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A New World A New American Foreign Policy

The Carter Administration, Nicaragua, and the Legacy of the Vietnam War, 1977-1981

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Table of Contents

Declaration.....III

Abstract.....IV

Acknowledgments.....V

List of Abbreviations.....IX

List of United States Abbreviations.....XIV

Introduction.....1

Part One: Carter's Policy in Context **41**

Chapter 1 – Neglect, Anxiety and Inconsistency: The Background to Carter's Nicaraguan Policy.....42

Part Two: The Carter - Somoza Years **82**

Chapter 2 – 1977: Failing to Establish a Nicaraguan Policy.....83

Chapter 3 – The assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and the significance of the US response.....113

Chapter 4 – From Non-Intervention to Mediation: the US Reaction to the National Palace Capture.....143

Chapter 5 – The Fall of Somoza: A Symptom of America's 'Lost Confidence'.....175

Part Three: The Carter –Junta Years **210**

Chapter 6 – After Somoza: The Ghosts of Economic Alliance and "Falling Dominoes".....211

Chapter 7 – Foundations of Tension: The CIA Counter-Argument and the Emergence of Domestic Dominoes in Nicaragua.....244

Chapter 8 – The Fruition of Tension: Lack of US Consensus, Falling Dominoes and the Path to Ronald Reagan.....274

Conclusion.....306

Bibliography.....314

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Introduction

> *It is a new world, but America should not fear it. It is a new world, and we should help to shape it. It is a new world that calls for a new American foreign policy – a policy based on constant decency in its values and an optimism in our historical vision.*
>
> ***Jimmy Carter, May 22, 1977, Notre Dame University***[1]

The above words by Jimmy Carter emphasised the importance of the United States shaping a new world. It was a new world characterised by an increasing presence of Third World nations asserting their desire to be equal, and confirmed the limits of American power. US defeat in the Vietnam War, coupled with international crises such as the oil crisis of the early 1970s and domestic crises such as Watergate, placed the United States at a crossroads. The US public and their elected representatives had lost the confidence that defined them before the Vietnam War as the world's leading power. Carter was the first elected president since US defeat in Indochina and the responsibility, therefore, fell on him to regain his nation's sense of identity in global affairs. Carter based America's new foreign policy on promoting human rights in the world.

In Central America, the main endeavour of the new US foreign policy was to return the Canal Zone to Panama. The resulting Panama Canal Treaties suggest that the Carter administration took the opportunity to shape a more equal isthmus that respected the sovereignty of Latin American nations. Yet, paradoxically, there was another instance in Central America, in which the influence of the Vietnam War

[1] Jimmy Carter, 'University of Notre Dame: Address at Commencement Exercises at the University, May 22, 1977', in *Jimmy Carter: 1977 (in two books), [Book 1]*, 957, Washington: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1977-1978 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Library 2005), http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ppotpus;idno=4732130.1977.001 (September 27, 2011).

impeded the Carter administration from shaping this growing sense of equality. The Nicaraguan revolution was a prime example in which the legacies of the Vietnam War restricted Carter's aim to shape the changing world. The Nicaraguan revolution saw the fall of the forty-three year old Somoza regime on July 19, 1979, by a coalition of forces led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN or pejoratively known as the Sandinistas). It is crucial to evaluate US policy towards Nicaragua, because the country's leader, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, was an example of the US's long support of repressive regimes that maintained order in regions of economic interest to the United States. Taking into account he had already set in motion a return of the Canal Zone to Panama, an area annexed by the US in 1903 to strengthen American economic trade in the region, the Nicaraguan revolution represented an opportunity for Carter to shape a new and more respectful relationship with the Central American country. It also provided the opportunity to reclaim the confidence lost from the defeat in Vietnam because the possibility was there for the US to create a new constructive relationship, based on diplomatic cooperation, with its southern neighbours.

This thesis argues, however, that the legacies of the Vietnam War, which will be elaborated on later in the chapter, caused the Carter administration not to recognise the opportunity that Nicaragua represented. Anxious about US intervention in another country's affairs, the Carter administration decided against active diplomatic engagement with the nations of Latin America to resolve the Nicaraguan crisis. Accordingly, the Carter administration missed a golden opportunity to influence a transition of power in Nicaragua from Somoza to a democratic government. Instead, the Carter administration pursued a policy of non-intervention, despite encouragement from Latin American nations such as Venezuela

and Panama to be actively engaged in resolving the conflict. This policy marginalised the US from its Latin American neighbours and allowed a greater Cuban influence in the Nicaraguan revolution, which provided the Sandinistas with the final push to overthrow Somoza and establish a strong left-wing element in Nicaragua's new government.[2]

[2] Although the Vietnam War had many legacies, the umbrella term 'Vietnam legacy' is used in the thesis to describe the overall influences of the Vietnam War on the Carter administration's foreign policy. Like previous scholarship, this dissertation refers to specific traits of the Vietnam legacy, such as the 'memory' and 'syndrome' of the Vietnam War. The use of 'syndrome' refers to the fear held by US government officials or US citizens to intervene in foreign lands as an effective means of supporting United States interests in the world. The use of 'memory' refers to US recollection of the Vietnam War and its negative consequences for the United States. The 'Vietnam syndrome' is an important aspect of this thesis. Not only did Carter see US intervention in Nicaragua as immoral and counterproductive to US-Latin American relations. Due to the failure of military operations in the Vietnam War, Carter and some of his officials had developed anxieties about the use of military intervention in foreign affairs. Sources in relation to the 'Vietnam syndrome' will be referenced later in the introduction because a lot of the sources mentioned in relation to the Vietnam legacy, also refer to the 'Vietnam syndrome'. The 'memory' of the Vietnam War will prove to be important in an implicit sense because high ranking officials in the Carter administration, such as Cyrus Vance and Jimmy Carter himself, would have originally supported intervention in Vietnam, but came to regret it, hence their anxiety to use intervention during the Carter administration. Another important phrase on the legacy of the Vietnam War is 'lessons'. This reflects the opinions of not only Carter and Vance to US defeat in the Vietnam War, but also other high ranking officials like National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, and what they felt were the key lessons to be learned from the defeat. In the case of Vance, for example, a key lesson learned was that the United States needed to limit its foreign intervention, while a key lesson for Brzezinski was that the US needed to maintain its military muscle to contain communism, while simultaneously acknowledging the growing sense of egalitarianism expressed by Third World nations. In other words, the lessons from the Vietnam War will vary from person to person depending on their opinions, while a legacy can be seen through a collective anxiety expressed by a group, for example, such as Carter, Vance and other US officials wanting to limit foreign intervention, or the reaction of another group to that anxiety, such as Brzezinski and others within the US government emphasising that the United States needed to use its military muscle. On the whole, the 'lessons' of Vietnam will come under the umbrella term 'legacy'. Important sources on the Vietnam memory are: Julia Bleakney, *Revisiting Vietnam: memories, memorials, museums* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Kenton J. Clymer, *The Vietnam War: its history, literature and music* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1998); John Carlos Rowe and Rick Berg, eds., *The Vietnam War and American culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Benjamin DeCarvalho, 'War Hurts: Vietnam Movies and the Memory of a Lost War', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3, (2006), 951 – 962; Katherine Kinney, *Friendly fire: American images of the Vietnam War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); P. Uchmanowicz, 'Vanishing Vietnam: Whiteness and the Technology of Memory', *Literature and Psychology*, Vol. 41, No. 4, (1995), 30-50; Keith Beattie, *The Scar That Binds: American Culture and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Jerry Lembcke, *The spitting image: myth, memory, and the legacy of Vietnam* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Marita Sturken, *Tangled memories: the Vietnam War, the AIDS epidemic, and the politics of remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009); Fred Turner, *Echoes of combat: the Vietnam War in American memory* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996); Hŏn-ik Kwŏn, *Ghosts of war in Vietnam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); David Ryan, *US collective memory, intervention and Vietnam: the cultural politics of US foreign policy since 1969* (London: Routledge, forthcoming); Melani McAlister, 'A Cultural History of the War without End', *The Journal of*

The introduction will first outline the three contexts fundamental to understanding US foreign policy post-World War II, and how these relate to the Carter administration and Nicaragua. Secondly, the aims and objectives of the thesis will be established. Thirdly, the methodology will follow, outlining the type of research and the archives and libraries used to write this thesis. Fourthly, the literature review will analyse and evaluate the work already produced on US-Nicaraguan relations during the Carter era and sources on the Nicaraguan revolution. The literature review will also analyse and evaluate research on the United States' post-Vietnam foreign policy. Taking into account that there is a large body of post-Vietnam research, it will only be the literature that has directly influenced this thesis. By outlining the literature on US-Nicaraguan relations during the Carter era, the Nicaraguan revolution, and the selection of post-Vietnam literature that has influenced this work, the literature review will outline the gap in the research that is filled by the thesis. Finally, the structure of the thesis will be outlined, mapping the different sections, the main argument in each chapter, and their collective meaning.

The Carter administration and US Foreign Policy in Context

There are three contexts fundamental to understanding US foreign policy post-World War II: the Cold War; North-South relations; and US defeat in the Vietnam War. After the Second World War, the United States was challenged by its newly expanded role in global affairs. Although it tried to aid the rebuilding of Europe after the war, there was an ideological rift and nuclear stand-off with the Soviet Union that created a bipolar world. The Cold War between the two superpowers meant that like the post-World War II administrations before it, the

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American History, Vol. 89, No. 2, History and September 11: A Special Issue (September, 2002), 439-455.

Carter administration had to factor in the extent of a Soviet threat when forming its policy towards a particular country or region. Like other post-World War II administrations, moreover, the Carter administration had to factor in that the world was not that simple. There was a more complex North-South context that influenced US foreign policy, characterised by international organisations that emphasised the importance of multilateral diplomacy, such as the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Decolonisation meant that there were more states and new issues were on the international agenda, such as the maintenance and promotion of basic human rights, over-population, under-development, disease, terrorism, sustainable growth and pollution. The Carter administration had to negotiate both contexts in its foreign policy. For example, although Carter saw human rights as the basis of his new style foreign policy, Iran was such an important ally in the ideological struggle with communism that its appalling human rights record was tolerated. Furthermore, in regard to the persecution of Soviet dissidents like Anatoly Shcharansky and restrictions on Jewish emigration from the USSR, Carter had to tone down criticisms for the sake of maintaining progress in negotiations on national security aims such as the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II).[3]

In addition to balancing both the Cold War and North-South contexts, the Carter administration was the first elected government since US defeat in the Vietnam War. It therefore had to factor in that the United States was in a period of transition, a post-Vietnam era where its status as the leading world power was in question at both home and abroad. The Carter administration, as will be seen in the thesis, tried to create a new post-Vietnam foreign policy for the United States that

[3] Alan P. Dobson and Steve Marsh, *U.S. Foreign Policy since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2001), 3, 13-14, http://www.questia.com/library/102241659/u-s-foreign-policy-since-1945 (August 2, 2012).

acknowledged the limits of American military power, but also tried to maintain democracy as the ideology that other nations should follow. The contexts of the Cold War, North-South relations, and the legacy of the Vietnam War, combined to create a US foreign policy based on promoting human rights around the world, but which could also use force if there was a direct threat from the Soviet Union in the Third World. The Carter administration had created a foreign policy that recognised the limits of US intervention as exemplified from the defeat in Vietnam. It also realised, however, that there were relatively new states in the world that were still finding their way; new nations that could, from the perspective of the US government, be negatively influenced by communism and the Soviet Union.

In sum, the contexts of the Cold War, North-South relations, and the legacy of US defeat in the Vietnam War, are fundamental to understanding the Carter administration's overall foreign policy. This thesis concentrates on Carter's policy towards Nicaragua and emphasises the context of the Vietnam War because these in conjunction have not been studied in detail. However, as will be seen in the thesis, the contexts of the Cold War and North-South relations (through inter-American relations between the United States and the Western Hemisphere) are also paramount. Furthermore, the contexts often combine, with the Vietnam legacy and North-South relations, for example, intertwining within the framework of human rights and its use as a US foreign policy during the Carter era.

Aims and Objectives

Firstly, the thesis aims to show that the legacy of the Vietnam War was a fundamental influence on the Carter administration's Nicaraguan policy before the fall of Somoza. President Carter, his Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and his

National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, had post-Vietnam perspectives on how the United States should pursue its foreign policy. Their viewpoints influenced a policy of US non-intervention towards the Nicaraguan revolution. The United States wanted to leave Somoza and his opponents to resolve their own problems. This policy accommodated Carter and Vance's anxiety about overseas intervention after Vietnam, and the limits of American power. It also factored in Brzezinski's belief that the US should only intervene in regions at immediate threat from the Soviet Union. Brzezinski's National Security Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean, Robert A. Pastor, felt that Latin America as a whole was not in immediate threat from communism.

The second aim of the thesis is to highlight that the legacy of the Vietnam War was still implicit in Carter's policy after the fall of Somoza. With a leftist element at the core of Nicaragua's new government, the Carter administration felt there was an increased threat of Cuban and Soviet influence spreading across Central America. The fear of falling dominoes made the Carter administration more active in the region, promoting a policy of economic diplomacy to aid Nicaragua's new government and the reconstruction of the country. Through this policy, the Carter administration felt they could prevent the region falling into the hands of communism. Hence, the Vietnam legacy of the domino theory influenced Carter to become more active in the region. Although this was a constructive response, not all segments of the US government were content with economic diplomacy. A counter-argument emerged, guided by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that called for economic assistance to be cut off to the Nicaraguan government, as it was feared that such aid would be diverted to further revolution in the region. As will be seen, the

antagonism in the US government over these perspectives led to increasing turmoil in Nicaragua and jeopardised the country's reconstruction.

These aims are achieved through two objectives. Firstly, it is important to realise how the Carter administration developed its policy towards Nicaragua. This objective is fulfilled by analysing US government documentation from the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and the National Security Archive. Determining the extent to which there was cooperation or argument within the US Executive and Congress, by researching US congressional hearings, also leads to a greater understanding in this respect. It reveals that the Carter administration had to balance competing viewpoints in the White House National Security Council and the Department of State. It also had to factor in lobby groups in Congress that were either in favour or not in favour of supporting the Somoza led government and its successor. Accordingly, the Carter government failed to commit to the one perspective that would have enabled it to establish a new foreign policy towards the region and improve its relations with the Western Hemisphere. Openly criticising the Somoza regime's human rights abuse and cutting off aid would have allowed the US government to maintain active involvement in the region. The Carter administration's commitment to non-intervention early in its term, however, meant that the United States became increasingly marginalised from the crisis. The emphasis on non-intervention also stopped the Carter administration from creating strong diplomatic links with the opposition that ousted Somoza in July 1979. This put Carter's policy of economic diplomacy at a disadvantage because the groundwork had not been done earlier in the presidency.

Secondly, with the US wanting to decrease its role in the Americas, it is fundamental to evaluate the Latin American reaction to this policy. Through

documents in the Jimmy Carter Library and the National Security Archive, it is possible to show that countries like Venezuela, although supportive of Carter's promotion of human rights, wanted the United States to openly oppose the Somoza regime. The Venezuelan government made it quite clear to the US that they would actively aim to depose Somoza. Despite growing intelligence that Venezuela and other countries, such as Costa Rica, Panama and Cuba, were helping the Sandinistas, the Carter administration decided to continue with non-intervention. This left space for the Nicaraguan revolution to escalate. When the Carter administration responded to the increased turmoil by promoting a mediation process between Somoza and his opponents, it was evident that the Carter administration lost its opportunity to influence a smooth resolution. Venezuela by this time stopped seeking US involvement. This marginalised the United States from a resolution because it depended on countries like Venezuela to negotiate on its behalf with the Sandinistas. With the US marginalised, this in turn allowed for an increased Cuban influence which consolidated the Sandinistas and helped them make the final push in May 1979 to oust Somoza and the National Guard. When Nicaragua's new government took over in July, the Carter administration had to compete with a contrasting ideology in the region because it had decided not to cooperate with Latin American countries earlier in its term.

Collectively, and ironically, the Carter administration and its insistence on non-intervention marginalised the US from Latin America. It sent out a signal to democratic leaders in the Western Hemisphere that the United States was not willing to commit to its promotion of human rights in the Third World. Carter's government isolated itself from resolving the Nicaraguan crisis, despite increasing disaffection in the region against human rights abuses by the repressive dictator Somoza.

Methodology

The thesis is a history of American foreign policy and diplomatic relations on the Nicaraguan revolution. The core is diplomatic history and document analysis of policy formation. Through this method the thesis adds a detailed analysis of the Vietnam framework to contexts already established in research on US foreign policy towards Nicaragua. The context of the Vietnam War and its legacy is added to the contexts of the Cold War and the inter-American relationship (or North-South relations), to produce a deeper understanding of Carter's failure, in the case of Nicaragua, to lead and shape the country in its bid for a greater sense of equality. The three contexts will be given more attention in the Literature Review, while this section will outline the government and media sources that are fundamental to this work.

The key component to the thesis is US governmental documentation from the Jimmy Carter Library, Atlanta, Georgia, and the National Security Archive, Washington, DC. In relation to the Jimmy Carter Library, there has been significant declassification of new material, the most recent declassifications taking place in 2008. These documents provide greater insight into Carter's Nicaraguan policy. The sources provide invaluable information on the high-level decision making on Nicaragua by key figures of the Carter administration, such as Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, and President Jimmy Carter himself. At the core of these documents, furthermore, are the decisions and viewpoints of Carter, Vance and Brzezinski's colleagues and advisors. For example, figures such as Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, National Security Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean Robert A. Pastor, and Venezuelan Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Viron

P. Vaky, prove to be key players in the US Executive's policy towards Nicaragua. These documents particularly unveil that these cardinal figures had as much influence in guiding the US Nicaraguan policy as Carter, Vance or Brzezinski.

The National Security Archive materials provide invaluable information on the communication between the US State Department and the US embassy in Managua, Nicaragua. Significantly, the views of US Ambassador to Nicaragua Mauricio Solaún come to the fore, and his belief in pursuing a more active policy towards the Nicaraguan revolution through diplomatic negotiations with Somoza and the Nicaraguan opposition. The National Security Archive documents also provide invaluable perspective into the progression of the revolution and the growing discontent in Nicaragua with the Somoza regime. The combination of government documentation from the Jimmy Carter Library and the National Security Archive, hence, allows for an all round understanding of the US executive decision making process, at both the high and low levels.

This material is supplemented with other archival documents and media sources to complete the overall understanding of the Vietnam legacy towards US-Nicaraguan relations. Valuable material is also included from collections by the State Department, the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs and the Office of Central American Affairs at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, Maryland. Furthermore, an insight into congressional influence on the Carter administration's Nicaraguan policy is not only achieved through the Jimmy Carter Library and National Security Archive material, but also through congressional hearings from the Law Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Documents in relation to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Human Rights and Genocide Treaties from New York University's the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner

Labor Archives, provide invaluable context into the formation of the Carter administration's human rights policy and the wider context in which it was developed. The Hoover Institution Archives in Stanford University, California, proved to be crucial for the personal papers of major Nicaraguan political figures like Alfonso Robelo, leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) and original member of the Junta Government of National Reconstruction that replaced the Somoza regime. The United Nations Archive in New York, furthermore, was also important for Nicaraguan policy material, while the Columbus Memorial Library at the Organization of American States also provided some valuable material on inter-American relations in response to the Nicaraguan revolution.

Media sources collected through New York University's electronic resources database have helped to complete the picture, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, and translations of Central American and South American broadcasts by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Research of English and Spanish language newspapers was completed in the New York Public Library; these included microfiche and electronic copies of articles from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *El Nacional* (Caracas, Venezuela). Microfiche of Nicaraguan newspapers *La Prensa, Barricada* and *El Nuevo diario* have also been included from the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans. Collectively, the newly declassified government documents in conjunction with the additional archival material mentioned and media sources help to create a thorough picture of the Nicaraguan revolution and the US influence in Nicaragua's political transition.

Literature Review

The literature on the Carter administration and the Nicaraguan revolution can be divided into six categories. Firstly, there is Jeane J. Kirkpatrick's analysis of Carter's Nicaraguan policy. Secondly, there are books by academics, politicians, and former members of the Somoza regime opposed to US policy during the revolution and the government that replaced the Nicaraguan dictator. Thirdly, media sourced and travel based studies were produced by journalists and academics on the Nicaraguan revolution. Works by former Carter officials that evaluate the administration's Nicaraguan policy make up the fourth category. Fifthly, there is Morris H. Morley's use of the state-regime distinction to analyse Carter's policy towards Nicaragua. The sixth category includes books that analyse Carter's Nicaraguan policy and the aftermath of the Nicaraguan revolution, within the wider US foreign policy framework and other pertinent geopolitical contexts. In addition to these six categories on US-Nicaraguan relations, a final category will be reviewed, made up of literature that evaluates US foreign policy after the Vietnam War. As mentioned above, only the post-Vietnam literature that has influenced this thesis will be evaluated.

Barring some of the works, these categories evolved chronologically and will be evaluated in that fashion. By doing so, it is argued that this thesis fills a gap in not only the literature of US foreign policy and the Nicaraguan revolution. It also makes a valuable contribution to the post-Vietnam literature on American foreign relations. The thesis shows that there is not only a need for research on the legacy of the Vietnam War and US foreign policy towards prolonged conflicts like Iraq. The Nicaraguan revolution shows there is potential for future research on the legacy

of the Vietnam War, and its influence on American foreign policy in smaller Third World conflicts perceived to be of lesser significance to the United States.

Kirkpatrick's 'Dictatorships & Double Standards'

The first important text on US foreign policy towards the Nicaraguan revolution came in the form of Jeane J. Kirkpatrick's article 'Dictatorships & Double Standards', published in the November 1979 issue of *Commentary* magazine. Kirkpatrick argues that the Carter administration had influenced the overthrow of traditionally autocratic regimes in Iran and Nicaragua by demanding of them rapid democratisation. The Carter administration in turn opened the door to anti-American groups, like the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, to establish new governments. Kirkpatrick concludes that the United States should encourage the liberalisation and democratisation of autocratic governments, but only when they are not facing violent insurrection. The United States, furthermore, should expect democratisation to be gradual, not immediate.[4]

Kirkpatrick places her argument in the following framework. That Carter has moved away from the long-established tradition of US governments tolerating authoritarian regimes in the Third World. These regimes maintained order in the region even if that meant military repression against their opposition. By moving

[4] Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, 'Dictatorships & Double Standards', *Commentary*, November 1979, 1-13, http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/dictatorships-double-standards/ (December 6, 2011). Kirkpatrick published this article in her 1982 book of the same name. See the following: Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, *Dictatorships and Double Standards: Rationalism and Reason in Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982). In 1979 and early 1980, other material was released on the Nicaraguan revolution. In 1979 Pedro Camejo and Fred Murphy edited a short volume of speeches and interviews with Nicaraguan revolutionaries, which also contained a translation of the new Statute of Rights of Nicaraguans. In early 1980 The Ecumenical Program for Interamerican Communication and Action (EPICA) published a book that aimed to systematise and present information about the Nicaraguan revolution and the new revolutionary system. See the following: Pedro Camejo and Fred Murphy, eds., *The Nicaraguan Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1979); EPIC Task Force, *Nicaragua: A People's Revolution* (Washington, DC: The Ecumenical Program for Interamerican Communication and Action, 1980).

away from this established framework, the Carter administration failed to protect its authoritarian allies and exacerbated conflict in the Third World. In the article Kirkpatrick is correct to note that the Carter administration began to distance itself from Somoza. This was not an indication, however, of the US government not knowing its enemies. Furthermore, it did not indicate that Carter assumed a democratic alternative was available to replace the Nicaraguan dictator, or that a Sandinista led government provided a better alternative to Somoza. As will be seen in later chapters, Carter tried to accommodate Somoza to become more democratic. This was to no avail, however, as Somoza had no intention of negotiating with his opposition in Nicaragua. If anything, the Carter administration early in its term failed to realise that Nicaragua's opposition groups, which represented not only the radical Sandinistas, but also the working and business class of Nicaragua, presented an opportunity for the United States to improve its relationship with Latin America as a whole and move away from its historical link to autocratic regimes. Not only were the Sandinistas supported by Panama and Cuba, they also had democratic support in the form of Venezuela and the majority of the Organization of American States. The Carter administration marginalised itself from the increasing consensus in Latin America for increased democratisation. Therefore, the United States, if anything did not make the assumption of there being a democratic alternative available. Moreover, their distancing of Somoza was an attempt in 1979 to maintain the status quo the best they could, as the Carter administration wanted to preserve the US created Nicaraguan National Guard in any successor government. Sustaining the National Guard, furthermore, was an attempt to decrease the left-wing element in a

new Nicaraguan government. Therefore, an assumption was not made that a Sandinista led government would be a better alternative than the previous regime.[5]

Kirkpatrick's article received a lot of attention when it was published. As William M. LeoGrande notes, the article was widely criticised at the time by academics as both historically inaccurate and logically unsound.[6] Tom Farer, for example, notes that on the 'most elementary' facts in relation to Latin America, Kirkpatrick is 'misinformed'. For example, Kirkpatrick claims that the Carter administration disarmed Somoza and the National Guard. The Guard, contrary to Kirkpatrick's claim, was 'bristled' with weapons supplied by Argentina and Israel. Furthermore, despite almost half of the OAS members being recognisable democracies, Kirkpatrick has little to say about democracy in Latin America, except that she doubts its existence when leaders are elected in countries like Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru and the Dominican Republic that 'practice socialism, criticize the United States, and talk with Castro'.[7] Others saw potential in Kirkpatrick's analysis. Richard V. Allen, Ronald Reagan's top foreign policy advisor during his presidential campaign, recommended Kirkpatrick. After several meetings between Kirkpatrick and Reagan, she was asked to join the campaign, and subsequently became ambassador to the United Nations during his presidency.[8]

The different opinions on Kirkpatrick's article can be further understood by her political background. It shows that the article was politically biased against

[5] Kirkpatrick, 'Dictatorships & Double Standards', 3-6, 11-12.
[6] William M. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 55.
[7] Tom J. Farer, *The Grand Strategy of the United States in Latin America* (New Brunswick: Transaction, Inc., 1988), 33-35. These pages are part of Chapter Four: 'Reagan's Latin America', which was originally published in 1981 in *The New York Review of Books*. See: Tom J. Farer, 'Reagan's Latin America', *The New York Review of Books*, March 19, 1981, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1981/mar/19/reagans-latin-america/?pagination=false (January 28, 2012).
[8] LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 55.

Carter's foreign policy and helps explain the observations of historical inaccuracy made by LeoGrande and Farer above. Kirkpatrick was a university professor long active in the Democratic Party. The Vietnam War, however, opened a great gap in the party between Cold War liberals and antiwar Democrats. Kirkpatrick stood on the side of the Cold War liberals, and with her fellow conservatives founded the Coalition for Democratic Majority in 1972. These Cold War liberals became known as neoconservatives.[9] They applauded the Carter administration's tough moral stances against the Soviet Union, but they complained when the administration took similar stances against authoritarian leaders in the Third World. As they saw it, the Soviet Union was inherently evil and could not see the legitimacy of human rights. Authoritarian regimes in the Third World, however, simply departed from values held within their own system, and as a result were not a threat to US foreign interests.[10]

Despite the blemishes mentioned above, Kirkpatrick's article is invaluable because it highlights the impact that the Vietnam War had on the Carter administration's foreign policy. She is aware of the transition period characterising American foreign relations. A transition where the US needed to find its role and status in the world; that allowed it regain respect and power and maintain its strategic global interests. Crucially, Kirkpatrick argues that Carter's policy towards Nicaragua is a fundamental indication of US failure to effectively regain its strength as a global leader.

[9] Ibid., 185.
[10] Betty Glad, *An Outsider in the White House: Jimmy Carter, His Advisors, and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 246-247.

The Pro-Somoza Literature

Academics, politicians, and former members of the Somoza regime, followed Kirkpatrick's article by producing books specifically on the Nicaraguan revolution and US foreign policy. They were opposed to US policy during the revolution and the government that replaced the Nicaraguan dictator. Like Kirkpatrick, these works were politically biased. For example Western Goals, an advisory board made up of congressmen, military officials and academics, produced *Ally Betrayed...: Nicaragua: keystone of Central America* in 1980. It condemned US policy towards Nicaragua and the background of several contributors, suggest that the work was setting forth a political agenda for a more aggressive policy towards Nicaragua, in order to counteract the possible spread of 'communism' through the Sandinistas. Several of the contributors had experienced revolutionary upheaval against authoritarian regimes in Central America and the Caribbean. The foreword was provided by Earl E.T. Smith, former US Ambassador to Cuba during the rise of Castro in 1959. Turner B. Shelton provides a postscript. During his US Ambassadorship to Nicaragua under the Nixon administration, the Sandinistas took hostage senior Somoza officials at a party in the Ambassador's honour. He had just left the party before the occurrence, but it nonetheless influenced his views on the Sandinistas as being trouble for the region. Francisco Urcuyo Maliaño, acting Nicaraguan President after Somoza's resignation, also provided a postscript to the book. Maliaño wanted to hold on to power after Somoza's resignation, but with no US backing, and the OAS wanting a transition to a new Junta Government of National Reconstruction, he was forced out of the leadership.[11] The contributors of

[11] Earl E. T. Smith, Turner B. Shelton, Francisco Urcuyo Maliaño and Western Goals Advisory Board, *Ally Betrayed...: Nicaragua: keystone of Central America* (Alexandria: Western Goals, 1980).

the book, therefore, had the agenda of deposing the Sandinistas because they represented, in their view, the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere.

The book that deserves particular attention is Anastasio Somoza Debayle's 1980 memoir. As expected, the former Nicaraguan dictator used his memoir to account his downfall and to attack his enemies. In the memoir he mainly criticises the Carter administration for his overthrow. The former dictator presents himself as being on a crusade to not only save the Nicaraguan people from the ravages of communism, but also to highlight to the US public their government's aiding and abetting of the 'evil forces'. Somoza notes:

> When I, as President of a free and democratic nation closely allied with the United States, witness the betrayal and subsequent defeat of that nation, I firmly believe the citizens of the United States are entitled to know the details of that betrayal.[12]

As the memoir persists, Somoza emphasises the communist 'conspiracy' that he felt the Nicaraguan revolution symbolised. 'Nicaragua was the first target in Central America', says Somoza. The country represented 'the toughest nut to crack'. Somoza argues it was a step towards the Soviet Union's capture of oil and gas reserves in Mexico, and that the spread of communism in Central America was a platform for this goal. The former dictator goes on to tell the Carter administration: 'So get your map of Central America and color Nicaragua red. Better make it blood red, too!'[13] Somoza, in short, uses his memoir as a means of propaganda against the United States and his enemies. The former Nicaraguan dictator overstates the Soviet influence and the possible communist conspiracy to spread revolution in the region. Somoza's attacks on the Carter administration and the Sandinistas provide little

[12] Anastasio Somoza, as told to Jack Cox, *Nicaragua Betrayed* (Boston: Western Islands Publishers, 1980), xi.
[13] Somoza, *Nicaragua Betrayed*, 309-310.

insight in to some of the key influences that caused Somoza's downfall. Such as the dictator's marginalisation of the business class in Nicaragua after the 1972 Managuan earthquake and the growing sense of egalitarianism, not communism, in the country. Somoza fails to realise that he, as much as anyone, did not respond to the transitions taking place in the isthmus and as a result caused his own downfall. This failure can also be extended to Smith, Shelton and Maliaño. They failed to understand that authoritarian regimes like that of Somoza and Batista represented an obstacle to equality in the Western Hemisphere, while simultaneously obstructing the United States from having a more positive constructive relationship with their southern neighbours.[14]

Media and Travel Based Literature

Somoza was assassinated in Paraguay on September 17, 1980. In its aftermath the next series of studies on the Nicaraguan revolution followed. 1981 marked the start of media and travel sourced studies by journalists and academics on the Nicaraguan revolution. Unlike Somoza's self-justification and propaganda, these studies mainly concentrate on the significance of the Sandinistas' success and the US failure to move away from repressive dictatorships. Bernard Diederich's *Somoza and the Legacy of U.S. Involvement in Central America* is the template for such research. Not only does the book act as a biography to Somoza's rule, tracking the dictator's rise and fall, but Diederich documents the key events in the downfall of Somoza, while bringing to the fore the US tradition of supporting repressive dictators or regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean. What is particularly

[14] Other examples of this literature followed Somoza's memoir. Maliaño published his own book on the Nicaraguan revolution in 1984. Somoza's Deputy Foreign Minister Harry Bodan-Shields also published his account in 1985. See: Francisco Urcuyo Maliaño, *Carter-Mondale's Administration and the Sandinista Communists* (Miami: FU Maliano, 1984); Harry Bodan-Shields, *Nicaragua: el teatro de los absurdo* (San José: Litografía e Imprenta LIL, SA, 1985).

significant about Diederich's book is that it allows space for the facts, well documented through his use of media sources, to recount the events of the revolution. Through this method Diederich realises what Kirkpatrick, Somoza, Smith, Shelton and Maliaño fail to understand. As Diederich argues in the preface: the collapse of the Somoza regime was 'inevitable' because the dictatorship, like Rafael Trujillo's in the Dominican Republic, Fulgencio Batista's in Cuba, and Marcos Pérez Jiménez's in Venezuela, was just another line of 'Latin strongmen who paid lip service to democracy and killed and tortured in its name to save the "free world" from communism'.[15] His argument is given credence because as correspondent for *Time* magazine, Diederich covered Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Diederich was on the ground not only for the fall of Somoza, but he experienced the repression of Francois Duvalier in Haiti. While resident correspondent for *The Associated Press*, *The New York Times*, *Time-Life News Service*, and London's *Daily Telegraph*, his reporting got him arrested, imprisoned and expelled from the country. While exiled in the Dominican Republic, he experienced the assassination of the dictator Rafael Trujillo in 1961 and the civil war of 1965.[16] Due to his experience, Diederich not only highlights the tyranny of Anastasio Somoza and his fellow dictators, he emphasises the paradoxical approach that one US administration after another took in promoting apparent freedom and democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

Diederich's book represents a plethora of increased study on the Nicaraguan revolution after Somoza's downfall and assassination. Like Diederich, these works

[15] Bernard Diederich, *Somoza and the Legacy of U.S. Involvement in Central America* (New York: EP Dutton, 1981), vii.
[16] For more information on Diederich's experiences in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, see his biographies on Trujillo and Duvalier. See: Bernard Diederich, *Trujillo: The Death of the Goat* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978); Bernard Diederich and Al Burt, *Papa Doc & the Tontons Macoutes* (Princeton: M. Weiner Publishers, 1969). For a biography of Bernard Diederich, see his website: http://www.bernarddiederich.com/AboutTheAuthor_2.htm (January 29, 2012).

recognise the paradoxical relationship that the United States had with dictators like Somoza. Thomas W. Walker, John A. Booth and George Black all released books that were sympathetic to the revolution and critical of US policy. Walker, Booth and Black argue that the US should have overthrown Somoza and might have, if the Carter administration had understood the situation better.[17] Rachel M. McCleary, furthermore, builds on their work by exploring the ethical implications of US intervention during the height of the revolution in 1978 and 1979. By tracking the key events of the revolution, McCleary shows that the Carter administration chose an approach in between their traditional policy of supporting dictators, and a newly transformed policy of deposing them. The Carter administration chose to work with countries in the region to find a peaceful way of democratising Nicaragua. However, their commitment to such a policy, as will be seen in the thesis, can also be questioned.[18] In addition, other works place the Nicaraguan revolution in its wider context. Shirley Christian's 1985 book *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, for example, not only chronicles the events that led to revolt and the consolidation of the anti-Somoza opposition, but she also interviews Reagan era Nicaraguans, disillusioned with the Sandinista government, about their unrest in the early to mid-1980s.[19] Books and dissertations were also produced during this period on the need for the US to understand Central America, the Carter administration's foreign aid

[17] Thomas W. Walker, *Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981); John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982); George Black, *Triumph of the People: The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua* (London: Zed Press, 1981). Thomas W. Walker has edited and co-authored other important works on the Nicaraguan revolution. In 1981 he edited a volume of field research based on the work of twenty scholars that not only looked at the Nicaraguan revolution, but also analysed the programmes and policies of Nicaragua after Somoza. Walker has published five editions of *Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino* (the fourth and fifth editions are entitled *Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle*), including a fifth edition co-authored by Christine J. Wade. See the following: Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Nicaragua in Revolution* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981); Thomas W. Walker and Christine J. Wade, *Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle*, 5th Ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2011).

[18] Rachel M. McCleary, *The ethics of intervention: the United States and Nicaragua, 1978-79* (Pittsburgh: Pew Charitable Trusts, 1988).

[19] Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1985).

policy towards Nicaragua, and the Carter administration's human rights and security policies during the revolution.[20] Works were also published that explored the Sandinistas, their intellectual foundations and ideology, as a means of understanding their victory in the Nicaraguan revolution.[21]

Literature by former Carter officials

The next phase of historiography that emerged includes books written by former Carter officials that evaluate the Carter administration's Nicaraguan policy. They are significant because they take contrasting opinions on the success of Carter's policy and also show the divisions in opinion that needed to be accommodated. Robert A. Pastor's 1987 work *Condemned to Repetition* was the significant turning point. It filled a gap in the literature on the Carter administration because the earlier memoirs of higher ranked Carter officials, such as Jimmy Carter's *Keeping Faith* (1982), Cyrus Vance's *Hard Choices* (1983) and Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Power and Principle* (1983) give little attention to the Nicaraguan

[20] Lester D. Langley, *Central America: the Real Stakes – Understanding Central America before It's Too Late* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1985); Richard E. Feinberg, ed., *Central America, International Dimensions of the Crisis* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982); Sherrie Lipsky, 'The legitimacy of economic coercion: the Carter foreign aid policy and Nicaragua', *Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Journal*, Vol. 5 (1982), 101-127; Molly Anderson, *Human rights confront a revolution: an analysis of the Carter administration's human rights policy towards Nicaragua from 1977 to 1979* (Harvard University: Thesis/Dissertation, 1985); George A. Lawton, *An elusive search for security policy through control: analysis of hegemony, human rights and legitimation in Carter administration policy toward the Nicaraguan transition crisis, 1977-1979* (Johns Hopkins University: Thesis/Dissertation, 1986); Morris J. Blachman, William M. LeoGrande and Kenneth Sharpe, eds., *Confronting Revolution: Security Through Diplomacy in Central America* (New York: Pantheon, 1986); Lars Schoultz, *National Security and the United States Policy toward Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Noam Chomsky, *On Power and Ideology: The Managua Lectures* (Boston: South End Press, 1987).

[21] Henri Weber, *Nicaragua: The Sandinista Revolution*, Patrick Camiller, trans. (London: Verso, 1981); David Nolan, *The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Coral Gables: Institute of International Studies, University of Miami, 1984); Donald Clark Hodges, *Intellectual Foundations of the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); Carlos M. Vilas, *The Sandinista Revolution: National Liberation and Social Transformation in Central America*, Judy Butler, trans. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1986); Dennis Gilbert, *Sandinistas: The Party and the Revolution* (New York, Basil Blackwell, 1988).

crisis.[22] They had passed the responsibility of Nicaraguan policy to Pastor and other officials like Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Director of Policy Planning Anthony Lake. Pastor's viewpoint is of particular importance because he served on President Jimmy Carter's National Security Council and later monitored Nicaraguan elections in 1990. Pastor published a paperback version of the book, with a new epilogue, in 1988, and then again in 2002 entitled *Not Condemned to Repetition*.[23]

In the first edition Pastor concludes that US policy towards Nicaragua was a tragic replay of the failed US policy towards Cuba's revolution. In both revolutions the moderate opposition, made up of the middle and business classes, were given support and advice by the United States, but they ignored it and supported their radical counterparts. Both revolutions saw the US distance itself from the dictator and search for a middle ground to resolve the conflict. In both revolutions democratic leaders in Costa Rica and Venezuela passed arms covertly to the rebels. 'The most fascinating and puzzling aspect of the Nicaraguan story', notes Pastor, was that the key leaders in the US, Nicaragua, and their neighbouring countries, were all aware of the parallels with the Cuban revolution. Yet, Pastor emphasises that neither the US, Venezuela, Costa Rica, the middle-class leadership in Nicaragua nor their enemy Somoza, could avoid repeating the mistakes of Cuba.[24]

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[22] Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1982); Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983); Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983).

[23] Robert A. Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Robert A. Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua, With a New Epilogue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Robert A. Pastor, *Not Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua*, 2nd Ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002). Both the 1987 and 1988 versions are considered the first edition.

[24] Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition* (1988), 6-7.

The second edition, *Not Condemned to Repetition*, includes an explanation of how this tragic replay happened and the importance of engagement when dealing with the Sandinistas, such as the engagement that took place when free elections were finally held in 1990. Pastor, for example, notes two moments during the Carter administration in which the US could have guided a resolution in Nicaragua. Firstly, in December 1978, Pastor notes that Somoza filed a request for exile, but the US ignored it and did not take the opportunity to influence a political transition. Secondly, from March to June 1979 the Carter administration moved away from active involvement in the Nicaraguan crisis after imposing sanctions on Somoza. Pastor notes this allowed space for the moderate opposition to move closer to the Sandinistas. Pastor feels that this could have been avoided if the United States had been more active during this period.[25]

Pastor's work is invaluable, but the potential was there to incorporate the Vietnam framework into the inter-American and Cold War contexts that he uses. As will be seen in later chapters, Pastor was explicitly and implicitly influenced by Vance and Brzezinski's post-Vietnam foreign policy perspectives. Pastor was given the responsibility to create Carter's Latin American policy in 1977. In his formation of the policy he decided on a generalised approach towards the hemisphere, with the aim of factoring Latin America in to a global framework later in Carter's presidency. The policy of non-intervention towards Nicaragua was chosen by Pastor to accommodate this transition and to factor in Brzezinski's view to not intervene in any region perceived not to be at immediate threat from Soviet influence, and to factor in Vance's view to limit US foreign intervention in overseas conflicts. Pastor could have incorporated this framework into his memoirs, and as a result, it would be

[25] Pastor, *Not Condemned to Repetition*, 301.

transparent to see that the Carter administration needed to become more active a lot earlier then its mediation effort in October 1978.

In addition to Pastor, further accounts from former Carter administration officials were published. These included memoirs by Anthony Lake and former US Ambassadors to Nicaragua Mauricio Solaún and Lawrence Pezzullo.[26] Lake in his memoir uses the fall of Somoza as a case study to show the workings of the US State Department in foreign policy making. Lake's memoir is invaluable because it highlights the extent to which the State Department and National Security Council placed the Nicaraguan crisis in their generalised policy of non-intervention and did not factor in changes that were needed, such as actively forcing Somoza to resign to ensure the smoothest resolution possible.[27] Pezzullo and Solaún provide invaluable perspectives from the US embassy in Nicaragua that contrast Pastor's justification of Carter's policy. Pezzullo recounts the final negotiations he participated in to replace Somoza with the Junta Government of National Reconstruction. Pezzullo argues that before his arrival the Carter administration failed to distance itself from Somoza and marginalised itself from the Nicaraguan opposition and their Latin American allies. The Carter administration failed to understand that they could not effectively resolve the Nicaraguan crisis as long as they were perceived to be linked to Somoza.[28] Solaún emphasises that the Carter administration's policy of 'moral suasion' and 'minor economic sanctions' towards Somoza, actually decreased the possibility of democratisation in Nicaragua because it allowed for the formation of a

[26] Anthony Lake, *Somoza Falling* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989); Lawrence Pezzullo and Ralph Pezzullo, *At the Fall of Somoza* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993); Mauricio Solaún, *U.S. Intervention and Regime Change in Nicaragua* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).
[27] Lake, *Somoza Falling*, 113. Actively forcing Somoza to resign was recommended by Viron P. Vaky, US Ambassador to Venezuela and Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. He recommended this to the Department of State and National Security Council in August 1978. This will be discussed further in Chapter Four.
[28] Pezzullo, *At the Fall of Somoza*, 243-244.

broad based coalition. Due to the US being uncomfortable with the new Nicaraguan leaders, the revolutionary government turned to 'self-professed adversaries of the United States', which in turn led to the decade of war under the Reagan administration.[29]

Morris H. Morley and the State-Regime Distinction

Morris H. Morley's 1994 work *Washington, Somoza and the Sandinistas* represents the next progression in the historiography of US-Nicaraguan relations during the Carter years.[30] Morley uses the analytical framework of the state-regime distinction to account for the Carter administration's policy during the Nicaraguan revolution. Morley's framework is a crucial addition because it distinguishes Carter's policy towards Somoza from that of the Nicaraguan state itself. He argues that the Carter administration's policy towards Somoza was mutable, but its policy towards the state was constant. Morley points out that President Carter did not distance himself from Somoza because of his concern for human rights and liberal principles, but that he understood the US could only maintain its influence in Nicaragua by the survival of the state and not of any single regime. In order to stop the prospect of a revolutionary government taking over in Nicaragua, Carter wanted Somoza to step aside in favour of a more moderate regime that would oblige US permanent interests and a more humanised National Guard that would defend them.

[29] Solaún, *U.S. Intervention and Regime Change in Nicaragua*, 9.

[30] The first hard back version of Morley's book was published in 1994, while the first paperback version was published in 2002. See: Morris H. Morley, *Washington, Somoza, and the Sandinistas: State and Regime in U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua, 1969-1981* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Morris H. Morley, *Washington, Somoza, and the Sandinistas: State and Regime in U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua, 1969-1981* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Somoza, however, refused to cooperate until it was too late, and the Sandinista dominated junta took power and the National Guard disintegrated.[31]

Nicaragua in the Broader US and Geopolitical Contexts

Literature was also published that encompassed the wider US foreign policy framework and other geopolitical contexts. Further studies encompassing the Carter administration's Nicaraguan policy as a prelude to the Reagan era were produced by Marc Levy, Holly Sklar, Cynthia J. Arnson, William M. LeoGrande and Timothy C. Brown.[32] A series of studies were also produced placing the Carter and Reagan policies into the broader context of US-Latin American and US-Central American relations. Walter LaFeber released his first edition of *Inevitable Revolutions* in 1983, placing the Nicaraguan revolution in the wider context of US-Central American relations, and the system of dependency created by the US government since the beginning of the twentieth century. LaFeber updated the book in 1993 to include the Reagan and Bush years.[33] Other key studies were produced by James Dunkerley, Lester D. Langley, Gaddis Smith, Peter H. Smith, Lars Schoultz, Greg Grandin, with Hal Brands producing the most recent contribution in 2010.[34] John Dumbrell,

[31] Morley, *Washington, Somoza and the Sandinistas* (2002), 308-315.

[32] Marc Levy, *U.S. policy toward Nicaragua under the Carter and Reagan administrations* (Brandeis University: Thesis/Dissertation, 1983); Holly Sklar, *Washington's War on Nicaragua* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1988); Cynthia J. Arnson, *Crossroads: Congress, the President, and Central America, 1976-1993*, 2nd Ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993); LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard* (1998); Timothy C. Brown, *Causes of Continuing Conflict in Nicaragua: A View from the Radical Middle* (Stanford: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University, 1995).

[33] Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: Norton, 1983); Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, 2nd Ed. (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1993).

[34] James Dunkerley, *Power in the Isthmus: A Political History of Modern Central America* (London: Verso, 1988); Lester D. Langley, *America and the Americas: The United States in the Western Hemisphere* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989); Lester D. Langley, *America and the Americas: The United States in the Western Hemisphere*, 2nd Ed. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2010); Gaddis Smith, *The Last Years of the Monroe Doctrine, 1945-1993* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994); Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, 3rd Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Lars

Gaddis Smith, Burton I. Kaufman, Scott Kaufman, William Stueck, Betty Glad, and Itai Nartzizenfield Sneh evaluate Carter's Nicaraguan policy in the wider context of his overall presidency.[35] Martha L. Cottam, moreover, studies the key perceptual groups within the US Executive and Congress during the Carter years to evaluate their effect on the Carter administration's Nicaraguan policy. Cottam argues that the perceptual group the Modified Cold Warriors, of which Carter was a member, dominated Nicaraguan policy throughout the administration in their search for new tactics to pursue containment. The perceptual group that promoted a move away from the traditional foreign policy of containment, known as the Third World/Human Rights Group, of which Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) was a member, failed to come up with a comprehensive alternative to the United States' traditional foreign policy.[36] Tony Smith evaluates Carter's Nicaraguan policy in the wider framework of US foreign relations in the twentieth century. Smith argues that the administration's policy of human rights in Nicaragua was far more realistic than Kirkpatrick's emphasis on using force 'to keep the dictator in power'. Carter nevertheless, argues Smith, needed to act earlier and more directly with Latin

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Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, The United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). Also see: Thomas M. Leonard, 'The United States, Costa Rica and the Nicaraguan Revolution, 1980-1984', in Howard Jones, ed., *The Foreign and Domestic Dimensions of Modern Warfare: Vietnam, Central America and Nuclear Strategy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 124-136.

[35] John Dumbrell, *The Carter Presidency: A re-evaluation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Gaddis Smith, *Morality, Reason, and Power: American Diplomacy in the Carter Years* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986); Burton I. Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993); Burton I. Kaufman and Scott Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.*, 2nd Ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); Scott Kaufman, *Plans Unraveled: The Foreign Policy of the Carter Administration* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008); William Stueck, 'Placing Jimmy Carter's Foreign Policy', in Gary M. Fink and Hugh Davis Graham, eds., *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 244-266; Glad, *An Outsider in the White House* (2009); Itai Nartzizenfield Sneh, *The Future Almost Arrived: How Jimmy Carter Failed to Change U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

[36] Martha L. Cottam, 'The Carter Administration's Policy towards Nicaragua: Images, Goals, and Tactics', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 107, No. 1. (Spring, 1992), 123-146.

American nations like Venezuela, Panama and Costa Rica to insure 'that democratic elections provided for a transition in power from Somoza'.[37] Theda Skocpol, furthermore, evaluates the Nicaraguan revolution, along with others such as the revolution in Iran, to determine why revolutions take place in some countries and not others. Skocpol shows that neopatrimonial dictatorships, like the Somoza regime, alienate the upper class and other social groups in their society, which in turn increases the prospect of overthrow. A corporate military dictatorship like in El Salvador, on the other hand, does not alienate these groups and as a result is less likely to be overthrown.[38] In addition, extensive research emerged concentrating on the legacy of the revolution from a Nicaraguan perspective, looking at topics such as the impact of the revolution on gender, religious faith, labour and agrarian reform, and the revolution's effect on state, class and ethnicity in Nicaragua.[39] Further books

[37] Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 252.

[38] Theda Skocpol, 'Introduction: Explaining social revolutions: First and further thoughts', in Theda Skocpol, ed., *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 19. Other valuable comparative studies of the Nicaraguan revolution are: Misagh Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Brian Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions and Revolutionary Theory: An Assessment of Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada* (Barbados: University of the West Indies Press, 2001).

[39] Tomás Borge, Carlos Fonseca, Daniel Ortega, Humberto Ortega and Jaime Wheelock, *Sandinistas Speak* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1986); Tomás Borge, *Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder, 1982); Women's International Resource Exchange Service, *Nicaraguan Women: Unlearning the Alphabet of Submission* (New York: Women's International Resource Exchange Collective, 1985); Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Nicaragua: The First Five Years* (New York: Praeger, 1985); Dianna Melrose, *Nicaragua: The Threat of a Good Example?* (Oxford: Oxfam, 1985); Elizabeth Dore and John Weeks, *The Red and the Black: The Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1992); Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., 'Revolt against the West: The Nicaraguan Revolution and Related Movements', in Howard Jones, ed., *The Foreign and Domestic Dimensions of Modern Warfare: Vietnam, Central America and Nuclear Strategy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 111-123; Phillip Berryman, *The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in the Central American Revolutions* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984); Roger N. Lancaster, *Thanks to God and the Revolution: Popular Religion and Class Consciousness in the New Nicaragua* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Laura O'Shaughnessy and Luis H. Serra, *The Church and Revolution in Nicaragua* (Athens: Ohio State University, 1985); Michael Dodson and Laura Nuzzi-O'Shaughnessy, *Nicaragua's Other Revolution: Religious Faith and Political Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Forrest Colburn, *Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua: State, Class, and the Dilemmas of Agrarian Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Gary Ruchwarger, *People in Power: Forging a Grassroots Democracy in Nicaragua* (South Hadley: Bergin and Garvey, 1987); Carlos M. Vilas, *State, Class & Ethnicity in Nicaragua: Capitalist Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast*, Susan

on the legacy of the Nicaraguan revolution include the work on the Reagan administration and its funding of counter-revolution against the Sandinistas.[40] On the whole, these studies of the Nicaraguan revolution compare and contrast the Carter administration within the wider US foreign policy or geopolitical contexts that shaped the conflict and its aftermath.

The more recent works mentioned above by Hal Brands, Glad, Sneh, the Kaufman's co-authored work as well as Scott Kaufman's book on the Carter presidency, are of particular significance because they had the opportunity to avail of newly declassified documents in the Jimmy Carter Library. Although this is the case, their study of the Nicaraguan revolution is constrained because they produced general histories, with the Kaufmans writing about Carter's overall presidency,

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Norwood, trans. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989); Laura J. Enríquez, *Harvesting Change: Labor and Agrarian Reform in Nicaragua, 1979-1990* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Kenneth E. Morris, *Unfinished Revolution: Daniel Ortega and Nicaragua's Struggle for Liberation* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010); Rose J. Spalding, ed., *The Political Economy of Revolutionary Nicaragua* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Michael E. Conroy, ed., *Nicaragua: Profiles of the Revolutionary Public Sector* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987); David Close, *Nicaragua: Politics, Economy and Society* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988); David Close, *Nicaragua: The Chamorro Years* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999); Patricia Taylor Edmisten, *Nicaragua Divided: La Prensa and the Chamorro Legacy* (Pensacola: University of West Florida Press, 1990); Richard Stahler-Sholk, 'Building Democracy in Nicaragua', in George A. Lopez and Michael Stohl, eds., *Liberalization and Redemocratization in Latin America* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 57-104; Phil Ryan, *The Fall and Rise of the Market in Sandinista Nicaragua* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); Jeffrey L. Gould, 'On the Road to "El Porvenir": Revolutionary and Counterrevolutionary Violence in El Salvador and Nicaragua', in Greg Grandin and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds., *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's long Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 88-120. Some of the above books are reviewed in: Kenneth J. Mijeski, 'From Solidarity to Class Struggle: Ten Years of Post-Somoza Nicaragua', *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (1991), 247-260.

[40] Sklar, *Washington's War on Nicaragua* (1988); Christopher Dickey, *With the Contras: A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985); Theodore Draper, *A Very Thin Line: The Iran-Contra Affairs* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1991); Roy Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy: The Making of American Policy in Nicaragua 1981-1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); William M. LeoGrande, 'Rollback or Containment? The United States, Nicaragua, and the Search for Peace in Central America', *International Security*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Autumn, 1986), 89-120; Peter Kornbluh, *Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention – Reagan's War Against the Sandinistas* (Washington, DC: Institute of Policy Studies, 1987); David Ryan, *US-Sandinista Diplomatic Relations: Voice of Intolerance* (London: MacMillan Ltd., 1995); Richard L. Harris and Carlos M. Vilas, eds., *Nicaragua: A Revolution under Siege* (London: Zed Books, 1985); Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Reagan verses the Sandinistas: The Undeclared War on Nicaragua* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987); Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Revolution & Counterrevolution in Nicaragua* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

Brands writing an overview of the Cold War in Latin America, and both Glad and Sneh writing about Carter's overall foreign policy. Taking this into account, this thesis takes the opportunity to evaluate in detail the newly declassified Carter material on Nicaragua. Analysing this material builds on the invaluable work already produced on Carter's Nicaraguan policy and the revolution. This is because a lot of the works mentioned above could not avail of the new documents. The works from Kirkpatrick to Morley could not source this material and their primary research was based on oral interviews and government documents that did not chronicle high-level decision making.

The Post-Vietnam Literature and Its Influence on the Thesis

The gap available in the literature allows for an application of the Vietnam legacy and its influence on US decision making towards the Nicaraguan revolution. It can be argued that the Carter administration had the opportunity to guide a smooth resolution and transition in Nicaragua, but failed to realise this because of their collective and individual anxieties over the Vietnam War. This is an invaluable contribution because the previous scholarship mentioned above, evaluates US foreign policy towards Nicaragua through the contexts of inter-American relations and the Cold War. The Cold War context, for example, is prevalent in Brands' *Latin America's Cold War* (2010) because it emphasises that the Nicaraguan revolution was one example of the series of volatile conflicts that characterised the Cold War in Latin America. This contrasted US and Soviet experience, two countries that had no direct conflict with each other during the Cold War era.[41] The inter-American context comes to the fore in the scholarship of LaFeber and Walker, because they argue that the Nicaraguan revolution was another example of the insurrection caused

[41] Brands, *Latin America's Cold War*, 1, 164-188.

by a US system that made Central America economically subservient to and dependent on its North American neighbour.[42] Both contexts, furthermore, are prevalent in Pastor's books, through their emphasis on the potential Cuban influence in the Nicaraguan revolution, and Carter's Nicaraguan approach reflecting US policy towards the Cuban revolution.[43] By no means does the Vietnam framework replace these contexts, but it is nevertheless a valuable addition that allows for a greater understanding of the anxieties influencing US decisions towards Nicaragua. To date, brief sections in works by H.W. Brands, William M. LeoGrande and Cynthia J. Arnson are the closest studies done in this respect of US foreign policy towards the Nicaraguan revolution.[44] It is important to note that the contexts intertwine, and therefore they should not necessarily be seen as competing ways in which to frame US-Nicaraguan relations.

Previous scholarship on the legacy of the Vietnam War has influenced the approach used in the thesis. These studies have tended to concentrate on prolonged wars like the War in Iraq as a means of comparing and contrasting the policies pursued by the US in both respecting conflicts.[45] There is a case, however, to suggest that studies should also be pursued on regional conflicts that were perceived to be of less significance. This can indicate whether the Vietnam legacy influenced

[42] LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*, 11; Walker, *Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino*, 3.
[43] Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition*, 3-15; Pastor, *Not Condemned to Repetition*, 3-13.
[44] H.W. Brands, *Since Vietnam: The United States in World Affairs, 1973-1995* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1996); LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard* (1998); Arnson, *Crossroads* (1993).
[45] Some important sources include: Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since the Vietnam War: The Search for Consensus from Nixon to George W. Bush*, 4th Ed. (Armonk: ME Sharp, 2005); Robert K. Brigham, *Iraq, Vietnam, and the Limits of American Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008); Robert K. Brigham, *Is Iraq Another Vietnam?* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006); James C. Schneider, 'Guns versus Butter: Vietnam's Effect on Congressional Support for the Great Society', in Howard Jones, ed., *The Foreign and Domestic Dimensions of Modern Warfare: Vietnam, Central America and Nuclear Strategy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 94-110; Kenneth J. Campbell, *A Tale of Two Quagmires: Iraq, Vietnam, and the Hard Lessons of War* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2007); T. Christopher Jespersen, 'Analogies at War: Vietnam, the Bush Administration's War in Iraq, and the Search for a Usable past', *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), 411-426.

or impeded the judgment of the US government in these regional conflicts. A primary source based study on Nicaragua during its pivotal moment of transition is an important contribution in this regard. It demonstrates the potential for further studies on the Vietnam legacy and its influence on US policy in such conflicts. As Odd Arne Westad notes, the United States 'created the Third World' through its 'repeated interventions', its 'need for raw materials' and through its 'vision of development'.[46] It is fundamental, therefore, for historians to understand fully the degree to which US governments would decide not to intervene in a particular situation, especially in a region like Central America, where the United States had developed amongst the indigenous population such a dependency on their North American neighbour. Exploring the consequences of the Vietnam War, and its influence on the US government's perception of their relationship with the isthmus, is crucial to understanding the Carter administration's changing policy towards Nicaragua.

Scholarship on the Vietnam legacy by Charles E. Neu, Brian Balogh, George C. Herring, Arnold R. Isaacs, Robert D. Schulzinger, and James Peck have influenced the argument in this thesis that elements of the Carter administration feared reflecting on the military failures of the Vietnam War.[47] Consequently, in the

[46] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 403.

[47] Charles E. Neu, 'The Vietnam War and the Transformation of America', in Charles E. Neu, ed., *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 1-23; Brian Balogh, 'From Metaphor to Quagmire: The Domestic Legacy of the Vietnam War', in Charles E. Neu, ed., *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 24-55; George C. Herring, 'Preparing *Not* to Refight the Last War: The Impact of the Vietnam War on the U.S. Military', in Charles E. Neu, ed., *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 56-84; George C. Herring, 'American Strategy in Vietnam: The Postwar Debate', *Military Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Apr., 1982), 57-63; George C. Herring, 'America and Vietnam: The Unending War', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 5, America and the Pacific, 1941-1991 (Winter, 1991), 104-119; Arnold R. Isaacs, *Vietnam shadows: the war, its ghosts, and its legacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Robert D. Schulzinger, *A time for peace: the legacy of the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford University Press,

case of Nicaraguan policy, the Carter administration did not consider legitimate means of intervention when the Nicaraguan crisis worsened.

The scholarship of Herring, Marilyn B. Young, Lloyd C. Gardner and David Elliot has influenced the exploration within the thesis of the flawed executive decision making inherited from the Vietnam War.[48] As a result, the thesis argues that the Carter administration failed to understand its enemies and allies in the Nicaraguan revolution. Somoza was an example of the foreign policy Carter tried to change, and yet despite the growing opposition in Nicaragua to his rule, the Carter administration, although pursuing a policy of non-intervention and seeking to respect the sovereignty of Latin American nations, maintained military and economic assistance to the dictator on several occasions during the revolution. Simultaneously, the Carter administration turned down Venezuelan advances for an active diplomatic approach despite the increasing chaos in Nicaragua. Its commitment to non-intervention meant that the Carter administration did not adapt its policy when needed to accommodate the fluctuating situation in Nicaragua.

John Dumbrell and David Ryan's study of the readjustments in the balance of power between the US President and Congress in the aftermath of the Vietnam War has influenced this thesis and its understanding of congressional influence on Carter's Nicaraguan policy.[49] Accordingly, this study emphasises that congressional

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2006); James Peck, *Ideal Illusions: How the U.S. Government Co-Opted Human Rights* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010).

[48] Herring, 'America and Vietnam...', 104-119; Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young, 'Introduction', in Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young, eds., *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam: Or, How Not to Learn from the Past* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 1-16; David Elliot, 'Parallel Wars? Can "Lessons of Vietnam" Be Applied to Iraq?', in Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young, eds., *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam: Or, How Not to Learn from the Past* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 17-44.

[49] John Dumbrell and David Ryan, 'Introduction', in John Dumbrell and David Ryan, eds., *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, lessons, legacies and ghosts* (London: Routledge, 2007), 1-7; John Dumbrell, 'The Iraq and Vietnam Wars: some parallels and connections', in John Dumbrell and David Ryan, eds., *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, lessons, legacies and ghosts* (London: Routledge, 2007), 209-221; David Ryan,

influence on Carter's global foreign policy caused the US Executive to hold back on its commitment to resolving the Nicaraguan crisis.

Herring, Michael W. Link and Betty Glad's work on the Vietnam War's deterioration of US self-confidence, has influenced the thesis to explore the extent to which Carter achieved a recapturing of this characteristic in its foreign policy.[50] By exploring Carter's policy in the final months of Somoza's reign, it is possible to see that the Carter administration did not regain US self-belief because it was a shadow player in resolving the Nicaraguan crisis, having to fall in line and support resolutions guided by the countries of Latin America.

The final major influence on the thesis is Matthew Masur's work on the legacy of the domino theory in US foreign policy. Masur argues that the Bush administration applied an altered version of the domino theory to the War in Iraq: a 'democratic domino' that emphasised the spread of democracy as opposed to containing communism.[51] In the case of Nicaragua, a modified domino approach, albeit different to Bush's version, can also be applied to the Carter administration's adaptation to the Junta government. Fearful of the potential spread of revolution in Central America as a result of Somoza's downfall, the Carter administration used a modified version of the domino theory in its justification to accommodate the new Nicaraguan government.

'"Vietnam", victory culture and Iraq: struggling with lessons, constraints and credibility from Saigon to Falluja', in John Dumbrell and David Ryan, eds., *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, lessons, legacies and ghosts* (London: Routledge, 2007), 111-138.

[50] Herring, 'America and Vietnam...', 104-119; Michael W. Link and Betty Glad, 'Exploring the Psychopolitical Dynamics of Advisory Relations: The Carter Administration's "Crisis of Confidence"', *Political Psychology*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Sep., 1994), 461-480.

[51] Matthew Masur, 'Falling dominoes: the United States, Vietnam and the War in Iraq', in John Dumbrell and David Ryan, eds., *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, lessons, legacies and ghosts* (London: Routledge, 2007), 193-208.

In sum, not only can the legacy of the Vietnam War be seen in the Carter administration's emphasis on non-intervention and respect for the sovereignty of Latin American nations. The influence of Vietnam can be seen in the traits that stemmed from these principles, which are: anxiety about the failures of intervention in Vietnam; flawed decision making process, characterised by an ignorance of both enemies and allies; readjustment of power between the US President and Congress; the negative effect of the Vietnam War on US self-confidence; and the ghost of the domino theory in subsequent US foreign policy.

Structure

The thesis is developed in eight chapters and divided into three parts. Part one, which consists of one chapter, provides a background to the Carter administration's Nicaraguan policy. It explores the three factors that are essential to understanding the Carter administration's policy towards Nicaragua. The three factors are: the unique relationship between the United States and Central America, the Vietnam War and its legacy, and the universal definition of human rights. Through this analysis, it is possible to see that the Carter administration needed to create a foreign policy towards Nicaragua that took into account the US system of dependency in Central America. Anytime the US government decided to not intervene diplomatically or militarily in a Central American crisis, the turmoil became exacerbated and prolonged. Carter's policy also had to try and get over the anxiety felt towards military intervention after the Vietnam War. It also had to avoid the inconsistencies of the Human Rights ideal. If the Carter administration did not take these factors into account, then their policy towards Nicaragua would be ravaged with neglect, anxiety and inconsistency that would significantly decrease their ability to diplomatically intercede if need be.

Part two (chapters two to five) evaluates the Carter administration's Nicaraguan policy until July 1979. Chapter two explores the establishment of Carter's human rights policy towards Latin America in 1977. The chapter argues that the United States viewed Latin America in a generalised manner and did not create a policy specific to Nicaragua. The United States, thus, underestimated the emerging crisis in Nicaragua. Chapter three explores the aftermath of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's assassination on January 10, 1978. US response to the assassination and the turmoil in its aftermath highlight that the Carter administration inherited the flawed decision making process of the Vietnam War. Due to their blemished decisions, the Carter administration ended up marginalising itself from resolving the Nicaraguan crisis. Chapter four evaluates the US response to the capturing of Nicaragua's National Palace on August 22, 1978 by twenty-five Sandinistas, and the month of insurrection that followed in September. The chapter argues that anxiety in the Carter executive about congressional influence on wider policy issues caused the US government to pursue the incorrect policy yet again towards the Nicaraguan crisis. The National Palace take-over and its aftermath represented the moment when US congressional influence reached its potential on Carter's Nicaraguan policy before the fall of Somoza. Chapter five analyses the year 1979, up until to the fall of the Somoza regime on July 19. The first half of 1979 not only represented the fall of Somoza and the rise of the Sandinistas, it also confirmed the failings of Carter's policy towards Nicaragua. The Carter administration had not reclaimed any confidence in US foreign policy decision making towards the isthmus. Carter's government had lost all belief in their ability to guide a resolution to the Nicaraguan crisis after their failed mediation attempt, and went back to a policy of non-intervention. In the shadow of US reversion, the countries of Latin America and the

Nicaraguan opposition were able to guide the resolution. Although the Carter administration made a last-ditch attempt in June and July 1979 to maintain a National Guard influence in the successor government to Somoza, they had given the countries of Latin America the advantage in guiding a resolution by reverting back to a policy of non-intervention at the beginning of 1979. On the whole, these chapters represent the first period of Carter's Nicaraguan policy; a period in which the Vietnam legacy was highly influential in US executive decisions towards Nicaragua.

Part three (chapters six to eight) evaluates the Carter administration's policy towards Nicaragua's new government. In chapter six it is argued that the Carter administration altered its policy to Nicaragua in conjunction to the new multifaceted government running the country. To counteract a potential growing Cuban influence in the region, the Carter administration effectively moved away from their policy based on non-intervention and human rights. Instead they emphasised constructive diplomatic relations with the new government to achieve economic development in Nicaragua through mainly private sector growth. The ghosts of the domino theory and Kennedy's Alliance for Progress were implicit in the policy. The domino theory is apparent because the main influence on Carter's new policy was the fear of revolution spreading to the Northern Tier countries in Central America and that Cuban/Soviet influence would implant itself in the isthmus. The Alliance for Progress is apparent because the key component to the Carter administration's new policy was economic development. Chapter seven argues that this new policy was jeopardised because a CIA guided counter-argument arose at the beginning of 1980 opposed to the Carter administration's emphasis on economic assistance. This in turn halted aid to Nicaragua. Consequently, increased disillusionment occurred in Nicaragua and the foundation for increased tension between the Sandinistas and the

business class was laid. This saw the resignation of two key Junta members, Alfonso Robelo and Violeta Chamorro. Chapter eight argues that the antagonism between the Carter executive and the CIA made the Nicaraguan government more vulnerable, increasingly paranoid, and placed it in a weakened position for Ronald Reagan to capitalise on when he took over the US presidency. On the whole, section three argues that the Carter administration tried to pursue a constructive policy towards the new Nicaraguan government, which they should be given credit for. The CIA, however, hindered the prospects of the policy and the Nicaraguan government's opportunity to succeed.

Collectively, these chapters create an understanding of the Carter administration's policy towards Nicaragua that has not been conducted before. The thesis establishes that the Vietnam legacy played a key role in the Carter administration's Nicaraguan policy. Before the fall of the Somoza regime, the legacy of the Vietnam War was paramount and stopped the United States from playing an increased role in the transitional process. In dealing with Nicaragua's new government, its influence was implicit in the Carter administration's policy of economic diplomacy.

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