September 1986

Conceptualizations of the Central American Crisis (Dialogue #67)

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September 1986

Published by the Latin American and Caribbean Center
Florida International University
Miami, Florida 33199

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Assistant Editors: Sofia Lopez
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PREFACE

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This paper was originally presented at the Conference for "Central America and the United States; Global and Regional Perspectives," organized by the State University of New York at Albany, April 18-19, 1986.

Mark B. Rosenberg
Editor
Occasional Papers Series Dialogues

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CRISIS

CRISIS/KRI-SES/: the decisive moment; an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs whose outcome will make a decisive difference for better or worse. (1)

I. INTRODUCTION

Lack of consensus is the most salient characteristic of political as well as academic debate over the Central American caldron. There is agreement as to the existence of a very serious situation in the isthmus--a so-called "crisis" which Thomas Anderson and Lawrence Whitehead rightly refer to as a "series of overlapping conflicts rather than a single region-wide divide"[2]--but there is little if any accord in the type of mechanisms required for its resolution. The only possible exception to this general assessment is the agreement reached in the last meeting of the Contadora nations and their support group (April 5-6, 1986). It did not have Nicaraguan approval. This has contributed to the increasing polarization of the area, and ultimately has drawn the actors into positions of intransigence whose outcome has been the inconclusive prolongation of the conflict.

Obviously the problems affecting Central America today are neither academic nor paradigmatic in nature. To contend that the regional conflicts have not been solved because there is: (a) a lack of understanding of the crisis' historicity; (b) insufficient knowledge of the crucial issues in the region's multiple agendas; (c) absence of the proper forums to carry on multilateral and bilateral discussions of these issues; or (d) lack of technical means to implement proposals of control and verification would be

ludicrous. Power struggle, not ignorance, is what has put Central America in a quagmire.

One of the few positive implications of the Central American catastrophe (150,000 people killed; 1.5 million uprooted in the past six years with the numbers increasing) has been the interest it has generated among the scholarly community in the United States and Europe. Never before has information on our region been more readily available to the general and specialized public as in the post 1979 period. Although the quality of the material is not homogeneous, the knowledge of Central America has been greatly enhanced by all these studies. Coupled with the political and social transformations brought about by the democratizations of the Southern Cone, the events in Central America triggered new trends and perspectives for regional research in the 1980s.[3]

However difficult it may be, this paper seeks to provide a general balance of the efforts undertaken to unravel Central American "intimacies" as portrayed in the opinions of scholars and politicians in Europe, the United States and Latin America. As any other attempt to draw generalizations from a wide variety of theoretical options and political positions, mine will probably appear oversimplistic. I must apologize for this. It became an unavoidable and necessary risk if categories were to be introduced in a realm where both eclecticism and dogmatism abound.

II. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

A "PARADIGMATIC AXIS"

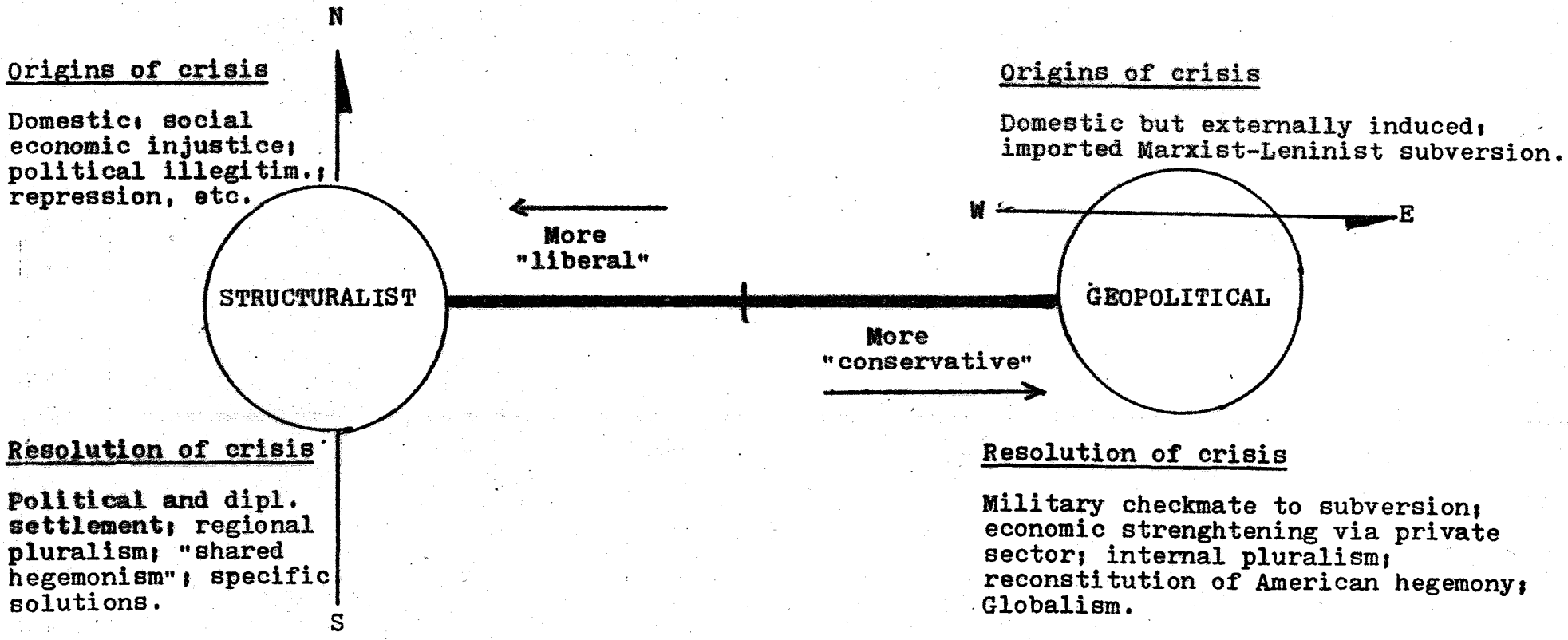
The assumption in this paper is that the Central American crisis has been fundamentally approached following premises that run on a bipolar axis, the extremes of which I shall call "structuralist" and "geopolitical," (see Figure 1). Structuralists are more concerned with North-South relations and emphasize domestic variables (i.e., social injustice, political illegitimacy, repression, poor income distribution, etc.) as fundamental in explaining the crisis. They tend to be "liberal" or even "leftist" in their politics, and advance proposals for resolution that generally call for a political and diplomatic arrangement, regional pluralism (tolerance of a multiplicity of regimes whose options may or may not be those of the "American creed"), negociations with large quotas of autonomy for regional powers (what I call "shared hegemony") and specific rather than global recipes.

The position of this group has been well summarized in a paragraph by the participants in the Inter-American Dialogue:

> To exaggerate the East-West dimension of Central America's conflict has a self-fulfilling quality. The roots of Central America's crisis are primarily economic, social and political, not military. The main sources of insecurity in Central America are internal to each nation: even when external support of insurrection is present, as in El Salvador, the underlying problems are domestic. Even though there is a military dimension to the conflict, the solutions ultimately lie in economic and social development and in political dialogue, not more weapons, military advisors and troops. (4)

There are, nonetheless, more "radical" versions of structuralism. These can be not only dogmatic but also messianic and fall into what Vega-Carballo has called "vulgar progressivism."[5] For them the crisis in the Caribbean Basin is regarded as the last stage of a long process of decay

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CRISIS: A PARADIGMATIC AXIS.



that finally destroyed a model of domination (called "oligarchic-imperialism") whose origin is found in the 19th century. Had it not been for the active support of the United States, they contend, the model would have collapsed many decades ago allowing a "new historic bloc" of emerging forces to take over the reactionary alliance of a Junker-type landed aristocracy with their paid henchmen, the Armed Forces. The crisis in Central America reflects a larger, universal crisis of the "domination system" (U.S. neocolonialism), the end of which has led to generalized insurrection, reactionary repression and ultimately, revolution.[6]

Geopolitical approaches magnify East-West confrontation and external variables (i.e., "imported subversion," Leninist internationalism, terrorism, etc.) as central to the unraveling of the crisis. Pragmatic authors within this group often acknowledge the existence of social injustices at the base of the regional situation, but seldom would they consider them to be the ultimate explanation of it. They tend to be conservative or even "reactionary" in their politics and advance proposals of resolution that generally call for a "military checkmate" to external subversion coupled with the strengthening of domestic economies via the private sector, internal pluralism (generally understood as the implementation of "liberal democratic" institutions within the parameters of the "American creed"), reconstitution of American hegemony (United States' "hemispheric leadership"), and reduction of the margins of autonomy of the regional powers. They also propose global rather than specific solutions to the region.

As stated in the Kissinger Commission's report,

> ...the roots of the crisis are both indigenous and foreign. Discontents are real, and for much of the population conditions of life are miserable; just as Nicaragua was ripe for revolution, so the conditions that invite revolution are present elsewhere in the region as well. But these conditions have been exploited by hostile outside forces--specifically by Cuba, backed by the Soviet

> Union and now operating through Nicaragua--which will turn any revolution they capture into a totalitarian state, threatening the region and robbing the people of their hopes for liberty...unless the externally supported insurgencies are checked and the violence curbed, progress on those other fronts (economic and social) will be elusive and would be fragile. (7)

The Commission's "bipartisan conservatism" though, is very mild and moderate when contrasted with the claims of the hard core "fundamentalists." Lecturing in San José, Costa Rica last March, Ambassador Jean Kirkpatrick outlined their position with great precision: (a) the struggle in Central America is not unique; it represents one more example of the battle between two divergent ways, that of freedom (democracy) and the wicked path of coercion (communism); (b) the United States is the champion of freedom and should meet the threat of communism boldly, particularly in this hemisphere; (c) there is a fundamental difference between applying force (military force) to liberate, i.e., Grenada, and applying it to subjugate as the Soviets did in Afghanistan; (d) communism should not only be contained, it must be "rolled back." There is no such thing as an "irreversible Marxist revolution"; (e) unless the "pathology" of the crisis is dealt with and resolved, i.e. communist subversion inspired and sponsored by the Soviet Union acting through regional allies, Cuba and Nicaragua, no social and economic remedy will be effective.[8]

It would be grossly inadecuate to suggest that all studies of the Central American crisis can be called either structuralist or geopolitical. In fact, most of them argue using premises drawn from both perspectives. True that in the final analysis authors give different "weight" to the available interpretations of the crisis, but rarely would they adopt "purist" stands.

REALITY AND PERCEPTION OF REALITY

What determines the weight an author gives to certain analytical variables is defined by his/her perception of reality, not reality itself.[9] In other words, reality becomes what an observer wants it to become. Once situations are defined as real, however, then their outcomes and accompanying consequences are also necessarily real. This means that something that did not exist but was "created" by a peculiar vision[10] could produce actions and reactions of extreme gravity not excluding the possibility of war. In the Caribbean Basin this has been the case with the specter of communism, which led to the systematic annhiliation of reformist alternatives in most countries until recently; and the fear of "counterrevolution," which has justified repression and increasing militarization of revolutionary regimes.

Above and beyond strategic considerations though, it is "political culture"[11] that determines these different and often conflictive perceptions. Political culture models and defines the sphere within which these individual perceptions develop. Among the many variables found in any given political culture, there are two sets of circumstances that are particularly influential to the social analyst: those stemming from the person's social (class) background, and the ones shared by the individual and the national community as a whole regardless of class considerations (nationalism, religious values, etc.). As Karl Deutsch has remarked, individuals seek to operate in "cognitive consonance" with their own values and fears, and therefore cannot be explained in a historial vacuum.[12] Nor are they isolated from long-term historical trends that vary depending on geographic location of a polity and its immediate context. The conceptualization of the Central American crisis can not escape this reality.

III. THREE PERCEPTIONS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN REALITY

THE PERCEPTION FROM THE UNITED STATES

The Question of Hegemony

American scholars and politicians generally regard the crisis in Central America either as a threat or as potential threat to U.S. national security. There is large disagreement as to the degree of seriousness the threat poses to the country and how immediate it could be, but almost everyone--including the most "liberal" analysts--acknowledges the negative impact that the ongoing crisis in the Caribbean Basin could produce in long-term U.S. regional and global interests if it continues indefinitely.

One of the elements that explains this "crosscut consensus" is the assumption that whatever its particular characteristics may be, any arrangement of resolution of the crisis in America's "soft underbelly"[13] has to guarantee the United States' integrity from extra-continental desires. Namely, an explicit and unequivocal indication to the USSR and its regional acolytes that any attempt on their part to introduce strategic material to the region ...would be met by whatever measures are necessary to prevent or reverse it."[14]

Although the legitimacy of this claim is hardly questionable, its importance seems to be more symbolic than practical. When President John F. Kennedy drew this "strategic bottom line" policy during the 1962 missile crisis he was updating and asserting old American pretensions previously outlined in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, refreshed in the Rio Treaty of 1947.[15] Yet Kennedy's stand only proved what everyone knew--except the Cubans, who at the time were "drunk" with proletarian internationalism: the

Soviets will not risk a major confrontation with the United States in the latter's backyard.[16]

Discussion over the issue of United States' regional hegemony, which I consider to be of utmost importance, has received little attention from the academic community in the United States. Isolated cases do exist,[17] but most notable examples of the topic's debate have resulted from initiatives undertaken in Latin America.[18] The reason that this issue is not given more emphasis in the United States may be explained by the fact that whereas in Latin America there is great interest in the question of hegemonic recomposition in the hemisphere, in this country this same issue continues to be tainted largely by the moral and political crises brought about by Vietnam and the Watergate scandal.

As a result of this, the analysts of Central America in the United States became entangled in the power traumas of the post-Vietnam era. For better or worse the conceptualization of U.S. hegemony as academic and political issues became polarized between those who wanted retreat in Central America and elsewhere to the "strategic bottom line" or little less than that,[19] and the warriors, for whom hegemony was an equivalent of neo-imperialism, the unabridged exercise of military power. Such a debate lasted throughout the late Carter years and most of Reagan's first administration, and has been abandoned lately as a result of the Grenada events, and more recently the policy toward Nicaragua. Both cases seem to have tacitly ratified American will to regain whatever hegemonic space was lost in the previous decade.

The Question of Economic Development

One crucial concern for U.S. analysts interested in the Central American crisis is the prospect for economic development in the region. Most authors regard the present situation as the outcome of severe economic deficiencies. Either as fundamental or secondary causes of the crisis, economic issues are always central elements in the conceptualizations of its origin and possible resolution.

The first comprehensive U.S approach to the problem of economic development in Central America came in the early 1960's with the Alliance for Progress. I shall not discuss its premises in detail. Let us just remember how the Alliance resulted from the confluence of modernization theories (advanced by some of the "best and the brightest"--W.W. Rostow, John Johnson, Gino Germani) and Cold War fears (triumph of the Cuban Revolution). The Alliance was partially successful in achieving some of its goals, but overall it proved that problems in Central America or elsewhere are not solved merely by throwing money at them.

Two decades have past since Lyndon B. Johnson decided to put an end to the Alliance for Progress, yet the basic U.S economic strategy for Central America remains virtually unchanged. On the liberal camp, proposals are largely those of the "modernists": military strength, change without revolution, industrialization via foreign investment and regional integration, and State-sponsored development. In a nutshell, bread and bullets. Conservatives are enraged with them of course, but the alternative they propose is not too different. It amounts to a private sector-led Alliance for Progress with the disadvantage (as former Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber once said) of rather "troubling" proposals in the areas of security and political issues.[20]

Any discussion of the economic variables within the conceptualization of the crisis in Central America has to include some reference to the economic package proposed by the Kissinger Commission. I shall not comment about it extensively for it has been analyzed before in great detail,[21] but being as it is the most comprehensive American proposal for economic development in Central America since the Alliance, the Commission's Report cannot be underestimated. It is also an insightful example of the predominant "mood" in academic and political circles in the United States as to the kind of economic policy that should be implemented in Central America in the near and not so near future.

Before any further elaboration though, I must say that again, fundamentalists on both extremes of the "axis" have quite different perspectives on the issue. Sol W. Sanders, for instance, has indicated the danger of pursuing a policy of "reckless subsidy of the debt in Latin America that ultimately becomes a burden on the shoulders of the American taxpayer." Although Sanders was specifically referring to the case of Costa Rica, his opinion can be extended to the other countries in Central America as well. Bilateral assistance is simply not enough for development he contends, and as long as these countries continue with their "socialist tendencies" (i.e., the Welfare State model), no long-term solutions can be found.[22]

On the other end things are even more pathetic. They range from total lack of realism (more American money but no political "strings" attached to it) to total lack of knowledge (the U.S. should provide more economic than military aid to Central America). All in all, neither group grapples the crux of the issue: what R. Cerdas has called "the economic unviability" of the Central American nations.[23] The economic question will continue to be

the most important and probably the determining issue of how the regional crisis in Central America is finally resolved.

THE PERCEPTION FROM WESTERN EUROPE

Central America is a relatively low priority in the European agenda. Many historical as well as geographic reasons explain this. Europe "abandoned" the region by the 1860's to pursue more promising objectives in Africa, the Middle East, India and China. It only kept a few, unimportant colonial possessions in the insular Caribbean.[24] Spain lost Cuba in 1898, thus leaving Jamaica as the only major European enclave in an increasingly "American Mediterranean" by the turn of the century.[25]

After recurrent failures to assert imperial claims in Venezuela and the Dominican Republic, Germany and Britain also left. Theodore Roosevelt, realizing the strides that the United States had made since the initial days of the Monroe Doctrine, came down enthusiastically to the area to enforce it with his corollary. After this, and once France's Panamanian adventure proved to be unsuccessful, the United States became exclusively powerful in the region. Europe had retreated to other universes.[26]

The reluctant though realistic recognition of the United States as the hegemonic power in Central America and the Caribbean has had a significant impact on Europe's foreign policy initiatives in the 20th century. European nations realistically have very little to lose or gain in the Caribbean Basin, their investments in this region are small in comparison with those of theirs in the Middle East and Northern Africa.[27] Secondly, as members of a strategic alliance, European countries tend to regard the Soviet--not the American--menace as the largest threat to their security; and to accept

American domination in other areas of the planet as long as it does not exacerbate events in the Mediterranean theater. Even the Soviets, though for different reasons, accept this.

A very eloquent description of the European point of view in regard to the United States has been fowarded by Maestre Alonso:

> ...We also know the rapacity of American imperialism. As far as we (in Europe) are concerned, North Americans are the "bad guys" of the Latin American movies, not of ours. In Europe Americans are regarded as allies or even friends, not enemies. Granted, the U.S. can be a glutinous and fastidious friend, an unwanted guest or an outright immoral and exploitative boss, but we also know that the U.S. is a powerful partner and a desirable protector. All together, we in Europe do not perceive the U.S. as a thief caught stealing in the middle of the night. Quite a different perspective exists in Latin America toward the "big brother" to the North. (28)

This is not to say that Europe has been a "willing partner" of U.S. policies in the Caribbean Basin, particularly after 1970. European uneasiness with the crisis in the isthmus has grown as it regards it as a suitable scenario for confrontations that could produce international imbalances.[29] Therefore, there is growing concern as to the implementation of a new approach that could enhance European autonomy in the region. Private as well as governmental efforts undertaken lately have been oriented in this sense.

Europeans acknowledge that their capacity to maneuver in the Central American conflict is limited. They also know that their role cannot be other than that of intermediators.[30] Belligerent initiatives such as the French-Mexican Declaration on El Salvador (1981) have proven unacceptable to regional actors as well as to Continental partners. At the same time, the "traditional" European policy of self-imposed removal from Latin America is not viable anymore, which creates the need for a more dynamic yet discreet participation in regional events. This has been particularly crucial after the events in the South Atlantic in 1982.

The Contadora alternative seems to have been one of the favorite channels for European initiatives. Contadora has the advantage of being a very legitimate "screen" behind which to promote diplomatic efforts without the risk of a direct and probably unpleasant encounter with the United States. It also has proven useful to prevent Europe from losing "credibility" in the eyes of the Third World--a major European concern and one which carries important economic implications for Europe.

It has been interesting to follow the evolution of European vision of the crisis in Central America. During the late seventies it was clearly pro-revolutionary. Namely, after undergoing a transitional phase from conservatism to socialism (destruction of dictatorial governments in Portugal and Spain, arrival of Socialist parties to power in France and Spain, etc.) Western European countries tended to identify with the ideals of both the Sandinista and the Farabundista insurrections. This position lasted from 1978 to 1984, and not only was it dogmatic in some expressions,[31] it also tended to be quite simplistic,[32] or unsophisticated at best.

This trend has been changing in the past two or three years. For the academic community in Europe the deepening of the crisis provided new opportunities for theorization. The passing of time has also given Europeans a rather gloomy perspective on the nature and possibilities of a revolutionary alternative, particularly in Nicaragua. Although many analysts are still supportive or at least benevolent toward revolutionary proposals,[33] pragmatism may have taken over the European view of the crisis in Central America.

A most significant situation has developed lately. Europe has been called upon by Central America. Political as well as academic gatherings have taken place in Costa Rica[34] with encouraging though limited results. These events are likely to continue in the future.

THE PERSPECTIVE FROM LATIN AMERICA

It is unnecessary to go into great depths to explain the high priority Latin American nations give to the resolution of the crisis in the Caribbean Basin. Equally clear are the reasons for Latin American fears and expectations vis-à-vis the United States and its participation in the conflict's development.

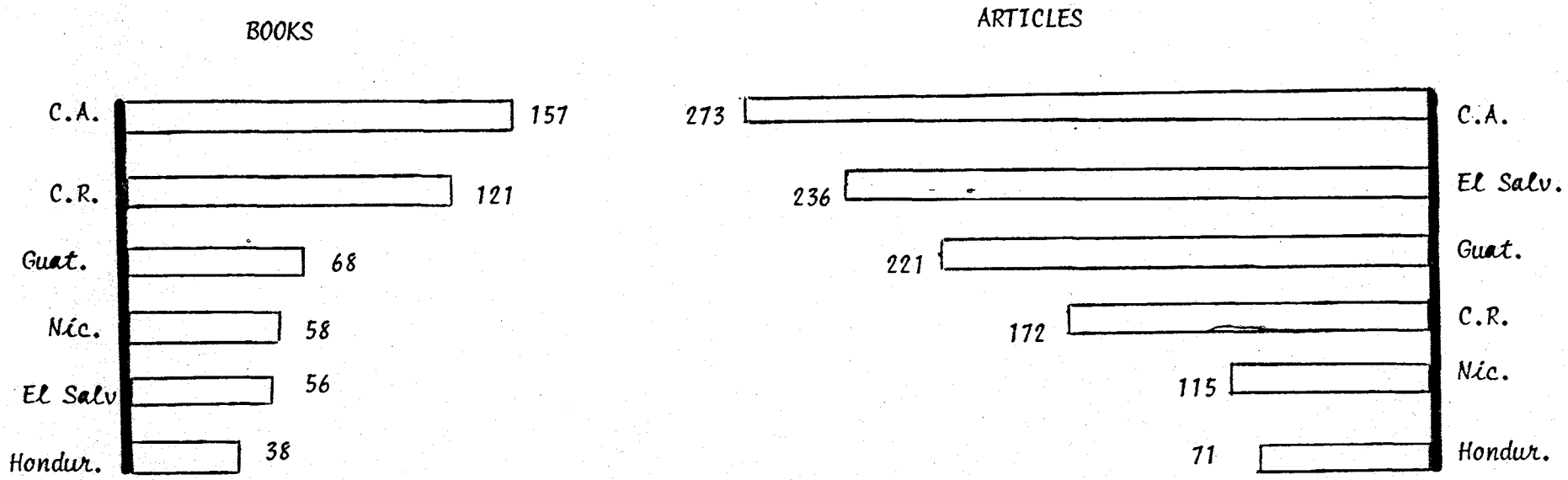
Latin Americans have been writing and conceptualizing over Central America for more than twenty years. A region whose contradictions were perfect examples for the theory of dependency, Central America became an issue of academic debate by the 1960's. This trend became dominant in the early seventies.[35] For many Latin American scholars, the crisis in Central America was an expected (and for some, even desired) event long before the revolt of the colonels in El Salvador and the fall of Somoza in Nicaragua.

A remarkable bibliographic synthesis of all this production (1960-1984) was compiled by Edelberto Torres-Rivas and Maria E. Gallardo in a 1985 book entitled Para entender Centroamérica (San José: ICADIS). It is interesting to note some comparative data extracted from this book (see graph).

Clearly, structuralist analyses predominate in Latin American conceptualizations of the isthmian crisis. Most studies undertaken after the years of the Alliance for Progress departed from the traditional "modernization" schemes into more sociological interpretations that made important contributions in the study of revolutions, popular movements, religion and politics and the theory of the State. Whereas in the 1960's research trends--even "progressive" ones as those of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL)--emphasized developmentalism and democratization, in the late 1970's and early 1980's democratization became synonymous with

BOOKS AND ARTICLES WRITTEN IN SPANISH ON CENTRAL AMERICA
(1960-1984)

	Guat.	El Salv.	Hondu.	Nicarag.	C.R.	General C.A.	Total
BOOKS	68	56	38	58	121	157	498
ARTICLES	221	236	71	115	172	273	1088



SOURCE: Edelberto Torres Rivas, María E. Gallardo, Para Entender a Centro América, San José: ICADIS, 1985.

accelerated change of the status quo; a direct challenge to U.S. hegemony and a reconstitution of Latin American "margins of autonomy" vis-à-vis the United States.

The question of hegemony in Central America and the Caribbean is therefore as crucial to the Latin American community as it is for scholars and politicians in the United States. It runs as high a priority as the discussion of the other two issues that will probably determine the future of the region: the debt and consolidation of democracy throughout the hemisphere. Just as El Salvador became a "test case" of American will and determination not to allow more Cubas in the "backyard," the crisis in Central America has become Latin America's testing ground for its own "battle" against United States' hegemonism.

Rhetoric has always been a very important part of U.S.-Latin American relations. Many Americans find it difficult to deal with, but more knowledgeable observers realize it has been a necessary outlet for mutual frustrations and fears. Thus, expressions of outrage from the South are common yet difficult to distinguish from mere reminders of regional vindications.

It is my opinion though, that above and beyond rhetoric, the crisis in Central America is being regarded by Latin Americans as a truly historical watershed in hemispheric relations--a moment of crucial decisions that will probably affect not only the Caribbean Basin but also the whole continent well into the 21st century. It almost seems as if the time has come for the forging of a new Inter-American dialogue and political pact that should rest on a consented assurance of U.S. geostrategic and economic regional interests, and larger spaces for regional autonomous iniciatives including the qualified acceptance of pluralism in the area.[36] Whether this is an

achievable aspiration is yet to be seen. Circumstances are not auspicious, nor does the political will seeking such an arrangement exist at the time.

The most significant debate in this vein has been expressed in the many books and articles written on the Contadora process. This debate is far from being over and has been very useful for determining new research trends in Central America.[37]

A key element here are the democratization processes that are taking place in the region. The peace proposals forwarded by the Central American presidents under the iniciatives of Vinicio Cerezo of Guatemala and President-elect Oscar Arias of Costa Rica are important expressions of regional will to assert and maintain wider margins of autonomy vis-à-vis the United States.

IV. CONCLUSION

Writing in a most insightful and candid book, The Road from Here: Liberalism and Realities in the 1980's, former Senator Paul Tsongas said:

> ...I have tried to show that there are certain realities facing America and that they will prevail over dogma, whether of the liberal or conservative variety. To the extent that these realities are not understood or appreciated, the nation and its political stewards risk the "waterfall." (38)

Then he went on to show his skepticism on "permanent" philosophical guidelines and enduring values:

> ...Spending a dozen years in politics, from city council to the U.S. Senate, can weaken one's belief in constants. The temptation is to observe the process of decisionmaking and conclude that it's all illusory, all no more than situational ethics--or abashed expediency--cloaked in appropriate rhethoric. I have frequently seen people and parties reverse themselves on an issue or an approach because it was suddenly in their interest to do so. I have certainly reversed myself. (39)

It seems to me that these ideas fit the Central American situation. Dogma should not be allowed to prevail over "common sense." In our region one of the several "waterfalls" could be war, a cruel struggle that would destroy any hope for lasting peace. Today peace in Central America is an aspiration, but it would be a historical impossibility then.

Secondly, inflexibility seldom works, especially when programs are devised in pursuit of a given value held to be "sacrosanct" even when it was inappropriate, ineffective and untimely. It is encouraging to see conceptualizations of the crisis evolving, getting more sophisticated and above all, more pragmatic, especially in Western Europe and the United States. The type of pragmatism required in Central America today is well exemplified by Carlos Manuel Castillo's quote on the issue of intervention.

> ...To achieve the distension necessary to reach regional accord things ought to be put in the right perspective, and the principle of non-intervention as we understand it in Central America must be enforced. For us, not to intervene only means to intervene in a certain way, something that is possible in this region although in many others cannot be understood. (40)

I think that one of the challenges in Central America today is how to persuade fundamentalists of all extremes that dialogue is a two-way street--that no settlement is possible as long as bullets are flying. As Costa Rica's newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto rightly said, "...peace is the base of development."[41] Little will be accomplished without peace.

There are two common misconceptions about the situation in Central America that worry me. The first one, and one that I mentioned in passing at the beginning of the paper, is to consider the crisis as a <u>single</u> reality, a "bloc" of problems that can be traced to a shared, unique origin. In fact, there are many crises in Central America. Some are socioeconomic, some are political, and most of them are moral as well--the human drama of

refugees for example. How do we deal with the millions of homeless people crowding camps in Honduras, Mexico and Costa Rica?

The second misreading of the isthmian crisis is the tendency to reduce it to a specific theater of conflict. In 1979 Nicaragua became the crisis, to be followed a little later by El Salvador (1980-1982). Nowadays, Nicaragua again is making the news. It is true that the crisis expresses itself more openly in some places than in others, but ultimately the problem in Central America is regional as well as national. Therefore, the solution has to be integral. Let us hope it will be.

My interpretation of these misconceptions has to do fundamentally with the reluctance of certain analysts to put the Central American crisis in a world context; namely, the lack of clarity in what has to do with the crucial role of the United States as a regional actor. In part, this recognition is problematic for political reasons, but most importantly, it becomes difficult to assess as a result of the "dual" nature of American presence in the isthmus. The United States has been both "judge and part" in the region's history, something that cannot be fully understood without a close reading of the country's tendencies in its relations with Central America.[42]

The positive resolution of the crisis in Central America requires, from the academic as well as from the political communities, a careful interpretation of the various perspectives that attempt to explain it. From the academic point of view, the most important responsibility should be the ongoing effort to discern the "legitimate" claims from those which appear as mere dogmatic impositions. Above and beyond this though, we have to realize that regardless of its importance, the academic debate will have little impact if the regional actors do not exercise their political will to arrive

at acceptable (or at least compatible) solutions that could avoid further polarization.

NOTES

1. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1979, p. 627.

2. Lawrence Whitehead, "Prospects for a Political Settlement: Most Options Have Been Foreclosed," mimeo, 1984, p. 4.

3. Baer Werner et al., "Trends and Priorities for Research on Latin America in the 1980's," Working Papers, The Wilson Center, #111, 1982.

4. Sol Linowitz et al., The Americas in 1984: A Year for Decisions, 1984, p. 25. The emphasis made is my own.

5. José Luis Vega-Carballo, "Algunas anti-tesis sobre la crisis centroamericana," Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos, Vol. 10, 1984, pp. 23-42.

6. A good example can be found in Francisco López Segrera, "Cuba y la crisis centroamericana," (Havana: Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales de Cuba), mimeo, 1985, pp. 6-7, 49-51.

7. Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, 1984, p. 4.

8. Speech of Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick before the Seminar "International Responsibilities Before the Crisis in Central America," San José, March 9, 1986.

9. Francisco Rojas, "Interés nacional y toma de decisiones: el caso de la neutralidad costarricense," Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos, Vol. 11, Fascículo 1, 1985, pp. 79-80.

10. As defined by Schumpeter: "...a pre-analytical cognitive act." Also, "...a world conception that is not scientific but that explains an individual's actions." History of Economic Analysis, 1954, pp. 41-42.

11. Peter H. Merkl, Modern Comparative Politics, 1968. He defines "political culture" as "...the total of the subjective orientations of a given group of individuals with respect to Government, other individuals and themselves," p. 476.

12. Quoted by Rojas, op. cit., p. 80.

13. Alexander Haig, Caveat Realism: Reagan and Foreign Policy, 1984, p. 118.

14. Linowitz et al., op. cit., p. 7. Also see James R. Greene et al., "Western Interest and U.S. Policy Options in the Caribbean Basin", The Atlantic Council Policy Papers, 1983, especially pp. 34-40.

15. Stephen Ambrose, Rise to Globalism, 1978.

16. William LeoGrande, "Through the Looking Glass: The Kissinger Report on Central America," World Policy Journal, Winter 1984, pp. 276-80.

17. An innovative interpretation is found in Mark B. Rosenberg, "Small States and Hegemonic Powers: Central America and the Caribbean Basin," mimeo, 1984.

18. For example, the annual meeting of the Program of Joint Studies on the International Relations of Latin America (RIAL) in Bogota, Colombia in 1985: "Hacia una nueva era de hegemonía norteamericana."

19. Walter Lafeber, Inevitable Revolutions, 1984.

20. Daniel Oduber, "Yes Kissinger, But...," The New York Times, January 19, 1984. A reply to Mr. Oduber by Dorothy Dillon appeared in the same source on February 2, 1984.

21. For a cross-cut sample see LeoGrande, op. cit., Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Failings of the Kissinger Report," The New York Times, January 17, 1984, p. 29; The New York Times editorial, January 12, 1984. All these offer quite critical appraisals of the report. More favorable views are those of John Hutchinson, "Here We Come? Here We Go?: The Kissinger Report," National Review, February 24, 1984, pp. 28-38; La Nación, the leading Costa Rican newspaper, published a series of editorials between January 12-16, 1984, largely supportive of the report; also The Wall Street Journal, January 12, 1984. The Reagan Administration's position can be found in the report submitted by the secretary of state to the president, special report #124, April 1985.

22. Sol W. Saunders, "Costa Rica ordeña a los EEUU," translated version published by La Nación, March 30, 1986. The article was originally published by The Wall Street Journal on March 21, 1986.

23. Rodolfo Cerdas, "Nicaragua: un paso adelante y dos atrás?" mimeo, 1984.

24. Franklin W. Knight, The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism, New York, 1978.

25. Ibid. Also see Philip Foner, The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism, (2 vols.), New York, 1972.

26. David Thomson, Europe Since Napoleon, London, 1978.

27. An extensive analysis is found in Wolf Grabendorff and Riordan Roett, América Latina, Europa Occidental y Estados Unidos: un nuevo tríangulo Atlántico?, Buenos Aires, 1984.

28. Juan Maestre Alonso, "Expectativas españolas hacia la democracia en América Latina," Relaciones Internacionales, primer trimestre 1985, p. 54.

29. Ibid., p. 55.

30. Idem. For a U.S. perspective of Western Europe, see Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, 1984, pp. 123-26.

31. A good example of these are the studies published by The Academy of Sciences of the USSR, América Latina, Moscow.

32. Pierre Schori, El desafío europeo en América Central, San José, 1981.

33. Wolf Grabendorff, "El papel de Europa en las relaciones internacionales de América Latina," Relaciones Internacionales, Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica, año 3, #5, 1982.

34. The Euro-Central American Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, September 1984. Also the international meeting on new ways of cooperation for Europe-Central America under the auspices of FLACSO, the Ministry of Information of Costa Rica, and IRELA, Oct. 1985.

35. Edelberto Torres-Rivas, Interpretación del desarrollo social centroamericano, San José, 1975.

36. As defined in the last document of Contadora, especially in the chapter of "Political Agreements." See also the documents of the inter-American Dialogue, April 1983, May 1984.

37. Among these studies are the ones undertaken by the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica (CIDE) in Mexico. Important research projects are being implemented by the Confederation of Central American Universities (CSUCA), and the Latin American Social Sciences Faculty (FLACSO). An interesting bibliographic essay is Andrés Araya, "El estudio de las relaciones internacionales en Centroamérica: un ensayo de fuentes y tendencias," San José, mimeo, 1985.

38. Paul Tsongas, 1984, p. 237.

39. Idem.

40. Carlos Manuel Castillo, "Una voz propia para Centro América," en Entroamérica, condiciones para su integración, San José, 1982, p. 59.

41. Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto, "La paz, cimiento de la integración centroamericana," en ibid., p. 70.

42. An extensive interpretation of these tendencies can be found in Francisco Rojas and Luis G. Solís, "Relaciones internacionales de Centro América: los Estados Unidos como actor principal," San José, ICADIS, mimeo, 1986.