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Iran; Nicaragua; Cuba; An Analysis of Revolutions.

> Neil Moynihan March 27, 1981

Iran, Nicaragua, and Cuba are three countries that have recently gone through revolutionary change from authoritarian dictatorship to some other kind of government. The transformations were widespread and complete—what Skocpol would call "Social revolutions." There are striking similarities between the three that are especially enlightening when looked at from an American perspective. For example, all three countries could be and have been considered strategically important for the United States. In all three the United States was influential if not the main course of the rise to power of the dictator, and in all three it blindly supported the status quo until the United States was discredited in that country.

Can the revolutions be explained by withdrawal of United States' support? It seems not. Can all three revolutions fit under any one theory of revolution? The answer here will probably also be no; each theory, however, gives valuable hints about what aspects of each revolution one should analyze.

There are a number of these questions that immediately spring to mind. First, why did the revolutions occur in these countries and not in others that were similar? Following from that, What made the non-revolutionary countries different? In what ways were the revolutionary countries similar? What then are the underlying causes of revolution?

I chose to study three recent revolutions that are both related yet dissimilar. Iran and Nicaragua are related in that they were under the influence of the United States during the same time period and so encountered equivalent

external influences during the immediate pre-revolutionary period. Cuba had the same smothering presense of the United States, but the "lesson of Cuba" had yet to be learned, so external reactions were different; the revolution was allowed to topple Batista. When looked at from this perspective, another question arises: Were the revolutions simply a reaction to United States neo-imperialism?

In States and Social Revolutions Theda Skocpol divides revolutionary theory into different types. "Aggregate-psychological" theorists attempt to explain revolutions through psychological motivation; relative deprivation is a key phrase. "Political-conflict" theorists see revolutions as struggles between organized groups; here revolution occurs when the populace must choose one side or the other and they choose the challanger to the government. "Systems/value consensus" theorists feel that a system goes into disequalibrium when it is invaded by new technologies or values; if the authorities resynchronize through reform then they can remain in power. Marxist theorists on revolution are most concerned with structural contradictions inherant in capitalism. In each country that I cover I will see which of these theories fits the best.

There are several differing views as to how the United States should react to change in developing countries. Over the years the generally accepted view has shifted from seeing political systems in a black/white context - first either "fascist" or "democratic", then later either "communist" or "free - to a more realistic stance of trying to see what was actually happening inside an individual

country. The United States government has unfortunately often seemed to be years behind in the way it reacts to immediate and pressing problems. In Iran, Nicaragua, and Cuba the United States missed all kinds of painless chances to show goodwill; the American image suffered further because of it. As it is likely that change will continue to occur, sometimes in revolutionary form and sometimes in countries friendly to the United States, it is to everyone's advantage to understand the process involved.

Iran has the fortune, or the misfortune, to be located in a very strategic position. It sits astride the narrow Straits of Hormuz - the pathway between the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. One unfortunate aspect of this location is that it is also important for nations other than Iran; other nations thus wish to have influence over these straits. Another factor of the physical location is the border that Iran shares with the Soviet Union. This border, 1600 miles long, is of course of strategic importance to the Soviets. However, again other nations wish to have influence; the United States, in its aversion to Communism, has for years blatantly spied over. In this way the United States has been able to check the USSR's compliance with arms limitations treaties, and to keep them from expanding their influence through the Middle East.

Possibly the most important factor affecting the modern history of Iran has been its oil. Since oil was first discovered in 1908 foreign powers have wanted it. The British navy switched to oil from coal shortly before WWI as a result

of their access to the Iranian oil fields; Israel was dependent to a very large degree on the Shah's willingness to supply them with oil; the United States would have experienced a much greater shortage in 1973 except for the fact that the Shah chose to supply the American companies during the embargo.

Because of these considerations, superpowers throughout the century have felt that it was of vital importance to keep the area "stable". When the United States ascended to the position of superpower it took it upon itself to insure stability. (And with stability, receptivity to American oil companies.) The increasing oil revenues were a destabilizing force, and after WWII Iran seemed to be growing increasingly unstable. Iran had the longest history of continuous monarchy in the world. Modernization shook the system; the Shah from the 1920's to the Second World War was not of specially royal lineage but only an officer who had seized power. When he lost his position during the war (because the allies did not trust him) he left a political vacuum.

During the 1940's political freedom had allowed political parties to form, and because of this factionalism, succeeding governments and Prime Ministers could not develop working relationships with the Majlis in parliament. In the early 1950's, however, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh emerged as a nationalist-reformist figure. He was supported by the newly formed National Front - a coalition of widely divergent parties. (He was also of "royal" blood.) Mossadegh advocated: 1) control of oil to maximize income, 2) minimizing British control by improving relations with the Soviets, and 3) initiating political and socio-economic reforms. 4 Mossadegh's popularity came in

a large part from the feeling the Iranians had of being used for their oil and strategic position and of not being given enough in return. He was voted Prime Minister on April 30, 1951; the next day he declared the nationalization of the AIOC (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company).

Dr. Mossadegh was named. "Man of the Year" for 1951 by Time magazine because of his outspoken stand against imperialism. Furthermore, he promised to deliver one million dollars a day from oil revenues. He failed to do it because he overestimated the importance of Iran as a petroleum exporter. Some argue that Mossadegh was as much concerned with humiliating the (non-royal) Shah as with nationalism; that he felt that his lineage made him the proper Shah. He exiled the Shah's sister; stopped the Shah's distribution to peasants of what he said were illegally acquired lands; set up committees to investigate the sources of Pahlavi wealth; started clearing the armed forces of pro-Shah officers; and finally on August 16, 1953, when an attempt at reglacement was made, drove the Shah out of the country.

The tide had not been entirely pro-Mossadegh during his tenure in office. In fact, the loss of revenues caused by the balking of the oil companies was very damaging to his popularity, and that, along with Britain applying pressure, helped Mossadegh make a few miscalculations. He was led to believe (by the United States Ambassador Henry Grady) that the United States was jealous of British influence in Iran and would support nationalization. The United States may have been jealous, but it was because they wanted to see American oil companies inside Iran - not because they wanted

Britain out. The United States actually helped to destabilize the Iranian economy by not loaning money when the oil income temporarily dried up. 10

The situation was relatively clear-cut to the United States. Mossadegh was a nationalist who was good for no one outside the country. When he realized that his power was beginning to slip, he pulled the only trump card he had in the deck: he threatened Britain and the United States with a much closer alliance with the Tudeh (Communist) party and the Soviets if they did not help him out. This was exactly the wrong threat to use against the United States in the early 1950's, and plans were made immediately to get rid of him. The National Front party fell apart as the religious section protested the communist influences. The actual coup failed the first time as large crowds demonstrated for the Prime Minister, and those involved in the plot were arrested. The pro-Mossadegh celebrating got out of hand, with the communist element exposing themselves much too blatantly, however, and the CIA got another chance. Hiring a crowd of muscle-men to overcome people's fear of demonstrating against the regime, they started a rally that snowballed against Mossadegh. Just days later a new prime minister (Zahedi, chosen by the U.S.) was in office. From that point on, the Shah proved his political shrewdness. From his essentially figurehead position he gained influence over the secret police (modeled after the CIA, by the CIA, for Zahedi) and parliament.

The Shah started his true reign in Iran in 1953 with what he felt was overwhelming public support. The situation,

however, was volatile; it could go either way, as events had shown. The Shah perceived the dissatisfaction of the people, but he misperceived the reasons for it. The people had wanted some kind of voice in the government to express themselves and their developing nationalistic feelings. The Shah planned to let them have revolution if they wanted it, but only through him. 11

At first the Shah was shy and unassertive, but over the years, as he remained in power, he became one of the most experienced politicians alive. There was, however, criticism of the regime; the Shah maintained his position primarily through repression during the early 1960's. The gains that the country had made were not shared by the majority of the Iranian people.

Meanwhile, the Iranian economy was sinking rapidly into a recession with a very high rate of inflation, worsening balance of trade, and a dramatic drop in the general level of productivity and economic activity. Thus, Iran continued to be one of the world's most slowly developing countries, with an illiteracy rate of over 85 percent. 12

The Shah started introducing his new economic policies in the early 1960's, naming it the White Revolution in 1963 in response to American pressure to appear reformist. He planned to use the "glorious monarchy" as a rallying point for a national socio-economic expansion. The White Revolution may or may not have been a genuine effort to improve the living conditions in Iran, but whichever, the opposing sides saw it as they wanted to see it. An example of the official United States viewpoint is given by James Bill. He says that the Shah stayed in power by coopting the demands of the opposition and that he supported reforms

where other monarchs haven't. He emphasizes the Shah's willingness to send students abroad to study and to perhaps to absorb dangerous thoughts. He admits, however, that:

what the Shah has done, in effect, has been to encourage enormous economic change and some social change in order to prevent any basic political change. 15

This view fits exactly into the "systems/value consensus" theory stated earlier; here the Shah would be compensating for the instability of new technology and culture. One would expect that he would have had to make a lot of changes; he didn't.

The Shah and the new prime minister Ali Amini (put in at the request of washington) concentrated at first mostly on land reform. In order to get the law passed, parliament, which was made up in large part by landowners, had to be dissolved. Landowners and the church, which derived much of its income from land ownership, fomented the most dangerous rebellions before those of 1977. Ali Amini finally left office, and the Shah took over personally. The landowners were placated with investment opportunity; the Shah sold government owned industries to the landowners to pay for the land they bought from the landowners. The church, however, was given only small grants of money.

The country really did advance rapidly during the sixties, even though there had not been much to work with.

Unlike many poorer countries that had been left a colonial infrastructure of communications and utilities, Iran started virtually from scratch. There was no trained industrial work-force and in most instances facilities such as power, water, approach roads and telecommunications had to be specially installed.

While significant progress was made under difficult circumstances, little or no thought was given to what opposition there was; SAVAK (the secret police) nipped most protest in the bud. The most audible opposition was coming from those most immune to SAVAK - church hierarchy and people outside the country. In 1963 and 1964 Khomeini, who for several years had been the leading contender for the Shi'ite (the sect of Islam with the largest following in Iran) leadership, had been opposing the Shah; he was arrested and released three times before being exiled. 17 The most outstanding examples of religious oriented criticism - such as Khomeini - were dealt with through repression the same as other dissidents. Other religious protest was probably silenced for fear of retribution. A 'section of the religious institution", however, did support the Shah during the 1960's. 18 According to James Bill. the Shah returned to "rule by force" again around 1966, while in 1971 there was an even tighter clampdown as hardliners gained control of the intelligence organization. This second shift was characterized by systematic torture of prisoners. 19 This may have silenced the opposition, but it certainly did not win any support. Furthermore, he was violating a cardinal rule of the systems/value consensus theory.

The Nixon Doctrine, as the program of regional defense formulated by Nixon and Kissinger was called, was the beginning of the Shah's long fall. In it the United States relied on local governments to maintain peace and stability in their regions — with American aid. This policy fit Iran and the Shah perfectly; Iran, because it, as was mentioned before, is located in an internationally strategic position; and the Shah

because he wanted to bring the ancient glory and importance back to Iran under his leadership. Furthermore, the Shah, with his liking for flashy and expensive armaments, would under this policy be receiving many more. Finally, the Iranian people, instead of seeing him and themselves as American puppets, would see him grasping for regional influence on his own.

While the Nixon administration essentially allowed the Iranians to purchase all the weapons they wanted, Nixon and Kissinger actually encouraged authoritarianism rather than democratization for reasons of stability. Of this approach to avoiding revolution fits into any of the theories Skocpol summarizes it is that of "political-conflict". That would require, however, an admission that there was an organized political group opposing the Shah and that loyalty had to be kept on the side of the government. If no admission of that sort is found, if the increased authoritarianism is just precautionary, then Kissinger's encouragement is not easily explainable.

The Shah, in retrospect, was at the height of his success, and each move he made toward tighter governmental control was pushing him further from what might have been a non-revolutionary path for Iran. The gains in legitimacy he was making through economic development he was to lose through repression. The United States had relied on the Shah to take over some of the burden of Asian security and could not criticize for fear of offending the tempermental rular. However, the United States, which was always very wary of using intelligence agencies on an ally, was given ample clues as to the political turmoil

that was occurring in the country. 21 Guerrilla violence increased and became more organized; there were many plots and assassination attempts; and finally those Americans that Iranians felt were aiding the intelligence network were murdered - including a military advisor, two air force colonels, and three Rockwell International employees. 22

In October/the OPEC cartel succeeded in raising the price of oil; the Shah figured that with this increase in government revenues he could increase proportionally the speed with which Iran progressed to the "Great Civilization". Problems arose with the price, however, that were pushed aside in planning by simple optimism. When the huge increase in orders from abroad reached the shores of Iran the docks were backed up in places for up to nine months. There was actually a scarcity of goods, including gasoline and building supplies. There then followed inflation of the money and of the cities - over 100,000 people per year were moving to Teheran alone by the mid-1970's. 24

The apparent success of the Shah in every field added a third kind of inflation - that of his ego. When restrictions on the purchase of arms from the United States were first lifted, the Shah devised an economic plan that included the purchase of all he could afford. When he reached that amount, the increased revenue from the petroleum price rise, and his success at obtaining it by beating the oil companies (or by getting help from Kissinger) led the Shah to reschedule an already ambitious industrialization program. The Shah may have been feeling quite powerful, even before an infusion of seemingly limitless funds, but afterward

he felt unlimited. His own personal vision of the future of Iran overruled everyone else's. He almost seemed to be impervious to realistic observations.

The change in the Shah's governance stems form many events, including apparent unconditional success economically and militarily. In 1976, Court Minister Asadollah Alem, his most trusted advisor and the only one that could face up to him and tell him about things that were going wrong, died. From them on the system was too screwed up to repair itself; all the highest ranking posts in all parts of government had been filled on the basis of loyalty to the Shah. People were removed if they got too popular, if they said or did something "disloyal", or if a scapegoat was needed. The Shah then had no one who was willing to face him and tell him bad news. Even the newspapers printed solely propaganda.

In 1976 the Shah had the Iranian calendar changed to match the start of the reign of the first king of Persia.

Five years before, in 1971, he had celebrated the 2500th anniversary of the Persian monarchy with a multimillion dollar international blast. The dated he claimed for the calendar in 1976 was 2535, which would make the 2500th anniversary match the date he took office. Thus, in one quick maneuver he had managed to alienate the Moslem clergy, who felt the Moslem calendar was better, any person with the ability or interest to see a discrepancy between the two dates, and the populace in general which was suddenly required by "popular decree" to work by unfamiliar dates. Something was going wrong with the monarch. Even as the economy was

spinning into an inflationary spiral. the Shah ordered more inflationary spending.

Purchases of flashy arms began to be a major liability in the mid-seventies. The Shah's government had mapped out a second five year development plan within a year of the first to take into account the predicted increases in oil revenue. In the second plan the had excitedly advanced the schedule of weapons purchases; Irans forces became incredibly well equipped - the army was purchasing more British tanks than the British Army. The petroleum importing countries, however, responded by tightening belts and consuming less. The Shah did not want to see his military expenditures cut, so he did not; other government programs were cut instead.

In 1976, the Shah appointed Tamshid Amuzegar as Prime Minister; he was chosen because of his ability to slow down the inflationary spiral. He was a man who could make the cuts, but he had no control over the most inflationary part of the economy - the military. He cut things like religious funding and low interest loans, a mainstay of the construction industry. 29 The willingness of the Shah to hurt the church and Iranian business while at the same time continuing arms purchases from and for the United States angered nationalists. The increase in oil revenues was simply being recycled back through the American arms industries - and the fancy weaponry purchased was obviously more than Iran needed by itself for its own security. Much of the most sophisticated weaponry and the most expensive was for use in spying over and defending the Soviet border. Iran could not reasonably hope to halt a Soviet offensive no matter what weapons it had. Thus, it was

obvious to people that weapons like the F-16 planes were being used by Americans for American purposes, but were being paid for by the Iranians.

The feeling of being used by foreign powers is deeply entrenched in the minds of Iranians, as shown by the support for first Mossadegh and then later for the Ayatollah Khomeini. Iranians believed that the Shah's policies originated in Washington. When the United States' policy seemingly began to shift from obvious self-interest to one that really did not profit - human rights, the rest of the world did not know what to think;

Given the Iranian's conviction that the United States could exercise ultimate control in Iran, Carter's advocacy of human rights aroused intense interest, even excitement. Opposition elements quickly tested to see if the boundaries of freedom were being broadened . . . Clearly uncertain about Carter's seriousness of purpose, the shah acquiesced in these activities and made a few moves of his owned toward liberalization. 31

The shift toward a United States policy favoring human rights brought many formerly acquiescent people out into the public; the criticism began to increase and human rights groups formed. Finally, the process of liberalization had to hit a wall; the government's corruption was incompatible with freedoms of speech and press. The government faced the choice of a complete overhaul or a restraining of public opinion. When the government found out that Carter was not going to worry about a bit of repression in a close ally, the choice, that of a clampdown, was clear.

By that time, however, (late 1977) the criticism of the government was gaining its own momentum, and the Shah started

to pull in the reins. The revolution, as they say, grabbed the bit and ran; too many people had come out in opposition who could not go back to living normal lives with SAVAK around. President Carter, perhaps realizing the tense situation the country was in, did what he was to do so many times in his term of office - he backed down and kept quiet on human rights in that specific case. On November 22nd, 1977, a list of signatories to a statement on human rights was sent to Carter; when the President arrived in Iran a week later he mentioned only how much the people supported and loved their stable Shah - thus abandoning the signers to repression and arrest. 32

The Shah, released from the restrictions of human rights, dicided to attack what he saw as an important cause of the unrest - the clergy. He allowed a slander article to be printed about the Ayatollah Khomeini, who was annoying him by smuggling political sermons in over the border in cassette tapes. (It is interesting to note that the sermons could be smuggled in from exile and heard by large numbers of people precisely because of the modernization that had occurred during the Shah's reign). The slander article touched off a protest sit-in the next day in the holy city of Qom. Soldiers fired on marchers killing between "several" and "dozens" and injuring hundreds. 33 In the Moslem tradition a mourning is held forty days after death. On February 18 several thousand people marched in Tabriz - it turned into a riot with the first cries of "death to the Shah". 34 The protests continued and grew every forty days, and over the months the army lost the ability, and perhaps the will, to keep shooting down unarmed protesters.

At one of the last pro-Shah rallies, the speaker,

publicized on national radio, praised the Shah for all his achievements to a crowd of peasants and working class people. The crowd cheered every time they heard the Shah mentioned, but they dould not understand the rest of the speech because it was in ancient Persian; the speaker did not care as long as he knew the Shah was listening to him. The Shah did not care as long as it was flattering. 35

By August 1978 the Shah realized that he would have to compromise, but the mujtahids (religious leaders) would accept nothing less than a complete return to the constitution of 1906. The Shah still felt that he was bargaining from a position of strength, so he refused; at each refusal he was narrowing his bargaining range.

In the beginning of September there was a brief period of intense violence; marshal law was declared on September 8th. Though the violence decreased for the next couple of months the protest did not. Workers began to strike in large numbers and the government gave large concessions to keep them supporting the system. The people felt, however, that they were forcing the concessions out of the government. Just as Jimmy Carter's human rights policy sparked the revolution while Carter was ever more despised as a hypocrite, so the Shah's concessions to the people exposed his weakness, and they did not give him credit for them.

In December the government finally fell apart. The Shah, not knowing what to do, allowed his Prime Minister to let marches take place to celebrate the Ashura holidays; this move may have been necessary, because a few days before a group of junior officers had raided and shot dozens of senior officers -

it looked like his last pillar of support, the military, might mutiny. 36 With the army possibly out of control and the oil industry at a standstill (along with oil revenue) because of strikes, the Shah capitulated. Foreigners and other liberals felt that he gave up all the benefits of westernization by allowing the Prime Minister to ban casinos, to change the calendar back, to close down nightclubs, and even to abolish the post of women's affairs minister in the cabinet. 37

The government the Shah set up to replace the military government that had been ruling since mid-November was doomed to failure. Though the new Prime Minister, Dr. Shahpur Eakhtiar, had opposed the Shah for years, he did not have the support of Khomeini. The Shah left for his holiday with a trunk of soil, leaving open the path for Khomeini and an Islamic republic.

What brought on the revolution? Can it be explained by any of the types of revolutionary theory? Was it brought on by temporary withdrawal of United States support, by a feeling in the populace of relative deprivation, by the church which forced the people to decide between one side and the other, by the disequilibrium associated with modernization, or simply by internal contradictions inherant in capitalism? There are no answers to these unless one specifies which aspect of revolution one is talking about; each has a different function in the building of revolution. One by one, all of the requirements for each of the theories were fulfilled, (or at least the revolution could be fit into the theory) until finally the revolution occurred.

Nicaragua, like Iran, is located in a region that historically has been of strategic importance to the United States. With the gold rush to California, passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific via and inter-oceanic canal suddenly looked necessary. Possible sites for a canal were brought under United States tutelage; Nicaragua seemed to be the most suited because rivers and lakes already cut most of the way across. Even after the Canal was located in Panama the United States kept its options open for one in Nicaragua. That brings us into this century.

In Nicaragua two political parties — the Liberals and the Conservatives.— had waged war on and off for decades. With better equipment (and more money at stake from developing agribusiness) the battles grew fiercer in the early part of the century. The United States stationed Marines there to protect American lives and property. With a short interlude in the nineteen-twenties, the Marines stayed from 1912 to 1933. Guided by Manifest Destiny, though they often wanted to leave, the Americans stayed and tried to help. A belief that they were doing some kind of good perhaps softened the edges of the self-interest that went along with the occupation. President Coolidge wanted free elections and was even willing to risk a Liberal victory. Maricans may have had them—selves and profits in the back of their minds, but it at least seemed like enlightened self-interest.

Secretary of State Stimson visited Nicaragua in 1927, bringing with him American preconceptions on how to handle problems. He felt that a non-political National Guard was the best solution. While Stimson was there, a young General named Anastasio Somoza Garcia translated for him; Stimson was impressed by his personableness and his command of English. Two things on Stimson's mind when he left Nicaragua were the creation of a Notional Guard under United States auspices, and the General Somoza. The two would later be inseparable.

The United States had returned with the Marines in 1926 after a short absence, and had brought the Liberals and Conservatives to an agreement. One Liberal, however, General Augusto Cesar Sandino, refused to lay down arms to allow American insertion of a Conservative president. On July 16, 1927, Sandino attacked a garrison of soldiers at Ocotal. He lost badly both because he had only two hundred or so men and because he played by his opponent's rules; while he laid seige on the garrison U.S. planes bombed his troops. Sandino survived and learned from that and other failures, and instead of disappearing he grew stronger and more infamous. He continued fighting for five and one-half years.

The newly formed <u>Guardia Nacional</u> suffered from Sandino's constant attacks; the United States Marines could not defeat him either. As Sandino's experience and fame grew, the United States' willingness to slowly lose men to him diminished; in the midst of the Depression, there was more and more pressure from back home to pull out. Meanwhile Sandino's cause shifted from not wanting a Conservative president to not wanting any foreign intervention. He seemed to have won when the Marines pulled out in 1933.

Sandino, whose army was by now the preponderant military force in Nicaragua, and could not successfully have been resisted, saw his goal as attained. He recognized the Sacasa government and signed a peace treaty in February 1933, disarming his soldiers and dissolving his force.

The war was over, but Sandino still had more support in some areas of the country than the government. He wanted to exert this control in the northern provinces. When President Sacasa and Somoza (now director of the Guardia) disagreed on whether or not they should appoint a pro-Sandino government in the north, Sandino offered the President six hundred armed men so Somoza couldn't pressure him with the Guardia. Somoza and Sacasa then turned together on Sandino because he had therefore not done as he had agreed and turned in all his weapons. Outmaneuvered politically, Sandino gave in and met for a conciliatory meeting with Somoza; he was gunned down after it by Somoza's men. Richard Millet's description of the way Somoza was pressured into the killing by his subordinates, and of how he almost did not go through with it after Sandino called him from the prison and begged him not to, is valuable for an insight into the way Somoza's mind worked. 40 However, the move had been planned well, and while the assassination was taking place Sandino's army were either killed or scattered.

Since Sandino's army had been the "preponderant military force in Nicaragua," one might expect that the outraged army would reform and fight on. Eduardo Crawley, however, says that it was leaders, or caudillos, which were the focal point of Nicaraguan political movements. "Allegiance was to them personally, rather than to their 'causes,' and they were perfectly able to cast aside principles and idiologies,

to change alliances once and again, without alienating their followers." 41 So though Sandino's army did try to reorganize it was demoralized and lacked leadership.

Anastasio (Tacho) Somoza fit the definition of caudillo; he inspired men to follow his lead - even though it was leading only to his personal gain. Somoza, at the head of the strongest force in the country, was the most powerful man in the country and was getting stronger as he consolidated his hold on the <u>Guardia</u>. President Sacasa realized this when he saw how easy the assassination of Sandino had been for him; Sacasa, in a type of powerplay, forced Somoza to publicly proclaim allegiance to the presidency and to find the assassins. Somoza, embarrassed, did follow the instructions publicly:

Covertly, hawever, he began to spread by word of mouth and through his press organ La Nueva Prensa, an entirely different story: the assassintaion had been approved by Washington and obediently carried out by 'their man' Somoza. 42

The rivalry between the two contenders for power spiraled up until the both surrounded themselves by armed guards. Somoza finally forced the congress to repeal bill by marching the <u>Guardia</u> in front of the <u>Palacio Nacional</u>; then he 'asked' for a constitutional amendment so he could run for president while keeping his present post. That was too much for Sacasa.

In 1935 President Sacasa realized that Somoza with the National Guard behind him was more than an equal match. He asked the United States to bring back the Marines to stop him. The United States refused. "Such a stand was consistent with the principles of the 'Good Neighbor Policy,' but to many Nicaraguans it seemed that the United States had created a monster, then gone off, and left them to try to tame it." 43

In 1936 President Sacasa was finally forced from office while Somoza arranged to have himself hoisted to power.

The United States had gone into Nicaragua with interests that were intended in at least some degree to help the Nicaraguan country. The United States' theory was that a stable nonpartisan armed forces would keep the political power in the country from shifting erratically back and forth, so they kept on bolstering the National Guard. The problem arose because nobody in Nicaragua expected or even wanted a nonpartisan force; when one was created it did not stay that way for long. Somoza used the <u>Guardia</u>, the most efficient and strongest unit in the country's history, to eliminate his opposition. After years of threatening to refuse to recognize any government that came into power by force, President Roosevelt changed the policy, thus opening a direct path for Somoza to power. Over the years American support of the Somoza dynasty would prove stronger than Somoza's support of American interests.

Somoza and his sons kept United States support through geniality and a kind of genius; they kept themselves very aware of what was happening inside the United States and reacted accordingly. For forty years they played the internal politics of their own country almost as well. In 1939 Somoza visited Roosevelt, who gave him a warm welcome. (It is interesting to compare the reactions of the Shah with those of Somoza to their respective meetings with FDR; the Shah felt slighted that he had to travel across Teheran for the meeting while Somoza was pleased that he had been so well received in Washington.) Somoza made the most of his "friendship" with FDR back home; that, along with the Nicaraguan belief that whoever the United States wanted in power stayed in power,

kept the majority of opposition from surfacing.

The situation continued through the Second World War with little changing. Somoza kept a tight rein on the <u>Guardía</u> and the country, using tactics similar to those of the Shah of Iran. If officers in the <u>Guardía</u> became too popular they would be removed; if they accepted the decision without complaint then they had a chance of being reinstated. Anyone discovered to be plotting against Somoza was given the death penalty.

Tacho Somoza was gunned down by Regoberto Lopez Perez on September 20th, 1956. By the time people were told that the dictator president had died, his sons Luis and Tachito had already arranged the transfer of power to them. 44 The opposition did not have time to rise up, as the assassin had predicted they would; the United States had rushed the older Somoza to the Canal Zone in Panama and had kept the seriousness of his wounds a secret until he died.

Guardsmen and officers were kept in line, just as in Iran, by being given a stake in the status quo. In this extraordinarilly poor country recruits were well-fed and well-paid; officers got a chance at profitable corruption. The government was stable and acceptable to United States capitalism, while the army offered its willing service to help the Americans in the defense against communism. In fact, because of the stability of the regime Americans somewhat forgot about it. There were only a handful of mentions of the political situation in twenty-five years of the periodical Foreign Affairs. Those twenty-five years were costly when we finally woke up to the reality of what was actually happening.

that do appear in <u>Foreign Affairs</u> are representative of the views that Americans had about the area. In a July, 1950 article there was concern over development from dictatorship to democracy; Nicaragua was described as nearest "to a truly stifling dictatorship." Another article, this one in 1965, also spoke of the group of Central American states; "Nicaragua, long the fief of the Somoza family, is comparatively stable, most of its population living in somnolent unawareness of the revolutionary temper abroad in today's world and little disposed to adventure." Central to the differences between the two articles is the later emphasis on stability rather than democracy.

The United States went through an almost identical set of concerns. The Somozas in Nicaragua were particularly capable of reading American concerns and then reacting correctly to them. Their method was:

the identification of all opposition, actual or potential with whatever foreign threat currently preoccupied the United States. In the 1940's this was the Nazi movement; later it would be the Communists.47

The American mood really did control the impression that Somoza tried to give, and only once did the older Somoza slip. He first of all planned to keep the job of president for a third term against the wishes of Washington. Then when the successor he hand-picked turned on him he blatently had him replaced by another, more loyal, man. The United States denied recognition and cancelled military pacts. By 1948, however, the Cold War had become a reality, so the United States changed its mind

and reopened relations with the anti-communist dynasty.

Since then, until their fall, staunch anti-communist propoganda aimed at the U.S. government/kept a Somoza in power and well armed. Nicaragua was used as a base for the United States sponsored counter-revolutionary adventures in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. After the failure of the Bay of Pigs, Nicaragua's stability was valued even more as a pillar of anti-communism.

The United States has generally thought of Central America as a region rather than as individual countries. Though the small republics were not in the news very often, or even on U.S.government officials' minds, a regional program developed. First of all, since subversion and revolution were the biggest American fears, the symptoms were treated. Military equipment was standardized as much as possible, with an eye to counter-revolution if one or another government should fall. Condeca, the Central American Defense Council was formed as a final assurance. By the mid-1970's Central America received thirty percent of all aid for military education in Latin America. Military force, however, cannot be a permanent solution to the threat of revolution; the United States realized this and developed another method.

To prove that under capitalism just as much progress could be achieved as under communism in Cuba, President Kennedy launched the Alliance for Progress. It involved both reform and aid, but it did not really take hold. In the second half of the 1960's the Nicaraguan economy grew relatively quickly, due in large part to the Vietnam War. In 1967, however, a large crowd gathered to demand free elections; it was fired

upon and dispersed, but the fact of its occurrance shows that there was political dissatisfaction. Though opposition didn't grow dramatically at that time, the better economic picture enabled people to become aware of the possible changes available politically. Neil Macaulay wrote in 1967:

If this 'revolution of rising expectations' is suddenly cut short by a military coup, or the fraudulent election of a military President, the resulting discontent could lead to violent social upheaval. Revolutions are seldom bred in abject poverty or under the oppression of an iron dictatorship. Revolutions usually come when things are getting better, when the dictatorship begins to weaken - when people are conscious of the improvement but consider it 'too slow'. Any attempt to arrest Nicaragua's current progress toward a democracy could be dangerous indeed.49

Though he seems to have been over-optimistic about the progress that Nicaragua was making toward democracy, Macaulay's observations are important. His ideas are of the relative deprivation type; not deprivation economically but politically. He saw danger of an uprising on the horizon while most others considered Nicaragua a source of stability. An unrelated but just as far-reaching instability came on December 23, 1972, in the form of an earthquake that leveled the capitol.

The 1970's had started on a note of change in Nicaragua. The FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional), which had been in existence but a failure since the early 1960's, succeeded in hijacking a plane, and bargained for money for the release of their leader from prison, and passage to Cuba. Somoza vistied with President Nixon, who remembered that in his tour of Latin America in 1958 Nicaragua was almost the only country that had not had unfriendly or even violent crowds demonstrating against him. The Catholic Church, however,

began to denounce the regime and call for change. Then came the earthquake.

After the devastating Managua earthquake of December 1972, the Somoza clan used the resultant international aid chiefly for its own enrichment. The Somozas misappropriated to their own advantage a good half of all aid received. The National Guard also looted. While victims of the earthquake were bleeding in Managua, the clan were selling blood plasma received from international aid organizations at a good price in the U.S.A.50

Harald Jung cites four reasons that the political situation approached a crisis starting in the early 1970's.

First, the earthquake, second the enrichment of the Guardia officers through corruption, third the increase in tax and inflation that caught the small businesses, and finally the government restrictions on wages while inflation took away purchasing power for everyone. 51 But, it was the earthquake that was the most revealing. Though the area in which

Managua had been located was, and is, prime earthquake area,

"With Somoza in charge of reconstruction, the city of Managua was rebuilt on Somoza's land, by Somoza's construction companies, with international aid funnelled through Somoza's banks." 52

Over the next several years opposition groups crystallized.

UDEL (Union Democration de Liberacion) formed as a united opposition - and it was viable enough so that the FSLN denounced it as both a bourgeoise and pro-Soviet party. 53 Its leader was Pedro Joaquin Chamorro - a relative of the famous leaders of the Conservative party. He had given up his family's "Conservative" label for that of "Christian Democrat." In a comparatively brief period most of the population of the nation shifted to support one opposition group or another; UDEL was

the largest.

It was the FSLN, or the Sandinistas, however, that were beginning to make the news. On December 27, 1974 a small guerrilla group raided a party held for "Somoza's Shadow" - U.S. Ambassador Turner Shelton. Turner had left the party, but the Sandinistas were able to negotiate a radio and news-paper announcement, a trip to Cuba, and five million dollars in ransom. Tachito Somoza then declared a state of seige.

President Nixon, a fervent supporter of Somoza in Washington, was no longer in any position to give help; neither was Ambassador Turner Shelton - who had the dubious honor of seeing a foreign service award be given to an underling for consistantly opposing him.

Domestic criticism arose, as did foreign, and the Catholic Bishops sent a joint letter of disapproval; Somoza campaigned against the Archbishop. Nicaragua had the world's highest murder rate and the highest alcoholism rate of any Central American nation. 54

Somoza fought back against all the problems enveloping him. He instituted stronger censorship (the budget for intelligence almost doubled from 1970 to 1975) and he blamed Chamorro for both the success of the FSLN raids and popular discontent. In the United States his prestige continued to fall. Simply by bringing attention to the incompetance, collumnist Jack Anderson got Ambassador Shelton recalled; he then turned on Somoza himself, calling him the "World's Greediest Ruler." 55

From that point on it was downhill for Somoza. He had family and health problems, he lost the respect of a large

percentage of those who had supported him by his corruption involving the earthquake, and he made a fool of himself by doing things such as having trials for the Sandinista guerrillas in absentin. 56

The stage was almost ready for revolution. The United States was no longer completely happy with Somoza, the people of Nicaragua felt cheated of what could have been theirs, the opposition groups along with repression was making it necessary for the populace to commit themselves to one side or the other, and the earthquake had introduced an inequilibrium into the system. Revolution did not come right away, however, it needed something else to spark it.

While repression was rising as a reaction to increasing resistance, the FSLN divided into several 'tendencies,' or groups based on the type of action they wanted to take. The largest faction, advocating armed struggle to overthrow the government, felt that the process had to be spread to other opposition groups. In 1975 they opened up the movement to non-Marxists. The large growth in the number of marginally employed, and thus dissatisfied and with free time, turned the struggle into a real movement in the cities. The final lines were drawn, however, as Jimmy Carter was running for election.

In 1976 UDEL began lobbying in the United States Congress to get support for Somoza cut because of violations of human rights. Even with pressure coming from two directions — the United States and Nicaragua — the Congress still voted military aid in June 1977. However, Nicaragua looked like the perfect showcase for Carter's 'human rights' policy:

The absence of any apparent security problem in Nicaragua meant that U.S. policy there, unlike policy toward Iran or South Korea, could be safely guided by the moral imperative of human rights undiluted by national security concerns. 59

Shortly after Carter took office he pressured El Salvador and Guatemala to improve human rights; they cancelled military assistance pacts. Nicaragua, on the other hand, said it would comply. It seems as if Somoza knew that he would have to pretend to be more socially lenient so he could get the weapons to be more socially brutal. No United States President until Carter even considered trying to pressure the Somoza dynasty out of power, but Carter himself was afraid of any of the regimes that seemed to have a chance to replace him.

When Carter entered office, or perhaps because Carter entered office, events began to move much more quickly in Nicaragua. In April 1977 both economic and military aid were restricted on human rights grounds. The moderate opposition in Nicaragua sat back and waited until the United States forced Somoza out; that was a tactical mistake. A Nicaraguan lobby in Congress threatened to hold up unrelated legislation and even the Panama Canal Treaty unless restrictions were lifted; they were in September. The FSLN started its first major offensive in October, and Somoza and the <u>Guardia</u> began to realize the seriousness of the threat to the regime.

On January 10, 1978, an event occurred that changed the course of the revolution - Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the founder and leader of the moderate opposition group UDEL, was assassinated. It is generally agreed that Somoza was behind the murder. The radical viewpoint on the situation is that Somoza had Chamorro killed when the United States finally

realized that he was a viable replacement figure. Somoza figured that with Chamorro gone a choice would have to be made between the leftist FSLN or himself; the United States would have no real choice but to support him. 60

A second view of the assassination is that Somoza did not realize the enormous repercussions it would have. There were mass demonstrations, the Archbishop of Managua said that people have the right to armed rebellion, and after two weeks of turmoil the moderates called for an indefinite strike until Somoza resigned. Here the United States stepped in with a symptomatic cure that harmed its long-term goals; it pushed first and foremost for an end to the strike rather than a resolution of the problem.

In bargaining the United States again said it would cut military aid to Somoza and pressure him for a change of government. The moderates, with their successful strike only in its second week, received support for the strike from the FSLN at the same time they were receiving pressure from the United States to end it. The members of UDEL felt that the situation was now out of their hands. They were right, but control had not gone to the United States as they had thought but to the FSLN, who had not wanted to end the strike until Somoza was gone. "On 16 February, after the bourgeoisie had lost control of the strike, the U.S.A. announced that it would not after all suspend military aid to Somoza for 1978, but only for 1979." 61

From that point on the rebellion was led by the FSIN just as the left's view says Somoza predicted. All that was left for Somoza to do was to alienate the entire population through brutal repression, bombing of cities, and murders of

anyone supposedly connected with the Sandinistas; the United States stuck with him and supported him nearly to the bitter end. Perhaps the end was more bitter than it had to be because of that support.

Hesumption of American backing was obvious to even the moderate opposition by the middle of 1978 - because of it they had to search for allies further to the left. The United States, which had previously refused Somoza loans, pushed through three for a total of 150 million dollars. Thus the United States was even tying itself financially to the maintenance of the regime. When in September the FSLN called for a national insurrection and fifteen towns revolted, they were seiged and bombed one by one by the <u>Guardia</u>. An estimated six thousand people were dead and another sixty thousand were forced to relocate. By November the economy was in ruins.

Somoza hung onto power, however, and stalled all United States efforts to find an acceptable conservative replacement for him. Just as in Iran, American reactions were months behind the real situation. By 1979 the United States dropped all other goals and made it an imperative that the FSLN be kept from power. Since 1976, however, all other opposition groups had been saying that the Sandinistas would have to have a part in any replacement government.

As events unfolded in Nicaragua, the United States consistantly tried to fit a square peg of policy into the round hole of reality. By failing to assess accurately the dynamics of Somoza's decline, the United States produced proposals which were invariably six months out of date. 63

Somoza was doomed, though, and by the summer of 1979
It was just about over; still, at the end of May the

International Monetary fund loaned the sinking government sixty-five million more dollars. Shortly before the end the United States moderated its goals - slightly - and requested only the retention of the <u>Guardia</u>, for stability, and another centrist on the governing junta. They were convinced to drop their demand that Somoza be allowed to pick a successor. On July 17 Somoza left with his <u>Guardia</u> officers and most of the treasury for Florida.

The revolution in Nicaragua, like that in Iran, satisfied the requirements of the differing types of social revolution theories. Economically and politically people were dissatisfied and felt they should have more; guerrilla violence and government counterviolence brought the people to a point where they had to decide between the two; the earthquake and the subsequent abuses put the country into moral and economic disequilibrium. The actual spark to revolution, however, was the assassination of Chamorro, which may itself have been prompted by Carter's human rights policy because under it Chamorro would have been a more acceptable leader than Somoza.

In both Iran and Nicaragua the stage was set for rebellion by having each of the theoretical requirements fulfilled. The last preparation in each was the (temporary) withdrawal of American support. The actual spark in each was a political miscalculation by the dictator in attacking the opposition; the Shah slandered the Ayatollah and Somoza murdered Chamorro. By the end the revolutions in each country had overwhelming public support.

Cuba is an island located 90 miles off the shore of Florida. Because of this proximity it is of far greater strategic importance to the United States than is either Iran or Nicaragua. This has meant that the United States has controlled much of what happens on the island for most of this century—until the revolution.

The island of Cuba--which is much closer to U.S. shores than Puerto Rico, has been under the thumb of different powers since the fourteen-hundreds. On and off in the second half of the eighteenth century Cubans fought for freedom from the Spanish. In 1898 the United States came in and quickly defeated the already weak regime--thus acquiring a host of colonies for themselves. Although Teddy Roosevelt felt that it was a fun and profitable war for the United States, it had been long and drawn out for Cuba; it was safe for the U.S. to give Cuba independence because they were well within reach of a guiding hand. Just to be sure, the Platt Amendment, giving the United States the right to intervene in Cuban internal affairs, was forced on the first president. Cuba developed well economically and politically then; often guided by the friendly United States Ambassador.

Economically, the sugar industry dominated; as a profitable enterprise, investment capital flowed in from the north. Because of the numerous areas in which Americans had interests, the power structure fragmented and decentralized. 54 The development of the country was not toward independence—just as with Nicaraguan agricultural goods and Iranian oil

(until the 1970's) the prices were set outside the country.

United States interests did not worry about the Cuban economy—
the dependence wasn't mutual. In fact in 1928 United States
beet sugar interests lobbied and obtained tariffs against.

Cuban sugar; Cuba's threat (in response) was that it would
have to industrialize to make up for the loss.

Sugar, because of the nature of its production, is almost more of an industrial rather than an agriculture product; the land is the production site and the work is done by paid laborers. The major problem with producing primarily or solely sugar is the fact that it is a crop--as such it is seasonal. Workers work full time for five months of the year while the rest of the time they are unemployed. By the late 1950's there were as many as five hundred thousand of these partially employed people-one third of the workforce. The cycle of employment/unemployment is almost guaranteed to cause dissatisfaction, especially if, as was the case with Cuban sugar, it was only a marginally good enough wage to last year round and saving wasn't encouraged.

When the Depression came, it hit Cuba vary hard. In the early thirties, increasing the problem, President Muchado decided that he needed longer than the constitutionally allowed length of time to complete his economic program; there was unrest, however, as he began to arrange for the extention of his term. The United States Ambassador Sumner Wells felt that interference was better than intervention, so he tried to pressure Muchado to resign. Muchado tried to arouse nationalistic sentiment behind himself, and finally

Wells asked him directly to step down. 67 Just days later, on August 12, 1933, the Cuban armed forces overthrew the President. At this point there was a quick succession of governments, for when General Herrera of the armed forces turned power over to a president of his choice the government had little or no support. On September 4, 1933, that government was overthrown in a coup led by a 'Sergeant-Stenographer' named Fulgencio Batista.

The United States did not like the idea of an unconstitutional government, no matter how much more support it had than the previous government, so they did not recognize it. (Summer Welles advocated action and requested Washington to send troops; Washington surrounded the island with thirty warships.) Because a government that the United States opposed could not remain in power in Latin America for long, Batista kept trying different presidents to please the Americans. It was an American policy change that made the difference; the fourth president, Carlos Mendieta, was recognized in June 1934. Along with recognition came the end of the paternalistic Flatt Amentment; it was replaced with a treaty that included the lowering of some American tariffs.

Batista was actually the power behind the government, and in the volatile Cuban political situation many people lined up in support of him. In 1936 he dicided to have President Gomez impeached. The charges were absurd but it went through anyway so people wouldn't be on record opposing Batista. From 1936 to 1940 Frederico Laredo Bru governed for Batista, and in 1940 Batista himself ran for and won the office. It is interesting to note that he stayed in power

for four years while in alliance with what would turn out to be his worst enemy - the Communist party.

In the prewar years Batista was followed and respected as a Cuban leader. He had shown that he would not cower in the face of United States dissapproval, he had tried to bring the economy back to a semblance of normality after the Depression, and he had brought a sense of legitimacy to the government that had been lacking.

1944 was another election year. One would not have thought from his record that he would have maintained himself in power through illegal means, but he is inordinately proud of his decision to hold those elections. They were honest. In his book Batista quotes an admirer - Emil Ludwig - who wrote about the elections shortly afterward.

Batista had forbidden any fraud in the voting, and thereby came away with a moral victory. Cuba's reputation had never been higher and the European opinion of Latin American elections had been profoundly changed. . .Batista rendered an incalculable service to the prestige of the entire continent.

If Batista's government had really been a completely non-corrupt one, then it is hard to explain the surprise of everyone over the elections. However, Batista lost. The government that succeeded Batista was perhaps the worst in the country's history.

The government of Ramon Grau San Martin (President Grau) came in in 1944; it started out by preventing the return to Cuba of the former president, and then it matured by perfecting graft in government. In fact, Jorge Dominguez states that while other governments had enabled officials to gain wealth by "influence peddling," Grau's government was characterized by outright theft of government money. 70 This developed into

an issue that would cut through the opportunistic politics of the country and have an effect even beyond the revolution.

The Cuban People's Party (the Ortodoxos) formed around the issue of corruption. Because of the existance of another center of political gravity, however, - Batista - President Grau's party beat the Ortodoxos with a minority of the vote. Carlos Prio Socarras (President Prio) proved to be just about as corrupt as President Grau had been; it became more and more obvious that the Ortodoxoa were the strongest political party in the country - and a cinch to win the 1952 presidential election. They never got a chance to try, however.

As the 1952 elections approached, two viable candidates emerged: Roberto Agramonte of the Ortodoxos and Batista of a coalition called the United Action Party. President Prio's party had almost no chance. In their years of being out of power the Ortodoxos had seen no improvements in the governments; their aims grew more radical. Batista, who was still a very influencial individual in Cuba, began to worry that either of the alternatives would be unacceptable. He felt that Prio was so corrupt that he could do practically anything.

In February 1952, one of the officers whom I had dissuaded from military uprising told me that Prio had had a meeting with the Army command. . . to discuss a plan to prevent the national elections. He said that, if I were elected, the Autentico and Ortodox Parties would unite against me and there would be civil war. If the Ortodox candidate won, which he thought probable, a band of fanatics would destroy Cuban institutions and the established order. 71

So to prevent the prevention of elections and to preserve the established order and institutions, Batista carried out a bloodless coup on March 10, 1952; the polarized parties

immediately drifted toward him, offering him the semblance of legitimacy, and Cuban politics went on as usual.

The situation, however, was not quite as usual - Batista had learned a lesson by losing in 1944 and he felt it necessary to suspend elections until the climate was back to normal. Opposition groups kept on threatening to boycott the elections, so normality did not return for quite some time; elections were finally set for June 1954.

On July 26, 1953, however, Fidel Castro and other revolutionaries planned an assault on a barracks in Moncada; the attack was easily repelled, and Castro was caught and imprisoned, though he had not actually taken part. The Batista government suspended guarantees in the constitution and once more postponed elections. When elections were held on November 1, 1954, Batista's opponent withdrew; Batista "won." When he officially came into office in February 1955 he announced a general amnesty that would backfire on him - he let Castro out of prison.

The attack on Moncada gave the "Twenty-sixth of July Movement" its name, and Castro left in 1955 to work on the overthrow of Batista from Mexico. Opposing parties tried to continue working within the system, but the system had been altered by the unorthodox transition of power. Furthermore, police harassed political opposition just as they had done when previous administrations were in power. In fact, the whole system that Batista wanted to maintain simply went towards an extreme that was unacceptable to a larger and larger number of Cubans.

Cuba's economy in the in the 1950's was not really a free-market economy; the interest group system in government

had a dominating effect. The best organized sections of the political spectrum, and of the economy, received the most attention. Payoffs and corruption made the system even more lopsided against the individual. The whole process was inefficient. Add to that the fact that the brutal secret police had a double standard and allowed gambling and prostitution, and it comes out to fertile ground for dissatisfaction. 72

Even the wealthier and more entrepeneurial individuals did not have the opportunity to grow. They were stifled by restrictions imposed on the economy in its close ties with the United States; for example, loans were difficult to get for agricultural expansion unless they were connected to sugar. Thus sugar production continued to dominate the economy. Cuban investors slowly gained control of the sugar industry. The facts are, however, that foreigners allowed Cubans to gain control only because the industry was not as profitable as it had been. By the late 1950's fully a quarter of all United States investment was going into the building of oil refineries in Cuba — an interesting arrangement because Cuba had virtually no oil. This was a help to the economy, but it also meant that to keep the industry going Cuba was dependent on oil from somewhere else — the United States.

From the outside Cuba looked fine. It had one of the highest per capita incomes in Latin America, above average social services, a high literacy rate, and even relatively modern labor laws. Batista simply could not accept any other explanation for the dissatisfaction of his people but that they were duped by Fidel Castro and communist subversives.

An important factor that must be taken into consideration, however, is Cuba's location in relation to the United States. Just ninety miles off the coast of Florida, Cubans could listen to American radio stations; they felt their relative powerty compared to the United States rather than their relative affluence compared to other Caribbean countries.

The conditions for revolution, though not as obvious as they would later be in Nicaragua and Iran, were there, "Cuba was not a country in the depths of poverty, but one extraordinarily frustrated, and where opportunities existed

for economic and social progress but where they were wasted - and the fact of the waste was evident."74 The illiteracy rate had increased from 1931 to 1950, 75 and most other educational indicators had dropped. The number of marginally employed and part-time workers also increased. Batista had not been governing the country as long or under as brutal conditions as Somoza and the Shah were beginning to do; this was a lucky thing for Cuba. Batista had not seen a fellow dictator go under in a social revolution, and so he did not know the extent to which he could use his army on the populace.

At 5:00 A.M. on December 2, 1956, Fidel Castro and eighty-two men landed from Mexico on the southeastern coast of Cuba. Their boat was slow and by morning they had not made it as for as they had planned; they landed in what turned out to be a swamp. The whole event was nearly a total failure, as their arrival had been noted by the army. Cuban forces caught up with them a few hours after they landed and routed them; seventy of the men were either killed, captured,

or scattered. Batista claimed to have killed him, but Castro and several other important figures miraculously escaped the encirclement and headed to the protection of the Sierra Maestra and the well-organized peasant militia.

From his secure base in the mountains Castro and the 26th of July Movement launched both guerrilla and propaganda wars against the Batista regime. The Cuban system was not able to fight either of these effectively; Batista was inconsistant in his responses, he unevenly pressed censorship, and his army was frustrated by guerrilla conflict. To keep up morale and to keep the population from joining Castro in a bandwagon effect untruths were told about the rebels and their chances in the conflict. The most outstanding example of this was the claim that Castro had been killed. When Batista lifted censorship the Cuban news media revealed that Castro was still alive, contrary to all government claims, and that he had even had an interview with the New York Times. Batista's minister of Defense challanged the article; the Times published a photograph of Castro and Matthews, the reporter. All this gave Fidel a kind of supernatural aura; if anything could help to make him a caudillo that would. Matthews' interview with Castro, published in New York, introduced the rebel leader to the United States - the only other country that could exert real influence on Cuban events.

The United States, having no historical reason to fear strong anti-American nationalism if anything but a Communist government came to power, did not fear the 26th of July movement. Castro said that he was a nationalist who wanted more liberties and free elections. The United States

government, and each faction had a different reaction. Castro either deliberately watered down his political philosophy for American consumption or he really was not as radical as he would soon be. The U.S. military still supported the Batista regime, and thus the American government kept on sending military aid, but support was weak enough in the States so that the revolutionaries could hope to change the policy.

In June of 1957, about six months after Castro had entered Cuba and high level resistance had begun, Raul Castro attacked the American naval base at Guantanamo and captured a number of American hostages. Raul gave three reasons for the attack: to bring to United States government officials attention the fact that Batista was using American weapons supplied for external defense on internal enemies, to stop military bombardment of civilian towns, and to acquire some equipment. The first and third objectives were successful.

By this time Batista was beginning to topple. He, like other dictators, feared being pushed out of power by another popular individual, and so had tried to eliminate possible opposition. Batista's fears, however, were greater than most. He insisted in keeping his most trusted forces near him in Havana, especially after the nearly successful guerrilla attack on the presidential palace in the spring. Because of this the best forces were in the west of the country, away from the fighting, and there were few good forces left to fight in the Sierra Maestra.

The combination of military incompetance and low morale assured the failure of Batista's only serious military offensive against Castro in mid-1958. It was characterized by instances of military-unit disintegration, lack of support for units in combat, error (as when the Air Force dropped supplies in rebel-held areas), piecemeal and delayed attacks, desertion, and surrender. The

The guerrillas would not give up their foothold in the mountains.

As time wore on and it became more and more obvious that
Batista would fall the United States began to give some serious
thought to the problem of his replacement. Castro realized this
and also realized that they probably would find him unacceptable.
He had been urging workers in large businesses and on large
landholding to use sabotage to help the revolutionary effort;
in February 1958 he switched his position and announced that
he no longer had plans for expropriation or nationalization
of foreign investment. 78

To keep potential leaders that might be acceptable to the United States out of the political arena Castro used a threat. Anticipating the Ayatollah Khomeini by twenty years he said that anyone who participated in the 1958 presidential elections would later be subject to the death penalty. The by that time, however, his movement had virtually achieved its goals. Ambassador Smith, who had supported Batista for months while the State Department had planned to let him fall, finally realized that he couldn't be kept in power. Pressure to force him to step down to prevent a complete Castro victory, however, was of no use; he stayed in until it was much too late and then fled on New Year's Eve 1958.

The Somoza clan in Nicaragua was able to maintain itself in power for forty-five years; the Shah held on for over a

quarter-century after the CIA helped to hoist him to power; Batista fell only seven years after he had seized power. The difference can be explained by changes in the rules of the game that occurred after the Cuban revolution - changes that were caused by the Cuban revolution. Batista continually tried to achieve legitimacy by referring to elections and public support; he recognized the existance of the constitution and tried to justify himself by it. The Shah and the Somozas lived only by their own rules; they made them up as they went along so there was no moral chink in their defenses. Batista kept restoring civil liberties, like freedom of the press, which only lost him support. (This is not an argument for immoral conduct by dictators, only an observation that if they achieved power through non-constitutional means they should realize the effects of restoring constitutionality. This is especially true because Somoza tried to restrict some, but not all, opposition.)

The Cuban situation filled all the theoritical requirements for revolution; the populace was frustrated, the political legitimacy had dried up, dis-synchronizing the system, and the population eventually had to decide between the government or the opposition. The United States denied support to the existing regime when it was challenged. The economy was basically flawed; Cuban investors in sugar, (the only area in which loans were available) had to be tighter in order to maintain declining profits. The Marxian model had expected more and more inequality in the distribution of surplus. The spark that actually fired the revolution was the conscious action by Castro and his revolutionaries.

There a large number of factors which tie the three revolutions together. First and foremost is the fact that all three were dictatorships - one man personally controlled the workings of a country. This is expecially true in Iran and Nicaragua, where both the Somoza and the Shah were informed of every event or decision that had to be made - no matter how minute. As little responsibility as was humanly possible was delegated to underlings. Because of this the political structures were immensely top-heavy; small as well a large decisions got backlogged, causing unneeded aggravation. When the structures began to fall the levels beneath had been carefully weeded of all those with any initiative; there was no decision making structure there to pass the government on to. When the dictators abandoned their sinking regimes their governments essentially no longer existed; Batista's and Somoza's armed forces simply disappeared while in Iran they were on the verge of mutiny before they were disbanded. This quotation about the Shah of Iran applies equally to all three dictators:

Perhaps like any other absolute ruler, he pursued a policy of severe political repression and manipulation of political, economic, and social processes. . The end result was an expanded and costly but, as in the past, very top-heavy, incometant, and corrupt state machinery and a repressed nation. . The government was dominated by the personalization rather than the institutionalization of politics. 80

The common factor of dictatorship requires certain other similarities; a necessary one is control over a military force. The most recent Shah's father (the Reza Shah) was the first to rise to power via the military in the three countries. Somoza and Batista started in the early 1930s to consolidate control; the United States placed Somoza at the head of the

Guardia Nacional while Batista won the loyalty of the Cuban armed forces. Later, in the 1950s, the younger Shah, who had been kept out of power by his Prime Minister Zahedi, gained influence in SAVAK and thus gained de facto power. All three rulers either understood the value of a powerful military or they had a natural inclination to a flashy modern army. Either way it fulfilled a double purpose; it gave the ruler the feeling that he was giving the country a better international standing and so justifying his rule, and it kept down opposition.

In Cuba, Iran, and Nicaragua the leaders cultivated close ties with the United States military; this enabled them to 1) get an inside lobby in the U.S.government, 2) improve their image and legitimacy, 3) get U.S. weapons and training, and 4) convince their respective populations that they had the backing of the world's most powerful military machine and were thus impervious to internal enemies.

Batista lost that image when the United States denied him arms for internal use. Nicaragua and Iran had their ties with the American military questioned, if not severed, when Jimmy Carter introduced his Human Rights policy. That pause in support was enough to start the crystalization of opposition, and the resumption of support was then too little to stop it. The Iranian and Nicaraguan armies were the strongest in their regions and were considered to be virtually impervious to any conceivable enemy. The armies were not strictly speaking defeated militarily - their internal workings simply broke down.

A third aspect of all three dicatorships was corruption.

Batista took office with a large part of the public clammering for an end to corruption, but he was in office to main-

tain the system; the system just happened to have personal profit for public servants as a major part of it. Batista's greed, however, was overshadowed by the wealth that the Pahlavi family amassed over the years. The Shah himself was not averse to gathering wealth, but as the system itself encouraged payments for influence, his family and high-ranking officials also had lots of temptations. They did not resist. It was this blatant gathering of wealth by any and all people who had contact with the Shah, and especially by his family, that eventually alienated the crucial support of the middle and upper classes. They simply could not continue their work normally as corruption increased. The Shah tried to restrict the semi-legal activities of his family, but he was too late in implementing his code of conduct. Even then, the family knew that it wouldn't be enforced on them. It wasn't, until the revolution.

Somoza was the most corrupt of all three rulers. While Batista thought his corrupt system was best, and the Shah was unable to restrict his own and his family's desire for immense fortunes, Somoza profited off the misfortune of others. He owned half of the arable land in a country where a large percentage of the rural population was living at subsistance levels. Foreign investment dropped off as he monopolized all the most profitable opportunities. The final blow to any reputation for humanity he may have had was wiped out by his actions after the earthquake of 1972. Even as Somoza fled saying that he just wanted the country to have the benefit of his Liberal party he emptied what little remained in the treasury and brought it with him. The wealth of the country was so concentrated in his hands that,

except for the money to keep things going, a new government automatically acquired property previously taken from private owners. (The United States worried at the prospect of a "leftist" government getting control of all the land and businesses, but it was okay for a friendly dictator to have control of it.)

The role of religion must also be taken into account.

Cuba's population was not as religious as either Nicaragua's or Iran's, so even if the Catholic Church had been pressing for change in 1959 it would not have had any over-riding effect.

Nicaragua, however, with a more religious population, was the recipient of a change in Latin American Church policy. The Church, while still opposing communism, no longer felt the same type of threat from socialism. Because of this, a large percentage of the population who looked to the church for moral leadership could oppose the regime and support revolution without qualms. When Chamorro had just been assassinated and UDEL called a strike the Archbishop of Managua said that people have a right to armed resistance against an unjust regime. 81

In Iran the Church, this one the Shi'ite Islam, played a central role in fomenting the revolution, carrying it through, and even governing afterwards. The religion was widespread throughout Iran, so the church communications channels provided excellent communication for the revolution. The Shah had never tried to gain the support of the clergy - he had even done things that angered them - so they constituted a group made up in a large part of dissaffected individuals. When the economy began to go sour and people felt that they had sold out on their cultural heritage for a shallow western way of

life, the clergy did nothing to discourage the feeling. When the religious protests, first over the slander of Khomeini and then over the shootings of protesters, turned into denunciation of the regime, many non-religious members used the religion as a cover for their protests. This had the dual effect of bringing down the Shah and of making it appear that there was a lot more support for an Islamic state then there may actually have been. Whatever the situation, the revolution as it ocurred in Iran could not have taken place without Islam.

The last big similarity to talk about in all three revolutions is the United States. America hovered like a protective giant over each of these countries, but it protected its own interests instead of those of the "protected" country. In Cuba the United States allowed the revolution to take place, but as soon as Castro tried to change the actual system they got defensive and angry. In Iran the United States was both too close a friend to spy and too worried about the large neighbor to the north to notice the internal unstability. Even if it had noticed, would the United States have reacted any differently? The policy is one of self-interested world order rather than the former striving for the best system of government. Jimmy Carter's Human Rights policy gave some promise of changing that, but he compromized it anywhere that it might have made a difference for the old style "stability." Because two revolutions occurred in formerly friendly countries the policy has been written off as a failure.

Coming so soon on the wake of Iran, the Nicaraguan revolution ought to have reminded us that stability enforced by bayonets is fragile indeed. Yet one has the uneasy feeling that, instead of searching

for a way to replace the Hemisphere's military dictatorships short of violent upheaval, U.S. policymakers are already narrowly preoccupied with preventing "another Nicaragua." 82

United States policymakers have equated revolution and change with anti-American feeling. Change is inevitable in the present world, though. The examples in this paper show that if change is denied, then social revolution tends to occur, just as the "systems/value consensus" theorists indicate. So denying change does not stop it, it simply makes that change more profound when it does arrive.

The requirements for revolution are therefore (at least) a feeling of relative deprivation, an organized opposition group, fundamental changes in society that are not reflected in the government, and a final spark. The United States withdrawal of support cannot be considered a spark, but only a psychological power shift to the opponent of the government. Chances are that if an opposition group is gaining strength inside a particular country then at some point it will be able to force the masses to choose between themselves and the government, even if the United States remains static.

Brazil and El Salvador seem to be similar to the three countries already studied except for the fact that they have not undergone a revolution. The situation in El Salvador does fit many of the requirements. There is widespread dissatisfaction and there have been fundamental social changes over the last couple of decades. The government is right now attempting to solve the problems, but it might not be willing to change enough; the opposition groups have not yet made the situation so unpleasant that the people have to choose sides; there does not seem to be any chance of the United States

shifting from its present support of the conservative government. If the conditions do develop a little further, as it looks like they will, then a spark could light a revolution.

Brazil is a more difficult case. Like other Latin

American countries there is widespread unemployment and masses
of people have been uprooted from rural poverty to urban poverty. This has been the case for twenty years, though. The

"Brazilian Miracle" from 1968 to 1974 can help to explain why
some of the people were content, but as Bolaffi says, it was:

booming economic growth that was, to a large extent, made possible by a starvation level of exploitation of the labour force and harsh political repression.

Furthermore, there is a wide gap in the income distribution between rich and poor that has only been aggravated by the recession that Brazil went into in 1974.

So though fundamental changes have taken place in Brazil, and a large number of people are disenchanted with the system, an organized opposition group has not emerged. The answer may lie in the enormous physical size of the country - there is not a strong feeling of national identity. In fact, a nationalistic spirit was developing in pre-1964 Brazil, but the new military government felt that they should play that aspect down. 84

Nationalism will doubtless continue to grow, but the government will have the upper hand in resources and organization all over the nation for a long while.

Another possible explanation is that perhaps the situation simply is not as unbearable for as many people as it would have to be for revolution to occur. Undoubtably the wealthy entrepeneurial class and those with education are well off; political

repression is not as harsh as it was in Nicaragua or Iran.. Given the job of fomenting revolution in Brazil one would first try to get a section of the political and economic elites to be unsatisfied with the situation; this would be difficult or impossible, because with the enormous loans that Brazil has from numerous international lending institutions all the elites fates are tied in together. If the economy goes sour because the political situation in the country is uncertain then they all lose. Second, one would try to create a popular movement; this is being tried by a number of groups. As stated before, their success has been limited.

The final point must be that for successful revolution there needs to be more widespread dissatisfaction with the government; General Figuerdo has proved adept at making people think that he is trying to improve things. Perhaps he is, and that is all that matters,

The situation of military dictatorship remains in many areas of the world; many of them share similarities with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Iran. In two of these countries, the situation is in ways similar to the way it was before. Batista was replaced by Fidel Castro; the Shah was replaced by the Ayatollah. It seems almost as if the personalization of politics was the only thing that lasted through the revolutions intact.

For Fidel castro the temptation offered by the demagogic opportunities in Cuba was overpowering. Apparently in the interest of gratifying his own desire for power, Castro bypassed the middle-class and the intellectual liberals, who had been his chief source of support prior to victory, and has based his regime on his ability to captivate the newly awakened.

And Khomeini seems to be following the Shah's example:

And yet these two men who nursed such implacable hatred for each other are oddly alike. They are both stubborn and vindictive. They both advance simplistic ideas about the problems of their country and the world. Neither brooks any contradiction. Each considers himself guided by the Almighty. They want to be the undisputed leaders of their people. Their dictatorial spirit knows no bounds.

It sometimes happens that the government after the revolution is no better than the one before. If so then the people could become dissatisfied once more.

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