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What You Know and Who You Know: Senator Jesse Helms, the Reagan Doctrine and the Nicaraguan Contras

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During the eight years of his presidency, Ronald Reagan made a vocal commitment to the roll-back of perceived communist expansion around the world. This strategy, dubbed the "Reagan Doctrine" by Charles Krauthammer, underpinned the U.S. response to many of the foreign policy crises that Reagan encountered as President. In Nicaragua, the Reagan Doctrine was used to justify the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars to Contra forces who were engaged in a bitter civil war against the leftist Sandinista government. The war against the Sandinistas, who ascended to power in the aftermath of the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution against the right-wing, authoritarian government of Anastasio Somoza Debayle, would be the Reagan administration's most publicised, and most polarising, foreign policy initiative.[1]

The President's commitment to the Contra cause has been well documented.[2] This article, however, will argue that authorship of the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua belonged not only to the President and his senior advisers, but, also, to a wide network of anti-Sandinista individuals from across the Americas. It will specifically point to the position of Senator Jesse Helms (R–N.C.) as a focal point for this community, contending that the Senator's links to such figures as Jeane Kirkpatrick, Oliver North, John Carbaugh, Nat Hamrick, Gerardo

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ISSN: 1753-5894

Schamis, and Lewis Tambs, as well as his rhetorical and legislative framing of the Contra cause, contributed to the evolution of policy toward Nicaragua. By taking a chronological methodology, this article will show that Helms's role in the hemispheric anti-Sandinista network, while fluctuating in influence and public exposure during the period, was evident from the initial response to the 1979 revolution through to the final stages of the Contra program in the late 1980s.

That the Senator could achieve leverage on national foreign policy was largely due to the wider context of a post-Vietnam resurgence in congressional foreign policy initiative.[3] The rejection of the Imperial Presidency, and the collapse of a Cold War consensus that had generally framed foreign policy formulation since the late 1940s, provided spaces for individual members of Congress to seek greater degrees of policy autonomy.[4] Helms achieved success in policy entrepreneurship because he was better able to locate and take advantage of these spaces than the majority of his fellow legislators. He recognised that traditional sources of policy influence, such as committee assignments, personnel appointments, and legislation, were still important in the late Cold War. Yet he astutely understood that he could achieve a greater say in foreign policy by also working outside of these avenues. Thus he encouraged independent action within his fiercely ideological staff, and cultivated an extensive collection of contacts around the world that provided an unrivalled information-gathering network, as well as access to many levels of the policy decision-making process.

In doing so, Helms crafted a position as not only one of the most active participants in the partisan foreign policy debates of the late Cold War but, also, as one of the period's most entrepreneurial lawmakers in the realm of foreign policy.[5] This is not to argue that the

ISSN: 1753-5894

Senator achieved continuous success. His reputation for intransigence and obstructionism, built upon an unwavering commitment to conservatism, left him legislatively isolated during many of the debates over Nicaragua. Likewise, his polemical articulation of anti-Sandinista policy was often at odds with a public that oscillated between indifference and hostility toward the Contras. It will be noted that, while these difficulties did not prevent the Senator from influencing the nature of the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua, they highlight the fact that Helms was often more effective when operating outside the traditional avenues of influence available to lawmakers within a democratically elected government. His use of less obvious policy conduits explains his largely obscured role within U.S. policy toward Nicaragua. By examining the combination of such approaches with his more public initiatives, though, it can be argued that Senator Helms was an important part of a wider anti-Sandinista community that helped forge the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua.

Origins

On 16 November 1981, President Reagan signed National Security Directive 17, approving covert U.S. support for Contra forces and officially sanctioning unilateral paramilitary action against the Nicaraguan government.[6] The President's action represented a marked escalation in the intensity of U.S. anti-Sandinista policy, and appeared to be the initial step in implementing the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua.[7] In fact, efforts to oust the Sandinistas through the support of anti-communist counter-revolutionary forces were already in motion. As the anti-Sandinista community in the Americas began to coalesce in the aftermath of the Nicaraguan Revolution, individuals within this group began to explore the ways and means by which the Sandinistas could be forced from power. Helms and his staff would play an important role in initiating these early anti-Sandinista efforts.

ISSN: 1753-5894

Helms was hardly a staunch Somocista. Unlike members of the small, but vocal, pro-Somoza lobby in the House of Representatives, the Senator was not bound by close friendship or personal loyalty to the Nicaraguan leader.[8] Helms acknowledged that the Nicaraguan government had its faults, speaking cautiously of its 'merits and demerits' and claiming 'I hold no brief for President Somoza'.[9] For the Senator, however, the issue was not the continuation of a Somocista government in Managua, but rather the preservation of hemispheric stability and security that such a government ensured (at least in Helms's opinion).[10] The Senator regarded disengagement from Somoza, and actions to seek his ouster, as the abandonment of a democratic government in the midst of its battle against the expansion of international communism.[11] Should the United States continue to adopt this approach, Helms told his Senate colleagues: 'our own Nation will itself fall prey to revolution.'[12] The necessity of opposing Communism and the requirement to defend democratic tradition, which Krauthammer considered to be the foundations of the Reagan Doctrine, were therefore already evident in Helms's advocacy of anti-Sandinista policies in 1979.[13]

Helms's rhetoric could not stave off Somoza's defeat, nor persuade the Carter administration to relent in its efforts to mediate the Nicaraguan's exit. Helms did not yet have the informal contacts to maintain his fight behind the scenes. He could only watch as Somoza fled Nicaragua and the Sandinistas filled the power vacuum. Yet the Carter administration's handling of the Nicaraguan Revolution prompted conservative intellectuals to seek to drive the Nicaragua situation into the public domain with a series of bold, thought-provoking commentaries on Carter's foreign policy. These essays, the most notable of which were Jeane

ISSN: 1753-5894

Kirkpatrick's "Dictatorships and Double Standards" and the Council for Inter-American Security's "A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties" (better known as the Sante Fe Document), condemned Carter's policies abroad, and advocated a renewed anti-communist crusade in the Americas.[14]

The publication of these documents was important in two ways for the nascent anti-Sandinista movement. Firstly, they identified the authors as uncompromising anti-Sandinistas, which allowed fellow conservatives to recognise ideological allies in the fight against the new Nicaraguan government.[15] As shall be discussed, Kirkpatrick and the authors of the Sante Fe Document – including the report's editor and primary contributor Lewis Tambs – would be important members of the anti-Sandinista network during Reagan's presidency.[16] Secondly, they demonstrated that Helms's efforts in 1979 and 1980 to minimise humanitarian aid to Nicaragua could be seen less as isolated reactionary-ism, and increasingly as part of a distinct and burgeoning anti-Sandinista network.[17] However, just as Helms had lacked the leverage to alter policy during the revolution, so he similarly now suffered because of a lack of support from the national Republican Party. Despite conservatives' efforts to publicise the perceived threat of the Sandinista government, policy experts urged those at the party's July 1980 convention to avoid making Nicaragua an issue.[18]

Helms, however, never believed he needed anyone's permission to fight against communism, and he rejected the party line.[19] Despite the apparent lack of interest from his fellow Republicans, the Senator made a substantial change to party policy during the convention. After the full platform was voted on, the Republican candidate for the presidency was now running on a platform of government change in Nicaragua. The GOP, the foreign policy plank stated,

ISSN: 1753-5894

> ... deplore the Marxist Sandinista take-over of Nicaragua and the Marxist attempts to destabilize El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. We do not support United States assistance to any Marxist government in this hemisphere and we oppose the Carter Administration aid program for the government of Nicaragua. However, we will support the efforts of the Nicaraguan people to establish a free and independent government.[20]

It was no coincidence that the language was strikingly similar to Helms's previous protestations against the Sandinistas.[21] He had personally drawn up the first two sentences. The final sentence, however, was absent from Helms's original proposal and had not been vetted by either the official read-through process or the full platform committee. It originated with one of Helms's senior foreign policy staffers, John Carbaugh, who had succeeded in bypassing the convention protocols to win its inclusion.

That Carbaugh introduced the language is of great importance. Advocacy for such anti-communist revolution was a fundamental element of the Reagan Doctrine, yet neither Reagan nor his senior team had been involved in the formulation of this platform plank. Instead, this early articulation of the Reagan Doctrine was moulded by a member of Helms's anti-Sandinista network. Furthermore, the link between Carbaugh's language – which he later acknowledged to be a clear statement of intent to remove the Sandinistas from power – and subsequent Contra activities suggests that Helms's aide, and the anti-Sandinista network in general, planned for the active implementation of their doctrine.[22]

Carbaugh's other activities at the convention highlight this. The extrovert staffer, who had generated a reputation for staunch conservatism, political activism, and effective networking during his years inside and outside the Beltway, used the convention as an opportunity to increase the size and scope of the anti-Sandinista network.[23] To do so, he

ISSN: 1753-5894

accompanied Nat Hamrick, a North Carolinian businessman with strong ties to the Somoza dynasty, and Gerardo Schamis, an Argentine diplomat attending on behalf of General Roberto Viola, around the convention.[24] The Argentine connection was a critical aspect of the anti-Sandinista alliance. It indicated the growing trans-nationalism of the network as U.S. anti-communists, dissatisfied with Carter's apparent ineffectiveness in combating leftist expansion in the hemisphere, sought out regional allies with similar sentiments. It also highlighted Carbaugh's desire to ally with groups who already had anti-communist paramilitary experience.[25]

The objective of Carbaugh, Hamrick, and Schamis was to increase support for the emerging Contra movement, and they succeeded in their efforts to get the Argentine a meeting with senior Reagan advisers.[26] This growing network of anti-Sandinista contacts, which linked Helms, his staff, the Reagan team and hemispheric hard-line anti-communists, began to succeed in its efforts to generate support for the Contras. Right-wing Latin American governments were increasingly confident that a Reagan election victory would yield much greater U.S. support for regional anti-communist operations.[27]Thus, even prior to Reagan's presidential election victory and his subsequent efforts on behalf of the Contras, an anti-Sandinista alliance had set in motion efforts to create an aggressive policy of assistance for anti-communist, counter-revolutionary groups in Nicaragua. Given their role in these activities, and the striking similarities between their initial endeavours and the subsequent reality of the Contra program, Senator Helms and Carbaugh can be regarded as having an important, if not leading, influence on early manifestations of a doctrine that would be intimately linked with Reagan over the next eight years.

ISSN: 1753-5894

Successes and Failures

Reagan's election to the presidency in 1980 was not only a personal boon for Helms, it was also critical in generating a greater role for the Senator in Nicaragua policy.[28] The election of a Republican majority in the Senate on the coat-tails of Reagan's landslide victory, and the growth in stature of conservatism within the national party, increased Helms's status in the GOP. As a consequence of the new Republican majority, he was promoted to the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations' Western Hemisphere Subcommittee. This role, and its prerogatives, allowed him to oversee Nicaragua policy. He could convene hearings on issues which mattered most to him, utilise key witnesses to advocate his policies, and frame the situation from a more prominent pulpit. Helms would not only enjoy a front-row view of the development of the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua, he would have more opportunities to shape it.

Reagan's victory over Carter immediately generated momentum for building up the Contras as a viable fighting force. Fresh from their success at the Republican convention, and buoyed by the election of a conservative to the White House, the anti-Sandinista network began to push harder on behalf of the Contras. Their first major success was the suspension of aid to Nicaragua, which Reagan agreed to on 1 April 1981. The decision was made after an intensive lobbying campaign by conservatives both within and outside the administration, and reflected the growing influence that this community enjoyed in Washington.[29]

ISSN: 1753-5894

During this period, Carbaugh and Hamrick began to work behind the scenes on actively influencing the composition of the Contras' leadership. Multiple rebel factions had emerged in the aftermath of the Revolution, ranging from disaffected ex-Sandinistas to groups of former National Guardsmen.[30] The two Americans and Schamis agreed that Colonel Enrique Bermudez Varela, who had previously been Somoza's military attaché in Washington and now commanded the 15th of September Legion, was the best candidate for the role of overall Contra commander.[31] They did so without any formal guidance from Washington, and at a time when U.S. support for the Contras was still unauthorised.

Their success in achieving their goal was a testament to the advantages of the informal networking that Helms and his allies championed. They used their growing network of contacts to press hard in the transition period for General Viola to visit the U.S., and were rewarded when the Argentine journeyed to Washington in March 1981. Viola's visit, according to Hamrick, confirmed the burgeoning alliance between Argentina and the U.S. on behalf of the Contras.[32] The following month, Carbaugh and Hamrick accompanied prominent Nicaraguan exile Francisco Aguirre to Buenos Aires. There they met with Colonel Mario Davico, who commanded Argentine operations in Central America.[33] Between them, they arranged the specifics of cooperation between the U.S. and Argentina in the Contra program, and in the following days Bermudez himself visited Argentina and secured its leaders' blessings.[34] The episode reflected not only the transnational scale of the community, but, also, the way in which contacts could be used to drive policy forward.

The network's size and influence were revealed in December 1982 when Hector Frances, who claimed to be a defector from Argentina's Intelligence Battalion 601, named Hamrick as one of a number of individuals involved in operations designed to overthrow the Sandinistas. Frances's testimony further exposed the anti-Sandinista community's

ISSN: 1753-5894

transnational connections when he revealed that Hamrick had been involved with right-wing Argentines, Hondurans, and Costa Ricans in support of the Contras. Moreover, Frances's statements suggested that Helms was being used as a means of generating influence and further contacts in Washington for those who supported the rebels. Hamrick was believed to be "opening doors" in the U.S. capital, and though it was unclear as to whether Helms was aware of this, Hamrick's personal association with the Senator was regarded as beneficial.[35]

Frances's claims suggest that not only were Helms's staffers actively involved in the development of the Contras prior to Reagan's November 1981 authorisation of formal, and legal, U.S. support for the movement, but that the network's influence was expanding along with its membership base. These results were not inconsequential, as Bermudez's promotion demonstrated. Furthermore, those involved in the network testified as to the importance of Helms's men. In addition to Frances's assertions about Hamrick's influence, Schamis recognised Carbaugh's "serious" commitment to the cause.[36] The reports suggest that a senior aide to a United States Senator worked alongside private American citizens in covert actions against a foreign government, thus violating the 1799 Logan Act that prohibited private U.S. citizens from engaging in acts or communications with representatives of a foreign government for the purpose of influencing the United States' foreign policy.[37]

The network could regard 1981 as a successful year. Reagan's decision to suspend aid to Nicaragua and authorise assistance to the Contras were major achievements for the anti-Sandinista community. Helms and his staff quickly capitalised on the momentum. Carbaugh travelled to Honduras in late November to witness that country's election and attend the election night festivities at the U.S. ambassador's residence. Along with several individuals from the aggressively anti-communist American Security Council, Carbaugh met with U.S.

ISSN: 1753-5894

ambassador John Negroponte and a senior Honduran officer, Colonel Gustavo Álvarez Martínez. The Honduran had been an active participant in the Contra movement to that point, unofficially backing groups of anti-Sandinista rebels in 1980 and meeting with CIA Director William Casey in early 1981 to offer Honduran assets to the cause.[38] Christopher Dickey of the *Washington Post*, attending the party at the ambassador's house, believed Negroponte and Álvarez, perhaps even Carbaugh too, knew Contra policy was intensifying.[39]

Helms added to the momentum by using his chairmanship of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee to convene hearings on Sandinista human rights abuses. The hearings emerged out of Helms's personal contacts in Central America, and demonstrated the influence of his networking on the political discourse in Washington. Helms revealed to the committee that during a recent visit to Honduras he had spoken with members of the clergy and other observers in that country who had informed him of Sandinista attacks on Miskito communities in eastern Nicaragua. Helms decried these 'repeated' incursions into Indian territory and painted a disturbing image of the Sandinistas 'burning entire villages to the ground, burning people alive, burying them alive'. In short, it was 'a systematic, thorough, and sustained program of extermination.'[40] His control of the hearings allowed him to call on Elliot Abrams, the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, who was a key member of the anti-Sandinista network in his own right. Abrams also offered a harsh indictment of Sandinista behaviour.[41] In doing so, he added his own authority to that of Helms's in implicitly portraying anti-Sandinista policies, and thus the Reagan Doctrine, as a means of securing justice for all of Nicaragua's population.[42]

ISSN: 1753-5894

The rhetoric of the hearings was not merely a means by which Helms and his anti-Sandinista allies could articulate their views on the Sandinistas and, by association, Contra policy. Such meetings also acted as important networking opportunities for Helms. In this case, the prominent Miskito leader Steadman Fagoth Mueller attended the hearings, ostensibly to see how Washington was reacting to the alleged atrocities. Yet Fagoth Mueller was himself a Contra leader, with close ties to the exile community in Miami and the U.S. military in Honduras.[43] Thus, the hearings were useful as a means of providing Helms with possible opportunities to develop contacts with valuable allies, and demonstrated the dynamics behind the network's information-gathering strategy. Helms received information from the network, and then used this information to convene hearings. These hearings in turn influenced the political discourse in Washington, and the way in which anti-Sandinista policies, and thus the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua, were framed.[44]

The outbreak of the Falklands War in April 1982 threatened the anti-Sandinista momentum just as it had gained extra impetus through NSD-17 and Helms's hearings on the Sandinistas. Latin American militaries reacted negatively to Reagan's support for Britain during the conflict.[45] Gustavo Álvarez Martínez accused Washington of betraying its allies and ignoring the Monroe Doctrine.[46] With a rift between the U.S. and its regional allies threatening to undermine the Contra program, the anti-Sandinista network sought to stabilise the situation. Carbaugh travelled to Miami and met with conservative allies, such as anti-Sandinista exile José Francisco Cardenal and the head of the Argentine Contra support program Oswaldo Ribeiro, in order to reassure the Hondurans and Argentines that the latter were still very much wanted as partners.[47] Jeane Kirkpatrick, Reagan's Ambassador to the United Nations and a staunch ally of Helms, drew criticism from British officials for attending a function at the Argentine embassy in Washington as the invasion commenced and

ISSN: 1753-5894

her subsequent public suggestions that Argentine actions were not outright aggression, given debate over the sovereignty of the Falklands.[48] Her efforts, according to the British, suggested a duplicitous U.S. policy that differed in private from Secretary of State Alexander Haig's public policy.[49]

Helms backed up these efforts with staunch public support for the Argentines. He was the lone dissenting vote on a 29 April Senate resolution that declared that the U.S. 'cannot stand neutral' and would seek 'to achieve the full withdrawal of Argentine forces'. Helms appealed for calm from Latin American nations, stating that 'I hope no nations in Central or South America will interpret this as being a slap in the face.'[50] Carbaugh claimed that it was his influence, rather than Helms's own perspective, which prompted the Senator to publicly defend Argentina, and argued he had used Helms to sustain the relationship between the various anti-Sandinista elements within Latin America.[51]

Carbaugh was overstating his influence in this case. Helms was deeply concerned about the threat to anti-Sandinista policies posed by the Falklands War.[52] The Senator's support for the Contras was based on his unwavering anti-communist principles, and on such principles, he declared in his memoir, one should never yield.[53] Helms's actions provided welcome political cover for anti-Sandinista forces at home and abroad, and added to the wider implications for the network's conduct during the Falklands War. The alliance's bold move in openly opposing the President reflected their prioritisation of the Contras as a policy instrument and demonstrated that even when Reagan was willing to temporarily forego his doctrine in favour of other policy considerations, others pressed ahead in developing and implementing an anti-communist strategy in Nicaragua.

ISSN: 1753-5894

This intractable commitment to the Contras was increasingly out of step with both congressional and public opinion, and the program began to run into turbulence. Media reports questioning the size and goals of the CIA's program elicited concern among lawmakers, and, in response to the negative headlines, Congress passed legislation in December 1982 which explicitly prohibited the U.S. from providing aid that would be used for overthrowing the Sandinistas.[54] The Boland Amendment was the start of sixteen months of damage control for the anti-Sandinista network that culminated in early 1984 with a public furore over the CIA's mining of Nicaraguan harbours the previous winter. Yet it marked an opportunity for Helms to more fully articulate his own perspective on the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua, and over these months the strategies and goals that he sought were further defined.

Helms condemned the Boland Amendment and those who voted for it, arguing that Congress was negligent in the fight against communist expansion in Central America.[55] Yet he could not stop the legislation, largely because Republican leaders, fearful of Rep. Tom Harkin's (D-IA) even more restrictive alternative, were willing to accept Boland's language.[56] Many members sympathetic to the President's policy also justified their vote for the amendment on the grounds that the legislation was meaningless, since Reagan had never proclaimed that policy was aimed at removing the Sandinistas.[57] Now, facing an increasingly hostile Congress, Helms and the network focused on the domestic repercussions for a weakened Reagan Doctrine. Twenty million refugees would flood into the U.S according to Helms and his allies.[58] Only an aggressive paramilitary interpretation of the Reagan Doctrine would prevent disorder in the hemisphere, and it was this thinking that explained Helms's defence of the administration when Congress learned of the CIA's mining operation in early 1984. He publicly lauded the actions of those who were 'working for the best interests of the

ISSN: 1753-5894

Nicaraguan people and of all the people in the region' and declared that 'whatever role, if any, may have been played by U.S. officials should not blind us to the fundamental truth that what we should do is applaud.'[59]

The problem for the anti-Sandinista alliance was that the damaging publicity from the mining scandal added to the growing concern surrounding the President's Contra policy. By 1984, opinion polls showed that the American people had little appetite for the program.[60] Helms's decision to openly defend the mining operation enhanced his image as a consistent advocate of paramilitary engagement with the Sandinistas, and provided a welcome, if isolated, point of support for the Reagan administration during a period of intense difficulty. It could not, however, disguise the fact that his language was ineffective. Helms's pronouncements on the communist threat in Nicaragua and his relentless appeals to domestic press points, such as illegal immigration, failed to sway a public largely opposed to Contra aid.[61]

Reagan's first term in office saw a determined effort by the network to develop, and maintain, a viable anti-Sandinista army. Helms provided outspoken and sustained public support for the program, mainly through his efforts to define the issue in stark, Manichean terms. Meanwhile, lower profile members of the community worked diligently to develop the regional anti-communist alliance that supported the Contras. This tendency to rely on the hard-line element of hemispheric anti-communism generated a vicious circle, since the policies being advocated – and implemented – reduced the chances of constructive engagement with a Congress that was sharply divided over the Contra issue. Thus, Helms and his network played an integral role in heightening the contentious political environment from which the Iran-Contra scandals would emerge.

ISSN: 1753-5894

Endings

In late 1984, Congress passed the second Boland Amendment, explicitly terminating all Contra aid. By the middle of the following year, legislators had voted to renew aid, authorising $27 million in humanitarian aid designed to sustain the rebels as a fighting force pending the restoration of military aid. The next year, Reagan achieved even greater success, securing $100 million in military funding for the Contras. The appropriation of so large a quantity of unrestricted aid – designed to provide the Contras with an arsenal capable of defeating the Sandinistas - marked the pinnacle of the Reagan Doctrine's application in Nicaragua. Within months, however, the policy would be ruined by the Iran-Contra scandals. It was during these years that Helms demonstrated both the effectiveness and dangers of partisan policy entrepreneurship.

The passage of the second Boland Amendment was a low-point for Reagan's Contra policy. As with the first Boland Amendment, Helms was unable to stop the legislation. He could not resist the potent combination of congressional anger at executive branch unilateralism, the lack of a clear public sentiment in favour of the Contras, and a Republican willingness to sacrifice aid in order to secure the funding of popular domestic programs during an election year.[62] Hard-line anti-Sandinista figures in Washington, notably William Casey, Oliver North, and John McFarlane, had been aware of the growing resentment

ISSN: 1753-5894

towards Contra policy, and during the preceding months had taken steps to ensure a sustainable flow of aid to the rebels.[63] Though such efforts were still legal at this point, the search for alternative funding planted the seeds for Iran-Contra. Helms had no direct link to these initiatives, though John Carbaugh was tied to the scheme. Carbaugh, who was fired by Helms in 1982 for ethics violations relating to the misuse of funds for travel, was named as a prospective member of an advisory board for a new tax-exempt corporation through which funds to the Contras could be moved.[64] Carbaugh was also listed in North's schedule for 26 September 1984.[65] Though there is no mention of the content of their meeting, the likelihood of it concerning efforts to continue Contra assistance was substantial given the previous actions of both participants. It was during this period that North embarked upon his plan to secure secret, third-party funding for the Contras; an endeavour which paid off for staunch pro-Contra advocates when Congress passed the second Boland Amendment.

Yet by Spring 1985, the anti-Sandinista rebels had enjoyed a turnaround in fortunes. Congress began to display cautious support for the Contras as result of a number of factors that emerged during early 1985. These included increasing congressional discontent with the Sandinista government, changes in the composition of the Contras, a perception among U.S. lawmakers that the administration had endeavoured to compromise over the goals and methods for the rebels, and a concerted effort by the President and conservatives to persuade moderates of the validity of the cause.[66] Helms took a leading role in this lobbying for the rehabilitated Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua, and he was blunt in his rhetoric. In a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing devoted to Central America, Helms stated that the President's policy had been 'mutilated' by domestic political concerns. He continued to warn his fellow legislators, and the public, of the imminent threat of twenty-five million people flooding into the U.S., and he wished for a time-machine in order to see what people would

ISSN: 1753-5894

say when it happened. The issue at stake was not, he told the committee, 'a choice between a little bit of nonintervention here and something else. It may be a choice of survival, of freedom in the United States of America.'[67] On the day of the vote to renew aid, Helms told his fellow legislators that they must 'decide whether the United States wants to support freedom and human rights, or whether one more nation will fall by default to Marxism-Leninism.'[68]

It was a powerful message that can be seen as part of the determined White House public relations campaign on behalf of the aid bills. The accumulated pressure proved to be influential. However, Helms's role in the resurgent Contra network was not limited to oratory. In his most direct contribution to the cause, he secured the nomination of Lewis Tambs to the post of Ambassador to Costa Rica.[69] Tambs's outspoken advocacy for the roll-back of communism and increasing political prominence in the late 1970s – both notable in his contribution to the Sante Fe Document – meant he was an influential figure within the conservative, anti-communist community in the U.S.[70] His politics endeared him to Helms, so much so that he had previously been the Senator's pick for the job of Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs.[71] Tambs was, according to Curtin Winsor, his successor in Costa Rica, 'one of Jesse Helms' [sic] boys.'[72]

Though he failed to land the post at Inter-American Affairs, Tambs did serve as Ambassador to Colombia, and Helms was delighted with his fellow conservative's efforts to curb drug production in that country.[73] Nicaragua was never off the radar, however, and the ambassador kept in touch with another acquaintance from the anti-Sandinista network – Oliver North – who shared a commitment to opening a southern front in the war in Nicaragua.[74] In November 1985, Tambs was sent to Costa Rica as ambassador, ostensibly

ISSN: 1753-5894

because of that nation's strategic value in the fight against communism.[75] In fact, he was dispatched to expand North's secret Contra program by opening a southern front.[76] The initiative was known to only a handful of Washington insiders, and was not authorised by Congress. It demonstrated the clandestine, and increasingly splintered, nature of Contra policy.

Tambs's appointment to such an influential diplomatic position illustrated two important issues with respect to the Contra campaign. The first was the danger of inserting partisan extremists into the decision-making process, particularly when the process was as fragmented as the Reagan administration's Contra policy. Those running the diplomatic corps recognised the potential benefits of political appointees.[77] However, like North and others who were running the illegal operations, Tambs's steadfast commitment to the anti-Sandinista cause dominated other considerations. Ideology over-ruled pragmatism, and individuals were given the latitude to promote personal preferences over defined – however ineffectively – national policy. The second issue was the mutually reinforcing nature of the anti-Sandinista community. In placing Tambs into a position of authority, and by bringing him into regular contact with individuals like North, separate policy initiatives were planned and executed in an atmosphere of complete support. It was as a result of these two factors that Tambs, his assistant James Tull, North, Abrams, and CIA Central American task force director Allen Fiers were successful in unilaterally running various Contra operations.[78]

One of the most notable incidents that demonstrated the dangers of the network's multi-track policy involved Contra commander Eden Pastora. Pastora had gained publicity as a leading Sandinista during the Revolution, but rapidly became disillusioned with the new government in Managua. After becoming a vocal opponent of his previous comrades, Pastora

ISSN: 1753-5894

was contacted by CIA Latin America operations chief Duane Claridge, who was convinced that the former Sandinista represented a different kind of Contra leader: charismatic, bold, and, crucially, one who enjoyed popular support in Nicaragua.[79] Despite a positive start, the relationship between the U.S. and Pastora broke down. U.S. officials described him variously as 'singularly ineffective' and 'disorganized and unstable'.[80] In 1984, after Pastora refused to ally with the CIA-backed Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), assistance to his faction was terminated.[81]

Though other members of the anti-Sandinista network were relieved to be rid of Pastora, Helms was outraged. The Senator was a leading supporter of Pastora, and had developed a close relationship with him. Helms publicly lauded the Nicaraguan as 'the one authentic folk hero of the revolution'.[82] Pastora contacted Helms in 1985 to ask for assistance in regaining U.S. support, and both the Senator and his aide Deborah DeMoss subsequently met with the guerrilla leader. The following year, in March 1986, General John Singlaub (ret.) travelled to Central America to meet with Pastora.[83] Singlaub was a close acquaintance of Helms, and shared his passionate anti-communism. Relieved of his duties by President Carter for publicly criticising him, Singlaub had become an active participant in the anti-Sandinista network and a leading private fundraiser for the rebels.[84]

Though DeMoss denied Helms or his office urged Singlaub to visit Pastora, Tambs claimed that the general was the Senator's envoy.[85] There is no direct link between the Senator and the substance of Singlaub's visit, but good news did follow for Helms when, after meeting with the retired general, Pastora agreed to cooperate with the FDN in return for a resumption in assistance.[86] The accord essentially altered official U.S. policy toward the Contras by re-engaging with the previously discredited Pastora. Tambs denied allegations by

ISSN: 1753-5894

members of the State Department that he had authorised this unsanctioned arrangement, reporting to his superiors that neither he, nor any member of his embassy, was linked in any way to the agreement.[87] Nevertheless, Secretary of State George Shultz was forced to order Tambs to disavow the agreement out of fears it may be used to embarrass the U.S. government, and the ambassador was told to notify Pastora that the arrangement was void.[88]

The episode was an embarrassment for the U.S., and threatened to undermine attempts to forge a unified Contra movement. Though Tambs was suspicious of Pastora, and believed Helms's support for the guerrilla was damaging the Contra effort, it is hard to disagree with the State Department's finding that Tambs's association with the accord – particularly his decision to transmit the agreement to Washington – provided 'an unwarranted stamp of official approval.'[89] It also reinforced the belief among observers that Tambs's tendency toward autonomy made him unsuitable for such a senior position.[90] Even Winsor, another Helms ally, believed Tambs lacked political courage. The result, according to Winsor, was a Contra policy that suffered from 'much deeper trouble than it should have'.[91] In an already chaotic bureaucratic process, Helms's contacts in the anti-Sandinista network had contributed to policy initiatives running in parallel, if not counter, to official U.S. policy.

This confused foreign policy decision-making scheme, which involved a multitude of foreign governments and private individuals alongside U.S. government actors, contributed directly to the Iran-Contra affair.[92] Helms loyally defended the President in the aftermath of the scandal, agreeing with those who declared it to be simply "juicy gossip for an otherwise boring summer."[93] He lobbied hard on behalf of those implicated, introducing legislation to limit the scope of possible prosecutions.[94] In a final effort to maintain the Contras as a fighting force he brought forward an amendment that would have authorised $300 million

ISSN: 1753-5894

worth of aid for the rebels.[95] No one wanted to listen. Renewed hope for regional peace talks led by Central American nations themselves and domestic fatigue with the Contra program doomed U.S. aid for the Nicaraguan rebels.[96]

The anti-communist zeal of Helms's network of Contra activists laid the foundations for the final collapse in support for the Contras. The advantages of the alliance during the previous eight years were to be important factors in the decline of support for the Contras. Where once informal, often clandestine, relationships had been to their benefit for implementing policy, in the harsh glare of public exposure during the Iran-Contra scandal they proved to be costly. The public and the vast majority of Congress found such methods unpalatable, and the entirety of U.S. anti-Sandinista policy was associated, however legitimately, with these secretive means. Furthermore, the ideological rigidity expressed by the group – whether in their legislative strategy or rhetorical framework for its policy – held greatly reduced influence on a public and Congress much wearied by the sustained and acrimonious policy debates of the past eight years.

Conclusions

The 1990 Nicaraguan elections resulted in the defeat of the Sandinistas at the ballot box. Two years later, at the Republican Convention in Houston, Pat Buchanan attributed U.S. success in Nicaragua to Ronald Reagan. In that country, according to the President's former communication's director and outspoken Contra advocate, 'the Marxist regime was forced to hold free elections – by Ronald Reagan's contra army – and the communists were thrown out of power.'[97] There is considerable debate over the effectiveness of the Contras as an

ISSN: 1753-5894

instrument of policy, and suffice to say it has been beyond the remit of this article to argue on this matter.[98] What can be said, however, is that Buchanan's hagiographic depiction of the former President's role in policy was a disservice to his fellow anti-Sandinistas, and in particular, to Senator Jesse Helms. There was no 'Ronald Reagan's contra army'; there was, however, an army - and a doctrine - based on the actions and ideology of a collection of individuals whose relationship with Helms, and his with them, was a crucial element in the war against the Sandinistas.

That Helms achieved influence on anti-Sandinista policy was a product of his integration within a network of hard-line anti-Sandinistas whose goal of overthrowing the Nicaraguan government was evident even prior to Reagan's election as President. Helms valued such networks for their information-gathering abilities.[99] As has been noted, in the case of Nicaragua the Senator utilised such information as part of a wider campaign to draw attention to alleged Sandinista atrocities and totalitarian programs. In doing so, Helms helped to articulate the Reagan Doctrine as a defence of democracy and human freedoms.

Yet such networks do not simply act as conduits for information. Alliances offer a source of wider support for actions carried out in order to achieve shared goals.[100] Helms was astute in recognising that his goals in Nicaragua were shared by a wide range of individuals, both in the U.S. and across the hemisphere. In developing relationships with these figures, the Senator was contributing to a group whose influence lay not in the actions of a single member, but in the combined strength of the community. Thus, Carbaugh, Hamrick, and Schamis could tie their efforts in with the Argentines and Hondurans. Tambs and North could operate together in opening up their desired southern front. Singlaub and Pastora could work

ISSN: 1753-5894

to draw a banished group back into the Contra fold. The support was mutually reinforcing, and all the more influential because of it.

In a post-Vietnam political environment in which Congress had reasserted its prerogatives in the foreign policy sphere, Helms understood that the decision-making process contained many points of access, and an individual could achieve much greater leverage on proceedings by seeking out these opportunities and taking advantage of their existence. By actively seeking connections – directly, or through proxies – with individuals and groups like Oliver North, Elliot Abrams, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Eden Pastora, Lewis Tambs, Gerardo Schamis and the Argentine military, and Colonel Gustavo Álvarez Martínez and the Honduran armed forces – the Senator successfully located, and achieved, access to a range of these contact points.

This is not to say that Helms was consistently successful in his anti-Sandinista initiatives, or that we must consider the strategy as a "Helms Doctrine". There were failures, or, at least, weaknesses, in the Senator's use of the network and his personal rhetorical and legislative tactics. Congress was rarely persuaded by Helms's efforts against the Sandinistas. Though the network allowed him to be updated on the state of the Contra crusade, it failed to provide much leverage for use in final votes on the Hill. Helms's ideological rigidity kept him on the outskirts of the legislative battles over Contra aid, and it was the more moderate members of Congress – those willing to bend over certain aspects of legislation – who achieved the most influence on the legally defined policy. His partisan efforts to support the Contras were more often than not doomed by their over-reaching, or by his unwillingness to compromise on matters of principle - a political strategy about which he was unapologetic.[101]

ISSN: 1753-5894

Yet when considering the development of the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua, it can be asserted that Contra policy was not merely the application of the President's, or his senior team's, ideology and directives. Instead, a wider network of hard-line anti-Sandinistas, within which Jesse Helms played a critical role, contributed to the initial formulation, and later the active implementation, of an anti-Sandinista strategy. James Scott has argued that these kinds of alliances, which competed with rival networks of policy advocates, have just as great a claim on the Reagan Doctrine as individuals within the White House. 'Credit, if it is due,' Scott declares, 'must be shared.'[102] In seeking to apply the Reagan Doctrine to Nicaragua, Senator Jesse Helms could justly claim some of that credit.

ISSN: 1753-5894

[1] The literature on U.S. policy in Nicaragua during the late Cold War is extensive. For more detailed background material, see William M. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1998), Cynthia Arnson, *Crossroads: Congress, the President, and Central America, 1976-1993* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), Robert Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977 – 1990* (London: Free Press, 1996), Theodore Draper, *A Very Thin Line: The Iran-Contra Affairs* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1991), Roy Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy: The Making of American Policy in Nicaragua, 1981-1987* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), R. Pardo-Maurer, *The Contras, 1980 – 1989: A Special Kind of Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1990), James M. Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Thomas Carothers, *In The Name of Democracy: U.S. Policy Toward Latin America in the Reagan Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), E. Bradford Burns, *At War in Nicaragua: The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), Robert A. Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), John Patrick Diggins, *Ronald Reagan: Fate, Freedom, and the Making of History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), Mark P. Lagon, *The Reagan Doctrine: Sources of American Conduct in the Cold War's Last Chapter* (Westport: Praeger, 1994), Walter F. Hahn, ed., *Central America and the Reagan Doctrine* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1987), and Chester Pach, "The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism, and Policy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1, Presidential Doctrines (March, 2006): 75-88. Krauthammer defined the doctrine in an article for Time magazine. See Charles Krauthammer, "The Reagan Doctrine," *Time*, 1 April 1985.

[2] The president consistently extolled the virtues of the rebels. For examples, see "Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters on Domestic and Foreign Policy Issues, 4 May, 1983." *The Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan*. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, accessed 18 Nov., 2012, http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/50483d.htm, "Radio Address to the Nation on United States Assistance for the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance, 22 March, 1986." *The Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan*. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, accessed 17 Oct., 2012, http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/32286a.htm, and "Address to the Nation on Aid to the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance, 2 February, 1988." *The Public Papers of Ronald W. Reagan*. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, accessed 16 Oct., 2012, http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1988/020288e.htm.

[3] Ralph G. Carter and James M. Scott, *Choosing to Lead: Understanding Congressional Foreign Policy Entrepreneurs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 115.

[4] Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since The Vietnam War: The Search for Consensus from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), 4.

[5] Carter and Scott assess Helms as 'the most active and prolific foreign policy entrepreneur in the post-World War II era.' For their case study of the senator's post-Cold War entrepreneurship, see Carter and Scott, *Choosing to Lead*, 186 – 203.

[6] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 84, and Leslie Cockburn, *Out of Control: The Story of the Reagan Administration's Secret War in Nicaragua, the Illegal Arms Pipeline, and the Contra Drug Connection* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), 6.

[7] Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981 - 1987* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 113.

[8] Rep. John Murphy (D-NY), for example, had known the Nicaraguan since their studies at LaSalle Military Academy as boys, and was a leading member of the House's 'Dirty Thirty' pro-Somoza lobby. For an account

of Congressional lobbying for Somoza, see Anthony Lake, *Somoza Falling* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 193-210.

[9] Jesse Helms (NC), "The Importance of Nicaragua," *Congressional Record* Volume 125 (1979), 15867 (Text from *Congressional Record Permanent Digital Collection*, hereafter *Cong. Rec.*) and Jesse Helms (NC), "The Resignation Of President Somoza," *Cong. Rec*. 125 (1979), 18948.

[10] Helms argued that although Somoza should resist U.S. efforts to force his resignation, a democratically elected government with full political, property, and human rights was an acceptable alternative to the continuation of the Somoza government. Helms, "The Importance," *Cong. Rec*. 125 (1979), 15868.

[11] *Ibid.*, 15867 – 15869.

[12] Helms, "The Resignation," *Cong. Rec*. 125 (1979), 18948.

[13] Krauthammer, "The Reagan Doctrine."

[14] Kirkpatrick's essay 'Dictatorships and Double Standards' appeared in a copy of *Commentary Magazine* in November 1979. The Sante Fe Document was released in 1980.

[15] Kirkpatrick's essay caught the attention of Ronald Reagan, who brought her into his presidential campaign team, and subsequently his administration. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 54 – 56. The authors of the Santa Fe Document would occupy positions in the Reagan White House too. Leslie W. Hepple, "Lewis Tambs, Latin American Geopolitics and the American New Right," *Les Hepples Unpublished Papers*, University of Bristol School of Geopolitical Sciences, accessed 20 October 2012, http://www.ggy.bris.ac.uk/personal/LesHepple/lewis.pdf, 14.

[16] Tambs' 'geopolitical ideas and punchy style ran through the report', according to an unpublished paper by Les Hepple that examines Tambs' role in conservative foreign policy. Hepple, "Lewis Tambs," 13.

[17] Helms offered an amendment to the Special Central American and Caribbean Assistance Act of 1979, seeking to reduce aid to Nicaragua from $75 million to $35 million. It was tabled by a vote of 61-26. "Special Central American and Caribbean Assistance Act of 1979: Rollcall Vote No. 16 Leg.," *Cong. Rec.* 126 (1980), 1087. In the summer of 1980 he went further, offering an amendment that had the explicit purpose of terminating assistance to the Sandinistas. 'I am not willing to take a chance, because this is a one sided chance', he stated on the Senate floor, urging his fellow legislators to reject the idea that aid would offer the chance to keep the Sandinistas beyond Moscow's influence. Jesse Helms (NC), "Supplemental Appropriations, 1980," *Cong. Rec.* 125 (1980), 17657-17662.

[18] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 21.

[19] Jesse Helms, *Here's Where I Stand: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 2005), 83.

[20] Republican Party Platforms, "Republican Party Platform of 1980, 15 July 1980," online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed 1 Aug., 2011, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25844#axzz1Tylk9sty.

[21] For examples of the senator's reaction to the Sandinistas, see Helms, "The Importance," *Cong. Rec.* 125 (1979), 15867-15869, Helms, "The Resignation," *Cong. Rec.* 125 (1979), 18947-18948, and Helms, "Special Central American and Caribbean Security Assistance Act of 1979," *Cong. Rec*. 126 (1980), 1083-1090.

[22] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 19-21.

[23] Carbaugh's gained particular notoriety for his efforts to publicise the presence of the Soviet combat brigade in Cuba in 1979, and for his attendance at the Rhodesia talks in London in the same year which led to accusations of his improper interference in the negotiation process. Though there were arguments over the validity of the charges, his skill in networking was indisputable: he secured a personal meeting with Margaret Thatcher. Kathy Sawyer, "Two Helms Point Men: Locking Horns With The Liberals," *Washington Post*, 27 Nov., 1979, A2.

[24] General Viola would become Argentina's president in March 1981. Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 22.

[25] Argentina had deployed military forces to hunt down exiled Montonero guerrillas fighting alongside the Sandinistas against Somoza, before concentrating its assistance on former members of the Nicaraguan National Guard who formed the initial nucleus of the Contra forces. For details on the Argentine strategy to fight communism in Central America, see Ariel C. Armony, *Argentina, The United States, and the Anti-Communist Crusade in Central America, 1977 – 1984* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997).

[26] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 22.

[27] Armony, *Argentina,* 64.

[28] Helms regarded the president as a close personal friend and a natural conservative ally. Helms, *Here's Where I Stand,* 113.

[29] Edward Walsh, "U.S. Economic Aid to Nicaragua Is Suspended but May Be Resumed," *Washington Post,* 2 Apr., 1981, A2.

[30] Pardo-Maurer, *The Contras, 1980 – 1989,* 2.

[31] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 50.

[32] *Ibid*., 52.

[33] Christopher Dickey, "Argentine Defector Tells Of Multinational Plots For Sandinistas' Ouster," *Washington Post*, 2 Dec., 1982, A22.

[34] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 50-53 and Armony, *Argentina,* 64.

[35] Dickey, "Argentine Defector," A22.

[36] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 51.

[37] Carbaugh was well aware of the Logan Act, having written his master's thesis on the legislation. Sawyer, "Two Helms Point Men," A2. Ironically, Senator Barry Goldwater would accuse liberal senators of conducting unauthorised foreign policy during the acrimonious debate over Contra aid in April 1985. Barry Goldwater (AZ), "Funds for Supporting Military or Paramilitary Operations in Nicaragua," *Cong. Rec.* 131 (1985), 8837.

[38] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 46 – 49.

[39] In Dickey's opinion, while the party was held ostensibly to laud Honduras' shift toward democracy, Negroponte and Álvarez 'could as easily have been celebrating the beginning of a war.' Christopher Dickey, *With the Contras: A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 125 – 126.

[40] Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Western Hemisphere Affairs Subcommittee, *Human Rights in Nicaragua*, 97th Cong, 2nd sess., 25 Feb., 1982, 1.

[41] *Ibid*., 6.

[42] The validity of the accusations is difficult to ascertain. Accounts of the relationship between the Miskito and Sandinistas do not allow for a clear conclusion. For example, Andrea Young, representing a fact-finding mission organised by Ramsey Clark, reported to the same hearing that the Sandinistas had treated the Miskito population well. *Ibid*., 29 – 31. For further accounts of Sandinista-Miskito relations, see Timothy C. Brown, *The Real Contra War: Highlander Peasant Resistance in Nicaragua* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), James Dunkerley, *Power in the Isthmus: A Political History of Central America* (London: Verso, 1988), Charles R. Hale, *Resistance and Contradiction: Miskitu Indians and the Nicaraguan State, 1894 – 1987* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), and Philippe Bourgois, "Class, Ethnicity, and the State among the Miskitu Amerindians of Northeastern Nicaragua," *Latin American Perspectives* 8, no. 2, Revolutionary Nicaragua (Spring, 1981): 22-39. Dennis offers an overview of the literature in Philip A. Dennis, "The Miskito-Sandinista Conflict in Nicaragua in the 1980s," *Latin American Research Review* 28, no. 3 (1993): 214-234.

[43] Prof. William M LeoGrande, in his own testimony to the hearing, acknowledged Fagoth Mueller's presence, and noted the Miskito leader's own role as a Contra figure and his ties to Nicaraguan exiles in Miami and the U.S. military in Honduras. *Human Rights in Nicaragua*, 50.

[44] The *Washington Post*, for example, noted an increased focus by Reagan officials on the Sandinistas' policies toward the Miskito population during spring 1982. Michael Getler, "U.N. Envoy Says Nicaragua's 'Assault' On Miskitos Is Massive Rights Violation," *Washington Post*, 2 Mar., 1982, A4.

[45] John Maclean, "Falklands war costly to U.S. Latin policy," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 May, 1982, A6.

[46] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 105.

[47] *Ibid*., 106.

[48] Ray Moseley, "America's 'even hand' not Britons' cup of tea," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 Apr., 1982, A8, Jane Rosen, "Haig's internal feuding aggravates US rift with Britain," *Guardian*, 7 Jun., 1982, 2, and Steven Rattners, "U.S. Handling of Falkland Crisis Stirs Deep Resentment in Britain," *New York Times*, 17 Apr., 1982, 1. Also in attendance at the event were Elliot Abrams and U.S. Ambassador to the Organisation of American States J. William Middendorf II. Middendorf was particularly close to Helms's aide Deborah DeMoss, who was like an 'adopted daughter' to the ambassador and who frequently visited his offices. Jim Anderson, *United Press International*, 7 Apr., 1982, and Robert Drexler, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*, Frontline Diplomacy, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 19 Mar., 1996. (Hereafter *ADST*).

[49] Alexander M. Haig Jr., *Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1984), 269.

[50] Margot Hornblower, "Senate Resolution Sides With Britain," *Washington Post*, 30 Apr., 1982, A24. Helms remained a strong supporter of the Argentine perspective throughout the 1980s. In 1987 he argued that the British ambassador's 'arrogance' and refusal to negotiate had prolonged the conflict. Jesse Helms (NC), "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989," *Cong. Rec.* 133 (1987), 24414.

[51] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 106.

[52] William A. Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 244.

[53] Helms, *Here's Where I Stand*, 64.

[54] LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 302-304.

[55] Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua and Central America*, 98th Cong., 1st sess., 12 Apr., 1983, 27.

[56] LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 303-304.

[57] Arnson, *Crossroads*, 111-112.

[58] Helms read a letter from Nat Hamrick on the Senate floor that made this claim. Jesse Helms (NC), "Negotiations in El Salvador," *Cong. Rec*. 129 (1983), 6664. The senator then repeated this point in Senate hearings a month later. *U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua and Central America*, 30.

[59] Helms did not succeed in persuading his legislative colleagues of his point. The Senate voted 84-12 to approve a non-binding resolution that condemned U.S. participation in the mining. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 339.

[60] Gordon L. Bowen, "Presidential Action and Public Opinion about U.S. Nicaraguan Policy: Limits to the "Rally 'Round the Flag" Syndrome," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 22, no. 4 (Dec., 1989), 797.

[61] Richard Sobel notes that there was a 'considerable amount' of public opposition to Contra aid during the period. Richard Sobel, *The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy Since Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 111.

[62] LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 343-345 and Arnson, *Crossroads*, 178-180.

[63] Theodore Draper, in his exhaustive account of the Iran-Contra scandals, points to summer 1984 as the period in which the administration began to seek out private funding for the anti-Sandinista rebels. Casey, as CIA Director, McFarlane, as National Security Adviser, and North, the National Security Council's point man for the Contras, were intimately involved in this process. Draper, *A Very Thin Line*, 37.

[64] [Proposal for the creation of a 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Non-Profit Corporation to Raise and Transfer Funds to the Contras], Project Proposal, c. 1 Mar., 1984, *Digital National Security Archive*.

[65] [North Schedule for September 26, 1984], Non-Classified, North Schedule, 26 Sept., 1984, *Digital National Security Archive*.

[66] Arnson, *Crossroads*, 183.

[67] Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *The Situation in Central America*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 19 Apr., 1985, 16-17.

[68] Jesse Helms (NC), "Nicaragua – The Chance to Decide," *Cong. Rec.* 131, 8837.

[69] According to his predecessor in Costa Rica, Tambs's appointment was a decision taken by Secretary of State George Shultz in order to pacify the outspoken Helms. Curtin Winsor, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 29 Feb., 1988.

[70] Tambs had transitioned from commentary to politics after Reagan's election, serving in the National Security Council alongside another member of the Sante Fe Document's writing team, Roger Fontaine. Hepple, "Lewis Tambs," 12-15. Tambs' outlook is also noted in interviews with former Department of State personnel. See Charles Anthony Gillespie Jr., interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 19 Sept., 1995.

[71] Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy*, 308.

[72] Curtin Winsor, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 29 Feb., 1988.

[73] On 21 March 1984, Helms spoke on the floor of the Senate to congratulate Tambs on his role in the 'world's biggest drug bust'. Jesse Helms (NC), "The Achievement of Ambassador Tambs," *Cong. Rec.* 130 (1984), 6157. Colombian forces, accompanied by a U.S. Embassy observer, seized almost 14 tonnes of cocaine worth $1.2 billion. "World's largest drug bust made in Colombia jungles," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 Mar., 1984, d5.

[74] Oliver North, *Under Fire: An American Story* (New York: Harper Paperbacks, 1992), 302.

[75] Jesse Helms (NC), "The Achievement of Ambassador Lew Tambs," *Cong. Rec.*133 (1987), 11994.

[76] North personally directed Tambs to do this at a White House briefing shortly before the ambassador travelled to Costa Rica. Elliot Abrams repeated this instruction to Tambs as well. James L. Tull, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 15 Jun., 2001.

[77] Ronald Spiers, who served as Under Secretary of Management at the Department of State from 1983 until 1989, believed 'a modicum of political appointees is good for the Foreign Service.' Ronald I. Spiers, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 11 Nov., 1991.

[78] James L. Tull, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 15 Jun., 2001.

[79] LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 295.

[80] Curtin Winsor, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 29 Feb., 1988, and Pardo-Maurer, *The Contras, 1980 – 1989*, 20.

[81] LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 465.

[82] Jesse Helms (NC), "The Nicaraguan Resistance: Is It Being Sold Down The River?" *Cong. Rec.* 131 (1985), 6641.

[83] Link, *Righteous Warrior,* 333-334.

[84] "Gen. Singlaub forced to retire after critizing Carter," *Chicago Tribune*, 29 Apr., 1978, 2, Storer Rowley, "Private funds fuel contras' fight," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 Sept., 1985, 12.

[85] Pastora/Singlaub Agreement, Top Secret, Cable San Jose, 26 Mar., 1986, *Digital National Security Archive.*

[86] *Ibid*.

[87] Pastora-Singlaub Agreement, [Lewis Tambs' Response to John Whitehead Criticism about Eden Pastora-John Singlaub Arms Deal], Secret, Cable San Jose, 31 Mar., 1986, *Digital National Security Archive.*

[88] Pastora-Singlaub Agreement, [George Schultz Instructions to Inform Eden Pastora that John Singlaub is Not an Authorized Negotiator for the U.S.], Secret, Cable State, 9 Apr., 1986, *Digital National Security Archive.*

[89] Tambs registered his hope that when Singlaub reported back to the senator, 'Helms may re-evaluate his position regarding Pastora.' Pastora/Singlaub Agreement, Top Secret, Cable San Jose, 26 Mar., 1986, *Digital National Security Archive*. John Whitehead, Deputy Secretary of State, registered his disappointment in Tambs' actions. Pastora-Singlaub Agreement, [State Department Condemnation of Lewis Tambs' Role in John Singlaub Agreement to Arm Eden Pastora's Contras], Secret, Cable State, 29 Mar., 1986, *Digital National Security Archive.*

[90] Richard Melton, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 27 Jan., 1997.

[91] Curtin Winsor, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *ADST*, 29 Feb., 1988.

[92] *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair with Supplemental, Minority, and Additional Views*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 13 Nov., 1987, 378.

[93] This comment came in a *Durham Morning Herald* article by Dr. Walter E. Williams, a friend of Helms, which the senator applauded and read into the Record. Jesse Helms (NC), "Lessons from the Iran-Contra Hearings," *Cong. Rec.* 133 (1987), 21932.

[94] Helms introduced an amendment to ensure Oliver North and others would not be prosecuted for any criminal activities other than where they may have committed perjury or received financial gain. The amendment was tabled by a vote of 91 – 4. "Printing of Reports of the Senate and House Select Committees on Iran: Rollcall Vote No. 369 Leg.," *Cong. Rec.* 133 (1987), 31097.

[95] Jesse Helms (NC), "Peace Plan for Central America," *Cong. Rec.* 133 (1987), 22435.

[96] Sobel, *Impact of Public Opinion*, 108-109 and LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 505-525. The U.S. would shift its focus to securing an electoral victory for non-Sandinista political elements in the 1990 Nicaraguan elections. For a provocative, highly-charged analysis of this strategy, see William I. Robinson, *A Faustian Bargain: U.S. Intervention in the Nicaraguan Elections and American Foreign Policy in the post-Cold War Era* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc, 1992).

[97] Patrick J. Buchanan, "1992 Republican National Convention Speech, 17 August, 1992," *Patrick J. Buchanan – Official Website*, accessed 29 Oct., 2012, http://buchanan.org/blog/1992-republican-national-convention-speech-148.

[98] Chester Pach argues that the momentum toward democracy in Nicaragua occurred only after the United States terminated lethal assistance to the Contras, thus Nicaragua was 'no victory' for the Reagan Doctrine. Pach, "The Reagan Doctrine," 84. Highly critical of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua, Grace Livingstone notes the impact of the Contras on pushing the Sandinistas toward a war economy. Grace Livingstone, *America's Backyard: The United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror* (London: Zed Books, 2009),

ISSN: 1753-5894

100. Robert Kagan argues forcefully that external pressure was necessary to force the Sandinistas into holding elections in 1990, and that U.S. support for the Contras was 'essential.' Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle*, 721.

[99] Helms, *Here's Where I Stand*, 208.

[100] Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 246.

[101] Helms, *Here's Where I Stand*, 64.

[102] Scott, *Deciding to Intervene*, 253.

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