for the political climate within the U.S. The lack of U.S. response eased the Soviet-supported takeovers in places such as Angola, Mozambique, and Nicaragua, and had the effect of conferring on the regimes installed in those countries an instant legitimacy, and permitted them to draw on broad sources of international support.¹⁰

In 1979, the focus of Central American attention shifted to Nicaragua, where a Marxist-led coalition named for Nicaraguan revolutionary hero, Augusto Sandino, overthrew the despised dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. The revolution was comprised of a broad opposition coalition composed of many social and political elements: business, the Catholic Church, parties seeking democracy, and the Sandinistas Liberation Front (FSLN). The Sandinista revolution was an

event that excited people throughout the world. While the United States had done much to keep Somoza in power, the Carter administration in the late 1970s denounced the “inhumane conduct” of the Nicaraguan dictator’s regime, blocked loans to his bankrupt government, and in June 1979 introduced a resolution in the Organization of the American States calling for his “immediate and definitive replacement.” When the Sandinista government took over, it promised free elections, a free press, free enterprise, and an independent judiciary. President Carter requested \$75 million in aid for the new revolutionary government, and an additional \$105 million was loaned or donated over its first year and half as a result of emergency appropriations legislation he signed. This was the highest per capita level of U.S. assistance going to any country at that time. Republicans grumbled that the Carter administration was helping Cuba and the Soviet Union to establish a beachhead on the American mainland, but the issue commanded little attention from the American people who were preoccupied with domestic economic issues and the plight of the American hostages in Iran.¹¹

Within weeks of Somoza’s overthrow, however, the Sandinistas had begun replacing one dictatorship with another; they seized television and radio stations and began censoring newspapers and crushing democratic sentiment they encountered as violently and ruthlessly as Somoza had ever done. It became apparent before the end of the Carter administration that the revolution had been taken over by hard-line Communists among the Sandinistas who were intent on creating a Cuban-Soviet-style state. They quickly allied themselves with Castro, Moscow, and the Eastern bloc, and on 10 January 1981 the Sandinista-supported Marxist guerillas launched an offensive against the pro-American government in El Salvador.¹² In his last week in office Carter suspended U.S. economic aid to Nicaragua and sent \$10 million in arms and

equipment, as well as 19 U.S. military advisers to El Salvador. When President Reagan took office, he reviewed this decision, and on 1 April 1981, confirmed it.¹³

After the Sandinista triumph in Nicaragua, Cuba took effective control of Nicaragua's military and security forces. The Nicaraguan military buildup and the consolidation of Sandinista control over that society was aimed at creating an extension of Cuba's military shield in support of guerilla struggles in neighboring countries. According to Ashley Tellis, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who specializes in international security and defense, U.S. officials became concerned that the Soviet presence in Cuba and Nicaragua signaled an intent to detach the peninsular European Rimland from the United States in the hopes of establishing itself as a vital power broker whose acquiescence would be necessary to create a durable peace in America's backyard.¹⁴

Description and Distinguishing Features of the Reagan Doctrine

The Reagan administration assumed that there was no higher calling than to rid the world of Marxist-Leninist regimes and others it deemed illegitimate—this was the essence of the Reagan Doctrine and its mission to defend freedom and democracy. Reagan, however, did not call what he was doing the Reagan Doctrine and unlike other presidential doctrines, the Reagan Doctrine is not the result of a single definitive statement contained in a presidential speech. The phrase was coined by columnist Charles Krauthammer in an essay in the 1 April 1985 issue of *Time* magazine. Krauthammer labeled the President's policies the Reagan Doctrine because the term neatly encompassed the administration's various efforts to support insurgent groups that were fighting communist governments. He took as his text a passage in the President's State of the Union address in February 1985 in which Reagan declared, "We must not break faith with

those who are risking their lives on every continent from Afghanistan to Nicaragua to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights that have been ours since birth.”¹⁵ Krauthammer was struck by this passage and seized on the State of the Union speech as the foundation for the Reagan Doctrine.

Although Krauthammer’s term caught on with the media, it was not used by members of Reagan’s staff. Many Reagan advisers nonetheless believed that Reagan liked the term. National Security Assistant (1983-85) Robert McFarlane observed that none of the more than 200 National Security Decision Directives signed by Reagan referred to the Reagan Doctrine; nor did the administration develop a comprehensive plan for aiding anticommunist insurgencies or devise a set of standards to determine which insurgencies were deserving of U.S. aid and which ones were not. “Doctrines are things which come from thoughtful analysis of problems, threats, possible ways of dealing with them and rather comprehensive, intra-governmental work. Not one nanosecond went into any analysis associated with the support of pro-democracy insurgent elements throughout the world,” according to McFarlane. In 1986, the National Security Council (NSC) staff composed a report, “Freedom, Regional Security and Global Peace,” for the American public that depicted Soviet-client states as a unique threat to peace, but it did not use the phrase Reagan Doctrine. McFarlane, who was no longer in the government, saw this as a belated attempt to capitalize on the public debate over a Reagan Doctrine.¹⁶

Nonetheless, the Reagan administration began to develop the theme of the Reagan Doctrine in earnest in its second term. The President alluded to broad support of “freedom fighters” in his State of the Union address on 6 February 1985. A week earlier, Secretary of State (1982-89) George Shultz told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that “experience shows we cannot deter or undo Soviet geopolitical encroachments except by helping, in one way

or another, those resisting directly on the ground.” Several days later, Secretary Shultz, who emerged as the chief protagonist of the evolving Reagan Doctrine, provided its clearest exposition in a speech to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco. He affirmed a “moral responsibility” for Americans to accept leadership of the Free World, including the support of “people who have their own decisions to stand and fight rather than see their cultures and freedoms quality erased.” Further, U.S. support should be given “not only out of our historical sympathy for democracy and freedom but also, in many cases, in the interests of national security,” because “promoting insurgencies against non-communist governments in important strategic areas has become a low-cost way for the Soviets to extend the reach of their power and to weaken their adversaries.”¹⁷

From those and other statements, the Reagan Doctrine emerged as more than an expression of moral and diplomatic support for freedom fighters resisting Soviet military power and repression exercised directly or through Soviet surrogates. Some of the key goals of the Reagan Doctrine included supporting regimes that were not aligned with communism, regimes with economies that did not rely on the Soviet Union, which had open trade with the United States and strong private sectors, and regimes that cooperated with the U.S. government. The Reagan Doctrine assigned top priority to those nation-states in which vital U.S. security interests were at stake, including Chile and Nicaragua.¹⁸¹⁹

Reagan’s Concerns over the Situation in Chile and Nicaragua: the Soviet Threat

The newly elected Reagan administration feared that the Soviet Union would extend itself far beyond its boundaries and begin to impact the Western Hemisphere. By the time Reagan got to the White House, Cuba was well entrenched as an advance base for furthering

Soviet colonization of the Americas. It had Latin America's largest army, billions of dollars worth of Soviet arms, and military training centers devoted to the exportation of communism, terror, and revolution throughout the Caribbean and Central America.²⁰ Reagan believed it was imperative for the United States to commit its resources in the worldwide struggle to halt the spread of communism. According to Reagan's close friend and journalist Lou Cannon, Reagan viewed the world through World War II eyes, and learned his generation's lesson that unwillingness to prepare for war invited aggression. For Reagan, the world "appeasement" carried connotations of surrender, and he believed that U.S. military strength was the best guarantee of peace.²¹

Reagan considered the seriousness of the problems in Central America as so obvious that he had no choice: "based simply on the difference between right and wrong, it was clear that we should help the people of the region fight the bloodthirsty guerillas bent on robbing them of freedom."²² Why did Reagan believe that Americans should be concerned by this? Putting aside helping others achieve and preserve democratic freedoms, there were reasons of national self interest that Reagan argued made events in Central America worth worrying about: almost half of U.S. exports and imports, including approximately half of petroleum imports, traveled through the region; and two out of three ships transiting the Panama Canal carried goods to or from the U.S. Reagan also argued that in the past, the U.S. had spent a lot of money on programs aimed at improving the lot of its Latin neighbors with little success; the programs had done very little to stimulate entrepreneurship or broaden economic opportunity. According to one study by the administration, the U.S. provided more than half the funding for governments of Central America. For example, in early 1982, the U.S. launched the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which Washington hoped would help Latin America help itself through tax incentives for investments

in the region, direct financial aid, technical assistance, reduced trade restrictions, and other steps.²³ Reagan was concerned that the U.S. was not seeing return where it counted the most—in economic development.

The President said that he faced a dilemma: “How do we stop the advance of communism in Latin America without making the people of Latin America think Uncle Sam is a bigger threat to them than the Communists?” The prospect of American troops being dispatched across Latin American borders to fight communism was abhorrent to most people. Reagan realized that the Vietnam legacy had deprived American presidents of the option of deploying U.S. troops in protracted wars.²⁴ Reagan said that he knew Americans would be reluctant to send troops to Central America and he had no intention of asking them to do that. He also knew that sending troops in Central America would not end the threat of Communist subversion because there were difficult economic and political problems in many of these countries that made them fertile ground for Cuban President Fidel Castro’s revolutionary guerillas.²⁵

According to Reagan, the Soviets had interpreted U.S. hesitation and reluctance to act as weakness and had tried to exploit it to the fullest, moving ahead with their agenda to achieve a Communist-dominated world. By the spring of 1981 the Soviets were more dedicated than ever to achieve Lenin’s goal of a Communist world. Under the Brezhnev Doctrine they claimed the right to support wars of liberation and to suppress, through armed intervention, any challenge to Communist governments anywhere in the world.²⁶ Reagan said as the foundation of his foreign policy, the U.S. had to send as powerful a message as it could to the Soviets that it was not going to stand by while Moscow armed and financed terrorists and subverted democratic governments. Reagan’s policy was to be one based on strength and realism. He wanted peace through strength, not peace through a piece of paper. In his speeches and press conferences he deliberately set out

to make frank comments about the Soviets to let them know his administration was not going to let them continue their policies. He wanted to let the Soviets know that in attempting to continue their policy of expansionism, they were prolonging the nuclear arms race and keeping the world on the precipice of disaster.²⁷ As Shultz argued, the Reagan administration's focus in Latin America was to encourage democracy, deny the Communists their goals, and gain greater American public understanding and support for the economic and security assistance that were needed. Shultz believed that the administration could not lose Latin America in the first place and that it needed three basic components to support its policy: some form of military pressure to make the Communists feel the heat; a vigorous negotiating track to reach an agreement and to demonstrate that they were working to achieve a peaceful solution; and support from those who counted in the region—Mexico, Columbia, and Venezuela.²⁸

The remaining chapters of the thesis will discuss Reagan's strategy in Chile and Nicaragua and whether he achieved the degree of success in the region that he hoped for. The next chapter will discuss my research plan, limitations of the study, and what other scholars have written on the topic. The third and fourth chapters provide findings of the case studies to determine whether Reagan achieved the success that he sought in Chile and Nicaragua. These chapters discuss whether or not the success, or lack thereof, was based on Reagan's policies themselves, or if other influences were at work, including support for or against Reagan's policies at home and abroad, and any national pressures that may have impacted his efforts. The final chapter of the thesis briefly summarizes the study's conclusions, evaluates the overall impact of Reagan's policies in Chile and Nicaragua, and explores what future U.S. presidents could learn from Reagan's foreign policy efforts in these two countries.

Chapter 2

Research Design and Approach

If you're afraid of the future, then get out of the way, stand aside. The people of this country are ready to move again. --Ronald Reagan

Chile and Nicaragua were selected as the focal cases for this research because Reagan considered these countries to be two of the most important countries the U.S. should focus on in defeating the growing Soviet threat in South America. Reagan wanted to counter leftist gains in Central America by shoring up the Chilean and Nicaraguan governments through military and economic assistance in the hopes that both nations would align themselves with the United States. These cases also were selected because although Reagan's goal of preventing communism applied to both countries, his methods in preventing these nations from falling into Soviet hands differed. In Chile, Reagan focused on providing military and economic assistance to the existing government in order to prevent Soviet influence, and in Nicaragua, he supported the destabilization of the existing government, which he judged was growing too close to Cuba and the Soviet bloc.

In order to measure the degree of success of Reagan's policies in these two nation-states, I first defined the time period that would be examined. The study examined the state of affairs in Chile and Nicaragua before Reagan was elected in 1980 by beginning in January 1977 when President Jimmy Carter took office, and ending in January 1993, at the end of President George H.W. Bush's administration. I selected the timeframe of 1977 through 1993 to provide more than a 15-year examination, including two years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, to determine whether or not Reagan's policies during his two terms introduced economic and political changes in these two nation-states. The impact of Reagan's efforts in Chile and

Nicaragua were considered successful if the promotion of democratic and market changes could be traced back to policies of the President. If a subsequent administration saw more movement toward or away from such reforms in these cases, the research looked for substantial deviations in the domestic policies of the selected countries toward or away from the reforms that Reagan promoted.

Dependent Variable: The Degree of Success in Chile and Nicaragua as Defined by President Reagan

The dependent variable for this project is the degree of success in Chile and Nicaragua as defined by Reagan. This thesis examined success from Reagan's perspective, using the key tenets of the Reagan Doctrine to determine whether his efforts in these two countries achieved the degree of success that he wanted. Reagan defined success in Chile and Nicaragua as having regimes that were not aligned with communism; with economies that did not rely on the Soviet Union and that had open trade with the U.S. and a stronger private sector; and that cooperated with the U.S. government. These standards (or, evaluative criteria) are contained in the Reagan Doctrine, the principal expression of the campaign to gain public support for the strengthening of governments and anti-government forces on the side of free democratic capitalism and the weakening of governments and anti-government forces on the side of Marxist-Leninism. The dependent variable was measured using historical data. The sources of evidence included Reagan's memoirs, articles and books written by Reagan administration officials and insiders, as well as declassified correspondence from the U.S. Department of State, CIA, NSC staff as well as other U.S. government agencies during Reagan's presidency.

Independent Variables: Political, Economic, Military, and Alternative Factors

This research looked at several possible influences on the degree of success of Reagan's strategy in Chile and Nicaragua. The clusters of independent variables examined were: 1) the policy actions that the Reagan administration took as it sought to achieve its policy objectives in these two nation-states, including overtly or covertly supporting anti-Soviet factions, increasing United States economic cooperation with the two countries to decrease their alliance with the Soviet bloc, and renewing military cooperation with Chile and Nicaragua by increasing American defense expenditures to strengthen Washington's negotiating position and prevent Soviet expansion; 2) whether there was opposition to or acceptance of Reagan's policies in the U.S. and in the host nation; and 3) alternative factors that might have influenced Reagan's success in Nicaragua and Chile. I selected these independent variables to help explain why Reagan achieved the success in Chile and Nicaragua that he sought to achieve, focusing on whether he did so based on his own policies or success occurred or failed to materialize due to other influences.

In order to measure these clusters of independent variables, I examined each variable individually to determine its influence on the degree of success. I also created several charts to assist me in sorting my judgments about the values of the independent variables to help determine whether or not they impacted Reagan's definition of success in Chile and Nicaragua. (See Appendices A and B.) Later chapters discuss the dependent variable in relation to the independent variable(s) that evidently had the most and the least influence on the Reagan administration's success in Chile and Nicaragua.

In order to measure the strength of the first independent variable—the policy actions undertaken by the Reagan administration, including covert and overt support to anti-Soviet

factions, increased economic cooperation, and renewed military cooperation—I examined U.S. government documents and government documents from the Chilean and Nicaraguan governments, as well as scholarly books, articles, and websites detailing U.S. support to Chile and Nicaragua during Reagan’s two terms to determine the amount and the nature of assistance provided. I also used historical data to determine whether or not the economic, political, and military assistance Washington provided to these two nation-states had the desired level of success Reagan was hoping to achieve.

When measuring the second independent variable, whether there was support for Reagan’s policies at home or in the host nation, I used historical data and public opinion polling. Relevant sources included State Department documents and congressional records that highlight the level of support for Reagan’s policies in the House and Senate. I argue that examining public opinion evidence is useful because public opinion may constrain or enable presidential actions in foreign policy and possibly the extent to which presidents are able to accomplish their goals. Presidents, including Reagan, have to contend with being reelected, appealing to the citizenry, and working with Congress. Members of Congress also take public opinion into account when deciding whether to support the president on legislative issues. Examining polls from Chile and Nicaragua, although difficult in these countries, particularly in Chile because it was under an authoritarian regime, is useful for my research because it provides the opinions of the citizenry, on which Reagan’s policies are directly impacting. If the citizens of Chile or Nicaragua support, or lack support for Reagan’s efforts, it might factor in to the extent to which Reagan was able to accomplish his goals. I examined polls (when available) in Chile, Nicaragua, and the U.S. that tapped support for or opposition to Reagan’s policies in Chile and Nicaragua to determine whether Reagan enjoyed support for his policies in both countries.

I measured the third independent variable—factors other than U.S. policy (“alternative factors”) using historical sources that discuss additional influences that might have been at play that impacted Reagan’s foreign policy efforts in these two nation-states, but had nothing to do with the policies that Reagan was promoting. For example, a factor that may have contributed to Reagan’s economic success in Chile, but had little to do with his foreign policy efforts in the region was Chile’s implementation of unprecedented privatization and other economic reforms in 1974. Chile’s former Minister of Finance Hernán Büchi Buc argued that from the mid-1980s to 1997, the Chilean economy grew at an average annual rate of 7.2 percent thanks to the reforms the Chilean government implemented in the mid-1970s.²⁹ Could the Chilean government’s own economic policies have impacted the degree of Reagan’s success in the country? Perhaps, and it is an area this research does not ignore and examines fully.

Data Sources

There is a wealth of information regarding Reagan’s efforts in Central America, but this thesis focused on works that discuss the Reagan administration’s involvement in Chile and Nicaragua. Sources that were the most useful for this study included books and articles by Reagan himself, members of his administration, and his close personal friends. For example, these works included *Ronald Reagan: An American Life* by Reagan, *President Reagan: the Role of a Lifetime* by journalist and close Reagan friend Lou Cannon, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* by Reagan’s second Secretary of State George Shultz, and *Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy* by Alexander M. Haig, Jr., the first Secretary of State. These books provided valuable information on the President’s thoughts about the means to achieve success in

Central America, his policy goals in the region, and the aspirations and concerns of those in his inner policy circle. For information on Reagan's policy goals in both nations, useful books and articles included State Department documents, congressional documents, U.S. Library of Congress Country Studies, James Scott's *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy*, Walter Lafeber's *The Reagan Administration and Revolutions in Central America*, and Fareed Zakaria's *The Reagan Strategy of Containment*.

When discussing whether national pressures were at work in Chile and Nicaragua during this time period, U.S. government documents, UN and international reports on economic performance, polls conducted in the U.S., Chile, and Nicaragua, and press reports on the views and impressions of Chilean and Nicaraguan leaders provided valuable information. Useful websites included those of Latin Focus, Banco Central De Chile, the CIA World Factbook, the World Bank, and Source Watch. These websites and U.S. government documents specified the amount of economic and military assistance the U.S. government provided to Chile and Nicaragua as well as the covert assistance Washington provided to influence the situation in these two nation-states.

Lastly, when discussing conditions in Chile and Nicaragua following the end of Reagan's presidency and during the Bush administration (1989-93), works from Seyom Brown, Thomas Carothers, and Andrew Lowenthal were particularly useful. Lowenthal's *Latin America at the Century's Turn*, Phillip William's *Election and Democratization in Nicaragua: The 1990 Elections in Perspective*, and William Leogrande's *From Reagan to Bush: The Transition in US Policy towards Central America* were especially helpful. I sought to ensure that I used numerous sources from a variety of authors with differing political and personal beliefs to reduce biases from adversely impacting the analysis.

Data Analysis

I had difficulty with finding a way to systematically make and present my key judgments based on the evidence. In order to distinguish among the variables that had the most influence on this research study, I put together two excel spreadsheets—one for each country (see Appendices A and B). Each variable is displayed in each spreadsheet, with the conclusions about their values and associations recorded underneath. I then used the evidence under each one to make judgments about the variable that evidently had the most impact on Reagan’s success in Chile and Nicaragua. By using this method I was able to organize my judgments for the following chapters. The variables that had the most influence on Reagan’s foreign policy efforts in each country are discussed first, with the ones that did not have much impact, or no impact at all, discussed in order of decreasing influence. This proved to be a useful tool for my research, one that I also hope will be useful for readers.

Limitations of the Study

This research encountered several limitations including its reliance upon primary sources by Reagan, members of his administration, government documents, and declassified correspondence, rather than on a wide variety of resources from scholars that provided their own views of Reagan’s success in Chile and Nicaragua. Although it was difficult to find primary sources from Reagan or members of his administration, I believe that the findings offer a useful reference to readers who are interested in determining whether Reagan accomplished the goals in these two countries that he sought and suggest lessons for future presidents as they are constructing their foreign policy strategies. I also believe that the research provides a different

look at this topic by examining a key presidential policy initiative, in this case the Reagan Doctrine, in order to determine whether or not the Reagan administration achieved the success that it sought to achieve.

When I began this research, I was concerned that the cases that I selected would be inadequate to address the research question. However, I found that these cases provided a useful comparison: although Reagan applied the same policies of the Reagan Doctrine to both countries, albeit with different methods, the results were not the same. In Chile, Reagan focused on providing military and economic assistance to the existing government in order to prevent Soviet influence, and in Nicaragua, he supported the destabilization of the existing government, which he judged was growing too close to Cuba and the Soviet bloc. Reagan put a great deal of energy into achieving success in these two countries, but his success varied as did the explanations.

When beginning this study, I also was concerned that the amount of time provided would be insufficient to measure the success in Reagan's policies in Chile and Nicaragua. However, examining the effects of the Reagan administration's policies in Chile and Nicaragua from 1977 through 1993 provided an adequate amount of time to determine the success, or lack of success, of Reagan's efforts. If I had ended this research immediately after the conclusion of Reagan's administration, the results would have been much different. Most presidents do not have the luxury to observe changes in foreign policy efforts that can be traced to their decisions while in office. Change frequently takes time and sometimes occurs after the administration has left office. When he departed, Reagan probably would not have seen much success in either country, particularly Nicaragua. From the time that the Bush administration assumed office until the time that this research ended in 1993, Nicaragua had begun to turn its economy around, improve

relations with the United States, and move away from the Soviet Union. These results led to the Bush administration having a positive impact on Reagan's definition of success in Nicaragua. Although Reagan probably cannot claim credit for Nicaragua's rebound in the early 1990s, with the help of the Bush administration Nicaragua began to improve and achieve some of the success that Reagan hoped it would achieve.

In addition, it was difficult at times to determine whether the success (or lack of success) of Reagan's policies in Chile and Nicaragua was based on the policies highlighted in the Reagan Doctrine, or if alternative factors impacted the situation in the two countries. This proved to be the case when examining some of Reagan's policies in Chile and Nicaragua, and these factors ended up being the most influential variables. Another aspect that had to be taken into account was whether changes in Chile and Nicaragua that took place in the years following Reagan's presidency reflected the influence of the Bush administration's policies, as these findings limited the level of success Reagan might have had on the region. As will be seen in the coming chapters, this variable also played a key factor in determining the level of success that Reagan had in both countries.

Another complexity that I encountered in conducting my research had to do with the use of public opinion polling. It was difficult to find opinion polling for this data study in both countries as I was attempting to find polling data that discussed the public's views on Reagan's policy efforts. Many of the polls that I encountered did not discuss Reagan specifically. In addition, public opinion polling was limited in Chile because Pinochet halted the use of opinion polling, and in Nicaragua, because the country was facing political upheaval, locating reliable opinion data was a difficult task.

Contributions to Current Literature

Despite these limitations, I argue that this research contributes to the current literature on United States involvement in the affairs of other nation-states around the world, and on whether Reagan's involvement in Chile and Nicaragua had positive, negative, or few discernible effects on the region. Many of the journalists, political scientists, and historians who discuss whether Reagan achieved success in Chile and Nicaragua do not compare the two countries, and most do not attempt to rely mostly on primary sources from the Reagan administration and other government agencies to determine the level of Reagan's success in both countries. Below are several examples of the scholarly literature discussing Reagan's efforts in Chile and Nicaragua.

In regards to Reagan's impact on the situation in Chile, many authors judge that the U.S. policies towards Chile changed with Reagan's election, and the Reagan administration brought with it improved relations with the Chilean regime. According to David R. Mares and Francisco Rojas Aravena in *The United States and Chile: Coming in from the Cold*, the Reagan administration improved the United States relationship with Chile and tried to persuade Chile to catch the wave of democracy spreading through the world. The authors praised the administration's persuasion of Congress to modify its sanctions towards Chile and its support for Chile's economic reforms.³⁰ Aryeh Neier, in "Human Rights in the Reagan Era: Acceptance in Principle," judges that the Reagan administration's efforts in Chile helped to open political space within Chile and contributed significantly to the likelihood that a democratic transition would take place in 1990.³¹ According to Andrew Lowenthal, the Reagan administration's involvement in Chile supports the thesis that the anti-Communist security interest was more important than other foreign policy purposes, including the promotion of democracy and human rights. It also suggests that any U.S. administration faces limits on prolonged and close relationships with

unpopular governments that violate human rights and deny widespread demands for democracy, since this eventually provokes adverse reactions from the media, church groups, concerned NGOs, and Congress members.³²

Many of the works describing Reagan's efforts in Nicaragua paint a picture of an unsuccessful policy, riddled with poor choices, an unwillingness to change course, and confusing goals. For example, according to Fareed Zakaria the Reagan administration did not achieve its goals in Nicaragua because it did not have any. Zakaria argues that the Reagan did not set clear goals, spoke in two different voices on its strategy in Nicaragua, and was unable to garner enough support for any of its policies.³³ James Scott, in *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy*, examines Reagan's policies in Nicaragua and comes to the conclusion that the policies were never clear, which made it difficult to determine what a successful policy outcome would be. The administration's application of the Reagan Doctrine's contributions to U.S. objectives was also never specified, and the applicability of the Doctrine to Nicaragua is suspect because the United States was supporting a resistance that lacked broad support in the population and was seen as a creation of the United States. Scott argues that the Reagan administration's efforts to strengthen the contras were not combined with a diplomatic effort, which made it difficult for Reagan to achieve the goals he set out to accomplish in Nicaragua. According to Scott, once the Reagan administration ended its involvement in Nicaragua, the conflict began to be settled by the Central American states themselves.³⁴

Seyom Brown's *The Faces of Power* describes Reagan's efforts in Nicaragua as an unshakable conviction that removing the Sandinistas from power in Nicaragua was imperative in the global struggle against Soviet-sponsored communism by a small cadre of totally dedicated and resourceful activists convinced that they were loyally serving the President and willing to

bend the law if necessary, coupled with a refusal to accept congressional interference.³⁵

Lowenthal argues that Reagan's policy of military aid to the contras was counterproductive; only when Congress forced the administration to drop the contra war was there space for the Arias Plan.³⁶ Robert Pastor claims that Nicaragua did not achieve success until Reagan left office, arguing that the country had to wait for the Bush administration in order to make any progress.³⁷

Using the research plan that I have presented in this chapter, I will provide the findings of the case studies in the next two chapters, trying to determine whether and why Reagan achieved the success that he sought in Chile and Nicaragua.

Chapter 3

Reagan's Policies in Chile

If the Soviet Union can aid and abet subversion in our hemisphere, then the United States has a legal right and a moral duty to help resist it. This is not only in our strategic interest; it is morally right.--Ronald Reagan

Reagan came into the Oval Office on a platform that rejected the previous three administrations' basic foreign policies. His criticisms of President Jimmy Carter were unsurprising as most presidents choose to distance themselves from their predecessors, especially those from the opposite political party. Yet Reagan also condemned the détente policies that had been fashioned by fellow Republicans Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger.³⁸ According to political scientist Fareed Zakaria, Reagan judged that the most important recent change in international relations was the growth of the Soviet threat. The Reagan administration's first focal point in the western hemisphere was Latin America because it judged that the Soviet Union had targeted the region as part of its master plan for threatening U.S. interests. This chapter will discuss the President's view of success in Chile, the policies that his administration pursued to try to achieve its goals, the level of support for Reagan's policies in the U.S. and in Chile, and whether any national pressures were at work during the time of Reagan's presidency that might have affected his policies in Chile. This chapter also will answer the question, "did Reagan achieve his goals in Chile?" by providing the findings of my research.

Dependent Variable: The Degree of Success in Chile as Defined by Reagan

Reagan said that he did not have a particular plan for Latin America but his goal was to help Latin Americans help themselves. For Reagan, the seriousness of the problems in Latin America were so obvious that the United States had no choice but to help. As Secretary of State

Shultz argued, the Reagan administration's focus in Chile was to encourage democracy, deny the Communists their goals, and gain greater American public understanding and support for the economic and security assistance that was needed. Using the key tenets of the Reagan Doctrine, this chapter will explore the Reagan administration's definition of success in Chile: having a regime that was not aligned with communism; a regime with an economy that did not rely upon the Soviet Union, with open trade with the U.S. and a stronger private sector; and a regime that cooperated with the U.S. government.

A regime that is not aligned with communism. One of the first places that Reagan turned his attention to was Chile—a country that Carter imposed military and economic restrictions upon—but a region that Reagan, by his second term, viewed as an important ally in the global strategy of containment of communism. A memo from Secretary of State (1981-82) Alexander Haig to Reagan in February 1981 urged the President to maintain cooperation with Chile because of its strategic location in order to provide hemisphere defense against the Cuban and Soviet threat.³⁹ According to a July 1983 interview, the U.S. Ambassador to Chile said that it was a matter of extreme importance to U.S. policy that Chile avoid infiltration by Castro-style communism.⁴⁰ The Reagan administration initially identified Latin American military governments including Chile's as "authoritarian" and did not push the Pinochet government on its human rights violations for fear that it would open the door to Marxist-Lenin totalitarian regimes. Pinochet was considered a friend of the United States and a bulwark against communism. He made everyone uneasy but he was on Washington's side.

Despite Reagan's softer line toward the Pinochet regime, Pinochet disregarded United States support for Chile's transition toward democracy to protect against the Soviet threat, and Washington feared that Pinochet's repressive policies would polarize Chilean society and

destabilize the country. According to Shultz, by 1984 the Reagan administration formulated a new policy toward Chile and made the restoration of democracy there its main objective, as a way to prevent Chile from coming under Soviet influence.⁴¹ Assistant Undersecretary of State for Latin America James Michel told Congress in March 1985, “if democracy is our principal objective, our policy reflects the entire gamut of U.S. interests in Chile, and it is not formed definitively by one overriding factor. Relations with Chile are facilitated through diplomatic means, with due respect to open diplomacy and other means for realizing United States interests.” An NSC meeting in November 1986 highlighted the Reagan administration’s mounting concerns over the communist threat facing Chile. Robert Gates, then Deputy Director of the CIA (1986-89), also said that since 1983 the Soviet Union and Cuba had provided material aid, training, funding, and arms for Chilean communist groups, and the Agency was concerned that the Soviet Union’s relationship with Chilean leftists would grow unless Washington continued its support for the Chile.⁴² The Reagan administration, therefore, viewed the installation of democracy in Chile as necessary to ensure that Chile was not affiliated with communism.

A regime that cooperates with the U.S. government. When the Reagan administration entered office in January 1981, it quickly signaled that improved relations with Chile were high on its regional agenda. Lauding Pinochet’s anti-communism and free market economic model, the cooling of relations between Washington and Santiago that had taken place during the Carter administration largely over the issue of human rights was to be replaced by a close working relationship between the two nations. According to a State Department memo written for the Secretary of State’s meeting with Chile’s Foreign Minister Rene Rojas in June 1981, Haig was instructed to discuss the Reagan administration’s desire to normalize relations with Chile as

quickly as possible.⁴³ Reagan, in a letter to Pinochet in early 1984, said that normalizing relations with Chile was an important goal of his administration.⁴⁴ Reagan thought that actively supporting Pinochet with bilateral and multilateral economic assistance and renewed military cooperation would lead to a transition to democracy in Chile and an improved relationship with the United States.

A regime with an economy that does not rely on the Soviet Union, with open trade with the U.S. and a stronger private sector. The Reagan administration moved quickly to demonstrate an affinity with Chile's free market economic orientation and strong opposition to communism in order to improve relations between Santiago and Washington and to prevent Chile from falling under communist influence.⁴⁵ Reagan administration officials praised Chile's economic policies and its progress toward a free market system and urged the Chilean government to continue its free market policies and its movement toward democracy in which the basic thrust of the neoconservative, market-oriented economic order could be preserved. According to a State Department policy memorandum in September 1983, U.S. interests in Chile included promoting economic growth and social welfare in the context of rational, market-oriented economic policies.⁴⁶

The indicators measuring the dependent variable show that the Reagan administration was focused on taking a softer line with the Pinochet regime than the Carter administration; Reagan officials placed a great deal of importance on the restoration of democracy in Chile in order to prevent the country's alignment with communism. Reagan also judged that supporting Pinochet with bilateral and multilateral economic assistance and renewed military cooperation would lead to a transition to democracy in Chile and an improved relationship with the United

States. Lastly, Reagan praised Chile's economic development and its progress toward a free market system to encourage open trading with the U.S. and private sector growth.

Independent Variable(s): Political, Economic, Military, and Alternative Factors

This research looked at several possible influences on the degree of success of Reagan's strategy in Chile, examining three clusters of independent variables: 1) the policy actions that the Reagan administration took as it sought to achieve its policy objectives in Chile, including overtly or covertly supporting anti-Soviet factions, increasing United States economic cooperation with the Chilean government to decrease its alliance with the Soviet bloc, and renewing military cooperation with Chile by increasing American defense expenditures to strengthen Washington's negotiating position and prevent Soviet expansion; 2) whether there was opposition or acceptance of Reagan's policies at home or in Chile; and 3) alternative factors.

Policy actions by the Reagan administration to achieve its definition of success in Chile. The Reagan administration viewed the Chilean government as an important ally in the global strategy of containment of communism. Early in his presidency Reagan sought to improve the United States relationship with the Chilean government in order to prevent it from aligning with the Soviet Union. As the U.S. tried to work with the Chilean government, various U.S.-Chilean relationships that had been suspended during the Carter years were revived. Reagan in 1981 immediately lifted all of the sanctions that President Carter had placed on the Pinochet dictatorship for failing to conduct a serious investigation into the Letelier-Moffitt assassination case; this murder in Washington, D.C. of Orlando Letelier, a Chilean political figure and later U.S.-based activist, and his American assistant Ronni Moffitt had become a

serious issue in U.S.-Chilean relations and mobilized important sectors of U.S. society against the Pinochet regime.

The Chilean government's violations of human rights and the regime's refusal to allow a transition to democracy also were disregarded. A policy of silent diplomacy was employed.⁴⁷ In August 1981, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (1981-85) Jeanne Kirkpatrick visited Santiago and called for a full normalization of U.S.-Chilean relations, and she soon lobbied Congress to lift the restrictions on military and economic aid to Chile that had been imposed during the Carter era. This was not enough, however, to insulate Pinochet from the pressure to reform as many Chileans had not forgiven him for destroying Chile's history of liberal democracy and resented him for the economic hardship they had to endure as a result of his pro-market agenda. By the middle of the 1980's, the opposition in Chile had reorganized and called for democratic reforms.⁴⁸

At the start of the second Reagan term, Shultz was convinced that the U.S. approach was not working. Violations of human rights continued and by 1983, massive national protests in Chile following the collapse of the monetarist experiment activated U.S. security concerns over violence and radicalization in a country previously determined to be safe and stable. The Reagan administration's position on Chile began to change as it came to understand that Pinochet was not changing; the U.S. wanted a more open government, rule of law, and a government headed by elected officials. In 1984 the State Department abandoned silent diplomacy. The Reagan administration restored humanitarian values like democracy and respect for human rights into the forefront of the foreign policy agenda, although they were subordinated to the principal security goal of fighting communism. From 1986 through 1988, Reagan endorsed five UN resolutions critical of Pinochet's record on human rights, although the U.S. also abstained on three and voted

against one.⁴⁹ The Reagan administration favored a smooth transition to democracy in Chile, one without abrupt breaks and in which the basic thrust of the neoconservative, market-oriented economic order could be preserved.

Reagan, with the help of Shultz, in the fall of 1985 sent a new ambassador to Chile to signal the change in U.S. policy. U.S. Ambassador (1985-88) Harry Barnes arrived in Santiago with the explicit mission to press for democratic change. Barnes and Shultz developed a threefold policy for U.S. relations with Chile: continue support for Chile's economic programs, make clear the U.S. view that basic human rights must be respected, and push Chile to move promptly toward a return to democracy. Barnes praised Chile's economic reforms, met with representatives of opposition political parties, and promoted the State Department's insistence on free and fair elections. When Barnes stepped up criticism of the Pinochet government and also expanded embassy contacts with the opposition including socialists, Pinochet responded by sniping at Barnes for his lack of discretion and indicated that U.S. diplomats could not expect to resolve the question of Chile's internal politics. Pinochet criticized the U.S. for interfering in Chile's domestic affairs and equated advocacy of human rights with terrorism; the media portrayed Barnes as a terrorist sympathizer.⁵⁰

In the spring of 1986 the Reagan administration with Shultz at the helm worked to develop a dramatically different position toward Chile. At a March 1986 meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, the administration for the first time sponsored a resolution critical of the repressive practices of the Chilean government. The resolution called on the Pinochet government to stop the use of torture and the abuse of human rights by security and police forces and to put in place democratic institutions. It received the consensus-backing of the 43-member commission. According to Shultz, while the Pinochet regime felt the Reagan

administration's pronouncements and actions constituted interference in its internal affairs, other Chileans took comfort in U.S. solidarity with their democratic cause.

On 2 July 1986, a general strike called by Pinochet's opponents led to five people being killed and 200 detained. The strike dramatized problems of leadership within the resistance, and Shultz and others in the administration counseled those in Chile to separate themselves from the Chilean Communists. On 7 September 1986, an attempt was made to assassinate Pinochet and he imposed a state of siege. During this time U.S. Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), then Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, and members of his staff opposed what Shultz was doing in Chile and made their displeasure known. Like-minded staff within the White House also opposed Shultz's policies. In November 1986 Shultz received a blow from the White House; Chile had applied for a loan of \$250 million from the World Bank, and Shultz had authorized Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliot Abrams to say in July that the U.S. would vote against the loan. As the date for the vote arrived, Reagan and others in the White House were uneasy about a rebuff to Pinochet, and they directed Shultz that the U.S. would abstain on the loan vote. The loan went through and Shultz argued that the message the U.S. projected was "ambiguous at best."⁵¹

Nonetheless, the Secretary of State continued his efforts to bring about democratic change in Chile, and he believed that he was having a real impact when he received a message in July 1987 from Ricardo Garcia, Chile's newly appointed foreign minister. According to Shultz, Garcia pledged the "total identification of myself and the external actions of Chile with the democratic principles that govern the free nations of the western world." In late 1988, the U.S. Congress voted to give \$1 million to the National Endowment for Democracy for use in Chile to support an "open and honest" electoral process.⁵²

Pinochet, meanwhile, consented to holding a plebiscite on his rule in October 1988, in part because he miscalculated his popularity. Chileans were given the chance to vote for or against extending Pinochet's rule for another eight years; if "no" votes prevailed, a multi-candidate election would be held the following year. Despite Pinochet's unpopularity, he was aided by the opposition's fragmentation, the campaign's short duration, and the government's superior resources. U.S. officials, in an attempt to compensate for such disadvantages, personally pushed to unify the Chilean opposition, which in February 1988 came together as a 16-party alliance called the "Coalition of Parties for the No Vote." In addition, the U.S. provided financial assistance to both Chilean and U.S. NGOs for election monitoring training to ensure against fraud. Much to Pinochet's surprise, the plebiscite made it clear that the people wanted a change in Chile and 54.5 percent voted for his ouster. The next year, after a series of negotiations between Pinochet and the opposition to craft a transition, Chileans elected Patricio Aylwin—a Christian Democrat—to serve as their next president, completing Chile's return to democratic rule.⁵³ Shultz argued that Aylwin's win culminated in a victory for the Chilean people.⁵⁴

These Reagan administration policies highlight the President's focus on ensuring that the Chilean regime was not aligned with communism. They also depict the administration's ability to adapt to changing circumstances: the policies shifted from a softer approach to taking a harder line against the Pinochet regime when Reagan realized that his administration's policies were not working.

The level of support for Reagan's Chilean policies at home. I encountered several problems when trying to utilize public opinion polling in the Chilean case. Public opinion polls focused on Reagan's policies in Chile were limited during his presidency, as most polls asked

respondents if they supported Reagan's efforts in Central America, without a focus on Chile. , As a result, polling data is not part of the story. Many members of Congress on both sides of the political party spectrum favored Reagan's new approach to the Chilean government in 1984 when it began promoting democracy in the nation-state, with the single exception of Senator Jesse Helms. Congress and Reagan moved in early 1985 to rebuke Chile's government for its refusal to bargain with political dissidents. The Reagan administration abstained on 7 February 1985 when the Inter-American Development Bank approved a \$130 million loan for "industrial revolution" in Chile and abstained again on 14 March from a \$11 million World Bank loan to Chile. In Congress, meanwhile, two subcommittees of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee approved a resolution (HConRes52) calling on Chile to restore democracy and respect human rights and stating that the U.S. should deny all aid (other than disaster and other humanitarian relief) to the Chilean government. The Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs acted on 19 March and the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations followed suit on 20 March. Congress's recommendations for economic sanctions were not binding on the Reagan administration, which opposed them. The administration argued that the resolution was an unnecessary slap at the Chilean government and would hinder the U.S. policy of using quiet diplomacy to encourage reform. James H. Michel, deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, said on 19 March that "the situation is too complex and our interests in Chile are too important" for the United States to deny all aid to Chile.⁵⁵

Taking their cues from the administration, Republicans and conservative Democrats followed suit and on 22 April 1985 rejected the resolution in the full committee. When the resolution reached the House floor, 148 Republicans and 58 Democrats joined to defeat it 191-206. Ted Weiss (D-NY) sponsored the bill because he argued that the resolution was a response

to “the deteriorating human rights situation and the need to support Chilean people in their efforts to end military dictatorship” there. It would allow Congress “to do something concrete” to support democracy in Latin America. But Toby Roth (R-WI) said that eliminating all sources of U.S. leverage over Chile such as aid and military contracts “only weakens our already tenuous ties with Chile and invites communist forces in the Latin American region to gain even more control.”⁵⁶

As stated earlier, in late 1986 Senator Helms and members of his staff publicly expressed their opposition to what members of the Reagan administration were doing in Chile. Helms became one of the most vocal opponents of Reagan’s efforts in Chile, arguing that Chile was a stable country with no corruption. The Senator was the lone dissenter on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s resolution (SConRes82) in October 1985 that praised the call by Chilean opposition groups for talks with the Chilean government leading to elections. Helms also blocked action on the measure by the full Senate. Following a trip to Santiago in July 1986, he told reporters, “If President Reagan was here, I believe he would send this ambassador home.” Helms attacked Ambassador Barnes for having “planted the American flag in the midst of communist activity” because Barnes attended the funeral of Rodrigo Rojas de Negri, a 19 year old Chilean exile who was killed in Santiago on 2 July, allegedly by government security forces. Helms charged that the funeral was a pro-communist event. White House and State Department officials attacked the Senator’s comments, saying that Barnes was carrying out the President’s policy in Chile which was to encourage and support the movement toward democracy. Richard Lugar (R-IN), the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on 16 July added that most senators did not share Helms’s view and insisted that the Senate supported the need for a genuine democratic transition in Chile.⁵⁷

Helms also blocked the confirmation of an ambassadorial nominee to Chile in September 1988 and would not agree to a single vote on four resolutions, including S J Res 370, which expressed U.S. support for restoring democracy in Chile. Republican and Democratic staff members charged that Helms refused to support the resolution unless its language was changed to reflect a softer tone toward the Pinochet government. The changes Helms requested “basically end up saying Chile’s a wonderful place to live,” the GOP staff aide said.⁵⁸

The evidence offered in this section, again based only on the extent of congressional support for Reagan’s policies in Chile, suggests that with the exception of Senator Helms, many members of Congress from both parties favored Reagan’s strategy in Chile. This bipartisan support allowed the President to move forward with many of his foreign policy efforts in Chile.

The level of support for Reagan’s Chilean policies in Chile. As already mentioned, polling data are not used in this case study. Not only was it difficult to find polls that tapped whether the U.S. public supported Reagan’s policies in Chile but it was also problematic to locate similar polls examining Chilean views of Reagan’s policies. Specific information on Chilean views of Reagan’s policies in the region was difficult to obtain, partly because Pinochet temporarily halted collection of public opinion polls, and polls were not conducted until the mid-1980s.⁵⁹

Pinochet, however, publicly criticized Reagan’s strategy towards his country. In 1984, as Washington began to criticize the Chilean government’s human rights record, Pinochet became vocal with his complaints against the U.S. In a *Newsweek* article in March 1984, Pinochet charged, “We have always had problems with the United States. We don’t like anyone, even the powerful U.S., telling us how to run our lives. We will never accept it.”⁶⁰ Pinochet’s strained relationship with the Reagan administration was dramatized during a meeting with three U.S.

members of Congress in December 1984 when Pinochet became defensive when asked questions regarding human rights. Pinochet responded, “Don’t stick your nose in affairs that don’t concern you...Why should I believe anything that the U.S. says or stands for? The U.S. won World War II but lost half of Europe. They lost half of Korea. You lost Vietnam. You lost Cuba. You lost Nicaragua and you will lose El Salvador if you are not careful. What kind of allies are you? You are not dependable.”⁶¹ In the months leading up to the end of Pinochet’s first term in 1988, he also accused the CIA of having been involved in the attempt on his life in 1986. Although Pinochet’s views provide interesting anecdotes about Reagan’s strategy in Chile, they likely do not reflect the opinions of the Chilean public and are not included in the analysis.

Due to the lack of public opinion polling in the United States on Reagan’s efforts in Chile, the halting of polling in Chile, and the difficulty of accurately measuring public opinion in an authoritarian country, this variable did not play a role in my findings.

Possible alternative factors that might have affected Reagan’s success in Chile. As discussed above, not long after Reagan took office, he lifted the sanctions that President Carter placed on the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile and actively supported Pinochet with bilateral and multilateral economic assistance and renewed military cooperation to prevent the nation from aligning with Marxist-Lenin totalitarian regimes. For a time, a policy of silent diplomacy with the Chilean government was employed.⁶² But Reagan’s position towards the Chilean government changed by 1983 as violations of human rights escalated, and by 1984 silent diplomacy was abandoned. The Reagan administration soon restored humanitarian values like democracy and respect for human rights into the forefront of the foreign policy agenda. Would Reagan have changed his policies toward Chile if these factors were not at play at the time? Probably not, and these factors likely influenced his policies toward the Chilean government and

his efforts to press Pinochet to support the transition to democracy in order to distance the country from communism.

Another factor that may have impacted Reagan's foreign policy efforts in Chile in a positive direction was the Chilean government's implementation of unprecedented privatization and other economic reforms in the 1970s. During the late 1970s the Chilean government implemented a program to modernize the country's economy and this program, accompanied by trade reform helped to transform the economy. Chile experienced a debt crisis like much of Latin America in the 1980s. Although Chile's debt was largely in private hands, the military government assumed that debt in order to maintain the country's creditworthiness in the international financial markets. Under Pinochet, the government transformed its state-dominated economy into one grounded in market-based economic principles, first by stabilizing the economy and then restructuring it by lifting price controls, deregulating labor markets, privatizing state enterprises, reducing trade, and exchange rate restrictions.

The economic policies of the late 1970s and into the 1980s were driven by the "Chicago Boys" who pushed free-market economic policies, foreign investment and loans, and denationalization of major sectors of the economy, a reversal of President Allende's social economic solutions to Chile's development problems.⁶³ Trade reform also began during this time, and the Chilean government worked to dismantle its multilevel tariff schedule and reduce non-tariff barriers. Economic reforms implemented after the 1982 collapse provided the basis for a dramatic and sustained period of economic growth. Chile sought to engage foreign markets more aggressively and open itself to international competition. The uniform average nominal import tariff rate fell from 105 percent in 1973 to 15 percent in 1988 and 11 percent in 1991.⁶⁴

By 1993, Chile had lowered its long-term debt by 30 percent through debt conversion and debt-equity swaps.

As part of the process, Chile weathered some devastating domestic setbacks including the 1982 economic collapse followed by the sudden onset of the Latin American debt crisis. According to Shultz, Chile survived these setbacks and might have even thrived because of the economic policies the country put in place following the economic collapse.⁶⁵ Chile's former Minister of Finance Hernán Büchi Buc argued that from the mid-1980s into the 1990s the Chilean economy grew at an average annual rate of 7.2 percent thanks to the reforms the Chilean government implemented in the mid-1970s. Buc considers the Chilean government's decisions to open trade, strengthen Chilean firms, and open its economy up to the rest of the world as the reasons why the Chilean economy turned around.⁶⁶

Conditions in Chile following Reagan's Presidency (Bush administration, 1989-93)

Although Chile had officially become a democracy with Aylwin's election in 1990, the Chilean military remained quite powerful, and the 1980 Constitution ensured the continued influence of Pinochet and his commanders, making the transition to democratic rule a difficult step for the elected governments that followed Pinochet. Aylwin's government was prevented from achieving many of the goals it had set out to achieve, such as the restructuring of the Constitutional Court and the reduction of Pinochet's political power. Throughout most of the 1990s, Pinochet maintained a sort of shadow government made up of a military and civilian group determined to prevent Chile from lapsing into another Allende-style revolution. Aylwin's administration, however, did initiate direct municipal elections, the first of which were held in June 1992. In spite of the severe limits imposed on Aylwin's government by the Constitution, in

four years Aylwin was able to alter power relations in its favor in the state, civil society, and in political society.⁶⁷

Chile made noteworthy economic progress in the 1990s especially in contrast to the 1980s by turning toward market-oriented economic reforms and greater integration into the world economy. Substantial foreign capital—some \$40 billion per year on average—started to enter the country in the 1990s.⁶⁸ There also were positive changes in Chilean politics. The press and nongovernmental organizations played more important roles, there was considerably more representation of indigenous peoples, and the space for diversity of various kinds grew. Women substantially expanded their participation and influence in politics. The protection of human rights was enhanced, albeit unevenly. Chile had turned away from civil wars and toward peaceful political competition.⁶⁹

With Aylwin's election, relations between the U.S. and Chile also greatly improved. The administration of George H.W. Bush welcomed Chile's commitment to free-market policies, while praising the new government's commitment to democracy. The United States also supported the Aylwin government's human rights policies and came to a resolution of the Letelier assassination by agreeing to a bilateral mediation mechanism and compensation of the victims' families.⁷⁰ Following the visit of Defense Minister Patricio Rojas to Washington in March 1991, Undersecretary of Defense for Latin America Nancy Dorn testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that Chile would receive \$1.1 million in military aid for 1992. Rojas signed a broad-ranging agreement with the Pentagon, and Chile received aid for education, training, logistics, and operations as well as was reincorporated into the Foreign Military Sales program.

Bush announced a new orientation in U.S. policy toward Latin America a few months after Aylwin assumed office in Chile. The Enterprise for the Americas proposed that an association of states “from Alaska to Antarctica” be created to provide the basis for free trade, private investment, and economic growth. The Aylwin government supported the initiative and hoped that joining an association with the United States would alleviate some of the other trade issues on the bilateral agenda. Aylwin’s support for the association encountered little opposition at home where most economic sectors saw the agreement as positive for the country. However, despite Bush’s good intentions to include Chile in the agreement, there was little support for the initiative in Congress. Before Bush left office, he promised Chile that it would be next in line for a bilateral agreement.

A few issues complicated the relationship between the two countries, however, including the FDA’s removal of Chilean fruit from United States supermarkets in 1991 due to tainted grapes. The U.S. also objected to Chile’s intellectual property legislation, particularly the copying of drug patents. Nonetheless, U.S.-Chilean relations remained strong throughout the Bush administration, and by 1991 the U.S. replaced Japan as Chile’s largest trading partner. Chileans also took heart in Bush’s commitment to pursue an economic agreement during his presidency.⁷¹

In examining the situation in Chile during the Bush administration, it does appear that the country was making some progress politically and economically, and it had improving relations with the United States. Chile made noteworthy economic progress in the 1990s especially in contrast to the 1980s by turning toward market-oriented economic reforms and greater integration into the world economy⁷²; there also was more space for women, indigenous people, the press, and nongovernmental organizations in Chilean society.⁷³ With Aylwin’s election,

relations between the U.S. and Chile also improved as the Bush administration welcomed Chile's commitment to free-market policies and the new government's commitment to democracy.⁷⁴

Reagan's efforts likely contributed to some of these positive changes in Chile, and his impact on the country will be discussed in the sections below.

Reagan Administration's View of Success in Chile

Although this thesis defines success in Chile according to the key tenets of the Reagan Doctrine, I thought it would be useful for this research study to explore how the members of the Reagan administration viewed their efforts in Chile, and if they themselves thought that their efforts had succeeded. Several members of Reagan's administration judged that their policies succeeded in Chile and that they achieved what they set out to accomplish. For example, in an interview in March 1991, Elliott Abrams said:

We had great influence in Chile in a precise sense. Being a right-wing government ourselves, we discredited military governments. We said clearly, as only [President] Reagan could say it, that the greatest obstacle for communism is democracy and not military regimes. We said that there was no justification whatsoever for such regimes. As conservatives we said that [the view] of it's either us or the flood, chaos and communism was not true. Our greatest contribution was to de-legitimize and discredit military governments throughout Latin America.⁷⁵

Secretary Shultz also appears to believe that by the time the Reagan administration left office Chile was on a course towards democracy and economic growth, but he credits a great deal of this success to the "Chicago Boys," an initiative that was not devised by Reagan, and to Pinochet's policies. In a PBS interview in October 2000, Shultz said, "We did see, in the end, a

peaceful transition to a democracy and general Pinochet, to his credit, did allow that to happen.” He also said that the Chicago-trained economists’ methods allowed Chile to have the best economy in South America in the mid-1980s and on. He also claimed that Chile’s free market worked its way into bringing about a free society.⁷⁶ Shultz argued in *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State*, that “the economic policies of free and open markets developed by the ‘Chicago Boys’ had brought Chile the healthiest economy in Latin America. This experience with freedom in the marketplace fanned the desire for freedom in the political arena. Chile’s democratic culture asserted itself and the democratic sweep had moved another step forward.”⁷⁷ ,

Although these two Reagan administration officials judged that Chile was better off following Reagan’s presidency, Shultz also gives credit to policies that the President did not devise. Did these efforts by the Chilean government impact Reagan’s success in the country? Did these policies by Pinochet and the Chicago boys have a greater impact on Chile’s progress in its economic and governance sector than Reagan’s policies? These are questions that will be explored below.

The Verdict for Reagan’s Success in Chile: Reagan and Pinochet Contributed to Chile’s Progress

In order to measure the influence of the clusters of independent variables discussed above, I examined each variable based on the evidence that I collected to determine its strength and which one(s) had the most influence on the degree of success in Chile as defined by the Reagan administration. Before preparing this research project I argued that Reagan’s foreign policy efforts had a positive influence on moving Chile away from the Soviet Union, but his policies had a negative influence on fostering economic growth and a positive relationship with

the United States. But after concluding my research, I found that Reagan's efforts in Chile varied when it came to whether he achieved the success that was outlined in the Reagan Doctrine. Reagan's policy actions had a direct influence on improving Chile's relationship with the United States, as shown by his public and private signaling to the Pinochet government that normalizing relations was a priority of the U.S. government, naming a new ambassador to Chile in 1985, and securing congressional support to give money to the National Endowment for Democracy for use in Chile to support an open and honest electoral process, and the administration's actions contributed somewhat to moving Chile away from communism and improving its economic situation. Even so, the policies that Pinochet put in place before Reagan was elected president appear also to have had a great deal of influence on Chile's progress by 1993. Despite Pinochet's authoritarian regime, his government protected Chileans from the threat of internal and international Marxism, and his economic policies pushed free-market economic policies, foreign investment and loans, and the denationalization of major economic sectors. This is illustrated by Pinochet's creation of a new constitution that protected Chileans from the threat of Marxism and his decision to modernize Chile's economy, which helped the government to dismantle its multilevel tariff schedule and reduce non-tariff barriers. Although Reagan and Pinochet had different views of what constituted success in Chile, their combined policies enhanced Chile's development and provided a positive foundation for the country by the early 1990s.

In what follows, I outline my findings about the dependent variable. I will briefly discuss each indicator of the dependent variable according to the degree of influence on Reagan's policy success of the indicators of the independent variables.(See too Appendix A.) As stated above, Reagan's efforts in Chile varied—the administration's policies contributed to Chile's movement

away from the Soviet bloc and helped to improve relations between Chile and the United States as well as to place Chile's economy on the path to recovery by 1993. But Reagan alone cannot claim all of the credit. Pinochet also had a positive impact on developing a Chilean government that was not associated with communism and in fostering Chile's economic progress by 1993.

A regime that is not aligned with communism. Chile appears less aligned with the Soviet Union in 1993 than it was in 1977, but the Reagan administration cannot claim full credit for moving Chile away from communism. An important alternative factor appeared to be at work to contribute to Chile's movement away from communist regimes, and that factor was Pinochet himself. Pinochet's policies were arguably the most influential in ensuring that Chile would be less aligned with communism by the time Reagan left office, and by 1993. The Reagan administration's policy actions before and during the 1988 election of Aylwin helped to secure a democratic government in Chile, but Chile began moving away from communism more than a decade before Aylwin was elected, and several years before Reagan came to office in 1981.

Congressional support for Reagan's policies also played a role in ensuring that the Reagan administration's policy goals toward Chile were enacted. Many members of Congress on both sides of the party spectrum—with the primary exception of Senator Helms—judged that Chile's movement towards democracy was an important policy goal and would help to prevent the country from coming under Soviet influence. Some of the legislative branch's most significant contributions to the Reagan administration's goal to move Chile away from communism included its decision in early 1985 to rebuke Chile's government for its refusal to bargain with political dissidents and its vote in 1988 to provide \$1 million to the National

Endowment for Democracy for use in Chile to support the openness and honesty of the electoral process.

A regime that cooperates with the U.S. government. According to my findings, the Reagan administration's policy goals toward the Pinochet regime had the most influence on Chile's degree of cooperation with the United States by the time that this research ended in 1993. Congressional support for Reagan's policies came in second place, but public opinion in the U.S. and Chile did not factor into the enhanced U.S. relationship with Chile. Reagan made it known from the beginning of his presidency that a cooperative relationship with the Chilean government was at the top of his priority list. He signaled to Pinochet that normalizing relations with Chile was an important goal of his administration, for example, by naming a new ambassador to Chile in 1985 and securing congressional support to give money to the National Endowment for Democracy for use in Chile to support an open and honest electoral process. From 1990 to 1993, relations between Washington and Santiago greatly improved, with both governments resolving the Letelier assassination, signing several military agreements, and increasing trade.

Coming in second place was the congressional support for Reagan's policies in Chile, as members of Congress for the most part supported the President's policies in Chile, which likely had a positive influence on the improvement of Washington and Santiago's relationship. Many members of Congress supported lifting economic and military sanctions on Chile and favored the Reagan administration's support for the promotion of democracy in Chile.⁷⁸

A regime with an economy that does not rely upon the Soviet Union, with open trade with the U.S. and a stronger private sector. Although the Chilean economy was in a better position in 1993 than it had been in 1977, and Chile had open trading with the U.S. and did not rely on the Soviet Union, the Reagan administration's efforts was not the most influential factor

on Chile's economic expansion. The greatest influence on Chile's improving economic situation was Pinochet's economic policies, namely his support for the policies enacted by the Chicago Boys, some of whom were in place before Pinochet came to power and the second most influential factor was the actions taken by the Reagan administration, particularly Reagan's hands off attitude towards Pinochet's economic procedures. The evidence also suggests that Congressional support for Reagan's policies and legislative approval of lifting economic and military sanctions on Chile probably contributed to some of Chile's economic success during the 1990s.

Pinochet's continuation of the Chicago Boy's economic policies and his decision to modernize Chile's economy helped the government to dismantle its multilevel tariff schedule and reduce non-tariff barriers. Chile made noteworthy economic progress in the 1990s by turning toward market-oriented economic reforms and greater integration into the world economy, and substantial foreign capital—some \$40 billion per year on average—started to enter the region. By 1991 the U.S. had become Chile's largest trading partner, and in 1993 Chile had lowered its long-term debt by 30 percent through debt conversion and debt-equity swaps.

When Reagan assumed the presidency, he praised Pinochet's economic policies and his progress toward a free market system and encouraged the Chilean government to continue its free market policies. Reagan's hands off approach to Chile's economic affairs, and his support for the transition to a new government in Chile by the late 1980s, probably helped to encourage Chile's economic development during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Congressional support probably contributed to some of Chile's economic success during the 1990s. During the Bush administration, many Chileans appeared to be pleased with the direction that their country was heading.⁷⁹

Although I hypothesized that Reagan's efforts had a positive influence on moving Chile away from the Soviet Union and a negative influence on fostering economic growth and a positive relationship with the United States, according to my findings Reagan's policies in Chile varied. His administration's actions appear to have positively impacted Chile's relationship with the United States, and they contributed somewhat to moving Chile away from communism and improving its economic situation. But the policies that Pinochet put in place before Reagan was elected president as well as the influence of other actors such as the Chicago Boys, also appear to have had a great deal of influence on Chile's progress by 1993.

Chapter 4

Reagan's Policies in Nicaragua

So, I guess in a way [the Nicaraguan rebels] are counterrevolutionary, and God bless them for being that way. And I guess that makes them contras, and so it makes me a contra, too. --
Ronald Reagan

Reagan took the communist threat in Latin America seriously, particularly the threat of communism in Nicaragua. According to Secretary Haig, the Reagan administration came into office with the determination to resist Soviet adventurism and it arrived with the idea of reopening a realistic dialogue with Moscow. Haig argued that the U.S. signal to the Soviets had to be a plain warning that their time of adventuring in the Third World was over and that the United States capacity to tolerate the mischief of Moscow's proxies had been exceeded.⁸⁰ As Reagan discusses in his autobiography, *An American Life*:

At first, through the CIA, we helped Nicaraguans who had fought with the Sandinistas against Somoza interdict the flow of Russian arms into their country and El Salvador. Initially, this involved mostly the Nicaraguans' use of homemade mines against ships bringing weapons into their country. In time, the CIA began organizing these fighters into contras (from the abbreviation of the Spanish word for "counterrevolutionaries"), a military fighting force that, with U.S. aid and support, undertook the task of bringing democracy to Nicaragua in the same way that the freedom fighters who led the American Revolution brought democracy to Americans.⁸¹

This chapter will discuss Reagan's view of success in Nicaragua, the policies that his administration carried out to try to achieve its goals, the levels of support for Reagan's policies in the U.S. and in Nicaragua, and what, if any national pressures were at work during the time of Reagan's presidency that might have affected his policies in Nicaragua. This chapter will also

answer the question, “did Reagan achieve his goals in Nicaragua?” by examining the situation in Nicaragua following Reagan’s presidency and whether or not his policies had any impact on moving Nicaragua away from the Soviet Union, fostering a cooperative relationship between the United States and Nicaragua, and expanding economic growth in Nicaragua.

Dependent Variable: The Degree of Success in Nicaragua as Defined by Reagan

Again using the key tenets of the Reagan Doctrine, this chapter will explore the Reagan administration’s definition of success in Nicaragua—a regime that was not aligned with communism; a regime that cooperated with the U.S. government; and a regime with an economy that did not rely upon the Soviet Union, which had open trade with the U.S. and a stronger private sector.

A regime that is not aligned with communism. A few days after Reagan’s inauguration, intelligence agencies obtained firm and incontrovertible evidence that the Marxist government of Nicaragua was transferring hundreds of tons of Soviet arms from Cuba to rebel groups in El Salvador. From intelligence reports and other data, the administration pieced together evidence that showed an unmistakable pattern of Soviet, Cuban, and Nicaraguan involvement in organizing, training, and arming the guerillas who were seeking to overthrow the legal government of El Salvador. Based on these findings, the Reagan administration, led by the CIA, started the process that would result in a suspension of aid to Nicaragua and a new policy of increased support of the government headed by Jose Napoleon Duarte Fuentes, a moderate Christian Democrat.⁸² This policy is discussed in the section below.

A regime that cooperates with the U.S. government. Reagan viewed cooperation with the Nicaraguan government as an important factor in denying the Soviet Union a beachhead in

North America. But he realized that cooperation with the Nicaraguan government would ultimately have to come after the Sandinista government was removed from power. Supporting the contras overthrow of the Sandinista regime became the most important factor in Reagan's Nicaraguan policy in order for the country to achieve political pluralism and terminate its ties with the Soviet Union. Reagan judged that the policy of assisting the contras would ultimately result in Nicaragua having a productive relationship with the United States.

As Elliott Abrams, the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, explained in his testimony to Congress in December 1985, United States policy toward Nicaragua was:

The fulfillment of the pledges made by the Sandinistas to the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1979 to establish a pluralist, political system guaranteeing to all Nicaraguans their full, civil, political, and religious liberties; the termination of security and military ties with the Soviet bloc and Cuba, and departure of those countries' security and military personnel from Nicaragua; the cessation of all material and logistical support for insurgencies and for terrorism in El Salvador and other Central American countries; and the reduction of Nicaragua's military apparatus to a level commensurate with those of its neighbors. We believe that the various elements of our policy toward Nicaragua support these goals. Our assistance to the democratic armed resistance helps those prepared to fight for freedom to maintain pressure on the Sandinistas to enter a meaningful dialogue with a view to opening Nicaraguan society to legitimate political dissent.⁸³

A regime with an economy that does not rely on the Soviet Union, with open trade with the U.S. and a stronger private sector. During the Carter administration, the Inter-American Development Bank gave the Sandinistas almost twice the money it gave the Somoza government

in the previous 19 years (\$134 million from 1960 to mid-1979, \$262 million from mid-1979 to 1981). Although the U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan government was controversial, the dominant view of the Carter administration was that economic and political pluralism was still salvageable in Nicaragua provided that Washington extended a benevolent hand.⁸⁴

Despite Reagan's desire to expand United States economic and strategic ties to Nicaragua and move the country away from the Soviet bloc, shortly after entering office the administration decided that the U.S. could no longer use economic leverage over the Sandinistas as they reopened arms flows to El Salvador and employed Communist bloc equipment and advisers to build a 25,000 person army and a 30,000 person militia. By mid-1981, all U.S. aid to Nicaragua stopped, inflation and unemployment rose, aid to the private sector dropped, incentives for foreign investors disappeared, and state controls and nationalization spread, as the administration perceived the Sandinistas as anti-free market.⁸⁵ Reagan later, however, approved the CIA's plan to fund and build up the contra forces to overthrow the Sandinista regime, and millions of dollars of aid poured in for the counterrevolutionary forces.

Independent Variable(s): Political, Economic, Military, and Alternative Factors

This research examined several possible influences on the degree of success of Reagan's strategy in Nicaragua: 1) the policy actions that the Reagan administration took as it sought to achieve its policy objectives in Nicaragua, including overtly or covertly supporting anti-Soviet factions, increasing United States economic cooperation with the Nicaraguan government to decrease its alliance with the Soviet bloc, and renewing military cooperation with Nicaragua by increasing American defense expenditures to strengthen Washington's negotiating position and

prevent Soviet expansion; 2) whether there was opposition or acceptance of Reagan's policies at home and in Nicaragua; and 3) alternative factors that might have influenced Reagan's success.

Policy actions by the Reagan administration to achieve its definition of success in Nicaragua. Shortly after Reagan took office, Haig warned North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) delegates that a "well-orchestrated communist campaign designed to transform the Salvadorian crisis from an internal conflict to an increasingly internationalized confrontation is underway." The Reagan administration moved quickly to weaken the Sandinistas' hold on power in Nicaragua. Haig announced the U.S. government was stopping \$15 million in economic assistance headed for Managua as well as nearly \$10 million in wheat for thirty days to test whether the Sandinistas would stop helping the Salvadoran rebels. By late February 1981, economic aid was turned off, and bread lines began to appear in Nicaragua's cities.⁸⁶

With the rapid transformation of the contras into a resistance force against the Sandinista regime and with the growing threat posed by the Sandinistas to their neighbors, Reagan and several of his advisers discussed the issue in a National Security Planning Group meeting in December 1981. CIA Director William Casey explained to the President that the contras were a mechanism for prodding the delivery of arms to the rebels of El Salvador, which is separated from Nicaragua by a narrow strip of Honduran territory. Casey presented the covert aid program not as a U.S. commitment to a new war but as a means of discouraging the Sandinistas from continuing to help their Marxist allies in El Salvador. Haig was skeptical of contra military potential but accepted Casey's plan largely because everything else had been rejected, and he judged that doing something was better than doing nothing. The covert aid program made it possible for the contras to become a fighting force approved by Reagan because several of his

advisers thought it less dangerous than an alternative course of action, such as engaging in a conventional war in Nicaragua. This marked the beginning of the covert war in Nicaragua.⁸⁷

By the end of 1981, Reagan had endorsed the CIA's plan and accepted a Pentagon program for rapidly building up the contra forces. These troops, aided by more than 100 U.S. military advisers and as many as 5,000 ex-Somoza supporters, were poised to wage war against the Sandinistas. Aid began reaching the contras by the spring of 1982. On 10 May 1982, Nicaragua announced that a five-year \$166.8 million agreement for Soviet aid had been signed. The Sandinistas were officially and publicly aligned with the Soviet Union and Cuba, and their aggressive posture toward their neighbors was apparent—most prominently in their determination to turn El Salvador into a Marxist-Leninist regime like their own. According to Secretary Shultz, the situation in Central America when he became Secretary of State in mid-1982 was deteriorating.⁸⁸

Newsweek asserted on 8 November 1982 that the U.S. Ambassador to Honduras was involved in covert arming and training Nicaraguan exiles there. In reply the Reagan administration acknowledged that the U.S. was supporting small-scale military operations intended to put pressure on, but not overthrow, the Sandinista government led by Daniel Ortega. This revelation set off alarm bells in Congress and in late 1982 congressional opposition heated up against the administration's support of the contras and the Salvadoran government. Legislative opposition was led by House Speaker Tip O'Neill (D-MA) and Representative Edward P. Boland (D-MA) who began battling to limit everything the administration was trying to do in Central America. On 8 December 1982, Boland and his supporters in the House passed the Boland Amendment 411 to 0 as part of the Defense Appropriations Act, which prohibited the

Department of Defense and CIA from providing military equipment, training, or advice for the purpose of overthrowing the Nicaraguan regime. Reagan signed the bill on 2 December 1982.⁸⁹

Reagan continued his fight with Congress over the situation in Nicaragua. Addressing a joint session of Congress in the spring of 1983, Reagan evoked a somber view: “The Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua turned out to be just an exchange of one set of autocratic rulers for another, and the people still have no freedom, no democratic rights, and more poverty. Even worse than its predecessors, it is helping Cuba and the Soviets to destabilize our hemisphere.”⁹⁰

Under the authority of a presidential finding, which was shared and discussed with the intelligence committees of Congress, the administration put in place a modest program of covert assistance to the contras. Reagan officials were ready to put military pressure on the regime in Managua and hoped to force it at least to hold honest elections. By supporting the contras, the administration sought not to directly overthrow the junta, but to create sufficient pressure on the Nicaraguan regime to distract it from adventures in El Salvador and to induce it to accept regional provisions for peace and stability. Reagan also wanted to impose foreign policy restraint on the Sandinistas in the interest of regional security, to interdict arms supplies to the leftist guerillas in El Salvador, to check the Sandinista military build-up, and to prevent a Soviet-Cuban beachhead. For the Reagan administration, no compromise outcome was acceptable.⁹¹

The administration preferred to keep the contra program private because it judged that an open effort would have caused a new set of problems, and deniability was important for all countries in the region through which the contra aid flowed. Shultz argued that officials could not stand up to a publicly disclosed involvement in a program designed to disrupt a neighboring government, and other covert programs around the world also might be forced into the open.⁹² But the reluctance of the Reagan administration to wage a public war had an unintended

consequence: covert action became the only remaining military alternative for opposing the advance of Soviet-style regimes in the Third World. According to Cannon, Reagan did not understand the full consequences of such conflict; he knew little about covert action and had a hard time understanding why his political advisers wanted him to keep silent about U.S. assistance to nationalist groups that he saw as the forces of freedom. These advisers judged that the public was likely to react negatively to a presidential admission that the U.S. was arming a guerilla force in Nicaragua, which was one of the reasons that the White House staff sought to limit Reagan's exposure to the media.

Reagan evidently did not recognize that covert action had a different set of dynamics than a conventional war, including obsessive secrecy. To finance the contra war in Nicaragua, the U.S. government turned to Saudi Arabia and other foreign countries, a practice that was subsequently outlawed by the second Boland Amendment passed by Congress on 11 October 1984. Nonetheless, this fundraising was conducted without the knowledge or approval of Congress or the American people. Cannon argues that since Reagan was not in a position of being able to tell the full truth about the product he was attempting to sell to the American people, he became an ineffective salesman.⁹³

By 1984, the Nicaraguan government faced both military attacks by the contras and the severe consequences of the cutoff of U.S. and multilateral aid. Elections for president and the assembly took place in November 1984. A number of political parties decided not to participate. One group of opposition parties put forward the candidacy of Arturo Cruz, but he dropped out of the race when conversations in Rio de Janeiro with Sandinista representatives broke down, and the presidential candidate of the Independent Liberal Party, Virgilio Godoy, also withdrew. In both cases the U.S. exercised strong pressure to achieve the withdrawals. By doing so

Washington sought to undermine the legitimacy of the electoral process and of the entire political system. However, seven parties remained in the running—three of them to the right of the Sandinista Front and three to its left. Approximately 1.2 million Nicaraguans voted to elect the president and National Assembly, and the result gave the Sandinista Front the presidency and the majority in the Assembly in elections that were considered remarkable for their calm and high voter turnout.⁹⁴

In the wake of this election, Reagan stepped up the efforts to destabilize the Sandinista government, including openly seeking assistance for the contra forces, now known as “freedom fighters.” Reagan rhapsodized about the exploits of the Nicaraguan rebels, whom he described as “the moral equal of our Founding Fathers and the brave men and women of the French Resistance.” Later, he would proclaim himself a “freedom fighter,” and he proudly accepted that the term contra was a label that also applied to him.⁹⁵ By May 1985 the U.S. declared a trade embargo, followed a month later by congressional approval of 27 million dollars in non-lethal aid to the contras. This was supplemented by \$37 million in lethal aid raised by the NSC staff from 1985 to 1986. In October 1985 the Nicaraguan government re-imposed a State of Emergency, reflecting its view that restrictions on political liberties were necessary as long as the government was under attack from external forces.⁹⁶

As Reagan continued to try to persuade Congress to provide badly needed aid to the contras, Americans began contributing money and supplies; for example, one woman contributed enough to buy a helicopter. Reagan argued that it was only later, after the Tower Commission and Congress completed their investigations that he learned that some on the National Security Council staff had gone further to help the contras than he was aware of. He was “distressed” to learn that NSC staffers had been heavily involved in the contra operation; press reports suggested

that NSC and CIA staff had gone beyond limits set by the Boland Amendment and were conducting an illegal war in Nicaragua. When Reagan inquired about this, he was told (allegedly by Casey) that these reports were inaccurate, and the President wrote in his biography that he trusted Casey's word. In 1986 an American was shot down over Nicaragua with a plane loaded with supplies for the contras, and Reagan said that he later learned the flight had been a supply mission apparently arranged by people reporting to the NSC staff.⁹⁷

After Oscar Arias Sanchez was elected to the presidency of Costa Rica in 1986, he designed a regional plan to bring peace to Central America. The Arias Plan, officially launched in February 1987, was signed by the presidents of the five Central American republics (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua) at a presidential summit held in Esquipulas, Guatemala in August 1987. This agreement, known as Esquipulas II, called for amnesty for persons charged with political crimes, a negotiated ceasefire, national reconciliation for those countries with insurgencies (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua), an end to all external aid to insurgencies including U.S. support to the contras and Soviet and Cuban support to guerillas in Guatemala and El Salvador, and democratic reforms leading to free elections in Nicaragua. After signing the agreement, the government created a National Reconciliation Commission headed by Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo. The U.S. government responded by encouraging the contras to negotiate. At the time, an estimated 10,000 contra rebels and as many as 40,000 of their dependents lived in Honduras.

An additional step toward the solution of the Nicaraguan conflict was taken at a summit of Central American presidents held on 15 January 1988 when Ortega agreed to hold direct talks with the contras to lift the state of emergency and call for national elections. In March 1988 the FSLN government met with representatives of the contras and signed a ceasefire agreement and

granted general amnesty to all contra members. Nonetheless, the Reagan administration's continued influence on the contras impeded further progress and increased tension between Reagan and members of Congress. Reagan called the plan fatally flawed and insisted the Sandinistas would never accept democracy unless Congress approved military aid to the contras. The swing votes in Congress rejected Reagan's argument and accepted that of Arias who told them it is "time to focus on the positive...let us restore faith in dialogue and give peace a chance."⁹⁸ The Soviet Union also made it clear to Nicaragua in October 1988 that further assistance for Nicaragua's development was predicated on a resolution of its differences with the U.S., but did not occur until President George H.W. Bush took office.

Reagan's policies in Nicaragua involved the use of a covert aid program designed to make the contras become a fighting force because the administration thought it less dangerous than engaging in a conventional war in Nicaragua. But as Reagan battled with Congress for continued military and economic support to the contras, the Sandinistas requested assistance from the Soviet Union to make up for the shortfall of aid after the U.S. cutoff economic assistance to the region. During this time Ortega signaled he was ready to move towards disarming the contras and hold new elections, but Reagan called this plan fatally flawed and continued to push Congress for military aid. The Soviet Union also began to lose interest in Nicaragua and expressed its desire to resolve the situation with help from the United States. Reagan's decision to continue supporting the contras despite these factors arguably prolonged the crisis in Nicaragua.

The level of support for Reagan's Nicaraguan policies at home. Although the press called him the "Great Communicator," Reagan claimed after he left office that during the eight years of his presidency he was frustrated with his difficulties in convincing Congress and the

American people of the threat in Nicaragua and the surrounding region.⁹⁹ According to Cannon, some critics argued that Reagan's explanation of U.S. support for the contras arrived too late because he was not able to convince Congress or the American public to continue backing his efforts in Nicaragua as many did not understand what the U.S. was fighting for.¹⁰⁰ The President gave no speeches about the covert war in Nicaragua for a year and a half after he approved the first allocation of contra aid. The existence of a covert plan was first revealed in an article in *The Washington Post* on 14 February 1982. At a news conference on 18 February 1982, Cannon asked Reagan if he had approved of covert activity to destabilize the government in Nicaragua, to which he replied, "Well, no, we're supporting them. Oh, wait a minute, wait a minute. I'm sorry. I was thinking El Salvador...Here again, this is something upon which [because of] national security interest, I will not comment." Reagan gave his first televised speech explaining the case for the contras on 9 May 1984 and he linked support to the contras to his belief that the United States had an obligation to "aid freedom's friends and resist freedom's enemies. If the Soviet Union can aid and abet subversion in our hemisphere, then the United States has a legal right and a moral duty to help resist it. This is not only in our strategic interest; it is morally right."¹⁰¹

The polls usually found that large numbers of Americans cared little or not at all about what happened in Nicaragua. In fact, a large proportion did not know where Nicaragua was located; among those who did care, few cared enough about communist penetration of the Americas to apply the kind of pressure Reagan said that he needed on Congress.¹⁰² For example, a 16 March 1986 ABC News/*Washington Post* Poll asked, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Reagan is handling the situation in Nicaragua." Thirty-six percent of respondents said that they approved, while 48% replied that they disapproved.¹⁰³ An "Americans Talk Security" poll

in June 1988 asked, “Do you think Ronald Reagan is doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job properly handling the situation in Nicaragua and Central America?” In response, 5% of respondents said that Reagan was doing an excellent job, 27% a good job, 34% a not so good job, and 29% a poor job.¹⁰⁴

It was this growing lack of public support for the contras as highlighted in public opinion polling that contributed to declining congressional support for Reagan’s policies in Nicaragua. Although the use of polling did not figure into the analysis of the Chilean case, it added to the discussion of Nicaragua because Congress did take public opinion into account as members began to push back on the Reagan administration’s efforts in Nicaragua. As public opinion turned on Reagan, so did congressional support for his policies. From 1984 to 1986 as Speaker O’Neill and his allies intensified their campaign to cut off support for the contras, the contras began to face shortages of guns and ammunition as well as food and medical supplies. Reagan battled with Congress to keep the force in existence, telling his staff, “We can’t break the law, but, within the law, we have to do whatever we can to help the contras survive.”¹⁰⁵

The level of support for Reagan’s Nicaraguan policies in Nicaragua. As with the Chilean case, it was difficult to obtain public opinion polling in Nicaragua that discussed the views of the Nicaraguan public on Reagan’s strategy in their country. Nicaraguan leaders, including the Sandinistas, Contra leadership, and Ortega publicly expressed their views on the Reagan administration’s policies in the region. The Sandinistas in 1982 charged that Washington was preparing to destabilize Nicaragua, and Ortega took the accusations against the U.S. to the UN Security Council. U.S. Ambassador to the UN Jeanne Kirkpatrick replied that the assertions were “ridiculous” and said that the Nicaraguans were “accusing the U.S. of the kinds of political behavior of which Nicaragua is guilty—large-scale interventions to overthrow

neighboring governments.”¹⁰⁶ The Sandinistas used anti-Yankee rhetoric to cast Nicaragua in the role of the underdog, divert domestic attention from the economic disaster at home, and justify ending press freedom and suspending remaining civil and political rights.¹⁰⁷ Contra leaders also resented being compared to the Founding Fathers of the United States because the wording opened the insurgents to ridicule by those who argued that Nicaragua was of little real importance to the United States. According to contra chief Ernest Palazio, “If Nicaragua were truly as important to the United States as Mr. Reagan says, then your troops would be down there.”¹⁰⁸

Nicaraguan officials in the mid to late 1980s grew frustrated with the Reagan administration’s support for the contras and the lack of U.S. economic assistance to Managua. Ortega in November 1985 told the Managua diplomatic corps that his government could not agree to normalize relations with Washington unless the U.S. signed a protocol that promised neutrality toward Nicaragua. Ortega’s statement was a response to a draft treaty drawn up by the Contadora group—composed of Panama, Venezuela, Columbia, and Mexico—which proposed a formula to limit the size of armies and arsenals in each country. Ortega was concerned that the Contadora group offered proposals “which threaten to leave Nicaragua defenseless in the face of the declared desire of the United States government to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution.”¹⁰⁹ Henry Ruiz, Minister of External Cooperation, in October 1987 publicly praised the Soviet Union’s pledge to step up economic assistance to Nicaragua, and he blamed the country’s economic troubles on Washington’s support for the contras.¹¹⁰ In January 1988 Ortega sent a letter to Reagan asking that the U.S. abide by the Central American Peace Plan and cease aid to the contras. “We make only one demand of the United States, that it accept the rule of law in its

relations with Nicaragua. This implies the immediate cessation of all support for the contras, and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of Nicaragua.”¹¹¹

As with the case study on Chile, it was difficult to determine Nicaraguan public opinion on Reagan’s efforts in their country. Nicaraguan leaders, including the Contras and Ortega, expressed frustration with Reagan’s policies, but their views will not be included in the analysis because I do not know if their opinions mirrored those of the Nicaraguan public.

Possible alternative factors that might have affected Reagan’s success in Nicaragua.

As stated above, Reagan became involved in Nicaragua out of fear that the Soviet Union was attempting to take over the country and spread communism throughout the region. But did the Soviet Union maintain its interest in Nicaragua, or did its policies toward Nicaragua change during Reagan’s presidency? Did this have any impact on Reagan’s success in Nicaragua? The Sandinistas’ closer relations with the Soviet bloc and especially Cuba contributed to Reagan’s belief that the Soviet Union was attempting to create a beachhead in Latin America, although the Soviet involvement in the Nicaraguan revolution did not reach the significance it did in Cuba for the Soviets.

Nonetheless, both military and economic assistance from Cuba and the Soviet bloc to Nicaragua gained strength in the late 1980s. Moscow’s economic and military support evidently accounted for Nicaragua’s changing voting record in multilateral organizations such as the UN, moving from a disciplined acceptance of U.S. foreign policies to an open allegiance to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union provided the Sandinista army with economic and military supplies, and when Mexico and Venezuela stopped supplying Nicaragua with oil due to U.S. pressures, the Soviets filled the void.¹¹² According to the Nicaraguan Ministry of External Cooperation, by 1988 the total amount of socialist economic cooperation was estimated at U.S. \$2 billion.¹¹³

Soviet policies changed after 1988, however. Mounting economic difficulties in the Soviet Union, together with ongoing diplomatic negotiations between the Soviets and the U.S. over nuclear weapons, reduced the flow of Soviet military aid and oil supplies to Nicaragua. By then the U.S. government realized that a military defeat of the Sandinistas was out of reach, and the Soviets joined efforts for a peaceful resolution. Moscow's policy shift was in part due to Mikhail Gorbachev's strategy of stepping aside from Third World conflicts.¹¹⁴ During Reagan's last year as president, an agreement was reached between conflicting actors in Afghanistan, with the Soviets withdrawing military forces in the following twelve months. A Soviet Union-U.S. diplomatic joint effort also drove the Angolan conflict to an end including a total retreat of Cuban troops.

With the Soviet economy lagging well behind the U.S., it was evident that it would not be possible for the USSR to sustain the mounting military spending it needed to neutralize the threats posed by the Strategic Defense Initiative launched by the Reagan administration without risking a further deepening of domestic tensions stemming from deteriorating living conditions and bureaucratic management. Reagan's trip to Moscow a few months prior to leaving office was additional evidence that the Cold War was ending. On his October 1989 visit to Nicaragua, the Soviet minister for foreign affairs stressed the Soviets' interest in carrying out a joint monitoring of the Nicaraguan crisis together with the U.S.¹¹⁵

Conditions in Nicaragua following Reagan's Presidency (Bush administration, 1989-93)

By 1989 when the Bush administration took office, the Nicaraguan economy was in dire straits. Government agencies were reorganized, leaving many Nicaraguans unemployed. The Sandinista army went through a reduction in force. To complicate matters, in late 1988 the

country had been hit by Hurricane Joan, which left 432 people dead, 230,000 homeless, and damages estimated at U.S. \$1 billion.¹¹⁶ In addition, a severe drought in 1989 ruined agricultural production for the upcoming year.¹¹⁷ With the country bankrupt and the loss of economic support from the economically strapped Soviet Union, the Sandinistas decided to move up the date for elections in order to convince the U.S. government to end all aid to the contras and attract potential economic support from Europe and the United States. When the five Central American presidents met in El Salvador in February 1989, Ortega offered to move the date of the presidential and legislative elections from late 1990 to February 1990 and reform electoral legislation to satisfy all the political parties; he also announced that international observers from the UN and the OAS would be invited to observe the electoral process from beginning to end. In exchange for these commitments, the Central American presidents promised to put together within 90 days a plan to demobilize the contra forces.¹¹⁸ The Bush administration in return negotiated a bipartisan accord with congressional leadership and announced support for Esquipulas, denied military aid to the contras, and allowed humanitarian aid.¹¹⁹

In preparation for the upcoming presidential election in February 1990, in June 1989, 14 parties united only in their opposition to the Sandinistas formed a coalition called the National Opposition Union (Unión Nacional Opositora—UNO), whose support was drawn from a broad base including conservative and liberal parties as well as two of Nicaragua's traditional communist factions. Despite its determination to vote the Sandinistas out of power, the UNO coalition remained a weak opposition lacking a cohesive program. The UNO and the Sandinistas began their political campaigns in the summer of 1989. By 2 September 1989 the UNO united to nominate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the widow of slain journalist and editor of the daily

newspaper *La Prensa*, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, as its candidate for president. The FSLN nominated Ortega for the presidency.¹²⁰

The political campaign was conducted under the close international oversight of the OAS, the UN, and a delegation headed by former U.S. President Carter. The Bush administration provided economic assistance to Chamorro's campaign. In October 1989, Congress approved \$9 million for the promotion of democracy in Nicaragua, of which \$2.5 million was designated for UNO's run for the presidency. The Chamorro campaign centered on the failing economy and promised peace by ending the unpopular military draft, bringing about "democratic revolution," and promoting economic growth.¹²¹

On 25 February 1990, Chamorro carried 55 percent of the popular vote against Ortega's 41 percent. Although the election results surprised many observers, both sides began conversations to bring about a peaceful transfer of power. On 30 May 1990, the Sandinistas, with the UNO and contra leadership, signed agreements for a formal ceasefire and the demobilization of the contras. Despite continued sporadic clashes, the contras completed their demobilization on 26 June 1990. During President Chamorro's approximately seven years in office her government achieved progress toward consolidating democratic institutions, advancing national reconciliation, stabilizing the economy, privatizing state-owned enterprises, and reducing human rights violations.¹²² Relations between the U.S. and Nicaragua began to improve during the Bush administration and following Chamorro's election. By the early 1990s, the new Nicaraguan regime led by Chamorro had established many democratic policies and was amenable to working with Washington to improve relations between the two countries.

Reagan Administration's View of Success in Nicaragua

As with the case of Chile, I thought it would be useful to explore how members of the Reagan administration viewed their efforts in Nicaragua and whether they deemed that their policies had been successful. There does not appear to be consensus within the Reagan administration about either whether Reagan achieved success in Nicaragua or if there was cohesion to his strategy. According to Tom Griscom, Reagan's assistant for communication and planning, there was not a clear policy as to what the U.S. was trying to achieve in Central America:

When the policy was first enunciated, there were those in the administration who felt that our role was to overthrow the Sandinistas. There were those who felt our role was to support the contras and bring pressure to change the government. There were others who felt that we should be preventing the Soviets from establishing a beachhead in Central America. But I don't think that any one person ever sat down and made a decision as to what the U.S. was going to do and then drove the policy to make it happen; therefore, what occurred was a leadership gap. Certain people within the NSC staff stepped in and filled that void, and they began trying to drive the policy for what they thought the goal was, which was to ensure that there was a democratic government in Nicaragua.¹²³

Shultz said that he was not able to wrestle the Nicaraguan problem to the ground before he left office, but he judged that resolution was possible. The Soviets, Shultz argued, were less able to sustain their assistance levels to Nicaragua. Shultz was confident that opposition to Ortega was broad and deeply rooted and that it would continue to increase the pressure on his regime. Nicaragua was isolated in Central America and the Sandinistas were increasingly seen

as the agents of catastrophe within Nicaragua. “The end of the Sandinistas’ rule was in sight, I was convinced.”¹²⁴

Reagan, however, was optimistic about his success in freeing Nicaragua from communism after his presidency. He writes, “in Nicaragua, despite the risky and shortsighted resistance of many in Congress to supporting the Contras, the Sandinistas had lost the battle for the soul of the country, and before many months would pass, freedom and democracy would prevail and the corrupt Sandinista comandantes in designer glasses would be thrown out of office.”¹²⁵

The Verdict for Reagan’s Success in Nicaragua: Reagan’s Policies Failed, Alternative Factors Had Positive Influence by the End of Reagan’s Presidency

In order to measure the clusters of independent variables discussed above, I examined each based on the evidence that I collected to determine its strength and influence on the degree of success in Nicaragua as defined by Reagan. Prior to beginning this study, I argued that Reagan’s foreign policy efforts had a positive influence on moving Nicaragua away from the Soviet Union, but his policies had a negative influence on fostering economic growth and a positive relationship with the United States. Yet, my research led me to somewhat different conclusions about whether Reagan achieved the success in Nicaragua that he hoped to attain.

Overall, in examining the Reagan administration’s efforts in Nicaragua and whether it achieved success, my findings suggest that the administration’s policies in the region failed and arguably worsened the situation by being unable to distance Nicaragua from the Soviet Union and Cuba, damaging relations between the United States and Nicaragua, and worsening Nicaragua’s already stagnant economy. Alternative factors that were occurring at the time, such

as the Soviet Union's declining interest in Nicaraguan affairs by the end of the 1980s, Ortega's willingness to demobilize the contras and establish a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Nicaragua with the help of other Central American presidents, and Chamorro's election in 1990, had the most influence on the state of affairs in Nicaragua by 1993. The evidence indicates that due to these alternative factors Nicaragua by the early 1990s was on a slow and steady path to advancing its relationship with the Western world, distancing itself from the Soviet bloc and Cuba, improving its relationship with the United States, and stabilizing its economy.

In second place are American and Nicaraguan perceptions of Reagan's policy goals in Nicaragua. As criticisms of Reagan's policies in Nicaragua began to escalate, congressional support began to decline. It was this lack of congressional support that probably contributed to Nicaragua's progress in the 1990s toward demobilizing the contras, rebuilding state institutions, and expanding its reach within the global community.

Reagan's desired impact on Nicaragua during his presidency came in last place. According to my findings, Reagan did not achieve the success in Nicaragua that he was hoping to achieve. In fact, many of his policies only worsened the crisis in Nicaragua by continuing the Sandinistas' relationship with the Soviet bloc and Cuba because of economic necessity. This angered many Americans and Nicaraguans who did not understand what the President was trying to do in Nicaragua and thereby harmed relations between the two countries and damaged the economic conditions in Nicaragua, which already were in dire straits by the time that Reagan assumed the presidency. This is not the outcome that Reagan sought when he entered the Oval Office and launched his ambitious foreign policy effort in Nicaragua. This also was not the result that I expected: I initially hypothesized that Reagan was able to move Nicaragua away

from the Soviet Union, but was incapable of fostering Nicaragua's economic growth and a positive relationship with the United States.

Below, I outline my findings according to each dependent variable that I examined based on the key tenets of the Reagan doctrine. As in the previous chapter, I briefly discuss each dependent variable according to the degree of influence of each independent variable. (Appendix B details these conclusions.)

A regime that is not aligned with communism. Was the Reagan administration successful in moving Nicaragua away from communism? According to my findings, the answer is negative. Nicaragua by 1993 was less aligned with the Soviet Union than it was in 1977, but national influences including Ortega's support for new elections in early 1990, Soviet disinterest in Nicaragua by the late 1980s, Chamorro's election, and the Bush administration's backing of the contras' demobilization probably had more to do with Nicaragua's movement away from the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s than Reagan's efforts. Congressional opposition to Reagan's policies by the mid to late 1980s and the Nicaraguan's frustration with the United States probably also contributed to the end of the conflict in Nicaragua. Despite Reagan's steadfast efforts to use the contras to defeat the Sandinistas and distance Nicaragua from the Soviet Union and Cuba, his policies were not effective, and it was only until he left office that Nicaragua became less aligned with the Soviet bloc, had a growing economy, and was more cooperative with the United States.

Several alternative factors had a significant impact in moving Nicaragua away from the Soviet bloc by the time this research ended in 1993. One of these was Ortega's change in policies in the late 1980s in which he agreed to hold direct talks with the contras on 15 January 1988 and to lift the state of emergency and call for national elections. Ortega also met with the

five Central American presidents and offered to move up the date of the presidential election from late 1990 to February 1990 and to demobilize the contras within 90 days. Following Chamorro's election, the Nicaraguan government progressed toward consolidating democratic institutions, advancing national reconciliation, stabilizing the economy, privatizing state owned enterprises, and reducing human rights violations. Thanks to many of the policies that Ortega enacted during the late 1980s, Nicaragua was heading toward a more democratic system and was no longer under the influence of the Soviet Union or Cuba.

Another factor was the Soviet Union itself, which played a role in successfully moving Nicaragua away from communist influence, as Moscow and Cuba began to take themselves out of the Nicaraguan equation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Two years prior to 1993, the Soviet Union had disintegrated—a move that probably had some influence on the Soviet bloc's lack of interest in expanding its influence in Central America by 1990. In 1989 the Soviet Union was facing mounting economic difficulties and reduced its assistance to Nicaragua and expressed interest in resolving Nicaragua's crisis together with the United States.

Declining American and Nicaraguan support for Reagan's policies came in second place in impact. This lack of public support appears to have pushed members of Congress to withhold their support for Reagan's policies in Nicaragua as many members began to check the President and decline his appeals for continued aid to the contras. Congressional opposition to Reagan's policies in the late 1980s with the legislative branch's support for the Arias Plan and its steadfastness in urging the Reagan administration to achieve a settlement of the Nicaraguan crisis probably helped lead to the Sandinistas' ouster in 1990 and the demobilization of the contras.

I have positioned Reagan's policies in third place because despite the administration's efforts to distance Nicaragua from the Soviet bloc, it did not prevail. One could argue that Reagan's policies might have prolonged Nicaragua's cooperation with the Soviet Union and Cuba and deepened the regime's dependence on the Soviet bloc. Reagan's suspension of all economic aid to Nicaragua to weaken the Sandinistas' hold on power and his support for the CIA's plan for covert support to the contras to wage war against the Sandinista regime resulted in a dire economic situation in Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan government's request to the Soviet Union and Cuba for assistance. The Soviets answered the request and by 1988 the amount of Soviet economic assistance to Nicaragua was estimated at U.S. \$2 billion.

By the mid-1980s, the Central American presidents and many members of Congress were calling on Reagan to cease his support of the contras and free elections in Nicaragua, but Reagan continued to push Congress for military and economic assistance for the contras and called Ortega's plan to hold talks with the contras flawed. Congress rejected Reagan's requests and Ortega sent a letter to Reagan in 1988 asking the U.S. to cease its support of the contras and respect the sovereignty of Nicaragua. Reagan's persistence in pursuing the contra program despite the lack of support from Congress, the American public, and individuals in Nicaragua, probably prolonged Nicaragua's alignment with the Soviet bloc. It was not until several months after Bush had taken the oath of office that the contra program began to be dismantled and Nicaragua was able to stand on its own, without involvement in its internal affairs by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Cuba.

A regime that cooperates with the U.S. government. The Reagan administration's policy goals toward the Sandinista regime had the least influence on Nicaragua's degree of cooperation with the United States by the time this research ended in 1993. The dominant

factors in Nicaragua's improved relationship with the United States in 1993 were alternative factors including Soviet lack of interest in the region by the late 1980s, Ortega's support for talks with the contras and an early election in 1990, and the Bush administration's support for the demobilization of the contras and the Chamorro government. Congressional opposition to Reagan's policies in Nicaragua by the late 1980s also played a part in the United States' improving relationship with Chile by 1993.

According to my findings, alternative factors played a part in improving Nicaragua's relationship with the United States. Much like the discussion above, these factors included Ortega's agreement in the late 1980s to hold direct talks with the contras, lift the state of emergency, call for early national elections, and work with Central American presidents to construct a plan to demobilize the contras. The Bush administration in return negotiated a bipartisan accord with Congressional leadership and announced support for the Central American presidents' plan, denied any military aid to the contras, and allowed humanitarian aid.¹²⁶ Bush provided economic assistance to Chamorro's campaign and continued to support Chamorro after she was elected president in 1990. The Soviet Union also had an impact on Nicaragua's improving relationship with the United States and in 1989 the Soviets reduced their assistance to Nicaragua and also pledged to resolve the situation in Nicaragua with the help of the U.S. The Soviets' disengagement from Nicaragua helped to open the door for the United States to repair relations with Nicaragua following Reagan's presidency.

The second most influential factor on the improved relationship between the U.S. and Nicaragua was congressional frustration with Reagan's policy efforts in the region and its support for improved relations by the end of Reagan's term. According to my research, it seems that it was only when the opposition in Congress pushed Reagan in the late 1980s to respect

Nicaragua's autonomy and the Arias Plan, and to end U.S. support for the contras that U.S. policies toward Nicaragua began to turn around.

Reagan viewed increasing United States cooperation with Nicaragua as an important feature of his foreign policies in the country, but his backing of the contras, termination of economic support, and rejection of the Nicaraguan government's demands that the U.S. work towards a peaceful end of the crisis resulted in spoiled relations between the U.S. and Nicaragua throughout his presidency. Relations between the U.S. and Nicaragua began to improve following Bush's election. By the early 1990s, the new Nicaraguan regime led by Chamorro had established many democratic policies and was amenable to working with the Bush administration to improve relations between the two countries.

A regime with an economy that does not rely on the Soviet Union, with open trade with the U.S. and a stronger private sector. By the time that this research ended in 1993, the Nicaraguan economy was in dire straits, and Chamorro's government was working to stabilize the economy and privatize state owned enterprises. Although the Nicaraguan economy had much room for improvement, in the early 1990s it was not reliant upon the Soviet Union and was beginning to improve its relationship with the United States. Was this due to Reagan's policies? No. In fact, because of Reagan's support of the contras and his denial of economic aid to the Nicaraguan government, Nicaragua was not able to make an economic rebound during the 1980s. It was only in the 1990s when Chamorro assumed control of the government that an ambitious economic stabilization program, combined with a series of steps to reorganize the national economy along market-oriented lines was undertaken.

According to my research, Chamorro's policies had the most influence on Nicaragua's improved economic situation by the time this research ended in 1993. Although Chamorro

confronted a difficult road to economic stability, by 1993 Nicaragua was headed in a positive direction. Little was achieved on the economic front in Nicaragua in 1990 because the Chamorro government concentrated on bringing peace to the nation by demobilizing the contras, advancing national reconciliation, consolidating democratic institutions, and reducing human rights violations. At the end of 1990, Nicaragua's economy contracted for the seventh straight year, and inflation soared to 13,490 percent according to the U.S. State Department. But in March 1991, the Chamorro administration began to cut public spending, restricted central bank credit, and replaced the nation's devastated currency. These measures yielded impressive results: annual inflation fell from 13,490 percent to 775 percent in 1991, and 3.5 percent in 1992. Encouraged by the Nicaraguan government's program, in September 1991 the donor community helped Nicaragua clear debts of one-third of a billion dollars with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Political turmoil, renewed fighting in northern Nicaragua, inadequate protection of property rights, and interruptions of foreign assistance flows discouraged investors in 1992, and the GDP only grew by 0.1 percent for the year. At the end of 1992, the Chamorro government restricted spending, and in January 1993, the government imposed new taxes and eliminated a series of tax exemptions. Throughout 1993, the Nicaraguan government tried to spur economic growth and maintain economic stability. The Chamorro government had a long way to go to improve the economy, but domestic and global investors were encouraged by what they saw in Nicaragua in 1993.¹²⁷

Much like the other influences, lack of American and Nicaraguan support for Reagan's policies contributed somewhat to Nicaragua's slowly improving economic situation in the 1990s. As the American and Nicaraguan public began to increase their criticism of Reagan's policies, Congress by the late 1980s called for an end to Reagan's plans in the region and the resumption

of economic aid. Reagan's policies in the region were the least influential, and the administration's course of action in Nicaragua probably worsened Nicaragua's economic situation.

Chapter 5

Conclusions: The Lessons of the Reagan Doctrine's Application in Chile and Nicaragua

Don't be afraid to see what you see.--Ronald Reagan

As part of the western hemisphere, the countries in Latin America, including Chile and Nicaragua, long have been considered by U.S. presidents as the rightful domain of U.S. interests and security, a type of backyard that must be protected. Throughout history, the United States has pursued these interests by trying to maintain friendly relations and cooperation with these countries and preventing hostile influence. Reagan was no exception. Reagan's policies in Chile and Nicaragua, reflected in the Reagan Doctrine, were to prevent these countries from further aligning with the Soviet bloc, to establish open and beneficial relations between Washington and their respective capitals, and to help build and maintain economies that did not rely on the Soviet Union and had open trading with the U.S. and stronger private sectors. The case studies examined in this thesis leave one with an intriguing question: "why did the Reagan administration's policies have the impact that they did in these two countries?" As the concluding sections of each case study chapter suggest, the impact of the Reagan Doctrine varied. This chapter briefly summarizes those conclusions, evaluates the overall impact of Reagan's policies in Chile and Nicaragua, and explores what future U.S. presidents could learn from Reagan's foreign policy efforts in the Chile and Nicaragua.

The Verdict for the Reagan administration in Chile and Nicaragua: Mixed Success

This thesis set out to address the extent of success of Reagan's foreign policies in Chile and in Nicaragua and why they were as successful (or unsuccessful) as they were. I selected Chile and Nicaragua as the focal cases, because Reagan considered them to be two of the most

important countries that the U.S. should focus on in defeating what he considered to be the growing Soviet threat. These cases also were chosen because although Reagan's goal of preventing communism applied to both countries, his methods for seeking to keep them from falling into Soviet hands differed. In Chile, Reagan focused on providing military and economic assistance to the existing government in order to prevent Soviet influence, while in Nicaragua he supported the destabilization of the existing government, which he judged was growing too close to Cuba and the Soviet bloc.

This study adopted Reagan's own definitions of success as enunciated in the Reagan Doctrine. The President defined success in Chile and Nicaragua as regimes that were not aligned with communism; that had economies that did not rely on the Soviet Union, which had open trade with the U.S. and stronger private sectors; and that cooperated with the U.S. government. The Reagan Doctrine described these aspects of success, and it served as the principal expression of the campaign to gain public support for strengthening governments and anti-government forces on the side of free democratic capitalism and weakening governments and anti-government forces on the side of Marxist-Leninism.

In doing the research, I found it somewhat more difficult to rely upon primary sources by Reagan, members of his administration, government documents, and declassified correspondence rather than on a wide variety of resources from scholars who provided their own views of Reagan's success in Chile and Nicaragua. In addition, I discovered, the use of public opinion polling was only useful in the case of Nicaragua and did not factor into my findings for Chile. Public opinion polls focused on Reagan's policies in Chile were limited during his presidency, as most polls asked respondents if they supported Reagan's efforts in Central America, without a focus on Chile. In addition, specific information on Chilean views of Reagan's policies in the

region was difficult to obtain, partly because Pinochet's authoritarian regime temporarily halted collection of public opinion polls, and polls were not conducted until the mid-1980s. But in Nicaragua, public opinion polling added to the discussion because Congress did take public opinion into account as they began to push back on the Reagan administration's efforts in Nicaragua. As public opinion turned on Reagan, so did congressional support for his policies. Nonetheless, I believe that the findings provide a useful reference for readers who are interested in determining whether Reagan achieved the success in these two countries that he hoped for and to offer lessons for future presidents as they construct their foreign policy efforts.

Reagan placed high importance on achieving victory in Chile and Nicaragua, but one can see from this discussion that just as Reagan's approaches to these two countries varied, so did my findings. Prior to undertaking this research, I argued that Reagan's foreign policy efforts in these two nation-states had a positive influence on moving Chile and Nicaragua away from the Soviet Union, but his policies had a negative influence on fostering economic growth and a positive relationship with the United States. However, the study demonstrated that I was wrong. Reagan arguably had some success in moving Chile away from communism, improving its relationship with the United States, and expanding the country's economic growth by the mid-1990s. In Nicaragua, Reagan failed on all three criteria of success through his support of the contras and his unwillingness to provide economic support to the Nicaraguan regime.

This differing success probably occurred for a variety of reasons. Reagan did not have as much of a stake in Chile in ensuring the success of his policies as he did in Nicaragua. Although he did not support Pinochet's authoritarian policies and human rights record, his administration initially did not push Pinochet because it respected his anti-communist agenda and his free market economic policies. Despite Reagan's abandonment of silent diplomacy in 1984 over his

concerns that Pinochet's rule was not giving way to an open government, the Chilean regime did not appear to be as much of a concern for Washington as Nicaragua was. One could argue that Reagan probably judged that Soviet influence did not threaten Chile as much as Nicaragua.

The Reagan administration also did not have to be as involved in Chilean affairs as it did in Nicaragua in order to ensure that its policies would succeed. Reagan might have judged that his administration would have an easier time in Chile than it would in Nicaragua and therefore his administration devoted more of its time and resources to the situation in Nicaragua. Reagan's lack of involvement in Chile probably helped to guarantee some of the successes of his policies. In addition, Reagan probably had an easier time promoting his policies in Chile since he was managing a relationship with an existing foreign regime rather than supporting the overthrow of a foreign regime, which was the case in Nicaragua. Reagan's secrecy and unwillingness to abandon support for the contras also almost certainly prolonged the dismal situation in Nicaragua and angered both Americans and Nicaraguans. If Reagan had changed course in Nicaragua in the mid-1980s, he might have been able to start to turn the tide in the country towards the end of his tenure.

Lessons that Future U.S. Presidents Can Learn from Reagan's Policy Efforts in Chile and Nicaragua

Reagan's mixed success in Chile and Nicaragua offers several lessons for future U.S. presidents when constructing their own foreign policy efforts. These lessons include taking alternative factors into account, avoiding one-size-fits-all policies, staying flexible, maintaining a strong executive, explaining foreign policy efforts to the American public, limiting covert policies, and effectively working with Congress. Although Reagan promoted his policies in

Chile and Nicaragua almost three decades ago, these lessons still hold true for presidents that have followed him as they pursue their own foreign policy goals. For example, President George H.W. Bush's inability to explain to his advisers, Congress, and the American public the reasons why the United States needed to take military action following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait frustrated many in the Bush administration, particularly those in the Department of Defense who did not think that the U.S. was justified in pursuing war with Saddam Hussein. It can be argued that President William Jefferson Clinton stumbled into the war in the Balkans without taking alternative factors into account. The administration did not consider, for example, what would happen if Yugoslavia resisted its efforts in the region; moreover, what was intended to be a low-intensity conflict in Kosovo transformed into a much larger scale conflict. Following the attacks on September 11, 2001 President George W. Bush went to war against al-Qaida terrorists in Afghanistan, and he used the same reasoning, along with Iraq's alleged possession of nuclear weapons, to explain to the American public why the war in Iraq was necessary. President Barrack Obama is having difficulty describing to the American public why the war in Afghanistan remains necessary and has battled with Republicans in Congress over his foreign policy.. These are just a few examples, and they depict the continued struggles that U.S. presidents have in constructing and promoting their foreign policy agendas and some of the lessons that they can learn from previous presidents, including Reagan.

Taking Alternative Factors into Account. According to my findings, the most important reason why Reagan cannot claim full credit for the improving state of affairs in Nicaragua and Chile by 1993 is because of the alternative factors at play during the time. These had nothing to do with Reagan's own efforts but impacted the success (or lack thereof) of his own policies. Such factors included the policies of the Chilean and Nicaraguan presidents and the level of

involvement by the Soviet Union in each country toward the end of Reagan's presidency. Despite their governments' brutal dictatorships, press censorship, repression of the opposition, and human rights violations, Pinochet and Ortega were able to positively impact the degree to which Chile and Nicaragua moved away from communism, expanded their nations' cooperation with the United States, and expanded each country's economy. In addition, lack of Soviet interest in Nicaraguan affairs by the middle to late 1980s lessened the Nicaraguan regime's links with communism and strengthened its cooperation with the United States by 1993.

All of these factors played key roles in improving the situation in Chile and Nicaragua by the time that this research ended in 1993. If Reagan had acknowledged these factors he might have achieved more success with his foreign policy efforts. Future presidents can learn from Reagan's mistakes by taking note of the successes that their counterparts might be having in the countries that they are trying to influence and examining whether or not the policies they are trying to impact to stem a threat are actually threats at all. The Soviet Union was a greater threat in Chile and Nicaragua—particularly the latter—at the beginning of the Reagan presidency, but Reagan's policies might have benefited if he had accepted the Arias Plan, Ortega's agreement to disband the contras, and the Soviet Union's proposal to end the crisis in Nicaragua with the help of the United States.

Avoiding One-Size-Fits-All Policies. Reagan spent most of his presidency attempting to tackle the Soviet threat, and his efforts in Chile and Nicaragua highlighted his commitment to ridding the western hemisphere of communist influence. In a speech to students at Moscow University in September 1988, the President stated:

We do not know what the conclusion will be of this journey, but we're hopeful that the promise of reform will be fulfilled. In this Moscow spring, this May 1988, we

may be allowed that hope: that freedom, like the fresh green sapling planted over Tolstoy's grave, will blossom forth at last in the rich fertile soil of your people and culture. We may be allowed to hope that the marvelous sound of a new openness will keep rising through, ringing through, leading to a new world of reconciliation, friendship, and peace.¹²⁸

Reagan fought hard to ensure that his policies would be successful in Nicaragua and Chile, but he came up short. As discussed throughout the thesis, national factors played key roles in determining the Reagan administration's success or failure in Chile and Nicaragua. Although different dynamics operated in the two countries, Reagan applied the same policies—those contained in the Reagan Doctrine—to both, and he met varying success. The Reagan administration appears had a positive impact on Chile's movement towards improving cooperation with the United States, and it contributed to Chile's improving economy and distancing Santiago from the Soviet bloc. In Nicaragua, however, Reagan's support for the contras and his decision to cut off economic aid alienated many Nicaraguans and likely extended the tense and dismal situation in the country.

Of course, Chile and Nicaragua were not the only two places that the Reagan Doctrine was applied. The elimination of the Soviet threat also prompted Reagan to apply the Doctrine to Afghanistan, El Salvador, Angola, and Cambodia. U.S. diplomats and operatives in these countries were expected to implement the Doctrine's imperatives in their areas of responsibility. Although the local configuration might not have conformed to the policy's premises, many U.S. officials faithfully persisted in trying to bend local realities to the same foreign policy effort. Future U.S. presidents can take a cue from Reagan: appreciate national factors and recognize that the one foreign policy might not work when applied to more than one country.

Staying Flexible. Although Reagan employed the same policy doctrine in both Chile and Nicaragua, the Reagan Doctrine, the President was flexible in employing these policies. Reagan deserves some credit for this, particularly in his approach to Chile; he shifted his policies from a softer approach to taking a harder line against the Pinochet regime when he realized that his administration's policies were not working. Arguably, Reagan's change in policies towards Pinochet permits the U.S. President to claim some credit for enhancing the United States' relationship with Chile and to a lesser degree improving Chile's economic situation and ensuring that the country was not aligned with communism.

Maintaining a Strong Executive. Reagan summed up his management style: "Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere as long as the overall policy you've set is being carried out." Reagan's delegation of power particularly during his last four years in office, however, allowed subordinates with poor judgment to make serious mistakes, such as allowing support for the contras to continue despite the lack of public support, ignoring important national factors, and producing Iran-Contra. When Reagan began his second term he broke up the team that had been largely responsible for many of his first term successes, such as moving Chief of Staff James E. Baker III to head the Department of the Treasury. Baker had performed admirably as Reagan's chief of staff as he was able to forge alliances with key Reagan advisers, and he recognized his limitations while drawing on the strength of others. Most importantly, Baker was able to create order between a passive President and a White House staff driven by inner competition. Reagan's new Chief of Staff, Donald Regan, did not have these same strengths, and his inability to control other members of the Reagan administration, especially those on the National Security Council staff, led to more battles in the White House during Reagan's second term and probably contributed to the Iran-contra scandal..

The system's looseness, Reagan's aversion to personal confrontation with staffers and his detached management style also bred turmoil, policy confusion, and protracted struggles among administration officials such as Defense Secretary Weinberger, CIA Director Casey, and Secretary of State Shultz. It was up to many of Reagan's subordinates to work out among themselves how the administration's foreign policies would be implemented and how they would promote them to the rest of the country. For example, Reagan's first budget director David Stockman called Reagan, "serene and passive. He conveyed the impression that since we all knew what needed to be done, we should simply get on with the job." Stockman also recalled how Reagan would typically suggest to his staff, "you fellas get together and see if you can work it out."¹²⁹

Reagan's management approach of selecting good people, setting broad policy goals, and delegating authority and responsibility to get the task done certainly resulted in several domestic and foreign policy successes. But his inability to maintain a strong presidency when making tough foreign policy decisions is a lesson that future presidents should not take lightly. Maintaining control over the highest office in the nation is imperative for future presidents to ensure that their staff knows who is in charge, to limit confusion and mixed policy messages, and to prevent jockeying for power among subordinates.

Explaining Foreign Policies to the American Public. Reagan prided himself on being the "Great Communicator," a leader of vision who was able to paint pictures with words and to construct a vision for America and the world that was superbly compelling. He would point to the greatness of the United States and the country's role in the world, striving to give Americans confidence to do their best. One of Reagan's greatest frustrations, however, was his inability to communicate to the American people and to Congress the seriousness of the threat they faced in

Central America.¹³⁰ The prevailing view among many in the administration, including Reagan, Haig, and Weinberger, was the less that was said about the contras the better. But in the President's view—which I argue was accurate—the absence of an effective White House communications campaign on behalf of U.S. policy in Nicaragua reflected divisions within the administration about the purpose of this policy and the strategies necessary to pursue it.

Reagan's inability to express to the American people his strategy in Nicaragua led to difficulties in convincing Congress and the public of the threat in Central America.¹³¹ According to Cannon, Reagan's explanation of U.S. support for the contras might have arrived too late because he was not able to convince Congress or the American public to continue backing his efforts in Nicaragua as many did not understand what the U.S. was fighting for.¹³² An article in *The Washington Post* in February 1982 first revealed the existence of the administration's covert plan, but Reagan did not explain the program to the American public until May 1984. Future presidents can learn from Reagan that it is imperative for the U.S. president to explain as much as they can about their foreign policies to the American public. Covert programs should maintain a sense of secrecy and protection, but if they are leaked, a president probably should acknowledge that they are taking limited actions in a foreign country to prevent a sense of fear, distrust and confusion among the American public.

Covert Programs should be Limited in Scope and Duration. Reagan's use of a covert program in Nicaragua was deemed necessary at the time, but it dragged on for years and his inability to convey its purpose to the American public also contributed to domestic confusion and disappointment with his policies. Reagan and Casey utilized the contras for most of the administration, fostering distrust and displeasure with the administration's performance. With memories of Vietnam still fresh in the memories of his domestic audience, Reagan was

concerned that the public would not accept direct U.S. military intervention in the affairs of another nation. Consequently, the CIA was employed to indirectly support the contras militarily, which concerned numerous members of the administration, the Congress, and the American public as Reagan's policies continued for several years. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence concluded in its 1984 report that "there was a need for explicit, written procedures to ensure Executive Branch compliance with the requirements for reporting covert action activities."¹³³

Officials who make public policy must be accountable to the public, but the public cannot hold these officials accountable for policies of which they are unaware. Covert actions have utility. Shultz's arguments that the administration could not easily handle publicly disclosed involvement in a program designed to disrupt a neighboring government and that other covert programs around the world also might be forced into the open¹³⁴ are persuasive reminders of why U.S. presidents do and should keep these programs shrouded in secrecy. But future U.S. presidents also should recognize that policies that are secret run the risk of becoming the private preserve of the few, with the possibility of resulting in long-lasting mistakes and the loss of public control over the government.

Effectively working with Congress. Although Congress did not have an impact on the success of the Reagan administration's policies in Chile during the time period examined here, legislative disapproval for Reagan's policies in Nicaragua towards the end of his presidency arguably had a positive impact on Nicaragua's movement towards normalcy and economic stability by 1993. By the late 1980s, many members of Congress called for an end to Reagan's plans in the region and wanted to see Nicaragua stand on its own, without the threat of destabilization by the contras and with the resumption of economic aid. Congressional support

for the Arias Plan and members' steadfastness in urging the Reagan administration to negotiate with the Nicaraguans to achieve a settlement of the crisis probably helped to lead to the Sandinistas' ouster in 1990 and the demobilization of the contras.

Reagan often expressed frustration with the lack of congressional support for his policies.¹³⁵ In an address to students and faculty members at the University of Virginia in December 1989, he accused Congress of exceeding its proper authority and intruding into his prerogatives as commander in chief. The President said that Congress had unwisely tried to influence policy decisions by using "the blunt instrument of legislation" to limit his flexibility. Reagan also argued that the "on-again, off-again indecisiveness" by Congress had caused his biggest foreign policy disappointment, the failures in Nicaragua.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, future U.S. presidents would benefit from a more productive relationship with the legislative branch.

Congress does not act as a unitary actor, and party politics played a large role during the Reagan administration. The President had difficulty in appealing to the two parties in Congress, with Democrats prioritizing human rights and Republicans favoring policies that focused on security. Future presidents can learn from Reagan's struggles with Congress, acknowledging that Congress cannot be approached as a unit. Bridging partisan divides and creating coalitions to move policies forward could prove useful for future presidents when working with legislators to reach important decisions impacting the nation.

Remembering Reagan's Impact in Chile and Nicaragua

In his memoir of his time as Secretary of State, George Shultz reflected on the Reagan Doctrine and its impact, stating that "the Soviet attitude toward its relationship to world events had altered profoundly. The Brezhnev Doctrine was dead, with the execution due in some

considerable part to its opposite number, the Reagan Doctrine.”¹³⁷ Although Reagan, Shultz, Abrams, and other administration officials judged that their policies succeeded in Chile and Nicaragua, as the case studies here suggest, the Reagan Doctrine had mixed impact in both countries. For Reagan, Chile and Nicaragua were part of his tough foreign policy where Washington would draw the line against the spread of communism and expand U.S. influence and goodwill. However, as this thesis suggests, this strategy had mixed results; it contributed somewhat to Reagan’s success in Chile, but in Nicaragua his administration failed.

Nonetheless, when examining the situation in Chile and Nicaragua in 1993, both countries were headed in positive directions as far as improving their economies, strengthening their relationships with the United States, and distancing themselves from communist regimes. Although Reagan cannot claim much credit for this, other leaders such as Pinochet and Ortega and other influences such as declining Soviet interest in the region, congressional policies, and the Bush administration’s involvement contributed to Chile’s and Nicaragua’s progress. In the final analysis, that is what matters for the citizens of these two countries: Chile and Nicaragua had improved by 1993, with or without Reagan’s involvement.

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Appendix A: Findings for the Reagan Administration's Success in Chile

DEPENDENT VARIABLE #1—DEGREE OF REGIME ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNISM				
	Independent Variables			
	#1	#2	#3	
<p>Before Reagan Took Office (1977-81) Pinochet abolished leftist political parties, press censorship, repression of opposition.</p> <p>Pinochet implemented Chacarilla Plan to transition to authoritarian democracy.</p> <p>1980—new Constitution approved by 2/3 Chileans; Pinochet said it would protect Chileans from threat of external and internal Marxist threat; create political party participation, reaffirm concepts of authoritarian democracy; Constitution granted Pinochet expanded powers.</p>	<p>Policy Actions by the Reagan Administration Reagan administration did not push the Pinochet government on its human rights violations for fear that doing so would open the door to Marxist-Lenin totalitarian regimes; Reagan praised Pinochet's anti-communist agenda.</p> <p>Reagan administration recognizes Pinochet regime is authoritarian but implements policy of silent diplomacy to maintain cooperation with Chile because of its strategic location to provide hemispheric defense against Soviets.</p> <p>Reagan administration concerned that Pinochet's rule not giving way to an open government; 1984—new policy toward Chile; silent diplomacy abandoned because of concerns over human rights violations, violence, and radicalization; restoration of democracy primary objective because U.S. did not want Chile to</p>	<p>Was there support for Reagan's policies? In Chile—during the 1980s many voiced suspicion of Reagan's policies; worried that excessive American interference in Chilean affairs could drive those who might otherwise be the key to a democratic transition in the country—business leaders, politicians of the center-right, and military dissidents—to rally around Pinochet.</p> <p>At Home—most Congress members on either side of the political party spectrum favored Reagan's new approach to the Chilean government in 1984 when it began promoting democracy in the nation-state, with the exception of Senator Jesse Helms who disapproved of many of Reagan's policies.</p>	<p>Alternative Factors at Work Chilean government was already taking steps to move away from communism before Reagan took office.</p> <p>Concerns over human rights violations in Chile impacted Reagan administration's position towards the Chilean government; humanitarian values like democracy and respect for human rights into the forefront of the foreign policy agenda.</p>	<p>After Reagan Left Office (1989-93) 1990-1992—Aylwin's government was prevented from achieving many of the goals it had set out to achieve, such as the restructuring of the Constitutional Court and the reduction of Pinochet's political power because Pinochet remained influential.</p> <p>Throughout early 1990s, Pinochet maintained a sort of shadow authoritarian government made up of a military and civilian group determined to prevent Chile from lapsing into another Allende-style revolution .</p> <p>1990-May 1992—the 1980 Constitution ensured the continued influence of Pinochet and his commanders, making the transition to democratic rule a difficult step for the Aylwin Government; but in June 1992 Aylwin's administration initiated direct municipal elections and altered power relations in its favor in the</p>

	<p>come under Soviet influence.</p> <p>1986-1988—Reagan endorsed five UN resolutions critical of Pinochet’s record on human rights.</p> <p>1988—U.S. Congress votes to give \$1 million to National Endowment for Democracy to use in Chile to support an open and honest electoral process.</p> <p>1988—Support for Pinochet’s opposition to vote against extending Pinochet’s rule for another 8-years; leads to 54.5% vote for Pinochet’s ouster.</p>	<p>In Chile— Pinochet vocal with complaints against U.S. involvement in Chilean affairs; some Chileans worried that increased attention from Washington might reflect the Reagan administration’s need to show opposition to governments of the right along with those of the left.</p> <p>At Home—Congressional support for measure.</p> <p>In Chile—Chilean government responded by accusing U.S. authorities of receiving Marxists and of being uninformed about Chile’s political circumstances.</p> <p>At Home—57% of American participants in a poll from “Americans Talk Security” in June 1988 responded that they did not know what their opinion was of Pinochet, 15% said that Pinochet was unfavorable, and 6% said that he was favorable.</p>	<p>state, in civil society, and in political society; by 1993 press and nongovernmental organizations more influential; greater representation for indigenous peoples, and diversity grew; women gained more political rights; the protection of human rights were enhanced.</p>
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WAS THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION SUCCESSFUL IN MOVING CHILE AWAY FROM COMMUNISM? Chile appears less aligned with communism in 1993 but the Reagan administration probably unable to claim credit; the Reagan administration aided in the democratic election of Aylwin, but Pinochet’s rule was the primary factor in preventing Chile from becoming aligned with Marxist-Lenin regimes.

RANKING	#2 Some of Reagan’s policy goals suggests the	#3 Congressional support for Reagan’s policies played a	#1 Pinochet’s policies were the most influential in ensuring
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administration aided Chile's movement away from communism, including Reagan's abandonment of silent diplomacy in 1984, support for five UN resolutions crucial of Pinochet's human rights record, and support for U.S. Congress vote to give \$1 million to National Endowment for Democracy to use in Chile to support the electoral process.

key role, but it does not seem to have affected Reagan's policy actions in Chile; difficult to determine Chilean public's reaction to Reagan's policies; Reagan administration does not appear to have shifted its stance towards Pinochet based on Chilean public opinion.

that Chile would be less aligned with communism; Reagan administration's policy actions following 1984 probably helped to secure Aylwin's victory in the election in 1988, but it appears that Chile began moving away from communism more than a decade before Aylwin was elected, and several years before Reagan came to office in 1981.

Pinochet abolished political parties, press censorship, repression of opposition.

Pinochet implemented Chacarilla Plan to transition to authoritarian democracy.

1980—new Constitution approved by 2/3 Chileans; Pinochet said it would protect Chileans from threat of

Reagan administration did not push the Pinochet government on its human rights violations for fear that doing so would open the door to Marxist-Lenin totalitarian regimes; Reagan sent a letter to Pinochet in 1984 signaling that normalizing relations with Chile was an important goal of his administration.

Reagan administration recognizes Pinochet regime is authoritarian but implements policy of silent diplomacy to maintain cooperation with Chile because of its strategic location to provide hemispheric defense against Soviets.

Reagan administration concerned that Pinochet's rule not giving way to an open government; 1984—

In Chile—Reagan administration's new approach to Chile was not enough to insulate Pinochet from pressure to reform as many Chileans had not forgiven him for destroying liberal democracy and resented him for their economic hardship; by the mid-1980s the Chilean opposition reorganized and called for democratic reforms.

At Home—most Congress members on either side of the political party spectrum favored Reagan's new

Concerns over human rights violations in Chile impacted Reagan administration's position towards the Chilean

program; a few issues complicated the U.S.-Chilean relationship including the removal of Chilean fruit from U.S. supermarkets in 1991 by the FDA due to tainted grapes and the U.S. also objected to Chile's intellectual property legislation, particularly the copying of drug patents; nonetheless, by 1991 the U.S. replaced Japan as Chile's largest trading partner. 1990-1992—Aylwin's government was prevented from achieving many of the goals it had set out to achieve, such as the restructuring of the Constitutional Court and the reduction of Pinochet's political power because Pinochet remained influential.

Throughout early 1990s, Pinochet maintained a sort of shadow authoritarian government made up of a military and civilian group determined to prevent Chile from lapsing into another Allende-style revolution

1990-May 1992—the 1980 Constitution ensured the continued influence of Pinochet and his

external and internal Marxist threat; create political party participation, reaffirm concepts of authoritarian democracy. Constitution granted Pinochet expanded powers.

new policy toward Chile; silent diplomacy abandoned because of concerns over human rights violations, violence, and radicalization; restoration of democracy primary objective.

1985—Reagan named Barnes as new Ambassador to Chile; Barnes and Shultz developed three-fold policy for U.S. relations with Chile to improve relations between the two countries and press for democratic change.

1986-1988—Reagan endorsed five UN resolutions critical of Pinochet's record on human rights.

1986—Reagan administration, led by Shultz, sponsored a resolution at March 1986 meeting of UN Human rights Commission in

approach to the Chilean government in 1984 when it began promoting democracy in the nation-state, with the exception of Senator Jesse Helms.

In Chile—Pinochet vocal with complaints against U.S. involvement in Chilean affairs; some Chileans worried that increased attention from Washington might reflect the Reagan administration's need to show opposition to governments of the right along with those of the left.

At Home—Senator Helms publicly criticized the Reagan administration for sending Barnes to Chile and interfering in Chilean political affairs.

In Chile—Pinochet responded by stating U.S. diplomats can not resolve Chile's internal politics and criticized U.S. for interfering in Chile's democratic affairs.

At Home—Jesse Helms and like-minded staff opposed Shultz's efforts; some members of the White House also disapproved of Shultz's

government; humanitarian values like democracy and respect for human rights into the forefront of the foreign policy agenda.

commanders, making the transition to democratic rule a difficult step for the Aylwin Government; but in June 1992 Aylwin's administration initiated direct municipal elections and altered power relations in its favor in the state, in civil society, and in political society; by 1993 press and nongovernmental organizations more influential; greater representation for indigenous peoples, and diversity grew; women gained more political rights; the protection of human rights were enhanced.

	<p>Geneva; resolution called for Pinochet to end use of torture and human rights abuses; approved by 43-member commission.</p> <p>1987—Shultz continued his efforts to improve U.S.-Chilean relations and bring about democratic change in Chile; judged he was having impact.</p> <p>1988—U.S. Congress votes to give \$1 million to National Endowment for Democracy to use in Chile to support an open and honest electoral process.</p> <p>1988—Support for Pinochet’s opposition to vote against extending Pinochet’s rule for another 8-years; leads to 54.5% vote for Pinochet’s ouster.</p>	<p>policies; 1986—Chile applied for \$250 million loan from World Bank and U.S. abstained on loan’s approval, frustrating Shultz who viewed US message to Chile as ambiguous at best.</p> <p>In Chile—Pinochet viewed resolution as U.S. interference in Chile’s affairs.</p> <p>In Chile—Shultz received a message from Chile’s new Foreign Minister who pledged to adhere to democratic principles that govern the Western world.</p> <p>At Home—Congressional support for measure.</p> <p>In Chile—Chilean government responded by accusing U.S. authorities of receiving Marxists and of being uninformed about Chile’s political circumstances.</p> <p>At Home—57% of American participants in a poll from “Americans Talk Security” in June 1988 responded that they did not know what their opinion was of Pinochet, 15% said that Pinochet was unfavorable, and 6% said that he was favorable.</p>	
<p>WAS THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION SUCCESSFUL IN IMPROVING THE UNITED STATES’ RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILE? Yes, Chile appears to have greater cooperation with the U.S. in 1993 due to Reagan’s policies in the country.</p>			
<p>RANKING</p>	<p>#1 Policy goals undertaken by</p>	<p>#2 Congressional support for the</p>	<p>#3 Reagan administration’s</p>

Reagan administration suggests that he was successful in improving Chile's relationship with the U.S.; Reagan signaled in 1984 that improved relations with Chile was a key policy goal; U.S. support for Pinochet's opposition probably contributed to the vote against Pinochet in 1988 and Aylwin's election in 1990; following Aylwin's election, Chile's relationship with the U.S. improved.

administration's policies was positive overall; difficult to determine if there was support for Reagan administration's policies in Chile with the American public based on lack of information found in polls and printed literature, but Chilean's initial suspicion of Reagan's policies grew to enhanced relations with the U.S. after Aylwin was elected; Bush administration praised Aylwin's policies.

focus on the human rights violations that occurred during Pinochet's presidency impacted his change of policies towards Chile and support for democracy in the country; likely had a positive impact in improving Chile's relationship with the U.S.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE #3—DEGREE OF REGIME’S ECONOMIC RELIANCE UPON THE SOVIET UNION, TO INCLUDE DEGREE OF OPEN TRADING WITH THE U.S. AND A STRONGER PRIVATE SECTOR

	Independent Variables			
	#1	#2	#3	
<p>Before Reagan Took Office (1977-81)</p> <p>President Carter imposed military and economic restrictions on Chilean regime for failing to conduct investigations into Letelier-Moffit assassination case; Chilean government assumed country’s debt in order to maintain the country’s creditworthiness in the international financial markets.</p>	<p>Policy Actions by the Reagan Administration</p> <p>At beginning of administration, Reagan signals it wants to improve its relationship with Chile and prevent it from aligning with Soviet Union; Reagan administration officials praised Chile’s economic policies and their progress toward a free market system and urged the Chilean Government to continue its free market policies and its movement toward democracy in which the basic thrust of the neoconservative, market oriented economic order could be preserved.</p> <p>1981—U.S. UN Ambassador Kirkpatrick lobbies Congress to lift restrictions on military and economic aid.</p>	<p>Was there support for Reagan’s policies?</p> <p>In Chile—during the 1980s many voiced suspicion of Reagan’s policies; worried that excessive American interference in Chilean affairs could drive those who might otherwise be the key to a democratic transition in the country—business leaders, politicians of the center-right, and military dissidents—to rally around Pinochet.</p> <p>At Home—Congress lifts economic and military restrictions on Chile.</p>	<p>Alternative Factors at Work</p> <p>Pinochet implemented a program to modernize Chile’s economy; Pinochet’s economic policies were driven by the Chicago Boys who pushed free-market economic policies, foreign investment and loans, and denationalization of major sectors of the economy; trade reform also began and the Chilean government worked to dismantle its multilevel tariff schedule and reduce non-tariff barriers.</p>	<p>After Reagan Left Office (1989-93)</p> <p>By 1993, Chile had lowered its long-term debt by 30 percent through debt conversion and debt-equity swaps; Chile made noteworthy economic progress in the 1990s especially in contrast to the 1980s by turning toward market-oriented economic reforms and greater integration into the world economy and substantial foreign capital—some \$40 billion per year on average—started to enter the region in the 1990s.</p> <p>Bush administration and Aylwin’s government came to a resolution of the Letelier assassination by agreeing to a bilateral mediation mechanism and compensation of the victims’ families; Chile received \$1.1 million in military aid from the U.S. in 1992; Chile’s Defense Minister signed a broad-ranging agreement with the Pentagon and Chile was provided with aid for education, training, logistics,</p>

Pinochet abolished political parties, press censorship, repression of opposition.

Reagan administration did not push the Pinochet government on its human rights violations for fear that doing so would open the door to Marxist-Lenin totalitarian regimes.

In Chile—the Reagan administration's new approach to Chile was not enough to insulate Pinochet from pressure to reform as many Chileans had not forgiven him for destroying liberal democracy and resented him for their economic hardship; by the mid 1980s the Chilean opposition reorganized and

After the 1982 economic collapse, which occurred because of the sudden onset of the Latin American debt crisis, economic reforms provided the basis for a dramatic and sustained period of economic growth; Chile sought to engage foreign markets more aggressively and open itself to international competition.

and operations as well as being reincorporated into the Foreign Military Sales program; a few issues complicated the U.S.-Chilean relationship including the removal of Chilean fruit from U.S. supermarkets in 1991 by the FDA due to tainted grapes and the U.S. also objected to Chile's intellectual property legislation, particularly the copying of drug patents; nonetheless, by 1991 the U.S. replaced Japan as Chile's largest trading partner.

1990-1992—Aylwin's government was prevented from achieving many of the goals it had set out to achieve, such as the restructuring of the Constitutional Court and the reduction of Pinochet's political power because Pinochet remained influential.

Implemented Chacarilla Plan to transition to authoritarian democracy.

1980—new Constitution approved by 2/3 Chileans; Pinochet said it would protect Chileans from threat of external and internal Marxist threat; create political party participation, reaffirm concepts of authoritarian democracy. Constitution granted Pinochet expanded powers.

Reagan administration recognizes Pinochet regime is authoritarian but implements policy of silent diplomacy to maintain cooperation with Chile because of its strategic location to provide hemispheric defense against Soviets.

Reagan administration concerned that Pinochet's rule not giving way to an open government; 1984—new policy toward Chile; silent diplomacy abandoned because of concerns over human rights violations, violence, and radicalization; restoration of democracy primary objective.

1985—Reagan named Barnes as new Ambassador to Chile; Barnes and Shultz developed three-fold policy for U.S. relations with Chile to improve relations to include support for Chile's economic

called for democratic reforms.

At Home—Most Congress members on either side of the political party spectrum favored Reagan's new approach to the Chilean government in 1984 when it began promoting democracy in the nation-state, with the exception of Senator Jesse Helms.

In Chile—Pinochet vocal with complaints against U.S. involvement in and concern with Chile; some Chileans worried that increased attention from Washington might reflect the Reagan administration's need to show opposition to governments of the right along with those of the left.

At Home—Senator Helms publicly criticized the Reagan administration for sending Barnes to Chile and interfering in Chilean political affairs.

Concerns over human rights violations in Chile impacted Reagan administration's position towards the Chilean government; humanitarian values like democracy and respect for human rights into the forefront of the foreign policy agenda.

Throughout early 1990s, Pinochet maintained a sort of shadow authoritarian government made up of a military and civilian group determined to prevent Chile from lapsing into another Allende-style revolution.

1990-May 1992—The 1980 Constitution ensured the continued influence of Pinochet and his commanders, making the transition to democratic rule a difficult step for the Aylwin Government; but in June 1992 Aylwin's administration initiated direct municipal elections and altered power relations in its favor in the state, in civil society, and in political society; by 1993 press and nongovernmental organizations more influential; greater representation for indigenous peoples, and diversity grew; women gained more political rights; the protection of human rights were enhanced.

programs; Barnes praised Chile's economic reforms.

1986-1988—Reagan endorsed five UN resolutions critical of Pinochet's human rights record; the administration favored democracy in Chile that preserved a neoconservative, market oriented economy.

1986—Reagan administration, led by Shultz, sponsored a resolution at March 1986 meeting of UN Human rights Commission in Geneva; resolution called for Pinochet to end use of torture and human rights abuses; approved by 43-member commission.

1987—Shultz continued his efforts to improve U.S.-Chilean relations and bring about democratic change in Chile; judged he was having impact

1988—U.S. Congress votes to give \$1 million to National Endowment for Democracy to use in Chile to support an

In Chile—Pinochet responded by stating U.S. diplomats can not resolve Chile's internal politics and criticized U.S. for interfering in Chile's democratic affairs.

At Home—Jesse Helms and like-minded staff opposed Shultz's efforts; some members of the White House also disapproved of Shultz's policies; 1986—Chile applied for \$250 million loan from World Bank and U.S. abstained on loan's approval, frustrating Shultz who viewed U.S. message to Chile as ambiguous at best.

In Chile—Pinochet viewed resolution as US interference in Chile's affairs.

In Chile—Shultz received a message from Chile's new Foreign Minister who pledged to adhere to democratic principles that govern the Western world.

At Home—Congressional support for measure.

In Chile—Chilean

	<p>open and honest electoral process.</p> <p>1988—Support for Pinochet’s opposition to vote against extending Pinochet’s rule for another 8-years; leads to 54.5% vote for Pinochet’s ouster.</p>	<p>government responded by accusing U.S. authorities of receiving Marxists and of being uninformed about Chile’s political circumstances.</p> <p>At Home—57% of American participants in a poll from “Americans Talk Security” in June 1988 responded that they did not know what their opinion was of Pinochet, 15% said that Pinochet was unfavorable, and 6% said that he was favorable.</p>	
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WAS THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION SUCCESSFUL IN IMPROVING CHILE’S ECONOMY SO THAT WAS NOT RELIANT UPON THE SOVIET UNION AND HAD OPEN TRADING WITH THE U.S. AND A STRONGER PRIVATE SECTOR? No, although Chile’s economy was in a greater position in 1993 than it was in 1977, and by 1993 Chile had open trading with the U.S., it does not appear that the Reagan administration can claim all of the credit; the Chilean government’s policies during the 1970s appears to have turned around the country’s economic situation.

RANKING	#2	#3	#1
	<p>Policy goals undertaken by Reagan administration suggests that the U.S. helped to improve Chile’s economic situation, but the Reagan administration likely cannot claim all of the credit; Reagan administration officials praised Pinochet’s economic policies; Reagan signaled in 1984 that improved relations with Chile was a key policy goal; U.S. support for Pinochet’s opposition probably contributed to the vote against Pinochet in 1988 and Aylwin’s election in 1990; following Aylwin’s election, economic situation improved.</p>	<p>Congressional support for the administration’s policies was positive overall; some Chilean’s were suspicious of Reagan’s policies and voiced concern that American interference could drive those who might otherwise be the key to a democratic transition in the country to rally around Pinochet; Chile’s former Minister of Finance Hernán Büchi Buc argued that the Chilean government’s decisions to open trade, strengthen Chilean firms, and open its economy up to the rest of the world as the reasons why the Chilean economy turned around.</p>	<p>Pinochet’s economic policies, driven by the Chicago Boys, likely had a positive influence in the implementation of free market economic policies, foreign investment, and trade reform; U.S. involvement in securing Aylwin’s election probably helped to improve Chile’s trade relationship with the U.S.; during the Bush administration Chile made noteworthy economic progress; the U.S. replaced Japan as Chile’s largest trading partner.</p>

Appendix B: Findings for the Reagan Administration’s Success in Nicaragua

DEPENDENT VARIABLE #1—DEGREE OF REGIME ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNISM				
	Independent Variables			
	#1	#2	#3	
<p>Before Reagan Took Office (1977-81) In 1979 a Marxist-led coalition called the Sandinistas overthrew the Somoza dictatorship.</p> <p>Sandinistas promised free elections, freedom of the press, free enterprise, and an independent judiciary; Carter administration responded by requesting \$75 million in aid an additional \$105 million was loaned or donated; U.S. conservatives worried that Carter was aiding Cuba and the Soviet Union establish a beachhead on the American mainland.</p>	<p>Policy Actions by the Reagan Administration By February 1981, Reagan had turned off all economic aid to Nicaragua to weaken the Sandinistas hold on power; by the end of 1981 Reagan endorsed the CIA’s plan for covert support to contras to wage war against Sandinistas.</p> <p>Reagan’s policy toward Nicaragua was “the fulfillment of the pledges made by the Sandinistas to the OAS in 1979 to establish a pluralist, political system; the termination of security and military ties with the Soviet bloc and Cuba, and departure of those countries’ security and military personnel from Nicaragua; the cessation of all material and logistical support for insurgencies and for terrorism in the region; and the reduction of Nicaragua’s military apparatus to a level commensurate with those of its neighbors; Reagan administration judged that its assistance to the contras would maintain pressure on the Sandinistas to open</p>	<p>Was there support for Reagan’s policies? In Nicaragua—Sandinistas in 1982 charged that the Reagan administration was trying to destabilize Nicaragua and take control of the country; Ortega took these accusations to the UN Security Council.</p> <p>In Nicaragua—Contra leaders began to resent being compared to the Founding Fathers of the U.S. and judged that Nicaragua was of little importance to Washington because Washington was not sending troops to the region.</p>	<p>Alternative Factors at Work</p> <p>Soviet involvement in Nicaragua did not reach the relevance it did in Cuba, but the Soviets remained involved in Nicaraguan affairs during the 1980s.</p>	<p>After Reagan Left Office (1989-93) By 1989 the Nicaraguan economy was in dire straits, government agencies were reorganized leaving many Nicaraguans unemployed.</p> <p>Ortega in February 1989 met with five Central American presidents and offered to move up the date of the presidential election from late 1990 to February 1990; Central American presidents also offered to put together a plan to demobilize contras in 90 days.</p>

Sandinistas did not create a free government, but instead allied themselves with Castro and Moscow and began establishing a dictatorship; Carter administration suspended economic aid to Nicaragua and sent \$10 million in arms and equipment, as well as 19 military advisers to El Salvador.

By the early 1980s, Cuba had taken control of Nicaragua's security and military forces to extend its military shield.

Nicaraguan society to legitimate political dissent. Reagan reviewed Carter's decision and confirmed it on 1 April 1981.

Reagan in 1982 acknowledged that the U.S. was supporting small scale military operations to pressure the Sandinista government; Reagan gave his first televised speech explaining the contras to the American public on 9 May 1984.

At Home—Reagan's policies worried some Congress members—particularly Boland and O'Neil; House of Representatives in December 1982 passed the Boland Amendment which prohibited the Department of Defense and the CIA from providing military equipment, training, or advice for the purposes of overthrowing the Nicaraguan regime; Congress passed the amendment in October 1984; many Americans argued that Reagan's explanation of the contras came too late and most Americans did not understand what the U.S. was

Bush administration negotiated a bipartisan accord with Congress to deny military aid to contras and allowed humanitarian aid.

Assistance from Cuba and the Soviet bloc both in military and economic terms gained strength in the late 1980s, contributing to Nicaragua's open allegiance to the Soviet Union.

	<p>During the November 1984 presidential election in Nicaragua, Reagan sent confusing signals to the Nicaraguan opposition, and those that favored a boycott of the election gained an upper hand; in the wake of the election Reagan stepped up his efforts to destabilize the Sandinista government, including openly seeking assistance for the Contras.</p>	<p>fighting for; polls found that large numbers of Americans cared little or not at all about what happened in Nicaragua and few cared about a communist penetration of the region.</p> <p>At Home—Congress approved \$27 million in non-lethal aid to the contras; NSC from 1985-86 raised \$37 million in lethal aid for the contras; Americans also began donating money and supplies; but Congressional support for Reagan’s policies in Nicaragua began to diminish in late 1984.</p> <p>In Nicaragua—Ortega in 1985 pressed the U.S. to sign a neutrality protocol Nicaragua.</p>		<p>Sandinistas’ opposition in September 1989 selected Chamorro as their candidate for president, and the FSLN selected Ortega; Bush administration provided economic assistance to Chamorro’s campaign; in October 1989 Congress approved \$9 million for the promotion of democracy in Nicaragua—\$2.5 million was designated for Chamorro; in February 1990 Chamorro secured the presidency.</p>
	<p>U.S. in 1986 encouraged contras to participate in Arias Plan, but Reagan continued to push Congress to provide military aid and called Ortega’s plan to hold talks with the contras flawed.</p>	<p>At Home—Congress rejected Reagan’s argument that Ortega’s plan was flawed and many Congress members said the U.S. should support the Arias Plan.</p> <p>In Nicaragua—Ortega in January 1988 sent a letter to Reagan asking the U.S. to cease its support of the contras and respect the sovereignty of Nicaragua.</p>	<p>By 1988 the Soviet Union was providing the Sandinista army with material supplies, and when Mexico and Venezuela stopped supplying Nicaragua with oil due to U.S. pressures, the Soviets filled the void; the total amount of Soviet economic aid was estimated at U.S. \$2 billion; in 1989 these policies changed because of mounting economic difficulties facing the Soviet Union and the Soviets reduced their assistance to Nicaragua; the Soviets also joined in efforts</p>	

		to bring about a peaceful resolution to the situation in Nicaragua; months before Reagan left office the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs in October 1989 stressed the Soviets interest in carrying out a joint monitoring of Nicaragua's crisis together with the U.S.	
			In May 1990 the Sandinistas, UNO, and the contras signed an agreement for a formal ceasefire; the contras completed their demobilization on 26 June 1990.
			By the early 1990s, Chamorro's government was making progress toward consolidating democratic institutions, advancing national reconciliation, stabilizing the economy, privatizing state owned enterprises, and reducing human rights violations.
<p>WAS THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION SUCCESSFUL IN MOVING NICARAGUA AWAY FROM COMMUNISM? No. By 1993, Nicaragua was less aligned with the Soviet bloc than it was in 1977, but according to my findings alternative factors including Ortega's support for new elections in 1990, and Soviet disinterest in the Nicaraguan situation in the late 1980s, as well as the Bush administration's support for demobilization of the contras in 1990 had more of an impact than Reagan's policies in moving Nicaragua away from communism.</p>			
RANKING	#3	#2	#1
	Reagan's support for the contras was designed to move Nicaragua away from the Soviet Union, but his support for the contras angered many in Nicaragua and frustrated Americans and those in Congress, and by the time his	Americans and Nicaraguans became frustrated with Reagan's policies in Nicaragua by the late 1980s; Congress rejected Reagan's argument that Ortega's plan was flawed and many Congress members said the	Several regional factors appear to have moved Nicaragua away from the Soviet bloc by the time this research ended in 1993 including Ortega's change in policies in the late 1980s, Soviet disinterest in

presidency ended, many Nicaraguans charged that Reagan was trying to take control of the country.

U.S. should support the Arias Plan; opposition in Congress pushed Reagan in the late 1980s to respect Nicaraguan sovereignty and end U.S. support for the contras.

Nicaragua in the late 1980s and Soviet support for a peaceful solution to the Nicaraguan situation as well as a joint monitoring of the crisis together with the U.S., the Bush administration also supported the demobilization of the contras and the Chamorro government.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE #2—DEGREE OF REGIME COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

	Independent Variables			
	#1	#2	#3	
<p>Before Reagan Took Office (1977-81) In 1979 a Marxist-led coalition called the Sandinistas overthrew the Somoza dictatorship.</p> <p>Sandinistas promised free elections, freedom of the press, free enterprise, and an independent judiciary; Carter administration responded by requesting \$75 million in aid an additional \$105 million was loaned or donated; U.S. conservatives worried that Carter was aiding Cuba and the Soviet Union establish a beachhead on the American mainland.</p>	<p>Policy Actions by the Reagan Administration Reagan viewed cooperation with the Nicaraguan government as an important factor in denying the Soviet Union a beachhead in North America, but he realized that cooperation with the Nicaraguan government would ultimately have to come after the Sandinista government was removed from power; by February 1981, Reagan had turned off all economic aid to Nicaragua to weaken the Sandinistas hold on power; by the end of 1981 Reagan endorsed the CIA's plan for covert support to contras to wage war against Sandinistas. Reagan's policy toward Nicaragua was "the fulfillment of the pledges made by the Sandinistas to the OAS in 1979 to establish a pluralist, political system; the termination of security and military ties with the Soviet bloc and Cuba, and departure of those countries' security and military personnel from Nicaragua; the cessation of all material and logistical support for</p>	<p>Was there support for Reagan's policies? In Nicaragua—Sandinistas in 1982 charged that the Reagan administration was trying to destabilize Nicaragua and take control of the country; Ortega took these accusations to the UN Security Council.</p> <p>In Nicaragua—Contra leaders began to resent being compared to the Founding Fathers of the U.S. and judged that Nicaragua was of little importance to Washington because Washington was not sending troops to the region.</p>	<p>Alternative Factors at Work</p> <p>Soviet involvement in Nicaragua did not reach the relevance it did in Cuba, but the Soviets remained involved in Nicaraguan affairs during the 1980s.</p>	<p>After Reagan Left Office (1989-93) By 1989 the Nicaraguan economy was in dire straits, government agencies were reorganized leaving many Nicaraguans unemployed.</p> <p>Ortega in February 1989 met with five Central American presidents and offered to move up the date of the presidential election from late 1990 to February 1990; Central American presidents also offered to put together a plan to demobilize contras in 90 days.</p>

Sandinistas did not create a free government, but instead allied themselves with Castro and Moscow and began establishing a dictatorship; Carter administration suspended economic aid to Nicaragua and sent \$10 million in arms and equipment, as well as 19 military advisers to El Salvador. By the early 1980s, Cuba had taken control of Nicaragua's security and military forces to extend its military shield.

insurgencies and for terrorism in the region; and the reduction of Nicaragua's military apparatus to a level commensurate with those of its neighbors; Reagan administration judged that its assistance to the contras would maintain pressure on the Sandinistas to open Nicaraguan society to legitimate political dissent and improve its relationship with the U.S. Reagan reviewed Carter's decision and confirmed it on 1 April 1981.

Reagan in 1982 acknowledged that the U.S. was supporting small scale military operations to pressure the Sandinista government; Reagan gave his first televised speech

At Home—Reagan's policies worried some Congress members—particularly Boland and O'Neil; House of Representatives in December 1982 passed the Boland Amendment which prohibited

Assistance from Cuba and the Soviet bloc both in military and economic terms gained strength in the late 1980s, contributing to Nicaragua's open allegiance to the Soviet Union.

Bush administration negotiated a bipartisan accord with Congress to deny military aid to contras and allowed humanitarian aid.

	<p>explaining the contras to the American public on 9 May 1984.</p> <p>During the November 1984 presidential election in Nicaragua, Reagan sent confusing signals to the Nicaraguan opposition, and those that favored a boycott of the election gained an upper hand; in the wake of the election Reagan stepped up his efforts to destabilize the Sandinista government, including openly seeking assistance for the Contras.</p>	<p>the Department of Defense and the CIA from providing military equipment, training, or advice for the purposes of overthrowing the Nicaraguan regime; Congress passed the amendment in October 1984; many Americans argued that Reagan’s explanation of the contras came too late and most Americans did not understand what the U.S. was fighting for; polls found that large numbers of Americans cared little or not at all about what happened in Nicaragua and few cared about a communist penetration of the region.</p> <p>At Home—Congress approved \$27 million in non-lethal aid to the contras; NSC from 1985-86 raised \$37 million in lethal aid for the contras; Americans also began donating money and supplies; but Congressional support for Reagan’s policies in Nicaragua began to diminish in late 1984.</p> <p>In Nicaragua—Ortega in 1985 pressed the U.S. to sign a neutrality protocol Nicaragua.</p>		<p>Sandinistas’ opposition in September 1989 selected Chamorro as their candidate for president, and the FSLN selected Ortega; Bush administration provided economic assistance to Chamorro’s campaign; in October 1989 Congress approved \$9 million for the promotion of democracy in Nicaragua—\$2.5 million was designated for Chamorro; in February 1990 Chamorro secured the presidency.</p>
	<p>U.S. in 1986 encouraged contras to participate in Arias Plan, but Reagan continued to push Congress to provide military aid and called</p>	<p>At Home—Congress rejected Reagan’s argument that Ortega’s plan was flawed and many Congress members said the U.S. should support the</p>	<p>By 1988 the Soviet Union was providing the Sandinista army with material supplies, and when Mexico and Venezuela stopped supplying</p>	

	<p>Ortega's plan to hold talks with the contras flawed.</p>	<p>Arias Plan.</p> <p>In Nicaragua—Ortega in January 1988 sent a letter to Reagan asking the U.S. to cease its support of the contras and respect the sovereignty of Nicaragua.</p>	<p>Nicaragua with oil due to U.S. pressures, the Soviets filled the void; the total amount of Soviet economic aid was estimated at U.S. \$2 billion; in 1989 these policies changed because of mounting economic difficulties facing the Soviet Union and the Soviets reduced their assistance to Nicaragua; the Soviets also joined in efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution to the situation in Nicaragua; months before Reagan left office the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs in October 1989 stressed the Soviets interest in carrying out a joint monitoring of Nicaragua's crisis together with the U.S.</p>	
				<p>In May 1990 the Sandinistas, UNO, and the contras signed an agreement for a formal ceasefire; the contras completed their demobilization on 26 June 1990.</p>
				<p>By the early 1990s, Chamorro's government was making progress toward consolidating democratic institutions, advancing national reconciliation, stabilizing the economy, privatizing state owned enterprises, and reducing human rights violations ; relationship with U.S.</p>

WAS THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION SUCCESSFUL IN IMPROVING THE UNITED STATES' RELATIONSHIP WITH NICARAGUA? No, despite Nicaragua's improved relationship with the United States by the time this research ended in 1993, this was probably due to alternative factors and not Reagan's policies. Reagan's policies caused a great deal of tension at home and abroad and his disinterest in demobilizing the contras probably prolonged the strained relationship between Nicaragua and the United States during the 1980s.

RANKING

#3

Although Reagan initially wanted to improve the United States' relationship with the Nicaraguan regime, his support for the contras angered many in Nicaragua and by the time his presidency ended, many Nicaraguans charged that Reagan was trying to take control of the country; Reagan's policies in Nicaragua likely prolonged the tense relationship between the U.S. and Nicaragua; some blamed Reagan for the outcome of the 1984 election because liberal democracy did not take hold.

#2

American—including Congressional—support for improved relations with Nicaragua likely contributed to the United States' improved relationship with Nicaragua by the early 1990s; Congress rejected Reagan's argument that Ortega's plan was flawed and many Congress members said the U.S. should support the Arias Plan; opposition in Congress pushed Reagan in the late 1980s to respect Nicaraguan sovereignty and end U.S. support for the contras.

#1

Several regional factors appear to have improved Nicaragua's relationship with the U.S. including Ortega's change in policies in the late 1980s, Soviet disinterest in Nicaragua in the late 1980s and Soviet support for a peaceful solution to the Nicaraguan situation as well as a joint monitoring of the crisis together with the U.S., the Bush administration also supported the demobilization of the contras and the Chamorro government.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE #3—DEGREE OF REGIME’S ECONOMIC RELIANCE UPON THE SOVIET UNION, TO INCLUDE DEGREE OF OPEN TRADING WITH THE U.S. AND A STRONGER PRIVATE SECTOR

	Independent Variables			
	#1	#2	#3	
<p>Before Reagan Took Office (1977-81) In 1979 a Marxist-led coalition called the Sandinistas overthrew the Somoza dictatorship.</p> <p>Sandinistas promised free elections, freedom of the press, free enterprise, and an independent judiciary; Carter administration responded by requesting \$75 million in aid an additional \$105 million was loaned or donated; U.S. conservatives worried that Carter was aiding Cuba and the Soviet Union establish a beachhead on the American mainland.</p>	<p>Policy Actions by the Reagan Administration By February 1981, Reagan had turned off all economic aid to Nicaragua to weaken the Sandinistas hold on power; by the end of 1981 Reagan endorsed the CIA’s plan for covert support to contras to wage war against Sandinistas.</p> <p>Reagan’s policy toward Nicaragua was “the fulfillment of the pledges made by the Sandinistas to the OAS in 1979 to establish a pluralist, political system; the termination of security and military ties with the Soviet bloc and Cuba, and departure of those countries’ security and military personnel from Nicaragua; the cessation of all material and logistical support for insurgencies and for terrorism in the region; and the reduction of Nicaragua’s</p>	<p>Was there support for Reagan’s policies? In Nicaragua—Following the Reagan administration’s cessation of aid, inflation and unemployment rose, aid to the private sector dropped, incentives for foreign investors disappeared, and state controls and nationalization spread; by 1982 the Sandinistas charged that the Reagan administration was trying to destabilize Nicaragua and take control of the country; Ortega took these accusations to the UN Security Council. In Nicaragua—Contra leaders began to resent being compared to the Founding Fathers of the U.S. and judged that Nicaragua was of little importance to Washington because Washington was not sending troops to the region.</p>	<p>Alternative Factors at Work</p> <p>Soviet involvement in Nicaragua did not reach the relevance it did in Cuba, but the Soviets remained involved in Nicaraguan affairs during the 1980s.</p>	<p>After Reagan Left Office (1989-93) By 1989 the Nicaraguan economy was in dire straits, government agencies were reorganized leaving many Nicaraguans unemployed.</p> <p>Ortega in February 1989 met with five Central American presidents and offered to move up the date of the presidential election from late 1990 to February 1990; Central American presidents also offered to put together a plan to demobilize contras in 90 days.</p>

Sandinistas did not create a free government, but instead allied themselves with Castro and Moscow and began establishing a dictatorship; Carter administration suspended economic aid to Nicaragua and sent \$10 million in arms and equipment, as well as 19 military advisers to El Salvador. By the early 1980s, Cuba had taken control of Nicaragua's security and military forces to extend its military shield.

military apparatus to a level commensurate with those of its neighbors; Reagan administration judged that its assistance to the contras would maintain pressure on the Sandinistas to open Nicaraguan society to legitimate political dissent and improve its relationship with the U.S. Reagan reviewed Carter's decision and confirmed it on 1 April 1981.

Reagan in 1982 acknowledged that the U.S. was supporting small scale military operations to pressure the Sandinista government; Reagan gave his first televised speech explaining the contras to the American public on 9 May 1984.

At Home—Reagan's policies worried some Congress members—particularly Boland and O'Neil; House of Representatives in December 1982 passed the Boland Amendment which prohibited the Department of Defense and the CIA from providing military equipment, training,

Assistance from Cuba and the Soviet bloc both in military and economic terms gained strength in the late 1980s, contributing to Nicaragua's open allegiance to the Soviet Union.

Bush administration negotiated a bipartisan accord with Congress to deny military aid to contras and allowed humanitarian aid.

During the November 1984 presidential election in Nicaragua, Reagan sent confusing signals to the Nicaraguan opposition, and those that favored a boycott of the election gained an upper hand; in the wake of the election Reagan stepped up his efforts to destabilize the Sandinista government, including openly seeking assistance for the Contras.

U.S. in 1986 encouraged contras to participate in Arias Plan, but Reagan continued to push Congress to provide military aid and called Ortega's plan to hold talks with the contras flawed.

or advice for the purposes of overthrowing the Nicaraguan regime; Congress passed the amendment in October 1984; many Americans argued that Reagan's explanation of the contras came too late and most Americans did not understand what the U.S. was fighting for; polls found that large numbers of Americans cared little or not at all about what happened in Nicaragua and few cared about a communist penetration of the region.

At Home—Congress approved \$27 million in non-lethal aid to the contras; NSC from 1985-86 raised \$37 million in lethal aid for the contras; Americans also began donating money and supplies; but Congressional support for Reagan's policies in Nicaragua began to diminish in late 1984.

In Nicaragua—Ortega in 1985 pressed the U.S. to sign a neutrality protocol Nicaragua.

At Home—Congress rejected Reagan's argument that Ortega's plan was flawed and many Congress members said the U.S. should support the Arias Plan.

In Nicaragua—Ortega in

By 1988 the Soviet Union was providing the Sandinista army with material supplies, and when Mexico and Venezuela stopped supplying Nicaragua with oil due to U.S. pressures, the Soviets filled the void; the total

Sandinistas' opposition in September 1989 selected Chamorro as their candidate for president, and the FSLN selected Ortega; Bush administration provided economic assistance to Chamorro's campaign; in October 1989 Congress approved \$9 million for the promotion of democracy in Nicaragua—\$2.5 million was designated for Chamorro; in February 1990 Chamorro secured the presidency.

January 1988 sent a letter to Reagan asking the U.S. to cease its support of the contras and respect the sovereignty of Nicaragua.

amount of Soviet economic aid was estimated at U.S. \$2 billion; in 1989 these policies changed because of mounting economic difficulties facing the Soviet Union and the Soviets reduced their assistance to Nicaragua; the Soviets also joined in efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution to the situation in Nicaragua; months before Reagan left office the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs in October 1989 stressed the Soviets interest in carrying out a joint monitoring of Nicaragua's crisis together with the U.S.

In May 1990 the Sandinistas, UNO, and the contras signed an agreement for a formal ceasefire; the contras completed their demobilization on 26 June 1990.

By the early 1990s, Chamorro's government was making progress toward consolidating democratic institutions, advancing national reconciliation, stabilizing the economy, privatizing state owned enterprises, and reducing human rights violations ; relationship with U.S. beginning to improve.

WAS THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION SUCCESSFUL IN IMPROVING NICARAGUA'S ECONOMY SO THAT WAS NOT RELIANT UPON THE SOVIET UNION AND HAD OPEN TRADING WITH THE U.S. AND A STRONGER PRIVATE SECTOR? No, the Reagan administration

probably made the economic situation in Nicaragua worse through his support of the contras and denial of economic aid to the Nicaraguan government. In 1993 the Nicaraguan economy was showing signs of improvement, but this was likely due to Chamorro's election and her government's support for democratic development and an expansion of the economy, and the demobilization of the contras.

RANKING

#3

Reagan in April 1981 supported Carter's decision to cut off economic aid to the Nicaraguan government and the Soviet Union made up for the difference, strengthening relations between the two countries in the mid 1980s; Reagan's support for the contras and continued economic sanctions of the Nicaraguan regime probably contributed to Nicaragua's dire economic situation by the late 1980s.

#2

Americans and Nicaraguans became frustrated with Reagan's policies in Nicaragua by the late 1980s; Congress rejected Reagan's argument that Ortega's plan was flawed and many Congress members said the U.S. should support the Arias Plan; opposition in Congress pushed Reagan in the late 1980s to respect Nicaraguan sovereignty and end U.S. support for the contras.

#1

Several regional factors appear to have somewhat improved Nicaragua's economic situation by 1993 Soviet disinterest in Nicaragua in the late 1980s and Chamorro's election.

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