

Intervening in Revolution: The US Exercise of Power in Guatemala, 1954

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to develop an understanding of US policy in Latin America. This effort is carried out in light of the examination of the political and cultural roots that have shaped the character of the United States as a nation and thus US strength in world affairs. These characteristics have been reflected in the geopolitical approach adopted when the US has drawn up (and *constructed*) its foreign policy priorities. This is particularly the case when a *response* to revolution and socio-political change is required to guarantee US national security. Hence the importance of exploring both the need to impose US power in the region and the *rationale* for it.

The thesis analyses US foreign policy towards Latin America in the context of the Guatemalan revolution of 1944-1954. It does so from the point of view of the revolution itself and the events of the early Cold War years. These are important years since it was at this time that President Eisenhower and Secretary of State, J.F. Dulles, under the rationale of the defence of US interests, developed a militant anticommunism. The result of this policy was the US-supported intervention in Guatemala which became the first of the US's cold war laboratories in Latin America. This intervention crystallised in 1954 in US support for a coup against President Jacobo Arbenz, which dissolved the democratic order in Guatemala.

The subject is approached by taking the following into consideration: a) the immediate background of the domestic political culture - which is most clearly reflected in insularity - as an important element in understanding the US stand on revolution and foreign policy, that is the domestic dimension, b) the geopolitical axioms about supremacy that were behind the US formal position of a defense of national security, which brought about the need to carry out a *construction* of a continental reality meant to match strategic principles, c) an interpretation of socio-political change in Central America as the key to an understanding of the roots of US interventionist ardour and, d) the problematic association between socio-political change, intervention and authoritarianism, as well as the implications that such an association, especially in the context of US-Latin American relations, has had for democracy in general.

To my parents María Luisa and Francisco and their grandchildren, Natalia, Carlos Patricio, Diego Antonio and María Fernanda, old and new generation of Americans in Mexican land, with love and gratitude.

To the Kosovan victims of the atrocities of the state.

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I am grateful to those friends and colleagues that have supported and encouraged me during this endeavour. It is impossible to list them all, but I am sure they will recognise that these thoughts and words are dedicated to them.

A PERSONAL NOTE

One personal note that stems from the experience of being, like Auden, a *citizen and pilgrim*, experiencing simultaneously the condition of the temporary visitor and the native returning to the fatherland. My travel experience has provided a constant parable for my thinking about Guatemala. *Todos los Santos* is a small town in the mountains. When I went there for the first and last time, I did so as a lonely Latin American traveller; for I did not find, during my marching and searching in that part of the country a single Latin American compatriot in that adventure - as was the case with European and North American travellers. This was my first important impression.

After having spent some time in the community of *Todos los Santos* I learned from the press, once back in Guatemala City, that the same town and region where I had so much enjoyed myself, had been raided by a military command unit, and all its inhabitants, including women and children, were practically placed under martial law under the charge of Communist-guerrilla conspiracy. This happened in 1979. The final destiny of that town and its people I don't know. What I cannot refrain from thinking is - and this is perhaps one of the mysterious reasons behind my permanent interest on my country's neighbour - that the times of my travels happened to be also *the times* of the second period of the long-lasting authoritarian terror that had started precisely in that June of 1954 when Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown by the US-sponsored coup. If one notes the particular details of the Guatemalan ethnocide of the last four decades, one cannot but realise, and not without terror, that this was taking place while my travels (my pilgrimage) was actually in process. Death was also a component of the daily reckoning of this traveller, and of this I was involuntarily a (blind) witness, which proves, among other things, that sometimes State terrorism can also take place in silence. Hence, silence as an accomplice of terror: from being the natural and wise host of memory while in the act of waiting, *silence* is kidnapped by men in the name of "reasons of state" and turned into an ignominious and a desolated orphan territory. National orphanity marks, thus, the limits of historic reason. For this reason, if only for this, perhaps George Santayana must be right when he told us that, "those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it," and Gabriel García Márquez did not make a mistake when referring, in his acceptance of the Nobel Prize, to this situation, among many others in the Latin American life, as the "measure of our solitude."

A NOTE ON FOOTNOTES AND QUOTATIONS

The Harvard system for footnotes is used throughout this work as well as in the bibliography.

Archival material, official publications, and newspapers, are quoted in full and when the reference is reproduced, I use the usual “op. cit.” & “ibid.,” system. The Harvard system is used when a particular author in a newspaper article is referred to.

Quotations from US authors are reproduced in US original English.

All texts in Spanish are my translation, including press and official documents.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAG=Compañía Agrícola de Guatemala
CAD=departmental agrarian committee
CAL=local agrarian committee
CF=confidential file
CGTG=Confederación General de Trabajadores de Guatemala
CIA=Central Intelligence Agency
CNCG=Confederación Nacional Campesina de Guatemala
CR=Congressional Record
CTG=Confederación de Trabajadores de Guatemala
DAN= Departamento Agrario Nacional
DF=Decimal File
DOS=Department of State
DOSB=Department of State Bulletin
DOSP=Department of State for the Press
EBS=Electricity Band and Share
EEG=Empresa Eléctrica Guatemalteca
EZLN=Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional
FBI=Federal Bureau of Intelligence
FR=Foreign Relations of the United States
FPL=Frente Popular Libertador
FPRI=Foreign Policy Research Institute
GF=General File
HCFA=US House Committee on Foreign Affairs
IBRD=International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IMF=International Monetary Fund
IRCA=International Railways of Central America
ITT=The International Telephone and Telegraph Company
JW=Joint Weeka
JCS=Joint Chiefs of Staff
MemoConv=Memorandum of conversation
MemoTel=Memorandum of telephone conversation
NYT=New York Times
NA=National Archives of the United States
NAB=National Agrarian Bank
NAD=National Agrarian Department
NMD=non-marked Document
NSA=National Security Archives
NSC=National Security Council
OAS=Organisation of American States
OF=Official File
OIR=Office of Intelligence Research
PAN=Partido Acción Nacional
PAR=Partido de Acción Revolucionaria
Pbsuccess=Code name of CIA-sponsored coup against Arbenz
PDC=Democracia Cristiana
PGT=Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo

PIN=Partido de Integridad Nacional
PRG=Partido de la Revolución Guatemalteca
RG=Record Group
RN=Renovación Nacional
S&C=Sullivan and Cromwell
UFCO=United Fruit Company
UN=United Nations
UNSC=United Nations Security Council
US=United States
USSR=Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USIA=United States Information Agency
WB=World Bank
WWII=World War II

“What we have to mention in order to explain the significance, I mean the importance, of a concept, are often extremely general facts of nature: such facts as are hardly ever mentioned because of their great generality.”

Ludwig Wittgenstein¹

Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler.

Albert Einstein²

The Force of America is the force of moral principle.

Woodrow Wilson³

Did the United States succeed in nation-building and in forcible nation-restoration because it was virtuous, or because it had Canadians and Mexicans as its neighbours rather than Russians and Germans?

C.S. Gray⁴

What is Past is Prologue.

William Shakespeare⁵

¹ In G.Arrighi (1983:8).

² In G.Goertz (1994:1).

³ In F.S.Calhoun (1993:2 and f/n 2).

⁴ C.S. Gray (1988:39).

⁵ W.Shakespeare (1611), *The Tempest*, act 2, sc. 1, l. [296]. Also inscribed on the front wall of the National Archives' building, Washington, DC.

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INTRODUCTION

Ni de Rousseau ni de Washington viene nuestra América, sino de sí misma
José Martí¹

This is a study which attempts to develop an understanding of United States (US) policy in Latin America. For this purpose it examines the historical roots that set up a political culture which shaped the making of US foreign policy in general and as a response to revolutions and social change in Latin America in particular.

Through the study of features such as exceptionalism, messianism and exemplarism, it is possible to understand the early aspects of the formation of a political culture in the United States. Since this formation is an element of the domestic dimension, it is also a prominent component of the US pattern of world dominance. In this light I would like to suggest, in the particular case of the “Colossus of the North”² as a dominant global and regional actor, the use of the concept of *supremacy*, a broader (but more particular) concept than the more widely-known notion of hegemony. I argue that “supremacy” is the locally-conceived exercise of power displayed in Latin America where it has had a specific spatial pertinence and temporal rationality since the 19th century, and particularly from 1823. Thus it explains best the rationale of power in the region. From the beginnings of the 20th century onwards this exercise was conceived in that it contained some degree of independence from other powers, both external and regional. Thus, it could be enjoyed without disturbances of any kind. Accordingly, I understand “supremacy” as a solitary exercise of power whereby superiority was taken for granted, for a struggle for power among equals did not

¹ J.Martí (1974:212). Also in J.Martí (1977:102): “our America springs neither from Rousseau nor Washington, but from itself.” Another interesting book by Martí on the subject of both *América* and “America”, is, J.Martí (1975). Note that I will refer in this thesis to *América* (with an accent) when explaining Iberian-América and to “America” (without an accent) when considering the (Anglo-American) geopolitical category of the US as dominant power.

² “*El Coloso del Norte*” was the popular name given in Mexico to the United States ever since that country became the overwhelming influence conditioning Mexican life. Since then, it has been a common way of referring to that country. This expression relates to another well-known maxim, often attributed to general Porfirio Díaz (1876-1880, 1884-1911) former dictator of México, who used to say, “poor Mexico, so far from God and so near to the United States.”

take place whatsoever: there existed an exercise of power in its purest fashion and, thus, it developed and explained itself in the light of an absence of a real contest to achieve it.³

By contrast, hegemony is also an exercise of power but within a dynamic contest in which a broad struggle for power takes place. Within the context of Cold War and bipolarity both hegemony and supremacy were indeed a US privilege.⁴ Furthermore, the US's gradual hegemonic endurance became a dominant feature of the post-World War II power game. However, hegemony (not supremacy) had to be contested with the Soviet Union and, in some cases more than in others, it had to be negotiated and shared between the two superpowers. To a great extent the latter idea turned the US claim that it had to confront Soviet penetration in the US natural sphere of influence, Latin America, into a myth. The very fact that the US was responsible for grasping a unique (and tautological) supremacy in the region refutes this myth. Moreover, it will be a central argument in this work that the Soviets did not (until the Cuban revolution's leftward turn) have a beach-head in any of the Latin American countries, in contrast to what the US wanted public opinion to believe.⁵

It perhaps goes without saying that the foreign policy-making process of any country - and in this case especially of the US - is intimately connected to national identity, and to its cultural formation. It is in this light that the study of the US concern over Latin America is developed in this research. Furthermore, there is an intimate connection between the aforementioned domestic aspect of US behaviour in foreign affairs - more particularly in Latin America - and revolutions or social change occurring in other countries. Although there is a consensus that the US response towards movements for social change must be explained as a result of the conjunctural domestic and

³ After having set the particular conceptual climate of this idea I would add that "hegemony" is a term to which I will be resorting to during the progress of the work. Especially so, when referring to US domination as a whole.

⁴ Bipolarity was the immediate result of the Cold War environment after World War II. Within the bipolar context a confrontation between the two superpowers takes place. Likewise, it signified the collision of two different conceptions of global political and economic order from which a relative degree of equilibrium is reached towards international arrangements.

⁵ For a contribution to this problem, see E.Augelli&C.Murphy (1988).

external political needs of the moment - hence its highly pragmatic nature - it is also reasonable to suggest that this response is part of a policy which, apart from being somehow impatient, is also unclear, in terms of its contribution to a consistent foreign policy project.

In short, what I suggest in broad terms is that the US response to revolutions is to a great extent the result of its dislike of the revolutionary phenomenon *per se*, which it saw as threatening order and national security (and therefore US predominance); but also the US's historical inability to assemble certain tools of foreign policy in order to make its own national project compatible with other national projects, including those where radical or even moderate transformations were carried out.⁶ This condition has its own systemic complexity: it stems from a conflict correctly stressed by Robert W. Cox, when he refers to hegemony. By quoting Gramsci, who himself addresses this question, Cox associates himself with the idea that international relations *follow* fundamental social relations.⁷ After sharing with Gramsci this conclusion, Cox suggests that the race for modernisation in the current era, has been subjected to

“the hegemonic concept of world order [which] is founded not only upon the regulation of inter-state conflict but also upon a globally-conceived civil society, i.e., a mode of production of global extent which brings about links among social classes of the countries encompassed by it ... [Thus] to become hegemonic, a state would have to found and protect a world order which was universal in conception ... A world hegemony is thus in its beginnings an outward expansion of the internal (national) hegemony established by a dominant social class ... [and it] is describable as a social structure, an economic structure, and a political structure; and it cannot be simply one of these things but must be all three.”⁸

This is a study that explores an historical conflict occurring in the Inter-American relationship, but it is in particular an analysis of US power (*vis à vis* Latin America), and an examination of its evolution in the light of revolutions, or independent movements aiming at the

⁶ For a discussion on the academic and political aspects of foreign policy, see, C.Hill (1994b:3-25).

⁷ For quotations from Gramsci I refer to A.Gramsci (1971:176). For the entire idea of Gramsci see below chapter 1.

⁸ R.W.Cox (1983:171-172).

achievement of both political modernity and economic progress. Hence, it focuses, on the one hand, on the US's historical inability to express other predilections than its quest for supremacy and, thus, its stand against progress. Consequently this is a study which attempts to examine what Aron considers to be "the dialectics of the contest".⁹ The contest is predominant within the context of the critical contiguity there is between two extreme socio-political realities in the continent, not to mention the contradictory cultural void there is between what is called by Mexicans in the North of the country when referring to the United States, "the other side" and Latin America. The contradictory relationship with the *other side* is explained by the writer Octavio Paz as an entity "inseparable from us and at the same time [as] radically and essentially alien."¹⁰

In order to make possible the study of the *contest*, I start my work analysing what I consider to be the beginning of the modern relationship between the United States and Latin America, exploring the "origins of domination" through the depiction of the cultural and political features of the United States pointed out above, and the characterisation of the second half of the nineteenth century as the historical period when the US projects its role as an unquestionably dominant actor in the American scene. This predominant role presupposes at the level of state decision-making, the generalised inferiority of both Latin American peoples and nations, as an inherent condition of the relationship. This inferiority is conceived on four fronts: racial, cultural, moral, and political.

As a result of this, the second half of the 19th century, but especially the end of it, offered a particularly fertile soil for the blossoming of a neo-imperial policy. The US had already consolidated its dominant role in hemispheric affairs, and the geopolitical features of what became a hegemonic policy were shaped. After the independence of Cuba at the end of the century, and the complete withdrawal of the dominant European powers which had already occurred years earlier, the US reinforced its position as a regionally dominant actor through what Augelli and Murphy

⁹ Although Aron means "contest" in broader terms, I will borrow the expression to explain the particular contest taking place in the interaction between the US and Latin America, which stems from the features comprising the "global" contest. See, R.Aron (1966:21).

¹⁰ O.Paz (1985:137).

term a "quest for supremacy".¹¹ And in this line, the Platt Amendment is the most vivid expression of the new "rendezvous with destiny", which President F.D. Roosevelt later said was the fundamental mission of the US to accomplish its objectives in world affairs.¹²

It is interesting to note that the very fact that the Americans tended to use the name of the continent as though it was of their property was not a matter of chance. It gives us a hint of the US ideology of expansionism which became a major geopolitical project.¹³ If the US considered it its right to appropriate the term 'America', this is due to some other reason than semantics. Perhaps, it happened that the US thought it their right to do so as theirs was the first independent process to be successful in the region. Nevertheless, and though this were the case, the US has difficulty in justifying using the term 'America' for a portion of this region's territory without actually demonstrating a strong reason for doing so.

In this approximation of US-Latin American relations the need to make a distinction between the United States and America is of extreme importance, not only in order to grasp the geopolitical dimension of the difference itself, but also to come to terms with the vital distinction that there is between *one* and the *other* America. Accordingly an explanation follows:

"The United States is a political entity, but "America" is a place. "America" lacks a government to articulate its foreign policies, a military to sustain them, and precise territorial jurisdiction... The United States is *in* the Americas, but America is *of* the Americas. The deceptively narrow but important distinction between those phrases, *evaluated historically*, is ... critical for understanding United States policy toward Latin America ... The United States and America have come to mean qualitatively

¹¹ See E.Augelli&C.Murphy (1987).

¹² F.D.Roosevelt (1944:v). The complete idea of Roosevelt was as follows: "There is a mysterious cycle in human events. To some generations much is given. Of other generations much is expected. This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny." Note the messianic emphasis on historical destiny. For this same quote see also R.B.Morris (1960). The Platt Amendment of March, 1901, stipulated conditions for withdrawal of US troops remaining in Cuba after the Spanish-American War. By its terms Cuba would not transfer Cuban land to any power other than the US, and rights to a naval base in Cuba were ceded to the US.

¹³ See chapter-2.

different things to Latin Americans during the past century and a half, as the legacy of the interaction between them has bequeathed two hemispheres ... an *American* (which I define as a citizen of the United States) is one who believes that the promise of America can be fulfilled in the United States."¹⁴

I would suggest that the core aspect of this problem lies on the very foundation of the idea that existed in the United States, this being that the latter (i.e. "*America*") had to be linked to the rest of the nations of the region ("our little region over there which has never bothered anybody"), which were a marginal and yet vital component in the relationship. This provided the US with its geopolitically privileged position in the continental sphere. In this context it is relevant to note some of the nationalist roots of the anti-*American* outbursts felt in the region thereafter: from being one more among the actors in the American continent, the US turned itself into being the "*American*" dominant actor, namely, the American Nation *par excellence* over the rest. In other words, there was only one way to be "*America*" in the Americas, and this was to be achieved by depriving the other countries' national interests by virtue of placing the US's ("*America's*") above and in front of them. It is for this reason, among many others, that "*America's*" interests have been historically the last dictum in the settlement of conflicts in the region. And, thus, they are also the relative (though plausible) explanation of the indiscriminate interventionist and punitive policies which have been implemented in this area.¹⁵

In the next chapter, "geopolitics and containment," I examine the problem of traditional order, change and the dilemma of intervention. I analyse this in the light of the main geopolitical priorities which fuelled the vitality of the US strategy abroad, especially during the Cold War period, and most particularly in those parts of the Latin American continent - such as Guatemala,

¹⁴ See L.D.Langley (1989:xvii-xviii), (emphasis in the original). See the Introduction.

¹⁵ It is a commonplace to say that the national interest is defended in the name of national security. Arnold Wolfers argues that this (modern) connection resulted from the Cold War atmosphere. Therefore, "the term national security, like national interest, is well enough established in the political discourse of international relations to designate an objective of policy distinguishable from others." He also notes: "the question is raised, therefore, whether this seemingly more precise formula of national security offers statesmen a meaningful guide for action. Can they be expected to know what it means? Can policies be distinguished and judged on the ground that they do or do not serve this interest?" See, Arnold Wolfers (1965:3,2-3). For more on this see, chapters 3,5.

my case study - considered to be problematic. Geographical considerations have always been important in constructing any balance of power, and in understanding the significance of the logic of force as a means to obtain supremacy. Moreover, geography in this context is an agent which is invested with the idea - and the need - of producing and consuming security. This also helps us to explain partially the problem of - and the need - for overt and covert intervention. The main aspect stemming from the geopolitical discussion is the extent to which geography creates a *context* for politics. If we accept, as Colin Gray says, that "geography is the most fundamental factor in the foreign policy of states because it is the most permanent," one may argue that this factor helped in the shaping of the US and its people's sense of identity.¹⁶

Consequently, the notion of being "a world unto itself" is both a geographical and a political statement of highly significant proportions.¹⁷ It reflects also a belief in the need to use "geographical advantages" in the process of "mapping the world". And this exercise implied that an expansionist energy should be necessary for the accomplishment of such an objective. I would argue that all these elements contribute to the vision that the people (and thus the political elite) in the US have of themselves. Yet, this is also the result of the physical conditions that have been present in the foundation of a national culture. In other words, the political behaviour of the US is the reflection of its history, thus its cultural *synthesis*; and this country's history is to a great extent (though certainly not entirely) the product of its geographical setting.

For all these reasons one cannot disassociate the most important features of US expansionism from the fundamental ideas that gave birth to the conception and reality of the US nation (my argument in chapter 1). Terms such as exceptionalism and mission, apart from being native cultural features, were direct antecedents of the US's actual position of power on the world map in general and in that of the continent in particular. It is therefore extremely important to pay

¹⁶ C.S.Gray (1977:1). See chapter-2.

¹⁷ Schumpeter referring to the notion and means to accomplishing the "American Dream", as quoted by W.A.Williams (1959:15).

attention to the material realities that made possible much of the content of these principles, as well as the means that existed to express them.

In the light of the above, an understanding of the *geopolitical content* of the policy is essential to an understanding of US geopolitical proclivity. Thus, I will be looking both at the concepts of "Heartland" developed by the English geopolitician Sir Halford John Mackinder and of "American Heartland", developed by, among others, US theoreticians Alfred T. Mahan and Nicholas Spykman. Along these lines, the concept of "frontier" developed by the American historian, F.J. Turner who in 1893 wrote a series of works on the meaning of the frontier in American history is an ever present feature of US expansionism. It is my suggestion that this concept has been an important extrapolation of both the aforementioned "quest" and "contest" throughout the political history of the United States, quite apart from the specific importance that this concept has had for the exercise of power within the global context.¹⁸

Due to the sometimes dramatic absence of a consistent theory within the realm of international studies, an analysis is carried out in chapter 3, "power politics and intervention," in the light of, a) a discussion of the differences that exist between the pattern of power and power politics;¹⁹ b) the problem of intervention in the domestic politics of another country as an exercise of power politics; and c) the metaphorical and geopolitical uses - according to US sociologists like Seymour Martin Lipset - that *Americanism*, understood both as a national ideology and as an instrument of domestic and global affirmation, has performed over time in order to ensure both an ideological and a pragmatic margin of manoeuvre in US international performance. I must say that "*Americanism*" as a whole is particularly important when referring to Latin *América*. It is a broad ontological statement in itself which will explain my relative neglect - except when referring to the ontological dimension of an area study such as this - of the broad discussion there is of power

¹⁸ See the following works: W.H.Parker (1982); A.T.Mahan (1890); N.J.Spykman (1942); G.R.Sloan (1988); and F.J.Turner (1962).

¹⁹ See M.Wight (1966a).

politics within the IR realm of thinking.²⁰ As a means of clarifying the above, let me elaborate on this briefly in the following paragraphs.

This thesis happens to be an area study, or a study of a regional problem (see below in this section), which resorts to an interdisciplinary approach. I maintain that a study of such a nature is original in that it combines elements of analysis that have not been applied before when approaching a case study such as this. Thus, there is a variable use of elements from historical sociology, political science, political philosophy and international relations towards the study of a complex phenomenon where societal, (geo)political, and international and regional aspects are involved. I recognise that realism, as the main school of thought responsible for motivating international politics, is a doctrine that goes somehow beyond the sole rationalisation of power politics, meaning the rationale of both world supremacy and hegemony.²¹ It is important to note, moreover, that realism has limitations as far as the explanation of social strife *vis à vis* the general and particular defence of national interest (national security), through the use of foreign policy, is concerned. In this light, the exercise of power as such reached a critical (and paradoxical) stage when trying to reconcile the defence of national security at the expense of others' sovereign processes with the achievement of democracy and economic modernisation: power was confronted (and contradicted) by its own inevitable intemperance.

This is so at least as far as the post-World War II period is concerned. During this period a fierce ideological struggle took place (see Part-III). At the same time while this struggle occurred (and the school of realism is the first to be aware of it) the Cold War was the general

²⁰ For these reasons I shall refer in this thesis to the US, not as '*America*', but as the US, and to this country's citizens as Americans. Still, the latter is done not without assessing the need of granting this juridical attribute to all the citizens of the American continent.

²¹ I refer to realism and neo/realism in relation to Latin American further on. Further when referring to realism, I will understand it as a component of state action, as a guide-line of foreign policy. I shall not elaborate on realism as a global doctrine. I do not focus on any of its specific sub-patterns yet, I accept the importance of the various schools embraced by realism. However, as we shall see further, I argue that, for the purposes of a thesis such as this, the likely differentiation between the various branches of realism need not concern us as they do not modify in any considerable way our understanding of the workings - as well as the general and specific objectives - of US foreign policy in Latin America in the early stages of the Cold War. See chapters 1-2.

theatre of dispute. And, thus, the establishment of the relevant cultural-ideological basis was one of the essential weapons. On the other hand, a major instrument for maintaining the international order in such a climate (Cold War *vis à vis* the balance of power), which was produced in order to satisfy the logic of this genesis, appeared: bipolarity.

The emergence of bipolarity, in itself, represented both a crisis for the foreign policy process and for theoretical thinking. It was also the reflection of the failure to achieve a peaceful settlement for conflict in world affairs. At the same time it narrowed the perspective of the political actors and as a result (mostly US) scholarship paid a price: its inevitable institutional adherence to this rationale. This limitation reduced the theoretical perspective within the US realm of foreign policy which produced among other limitations, a generally dominant vicious circle: some problems of foreign policy were generally confined to the analytical framework of “perceptions” of threat (to national security). Thus, such a crisis represented also an obvious ontological limit which subsequent scholars representing a school of critical thought, such as Cox, have stressed.²²

Therefore, I consider that, given the crisis occurring within the foreign policy making establishment, the *nature* of the policies of intervention did not seem to vary in any significant way from the start of the Cold War period up to, at least, the Reagan years. Apart from the shift occurring from overt intervention to covert and clandestine operations (the policies of secrecy and counterinsurgency) that occurred in the transit from the end of the 1940s onwards, there has not been much of a difference in the making of US overall policies in Latin America from one president to the other. Moreover, a feature of major importance in the foreign policies of this century, clearly inherited from the past, was in evidence: a policy of contempt. President Eisenhower, for instance, believed, as part of his “new look” (a “dramatisation” for many) at the region’s realities, and as reflected in a telephone conversation with his secretary of State John Foster Dulles, that the new approach towards Latin Americans as part of his administration’s new

²² See R.W.Cox (1996); and S.Gill&J.H.Mittelman (1997). This kind of ‘understanding’ of the problems of Latin America has affected severely both the diagnoses and solutions offered.

strategy, “was a very good way of doing things, for you have to pat them a little bit and make them think that you are fond of them.”²³ The consequence of this was a general ineffectiveness in terms of having a coherent policy towards Latin America: there was simply an absence of policy.

And yet, some differences are to be found between, say, presidents Woodrow Wilson (who as a major liberal crusader was the president initiating most interventions) and James Carter on the one hand, and Dwight D. Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan on the other. Still, the attention has been focused upon the early years of containment and its subsequent by-products, “retaliation” and “roll back.”²⁴ During and after this period, no one within the US establishment doubted (see J.F. Kennedy’s inaugural address for instance) that “*America*”, the *City upon the Hill* (epic included) was entitled to impose, on world-wide grounds, the “American way.”²⁵ As a result the merging of the pieces of the US modern hegemonic project spread. The immediate result of this was the gathering together of Americanism-Exceptionalism-Interventionism as the essential trilogy of a geopolitical hegemonic project during the 1950s and 1960s. This was accomplished at the Latin American level within the framework of anti-Sovietism in order to “protect *American* ideological integrity” (parts II-III), and, thus, what I call a “crusade against Soviet ubiquity” in Guatemala followed.

Hence, the ideological uniformity that has prevailed in the US when both defining foreign policy priorities and confronting socio-political unrest in general, but more particularly in its

²³ Telephone conversation between Eisenhower and Dulles cited in R.H.Immerman (1990:163), (my emphasis). For more on Eisenhower views of Latin America see, S.G.Rabe (1988:26-27); D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:514); and S.E.Ambrose (1983:56-58).

²⁴ Although retaliation from the stand point of Dulles’s public image turned into the popular abbreviation, “massive retaliation,” I will be referring to this category as “retaliation.” And as for the other component of his policy, “roll back,” it referred to “liberation.” The “Roll back” policy was conceived to reverse the Soviet gains in Eastern Europe.

²⁵ On J.Winthrop’s uttering see chapter-2. Kennedy’s magnificent piece of oratory prepared for his inaugural address, is an example of the “new frontier” rhetoric to which the “new generation of Americans” represented by Kennedy, resorted. It is also interesting to note that this rhetoric also represented the beginning of a new language in order to deal with the Soviet question. The assassination of Kennedy made it impossible to prove the extent of this new beginning. See J.F.Kennedy (1987:1-28), and chapters-1,5 in this thesis.

natural sphere of influence. In his book, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*, John Ehram has provided an interesting contribution in this respect. Ehram suggests that there was no substantial difference between, on the one hand, NSC 68, the first containment policies of the Truman era and the liberal current, the *Vital Center*, which was inspired by the book of the same name by Arthur Schlesinger Jr, and, on the other hand, Neoconservatism. According to Ehram, NSC-68 was based on the *Vital Center* and both of them anticipated the foundations of Neoconservatism.²⁶

As I stress in this work, neither Realism nor Idealism, (at the state policy making level and within their own domestic and chaotic *tete à tete* resulting from the bipolar atmosphere) were schools of thought that had any significant ontological concern with this part of the world. They were focusing on Europe and the USSR. In this sense Latin America, and most particularly the Central American region, neither mattered nor existed. Moreover, this was a region of the world which was not central to the general undertaking of the bipolar strategy. It was a myth among myths: on top of the already existent domestic myth of Latin America as a *unity*, there was the (US) myth of “America” being made up of the Latin American countries as a territorially integrated whole. And yet it was utilised by the US as the firing range for bipolarity on “American” ground; thus, the foreign policy implemented there made of this region the Cold War laboratory of Washington to test the extent and strength of its paramount policies.²⁷ Consequently, when it comes to the diagnosis and most importantly, the outcome of the policies, in so far as intervention in Latin America is concerned, there has not been a substantial approach by either foreign policy makers or the mainstream of scholarship in the US.²⁸ Thus, a pragmatic policy of

²⁶ J.Ehram (1995); A.M.Schlesinger, Jr (1988). Schlesinger’s book was one of the first modern anti-Communist books produced by the liberal establishment in the US in the 1940s.

²⁷ Central America was not necessarily central as part of the Cold War or bipolar disputes. However it was - especially Guatemala in 1954 and later on Cuba in the Caribbean - a sphere of political *tests* vis à vis Sovietism. As shown further, Guatemala was turned into the first (Latin American) Cold War Guinea Pig. Other significant cases, such as Dominican Republic, Chile and Nicaragua were to be cases in point in that the US used them as a way of mobilising anti-Communism and creating a sense of a divided, bipolar world in which Washington had a free hand in its own area.

²⁸ I refer to critical approaches within the realm of international and regional studies. Still, there are some exceptions, for instance, R.H.Immerman (1982); S.G.Rabe (1988); R.H.Immerman (1990).

involvement had to be conceived which is demonstrated by the resorting to indiscriminate intervention against constructed regional threats such as Guatemala, my subject of analysis in part II.

Any study of US territorial and political expansion would be misleading without a study of the regional dimension of this phenomenon. At this point it is important to bring in Ken Booth's argument as to how divorcing strategic studies from area or regional studies is ineffectual because it means largely thinking in a void.²⁹ In order to make possible the accomplishment of this aim it is necessary to link the Latin American dimension of this regional examination to a particular phenomenon occurring in the region. I consider that revolution and socio-political transformations are the pattern of analysis *par excellence* to interpret, not only the very nature of US interest in the region, but also the specific behaviour of Washington (the intervention) towards unsteadiness and political change. Hence the need for analysing the US stand on whether intervening in domestic processes ensured its specific strategic interest in a given country. This analysis is accomplished in chapters 4-8.

In the light of the aforementioned consideration I carry out in parts II-III an empirical study of Guatemala. This country experienced in the period 1944-1954 a process of constitutional change, *The October Revolution* - "moderately democratic" as I describe it below.³⁰ Nonetheless, despite its reformist nature, the elected government of Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown in 1954 by a CIA-sponsored rebellion. Political order and due process were erased, and an authoritarian state introduced. It has to be said that the consequences of this *coup d'état* brought about both a long-lasting political turmoil in the region as a whole and one of the fiercest dictatorships of modern Latin America. At this point I consider it relevant to discuss the democratic normative question *vis*

²⁹ See K.Booth (1979:147-152). See chapter-2.

³⁰ The *October Revolution* was a reformist process. It took place in a precarious liberal democratic context. It was not a revolution in the classic sense. However, given the political context, its reformist features, radical enough for those times, were, thus, sufficient reason for the US to be fearful of the potential spreading that this pattern of change might have had within the regional arena. Thus the US's willingness to encourage and support the overthrow of the Guatemalan regime. See the Conclusions.

à vis the US stand in support of authoritarianism, quite apart from its direct or indirect involvement in the violent end of the Arbenz government.

Exploring the nature of the transition from a moderate political change to an authoritarian outcome, and the character of the US support for this to happen in the light of the Guatemalan case, might yield some benefits of great historical significance. From the success of the intervention in Guatemala the United States conceived, quite pragmatically (and incorrectly), that other experiences of the same type should be supported (and the Cuban Bay of Pigs fiasco was the first case to follow). In this light, in the concluding chapter, “on how success in Guatemala produced political blindness,” I examine to what extent a success of this nature, while provoking consecutive intervention, also blinded US perception and policies in the region even more.

Although I refer marginally to other significant events, I examine, in the Conclusions the importance of Guatemala mainly in the light of the unsuccessful Cuban experience. While not a core case study in this analysis, I suggest that the US failure of “operation Mongoose” in Cuba in 1961 exhibited the failure of the whole regional policy for the years to come.³¹ Through the motto, “those who make peaceful revolutions impossible will make violent revolutions inevitable,” the Kennedy administration resorted to indirect assistance to its client elites through the launching of the fruitless “Alliance for Progress,” in itself a matter of considerable subsequent analysis.³² This economic and political initiative sought both the promotion of economic growth and democratic normality “from above.” And yet, placing the economic resources and the trust of the United States in the economic elites and in the military castes of Latin America (both of them bulwarks of anti-Communism) proved to be a failure, for it prompted a process of the perilous concentration of power, which ultimately resulted in growing unequal economic distribution and polarisation of society, and a persistent long tradition of authoritarianism in the region. This was to be the

³¹ On the intervention in Cuba see L.S.Etheredge (1985).

³² Quoted in A.Lowenthal (1987:1). See also, M.Gordon (1971:155). See chapter 2 for the contextual use of Kennedy’s phrase. On the Alliance for Progress see, E.R.May (1963:757-774); for a critical conservative appraisal see, E.Frei-Montalva (1967:437-448). The importance and extent of this subject deserves a particular study which in a thesis such as this cannot be accomplished.

beginning of US involvement in the region - but more specifically in Central America and the Caribbean - reaching another level. This situation created long-lasting conditions for perpetuating forms of barbarism whose consequences in the context of Guatemala, and the responsibility of Washington and its allies, have been recently disclosed.

PART I
CHAPTER 1

THE US AND LATIN AMERICA: THE ORIGINS OF DOMINATION

The United States appears to be destined by
Providence to plague America with misery
in the name of liberty.
Simón Bolívar (1829)¹

The tradition of all past
generations weighs like a nightmare upon
the brain of the living.
Karl Marx²

- Introduction

What is the importance of studying the United States of America and its relations with the Latin American Continent nowadays? One central aspect is the rise of the United States as a significant actor within the American Continent. In analysing the genesis of “the colossus of the north” in this opening historical chapter, I will describe the most important features that have shaped its expansionist character, addressing inevitably the effect that the US has had upon the destinies of the various Latin American countries. The emergence of the United States, as a dominant nation, is explained by, among other things, its geographical closeness to the rest of the countries in the region, while these countries’ modern development and economic and political features are largely explained by the US interest and influence in those countries’ affairs.³

¹ Cited in T.&M.Melville (1971:81).

² See (1851-1852) *Der 18 Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, I m’, Marx-Engels, Werke (MEGA) Bd8, pp. 115-207 and Bertin Dietz Verlag (1972), p. 115.

³ See chapter-2.

Paz, has perhaps best elaborated on this geographical proximity from his own experience as a Mexican. He states that before “becoming a reality the United States was an image.” He explains:

“That is not surprising: we Mexicans begin as children to see that country as the *other* ... The other side is geographical: the frontier; cultural: another civilisation; linguistic: another language; historical: another time (the United States is running after the future while we are still tied to our past); metaphorical: it is the image of everything that we are not. It is foreignness itself. Yet we are condemned to live with this foreignness: the other side is right next to us.”⁴

Hence contiguity is a historic category that gives an extraordinary new dimension to the frontier exegesis. Paz discusses the omnipresent condition of the United States in the life of the other countries of the continent. Referring to the universal (and unique) condition of the US as a great power, Paz adds that the United States was the immediate example of this universality: “in its present we could see a vision of our future. A telltale mirror: like the stepmother's mirror in the fairy tale. Each time we asked it to show us our image, it showed us that of the *other*.”⁵ Thus, Paz argues,

“The United States is always present among us, even when it ignores us or turns its back on us: its shadow covers the entire continent. It is the shadow of a giant. To us this giant is the same one that appears in fairy tales and legends - a big overgrown fellow and something of a simpleton, an ingenuous sort who doesn't know his own strength and who can be fooled, though his wrath can destroy us. The image of the good-hearted, doltish giant is juxtaposed with that of the shrewd and bloodthirsty Cyclops. A childish image and a licentious one: the ogre that eats children up alive in Perrault, and the ogre of Sade... and Prometheus as well - the fire of industry and of war. The two faces of progress: the automobile and the bomb. The United States is the negation of what we were in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth, and of what since the nineteenth century, many among us would prefer us to be.”⁶

In these rhetorical images Paz sees the features of a paradoxical fascination, an enchantment that is linked primarily to the process of modernisation always defined *vis à vis* the

⁴ Ibid:137, (his emphasis).

⁵ Ibid:148.

⁶ Ibid:137-138.

United States - whether for or against. The result, as Paz says, is that our intellectuals' and politicians' "passion ... for US civilisation ranges from love to bitter rancour, from adoration to horror."⁷

- The study of US Foreign Policy and *l'extreme occident*

The study of and the implications of US foreign policy towards the Inter-American sphere are, within the realm of international relations and historical sociology, both a challenging and a complex exercise. Even more, if we consider, as Alan Knight does, that "the [Latin American] continent represents a cultural bridge between Western Europe and the so-called Third World; it is, in Alain Rouquié's phrase, *l'extreme occident* ... In this sense, Latin America remains a historiographical frontier."⁸ At the same time, the United States has developed itself into the most remarkable economic and political power from the second half of the nineteenth Century onwards, and Latin America (the *otherness* from the US perspective) has since struggled to secure its own space in the Continental map, being relatively shaped by many of the events occurring in the region. The nature of the relationship has changed its form in accordance with the historical moment and, most importantly, it has been the genesis of the United States and its conformation as a nation that has, to a large extent, shaped the nature and features of the modern relationship with the Latin American countries.

Accordingly, Paz discovers that

"The United States enters our history during this second moment [modernisation], making its appearance not as a foreign power that must be fought, but as a model that must be imitated. This was the beginning of a fascination that, despite having changed form during the last 150 years, is still as intense as ever."⁹

⁷ Ibid:141.

⁸ A.Knight (1994:13).

⁹ O.Paz (1985:141).

Multiple aspects of this relationship could be pointed out. Still, it will be one of the aims of this work to emphasise not only the structural asymmetry there is between the so called *two Americas*, but also to explore the workings of *American expansionism* within this duality depicted by Paz. Moreover, the extent to which the United States *can* understand Latin America has often been questioned, as has the degree to which the US has dismissed those actual aspects of Latin American history, which must be understood in order to be able to lead the relationship to a mutual understanding. Whether or not there was a prospect of conducting the US-Latin American relationship along different lines must be the other question to be tackled; hence the need to do this within the empirical exercise of which Guatemala will be the central objective. Furthermore, there is an apparent *American* lack of intention to *understand* Latin America; this wilful ignorance is of central importance as it is a strategic device which the US has continually used in order to secure control. A major consequence of this being the absence of a US coherent policy in the region. Thus the long history of US interest in Latin American affairs must be studied, bearing in mind the historical realities that have shaped the existence of the United States as a nation *vis à vis* the nations of the South. Both US power and Inter-American interaction must be observed in such a perspective as to grasp the significance they have had in the overall history of the regional affairs.

- Tradition as a road to power

A strong sense of tradition, superiority and mission characterises the US expansionist project, impacting upon the entire regional system. Furthermore, this aspect of US policy, far from being just an isolated event, has become a diachronic constant, such that the "continuities are much more striking than the variation".¹⁰ Of course these 'continuities', ultimately - and logically - aimed at a powerful US role in world affairs, were originally supported and encouraged by the builders of the nation themselves. Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison in April 1829: "I am persuaded no Constitution was never before as well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self government", and referring to the American Continent he also

¹⁰ N.Chomsky (1987:5).

declared: "America has a hemisphere to itself".¹¹ Similarly, Secretary of War Henry Stimson in 1944, encapsulated the strategic importance of Central America, when explaining privately why it was legitimate for the US to maintain and extend its own regional system while dismantling those of competitors and enemies. This region of the Continent was, in his own words: "our little region over here which never has bothered anybody".¹²

In this same line though analysed in more general terms, Raymond Aron gives us an insight into the weight that tradition has had in the diplomatic game: "There is nothing more 'traditional', more moulded by the heritage of the past than the diplomacy of a state, its perception of the world of international relations and its conception of its role in that world."¹³ By launching a diplomatic policy backed up by these principles the US was able to set down the conditions of world-wide domination in general and to keep under control those Latin American affairs in particular which most concerned and preoccupied Washington. Thus, the US acquired the tools to stand as a continental power and as a (modern) dominant actor in the international arena.¹⁴ The question arises over the extent to which, by taking for itself the right and the means to control American affairs, US diplomacy has been in its ultimate expression, a disruptive element in its relations with Latin American countries. In the last analysis, this may have been a central cause of upsetting the regional system to such an extent that this situation has sometimes created difficult conditions for Latin American nations to live together peacefully. Although the Latin American historical conflicts are, it must be stressed, mainly of domestic origin, one cannot deny that this origin is itself composed firstly of the original colonial experience and secondly of the most recent neo-colonial practice.

¹¹ Quoted in N.Chomsky (1985:58).

¹² Quoted in Ibid:57. Henry Lewis Stimson was an experienced US representative abroad: Secretary of War in Cabinet of President Taft, May 1911-March 5, 1913; special representative of the President to Nicaragua, 1927; governor general of the Philippine Islands, 1927-1929; Secretary of State in Cabinet of President Hoover, March 1929-1933; Secretary of War in Cabinet of President Roosevelt, July 1940-April 1945; and in President's Truman Cabinet, April-September, 1945. See Who Was Who in America. Chicago, Illinois: Marquis-Who's Who, Inc., Vol. 3, (1951-1960), p. 822.

¹³ R.Aron (1975:xxiv).

¹⁴ On US expansionism and foreign policy see, R.W.Van Alstyne (1960); M.H.Hunt (1987); E.Augelli and C.Murphy (1988); S.Hoffmann (1968); W.A.Williams (1972); N.J.Spykman (1942); S.Ambrose (1991); G.C.Smith (1974); F.Merk (1963); G.Kolko (1969).

Thus, there are objective bases upon which to believe that the answers to these questions can be found both in the *genesis* of the US expansionist policy itself (the neo-colonial experience) and within its very philosophical and strategic content. In some of the cases, on the one hand, the Latin American events that are closely related to the US interest are both the cause and also sometimes the effect of US policies in the region. On the other, it remains unanswered to what extent the events occurring in the area were a response in any way related to the most intimate interests and policies of Washington.

The generalised claim that US foreign policy has been from its very start fundamentally an imperialist one may appear to be a truism. As polemical as such a term appears to be within the social theory debate nowadays, there is perhaps no other region in the world comparable to Latin America, where this category can be applied so appropriately. One of the main problems in US foreign policy seems to be its claimed degree of legitimacy in that the rhetorical contents of such principles as well as its strategy were calculated alongside the launching of the expansionist policy. Does this represent a contradiction in itself?

- The “existence” of reality

If the above is correct, one could ask whether this contradiction is a victim of a *construction* of a political reality (both discursive and practical) which may be in itself false, and thus whether this is what makes the means utilised - whatever - to achieve determined outcomes questionable? Is it right to say that US foreign policy in Latin America as we know it, is false because it is based upon a deliberately false interpretation of the Latin American reality, and thus a false diagnosis of the needs and the nature of the problems in the region is given? In other words, is it true that what is behind US policies, rather than the explanation of the real features of any of the stages of the Latin American crises, is a *discourse* whose principal aim is to protect the US strategic interest in the region and therefore to justify its achievement by any means? If the above questions could turn into sustainable argument, then it can be argued that the American geopolitical spectrum of the region is a rare case of a self-created caricature which

has given the US a *rational* explanation to *exist* both as a dominant and unique actor in Inter-American affairs?¹⁵

US philosopher, Paul Feyerabend, has said when referring to arguments in social sciences that:

“... almost everyone now agrees that what looks like a result of reason - the mastery of a language, the existence of a richly articulated perceptual world, logical ability - is due partly to indoctrination and partly to a process of growth that proceeds with the force of natural law. And where arguments *do* seem to have an effect, this is more due to their *physical repetition* than to their *semantic content* ... The standards are supposed to have maximal *causal efficacy* as well. This makes it very difficult indeed to distinguish between the *logical force* and the *material effect* of an argument ... Now, if there are events, not necessarily arguments, which *cause* us to adopt new standards, including new and more complex forms of argumentation, is it then not up to the defenders of the *status quo* to provide, not just counter-arguments, but also *contrary* causes? ... Even the most puritanical rationalist will then be forced to stop reasoning and to use propaganda and coercion, not because some of his reasons have ceased to be valid, but because the psychological conditions which make them effective, and capable of influencing others, have disappeared.”¹⁶

To the above reflection the following idea by Ernesto Laclau can be added: "Knowledge presupposes, then, an operation of rupture: a disarticulation of ideas from those connotative domains to which they appear linked in the form of a misleading necessity, which enables us subsequently to reconstruct their true articulations."¹⁷

By inserting the above and below quotations it is not the sole intention here to make a methodological statement (see the Introduction). For the moment this is noted only in order to suggest a notion of how complex the understanding of reality is, especially when economic,

¹⁵ On the ties between the uses of discourse and the achievement of power, see M.J.Shapiro (1988); and H.Larsen (1997). On the importance of questions in the sociological analysis, see footnote on Paul Veyne in the Introduction.

¹⁶ P.Feyerabend (1988:15-17), (my emphasis).

¹⁷ E.Laclau (1987:7-8). Paul Veyne has stressed the importance of “becoming aware that what is might not be. The real is surrounded by an undefined zone of com-possibles which are not realised. Truth is not the highest of the knowledge values.” P.Veyne (1982:197). See also chapters-2,7.

political and moral principles are involved. Furthermore, by doing this, I may be bringing into consideration the validity of reality as we know it when talking about the international dimension of US dominance upon Latin American affairs. In this particular area of study, as will be seen in the analysis of the case study, overestimation, preconceptions and even deliberately false interpretations (via discourse) of events have been part of the making up of a certain order in the Inter-American scenario, which seem to respond more to *geopolitical motives* (as will be seen in chapter 2) than to the succession of genuine domestic events. In this view US power has a two-fold importance: a) it creates material conditions of hegemony, b) it makes use of both ideological (discursive) and moral means to impose the hegemony.¹⁸

The existence of reality and the question of political action in a (troubled) sphere of influence

In the light of this estimation, it may be relevant to address a question that points to another major aspect of this analysis, which also reflects the paradoxes that have been mentioned in the above paragraphs. Though its apparent simplicity may obscure the depth of its importance, it nevertheless profoundly involves the nature of the rhetoric used by the United States when referring to their policy of domination in the region: why are invasions, interventions, overt and covert operations, or some other kind of involvement, when they occur, not given these names? Is it simply that Latin Americans must accept US interventions in the region as just acts of rescue striven to avoid falling into the clutches of evil? Moreover, the idea that the US has a special - almost sacred - commitment to the world has persisted, legitimating the imposition of principles and policies within their dominated sphere of influence. As Aron notes: "By the end of the last century the national purpose of the founders of the American republic had been achieved. Throughout the ensuing half-century the republic searched anew for a purpose and swung from one line of conduct to the other as whim dictated."¹⁹

¹⁸ Knight refers to this when considering that the value of studying Latin America "implies *historiographical* valorisation, rescuing 'the people' from 'the enormous condescension of posterity'." A.Knight (1994: 10). In this context supremacy is seen as the local expression of hegemony. See the Introduction and chapter-7.

¹⁹ R.Aron (1975:xxiv).

Such 'purposes', used by one country to dominate others both within the confines of global order and the social theory framework are usually called 'imperialism'. It is not surprising that the US has portrayed intervention otherwise, without calling their actions by their name. As R.W. Van Alstyne, a US historian, has argued in his book, *The Rising American Empire*:

"... American foreign policy has a vocabulary all its own, consciously - even ostentatiously - side-stepping the use of terms that would even hint at aggression or imperial domination, and taking refuge in abstract formulae, stereotyped phrases, and idealistic clichés that really explain nothing. Phrases like 'Monroe Doctrine', 'no entangling alliances', 'freedom of the seas', 'open door', 'good neighbour policy', 'Truman Doctrine', 'Eisenhower Doctrine', strew the pages of American history but throw little light on the dynamics of American foreign policy. Parrot-like repetition of these abstractions and other generalities produces an emotional reflex which assumes that American diplomacy is 'different', purer, morally better than the diplomacy of other powers. There is a strong pharisaical flavour about American diplomacy, easily detected abroad but generally unrecognized at home".²⁰

Thus, in the case of US policy in Latin America it would not be an exaggeration to state that it could have not obtained its objectives had the US not simulated that its interests were synonymous with the achievement of economic and democratic progress in the region. Despite this simulation - a long-lasting paradox of US history - the US was clearly committed - from the very moment the opportunity arose - to expansion, to dominate the region using whatever banner necessary for the achievement of such an objective.²¹ But in this respect John Foster Dulles, one of the most powerful and influential Secretaries of State, and who served with Eisenhower from 1953-1959, has an eloquent opinion: "not for one minute do I think the purpose [of US regional policy] is to make friends. The purpose... is to look out for the interest of the United States."²²

²⁰ R.W.Van Alstyne (1960:7).

²¹ I am aware that this issue raises questions on whether, if the US was a neo-imperialist state it did not just go the whole way and acquire colonies in the continent. To this the answer is partly that there was a US antipathy to European imperialism, partly it did not want to turn back the history of the heroic struggles for independence, recently successful, and partly in the lack of need for colonies, i.e., the US was astute enough to realise it could get the gains without the headaches.

²² Quoted in G.Kolko (1969:65). Dulles's conviction is honest realism which to a certain extent explains why it is that Washington does not "call its actions by their name" in its public foreign policy statements.

- History and the “aims” of power

It was Denis Diderot who in 1778 enthusiastically supported the rebellion of the thirteen British colonies against the British Empire as a sign of democracy and freedom. He envisaged it as a revolution whose ultimate objective would be to offer to the European inhabitants "an asylum against fanaticism and tyranny."²³ And he was right in his assertion, in that the US was going to be for a long time that asylum which promised land and gave freedom to the Europeans who could not stand despotism in their own countries. However, this very event in US history also accelerated the transformation of this country. The declared purpose in fighting the War of Independence was stated as, "creating a new empire" (in substitution of the British Empire), "or, to put the thought in words hardly familiar at the time, a new national state."²⁴

While the neo-imperialist feature that shaped the US presence in the world has to be measured, the problem of *power* appears to deserve fundamental attention if we want to understand what was going to become the *messianic despotism* of the US.²⁵ According to Morgenthau, "international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics power is always the immediate aim".²⁶ It seems, however, that in defining power one must do so in a more specific context, referring to the actors involved in its execution. Power acquires a myriad forms according to the plan of its economic, social or political conditions. Likewise, it appears to be an abstraction of the greatest risk to talk - as Morgenthau does above - about 'whatever' 'aims' or 'ends' without considering the specificity of the 'aim' as well as the milieu in which it is produced: in talking about aims we are also referring to *particular* (and private) impulses, social forces, historical actors and national societies, which

²³ "... un asile contre le fanatisme et la tyrannie, instruire ceux qui gouvernent les hommes sur la **légitime usage de leur autorité!**" D.Diderot (1963:491), (my emphasis).

²⁴ See, R.W.Van Alstyne (1960:2).

²⁵ The term power is going to be considered in general terms as the capacity to control, to direct, and to dictate some others' willpower in the name of a general or particular interest. Also, as argued further on power, it will also be regarded as a particular *expression* of the paramount capacity to dominate. On the first point see D.A.Baldwin (1989); on the second, see A.Gramsci (1971:chapter-2).

²⁶ H.Morgenthau (1967:26).

turn the aim into an alternative entity depending on the context in which this exercise is produced.

The scope of the term 'aim' in the international system addresses the problems of nations, states and societies which are not the same among them. The origin, composition, nature and place in the world order of such aims are created by specific historical conditions; thus the need to provide this debate with a historical explanation of the nature of power. Is it, the case, then, that all political agents must exert power in the same terms?, and must pursue the same aims?, or perhaps impose the same political conditions in the name of these aims? And yet, power might happen to be consistently shaped by the reality in which it is applied, its use being conditioned by the particular needs both of this reality (to be such) and the actors involved. Power cannot cover anything and everything: its form as well as its content are brought about as a result of heterogeneous features within which it develops. It is also the result and the expression of diversity, and constitutes "the ambition of certain men or of certain peoples: it is not in itself a rational objective."²⁷

In the context of the international system the "effective power" of Aron must be understood as something resulting from what Gramsci calls "the conflict of forces"²⁸ within a particular "organic phenomenon" in which only particular ("conjunctural") crises occurs. In this case the "organic phenomenon" is an umbrella to understand the problem of power in its paramount expression. It also gives us the opportunity to understand the structural dimensions of the exercise of power in the international arena. In this respect Gramsci asks himself:

"Do international relations precede or follow (logically) fundamental social relations? [and he answers], there can be no doubt that they follow ... Even the geographical position of a national State does not precede but follows (logically) structural changes, although it also reacts back upon them to a certain extent. However, international relations react both passively and actively on political relations ... The more the immediate economic life of a nation is subordinated to international relations, the more a particular party will come to *represent* this

²⁷ R.Aron (1966:90).

²⁸ See D.Forgacs (1988:200-209); A.Gramsci (1971:175-181).

situation and to *exploit it*, with the aim of preventing rival parties gaining the upper hand."²⁹

It is the very existence of this "particular party" whose nature stems from the particular features of the international system in a particular historical moment, which moulds the "organic phenomena" and the nature of conflict. In view of this, the characteristics of the international system have to be distinguished as the only way to make the appearance of 'forces' within the international arena comprehensible, and thus the impulse that these forces are capable of giving to the hegemonic potentialities of one or more of the actors participating.³⁰

In this respect Aron has noted that

"... an international system [is] the ensemble constituted by political units that maintain regular relations with each other, [its structure] ... is always oligopolistic [and] ... in each period the principal actors have determined the system more than they have been determined by it ... [its] first characteristic [being] the *configuration of the relation of forces*."³¹

Through the process of constitution of the 'forces' there are the various physical scenarios in which, certain 'struggles' take place in order to obtain 'advantages' over the rest of the actors. Such a scenario is employed by those who in the international arena have a position of relative advantage over other players. And in some cases this advantage is given by geography by means of which the correlation of forces is set up.³² In this case how the *map* is used is the result of the distribution of forces. But the distribution of actors resulting from the

"...so-called *constants* imposed by geography are often deceptive. It is not geography, but the projection on a map of a certain relation of forces which suggests the idea of friendship or hostility, original or permanent. Once this relation of forces changes, another policy becomes reasonable ... Of course, the geographical distribution of alliances exerts an influence on the course of

²⁹ A.Gramsci (1971:176), (my emphasis).

³⁰ Ibid:175-176.

³¹ R.Aron (1966:94-95), (emphasis in the original).

³² See chapter 2.

diplomacy. According to the space they occupy, the political units have different resources, different objectives, different dreams. Alliances have a relation to the respective positions of states - the most powerful ally is less alarming if it is remote. If it is not a 'permanent ally', a neighboring state easily becomes an enemy."³³

- Force, diplomacy, geography: law and order and the question of realism

Aron's thinking raises the question, what was first: force, diplomacy or geography? And how does the international map reach stability? Although it is right to explore the ways in which the projection of the relation of forces takes place, is it not true, perhaps, that geography is the result of the political distribution of power within the international system? And if that is correct so it is to say that the sources of the political units, as well as their 'space', 'objectives' and 'resources', respond to a sense and, above all, *execution* of power. It seems as though Aron closes the debate before all the terms have been analysed. However, it is reasonable to accept that his comment on power is, in the context of this work, acute and assertive:

"the word *power* in English has very broad (or very vague) meaning, since depending on cases, it translates the three French words *pouvoir*, *puissance*, *force*. Power is first of all, in the broadest sense, the capacity to act, to produce, to destroy, to influence; then it is the capacity to command legally (to come to power, exercise power); it is also the capacity of a person (individual or collective) to impose his will, his example, his ideas, upon others; finally it is the sum of material, moral, military, psychological means (or one or the other of these means) possessed by the three capacities we have just enumerated."³⁴

Aron's rationalisation on the depth and the meaning of the concept is in some respects polemical. There is indeed one point upon which he may be extremely naive: his vision of power is based upon a legalistic and rigorous state-of-nature inference, which does not allow us to see the way power is handled in international relations, least of all the US way of settling affairs in the Inter-American scene. In this regard, it is worth stating that the distribution of forces, when it comes as a result of the application of the law, is not only unequal, but in many respects and circumstances illegal. The execution of power and the use of the law are, in this view, closely related. One permits the other to subsist as far as they can give each other a reason

³³ Ibid:97, (emphasis in the original).

³⁴ Ibid:595, (emphasis in the original).

to co-exist without having to confront each other.³⁵ Perhaps a good example of this is the perception that the United States had of itself as a great power. It is also the belief in its predestination to turn into a great power, irrespective of the means to be used in order to achieve this status, and quite outside any legal consideration.³⁶

Law and order have in this context a rationale, and they are also principles indistinctly imposed as the means to reach a world of natural order. Hence, it is worthwhile to note an aspect of the legalistic framework utilised by the US in its policy towards Latin America: it dramatises the dilemmas (freedom or anarchy, order or justice) that the system is facing in order to legitimise the priorities of national security, and, thus broaden the use of the means of *Realpolitik*. By insulating into such a normative avenue the other actors' sphere of action, the US manages to grant itself the means to create pragmatic doctrines (within the context of an ideal ideological context) whose ultimate end is the immediate aim; namely the imposition of a *rationality* of power which generally uses common sense (thus the need of national security) as a common creed shared by the actors surrounding the US.³⁷

Thus respecting the law and hence others' freedom seems to be both at the domestic and international levels, a problem as old as democracy. It appears, however, that power and freedom are somehow opposed when they come to the moment of being two parts of a whole: they become irreconcilable. There is a stage, according to Norberto Bobbio when referring to social democracy and individual rights, in which power and liberty are at odds. There are, he says:

"...guarantees of liberty, taking liberty in the sense of what is known as negative liberty - as a sphere of action within which the individual is neither constrained, by whoever holds the power of coercion, to do anything he does not wish to do. There is a sense ... in which 'liberty' and 'power' can be counterposed as

³⁵ See part III in this thesis. See, R.Immerman (1982); and L.Etheredge (1985).

³⁶ With regard to this point I would be arguing that order and diplomacy have been, in the international arena, generally accomplished upon grounds of correlation of forces and geostrategic considerations as Wight says. Neither order nor diplomacy are determined as rational solutions, but as a result of the distribution of power shares, both in the bilateral and multilateral levels of relations among nations. See K.Knorr (ed) (1983).

³⁷ On this discussion I will be elaborating in a further section of this chapter. See H.Morgenthau (1960:26).

antithetical terms, denoting two realms which are mutually conflicting and thus incompatible. In the relationship between two persons, as the power of the former is *enlarged* (power, that is, to compel or forbid), so the liberty, that is the negative liberty, of the latter diminishes; and conversely, as the latter enlarges his sphere of liberty, the power of the former diminishes."³⁸

This idea seems appropriate to be linked to the problem of international relations. Hence this view of freedom and liberty as applied by Bobbio in the case of the individual could be equally applied to the case of international affairs insofar as the contradictory struggle for and between power and freedom takes place. What is more, if we are referring to the US relationship with Latin America (the 'aims' of power), and as Morgenthau says, with other "collectivities", the parallels with the political situation in the region are remarkable.³⁹ The defence of 'the other' within the framework of order and law, and thus the US's concern for the 'other collectivities', constitutes such a unitary ideology, according to which *they* (statesmen, states, etc.) should not ignore the interest of those of other collectivities. But it is precisely here that lies one of the major problems in the study of this subject and thus the difficulties that political realism encounters when studying the Latin American complexity: why should *they* worry about which problem? Why should *they* be interested in the well being of the other collectivities? Is it not that the US has created the idea of needs as a device in order to defend that which exists (law, order, *status quo*), and from this perspective erect itself as the representative ("the watchman") of the interest of *all*? Is it not that the interest of all is also the US's *own* interest, and that by virtue of this defending the former Washington is in fact assuring and guaranteeing the survival and consolidation of the latter?⁴⁰ This seems to be the saga of the international system. The shortcomings of realism when approaching Latin America have been spelled out in the Introduction. However, there is perhaps one more addition to stress here. Realism aims at assuring security as the ultimate objective. Since the accomplishing of this objective in the continent occurred in the context of Cold War confrontation this limited the capacity of the US

³⁸ N.Bobbio (1990:15), (my emphasis). Beyond the rhetorical point Bobbio's argument perhaps stresses the problem of freedom as a *zero-sum* game. Eventually this question may be of importance when addressing the extent to which Capitalism, in the way we know it in Latin America, is a betrayal of democracy. For more on this discussion see further on in this thesis. This problem has been examined in, J.L.Valdés-Ugalde (1995).

³⁹ See the debate in this respect in R.Aron (1966:593-594).

⁴⁰ See the Introduction and coming chapters.

to detect the true nature of danger and eventually blinded both diagnosis and political action. As a result the apprehension of reality was drastically altered.⁴¹

Similarly the recognition of the existence of national self-interest, which according to a realist analysis is inherent in all men and states, is also a starting point from which to make a reality of the unavoidable. This is to say, if power exists to make the world function from the very perspective of this power's concrete interests, and not from the perspective of the others' interests (which the former claims to represent), then the existence of unavoidable egoism is one of the bases that justifies power's actions towards the creation of a self-perpetuating mechanism that permits this exercise. Within this context there would be two aims to which power is committed: a) to put power itself into practice, and b) to regulate or avoid the overflowing of egoism towards unbearable limits - this is to say, of course, beyond the control of power itself which holds inherent risks of widespread anarchic disorder for the international system.

- National Greatness and “American” destiny: “A hemisphere for itself”?

Participating in Latin American affairs, said Senator Fulbright in *The Arrogance of Power*, "... is done with the best of intentions, usually indeed to *protect* the Latin Americans... Most of them do think they need protection from the United States and the history of the Monroe Doctrine and the ‘Roosevelt Corollary’ suggest that their fears are not entirely without foundation".⁴²

It could be argued that despite Fulbright's good personal intentions, the wealth of evidence to the contrary imposes strict limits on his assertions. Moreover, such 'intentions' are contrary to his country's historical reasons to act in the Latin American continent. This being

⁴¹ Some aspects of this problem are discussed in A.Hurrell (1996). In his study, however, Hurrell confines himself to the descriptive level and does not explain why is it that realism (and also those who explain it in the Latin American context like Hurrell himself) do not dissect the deep essential shortcomings that realism has faced in trying to explain the problems of the continent, as well as the political results of political action.

⁴² J.W.Fulbright (1967:96-97), (my emphasis).

demonstrated by the wide range of violent interventions that the US has launched in the region from the nineteenth century onwards. There is, however, an irony in all this: the suggestion implicit in Fulbright's thoughts that his country and its citizens are there to think about the well being of the rest of the collectivities abroad. To consider as Fulbright does, that Latin Americans "think" that they need protection from the US, displays - despite the possible irony - a characteristic way in which the United States has historically interpreted what the needs of the 'others' are, as well as how and who is going to solve them, as a means of guaranteeing their own needs, namely power. Accordingly, the assurance that local political processes in Latin America go hand in hand with the interest of the US would follow.

Such an interpretation is a conscious mis-interpretation of the nature and needs of the *others*, and in the present time, as in the past, US philanthropy has turned to be a means for the uncompromising achievement of power and, whenever necessary, expansion. The Alliance for Progress which was produced in the light of the need to avoid revolutions occurring after the Guatemalan process was aborted in 1954, and the Cuban revolution succeeded in 1959, might be a good example of this policy of assisting economically when the political crisis has already occurred.⁴³ Therefore, power becomes both a means and an end, and it stands as the only way that the US has had to convince Latin Americans and the world of the need to count on its good will for the sake of progress, liberty and democracy. Accordingly the US has been able to build an image of the "good Samaritan" which thereafter is going to turn into a rhetorical character in order to build up an expansionist project.⁴⁴

Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic book *Democracy in America* written in 1833, referred to this aspect of Americans' and US sense of pride in the following terms:

"It seems at first sight as if all the minds of the Americans were formed upon one model, so accurately do they follow the same route [...] If I say to an American that the country he lives in is a fine one, 'aye', he replies 'and there is not its equal in the world'. If I applaud the freedom its inhabitants enjoy, he

⁴³ The US-sponsored coup in Guatemala and the Alliance for Progress will be examined in part II and III of this work, see especially chapters-7,8 and the Conclusions.

⁴⁴ On the missional and ideological features of American expansionism see: M.Parenti (1969:chapters-3,6,8,14); M.H.Hunt (1987:chapters-2-3); and E.Augelli&C.Murphy (1988:chapters-2-3).

answers 'freedom is a fine thing but few nations are worthy of it'. If I remark on the purity of the morals that distinguishes the US he declares 'I can imagine that a stranger who has witnessed the corruption which prevails in other nations would be astonished at the difference'. At length I leave him to a contemplation of himself, but he returns to the charge and does not desist until he has got me to repeat all I have been saying. It is impossible to conceive a more troublesome and garrulous patriotism."⁴⁵

The strong social certainty of this remarkable aspect of the “*American*” sense of fulfilment is remarkably reflected in an editorial which appeared in the *United States Journal* on 18 October 1845:

"It is truth, which every man may see, if he will but look - that all the channels of communication, public and private, through the school-room, the pulpit, and the press - are engrossed and occupied with this one idea, which all these forces are combined to disseminate: that we the American people, are the most independent, intelligent, moral and happy people on the face of the earth."⁴⁶

- National pride and mission: towards a foreign policy for the future?

Although it is obvious that every nation has its form of spiritual pride, the US's version of its own has been used for purposes other than domestic consumption. It has penetrated profoundly the US foreign policy spectrum and, thus, influenced its design to participate in world affairs. Within this context the Latin American region has not been excluded as one of the most important trustees of this policy. Hence, it is obvious although remarkable that one of the basic foundations of US foreign policy is the almost religious character that foreign policy-makers have imprinted on Washington's vision of the world as well as in the elaboration of doctrines and policies. This aspect, as seen in the light of the Monroe Doctrine and the Manifest Destiny, was going to become a powerful tool for the protection of Latin America by the US,

⁴⁵ A.DeTocqueville (1990:242,267).

⁴⁶ The United States Journal, 18 October, 1845. Editorial page. For more in this press source see, J.Fuentes-Mares (1980).

which at the same time justified and even *sanctified* US interference in the control of the affairs of the nations of this region.⁴⁷

The *missionary* content in US foreign policy and, thus, the commitment to preserve the rest of the world, although resorting to the same sentiment of historical destiny, has drawn different conjunctural meanings and purposes throughout the history of the United States. But, as argued below, this missional character of US policy has its origins in the puritan conceptions and philosophies of the dissenting Protestants coming from Europe. Allegedly, this destined the United States to an extraordinarily historic responsibility to keep freedom, order and progress in line with the principles of modern (Western) civilisation, to which the US was already starting to belong.

And yet, this notion of progress, “as elusive as a ghost,” as Paz says, was also,

“brutal and insensitive, [with] no notion of nuance or of irony, [speaking] in proclamations and watchwords, ... forever in a hurry, and ... brought up short only if it crash[ed] headlong into a wall ... the fascination that decadence holds for Americans lies not so much in its philosophical and aesthetic charms as in

⁴⁷Although The Monroe Doctrine was announced to the US Congress by President Monroe on 2 December, 1823, it stems originally from an idea developed by the British Prime Minister, George Canning on 20 August, 1823. He proposed it at the time to the US representative in Great Britain, Richard Rush as a plan of common declaration in the face of the designs of the Holy Alliance in Latin America, particularly the likelihood of France purchasing some of the Spanish colonies. John Quincy Adams, Monroe's Secretary of State, did not want to accept becoming a British subordinate, thus, the proposal was not accepted. And yet, President Monroe preferred its inclusion into his statement to Congress that year. The Monroe Doctrine established 5 essential points: 1) the US will not allow the European Powers to possess new colonies in the Continent. Any attempt contrary to this principle will be a hostile act against the US. Cases for contention: the British control over the Falkland Islands (1833), Belize (1859), Islas de la Bahía (1835) and Mosquitia (1847); 2) The US considers against its security, peace and happiness the European intervention in any portion of the American continents. Critical cases: Spanish attack on Tampico, México (1862), the French-Spanish-English intervention in Mexico (1862), the French invasion in México and the imposition of the Emperor Maximilian (1863-1867), the Spanish bombing of Chile and Perú (1866), the bombing of and blockade of Venezuela by Italy, Germany and England, the English-German-Italian involvement in the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), among others; 3) The US has not intervened nor will intervene in the European domains; cases of violation: Cuba (1898), Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines (1898); 4) the US will not intervene in the wars or internal affairs of Europe; and 5) the US will not intervene nor will violate the national sovereignty of other American republics. This Doctrine was a part of the manifest trend for domination just as the rest of the continent was intended to be for the use of the US. Latin America was conceived of as the 'natural area' that would permit the continuation of the consolidation of the US expansion. And for the achievement of this the former colonies recently liberated from the Spanish yoke provided the US with an excellent opportunity to accomplish such a purpose.

the fact that it is the gateway to history. Decadence affords them what they have always sought: historical legitimacy."⁴⁸

And it was to a great extent in search of "historical legitimacy" that the United States started its pursuit of the future. Thomas Paine representing the spirit of independence prevalent in the new republic wrote in his well-known pamphlet *Common Sense*, published in the US in 1776, of the extent to which the new Americans were committed "keepers of the flickering flame of liberty". Theirs, he maintained, would be the "power to begin the world over again."⁴⁹ For his part, Tocqueville tells us that Puritanism, was, "... almost as much a political theory as a religious doctrine. No sooner had the immigrants landed on the barren coast described by Nathaniel Morton than it was their first care to constitute a society."⁵⁰

Thus a moralised discourse and one both combative of old European Imperialism and expansionism emerged ('to begin the world over again'). The unity of religious and political discourse described by Tocqueville positions the new republic and its founding fathers as God-like, imbued with a messianic vision and destiny: a new *genesis* towards a new historical reality in which Washington must have dominion over America. The missionary and religious feature of this view of the new US responsibilities turned into a doctrine endorsed by, what I shall call, *theological geography*, which was shaped originally within the framework of a *theology of security*.⁵¹ These two non-secular components of US foreign policy are going to be dominant in the elaboration of the US conception of the world and, as a result of this, in the understanding of the Latin American realities and hence the policies carried out in this area of the world.⁵²

⁴⁸ O.Paz (1985:22).

⁴⁹ Quoted in M.H.Hunt (1987:20).

⁵⁰ A.DeTocqueville (1990:34). In this sense *Americanism* is linked with Puritanism.

⁵¹ These are my own terms. Given the theological features of the political discourse attention must be given to the similarity that this has with the Genesis story according to which man is set up as the *Lord of Creation*.

⁵² Doctrine is conceived as a more general and permanent (thus philosophical) component of US policy which implies the defence of national security and, most important, for the purposes of the general argument of this work, a particular perception of the concept of national security and the meticulous and pragmatic way to put it into operation. In short, it is also a specific way of life, not only to be exported, but to be consolidated and endured within the domestic arena too. See chapters-2,3.

Hence, doctrines followed ideology and thereafter doctrines pursued the achievement of geographical supremacy. This idea, which had a very strong support within the new national society-to-be, and was going to influence deeply the character of *Americans'* feelings, can be best illustrated by the thoughts of W.H. Drayton, who was a leading planter and chief justice of South Carolina in 1776:

"... The Almighty... has made choice of the present generation to erect the American Empire... And thus has suddenly arisen in the World a new Empire, stiled the United States of America. An Empire that as soon as started into Existence, attracts the Attention of the Rest of the Universe; and bids fair, by the blessing of God, to be the most glorious of any upon Record."⁵³

Thus, the US conceived of itself as both a national and international society, as a result of the early puritan ideas. I would argue that the strong beliefs of US Puritanism are fundamental to an understanding not only of the social and religious experience of US citizens in the 19th century but also to the US role and interest in Latin America. From the US fidelity to this calling or vocation as illustrated above, the Anglo-Americans affirmed the certainty of their example and hence of their superiority, and from all this stemmed their mission in the service of good and against evil.

- The “chosen nation” and the world: exceptionalism as way of life

The very idea of being the chosen people justifies the concept of the historical mandate to turn into the chosen nation commissioned by God to solve whatever needs the world had. This concept of being chosen among the rest to play a peculiar destiny in the affairs of the world has a threefold explanation: the need to achieve a) a particular *identity*, b) a set of *uniform* social features, and (in spite of this) c) an *exceptional* national character within the concert of nations. In this respect Augelli and Murphy illustrate outstandingly the latter remark by providing an account of the meaning of common sense in US society and its implications for US citizens' self-conception and world-view:

⁵³ R.W. Van Alstyne (1960:1), (capitals in the original).

"Colonial religion can be understood as the source of three sets of ideas that are common sense to most Americans. One idea has to do with identity, with who Americans are, with the view that many Americans have of their own exceptionalism and destiny, the idea of Americans as a chosen people. The second has to do with how to deal with dissent, how to deal with people whose views differ from your own. For many Americans the only ways to deal with people whose ideas differ from your own is to isolate yourself from them (or them from you), convert them, or destroy them [...] Finally, we look at the limited American idea of charity which is bound up with assumptions about the exceptionalism of the American people."⁵⁴

Few people in the US refute the idea of US exceptionalism and the implications that this has for the US sense of national destiny. The latter is interestingly summarised by one of the most respected US novelists, Herman Melville, who in his novel *White Jacket* wrote what seems to be a dominant feeling among that country's past and present generations: "... we Americans are the peculiar chosen people - the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world."⁵⁵ Another remarkable sign of this early intolerance, that will play strongly in the developments to come, is the Manichaeism in which this conception of the world places social actors and historical events. Hand in hand with such a spirit, there was a supreme dictum according to which God had chosen certain people to enter the Kingdom of Heaven while there were others (the vast majority) whose destiny was lost: loyalists confronted successfully against reprobates, in the same manner as virtuous did so against wicked, or graceful against misadventured, Christians against papists, Anglo-Americans against Spaniards, democrats against fascists, and lastly democrats against communists. Such a political Manichaeism that even in modern times has influenced politicians, writers and intellectuals, will reflect an ethnocentric conception of both society and politics that will have negative repercussions upon the US general attitude, perceptions and policies in Latin America.

This extraordinary self-conception as *The Exceptional Society*, the *Society of Destiny*, *The New Israel*, *The New Jerusalem*, or, the Nation to Be as John Winthrop told to his pilgrims

⁵⁴ E.Augelli&C.Murphy (1988:37).

⁵⁵ Quoted in L.Baritz (1985:26). See also another important book by the same author, L.Baritz (1964).

in the Massachusetts' Coast in 1630, like the "city upon a hill",⁵⁶ were all of them components of major importance in the formation of a new *civil religion* in the US whose ultimate objective was going to be to achieve National Greatness for that country. National Greatness represented in this context the beginning (and an end in itself) of a new moment in that nation's history, a moment according to which the US "under the protection of Heaven", was called to be the instrument for the moral and political regeneration of the world.⁵⁷ After defining their character as a nation, and thus its international presence, the US was this time, "... defining [its] foreign policy [whereby] they would also be defining their character as a nation."⁵⁸

The non-secular component contained in the original, and thereafter, subsequent philosophy articulated by the US in its policy towards the world, is going to be of great importance in subsequent stages of the US unfolding as both a world and a regional power. Apart from the literary reference already made from Melville's book, there is another one that illustrates dramatically this point, and this is the play, *The Crucible*, written by Arthur Miller.⁵⁹ Miller's work shows powerfully (artistic imagination included) the strong parallel that existed between the dramatic witch trials perpetrated by the Puritans in Massachusetts in September 1692, and the purges made against communists in the 1950's, the age of McCarthyism. While *The Crucible* depicts the events that occurred in the seventeenth century, it also points generally at a permanent feature of US political culture which, as shown above, has been continuously present within the US ethos from the early times. If there is a remarkable aspect of these two historical events provided as examples, this is the high degree of popular delusion that existed on both occasions. The purges against the nineteen Witches of Salem who were prosecuted by

⁵⁶ The full idea uttered by Winthrop is: "Men shall say of succeeding plantations: the lord make it like that of New England: for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us." Quoted in L.Baritz (1964:3), (in the original English).

⁵⁷ See A.P.Whitaker (1941:chapters-1-2,11-12).

⁵⁸ M.H.Hunt (1987:21). Although surely this rhetoric is common to many countries, the difference is that the US has amassed the economic, military and political power to make it seem to be true.

⁵⁹ See Miller's own interesting edition of this play, in A.Miller (1977). I consider that it is relevant, even in a work of research like this, to provide literary examples, for they are an essential expression of any society's cultural features. To include Miller's literary piece in order to support my argument may appear to be at odds with a historical sociological analysis such as this. However, I maintain that the strong political nature that the above play has in the context of both US domestic and foreign politics allows me to argue that such an example *expresses* to a great extent the socio-cultural vein in which the political debate was carried out in those times in the United States.

the scholar from Harvard and minister of the Gospel in Boston, and reputed to be an extreme member of a Protestant family, Cotton Mather, shows a dramatic early stage in US intolerance.⁶⁰ Accordingly, the same intolerance was to be shown later by senator McCarthy and subsequently and simultaneously by other main US political celebrities (like Richard Nixon).

The importance of this literary piece does not lie in the extent to which it portrays the Salem witchcraft trials accurately but as a workable analogy for the US world-wide imposition of force in the early 1950s and other subsequent critical stages of US history. In this light let us emphasise that

"... Americans, especially those who identify themselves as more religious, are not particularly tolerant of behaviour that deviates from relatively narrow norms, even though the same people are likely to profess an adherence to an abstract principle of 'liberty for all'. As a result, many Americans accept a relatively authoritarian concept of 'community', one that entails indoctrination and little real dissent. For many Americans it is the only concept of 'community' they understand. Yet, many Americans remain frightened by those who limit a dissenter's alternatives to reconversion or repression, and they fight against every manifestation of this impulse in American political life... 'Calvinism original force comes from this ability to impose a legitimate, authoritarian order on a confused world'."⁶¹

If this "authoritarian concept of community" was going to shape the national character, not surprisingly this national character would play a major role in the consolidation of a notion of national greatness set up on the basis of dominance and control of dissent and difference. Indoctrination and a hierarchical notion of life became features of great importance in interpreting events beyond the national boundaries, and in particular US expansionism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

Nonetheless, this univocal vision of history which permeated acutely the body politic, would become, in the beginning of the era of US power, a relative disadvantage which at one stage translated some of the isolationist features that this country had already shown. And yet,

⁶⁰ See: C.Mather (1693); C.Mather (1957:144); D.Levin (1978:chapters-V-VI:143-174); B.M.Levy (1979:chapter-VI:56). See especially the editorial Introduction of Mather (1693).

⁶¹ E.Augelli&C.Murphy (1988:40-41,f/n15).

as the international system expanded, it did so on grounds of treating international society as no more than the sum of nations and thus (in Central America) as subordinate-nations-to-be. Within this obsessive view “common sense” was going to apply in politics with an important element added to it: racism. Racism, as Hunt shows, was going to be something other than a domestic issue. Accordingly, Hunt discusses three principles motivating foreign policy: 1) the hierarchy of race, 2) the idea of American destiny and 3) American aversion to revolution.⁶² Thus, such strong social Darwinist features were going to influence significantly foreign affairs and the US race for “the waste places of the earth.”⁶³

James Wilson argues that “white racism” in the United States promoted murderous policies against Indian settlements during the 18th and 19th centuries. This hidden story of genocide against nativism for the sake of possession of the land which the Indians owned, is compared by Wilson to the policies that the Nazi Third Reich pursued against the Jews and its other designated racial enemies. Moreover, the mention of cases like the infamous massacre of men, women, and children at Black Kettle’s camp at Sand Creek on 29 November 1864 by Colonel John Chivington, the Washita River Massacre of peaceful Southern Cheyennes on 27 November 1868, and indeed the massacre at Wounded Knee on 29 December 1890, make one think only too vividly of the My Lai massacre in March 1968 in Vietnam.⁶⁴ In other words, it cannot be denied that there is a component of exterminatory impulse within which racism is like a cancer in the US social fabric, not to mention the manufacturing of foreign policies of intervention.⁶⁵

This notion of “race” as a concept and as a point of departure towards virtue developed a hierarchical attitude and conception of reality. The cultural effect that this had upon generations

⁶² See M.H.Hunt (1987:chapters-2-4).

⁶³ This statement was uttered by Henry Cabot Lodge and it is quoted in Ibid:37.

⁶⁴ See, US Senate, “Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders,” Senate Reports, Vol. 3-8 (Report No. 94-465), 94th Congress, 1st. Session (November 20, 1975). Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office. This is a documented Congressional Hearing in which is demonstrated the involvement of leaders such as CIA Director, Alan Dulles, CIA executive Richard Bissell, and Presidents Eisenhower and Nixon in sophisticated conspiratory attempts to destroy both governments and leaders with whom the US government was not satisfied.

⁶⁵ See J.Wilson (1998).

to come was going to be fundamental in drawing distinctions among the "various peoples of the world on grounds of physical features, above all skin colour and to a lesser extent, head type".⁶⁶ Americans were setting themselves up as an elite among the other races, as "superior peoples", just as the US was going to set up itself as the *unique* nation among the rest, bound to take control over the rest of the world's affairs. And, thus, this feature was absorbed by Americans as an "... awareness of race in their schooling, in their homes, and in their work place. As a central point of cultural reference on which all were agreed, race could be applied to foreign problems without fear that the concept itself would arouse domestic controversy."⁶⁷ Hence, the racial and hierarchical emphasis in interpreting world politics was going to be an important component in the US definition of the new order in the post-colonial era.

For instance, Washington and Adams tended to conceive of

“extending the American Empire by private settlement and a sort of evangelism, the conversion of those who would be converted to the American way... American policy-makers felt it to be not only justified, but benevolent, to impose conversion to the American way by force ... [Richard Barnet notes that] Calvinism forces people to face the question 'Who will be the Sheriff? Who will create order in an unruly world? ... [And it provides the answer]: Those whose virtue has been certified by world success. Thus, American use of force against the recalcitrant world can be thought of as responsibility incumbent upon the United States because of its power'; and in this line 'Because American foreign-policy makers believed in a hierarchy of races, in lesser and greater people, they could justify double standards in diplomacy.'"⁶⁸

Indeed, the question of “who is going to be in charge?”, has, in the light of the above observations, and in referring to the southern part of America, interesting repercussions. It is understandable that every country needs to find a way to consolidate its identity, its own cultural and political language. But when this occurs in a country that was about to acquire a powerful position in the world, as was the case of the US, one is forced to observe the remarkable importance that this has, when such a feature - an end in itself - had to be achieved

⁶⁶ M.Hunt (1987:48).

⁶⁷ Ibid:52.

⁶⁸ See, E.Augelli&C.Murphy (1988:63-64,f/n 15:72); and R.Barnet (1972:70).

at the expense of other nations' interest. A major precondition for US strength was, it is understood, their supreme control over the affairs that most concerned them. The above socio-political components permeated importantly the modern expansionist developments that marked the modern geopolitical condition of the US and this shall be analysed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

GEOPOLITICS AND CONTAINMENT: THE COLD WAR, DOMESTIC SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE AND INTERVENTION AS A SOLUTION

We are not a nation,
so much as a world.
Herman Melville¹

The great advantage of the Americans
is that they have arrived at a state of
democracy without having to endure a
democratic revolution; and that they are
born equal instead of becoming so.
Alexis de Tocqueville.

There [was] no neighbouring state in
America with which the US could have
the kind of relationship which prevails
among the European nations, a state
which they would have to view with
distrust and against which they would
have to maintain a standing army.
Canada and México present no serious threat.
Hegel²

- Introduction

The vigour and insistence of US involvement in Latin America raises the question of whether this process of intervention constitutes a permanent theatre of international affairs. Such a question might appear simple, yet, to quote Clausewitz, “The simple is always difficult.”³ This chapter and its successors develop one main theme: The setting of the global and regional map, in response to the need to link the US's emergence as a great international player with the material conditions necessary for obtaining and consolidating that position. The above occurred in a context of the distribution of force *vis à vis* the achievement of order (most importantly

¹ H.Melville (1956).

² G.W.F.Hegel (1975:169).

³ R.Aron (1974:xii).

when this order was threatened by rebellions). The territorial consolidation of power, although primarily a traditional geopolitical aim, has continued to be reinforced in the twentieth century:

“[The Latin American countries] constitute [a] geographic [and] a military entity ... From the points of view of both geography and munitioning capacity, therefore, their security against aggression from the Eastern Hemisphere should be regarded as interdependent.”⁴

This secret document issued by US Secretary of War in 1945 goes on to assume that:

“... The American republics cooperate against any threat on the part of an extra-continental power to encroach upon the territorial or political integrity of any of those republics [so that] the Inter-American defensive structure should be *preserved within* the *global* structure as a regional arrangement for effecting settlements within the Hemisphere.”⁵

The above objective implied the setting of a *pattern* of power.⁶ This design was particularly useful in working towards the achievement of force. The Soviet question was by far the single most important issue facing the US; it was only in this context that it would carry out the strategy of force and the distribution of force, both in the global context and in the internal affairs of Latin America. That was especially so in relation to social and political changes in the region, particularly when these posed an important challenge to the US natural sphere of control. The problem of the distribution of force in the continent was linked to the bipolar extrapolation provoked by the Cold War and, thus, the relevance of the Soviet question.

- The (Soviet) Communist question: Cold War *vis à vis* change and consensus

Within the climate of a post-World War II pattern of power a major assumption in this work concerns the Soviet Union - the other *pivot* defining conflicts and their resolution in the period - and its involvement in social change (either revolutionary or reformist) in Latin

⁴ NA, “Memorandum for the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy. Subject: Military objectives in Latin America.” (6-7 February, 1945), State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee: Military Objectives in Latin America. US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Central Decimal File, Record Group 218, 1946-47, 092(1-18-45), section 1, Military Objectives in Latin America, Box, 23, p. 1, (my emphasis).

⁵ NA, *ibid.*, pp. 1,2, (my emphasis).

⁶ See below in this chapter and part-II.

America. Soviet involvement was overestimated by the United States. Thus, in some cases, there was no serious basis for US claims that Communist regimes were in power in countries of this region where social change was taking place. Furthermore, as will be seen, these US policies partly resulted from a domestic atmosphere of fear characteristic of the 1950s. As argued by David Caute, the “great fear” generated both a politics of anti-Communist hysteria and an active machinery of repression.⁷ These features are visible in subsequent US policies in Latin America.

The traditional yet persistent US distrust of any change as intolerable has come to dominate the US view of Latin America; it could be assumed throughout the first half of the twentieth century that the very fact revolutionary change occurred would be utilised by the US to justify some form of intervention; later it became common for the US to resort to the banner of Cold War anti-Communism as the geostrategic rationale behind whatever kind of involvement it pursued. In this light it is relevant to point out as Coker correctly stresses, that “a distaste for Communism did not amount to a policy. A policy suggests a preference, a distinct national interest and a preferred means of serving it.”⁸ This deliberate incapacity to distinguish Communist change from reformist and/or moderate change marked, as my case study illustrates, the failure of the policy. It was about a dominant country (the US) unable to recognise the value of diversity and the universal in the international arena.

The US found itself shaping its own (mini) Cold War in Latin America, most of the time without historical and factual justification. Although it followed from the general framework of the Cold War atmosphere between the two superpowers, the conflict - both in terms of nature and measure - was over-emphasised in many of its features, largely for the sake of geopolitical strategy. Hence, the mechanical use of Cold War rhetoric contributed to a basic confusion in the

⁷ See D.Caute (1978). Fear has been a major issue in the socio-cultural life of the US, more precisely fear about outside threats. This is so especially before, during and after the Cold War years. An example of this was the *War of the Worlds*, Orson Welles’s famous dramatisation broadcasted on Halloween night in 1938 by his Mercury Theatre on the Air, which presented an Invasion from Mars so realistic and effective that at least one million people in the US became frightened and thousands were panic-stricken. An interesting study of this event and the psychology of panic in the US can be found in H.Cantril (1982). Perhaps there is nothing specifically *American* about such a reaction. Yet, there is not evidence of a socio-cultural episode of this importance occurring in any other industrialised (capitalist) society of the time.

⁸ C.Coker (1989:110).

understanding of reality and policies (through the construction of an illusion of great pragmatic utility) and created an historical obstacle to the achievement of peaceful consensus in the region.

Similarly, not only was the Soviet threat over-emphasised, but the whole strategic interest pursued by the US was, in the end, opposed to the structural needs underlying national rebellions. Following this line of analysis, US intervention ended up virtually being an action against the interest of the national societies and not actions against the Soviet presence as such. And thus, it was a process directed towards opposing what I would call the real threat, namely domestic change - which necessarily takes us to the need to highlight critically the principle which maintains that international relations consist solely of the interaction of governments or states.⁹ As will be shown when arriving at the empirical material in further chapters, the entire assumption and effectiveness of the policy - mainly shaped in the light of the Cold War - had to be questioned, for the alleged Soviet menace was actually difficult to identify as the basic source of threat to regional security, and more particularly to US security.

Particularly relevant here is Bull's argument that "the chief function of the balance of power... is not to preserve peace, but to preserve the system of states."¹⁰ When Bull referred to a "society of states", he meant primarily industrialised Capitalist states, although he also saw new, developing states as having accepted its basic principles.¹¹ The problem for this analysis, however, is that intervention itself compromises the ability of the state to act as mediator between the general and the particular interest, threatening its very existence *qua* state, and this applies to the actions meant to overthrow or support the overthrow of regimes in the name of security - these actions leave societies incapable of reaching order, justice and peace - particularly when differences in levels of development are marked.

In this context social revolutions and reformist movements in Latin America with the exceptions of Cuba and perhaps Nicaragua, have - not necessarily - pursued the eradication of

⁹ On the domestic consequences of violent interventions see G.Kolko (1988); J.Girling (1980); L.Etheredge (1985); R.Barnet (1972); R.A.Packenham (1973).

¹⁰ H.Bull (1977:107). See also above. George Kennan was of the strong opinion that international relations consisted primarily of the measured interaction of governments. See G.Kennan (1977:chapter-2).

¹¹ See, H.Bull (1977:258-259).

the basis of the Capitalist system. As an example of a reformist movement I would suggest the case of Guatemala, 1954. Lastly and intimately connected to the above, I will look at the extent to which the US interest, both perceived and real, has been threatened by revolution and its consequences. This argument takes us to the need to analyse closely the ideological and strategic content of the intervention and thus the strong hegemonic component (in terms of its *supremacist* expression as argued in the Introduction) that it has had in the Latin American context. This has brought about the visible result of the US not adopting a consistent or clear policy towards social revolutions - except that of intervening periodically - *vis à vis* its priority to defend the regional expression of national security at any cost. Additionally, in some countries the intervention fostered social injustice, antidemocratic features, long term social instability, authoritarian regimes, and the systematic violation of human rights.

The issue here thus appears to be the basic dilemma of liberal democracy. Where there were liberal democracies and change was pursued and achieved by constitutional means, as in Guatemala (and Chile later on), this was indeed fertile ground for the coming to power of governments that were radical or perceived as a threat by the US. But by intervening and (in the case of Guatemala) supporting violent processes of destabilisation, there was an increasing risk of subverting the very nature and foundations of the political system to which Washington was ostensibly committed - liberal democracy. The ambivalence feeding this 'dilemma' relates not only to the Latin American reality but also to the ambivalence towards democracy deeply rooted in US culture itself.

- The ugly American neo-empire: security or consensus?

In line with the latter reflection, however, I consider that it is necessary to do justice to the historical role of the United States in global and regional affairs over the last one hundred years, by saying that the fact that had US turned - albeit reluctantly - into a powerful country since the end of the 19th century and most especially during the nuclear era after World War II did not necessarily mean that this country had given birth to a neo-empire destined to inflict misery on the unprotected or weak nations of the world. The United States seemed to have followed the path of history and mission (its encounter with destiny) and paid tribute to the

cultural and political attributes that gave this nation its sense of identity, its fundamental rationality. Because the US achieved both supremacy and hegemony, not only as a result of its willingness and careful calculation to do so, but rather, as a result of its very convenient and fortunate position in the continental map, I would underline the dramatic, and sometimes disastrous results of its policies in Latin America. While not pausing to consider in depth the contradiction that is likely to be found between republicanism and dominance, or between republicanism and imperialism, I will say, in line with the above, that what did exist (or at least the feature that is undoubtedly most visible in the context of the US interest in the region) was the *physical* phenomenon of US strength, and the stereotyped desire to acquire both space and influence in the regional sphere.

At this point it is relevant to ask at what price US security had to be imposed? Was there any other avenue which might have led to security, for instance by tolerating or supporting the democratic features of those nations' political systems and thus through gaining potential allies among those countries' peoples? Did the establishment of democratic change present a real threat to US security? Why did security not share with democracy the former's achievements? Was democracy too much of a challenge for the US geostrategic principles of dominance, security and order in that it carried the possibility of innate structural, though generally moderate, transformations in the economy and polity of some of the countries of the Hemisphere? Was security possible alongside democratic change, or was democracy too much of a burden for the former? Was democracy as strategically non-essential or unimportant as the US response towards it appears to demonstrate? Thus, shall we conclude that democracy and order were seen as luxury items for Latin Americans committed to the achievement of political progress? And last but not least was the defence of true security negated in the very act of indiscriminately resorting to intervention for the sake of *experimentation* against pre-fabricated threats?¹²

¹² I would agree with Veyne, that “in history the questions, which are sociological, are more important than the answers, which are fact ... whatever the answer, isn't the main thing the very idea of putting the question? In other words, it is more important to have ideas than to know truths ... having ideas is also called dealing with a topic, acquiring consciousness of what is, making it explicit, conceptualising it, wrenching it from what goes without saying, from *Fraglosigkeit* [unquestioning] and from *Selbständigkeit* [autonomy].” P.Veyne (1982:197). See chapters 1-2 and part III in this thesis. It is within this vein that this work will try to be accomplished.

Justice or order?

Along these lines, it should be pointed out that the needs of justice are not necessarily the needs of order; that order is not necessarily the result of "a sense of common interests in the elementary goals of social life [and that] the rules prescribing behaviour that sustains these goals, and [the] institutions that help to make these rules effective [are in fact not necessarily so]."¹³ Bull's thesis on the compatibility of order and justice in the international system, misses the fact that one of the major goals of order - at least after World War II - was to contain social change. But this containment conflicted with a wider task of order during the process of independence (in Africa for example and to some extent in Latin America), namely the task of regulating national societies.¹⁴

In this context, moderate or radical change presented *threats* to order in that the aim of such change was the achievement of new rules to organise and consolidate new political and judicial systems. This seems to be the case with the Guatemalan Revolution of 1944, but especially its last period when Jacobo Arbenz came to power in 1951. I would argue that one of the reasons for the incompatibility of order and justice is that the dynamic expectations of the latter are obstacles to the former's designs. If this proves to be correct then order (in the Inter-American context), is meant to stop any tendency towards social change, even though the latter is directed towards the achievement of justice and democracy.¹⁵

Here two inescapable questions arise: first, was anti-Communism - in the Latin American context - historically responsible for the violent culmination of some processes of change, more generally in the form of authoritarianism and repressive regimes? And second, did anti-Communism actually impede the efforts towards peaceful change, so rendering the latter impossible and revolutions 'inevitable'?¹⁶

¹³ H.Bull (1977:65). See above in this chapter.

¹⁴ See below on the contradictory demands of containment.

¹⁵ Although there is not always a conflict between order and justice, I argue that this conflict is particularly critical in the context of Central America. See further in the Conclusions for my elaboration on the critical relationship between sovereignty and justice and order and democracy.

¹⁶ See the Introduction. For Bull's argument on order and justice see H.Bull (1977:93).

Morgenthau views justice and its moral implications in the context of foreign policy: "the state has no right to let its moral disapprobation ... get in the way of successful political action, itself inspired by the moral principle of national survival."¹⁷ On the other hand Reinhold Niebuhr explains the relationship between democracy, justice and legitimacy of governments in the times of absolutist monarchy, in terms that might illustrate also the contemporary expression of this problem:

"Justice is always a secondary, though not a primary, source of authority and prestige. The primary source is the capacity to maintain order because order is tantamount to existence in a community, and chaos means non-existence ... [Nevertheless, he concedes that] the source of power is the authority of a government to gain consent without force."¹⁸

In the context of the above points, it is possible to argue that Latin American revolutions of all types are a partial - if explosive - response to the priority of order in both the conceptualisations and the practices of international relations. The aforementioned questions are best illustrated - although still with a strong a-critical and missionary tone - by the inquiries of the liberal commentator William V. Shannon:

"For a quarter of century, the US has been trying to do good, encourage political liberty and promote social justice in the third world. But in Latin America where we have traditionally been a *friend* and *protector*... our relationships have mostly proved to be a recurring source of sorrow, waste and tragedy... Thus through economic assistance and the training of anti-guerrilla army teams we have been intervening with the *best* of motives [in Latin America]. But benevolence, intelligence and hard work have proved not to be enough. Chile demonstrates the problem... [where with the best of motives] ..., by intervening in this complicated situation, the CIA implicated the US in the unexpected sequel of a grim military dictatorship that employs torture and has destroyed the very freedom and *liberal* institutions we are trying to protect "¹⁹

¹⁷ H.Morgenthau (1967a:10). According to J.Rosenberg, "Morgenthau ... had some rather unflattering and unsophisticated views on human nature, and an embarrassing habit of parading them as the philosophical basis of realism," see, J.Rosenberg (1994:23).

¹⁸ R.Niebuhr (1959:108).

¹⁹ W.V.Shannon (1974:29), (my emphasis).

Shannon seems to be re-stating the 'dilemma of liberal democracy'. It would be pertinent to bear in mind the emphasis on the religious aspect of US foreign policy outlined in Chapter 1, and about which Niebuhr himself warns us: "no nation or individual, even the most righteous, is good enough to fulfil God's purposes in history."²⁰

- The dramatic existence of reality: history as ornament?

The above statement could provide us with strong grounds for doubting the US picture of world affairs and international order, especially when describing the state of affairs in Latin America. Furthermore, this picture could be sufficient to make us fall into the temptation, when analysing this phenomenon, of using the sophist rhetoric on the non-existence of reality, or as Gorgias has put it: "nothing exists: even if anything does exist it is inapprehensible by man."²¹

And yet, despite the risk, let us use it in order just to provide some semantic ground to emphasise that although history is what we see, it is sometimes also what we do not see, even perhaps what does not exist ("what *is* might not be" Veyne dixit) - for instance, the Communist menace in countries such as Guatemala in the 1950s. The actors tend to behave in discernible ways without necessarily thinking that their acts will determine completely the course of events. Although probably provocative, the whole idea of foreseeing the reality of events in a different way should history have been different, is an exercise of (sociological) imagination that attracts the attention of the observer in almost any field of knowledge. Hence the speculative rationalisation on any important aspect of reality and the fundamental venture of science which is to discover the unknown.²²

Still, in order to deal with the central preoccupations of this work there is a need to come to terms with the explanation of this phenomenon, especially that part related to the involvement of the US in the affairs of other countries, and the consequences upon the Inter-

²⁰ Quoted in Ibid:29.

²¹ See G.Kennedy (1980). See especially the section on the sophists. See also above chapter-1.

²² See the Introduction and part III.

American sphere. In this light, it is doubtless a main preoccupation of this observer interested in the ramifications that these affairs have had upon the history of the region, to discover the extent to which the US has been a major factor responsible for making history. This exercise has occurred by altering the setting of certain social and political orders, or, if we prefer, by impeding certain events (to-be) from arising or continuing. In this sense, it is also notable that the US has emerged as the only actor able both to perform a historical role and to encourage an historical process. This has been produced with the ultimate objective of directing the outcome of events, without conceiving that overcoming Latin American's essential interests and preoccupations in order to further its own security interests is one clear way of breeding potential social and political explosions in the region. Hence the unorthodox ontological approach to history might have been of use as a geopolitical instrument and yet it risked becoming a reversal mechanism.

The Balance of power and the use of force: the institutionalisation of hierarchy in foreign policy

There are of course various levels of analysis involved in grasping the full dimensions of this problem. Yet it seems that the problem of distribution of force and power at the regional level is at the centre of the discussion. Without force there can be no order and security. Without order and security, force cannot be achieved or executed. Force is then a *permanent* feature present in the process of materialising the conditions to make it enduring and effective.²³ Force in the name of order could condense force and order at the same time. Hence, the historical and cyclical need to dominate. Here it would be appropriate to add that among the contextual spaces in which the power of force is exerted there are hierarchies and priorities, contents and forms, that shape the struggle for spaces and influence.

At this point we might recognise a general - although in some cases reluctant - agreement to trade, accommodate and submit (particular) interests to the will of the dominant actors. There is also a perennial decline and variation in the nature of this settlement which in

²³ On the relationship between balance of power and pattern of power in global politics see chapter-3.

the end aims at achieving a relative balance of power. Through the achievement of a negotiated balance it is possible to reach a basic agreement to interact.²⁴ However, and here Spykman explains it quite conclusively, "experience has shown that there is more safety in balanced power than in a declaration of good intention. To preserve the balance requires action not only against the neighbour that becomes too powerful but also against distant states."²⁵

The interest in obtaining agreement in international relations is also illustrated by Spykman in the following terms:

"in international society, as in other social groupings, there are observable the three basic processes of co-operation, accommodation, and opposition. Not only individuals and groups but also states maintain the three types of social relations."²⁶

Nonetheless, when it comes to the problem of reconciling balances of power and hierarchies (which is what really counts in politics), we find that the sources and channels of power are manageable only in that it is accepted, as Bull maintains, that

"where one state is preponderant, it may have the option of disregarding the rights of other states, without fear that these states will reciprocate by disregarding their rights in turn, [hence, the need to accept that] while international law depends for its very existence as an operating system of rules on the balance of power, preservation of the latter often requires the breaking of these rules."²⁷

And this is explained by, among other things, the fact that,

"a balance of power policy is in the first place a policy for the Great Powers. The small states, unless they can successfully combine together, can only be weights

²⁴ I take interaction to mean the broad range of relations that exist in the international arena, including those that put in contact 'non-official' actors. In principle the interaction taking place between states is to some extent interaction between nations and societies, which, in some cases, are not necessarily the same. This may include alliances, interventions, treaties, annexations of territory, etc.

²⁵ N.J.Spykman (1942:20).

²⁶ Ibid:15-16.

²⁷ H.Bull (1977:108-109).

in a balance used by others. But although they are stakes rather than players, their interest in the outcome of the game is none the less great. A small state is a vacuum in a political high pressure area."²⁸

The "high pressure area" - wherever it is allocated in terms of the distribution of conflict - must be an ordered and manageable area, or, as Toynbee says when also referring to the balance of power mechanism, it must be regulated by what he terms a process of "anarchy by treaty."²⁹ In this view treaty negotiation becomes *institutionalised*, but this also legitimises warfare or violent means for resolving disputes or conflicts of interest. However, the ultimate purpose, is not just to achieve order, but to shape a framework that facilitates "putting into place if not a scheme of world order ... at least functional and regional elements of order."³⁰ It is precisely this order which, in the Latin American context, is the matter of contention. It concerns conflict at the Inter-American level, between actors in a *high pressure area*. It is most commonly about a conflict of power, an essential conflict in the understanding and definition of the national interest, which has been an integral component of the struggle between the countries of the continent. Apart from considering the US national interest as a race to obtain "limited ends" through the use of variable policies, I would agree with Hoffmann that in the foreign policy making process

"the actors define their national interest ... by giving primacy to their foreign policy needs and greeds: in terms of the geopolitical situation of the country, its external rivalries, ambitions, and drives, and its diplomatic traditions. For the main objectives are possession goals, i.e., the effective control of territories, populations, resources, and markets capable of increasing the overall power of improving the geo-political position, and of raising the rank of the player."³¹

This conflict, of course, has features and actors that might explain in this regional context the idea of a certain state as a *vacuum* in the international arena. A vacuum state would

²⁸ N.J.Spykman (1942:20).

²⁹ See, A.Toynbee(1967:xiii-xxix).

³⁰ S.Hoffmann (1978:10-11).

³¹ See *ibid*:110. Hoffmann says on the relationship between revolutions and national interest in the US: "revolution and radical reform are often not stable in the long run [and], it is not easy for America to associate itself with them - even when this would be in the national interest." See *Ibid*:31. This is a view relating to a pre-1939 world order. Yet, I argue that (in some cases more than in others) this is a characteristic still present within the modern international system.

be, in this line of argument, a relatively non-existent or non-representative state except when it stands firmly against historic conditions of the interaction, or calls for restraint in the use of some other actor's power. The small state, Spykman argues, "does not live because of its own strength but because nobody wants its territory or because its preservation as a buffer state or as a weight in the balance of power is of interest to a stronger nation."³² My aim here is to emphasise the *geostrategic role* that the United States, as the modern dominant regional actor, has played *vis à vis* the domestic processes of change taking place in the Latin American countries. In order to explain the extent to which the *American* interest³³ has been affected by events of this nature, it is important to establish broadly the geographical space where this has happened as well as the geopolitical premises upon which the interaction has taken place.³⁴

Within the context of the US *Rimland* Central America - an experimental zone - has appeared as the closest strategic portion of the continent to the United States, and because of its poor standard of living it was an important centre of social and political upheaval and thus an important theatre for US military operations. Thus the significance of the US implementation of its policies of containment and dominance to such an extraordinary extent, in comparison with the rest of the regions of the world, that it places the area in a stance of unconventional - yet controversial - priority. Although Central America and the Caribbean will be the geostrategic sphere for exploring the axioms pointed above, there is a paradigmatic parallelism between this region and some other important cases in the Southern Cone. Thus the explanation of the Guatemalan case shall allow us to explore to a great extent the historical and sociological similarities that exist from one case to another. Although aware that these similarities are the subject of an alternative research, I would argue that this can give us the instruments to judge how liberal democracies fell into disrepute and generalised unrest as a result of the domestic and external pressures upon them.

³² N.J.Spykman (1942:20).

³³ See chapter-1.

³⁴ On the geopolitical aspects of foreign policy see the following works: C.S.Gray (1977); C.S.Gray (1988); P.O'Sullivan (1986); G.Parker (1985); W.H.Parker (1982); G.R.Sloan (1988); G.Goertz (1989); A.Widavsky (1985); S.Neuman (1943:276-288); H.W.Weigert (1957); A.T.Mahan (1890); C.Chase-Dunn (1990:100-130); IISS (1980); N.J.Spykman (1942); P.Girot and E.Kofman (ed) (1987); D.J.M.Hooson (1964).

- Geopolitics and containment in Central America: the disadvantages of power

There has been a long process of change and conflict in Inter-American relations during the last three decades. It is of particular importance to point out that from the 1950's up to the 1980s decisive changes occurred in the relationship between the US and the Latin American countries.³⁵ On the one hand the international order - with the US its major actor - underwent a radical transformation. This transformed the decadent old order and the distribution of global power-shares; this was carried out alongside the policies of containment. Attention needs to be paid to two main aspects which imprint historical importance upon the long period of the Cold War. One is the evolution of Communism as a form of government and the other is the consolidation of Capitalism and liberal democracy. These two outcomes were the direct result of the end of World War II and of the defeat of fascism. The aftermath of the war brought about unusual new tension in the international system, which was to be dominated by the nuclear confrontation between the two main superpowers. But most of all, this struggle for power was expressed in the form of regional conflicts which in the end would prove decisive in determining the fate of international agreements.

Thus, the bottom line of the superpowers' regional confrontation lies far beyond the so-called ideological confrontation between Communism and Capitalism, although it has been accepted that in practical terms some of the decisive stages of the superpowers' confrontation were the direct result of this. In order to understand one of the central arguments in this thesis, it is necessary to stress that it is the regional geopolitical interest³⁶ - which is in itself a dominant rationale behind the US hegemonic impulse in Latin America - that has been behind the shaping of the dominant features of US policy across the region, interacting with the issue of ideological confrontation.

Likewise, it is comprehensible that the ideological struggle shaped the affairs of the new order and that anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism were more of a rhetorical or technical

³⁵ On the Inter-American issue see: G.C.Smith (1974).

³⁶ The existence of geopolitics as such, implies the existence of *losers* and *winner*s. Nevertheless, I think with the Sprouts, that "despite their shortcomings, geopolitical speculation and theorizing have enriched our understanding of the international system," as quoted in, W.H.Parker (1982:149). For a further development of this idea see, H.&M.Sprout (1965).

instruments than genuine expressions of the state of the affairs within the Inter-American sphere. Nevertheless, I argue that this technical instrument of foreign policy was an inescapable component of the US *geopolitical crusade*. It is along these lines that the ideological dimension of the policy was unveiled: as a tactical component in the formulation and imposition of strategic principles, the latter occurring more as a result of US strength than of the correctness of its argument - hence the suggestion of the construction of an illusion.³⁷

As I have mentioned in chapter 1, it is the US regional supremacy that is at stake and the US conviction that, within such a framework, the Inter-American order could not tolerate - if it wanted to be *viable* - any radical change in the domestic life of the countries of the region; any process of this sort was seen as a threat and was drastically opposed by Washington. For this reason the US, as the only superpower in the region, has intervened continuously in direct ways in the continent and has affected this region more generally in numerous indirect ways. The explanation of this does not necessarily rest, as Williams suggests, in the lack of US knowledge of the region, but in the fact that Washington has acted more according to geostrategic principles than to a coherent set of regional policies.³⁸ In this respect it is significant that this strategic vision is in part closely associated to the historic condition of the United States as an emerging power in this century: "today [the US] has little choice but to organize and protect, if not to exploit and dominate the accessible maritime world; she must therefore be to some degree an imperialist power."³⁹

In view of this it is worthwhile quoting, on the one hand Goldstein, who critically comments on Morgenthau's view of the balance of power mechanism:

"the long cycle perspective implies a dim view of balance-of-power theory. The balance is seen not as an elegant and timeless system for keeping the peace, but rather a degenerate, transitional and unstable phase of the hegemonic cycle. Every balance-of-power system has degenerated into recurring great power wars and eventually hegemonic war."⁴⁰

³⁷ See part III.

³⁸ See W.A.Williams (1972:chapters-1-3). This will be discussed further, see below parts II-III.

³⁹ W.H.Parker (1982:198).

⁴⁰ As quoted by C.Chase-Dunn (1990:127).

On the other hand doubts have been raised elsewhere as to how disadvantageous it is for the US, in the context of international relations to place itself as the "champion of 'freedom', 'democracy', 'decency', and of 'human rights'; yet in order to obtain the kind of stability needed for Rimland control [it] supports military dictatorships which suppress human rights with American arms."⁴¹ The above condition is considered to be a major relative disadvantage and potential weakness of this policy in that it "not only provides the USSR with powerful propaganda, but develops anti-American feeling in the countries concerned, [besides] too visible a military connection with the West and in particular the United States, might weaken domestically uncertain regimes, rather than strengthen them."⁴² The "Americans, [argues I. Davidson], have gone too far in clothing the skeleton of Realpolitik in the robes of saintliness."⁴³ And finally in referring to Communism and evil, Robert E. Walters has stated that "the outward attitude towards Communism and Russia (sic) was cloaked in the mantle of a crusade of goodness against evil."⁴⁴ Accordingly, acting according to geostrategic principles involves imposing the consideration that one party's concept of security must become the others' concept of security, or as Gray has put it when he emphasises that producing (the idea of security) also creates the *need* to produce (the idea of security): "the US produces and others consume security."⁴⁵

This has been the norm when it has come to (the US) coping with revolutions and social unsteadiness. Revolutions in themselves have been considered by the US to be 'anomalies' in the realm of the international order and major threats against security in the Inter-American sphere. The US has set out to convince domestic and foreign interest groups or potential allies of the inconvenience of allowing these processes to occur and develop out of control, beyond the

⁴¹ See W.H.Parker (1982:200).

⁴² See IISS (1980:9).

⁴³ See I.Davidson (1979:21).

⁴⁴ See R.E.Walters (1974:192).

⁴⁵ C.S.Gray (1988:40). The struggle between the *Empire of God* (US) and the *Holy Empire* (USSR) constitutes the major feature of bipolarism. As a result this aspect has become a constant impromptu on the part of the two actors pursuing national security.

possibility of containment. In the light of this approach - despite the lack of coherence of the policy - the US has had quite enough strategic and thus historical reasons to confront those conflicts - wherever - that put at risk its geo-strategic might. Hence, the unavoidable need of the US to respond in a particular way to a particular conflict occurring in the *American Mediterranean*.⁴⁶

Pragmatism versus rational policy

This generalised policy against change gradually left US strategy in Latin America exposed to the pragmatic considerations of consecutive administrations from President Truman onwards. And yet, it is important to stress the appearance of a paradox: that seen as a whole, US policy in the region has not even been entirely pragmatic, for it has had to resort to actions meant to solve conjunctural crisis but not designed as components of a long-term planned policy. In this view I would argue that the essential principle of pragmatism, or as referred by William James, "the pragmatic method", is action. And action alone, meaning practice towards immediate achievements, represents in this context a very valuable (although not always workable) principle for *Realpolitik*. Although it was originated by the Greeks, Charles Pierce introduced it into philosophy and James made use of it in reference to rationalization, humanism and religion. Jameson view of pragmatism is relevant here:

"the pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise may be interminable. Is the world one or many? - fated or free? - material or spiritual? ... The pragmatic method... is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences ... If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side or the other's being right."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ The American Mediterranean as explained by A.T.Mahan (1890); and N.J.Spykman (1942). See above chapter-1.

⁴⁷ See F.Burkhardt (1975:28). See also W.James (1978:chapters 2,5-6). For an empirical view of the US role in international affairs, see J.G.Stoessinger (1975).

A dominant power such as the US cannot risk its hold upon the strategic zone of dominance by tying itself to a *steady* policy (thus the inevitability of sacrificing a rational policy). Rather the contrary: an obvious behaviour, loyal to its dominant condition, should be that of having a free margin of acting as a response to whatever event may occur. The above condition is the best of the guarantees to convince of the rationale of US policy and thus to impose the circumstances and procedures that make it possible. This has been in principle the framework used historically by the United States to launch its design in the region. The immediate outcome of this policy of disarray has been either lack of coherence in order to achieve general interests, a lack of policy in order to fulfil a most important geopolitical principle, a pragmatic policy which aimed at providing the right solution in the context of critical or normal circumstances, and/or a combination of the three of them. In any event, it is discernible, as will be seen in the official foreign policy documents, that an interventionist enthusiasm has lain behind every one of the initiatives pursued by Washington. Although on most occasions this intervention was accomplished militarily, US involvement in the affairs of Latin America included all sorts of economic and political means, including the economic boycott. Hence the attention given to the use of force as a means of coercion in the face of domestic change. Accordingly, an analysis of this type has to be carried out in the light of the following axiom: intervention was produced against revolution and revolution was a partial and indirect response to the historical collapse created by intervention.

- Mapping the world

The above proposition ought to be explained in the light of the following: first, what the *mapping* of the world was in terms of the general strategy of the US after World War II; second, what the US sphere of influence in Latin America is; and, third, whether or not a connection between containment and geographical priorities exists. Thus, I would argue that the US rise to globalism⁴⁸ in Latin America - as I will show when analysing my case study in Parts Two and Three - was achieved alongside, and was endorsed by, the philosophical and strategic principles of containment. The effect of this was to influence significantly both the nature of the

⁴⁸ See S.Ambrose (1991).

involvement and the essence of the subsequent evolution of events occurring and to occur in the region and most specifically in relation to Guatemala.

As maintained in chapter 1, there is a well-moulded, systematised stance towards social revolutions in the United States. Undoubtedly much of this approach has to be explained in the light of the national character of the US, and thus in the light of the conception that US people have of that part of the world neighbouring their country.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, it must be said that most of this perception that the US has of the external world is founded upon a wide range of material and physical conditions surrounding the United States. One of these essential conditions is geography and that part of the physical environment that explains its specificities. It can be said that without geography and the political association that it has made from it, an important component of US history would not be explained, that of its geopolitical condition.⁵⁰ Accordingly in the US formulation of geopolitical strategies what is most important to underline is that

"political predominance is a question not just of having power in the sense of resources but also of the structure of the field within which that power is exercised; [almost] 'all international transactions involving some element of opposition, resistance, struggle or conflict, the factors of location, space and distance between the interacting parties have been significant variables'."⁵¹

When discussing geography and international affairs Colin Gray has argued that "Geography is the most fundamental factor in the foreign policy of states because it is the most permanent."⁵² In this process it is worthwhile to say that although the geographical perspective is somehow unavoidable when attempting to shape and understand any kind of policies at the global or regional level, the geographic or geostrategic plane is not just important because of its

⁴⁹ See M.Hunt (1987:chapter-4- "*The Perils of Revolution.*").

⁵⁰ See, G.R.Sloan (1988:ix). The US is not alone in terms of its geopolitical importance. On issues like geography, prejudice, etc., the US is probably no better and no worse than most nations, especially powerful ones. However, a substantial difference must be underlined. This predominant US geopolitical reality occurs (as opposed to Czarist Russia or Imperial Spain) in technologically advanced times: today nuclear deployment can make the difference between partial or total destruction.

⁵¹ As quoted in *ibid*:ix.

⁵² C.S.Gray (1977:1).

relative stability (its “permanent condition” according to Gray) but also because of - as Starr and Siverson argue - "its role in shaping the dynamics of opportunities and risks."⁵³

Furthermore, when it comes to the formulation of certain foreign policies, a number of complex political and geographical assumptions are indeed inescapable in the context of obtaining relative advantages. This is most clearly the case when talking about power formulation and powerful actors who appear to be *destined* to have some kind of attraction for all that is potentially conquerable. The latter seems to be the case of most of the Great Powers that have been able to articulate their physical or geographical *time* with their historical *timing* into some sort of framework of language and political action as a means of achieving a means of dominance and control as a priority of their foreign policy objectives.⁵⁴ In this sense O'Sullivan reminds us that

"if we are willing to make crassly simple assumptions about the objectives of foreign policy, then it may be possible to produce a crude first approximation to geopolitical behaviour, in either deterministic or probabilistic fashion. The essence of the state is territoriality and the focus of international competition is control of territory. [At the same time] geographical images of world politics ... are important not because they objectively explain reality, but because they interpret or express the intentions of certain powerful sets of people."⁵⁵

What is important to notice is that, in defining the relative gain there is behind any process of increasing and achieving any actor's influence, the contextual sphere of this dynamic is by no means separated from the sphere of content. Context and content are two parts of a single strategy which is always dynamic and mutable. In this line the context has its own means to be an enduring force in the process of definition of any geopolitical strategy, to the extent that "it is not static."⁵⁶ In the international field, geography is, according to Starr and Siverson

"one component of the international/geopolitical context. The mapping process is to be seen as a dynamic in which space is a contingent factor, where

⁵³ H.Starr&R.Siverson (1990:237).

⁵⁴ See P.Kennedy (1987); and P.O'Sullivan (1986).

⁵⁵ P.O'Sullivan (1986:ibid:24).

⁵⁶ H.Starr&R.Siverson (1990:236).

territoriality is constantly in motion ... Put simply, there is a constant dynamic in the configuration and reconfiguration of space within the context of international relations."⁵⁷

This idea is explained and connected with the issue of content in more general terms by the insights of Goertz: "... we speak of contextual theory where the relationship between variables is not just additive, but where the importance of the effects of the different variables are theorized to be different in different environments."⁵⁸ It was not until the 19th century, when the modern geopolitical ideas were shaped, that it was possible to distinguish the specificity of each country's need and determination for control. The United States has resorted to achieving the latter through the use of what Gray calls the "American Way."⁵⁹ This is to say that the specific US necessity *to map* the world and to achieve a favourable geopolitical configuration stems from an historical and inherent need to interact with the rest of the world, in order to project what it considered to be its *uniqueness*, "the notion that America is not an 'ordinary country.'"⁶⁰ According to Gray it was because of "its geography that the US has an insular perspective of international relations. The US is an insular power of continental size. Both psychologically and in terms of military logistics, its traditionally protective oceanic distances [have been enough] to retain major strategic significance."⁶¹

As a "world unto itself" both in political and geographical terms, the US was able to measure the degree and size of the "opportunities and risks" it had to face throughout its historical role as a world power in the twentieth century. And as a result of this and its ability to direct alliances and intervene in world conflicts, the US was able to turn into a "Global Guardian."⁶² A guardian capable of producing not only a notion of, but also a need for, an order meant to shape events and strategies in world affairs. Hence, cultural features in the US are intimately connected with the realities of expansion and the needs of fulfilling the US dream of

⁵⁷ Ibid:236; and A.Kirby (1986:187-192).

⁵⁸ G.Goertz (1989:5).

⁵⁹ C.S.Gray (1988:chapter-6).

⁶⁰ Ibid:54.

⁶¹ Ibid:45.

⁶² Ibid:56. See the Introduction.

achieving what seemed to be the mission of every generation: national greatness in the name of destiny.⁶³ In accordance with the above idea the achievement of geographical advantages in the light of the mapping of the world pursued by the US had very much to do with the essential nature of that country. The need for expansion expressed a main feature of US political culture; or to use Gray's thoughts in this respect: "geopolitics ... embraces human and cultural factors as well as the statistics of the territorial dimensions, landforms, economic assets, distances."⁶⁴

Broadly conceived, geography directs the very cultural features defining that nation's self-perception of US historical role. The nation's vision was to a great extent determined by the people's (but most especially, the political elite's) vision as a result of the physical conditions that were present in the creation of its national culture. This is stressed by Gray as follows: "the political behaviour of a country is the reflection of that country's history; and that country's history is in great part (though certainly not entirely) the product of its geographical setting."⁶⁵

The geographical shield: a context for frontier politics

The major features of US expansionism are linked to the fundamental ideas that gave birth both to the conception and reality of a new nation. Again Paz, when comparing the flourishing of the "two Americas", has maintained that the Utopian character of the "Saxon portion of the continent" was "purer" in that settlement implied for "America" a relative less complex struggle with nature and the elements. He develops his view of this essential cultural difference (subsequently economic and political too) in the following terms:

"America was - if it was anything - geography, pure space, open to human action. Lacking historical substance - old class divisions, ancient institutions, inherited beliefs and laws - reality presented only natural obstacles. Men fought, not against history but against nature. And where there was an historical obstacle

⁶³ See the Introduction and chapter 1.

⁶⁴ C.S.Gray (1988:43).

⁶⁵ C.S.Gray (1988:43).

- as in the Indian societies - it was erased from history and, reduced to a mere act of nature, action followed as if this were so."⁶⁶

Hence, terms such as “exceptionalism” and “mission” were direct antecedents of the US’s genuine position of power on the world map in general, and the continental map in particular. This aspect of the US predominance is well drawn out by Spykman:

"History has treated us kindly; geography has endowed us greatly; the opportunities have been well used; and the result is that our country is today the most important political unit in the New World. Geography and strategic factors, raw materials and population density, economic structure and technological advancement all contribute to give the United States a position of hegemony over a large part of the Western Hemisphere. The United States is blessed by the happy circumstance that she is a strong power between two weak powers [Canada and México]. She need fear no direct assault on her land boundaries, and her security problem is not one of frontier defense [...] It is, therefore, perfectly obvious that the land neighbours of the United States cannot menace her boundaries. Regional location gives our country a position of unrivaled territorial security."⁶⁷

Thus a scale model country was reproduced in the form of “*America*” and other countries were to be measured against it; this allowed the United States to enjoy the privilege of being the first in any pairing. Complementary to this, the US had guaranteed - through its geographical shield - permanent protection from “unknown” foreign forces. For this reason we cannot explain the expansionist energy of the US solely on grounds of the primary ideological deterministic view that the US had of the world and its “sacred” destiny to dominate it. It is extremely important to pay attention to the material-physical realities that made possible much of the content of these principles. In addition it can be argued that the reality of geography was also a decisive factor in giving the US its own (and it seems only) possibilities of expression - in the various stages of its historical move towards dominance, supremacy, and even hegemony - would not be misleading. In this context it is especially important to observe, as has been already drawn above, the extent to which geography creates a context for politics - this is to say a context for policies of dominance with a clear calculation of the “risks and the benefits”

⁶⁶ O.Paz (1992:10), (my emphasis).

⁶⁷ N.J.Spykman (1942:59-60).

involved.⁶⁸ It is for this reason that in this continuous process of securing a *geographical shield* there was a major cultural aspect which established the appropriate conditions of thinking and behaving, or as Gray expresses it:

"The American people are geopolitically conditioned as Americans to think and feel in a reasonably distinctive American way about those choices. The roots of American strategic culture lie in the frontier tradition, an experience and expectation of success in national endeavours, experience with an abundance of resources for defense, a dominant political philosophy of liberal idealism and a sense of separateness - moral, geostrategic - from the evil doings of the Old World ... The 'cultural thoughtways' of a people or peoples who conceive of themselves as a nation are very much the product of geography."⁶⁹

Complementary to this argument is F.J. Turner's concept of the frontier. Turner, albeit implicitly, also addressed this issue from the cultural perspective giving strong weight to the fact that

"an appeal of the undiscovered [was] strong in America. American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line ... This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion Westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character."⁷⁰

And he added, referring to exemplarism, that

"American democracy was born of no theorist's dream ... there was the ideal of democracy, the ideal of a self-directing people, responsive to leadership in the form of programmes and their execution ... and it gained new strength each time it touched a new frontier. Not the Constitution, but free land and abundance of natural resources open to a fit people ... there was the ideal for discovery, the courageous determination to break new paths, indifference to the dogma that because an institution or a condition exists, it must remain. All American experience has gone to the making of the spirit of innovation; it is in the blood and will not be repressed. [Concluding with a fundamental aspect of the

⁶⁸ See A.Kirby (1986:190).

⁶⁹ C.S.Gray (1988:43). Juan Bosch, the deposed president of Dominican Republic defined the Caribbean as an "Imperial frontier," see, P.Girot&E.Kofman (1987:114).

⁷⁰ F.J.Turner (1962:2-3).

American creed]: The world was to be made a better world by the example of a democracy in which there was freedom of the individual, in which there was the vitality and mobility productive of originality and variety."⁷¹

Originality and variety were indeed archetypal values in the developing national culture, the new civilisation. Yet these values in the very process of the US's retaining strong influence upon the building of a foreign policy developed the basis for policies of *exceptional* power. This was especially so in the immediate US zone of influence. These values were exported for the sake of both the achievement and the conservation of regional ascendancy. And, thus, it occurred that the US (security) interest in Central America was claimed at the expense of the (national) interest of Central Americans. In this way the entire region was exposed to this interpretation which provided the US with a major opportunity to reach a position of force by grasping a key region on its strategic map. In the light of this it is possible to say that the insights of official theoreticians such as Turner or Spykman and others that preceded and followed (like Mahan, Kennan, and perhaps Kissinger among others) were rationalisations of what appeared to become reality in the gradual process of (global) expansion and growth westward. In other words, such rationalisations were the expression of those (geopolitical) times and the subsequent ones to follow. To what extent did the perception of the world depicted in the above terms influence the patterns that were going to dominate not only the interpretation of Latin America's political geography, but also the avenue to follow in order to reach the objectives of foreign policy?

- The sphere of influence. Mapping the "Grand Area" in the "American Heartland": against the external threat

As recently as 1985, A. Widavsky referred to the United States in the following terms:

"By its very existence, whether it wishes or not ... America is and must remain the shield of the West. America is the only global power able to resist the Soviet Union. America's fault is that *it exists*. Therefore, it threatens the vital principle of Soviet rule - no independent centres of power. So long as there is a global

⁷¹Ibid:293,306.

alternative, therefore, the Soviet system cannot fully consolidate its rule either inside or outside the USSR."⁷²

It is within this framework of "contextual struggle for existence with the fittest surviving"⁷³ that we can find the shaping of the concept of *Heartland*. The concept is owed to the English geopolitician Sir Halford J. Mackinder and it was extremely important in defining the geostrategic realm of the world. The term was subsequently in common use in the US, which was often referred to as the *American Heartland*. This was actually a distortion of Mackinder. The original meaning of "Heartland" was first suggested by Mackinder before the Royal Geographical Society in January 1904 in a paper entitled "The Geographical Pivot of History," where he described the Asian territories, in particular its core, as having inland or Arctic drainage and therefore being out of reach of maritime power.⁷⁴ He saw the "pivot area" of the Heartland as the key geopolitical area in the contemporary world.

The idea that Russia was potentially the strongest nation in the world by virtue of unique geopolitical considerations was a the core of Mackinder's theory. The "Heartland" theory as developed by the British geopolitician later on in 1919, conceived Russia, thereafter the USSR, as the *Pivot Area* of the Heartland. In his world view the Heartland was similar in significance to the *Pivot Area* as conceived in 1904. Although covering a very similar area, it was considerably larger and significantly included the whole of the eastern part of Europe.⁷⁵ At the same time the *Heartland* would be surrounded by what he called *The Rimland*, namely, Northern China, India and part of the Arab world. Mackinder, interpreted by Parker, defined the Heartland in general terms as

"the region to which, under modern conditions sea power can be refused access ... we have come to the conclusion that the World-Island [the term used by Mackinder to describe the single landmass made up by Europe, Asia and Africa] and the Heartland are the final Geographical Realities in regard to sea-power and land-power, and that East Europe is essentially a part of the Heartland ... Russia

⁷² A.Widavsky (1985:117), (my emphasis).

⁷³ S.Neuman (1943:148).

⁷⁴ See H.J.Mackinder (1969).

⁷⁵ G.Parker (1985:33-34,186,188).

was the first tenant of the Heartland with a really menacing man-power. 'The territory of the USSR is equivalent to the Heartland'."⁷⁶

The concept of *Heartland* was to be developed by Mackinder over the time up to the age of the Cold War, in which debate he took part to some extent. However, let me argue that for the purpose of my analysis his conception of the world is very much an early version of the containment theory in that it was based upon a vision of a world situation driven by a (western) *confrontational* approach where the West should be the dominant force among several. He said: "the Westerners are the Victors, and they alone are able to prevent the whole world from having to pass through the cycle so often repeated in the case of individual nations - idealism, disorder, Famine, Tyranny."⁷⁷ From then onwards there have been a number of critics that have endorsed, improved, implemented, and adapted this theory to the new international order stemming from the end of World War II. Accordingly, G. Parker suggested that the 'Heartland' yields its power to the state which "commands" and it can be commanded from outside or within it.⁷⁸

Such appeared to be the line followed by political geographers such as H.W. Weigert, who in 1957 defended strongly the new political (and thus geopolitical) reality of the US and who said in reference to Mackinder's theory:

"the concept of North America as part of a chain of insular powers distant from the Heartland now becomes a geographical myth. In terms of air-geography the Heartland and North America appear in destiny-laden proximity. As viewed over the top of the world, the Heartland assumes a location different from that which Mackinder assigned to it plotting it from Britain and with the destinies of Britain foremost in his mind ... seen from North America and in terms of new communications reaching out from many points in the farflung 'perimeter of defense' line, inaccessibility and vastness no longer conceal the Heartland from us. It no longer lies behind an impenetrable wall of isolation."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ W.H.Parker (1982:165,166,217).

⁷⁷ Ibid:166.

⁷⁸ See, G.Parker (1985:120-138).

⁷⁹ H.W.Weigert (1957:217). This quote seems to refer to the arrival of nuclear weapons and in particular long-range airpower (ICBMs). In the Inter-American context this question was crucial in the light of the stationing of Soviet medium range missiles in Cuba, 90 miles from Florida.

There were other more radical critics that went beyond Mackinder's theoretical boundaries, such as D. Hooson who discussed that if there was anywhere a world citadel or Heartland, it may well lie in North America rather than Eurasia. He refers to geographer George Cressey on this and concludes that, “‘from the standpoint of geography’ ... it is very unlikely that the USSR will ever overtake North America [as the new Heartland].”⁸⁰ Hall went on in 1955 and advanced his idea that the Americans were “‘justified ... in speaking of an Anglo-American Heartland ... set in the midst of the oceans rather than in the centre of a great land mass.”⁸¹ As time went by the advantageous position of what A.K. Henrikson called the *Insula Fortunata*⁸² in reference to the United States, was more visible. At this point, a switch occurred in the configuration of the new picture of the world. For example A.P. de Severesky (1952) modified the debate significantly when he observed the strategic dimension of this issue from a regional perspective.⁸³

De Severesky argued that the world was divided into two great circles, that of the United States covered most of the Western Hemisphere whilst that of the Soviet Union covered the greater part of the World Island. The two possessed approximately equal power over North America and Northern Eurasia, and this was the “area of decision” within which the two industrial hearts were in striking distance of one and other by strategic bombers. The key to world supremacy thus, lay within this area and the US had a number of strategic advantages. Apart from this, the defence of the United States was to be conducted from the Western Hemisphere and Latin America, located in the rear of the US on the Pole-centred projection was to constitute a reserve economic hinterland. He suggested that,

“South America is the US’s aerial back yard, safely outside the aviation reach of Soviet Russia. The North American land mass stands as a barrier between Eurasia and Latin America. Shipping between North and South America will be coastwise and generally beyond the striking range of Soviet air forces ... Where

⁸⁰ D.J.M.Hooson (1964:115).

⁸¹ As quoted by W.H.Parker (1982:225).

⁸² Quoted in G. Parker (1985:138).

⁸³ See the Introduction on Booth’s insights on the importance of area studies.

the American circle and the Russian ellipse overlap will be the aerial no-man's land, where the struggle for mastery of the whole air ocean will be unfolded."⁸⁴

A natural rights (international) order in the American Crush-Zone?

Apart from this being a new explanatory dimension of the world scene and the fact that it is useful to envisage the basis upon which the real shares of territory and power were going to be distributed, it is worth highlighting the powerful connection there is between this basis and the essential principles contained in the dominant conception of the global order. The above insights as seen from the US perspective appeared to conceive of the human phenomena within the global sphere as a natural cycle stemming from a natural rights system that provided the strongest of the actors not only with the right to impose its ambition, but also (logically) the "mission" to decide the others' destiny.

This assumption, as we shall see further, was to depict the major modern components of bipolarity, supremacy and hegemony.⁸⁵ At the same time it deprived the minor actors of the world arena, in particular the members of what I would call the *American Rimland* or *American Crush Zone* - of any chances for (even relative) autonomy when defining their priorities.⁸⁶ Or as it is put by R. Tuck in his study of Grotius, the world was one in which

"men had physically to take possession of the material object, or to alter or define it in some way ... [and although the sea was] not yet private property in the modern sense [it was going to be a place where men had] rights of a kind over it and on it [concluding that]: Grotius had provided a useful ideology for

⁸⁴ A.P.De Severesky (1952:260). See also A.P.De Severesky (1961).

⁸⁵ Hoffmann discusses that the definition of the world was "not a bipolar, but a hegemonic order." See, S.Hoffmann (1978:13).

⁸⁶ O' Sullivan describes the 'crush zone' as "the belt of small countries lying between the Heartland and the sea powers [adding that] most of the conflicts of the last 30 years have arisen in the 'crush zone' between the great powers. The force fields of the hegemonies may be thought of as extending out from their cores overwhelming smaller nations with their powers surrounding the spheres of influence of lesser powers and lapping against each other at the edges. In this picture the rulers of each state dominate the territorial limits." P.O'Sullivan (1986:33,69). I agree that these concepts refer to 'security zones' where great powers' traditional security is at stake. Although Central America was not a classic zone of (military) risk for Washington, the terminology can be useful when explaining the geopolitical ideological preoccupation that "conflict" in the "belt of small countries" represented for the US.

competition over material resources in the non-European world and had clearly begun the intellectual process that was to culminate in the competitive rights of the Hobbesian state of nature."⁸⁷

The state of nature had a strong similarity with the principles lying behind the geopolitical approach of theoreticians such as Mahan, Mackinder and Spykman, as well as with some of the essential early views of US realism, which in this study appears to match the central premise that "what God has shown to be his will, that is law."⁸⁸ Likewise, the axioms embraced in this view could not be fulfilled without *Uniqueness* which according to Hoffmann "was seen as emanating from the domestic harmony of ends; [and] force was seen as the legitimate and only way of dealing with the conflict of ends and with those who would not compromise."⁸⁹ In the light of this eschatological self-imposed role in history and in order to accomplish this (quite) divine voluntaristic task, there was the power "to punish [which right and mission had] been granted to the state alone."⁹⁰

In the context of the *Heartland* picture that Mackinder and the other theorists provided as a way to understand the means to improve the technical and political instruments to exert domination upon the global order, there was a gradual process of interpreting world order on the basis of natural rights. As a result, there was a need for a logical naturalistic construction of the depiction of the zones of influence as areas bound to be included in the framework of domination. This is accounted for by Parker in the following terms:

"the early geopoliticians were trained in natural science and applied Darwinian theory to Geography. They take a more or less organic view of the state (which had the "power to punish"... only) [and] of international affairs ... Mackinder ... seems originally to have approached political geography within a Darwinian framework."⁹¹

⁸⁷ R.Tuck (1979:61,62).

⁸⁸ Grotius as quoted in R.Tuck (1979:59). See my footnote on realism in the Introduction.

⁸⁹ S.Hoffmann (1978:6).

⁹⁰ Grotius as quoted by R.Tuck (1979:62). Grotius argues however, that this 'power' is entitled to individuals too.

⁹¹ W.H.Parker (1982:148), (my parenthesis). Mackinder was interested in understanding the great movements of power in history. Yet, whether he wished or not, his ideas influenced great power's geopolitical thinking.

As seen in the light of these theories Latin America as a whole and the Central American region in particular appeared (in their condition as part of one of the “rush lands”) as being territories where these expressions found their organic site, their situational “rendezvous with destiny”. This sense of inevitability, however, is best refuted by Hannah Arendt when she argues that "to our modern way of thinking nothing is meaningful in and by itself, not history nor nature, taken as a whole, and certainly not particular occurrences in the physical order or specific historical events."⁹² The uniform notion of world politics so prevalent in Washington is also refuted by Arendt’s argument that an historical event is a unique outcome which does not repeat itself.⁹³

Tracing the American Rimland

In 1942 Spykman defined the Americas as the area in which the United States must have absolute hegemony, because he considered its maritime hinterland crucial to the supply of raw materials and a zone of defence outposts. But as early as 1890 another strategist, Alfred Mahan, the first geopolitician of the United States, had already conceived of a close parallel between the American Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, and the Mediterranean of the Old World. His idea was the creation of a set of “new Gibaltars”. The importance of this emphasis on the "physical conformation" of a country was best expressed by Mahan in his influential book, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*:

"the geographical position of a country may not only favour the concentration of its forces, but give the further strategic advantage of a central position and good base for the hostile operations against its probable enemies ... The seaboard of a country is one of its frontiers; and the easier the access offered by the frontier to the region beyond, in this case the sea, the greater will be the tendency of a people toward intercourse with the rest of the world by it."⁹⁴

⁹² H.Arendt (1957:11).

⁹³ I refer to history in the same sense as Veyne does. History was to repeat itself in the context of US policy in the region. For more on Veyne’s view see the Introduction and chapter-5.

⁹⁴ See A.T.Mahan (1890:30-35).

Accordingly, he considered that "the position of the United States upon the two oceans would be either a source of great weakness or a cause of enormous expense, had it a large sea commerce on both coasts."⁹⁵ And thus a crucial aspect of Mahan's geopolitical theory concerned the opening of a trans-isthmian canal at Panamá. This would alter the relation of the US to the Caribbean so that the US could be the dominant sea power in the Caribbean area:

"The chief political result of the Isthmian canal will be to bring our Pacific Coast nearer not only to our Atlantic seaboard, but also to the great navies of Europe ... Except to those optimists whose robust faith in the regeneration of human nature rejects war as an impossible contingency, this consideration must occasion serious thought concerning the policy to be adopted by the United States'."⁹⁶

Thus, this analogy went as far as to establish a strong parallel between the strategic importance that the Mediterranean Sea represented for the great European powers of the time, and that which the region of the Caribbean and Central America represented for the United States. In this explanatory effort Mahan gave considerable emphasis to the fact

"that circumstances had caused the Mediterranean Sea to play a greater part in the story of the world, both in a commercial and a military point of view, than any other sheet of water of the same size ... Furthermore, it has at the present time a very marked analogy in many respects to the Caribbean sea - an analogy which will be still closer if a Panama Canal-route ever be completed. A study of the strategic conditions of the Mediterranean ... will be an excellent prelude to a similar study of the Caribbean, which has comparatively little history."⁹⁷

Within the context of the debate on the US interest in constructing the Canal route through Panamá, Mahan argued that the adventure could be a strategic failure if the US did not at the same time ensure the control of maritime gateways in the Caribbean through the construction of naval bases. In this respect he had already advanced some insights in his book by considering the asymmetry there was in the

⁹⁵ Ibid:29.

⁹⁶ G.R.Sloan (1988:90).

⁹⁷ A.T.Mahan (1890:33).

"geographical position of the United States relatively to a Central American Canal. If one be made and fulfil the hopes of its builders, the Caribbean will be changed from a terminus, and place of local traffic ... to one of the great highways of the world. Along this path a great commerce will travel, bringing the interests of the other great nations ... close along our shores, as they have been never before."⁹⁸

Mahan's analogy extends when talking about the importance of the US position with reference to Panamá to that of England in regard to the Channel, and that of the Mediterranean countries in regard to the Suez route. Mahan considered that control over this route would depend, apart from the "geographical position", also on the means to control what he called "the centre of the national power, the permanent base."⁹⁹ Furthermore, as far as the US proximity from the Isthmus is concerned, the United States would have to guarantee the means "to obtain in the Caribbean, stations fit for contingent or secondary bases of operations; which by their natural advantages, susceptibility of defence, and nearness to the central strategic issue will enable her fleets to remain as near the scene as any opponent."¹⁰⁰ Ensuring the control of these outposts, Mahan concludes, "with the communications between them, and the home based secured [and] with the proper military preparation, for which she has all necessary means, the preponderance of the United States in this field follows from her geographical position and her power, with mathematical certainty."¹⁰¹

It is worthwhile to add that President Theodore Roosevelt adapted some of Mahan's theories and applied them in particular in 1898 during the war with Spain. It is, therefore, owing to Mahan's strategic insights that the US holds the Panama Canal and controls the most important naval bases of the region, namely Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, the Virgin Islands (bought from the Dutch in 1917), as well as having appropriated Hawaii in the Pacific and subsequently developed that very domestic version of containment that is the naval blockade. Today the US has about forty bases at its disposal in the region that are primarily used to control the main maritime routes. It is in this light that it is possible to

⁹⁸ Ibid:33.

⁹⁹ Ibid:33.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid:34.

¹⁰¹ Ibid:34-35

recognise the strategic conception of the Caribbean and Central America as the region from which any other actor could “strangle the US by cutting off the vital oil lines” should it gain control of it.¹⁰²

A supplementary account of the American Mediterranean is provided by Nicholas Spykman in the following terms:

"Below the Rio Grande lies the world of Latin America, [...] Nearest to the United States is the region of the American Mediterranean which includes México, Central America, Colombia, Venezuela, and the islands along the eastern rim of the Caribbean [...] In addition to its significance as an exporter of tropical products, the area is also important because of its mineral wealth. Gold and silver were long its principal exports [...] Sources of energy are widely distributed with potential water power in most of the mainland states [...] Venezuela has today a petroleum output greater than all Asia; the production in Colombia is increasing; and the American Mediterranean as a whole is the greatest oil-producing area in the world [...] The litoral of the Caribbean is the most productive zone in the American tropics and as such a region inevitably dominated by the United States."¹⁰³

These views have an original common linkage among them, namely, that the policies abroad were going to be accomplished only if the achievement of one precondition was conceded: that the political control of the sea (thus of the borders) was going to rely on the actions of a powerful navy. Hence the strategic effect that the possession of this powerful navy would have on the control of the two great coasts, and therefore on the foreign policy of the United States. The achievement of this dominion implied that the US could be ready to confront the external (and potentially hostile) world in a global struggle to maintain such a stance of prominence. Mahan points this out in the following terms: "‘all around us now is strife; ‘the struggle of life’, ‘the race of life’ are phrases so familiar that we do not feel their significance till we stop to think about them. Everywhere nation is arrayed against nation; our own no less than others’."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² See P.Girot&E.Kofman (1987:108-109).

¹⁰³ N.J.Spykman (1942:280,281,282).

¹⁰⁴ A.T.Mahan quoted by G.R.Sloan (1988:90). I argue that this approach prevailed in US thought during the 1950s and after; this is best explained in Washington’s indiscriminate disapproval to socio-political change in Latin America.

- The rationale of containment and the regional map: Kennan's "encirclement" as a way of life in the Americas?

Thus the various strands of geopolitical arguments were brought together by US strategists and politicians to emphasise Washington's vital security interests in Central America, despite their diverse logics and at times tenuous correspondence with empirical reality. The degree of fear and suspicion of change meant that subtle differentiation became impossible.

According to W.H. Parker there is a powerful geopolitical component in containment policy, which, he asserts, has been criticised "for its inflexibility, automatically demanding American foreign intervention at any point on the circumference of the world island where the Soviets might intervene or appear to gain influence."¹⁰⁵

A singular example of the above is Milton Eisenhower's report on the Guatemalan situation, when, at President Eisenhower's request, he travelled to Latin America to enquire on the region's economic and political situation. His conclusion on the Guatemalan crisis was not distant from the mainstream's dogmatic diagnosis on the Soviet question, he said:

"When Communism threatened to engulf Guatemala in 1954 the American people became uneasy. For the first time we began to fear that the *backyard* could suddenly become a path for Communist subversion. We breathed in relief when forces favoring democracy restored Guatemala to its normal place in the American family of nations ..."¹⁰⁶

Was the containment policy an intolerant device which resorted to intervention as its "natural means" to make possible the accomplishment of law and order in the new era? To what extent does George Kennan - as the articulator of containment - belong to the geopolitical US

¹⁰⁵ W.H.Parker (1982:194-195).

¹⁰⁶ M.S.Eisenhower (1963:48), (my emphasis). See also his report in DOSB, "United States-Latin American Relations," (Report to the President by Milton S.Eisenhower, Special Ambassador), Vol. 29, No. 752, November 23, 1953. See below in this thesis.

tradition stemming from Mahan's, Spykman's and Mackinder's principles?¹⁰⁷ What is significant to emphasise at this point is the importance of Kennan's thesis as opposed to the world situation of the post-World War II period. It is certainly correct to contend that both Kennan's record and political future were importantly affected by the extreme anti-Soviet, and up to a certain point, anti-Communist ideology that drove his strategic thoughts. His proposals, as they were introduced at the outset of the Cold War, had a deep influence within the historical formulations of US policies that were launched from the 1950's onwards. Kennan's leading premises were shaped in the light of an early version of containment prevalent in the US before Kennan's own views were made public. According to Parker, the containment policy is the

"peripheral sea powers' name for what in the central land power is called *encirclement*. And encirclement is intended to prevent aggression, actual or potential. Both encirclement and aggression are bred of the fear which arises from the geographical-geometrical opposition of land and sea, centre and circumference ... The policy of containment was a reaction to Soviet activity in eastern Europe, Greece, Turkey and elsewhere in the immediate post-war years, but this activity may have been the natural defensive reaction of a state that had just suffered a devastating invasion."¹⁰⁸

This latter argument was going to be confirmed by Kennan himself in further writings and interviews. For example in the winter of 1987 in *Foreign Affairs*, he discusses his original thesis as follows:

"in no way did the Soviet Union appear to me, at that moment, as a *military threat* to this country. Russia was at that time utterly exhausted by the exertions and sacrifices of the recent war. Something like 25 million of its people had been killed. The physical destruction had been appalling ... In these circumstances, there was no way that Russia could appear to me as a military threat ... So when I used the word 'containment' with respect to that country in 1946, what I had in mind was not at all the averting of the sort of military threat people talk about today. What I *did think I saw* was what I might call an *ideological political threat*."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ G.Kennan entered the geopolitical debate of the Cold War when he wrote his famous article which he signed as 'X': "The Sources of Soviet Conduct", *Foreign Affairs*, 25, (July, 1947).

¹⁰⁸ W.H.Parker (1982:195-196), (my emphasis).

¹⁰⁹ G.Kennan (1987:885-886), (my emphasis).

More than ten years prior to these remarks, in 1972, he declared in an interview referring to his famous article:

"it was meant to sound ... a hopeful note, urging people to believe that our differences with the Soviet Union of Stalin's day, while serious indeed, were not ones that could be solved only - or indeed *solved at all* ...: we and the Russians have each other defeated ourselves; neither was up to its pretensions of earlier years."¹¹⁰

The article in question was however, in 1947, an inflammatory account of the Soviet role in world politics. Thus Kennan's remarks and the policies that followed, are, in the context of my analysis, extremely important. Indeed while showing affinities with the geopolitical approach which had existed from the beginning of the century, there are significant new ideological and cultural features underlying Kennan's view of world affairs, especially the confrontational trend between the two super powers.

If it is correct, as Kennan suggests, that the US had nothing to fear from the Soviet Union at that time, then one wonders why he approached that conflict in such a fashion and also why Washington's policies - in their various doctrinaire manifestations - were so much in line with Kennan's discoveries about the *Soviet threat*.¹¹¹ Since the factual manifestations of this supposed threat in the Latin American context, in particular in Guatemala, will be explored in following chapters, I will refer here only to the confrontational progression occurring within the framework of mapping of the world, in relation to substantial cultural and ideological features of Kennan's thoughts, most particularly those ventilated in the article in question.

It could be argued that Kennan's vision was used (to his own regret later on), in the promotion of a modern, post-World War II, interventionist impulse that since the Korean and the Vietnam wars has been a dominant feature of US foreign policy. Along these lines Kennan was able to develop, if not explicitly, a comprehensive geopolitical argument. For instance, in 1954 in a series of lectures delivered at Princeton he said:

¹¹⁰ G.Kennan (1972:20,18-19), (my emphasis).

¹¹¹ I do not mean to say that further foreign policy doctrines equal Kennan's. It is only that encirclement was an important foundation of US modern foreign policy, as far as the Soviet question is concerned.

"the first fact to which I should like to invite attention is a geopolitical one, important to all thinking about the Soviet problem ... our own North American community constitutes one such a centre of military-industrial strength. There are only four others in the world. They are all in the Northern Hemisphere. Two of them, England and Japan, lie off the shores of the Eurasian land mass and belong to the insular and maritime portion of the globe, of which we Americans are also part. The other two have their seat in the interior of the Eurasian land mass. One of these last two is made up of Germany ... The other is represented by the Soviet Union proper ... I repeat, nowhere outside these five areas can military-industrial strength be produced in the world today on what we may call the grand scale."¹¹²

If Kennan was a geopolitician, his was an approach carefully constructed with modern ideological components. These components (anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism) are two elements central to an understanding of his sharp attack on the USSR. In this perspective, it is possible to argue that in Kennan the strategist and the ideologist met and found each other. His preoccupation with the "logic of history" led him to envisage that there was a radical contradiction between the two main socio-political systems: there is, he said, an "innate antagonism between Capitalism and Socialism."¹¹³ For Kennan the "dialectics of the contest" had to be faced having in mind an essential distrust for Communism, ("the Communists are essentially traitors"),¹¹⁴ whose only aim is to promote "adventuristic revolutionary projects abroad."¹¹⁵ The response to this he gave in the aforementioned article, whose importance, as Gaddis says, has been such that "no article in the history of *Foreign Affairs* has been more frequently reprinted."¹¹⁶ In these circumstances, Kennan suggested, "it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."¹¹⁷ In the light of this

¹¹² G.Kennan (1954:63-64). It will be interesting to explore the connection of this argument with Kissinger's own representation of the world. See U.S. Government Printing Office. (1975) *United States and Chile during the Allende years, 1970-1973*. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. House of Representatives. Washington D.C., p. 583. See below, chapter-3.

¹¹³ G.Kennan("X") (1947:572,573).

¹¹⁴ Quoted in J.Peck (1988:319).

¹¹⁵ G.Kennan("X") (1947:573).

¹¹⁶ J.L.Gaddis (1977:873).

¹¹⁷ G.Kennan("X") (1947:575).

"innate antagonism" (thus, the innate confrontation one deduces), it would be clearly seen, said Kennan:

"that the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and manoeuvres of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence."¹¹⁸

Historians and analysts, as Gaddis maintains, "have argued for years over what Kennan meant to say in the 'X' article."¹¹⁹ Yet, the fact that most of the contents of this article are dedicated to the assessment of the USSR, placed this piece in the core of the political and ideological debate of that time. Although the ideological issue was certainly quite present, especially in his "long telegram", and even though the USSR was not (yet) necessarily the real threat as the promoter of "adventuristic revolutionary projects" as he stated, Kennan's article must be understood more as a warning signal of the events - and thus the actions - to come. The United States, he said,

"has in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection that it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power."¹²⁰

A fashionable notion of national security

According to G.R. Sloan, Kennan's views represented "the beginning of a period in which the political meaning of the Eurasian continent changed, in terms of the choices available

¹¹⁸ Ibid:576.

¹¹⁹ J.L.Gaddis (1977:873).

¹²⁰ G.Kennan("X") (1947:582). The "Long Telegram" underlined the ideological roots from which containment stemmed and was sent by Kennan on 22 February 1946, in his capacity as US official from the US Embassy in Moscow. My purpose in this analysis of Kennan's views on Sovietism is to reinforce my point on this issue which I shall make later in chapters-5-7. Kennan was relevant in that he offered a major strategic thinking on the Soviets at the start of the Cold War. This prevailed over the following years. Alternatively, on Kennan's view of Latin American Communism see the epigraph in this chapter.

to policy-makers."¹²¹ This was just the beginning of a policy destined to spread at any cost: Kennan's sole idea, which inaugurated a modern (and *fashionable* concept of defence of national security), was the need to apply "counter-force" to contain "the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the free world", or the need for the US to enter with "reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world."¹²²

This is a highly significant geopolitical statement because it denotes insights that confer political importance to the geographical environment and also because Kennan is - *in situ* - suggesting the construction of a (single thus, paradigmatic) confrontational theory to deal both with the expected, the unexpected, or foreseen pressures - and dangers - in the relationship with the Soviets. Some analysts consider that Kennan's arguments stem from the geopoliticians that preceded him, such as Mahan, Mackinder and Spykman. For example, Walters quotes this passage from Kennan: "our problem [the US's] is to prevent the gathering together of the military-industrial potential of the entire Eurasian land mass under a single power threatening the interests of the insular and maritime portions of the globe." Walters states, with some reason, that these words could have been taken straight out of Mackinder's *Heartland* theory.¹²³

Sloan, on the one hand, suggests a parallel between Kennan and Spykman which exists, first because

"Spykman's emphasis on the importance of the United States maintaining a margin of political and military superiority on the Rimland, was similar to Kennan's political objective of deterring Soviet expansionism [and second, because] Kennan's thesis ... attempted to put forward certain explanations which suggested the contemporary and future political relevance of various geographical conceptualisations."¹²⁴

¹²¹ G.R.Sloan (1988:130), (my emphasis).

¹²² G.Kennan("X") (1947:576,581).

¹²³ R.E.Walters (1974:178).

¹²⁴ G.R.Sloan (1988:135).

On the other hand, C.S. Gray appears to give a more historical explanation. He argues that the US global compromise and behaviour, before, during, and after containment has addressed the tension between the risks to “American survival” that attend security commitments around the littoral of Eurasia and the less than “immediate” survival quality of US interests that are the “explicit” objects of these commitments.¹²⁵ Gray goes further when considering the high importance that these commitments had in the light of the five national security concepts prevalent in the US, namely, *containment*, *dynamic containment*, *rollback*, *devolution*, and *fortress America*. He argued that "with the exception of fortress America, the concepts discussed here all rest upon the assumption that the United States has a vital interest in the containment of Soviet power roughly within its current Eurasian perimeter."¹²⁶

The debate on the degree of sophistication of Kennan's theories and resulting policies has gone on throughout the years after 1946, and the comparisons of his approach with that of the preceding geopoliticians have been abundant. However, where there appears to be agreement is that his stand towards Communism (regrettable or not for Kennan himself) articulated a policy which subordinated all variables of the global phenomena to the primacy of geopolitical explanations. Hence the consequences of this framework upon the policies towards third (non-involved) parties.

A major result of this was that all the political events occurring in international and regional affairs were interpreted in terms of the Communist threat. Thus the latter endorsed a durable policy during the following decades. The other result of this was that the concept of containment, which above all tended to emphasise the need to secure US interests, neglected, and in a way obscured, the "essential character of the Soviet threat".¹²⁷ The result of this approach is all the more paradoxical as the central aim of the policy was allegedly meant to give (a rational) shape to the main features of the new international order. The aforementioned outcome had, as will be seen, a decisive effect upon both the understanding and the implementation of policies towards movements of socio-political change. Apart from the fact

¹²⁵ See, C.S.Gray (1988:39-47).

¹²⁶ Ibid:115.

¹²⁷ Ibid:118.

that Communism and Sovietism were not explained as much as they were stigmatised, the understanding of them did not so much guide the action as it operated as "a justification for action already decided upon."¹²⁸

One of the main aspects that is possible to notice from the reading of Kennan's article and some of his other writings is that he seemingly made an observation of the Soviet ideology, the Soviet character, the Soviet psyche, the Soviet nature through the prism of the Soviet people's degree of tolerance and courage in front of the Stalinist oppression. Thus his notion of the Soviets was extrapolated from the most important post-war political danger of the time for the West: the perpetuation of Stalinist terror. And yet, what he did not have was a *pragmatic* intuition as to how to deal with the Soviets (productively) in his time and in the times to come. Thereafter, Kennan maintained his fear of Communism (and of Sovietism) in that it was focused on Stalin as the crude representative of what Communism seemed to be at the time:

"The world Communist movement was at the time a unified, disciplined movement, under the total control of the Stalin regime in Moscow. Not only that, but the Soviet Union had emerged from the war with great prestige for its immense and successful war effort; ... and I had nothing ... but suspicion for the attitude of the Stalin regime toward us or toward the other Western allies. Stalin and the men around him were far worse - more sinister, more cruel, more devious, more cynically contemptuous of us - than anything we face today."¹²⁹

The reality of a new order: security versus intervention in the American Mediterranean

Apart from the Kremlin's neurotic view of the world (only in part explaining Kennan's own neurosis) and its instinctive sense of insecurity (reflected in its own global and bilateral policy), what is indeed most interesting about this stage of the Cold War debate is the fact that a new anathema and strategy was under process of construction. The prerequisite for this for creating the conditions of a new order largely arose from the need to bring about a new balance of forces in the political and economic rationality of the world. Among all the aspects lying

¹²⁸ J.L.Gaddis (1977:874).

¹²⁹ G.Kennan (1987:886). I argue that Stalin's death in 1953, as seen in chapters 5-7 when discussing Eisenhower and Dulles's approach to this question, did not necessarily change US perceptions of the threat from Soviet Communism. See above in this chapter on Hoffmann's reference to "diplomatic traditions".

behind what seemed to be a clear strategy to consolidate a notion of reality, is the idea of pragmatism towards security. This time it meant that the foundation of this new paradigm, in which context order would be the result of the absence of violence - or at least only selective and carefully controlled violence, and/or the absence of threat - was at the centre of the analysis. Hence the significance of Kennan's (instrumentalist) suggestion to deal "patiently" with Communism which apparently did not have an agenda of its own.

In this context (although not as much a direct responsibility of Kennan the political persona, as of Kennan the ideologist) anything opposed to the maintenance of order - especially in the light of the Latin American sphere where socio-political unrest occurred - would be considered a threat - a non-natural threat. If this idea reflected the reality of the times of the Cold War, it was also a very important expression of the moral and political principles of the United States as a nation - the principles of the "New Frontier". Kennan's was just the right expression at the right time of the notion of both a world order, and a global system supported on the principle of equilibrium, where inclusions and exclusions would be regulated and strictly controlled on the basis of defending the security of the principles and the principles of security. This latter endeavour was accomplished almost with a religious commitment, or as Daniel Yergin quotes it, in Kennan, "the Presbyterian Elder wrestled with the Bismarckian geopolitician."¹³⁰

In view of this, security meant order and order could not be achieved without an agreement on the basic principles to accomplish it. Alternatively, these principles were to be found within the very framework of US democracy. In the light of this there was a conflict occurring between - and around - the new political and ideological confrontation with the Soviet Union, and the debatable economic, philosophical, political and even geostrategic conception of the world: the United States was the representative of democracy *par excellence* and concepts such as freedom, development, modernity, became an organic part of the new geopolitical *situational* background. The entire conception of new order followed from this and the logic (and inertia) of the new order was found in the essential need either to confront or satisfy some other, upon the basis that the *other* - in this case the Soviet Union - was essentially committed to

¹³⁰ D.Yergin (1978:28).

confront (dangerously) the foundations of this project - Capitalist democracy included. Hence the need to defend - thus contain - the “free institutions of the Western world” from the “Soviet pressure” against them.

The US idea of the Stalinist Soviet Union as the evil to resist - as represented by Kennan's own doctrinaire philosophy - and if necessary to confront, is indeed explained and justified by the existence of the Stalinist regime and by the era of destruction and barbarism that it represented. Nonetheless, it was also the direct result of the appearance of Communism as a form of government and Stalinism as the crudest and most palpable of its expressions. At this point, what is worth emphasising is that *Mr. X* would not have existed as it did, without Stalin and his reign of terror. This was the time of the erection of a new pragmatism which responded not only to the existence of US's opposite force (Communism), but also to the very past of the United States, in particular the deterministic notion of the natural development of the political phenomenon. The times of Kennan, thus, were also the times of the beginning of an era, in which a novel perspective of the world created the framework for an advanced and affirmative atmosphere of *Realpolitik*.

Within this context, the *American Mediterranean* was a matter for the exclusive concern of a powerful actor such as the US. Therefore it is unarguable that this region had had a strategic importance for some time, as the writings of Mahan and Spykman demonstrate. Ultimately containment played a central importance in the management of the Latin American phenomenon. In fact, one of the reasons why it is possible to find a lack of originality in the particular policies pursued by the US in the continent (in particular those applied to support the suppression of a movement of change, such as the Guatemalan), is that the US intruded its own ideological and strategic conception of the main world struggle into the regional scene, without making room for any different interpretations and/or policy-options, but power politics.

Hence, one may presume that this rejection of Soviet-Stalinist-Communism - which stemmed from a correct perception and critique of the brutality of the Stalinist regime on the grounds of morality and ethical behaviour - did not, however, have the power of differentiating the domestic and regional extension of Soviet strength from Communist ideology in general. Therefore, it was impossible to turn the above rejection into a policy with appropriate analytical

elements in order to explain comprehensibly the phenomenon of Communism in other regions of the world as well as the most convenient means to contain it.

The above limitation is somehow expressed in the following assessment of US foreign policy in Latin America:

"As long as the United States continues to evaluate the poorer and weaker countries of the world in terms of what each can contribute to the grand design - or the real and imagined threats that each poses to the grand design - there can be no assurances of non-intervention."¹³¹

- Kennan and Containment: intervention as a solution?

Were the above strategic considerations sufficient to justify the launching of *encirclement*? To what extent was “encirclement” going to be both a security rationalisation sufficient to justify building a bridge to intervention in the *American backyard*? Is the path to “liberation” also the path to intervention? If people or peoples must achieve freedom for themselves - as Mill argued - is it then legitimate to say that containment's aim was, in fact, to achieve the former?¹³² Is domination the path to achieve order, or is domination and its instrumental paraphernalia a disruptive element of order? And lastly, in this same line, is intervention launched in the name of the achievement of order ultimately a tool of domination, even at the cost of the disruption of order itself? If the latter is so, then is this the beginning of the creation of a new order founded on oppression?

This is a major problem that refers to the separation between moralism and politics in domestic politics and the excessive divide between morality and politics inherent in US foreign policy. On this, Kennan wrote,

"morality, then, as the channel to individual self fulfillment -yes. Morality as the foundation of civic virtue, and accordingly as a condition precedent to successful democracy -yes. Morality in governmental method, as a matter of conscience and preference on the part of our people -yes. But morality as a general criterion

¹³¹ R.Fagen (1975:312).

¹³² Mill emphasised that a people must “become free by their own efforts.” See J.S.Mill (1857:175).

for the determination of the behaviour of states and above all as a criterion for measuring and comparing the behaviour of different states -no. Here other criteria, sadder, more limited, more practical, must be allowed to prevail."¹³³

I shall address the above questions in the chapters which follow.

¹³³ Originally in G.Kennan (1954:49). Also quoted, interestingly, in C.R.Beitz (1978:12). In short, a selfish morality. Furthermore, *moralism* marks an implicit denial: it denies morality for it refuses to recognise any method other than the *American* for setting moral standards in dealing with foreign policy decisions. This will be an issue of central importance in this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

POWER POLITICS AND INTERVENTION: INTERVENTIONIST DETERRENCE AND AMERICANISM AS GEOPOLITICAL INSTRUMENTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

If there is to be coexistence
there must be a balance of power,
for if power is unbalanced the
temptation to Communism to resume
its crusade will be irresistible.¹

- Introduction

The argument driving this chapter is that interventions are disruptive mechanisms of the international system, that the intervention is generally an element that has prompted a partial or total dysfunction of world and regional order, and that its appearance in world politics responds to a great extent to the functional requirements of power politics. Following this I will elaborate on a framework likely to be of use for the study of intervention in Central America.

Allowing that the balance of power aims at creating consensus about the need for order, it follows that the defence of world order is the defence of a specific system of relations and interactions. It is a system of power in which "a power holds the balance only so long as it does not commit itself; and when it has committed itself, there is a new situation in which the balance will probably be held by another power."² Still, the idea of balance of power involves a higher degree of abstraction. According to Wight

"It means thinking of the powers less as pieces in a chessboard than as weights in a pair of scales [...] To balance is to compare weights [...] The word 'balance'

¹ The Manchester Guardian, (Leading Article), August 21, 1954. Quoted in M.Wight (1966b::153).

² Ibid:161. M.Wight argues: "Indeed, holding the balance of power has its *n*th power problem. It is not only the Great Powers that can aspire to the role. Sometimes a small power, through the accident of strategic position or the energy of its ruler, can contribute useful if not decisive strength to one side or the other." Ibid:161.

has entirely lost its meaning of 'equilibrium'. There is less notion of stability, more of perpetual change about it than in sense 1 (Wight refers to an even distribution of power)."³

I would argue that this is probably the main issue in the entire discussion of power in international relations: its *intemperance*.⁴

- Intervention

It is in this light that the international dynamic confronts a dominant truth: the need to protect and to preserve the status of the world concert. And the Inter-American system does not escape this geopolitical circumstance. In addition, interventions are also the means whereby a certain type of organisation of the international political system occurs.⁵

Interventions are typical extensions of the politics behind the rationale of balance of power. This happens, in spite of the fact that the intervention against the disruption of order is in itself a disruption of the latter, for intervention creates an escalation of conflict resulting from a generalised and - presumably - illegal aggression against a certain sub-order. Although this shall be discussed further, let me put forward that the rationale operating against this sub-order is embraced by the proposition of the US sense of both mission and duty towards the defence of a destiny: that of making the world safe for new conditions for the achievement of a modern deployment of power in world affairs. As the US positioned itself as the great manipulator its duty was to protect a favourable balance for the accomplishment of particular interests. The problem centred on how and why to do it. I will argue that the means for this historic mission to be pursued was going to be interventions and the pretext for this being revolutions.

³ See Ibid:149,150,155.

⁴ On this issue, see also M.Wight (1966a, 1966c, 1978).

⁵ This is carried out, according to R.Little when he refers to behavioural commitment, "when decision makers form a consensus which is false or projected." See, R.Little (1975:136).

As will be shown further, the accomplishment of this enterprise for supremacy required convincing tools for the latter to be carried out. Hence, the significance of my general argument on the association between, a) a geopolitical position of relevance, b) the strong importance of "*Americanism*" as an innovative tradition in the foreign policy making process, c) the existence of revolutions as the main argument - within the bipolar context - for alertness in so far as the defence of the national interest was concerned, and d) the use of interventions as deterrent instruments against revolutions or political changes occurring in other countries which have been considered - in a special fashion in the Inter-American context - as the main threat to national security.⁶

Therefore, the intervention contributes to the realignment of actors within the international system as a whole and into particular spheres of influence. Generally intervention has had the purpose of obliterating the existent specific order (mostly in the context of the domestic dimension) this being an important reason in the original intervenor's pursuit to get involved in another region's affairs.⁷ Intervention has no moral limitations, nor is it a hesitant performance of a specific state - typically a Great Power. Ultimately, intervention is a major actor's deployment of force of which the main aim is securing a relevant position in the exercise of power. In this regard Young thinks that intervention "refers to organized and systematic activities across recognized boundaries aimed at affecting the political authority structures of the target. [Also] the term intervention is associated with activities aimed at changing or preventing change in political authority structures."⁸

The intervention has the virtue of responding to careful calculations aimed at securing its success and its basic original rationality over and above any endogenous factors that might attempt to disarticulate it. That is why one of interventions' major characteristics is that it "has

⁶ See C.S.Gray (1988:chapter-6,"The American Way").

⁷ On the implications of intervention upon the local political processes, see, among others, S.Huntington (1986); A.F.Lowenthal (1991); A.Rouquié (1976); A.Rouquié (1983); I.Roxborough (1979).

⁸ O.Young (1968:178).

been a recurrent feature of the history of international politics."⁹ In this light it is possible to see that intervention "clearly becomes more frequent, as well as more dangerous."¹⁰

Interventions have represented a substantial part of the International System throughout centuries. Apart from that, if we accept that the International System is a sphere in which a whole process of political interaction occurs, we will concede that intervention is one of the major outcomes of this process, if not the major one. Intervention is also the political space from which we are able to explain the relative contradiction occurring in the interaction between the international community and the individual states, let alone such issues as the respect of sovereignty, popular representation and community life.¹¹

Intervention is linked with power. Hence intervention, as a political outcome, is not disassociated from a general dynamic occurring in world politics which tends to alter the existing balances of the international agreement for the sake of defending the principles of one actor. Bull alludes to this problem in the following terms: "a basic condition of any policy that can be called interventionary ... is that the intervener should be superior in power to the object of the intervention."¹²

- Intervention and international power

A number of the international relations investigations have been made within the general literature of 'intervention'. Intervention (and its aftermath) is an abstraction and an event, both of which are the subject of much inquiry and debate, and sometimes misunderstanding in international relations literature.¹³

⁹ Ibid:180.

¹⁰ See M.Beloff (1968:199).

¹¹ See M.Wight (1966a), J.Rosenberg (1996), and chapter-1.

¹² H.Bull (1984::1). This occurs at least if it is to be successful, i.e., the UK in Suez in 1956, and in the Falklands in 1982.

¹³ See M.Wight (1966c).

The definition of the term 'intervention' has been so wide that it has been able to cover a whole gamut of phenomena - intervention as a scientific concept, as shows of force, as a response to domestic conflicts, as the result of the war between Communism and democracy and thus of the need to keep regional power balances, as legitimate or unjust actions, as either the normal or abnormal result of international actors' interactions, as a condition of survival, or as immoral protracted conflicts which alter the peaceful coexistence of the international system.¹⁴

As argued by some authors, intervention has been decisive in directing "international action."¹⁵ Unilateral intervention has constituted in the past one of the avenues via which it would be possible to overcome international dilemmas of collective action.¹⁶ Since the beginnings of our present international political system in 1648, states have frequently entered into mechanisms for international co-operation in order to realise some sort of order in the anarchical system and in order to escape sub-optimal results. Despite the importance of these arrangements, interventions have been an ever-present feature, and have sometimes replaced the formal mechanisms that give normativeness, legitimacy, and, some how, identity to international order.¹⁷

R. Little and other authors agree that intervention starts being considered a political and an intellectual issue within the realm of the international system from the times of Thucydides, who argues that behind all the reasons given for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war (an event of major importance in the analysis of this phenomenon) lies the unalterable factor of power. Little adds on this that "the belief that international relations are synonymous with

¹⁴ See O.Young (1968); and M.Beloff (1968).

¹⁵ See J.N.Rosenau (1968:166).

¹⁶ Hoffmann says that "the choice in international affairs has never been between intervening and observing the sacred principle of non-intervention. The choice has always been between individual intervention and collective intervention." See S.Hoffmann (1984:11).

¹⁷ Sometimes even a formal collective security system will require 'legitimate' intervention, and will rely on a great power to lead the action, i.e., the US in Korea in 1950. In modern times both the critical absence of political action in former Yugoslavia and the 1999 NATO's intervention against President Slobodan Milosevic's 'ethnic cleansing' is bringing about dramatic and dangerous results.

power politics has persisted ever since."¹⁸ In this light there is a consistent use of power politics as a base for intervention and there is the existence of the latter as a pattern to give the former its systemic legitimacy. This is more so, when, as Wight says, the intervention becomes either "forcible interference, short of declaring war", or it "means coercion short of war."¹⁹

While Bull considers that intervention is more likely when it comes from a powerful actor, Hoffmann limits his definition of intervention by saying that it functions "by reference to the type of activity."²⁰ In refusing to consider it as a "dictatorial interference", as do Oppenheim, Walzer, and Vincent among other authors,²¹ Hoffmann argues that, "after all, the purpose of intervention is the same as that of all other forms of foreign policy; it is to make you do what I want you to do, whether or not you wish to do it."²²

Hoffmann's contention is in itself an acceptance of the "authoritarian" nature that entails the intervention. In the refusal to accept that "not wanting" the other's wishes means an authoritarian action, there is also the tacit acceptance that "not wanting" to act or go along in a specific direction means both an act of authority from a powerful actor who is likely to behave violently, and the acceptance of this behaviour by another actor whose relative fragility to the former will allow that to happen and create an atmosphere of what Hudson calls a "highly precarious balance."²³ Still, a consideration is relevant here, the distinction between influence and power: the latter retains the ultimate capacity to over-ride resistance; the former can only hope to do so by long-term shaping of targets' attitudes. Morgenthau refers uncritically to intervention as "as ancient and well-established an instrument of foreign policy as are diplomatic pressure, negotiations and war. From the time of the ancient Greeks to this day,

¹⁸ See R.Little (1975:16).

¹⁹ See M.Wight (1978:191).

²⁰ See S.Hoffmann (1984:9).

²¹ See J.S.Mill (1857); J.Vincent (1974); L.Oppenheim (1955); M.Walzer (1992).

²² S.Hoffmann (1984:9). Still, there are *forms* of intervention, some more acceptable - to the target or to the international community - than others.

²³ G.F.Hudson states that, ultimately, "the 'balance of terror' must ... be a balance of will as well as of technical 'capability'. It is in fact for this very reason a highly precarious balance." See G.F.Hudson (1966:205).

some states have found it advantageous to intervene in the affairs of other states on behalf of their own interests and against the latter's will."²⁴

Morgenthau discusses this further when tackling the problem of intervention against revolutions. However, compared to other authors whom I shall be analyzing here, Morgenthau's will appear as an ill-considered argument. This is primarily so, when he compares as instruments of foreign policy, intervention as a general - and most commonly violent - act with "diplomatic pressure" and "negotiations." Morgenthau's view (and description of world's reality) is clearly indicative of a refusal to question the defence of order and the *status quo* as classical features of power politics and unquestionable constants within the logic embraced by the balance of power. By maintaining this position, I would claim, Morgenthau denies the value that any kind of diplomatic measures have as stages previous to conflict or to the plain use of force. By doing this Morgenthau appears to accept that which Hudson attacks, namely the fact that "war ... [is] a failure in the application of force, just as the killing of a cashier by a bank robber usually implies that the robber has failed to intimidate by pointing a gun and had to carry out his threat in action."²⁵

Accordingly, the primacy of the use of coercion in the international concert arises from the requirement to defend the national interest. This implies, by its very nature, that there are a number of international policies aimed at the fulfilment of the reasons of state. It is thus that interventions can be justified when breaking the moral rules that apply to all the actors of the international system. In this light the argument underpinned by Morgenthau and other analysts claims at some points that the national interest of a power must be constrained by its *own* morality.²⁶

Ironically his manoeuvre seems to allow him to maintain the thesis that the rule "follow the national interest" is the first principle of international conduct. Following upon this, such a highly Machiavellian conviction leads us to ask together with Beitz for an explanation of, "why

²⁴ See H.Morgenthau (1967b:425).

²⁵ See G.F.Hudson (1966:201).

²⁶ See chapter-2 on his assessment of the role of the state.

it is wrong to make moral judgements about international behaviour whereas it is not wrong to make them about domestic political behaviour or about interpersonal behaviour."²⁷

Having said that, it becomes urgent to establish clearly which is the real meaning of a power acting for "reasons of state." Of course, the significance of this points to the foremost problem of sovereignty: the intervention either interferes with or reinforces the other state's right to defend the territorial and political integrity of the nation. At this point we arrive at a scene in which two or more actors will be involved in creating the conditions for the political discussion of the legal circumstances that precede interventions.

For his part Walzer argues that,

"interventions are so often undertaken for 'reasons of state' that have nothing to do with self-determination that we have become skeptical of every claim to defend the autonomy of alien communities ... intervening states must demonstrate that their own case is radically different from what we take to be the general run of cases."²⁸

Some analysts generally accept that interventions are natural responses of states when it comes to solving international and national crises.²⁹ There are others who consider, as L. Oppenheim argues, that the intervention is a

"dictatorial interference by a State in the affairs of another State for the purpose of maintaining or altering the actual condition of things. Such intervention can take place by right or without a right, but it always concerns the external independence or the territorial or personal supremacy of the State concerned, and the whole matter is therefore of great importance for the international position of States."³⁰

²⁷ See C.R.Beitz (1978:21).

²⁸ M.Walzer (1992:91).

²⁹ See J.S.Mill (1857:172).

³⁰ L.Oppenheim (1955:305). For a polemical view of the Latin American case see, M.Hilaire (1997).

Although intervention, as considered by Oppenheim, is, as a rule, "forbidden by International Law which protects the international personality of States",³¹ it is also considered to be the result of the right of states when violations occur:

"Wherever there is no right of intervention, an intervention violates either external independence or the territorial or personal supremacy. But if an intervention takes place by right, it never constitutes such a violation, because the right of intervention is always based on a legal restriction upon the independence or territorial or personal supremacy of the State concerned, and because the latter is in duty bound to submit to the intervention."³²

- The interventionist deterrent: "*Americanism*" and foreign policy

As will be shown in the Guatemalan case, the interventionist impetus of the US has been a key feature of its foreign policy philosophy. The historical record acknowledges that US interventionism has led in most cases to various kinds of authoritarian forms of government. The figures resulting from intervention, show that Central America and the Caribbean have been a central theatre of interventions for the US in the last 100 years. According to official reports of the US Senate, the US has conducted 70 military operations in Central America and the Caribbean without declaration of War.

Yet, this data is rather conservative if we consider that, according to independent analysts, the US has intervened directly on numerous occasions. These total 23 full-scale interventions within all 23 years of occupation in several states (Cuba, Haití, Nicaragua). Some other studies however, have enumerated close to 400 interventions of all types during that period. Yet, some others have found that the US world expansion included, in the period between 1800 and 1969 (thus leaving aside the cases of Grenada, Panamá, and the mining of the Nicaraguan harbours), 748 interventions launched by the US, out of which 270 were

³¹ L.Oppenheim (1955:305).

³² Ibid:306.

perpetrated in México, 92 in Cuba and 79 in Nicaragua. W. Wilson the US president who ordered most interventions in that period with 89, was followed by L. Johnson with 65.³³

This feature has been a remarkable condition playing an important role in the long-run crises that some countries in Latin America have confronted. Though the United States has performed a relatively influential role in this process, US interventionism has inflicted a severe pressure upon the target countries' long-standing difficulties in trying to gain access to political progress and economic development. It is not the purpose of this research to take Washington indiscriminately to trial as the single actor responsible for all the misery experienced by Latin America. The problem is much more complex than that. Accordingly, one of the main concerns in this research is to make a case of a country, such as the US, which was clever enough to utilise the existent inherited contradictions from the colonial times, such as despotism, anti-democratic structures and economic weakness, to the benefit of its very particular strategic pursuit. To a certain extent the US enjoyed the fortune of finding itself as an extraordinary great power, next to a collectivity of weak neighbours in its southern border.³⁴

- The political features of foreign policy: the inevitability of deterrence?

It has been my argument in this study that, (over and above the specific international realities and constraints that explain foreign policy) there is always a cultural-political element which explains why US foreign policy resorts to deterrence for its legitimatisation. In this light, it is my assumption that the foreign policy of a Great Power always needs to ensure that the national interest in a continental area of influence is reinforced by means of deterrence. Furthermore, a foreign policy of deterrence represents the best way to establish from the very outset the conditions and the extent to which certain partners' behaviour might be tolerated. Typically such policy results in interventions of the most diverse types, the most important of which being those in which force is used to settle disagreements and disputes, whatever their nature.

³³ See G.García-Cantú (1971) and P.Girot&E.Kofman (1987). See also the chronologies.

³⁴ For more on this subject see parts-II-III, and L.Hanke (1964).

As argued, the most salient feature of US geopolitics and ideology and, hence, of its political behaviour in foreign policy, has been intolerance.³⁵ This feature of US character is best represented by Attorney General Tom Clark, who in his address to the Cathedral Club of Brooklyn New York in 1948, stated that “those who do not believe in the ideology of the United States, shall not be allowed to stay in the United States.”³⁶ For his part Walter Lippmann claimed that, "a nation, divided irreconcilably on 'principle,' each party believing itself pure white and the other pitch black, cannot govern itself."³⁷ Such a vein is only one part of the social complexity of the US and it is often still expressed in the US domestic political sphere. Although it is not the purpose of this work to measure the degree of social polarisation contained in this country's political foundations, Lippmann's remarks nevertheless, represent an aspect which should be stressed when talking of the United States' political heritage.

The ideological blessing that US foreign policy needed to receive from the main domestic ideological input of the US, *Americanism*, was decisive in that it developed strong shields of protective principles around the foreign policy making process. From the mid-1940s onwards, US foreign policy could be portrayed, and seen, as strong and legitimate in that, and only in that, it reflected '*American values*', each of which would require a whole raft of policy were foreign policy to be coherent. Is it that any nation's foreign policy reflects national values? Whatever the case, what I intend to emphasize here is, in the first place, the importance of the very creation of a national tradition in foreign affairs: from the mid-1940s on, the US was able to impose its interest in the name of the defence of all those values which represented and were represented by the "*American tradition*"; and, secondly, there was an imposition of the "*American interest*" on other actors' foreign policy traditions: "*Americanism*" as a national tradition became, both in Europe and in the so-called Western hemisphere the doctrinaire fabric that would become the dominant (and patronising) feature in world affairs. This development came to reflect on the rules imposed upon the Western world as a result of bipolarity. Moreover,

³⁵ I argue that the above aspect of politics in the US will allow us to grasp why is it that a foreign policy of deterrence was needed. I have provided an overview on this in chapters-1-2.

³⁶ Quoted in D.Caute (1978:15).

³⁷ Lippmann, quoted in D.Bell (1965:121).

this tradition would appear as a unique and compelling avenue by means of which the US's hegemonic position could and would be achieved. In some respects, the Western tradition has, from the mid 1940s, been marked by such a climate and it seems likely to remain so until the end of this century. As Beloff has said, "the United States ... intervened or attempted to intervene in the internal affairs of other states under the guise of the slogan, 'making the world safe for democracy'."³⁸

Simultaneously, these values, unlike those in some other developed nations, have been to some extent the reason for the injection of intolerance into the US's political tradition. It is with this in mind that Lipset states that,

"the historical evidence [...] indicates that, as compared to the citizens of a number of other countries, especially Great Britain and Scandinavia, Americans are not a tolerant people [...] One important factor affecting this lack of tolerance in American life is the basic staring of Protestant puritanical morality which has always existed in this country. Americans believe that there is a fundamental difference between right and wrong, that right must be supported, and that wrong must be suppressed, that error and evil have no rights against the truth. This propensity to see life in terms of all black and all white is most evident, perhaps most disastrous, in the area of foreign policy, where allies and enemies cannot be grey, but must be black or white."³⁹

A Latin American perspective on the fusion of religion with politics in the US can be found in the following insights by Octavio Paz:

"these foundations [Protestant religious ethic] are not only political - the social contract between men - but religious: the covenant of men with God. In all societies politics and morality exist side by side, but unlike what happens in a secular democracy such as that of France, in the United States it is almost impossible to separate morality and religion ... In the US ..., democracy is the direct offspring of the Reformation - that is, of a *religious* critique of religion... The fusion between morality and religion is characteristic of the Protestant

³⁸ See M.Beloff (1968:201). A recent case of this long enduring tradition can be found in the following words by US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, referring to the right of Washington to attack Iraq: "If we have to use force it is because *we are America*. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future." See H.Young (1998) (my emphasis).

³⁹ S.M.Lipset (1964:316-317). Lipset elaborates further: "I still believe that viewed cross-culturally, Americans are more likely to view politics in moralistic terms than most Europeans. No American politician would say of an ally, as did Churchill of Russia, that I will ally with the 'devil himself,' for the sake of victory," *ibid*:316-317.

tradition. In reformed sects, rites and sacraments yield their cardinal place to morality and soul searching ... American democracy lacks dogma and theology, but its foundations are no less religious than the covenant that unites Jews and Jehovah."⁴⁰

In the light of this views, I suggest that, as a political creed, "Americanism" has turned, quite conveniently, into an essential ideological component of the US political consciousness, "much like Socialism, Communism or Fascism."⁴¹ However, it must be stressed that, for better or for worse of the foreign policy framework of this nation, *Americanism* has been the backbone of the grounds on which the US foreign policy project has been founded. Consequently it has been an essential feature in the overall definition of US national interest whose main expression is found in the international system, most particularly the Inter-American System.

Given, then, the struggle to produce a national foreign policy, it is essential to consider the cultural and political circumstances that precede foreign policy decisions. According to Bell,

"there has been little evidence that American foreign policy is guided by a sense of historical time and an accurate assessment of social forces [...] Foreign policy has foundered because every administration has had difficulty in defining a national interest, morally rooted, whose policies can be realistically tailored to the capacities and constraints imposed by the actualities of world power [...] Americans have rarely known how to sweat it out, to wait, to calculate in historical terms, to learn that 'action' cannot easily reverse social drifts whose courses were charted long ago."⁴²

- "A land of two dimensions"

Albert Einstein on a visit to New York, exclaimed with

⁴⁰ O.Paz (1985:145).

⁴¹ S.M.Lipset (1964:321). Lipset adds that "Americanism has become a compulsive ideology rather than a simply nationalist term. Americanism is a creed in a way that 'Britishism' is not [...] An American political leader could not say, as Churchill did in 1940, that the English Communist Party was composed of Englishmen, and he did not fear an Englishman." Ibid:320-321.

⁴² D.Bell (1964:20).

"questioning surprise [that]: 'this seems to be a land of only two dimensions!' [...] In his terms, he had perceived the nature of a society of power. Such a world has only two surfaces; its energy goes into the continuous making of frontiers of action, never deepening to a 'third dimension' what it has acquired."⁴³

This 'discovery' (which serves further to highlight Lipset's overview) provides us with an outstanding feature of an industrialised first world country that has no other response to the challenges of modernity but to resort to uniformity in an attempt to both organise its political action and, to a great extent, to win a place in world history. In this respect, the historian Richard Hofstadter provides an archetypal pattern when he states with reference to "*Americanism*": "It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies, but to be one."⁴⁴ In stating this, Hofstadter emphasised a convention that has existed for generations, and which concerns the country's "political religion": becoming an American can be seen as a religious and an ideological act. Hence the implication that being an "American" means sharing a political creed ("*Americanism*" as opposed to the "otherness"). And, thus, also the limitation of national ideology to meet the contours of "ideological conformity"⁴⁵ as one of the conditions of both good citizenship and, eventually, I would argue, of a strategic agenda in world politics. Accordingly the relevance of the two dimensional nature of US political history as elucidated by Einstein.

Bell mentions that since the 1950s, "the emergence of foreign policy [has to be considered] as the chief problem of politics," and adds that the "arena of politics" being now foreign policy, "allowed the moralistic strains to come to the fore."⁴⁶ Following on from this, Bell argues that one of the unique aspects of US politics is that

"while domestic issues have been argued in hard headed practical terms, with a give and take compromise as the outcome, foreign policy has always been phrased in moralistic terms [...] since foreign policy has usually been within the

⁴³ W.Frank (1929:88). See also C.Coker (1989).

⁴⁴ Hofstadter quoted in S.M.Lipset (1996:18).

⁴⁵ S.M.Lipset (1964:321).

⁴⁶ D.Bell (1965:120).

frame of moral rather than pragmatic discourse, the debate [...] became centered in moral terms."⁴⁷

There exists, therefore, the need for an ideological issue which would reflect the simplicity of the US's uni-dimensional and/or bi-dimensional ideological universe, and which could easily be equated with a moral issue. In this respect, Bell concludes that "the attacks on Communism were made with all the compulsive moral fervour which was possible because of the equation of Communism with sin."⁴⁸ Accordingly, I would argue that Communism, understood mainly as a foreign menace to national integrity, was seen to oppose "*Americanism*", and "*Americanism*" as a "way of life", produced a feeling (and a rationale) whereby anything or anyone which opposed such a principle could be regarded as disloyal to "American standards." That is why "in America, there is more of a tendency to define a person as American by the extent to which he acts and feels and thinks in a way defined as American [...] The American way of life involves the affirmation of ideals. Englishmen do not have to strive to live an English way of life."⁴⁹

In this light I would argue that the critical development that follows the fusion of *Americanism* and anti-Communism as major geopolitical instruments of the US foreign policy rationale, has resulted in a lasting tradition of US penetration in Latin America. In effect, this has occasioned a number of repercussions in the Inter-American sphere: firstly, a critical disturbance occurring within the foreign policy process as such, and secondly, both the eventual loss of credibility and the extreme political fragility to which foreign policy, better understood as the coherent reflection of diplomacy, was exposed.

There is perhaps no other first world country among all the modern Western nations this century, which resorts to ideology in order to construct a pattern of national identity which results eventually in a foreign policy enterprise with a considerable degree of a noticeable element of popular hyperpatriotism. The very existence of Leninism and of Sovietism might be an argument to make a similar case. However, there does not seem to be any Soviet 'ism'

⁴⁷ Ibid:120.

⁴⁸ Ibid:120

⁴⁹ E.A.Shils (1956:77-78).

(except Communism itself and it was not sufficient) that could parallel *Americanism* as the worldwide pragmatic and all-powerful ideological umbrella with the eventual ability to influence the domestic and international politics of both the Western and the Eastern world. In this light, let me say that it would not be a truism to stress the worldwide importance (for the end of the Cold War too) that the Eastern world's long-lasting fantasy with the "*American way*" has represented for the developments taking place in that part of Europe and some other regions from the 1960s onwards.

A number of events occurring in some of these countries are relatively important examples of the prevalence of a Cold War mentality, let alone the repressed migration coming from the other side of the Iron Curtain. Of course, there is quite sufficient evidence (not accepting this would be at the risk of verging on the implausible) to say that generalised civil and political oppression played a major role in these societies' turmoil. But it is also possible to make the argument that the exacerbated anti-Communism of Washington in the Western European nations emphasised within the Eastern societies the relevance of such a radical shift of life.⁵⁰

Whether in the form of Communism or socio-political change in other countries, particularly in those closest to the US sphere of influence, such political activity becomes associated with a 'foreign intrusion' into the US civilisatory scope, and is, therefore, regarded as a violent denial of essential values. Hence the US need to protect its security not only for the sake of security itself, but also because this security is threatened by an unnatural menace, which is unacceptable by American standards.⁵¹ Puritan morality finally resulted in a denial of

⁵⁰ See R.A.Melanson&D.Mayers (1987); J.Lovenduski&J.Woodall (1987); L.P.Morris (1984); V.Tismaneanu (1988). It is worth to mention here Adolf A. Berle who in 1952 was an important link between the Salvadorian government - one of the three Central American plotting countries against Guatemalan president, Jacobo Arbenz - and the Eisenhower Administration. His own record shows to what extent anti-Communism's most important representatives were anywhere at the perfect time: "Although he returned to his law practice and held no official positions from 1946 to 1961, he maintained close ties with US policy-makers on Latin America and served informally as an adviser to the Truman Administration. During the Eisenhower Administration, he worked with the elite Cold-War National Committee for a Free Europe, which ran Radio Free Europe, dedicated to 'liberation' of Eastern Europe from Communism." See A.A.Berle (1973:614). See also S.Jonas&D.Tobis (1974:57).

⁵¹ It can be argued that the threat of Communism was an ideological categorisation utilised by the US to *convince* the allies to pursue common purposes. The political reality was that the URSS did not show any signs, according to Carr, of fighting a "Cold War seriously in the hemisphere." This is more so, if we consider that the two strongest Communist parties, the Brazilian and the Chilean, did not have any direct and relevant involvement in politics during the Cold War years. See R.Carr (1967:160).

pluralism; that is a denial of what is most commonly understood in classical political theory as the reign of freedom. At the same time, such “*Americanism*” catalysed an extremist anti-revolutionarism, which for some authors has been the origin of an "exacerbated xenophobia"⁵² in US politics after World War II, let alone in world politics. This has, however, been particularly evident in US policies towards Latin America this century. This aspect of US political tradition and its powerful influence in the arena of international relations came to demonstrate the extent to which a policy of secrecy would become one of the pillars of US foreign policy.⁵³

- Legitimisation through intervention

I do not mean to say that there have not been foreign threats in recent history which explain the need for a strategy of national security. Nor do the above arguments deny the very existence of (Stalinist) Communism and Sovietism as a geopolitical problem for US security and, thus, for the other actors in the international system: security is a prime feature of any state's policy. The liberal state preserves security in order to avoid the risks of foreign aggression. US areas of influence after World War II created security needs for world actors. The US creates the need (from its own strategic conception of national interest) for the others to have to be preoccupied with security. Security in this case means essentially US security: "the US produces and others consume security" argues Gray.⁵⁴ What I do argue is that state legitimacy which relies heavily on the values of US political culture, eventually, in the field of foreign policy, finds an alternative (and new) way of legitimising itself through intervention.

That new form of legitimisation became possible in that Communism - as an extrapolation - came to concretise all that *America* feared about history and the world, and

⁵² E.A.Shils (1956:95).

⁵³ McCarthyism permeated Cold War policies. This was so particularly during the Eisenhower presidency. Guatemalan Secretary of Foreign Affairs with Arbenz, declared in 1954 that Guatemala "opposed ... the internationalization of McCarthyism." See G.Toriello (1955:272). See S.G.Rabe (1988:chapters 2-3). For a more specific approach to the working of covert operations, see, G.F.Treverton (1988).

⁵⁴ See C.S.Gray (1988:40,14,15), and above in the Introduction.

represented therefore everything which stood against the particular US notion of progress and the development of civilisation. Thus, there is a need to associate the presence of this danger wherever it occurs, with the need to oppose it in the defence of liberty. Hence the need to preserve national security ('security for all' equals the assurance of US security), and, to that end to prevent the full representation of widespread evil, be it Communism, socio-political change, or even differing political opinions.⁵⁵

It is for the above reason that intervention was provided with a broad legitimacy: all that represented a threat for the US was consequently (although in some cases reluctantly) accepted for the other actors as a danger of their own. As a result the principle of sovereignty was a minor preoccupation for Washington. Ultimately, sovereignty was an unacceptable principle for it contradicted and struggled against the very philosophical grounds of *Americanism*.⁵⁶

In this light, the US would seem to have required the establishment of a link between the paradigm of *exceptionalism* and the need for a paradigmatic foreign policy. That link had to be solid enough to underpin a rationale that could both meet historical expectations and fill the gaps left by those historical events which needed, in the context of their *historical orphanity*, nothing less than an *American* 'explanation', and certainly an *American* 'solution'. Following my argument, it goes without saying that the United States appropriates the paternity of (if not the history of) a new *epochal* climate of traditions in the making of foreign policy.⁵⁷

Exceptionalism in the US constitutes a vital pillar in the country's explanation of the bounds of its foreign policy. Some of the principles of the United States undertaking, according

⁵⁵ See further on J.F.Dulles's strategic thinking.

⁵⁶ I accept that this might be a general feature characterising the foreign behaviour of any country, still, the intended link between *Americanism* and the problem of sovereignty is a valid one. As already said above, Hoffmann refers to the contradictions of interventions in the international system, the most fundamental being "the principle of sovereignty ... If one accepts the principle of sovereignty as the corner-stone of international society, this means ... that intervention, defined as an act aimed at influencing the domestic affairs of a state, is quite illegitimate." See S.Hoffmann (1984:11).

⁵⁷ Augelli and Murphy have noted that , "perhaps the most widespread popular belief about foreign affairs is that the United States has a peculiar destiny. American foreign-policy-makers need to, and have almost always wanted to, treat the US as a country with special mission ... Those who accept this Calvinist repertoire have difficulty approving of any attempts their government might make to make long term deals with any foreign nations that do not accept the 'American system'." See E.Augelli&C.Murphy (1988:59).

to Packerham, imply an entire set of conservative beliefs about economic and political development, namely: "1) change and development are easy, 2) all good things go together, 3) radicalism and revolution are bad, 4) distributing power is more important than accumulating power." Exceptionalism is also important as an immediate result of the Revolution, for

"the 'American exceptionalism' perspective, particularly as enunciated by Hartz, implies two corollaries that are also confirmed by the historical record since World War II. One is that political ideas that looked radical to Americans were in fact within the liberal tradition. Since the American liberal tradition is, on a world scale, a rather conservative type of political thought, these 'radical' ideas were also rather conservative, even though they did not appear so to Americans. In other words, variations in political development of ideas in the doctrines and theories seem large when viewed from within the liberal tradition, but they appear much smaller when viewed from outside it."⁵⁸

On the one hand, *exceptionalism* marks the difference between the past and the present, and sets the limits of the *timing* of history. On the other, it draws the line between those who are eligible for the (US) *civilisatory* label and thus their right to belong to the sacred (and non-secular) world of the well-behaved. Such an accolade is a pennant which embraces both the *temporal* and the *spatial*, for it refers both to the movement of history and to the specific positioning of the actors.⁵⁹

In this case, history (time) means US *history* or, at least, a certain version of history in the making, and *space* concerns the scope of movement, both territorial and intellectual available to the historical actors. The space of time and the timing and measuring of space is, then, an exercise that has established the conditions not only of mechanical and/or physical

⁵⁸ See R.A.Packerham (1973:20-21). It does not seem to be any liberal (or radical) element in US foreign policy making, especially when the defence of security is a priority.

⁵⁹ A very crude but highly illustrative example of this in modern US diplomacy is perhaps the incident that occurred in June 1969 in Washington, when Chilean Foreign Minister, Gabriel Valdés, was confronted by Kissinger after Valdés' strong speech on regional development to Nixon at the White House. Kissinger said: "Mr. Minister, you made a strange speech. You come here speaking of Latin America, but this is not important. Nothing important can come from the South. History has never been produced in the South. The axis of history starts in Moscow, goes to Bonn, crosses over to Washington, and then goes to Tokyo. What happens in the South is of no importance. You are wasting your time." "I said," Valdés recalls, "Mr. Kissinger, you know nothing of the South." "No," Kissinger answered, "and I don't care." At that point, Valdés, astonished and insulted, told Kissinger: "You are a German Wagnerian. You are a very arrogant man." See S.M.Hersh (1983:263). See also Paz's elaboration on the influence of the US over the complex realities and contradictions that México and some other Latin American countries have undergone through the time in chapter 1. See the Introduction.

movement, but also of concrete action, both intellectual and socio-political.⁶⁰ Movement and action are, then, confined by the specific boundaries of symbolic reason (or symbolic power)⁶¹ and of the rationalisation of power. Such confinement serves as the best illustration of why exceptionalism matters in attempts to explain the basis upon which early and modern US foreign policy in Latin America is formed. Both symbolic reason and the rationalisation of power are the foundations of a real strategy of supremacy, of regional power politics.

Furthermore, past and present converged in the juncture that gave rise to the "New World." Anglo-America and Iberian-America have respectively their roots in an island and a peninsula. Whereas the former gave life to the strongest continental economy in modern times, the latter originated societies with an utter bias to insularity, and, to some extent isolation. The eccentricity of this fact should be underscored, for the ethos that is present at the roots of both societies marked their development path from the colonial period to present times.

European "successful" expansionist experiences had their first and firmest concretion in America. Iberian and English imperialism were the leading forces heading the establishment of the foundations of the two main variants of European civilisations: Iberian-*América* and Anglo-*America*. But speaking of the *new* world may arouse suspicion, for America was at the same time the occasion to revive old as well as to set in motion new ways of societal arrangements. Thus, America was still a territory to be named and "discovered" - and eventually possessed - and this was going to be achieved through the missional character of foreign policy: the United States, the young Protestant nation, had the occasion to overcome the Iberian Catholic heritage. The end of the nineteenth century is the moment when the "two Americas" are born, and it is also the commencement of a new (though hesitant) "civilisatory" era in which the struggle between the "old" and the "new" world would shape the history of the United States as the new dominant actor in world affairs.

And yet, Latin America and, particularly, its tiny Central American region are just the *experimental territories* (elastic space), but remain, for all that, clearly significant targets,

⁶⁰ See, M.Wight (1966a,1966b,1966c,1978) R.Cox (1987,1996) and S.Gill (1997).

⁶¹ As already mentioned, P.Bourdieu (1991) refers to power in this way.

against which the US will prove the real effects and extent of its dominion strategy (discretionary time). Put crudely, Central America has acted both as an *agent* and as an *object* of US hegemonic aims in the region as a whole and, thus, in world affairs. Central America has been the territory in which Washington could display the potential of the geopolitical tools which it utilises to confront a bipolar world. In such an arena, that display could be carried out without any disturbance from other powerful actors on the international stage.⁶² Ultimately, the Central American countries became the regional Cold War laboratory (a *firing range* of bipolarity) of the United States to test the extent and relative strength of its major policies. This was a development of the greatest importance, as will be shown in the light of the further empirical analysis on Guatemala and which is explained by Stephen Rabe as follows:

"The Eisenhower administration wanted Latin America to understand that the Cold War was an essential feature of international relations in the post-war world. As mature, responsible members of the world community, Latin American nations needed to defer to US leadership in the momentous confrontation with the Soviet Union and to cooperate with the United States in safeguarding the hemisphere against Communist aggression. In the view of the Administration, the Inter-American system *had* to become an anti-Communist alliance. The United States tried to codify that view in 1954 when it obtained Latin American assent to an anti-Communist manifesto, the Declaration of Caracas ... the Eisenhower administration then decided to intervene unilaterally to help overthrow what it *thought* to be a Communist-dominated government in Guatemala."⁶³

I shall discuss this progression in the following chapters.

⁶² See in the Introduction my explanation on supremacy.

⁶³ S.G.Rabe (1988:42), (my italics). See the Conclusions.

PART II
CHAPTER 4

MODERNISATION IN GUATEMALA

[Central Americans] are,
have been, and for ages will
remain entirely unfit for
any government under heaven
but an unqualified despotism.
US Consul Charles Savage¹

O God, My Mother, My Father, Lord of
the hills, and valleys, Spirit
of the forests, be patient with me
for I am about to do as I always
have done. Now I make my offering
to you that you may know
that I am troubling your good will,
but suffer it, I pray.
I am going to destroy your beauty,
I am going to work you that I may live.²

- Introduction

In this chapter I will explain the genesis of the *October Revolution* occurring in Guatemala between 1944 and 1954. This is accomplished by referring to the domestic events embracing this process which have been named as the cause of US involvement. An inquiry into the US construction of both discursive and practical reasons prior to the intervention is also analysed in this and in the following chapters.³

The Guatemalan political experience of those years was an unconventional reformist process which took place in a rural-based underdeveloped area of the continent. The leadership

¹ Quoted in J.Dunkerley (1988:1).

² A Maya prayer of apology to the gods or saints of the earth when in need to make use of the soil and its resources. See T.&M.Melville (1971:15).

³ See especially chapters-6-7.

of this revolution was composed of progressive members of the bourgeois political elite which were interestingly supported by some of the leaders of the unionist movement as well as by members of progressive parties such as the illegal PGT (Communist). It aimed to create conditions for modern Capitalism and political democracy. The movement was unprecedented throughout the entire region. The Guatemalan revolution occurred at a transitional time for US-Latin American relations, interpolating F.D. Roosevelt, the New Deal and the Good Neighbour policy on the one hand, and on the other, Dwight Eisenhower, McCarthyism and Retaliation. It also appeared during a critical period of world history in which Cold War 'realism' was in the process of consolidation and about to dominate international affairs by inaugurating the policies of bipolarity.⁴

The case of Guatemala has already been the subject of a quite extensive literature, with various competing interpretations. One key recent study which deserves particular attention is that of P. Gleijeses. The title of his book, *Shattered Hope*, is itself a theme of the current historical chapter; Gleijeses' work, alongside other works such as *Bitter Fruit* and *The CIA in Guatemala* by S. Schlesinger & S. Kinzer and R. H. Immerman respectively, among a wide variety of studies, shows to what extent Guatemala has been a controversial subject among scholars in the US, because of their relatively divergent approaches in interpreting the reasons of both Washington's intervention in Guatemala and the final end of the *October Revolution* regime. For instance, Immerman gives priority essentially to an external variable (CIA's clandestine involvement) as preponderant in explaining the end of the *October Revolution* ("the perfidy of the CIA"); on the other hand *Bitter Fruit* offers a reinterpretation of neo-imperialist policies ("when something happens to shock Washington ... we reach for our gun") focusing interestingly on the interests of the United Fruit Company. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a fundamental agreement in these three critical approaches to which I have resorted to illustrate the US academic view of Guatemala. In effect, the authors tend to share a preoccupation: neither the US government nor the public could understand Guatemalans, and the US has always underestimated Guatemalan and Central American affairs, not to mention continental affairs.

⁴ See the Introduction. As will be seen in this and further chapters, the *October Revolution* represented, in its originality, the beginning of an era of tension between democracy and authoritarianism in Latin America.

Glejeses' is also one of the main insightful studies from an academic viewpoint. By introducing in the analysis important original sources and interviews with some of the central actors of the Guatemalan drama of 1954, the author allows the reader to get a direct testimonial from those who experienced the events that occurred in June 1954. In effect, *Shattered Hope* gives us an actor perspective, and therefore a close-up look, at the Guatemalan revolution. Glejeses' approach shares to a certain extent one of the general assumptions of this thesis about the contradictions faced by a country that, from a relatively disadvantageous position, attempted the peaceful reform of its political and economic structures in order to establish the conditions in which the roots for a liberal democracy might be consolidated. Likewise Glejeses highlights the confrontations occurring among the main actors during the Guatemalan process of transformation in 1944-1954.

Was Jacobo Arbenz a Communist? Glejeses discusses the issue of communist influence upon Arbenz persona and policies. He seems to confer some importance, for instance, on the prevalent idea that "the virus of Communism had infected both of them (Arévalo and Arbenz), especially Arbenz."⁵ Glejeses offers interestingly the view of the US press at the time: "Arbenz was 'a prisoner of the embrace he so long ago gave the Communists'."⁶ This issue is in itself relevant (and controversial) in that it has been a cornerstone of the controversy that has surrounded the interpretation (and the US *perception*) of the events during the last stages of the *October Revolution*. Were Arbenz's alleged communist sympathies responsible for the failure of the Guatemalan process and eventually for the CIA sponsored coup against the *October Revolution*? Or was the authoritarian tendency encouraged throughout by Washington, the final and most important reason for the destruction of the Guatemalan democratic regime? Glejeses sees the ideological issue as decisive. This is especially important if the implementation of the agrarian reform and the democratisation of the political regime are taken into account. According to one of Glejeses' interviewees (with whom he seems to agree), José Manuel Fortuny the former general secretary of the PGT during Arbenz's government, "they [the US]

⁵ P.Glejeses (1991:3).

⁶ Ibid. This is the view of the New York Times at the time.

would have overthrown us even if we had grown no bananas.”⁷ The very fact of an attempt at a fundamental reform was enough, argues Gleijeses, to provoke Washington. Thus, although not in every respect, Gleijeses’ approach strengthens one of the fundamental arguments of the current thesis. Accordingly, an essential coincidence has to be pointed out: Arbenz - and even Arévalo some time before - was bent on radical gradual reform even without the PGT.⁸ The political and socio-economic conditions of Guatemala at the time seemed to be receptive to a process of considerable transformation of the polity and the economy.

Glejeses argues that Arbenz’s presidency was “marked by three departures: agrarian reform, close ties with the Communist party, stubborn defiance of the United States.”⁹ As he recounts later on, it was in the first instance the radical agrarian reform that created the need to encourage further changes. After all, “the healthy state of the economy was matched by equally satisfactory developments in the political realm: the administration was popular, Arbenz’s control of the government coalition appeared firm.”¹⁰ It seems from Gleijeses’ interpretation that the perceived “defiance” of the US was set on course from the very moment that Guatemala launched successfully “the first true agrarian reform of Central America” at the time.¹¹ If understood as a bridge towards economic modernity and progress then the agrarian reform cannot be underestimated as an important reason for confrontation with Washington, which was, in this context, inevitable. From this perspective, I would argue that Washington’s dogmatic intolerance of other forms of change is another element to be added to the long *list* of reasons why the US had to intervene in Guatemala.

⁷ Ibid:3-4.

⁸ J.Pearce explains that even though “Arévalo was a cautious reformer ... and he was unwilling to introduce a land reform of any significance ... for the first time legislation was passed to improve the conditions of the labour force, and workers on the foreign owned plantations ... were allowed to organize to defend their rights.” See, J.Pearce (1981:28).

⁹ P.Glejeses (1991:134).

¹⁰ Ibid:170.

¹¹ Ibid:3.

It mattered little that the PGT was not properly involved in state policy-making and that it “never controlled the labour confederation.”¹² Gleijeses’ research throws new light on the Arbenz’s-PGT affair. In his analysis he also shows that this affair did not determine substantially Arbenz’s policies had the PGT not been present in the reform process.¹³ As will be argued later in this thesis, the tragic destruction of the Guatemalan revolution was the result of the clash between two different conceptions of modernity and democracy. In the end the authoritarian temptation - an enduring domestic tradition reinforced firmly in Latin America by Washington’s intervention in Guatemala - and sponsored directly by the CIA overcame the unprecedented civilised avenue opened up by the October revolutionaries from the very moment of the election of Juan José Arévalo in 1944.

Thus Gleijeses’ important work revises the conventional interpretations of the Guatemalan case, which tend to have been stuck in the ideological dichotomies of the Cold War. His principal conclusions are that there were three forces that shaped the American response to the Guatemalan revolution: “the search for economic gain, the search for security and imperial hubris.”¹⁴ In a general, although challenging buttress to one of the main arguments of this thesis, he points out that

“in no country of Latin America had the communists ever been as influential as they were in Guatemala. And no president had ever been as close to the communists as was Arbenz” ... [nonetheless he agrees that] ... “the reports of the late forties reveal, beyond their arrogance and ethnocentrism, immense ignorance. Many are simply bizarre, particularly those discussing the communist issue - those convoluted papers, for example, on whether Arévalo was a communist. These reports bear no relationship to the reality of Guatemala; they inhabit a deranged world of nightmares.”¹⁵

¹² Ibid:191.

¹³ The PGT was remarkably functional in implementing the complex technicalities of the agrarian reform. This was a dominant field where the absence of the PGT would have affected Arbenz’s agrarian policies.

¹⁴ Ibid:361.

¹⁵ Ibid:362.

This differs to a certain extent from the argument of the current thesis in that it does not portray a *rational* US appraisal in terms of aiming at *constructing* an alternative non-communist option. Rather, the US aimed to destroy the order of the *October Revolution* in the name of the mission against the communist menace, imposing whatever substitute there was at hand - and preferably, as the evidence shows, an authoritarian one. Nonetheless it is important to examine - and on this evidence Gleijeses' is undoubtedly an important guide - the Guatemalan revolution in more detail, in both its empirical and discursive formations, both inside Guatemala and in Washington.

Thus, what follows provides an explanation of the Guatemalan revolution by dissecting the various endogenous conditions that influenced both the initial changes in the Guatemalan political process and later its termination. In chapters 5-8 a detailed explanation of the US undertaking will be offered. In this explanation the argument pointed of this thesis about Washington's fixation with change in Guatemala will allow us to ponder the extent to which the United States was intolerant towards *any* reformist change even where the latter was far from representing a real threat against its security interests. Guatemala was treated as an inadmissible example set by a small nation within a misunderstood continent.

- A successful transition to modernity

1944-1954 had been years of successful transition towards political modernity and economic progress for Guatemala. Dictator Jorge Ubico Castaneda (1931-44) had been replaced after thirteen years in power by a movement remembered as the October Revolution, a democratic uprising composed of both civilian and military personalities.¹⁶ After trying to negotiate an "Ubiquismo without Ubico" formula, the old regime had to give up power following a widespread social revolt commanded by junior officers and later on headed by a

¹⁶ On the Guatemala political process see: J.J.Arévalo (1945); J.J.Arévalo (1953); J.J.Arévalo (1959); G.Toriello (1955); G.Selser (1961); M.Galich (1956); J.D.Rozzotto (1958); J.Maestre-Alonso (1969); M.Mejía (1951); M.Monteforte-Toledo (1959); T.&M.Melville (1971); S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982); P.Gleijeses (1991); R.H.Immerman (1982); S.Jonas&D.Tobis (1974); S.Jonas (1991). See also one of early accounts of the overthrow of Arbenz and on the Guatemalan process by the prominent Guatemalan poet, L.Cardozo y Aragón (1955), see especially chapter-3.

three-man *junta* which called elections and ushered in a period of ebullient reform.¹⁷ A deep transformation of the nature of the political regime in Guatemala was underway.

Subsequently a democratically elected government embarked on a gradual but unprecedented process of reform. An exemplary figure in the October Revolution was Juan José Arévalo, a bright intellectual and educator just returned from a long exile in Argentina, who became the first democratic President of Guatemala on March 15, 1945. Thus began the *October Revolution*. The end of Ubico's dictatorship marked the beginning of what would be a fresh (yet a short-lived transition by Central and Latin American standards) which conducted a transformation of the country in socio-political, and economic terms.¹⁸

The decade of remarkable democratic rule was brought to an end in June 24, 1954 when Arévalo's successor, Jacobo Arbenz (1951-54), was ousted from power by a faction within the military headed by Col. Carlos Castillo Armas (1954-57) (subsequently assassinated in 1957) and some members of the oligarchic groups strongly supported by Washington.¹⁹ Initially, the plotters of the coup d'état did not represent entirely the features of the old authoritarian regime. They were the bridge between the previous reformist periods and the return of a true representative of the pre-1944 order, Gen. Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes (1958-63)²⁰ whose subsequent period represented not only the return to the past, but also, (and this is of major

¹⁷ The three men *junta* were: Major Francisco Arana, Captain Jacobo Arbenz, the two heroes of the revolt, and the civilian Jorge Toriello, an upper class youth who had stood against Ubico.

¹⁸ For many liberal observers the new Constitutional arrangements with its system of checks and balances, that resulted from the Constitution of 1944, which was strongly inspired by the theories of Montesquieu, Thomas Jefferson and others, represented the most enlightened constitutional process throughout Latin America. See M.Mejia (1951:59-68); M.Monteforte-Toledo (1959:310-311); F.D.Parker (1964:97). This may be true for the Central American nations. Nevertheless, it is salutary to note that a relatively strong constitutional tradition had characterised most Latin American countries since independence, and yet in a number of cases constitutions became dead letters.

¹⁹ As will be seen further Castillo Armas was Washington's instrument in organising Operation Success-*Pbsuccess* (the code number of US covert intervention; henceforth *Pbsuccess*) in order to overthrow Arbenz. See R.H.Immerman (1982:chapter-6); and P.Glejeses (1991:243-247).

²⁰ Ydígoras-Fuentes, a long time instigator during the first stage of the Revolution, had been considered as a "moderate" candidate during the 1944 transition (instead of the puppet candidate Federico Ponce), but failed in the attempt. Later on, in 1950, he contested and lost the presidential election against Arbenz. It was not until 1958, at the high-tide of authoritarianism, that he was appointed President by the traditional military elite. See P.Glejeses (1991:75-76,82-84), M.Ydígoras-Fuentes (1963).

importance to understand the disastrous implications of the US sponsored coup) to the start of a long lasting authoritarian regime that became an ignominious repressive symbol in the region.²¹

The regime presiding over Guatemala before the *October Revolution* was an unadulterated military dictatorship. But this was no novelty within the annals of Central American history. On the contrary, the authoritarian regime in Guatemala was just another component of the political *normality* prevailing in the region, (as was the case for all four of the other countries in the region: Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica), thus, it did not represent a cause of a political crisis. In fact it represented part of a continuity, a solution impeding rupture. Therefore, crisis (reform) and disorder (the plotting against reform) commenced in the moment of progress. And such a turmoil, it is understood, explained itself in that *national progress* encouraged by the *October Revolution* inevitably clashed with the neo-colonial order.

The main feature of the Guatemalan economy (as with most of the countries of the region) was its monoculture mercantile structure (coffee and bananas), where two economic actors (the oligarchic landowners and the peasants) were decisive (hence the importance of the Agrarian Reform which shall be discussed further). The oligarchy's unwillingness to accept or to encourage social change stemmed from political causes, to the ideological orthodoxy of the dominant agricultural groups. In the words of Torres-Rivas, the

²¹ In order to briefly illustrate the latter an eloquent account by an editorial in The Economist in 1968, fourteen years later, follows: "Right wing terrorism in the name of anti-Communism is rapidly replacing Cuban-inspired guerrilla activity as the chief threat to stability in this troubled Central American republic. A vindictive clandestine war between extremes of the right and the left claimed more than 1,000 lives in 1967 (Guatemala's total population is 4.5 million). And people continue to be killed or to disappear at the rate of more than three a day [...] Left-wing (but non-Communist) unionists and professional men are particularly vulnerable to the indiscriminate counter-terrorism of the right. Now many of them are seeking sanctuary outside the country as "death lists" appear, slipped under doors, posted on buildings or sent in anonymous letters." "Guatemala: The Ferocious Cure", The Economist, January 6, 1968, p. 22 (the population figure corresponds to the date this article was written). For his part Schlesinger says when giving an early account of declassified documents on Guatemala, that, "what emerges from these documents is a pattern of official US deceit and corruption toward Guatemala and establishes the affair as one of the most sordid and inane foreign 'security' operations in American history." See S.Schlesinger (1978:439). A recent report called *Guatemala: Nunca Más*, promoted by the archbishop of Guatemala Juan Gerardi, who was murdered as a result, announced that 50,000 murders have taken place during the 56 years of "dirty war". See El País (Domingo), 10 May, 1998, pp. 14,16, and below in the Conclusions.

“total predominance of the interests of the large landowners - particularly those of the coffee-growers - established the boundaries within which economic policy could take shape. The need to defend the political order in turn inspired acceptance of a conservative diagnosis and treatment of the ailing body of the economy. In sum, the government[s] of the time were responding - through both omission and commission - to deeply rooted oligarchic instincts.”²²

This then was the scenario confronting the *October Revolution*: rural Capitalism, a weak middle class, an oppressed *campesinado*, authoritarian features of the political regime, and a recurring dependency on the US.

To a great extent resulting from the above, in all five countries of the isthmus a generalised demand for democracy took place in 1944, and yet only in Guatemala did this appeal become a reality. This was the result of an anti-oligarchic offensive which was shaped by a clamour for “democracy”: democracy was conceived in terms of opposing dictatorship and securing rights established by liberal political philosophy. This was, in a number of respects, however a good beginning for a country aiming at achieving Capitalist modernity and political progress for the first time. The impetus for reform affecting Guatemala might be attributed to the strong foreign economic presence, the stronger mass politics tradition than in other countries of the region, and the existence of a more politicised middle class. It was also a process, “stimulated by the international climate of the mid-1940s, which had been marked by antifascist victories, popular discontent coalesced for the first time around a specific challenge to the ruling order: the demand for a democratization of the system.”²³

In fact, Arévalo and his successor, Jacobo Arbenz were essentially middle-class reformers who modelled their programme to a great extent on the New Deal, including health care, worker’s compensation bills, and a social security system. Arévalo himself was a great enthusiast of Franklin Roosevelt, as can be noted in his following words: “... the giant figure of President (F.D.) Roosevelt becomes the symbol of the modern statesmen: love for the humble people, respect for the nations, courage in front of adversity, generosity and greatness

²² E.Torres-Rivas (1989:15).

²³ E. Torres-Rivas (1989:17). I argue that US economic presence challenged the political impetus of Guatemalan novel nationalism.

at any moment ... Roosevelt the visionary, the apostle, the friend of the common people...”²⁴ Thus the *October Revolution*'s commitment to achieving democracy is better understood, within the context of the Rooseveltian New Deal spirit permeating progressive middle-class strata throughout the continent. It can be seen, then, as an authentic though (if we consider the socio-political context) a naive hope of achieving progress. An important ambitious fraction of the Guatemalan political class was no exception, as a result the *October Revolutionaries* were led by an urban petty bourgeoisie, generally educated but frustrated by the lack of political democracy and of opportunities for economic advancement. This is why the movement was spearheaded by,

“a generation of university students mostly of middle class origins, who perceived themselves as ‘classless’. The coalition also included intellectuals and professionals; small businessmen and merchants, whose economic prospects had been limited; and underpaid public employees, particularly teachers and junior army officers. These groups were joined by progressive, nationalistic property owners who had been out of favor with Ubico.”²⁵

According to Manuel Galich, Arévalo's and Arbenz's Minister of Foreign affairs, the 1944 junta “had no revolutionary ideology, nor concrete program, nor well planned strategy, simply because the obscurantism we and our parents had lived through over almost a century, had kept us more than a little isolated from the world that surrounded us.”²⁶ The above features provide an idea of the diversified class composition that made up the *October Revolution* movement. To a certain extent the socio-political composition of the vanguard of change represented a split with the authoritarian past. But at the same time these mixed and ambiguous class affinities concealed the seed for the return to power of the old conservative groups that relied obediently on the neo-colonial rationale.

- The *October Revolution*: Arévalo

²⁴ See J.J.Arévalo (1953:256,270).

²⁵ See S.Jonas (1991:23).

²⁶ Quoted in B.W.Cook (1981:222).

An important aspect of the revolutionary movement in Guatemala was its relation to anti-Fascism. To a great extent modernised and progressive Guatemalan elites followed indirectly the US struggle against fascism in Europe. For this reason opposing and ultimately ousting dictator Ubico was very much an action that went in accordance with the spirit of Washington's anti-Axis campaign. Thus, in 1944, after a generalised revolt, Ubico was ejected. However, and in an attempt to both withhold privileges and also preserve the remnants of the old regime, he appointed a military triumvirate which manoeuvred the "election" of Federico Ponce as provisional president.

On October 20, 1944, armed students and workers joined dissident members of the military to oust Ponce. The interim Junta²⁷ held congressional and presidential elections and Arévalo was elected president in 1945, marking the beginning of the *October Revolution* (1944-54). The singular significant featuring of the October Revolution was its constitutional legitimacy: "the national election conducted before the end of the year [1944] was indicative of the revolution's democratic character."²⁸

The election marked the beginning of a new era in Guatemalan politics, a systemic internal transformation of the state in Guatemala, and Arévalo proved to be an important transitional political actor of this structural transformation. The importance of the social, economic and political reforms he initiated lies in the fact that they were both the germ of the Arbenz's stage of the deepening of the revolution and the natural response to the winds of modernisation blowing through Guatemala at that time.

Spiritual Socialism in power

²⁷ See above footnote.

²⁸ R.H.Immerman (1982:44).

Arévalo was the first modern constitutional president of Guatemala. He was an articulate intellectual whose ideological orientation was based on what he called “Spiritual Socialism.” This doctrine represented a more humanitarian dimension of political action, a Christian Democratic rather than a Socialistic tradition, and distinct from Marxism.²⁹ In fact, it must be noted, some of Arévalo’s political principles were based on anti-Communist beliefs. He argued that there was a difference between *Kommunism* and Communism. In his view, Communism was represented by the Communist Party of Moscow and Leninism, whereas *Kommunism* was a democratic political ideology, the purpose of which was the “defence of the interests of the workers and the exploited ones of the world,” and whose principles stress “nationalism and sovereignty and that dare to question the United States.”³⁰

“Spiritual Socialism” was analogous to “Arevalismo,” and according to Arévalo himself these features were explained in the following way:

“‘Arevalismo’ is the only political conglomerate which has its own philosophy. We do not have simply a government program for the next three or four presidential terms; we have our own social and political theory; we have called it Spiritual Socialism, and it represents a true doctrinaire innovation for our America, which until now has been grappling with only conservatism, liberalism and Marxism.”³¹

The doctrine was concerned primarily with what Arévalo conceived as “the psychological freedom of the individual.” He wished to develop within the Guatemalan society (through a wide political alliance) the “psychological and moral integrity” which he believed had been denied to all Guatemalans in the past. And this, he claimed, was going to be possible only in an atmosphere of political freedom. His was both a deeply mystical and a liberal-progressive approach to the problem of political and civil liberties.

²⁹ Arévalo’s philosophy was closer to a version of a Presidential humanism.

³⁰ See J.J.Arévalo (1959:cover).

³¹ J.J.Arévalo (1945:162).

It was also a sophisticated way of addressing the problems of a country with an indigenous majority and with a semifeudal system of underdeveloped Capitalism, for his commitment to defend the right of each Guatemalan to their own way of life (“their own thinking and their own property”) did challenge the timid democratic tradition of the region as a whole. His idea was that the government promote the protection of these rights against state abuse and by doing so, he believed, Guatemalan society would be able to move towards political and economic progress.

We may note here three novel features of the *October Revolution*: first there was an attempt to create a democratic discourse that would not alienate the US nor the conservative sectors of the oligarchy; second, the attempt to translate this democratic discourse into effective political action; and finally in both real and symbolic terms, to go beyond the traditional (and exhausted) rhetoric of the Latin American elites (which had generally comprised an empty collection of false promises).³²

Thus, Arévalo represented a dissident, uncommon and independent voice which had uncertain and therefore dangerous potential in the context of the uniform concert of both political action and political discourse in Central America. Consequently, as an unknown and independent political tradition this constituted a potential ‘threat’ in relation to the national security policy of the US. Indeed the acceptance of such uncertainty and danger, possibly resulting in the subsequent dislocation of the rationale of domination settled by the Monroe Doctrine, was a challenge to the US restricted notion of tolerance. The strong popular support that Arévalo gathered, permitted his government the achievement of relatively good results without having to engage solely in the typical populist rhetoric (a widespread phenomenon in most of the region’s countries).³³

³² In short, and apart from some historic landmarks, such as some features of the Cardenista stage of the Mexican post-revolutionary process, economic and political democracy at the time, as a widespread phenomenon, was a fiasco in most of the continent. Lázaro Cárdenas presided over México from 1934 to 1940. He was noted for his efforts to carry out the social and economic aims of the Mexican Revolution and in 1938 he nationalised the oil industry.

³³ Washington observed Arévalo’s policies with caution. His government was not perceived as a ‘threat’ by the US. Thus, there were no obvious attempts to challenge him. Besides, contrary to what happened to Arbenz, he was ‘protected’ by the anti-Axis alliance scenario. It was not until the further radicalisation of the October Revolution emerged (whose basis were to a great extent prepared by Arévalo) that the menace was materialised.

Political Democracy

The first two critical decisions taken by Arévalo once in government were to launch a new constitution and to create the institutional conditions for political democracy. Thus,

“‘Universal’ suffrage was granted to all adults except illiterate women (76.1 percent of women and 95.2 percent of Indian women as of 1950). Basic freedom of speech, press, and so on were guaranteed. Political parties could be organized and function freely, with the exception of the Communist Party [PGT] and other ‘foreign or international’ parties ... Political power was decentralised, as the university, municipalities, armed forces, and the other institutions were made autonomous.”³⁴

Journalist, Carleton Beals, once said referring to Arévalo’s administration that “it was the closest type of government stemming from the doctrine of the four liberties.” He said on the new Arévalo’s government, that after a year in power, “change was fundamental,”

“new political parties have been founded. Labour has been organised, the peasants have organised themselves. The Press attacks or praises the government. Public meetings are allowed. There is something new everywhere and lots of new books have appeared. No other president in the Americas is a more devout believer in popular freedom and democratic procedures.”³⁵

Arévalo’s own vision of the state was that it was an aggregate of collective (i.e., civic but not individual) interests and values. He also viewed the function of government in the context of a democratic society as serving equally individual and collective goals. His idea of the relation of government and society within a political democracy (and this represented the main contradiction of his thought) implied that civil rights might be restricted to protect

It can be argued that the aforementioned three dimensions of Arévalo’s vision of politics (sharper than Arbenz’s) represented the reason and the obstacle for both the subsequent US involvement in 1954. See, chapter 8.

³⁴ See S.Jonas (1991:23).

³⁵ Carleton Beals, as cited in J.J.Arévalo (1964:119,f/n 14).

majority rights and national security. This was so, in his view, especially in the light of the backward side of Guatemalan political tradition, especially the Maya whose great isolation needed the assistance that only the government could provide. Thus the democratic process, in contemplating the satisfaction of the general interest and within the framework of an extremely unjust society, had to act sometimes at the expense of the rights of the (poor) majority.

Therefore, although his concern for popular sections (Indians, peasants and workers) was a genuine one, his diagnosis of a pluralist society was perhaps somehow optimistic given the underdeveloped conditions of most aspects of daily life in Guatemala. Nevertheless, his determination to unite Guatemalans behind a common agreement to place Guatemala on the track of economic progress and civilised coexistence seemed to be politic, astute, and even a moderate way of addressing the problems of the country.

Still, his ideal picture of Guatemala seemed to collide with some structural limits directly related to the class structure of the country. On the one hand, he claimed the need to endorse the existence of a Guatemalan “worker well fed and well dressed,” to achieve a man “psychologically and morally integrated” in order to make possible “a Republic made of free and dignified men.” And on the other hand, he stressed that the powerful classes “have come to understand that the happiness of the peoples of the world will never become a reality” if their inhabitants remain in a condition of the “psychological, social and economic inferiority in which they have remained under feudalism.” Thus, he stressed (in a pure Rooseveltian spirit) that in such a process, a “new political sensitivity” prevailed, under which “the powerful ones” have opted for “the humble and the unprotected.” At this point he proclaimed that in that stage of world history a “shift” had taken place, “a return from the liberal egoism of two centuries back, to the generous immersion of the individual into the collective being.”³⁶

Moreover, his idea of genuine democracy was that all citizens’ interests were to be represented by the government on equal terms. And thus, in particular, he recognised the need to represent, respect and so to preserve the rights of private property. Moreover, within the atmosphere of transformation and nationalisation that was in process (and which brought about

³⁶ J.J.Arévalo (1945:148).

charges of Communism from the local elites against the government), the government stated its intention to leave foreign investments intact (contrary to traditional Communist practices and surprisingly given Arévalo's nationalist orientation):

“The goal was economic reform, but the administration publicly asserted that Guatemala would encourage outside capital to continue to flow into the country, Arévalo perceived foreign investment and expertise as a vital component of his program for achieving economic development.”³⁷

This multi-dimensional profile that Arévalo's discourse elucidated was, to a certain extent, an expression of a systemic contradiction between the need for change on the one hand, and on the other, powerful elements of the old order which in Guatemala seemed unprepared to carry out a process of modernisation of both the state and the polity. And the irony was, that, despite Arévalo's vision and determination, when giving a diagnosis of the country's needs, his (abstract) concept of liberty and political and economic change struggled with the extremely unjust and stratified class composition of Guatemala which would eventually bring about the violent fall of the Revolution.

Agrarian Reform and Labour

While one of the objectives of “Spiritual Socialism” was to create the political and the economic conditions for Capitalist reform, this had to lead to changes in the nature of labour relations within the economic structure. Any program to reform the economic structure of Guatemala had to address the problem of the countryside, which was one of the most impoverished of Latin America. Agrarian reform in an underdeveloped country such as Guatemala was imperative in order to create a healthy internal market and allow an increase in the standard of living and the purchasing power of the population. And at the same time this process needed to create the conditions for the surplus rural labour to migrate into the urban

³⁷ R.H.Immerman (1982:52).

areas and form the basis of an industrial sector. Agrarian reform was thus a pre-condition for industrialisation.

In addition, domestic and foreign observers agreed with Arévalo that the government had to take responsibility for Guatemala's economic progress. Accordingly the *October Revolutionaries* (in order to both attract and organise funding for social expending), created the Ministry for Development and Labour and the Department of Cooperative Development. Soon afterwards, the government set up the Bank of Guatemala and the Institute for the Development of Production. The clear aim of these institutions was to promote the financial and technological strength for the diversification of the Guatemalan agrarian structure. At the same time the new constitution made provisions to restrict the growth of *latifundios* and to partially nationalise plantations owned by foreigners.³⁸

It was clear however, that "Arevalismo" lacked the substantial tools to succeed in promoting deep economic reform in the countryside (a goal that Arbenz for a short while was able to achieve). There were also political disadvantages. Despite Arévalo's exceptional sympathetic sentiment toward the rural masses, the reform in this field of the economy was not as successful as expected. The problem of the Guatemalan agrarian situation was too much for the first revolutionary government, which was faced with a huge array of problems. It could not concentrate on agrarian reform to the extent that it was both desired and needed. On the other hand there was a fear of doing too much too soon in terms of antagonising the interests of the large landlords which would lead to an undesirable political confrontation. This task would be left for Arbenz's government to take care of.³⁹

The reality was that the only powerful pressure group with direct interests in the countryside was the upper class, and this group was not only not interested in reform, but was

³⁸ Although this provision was accomplished more efficiently by Jacobo Arbenz, Arévalo nationalised the German plantations that had been confiscated during World War II. Subsequently these lands were owned by the state under the name of "Fincas Nacionales."

³⁹ Jenny Pearce considers that "Arévalo was a very cautious reformer." She agrees with many other analysts, that when the time of Arbenz came, the aim "was to transform Guatemala's semi-feudal form of production into a modern capitalist one and to create an internal market so that industry could develop." See J.Pearce (1981:28).

opposed to all change and did not approve of extending agrarian reform any further. For this reason, the inevitable target of the economic reform was to embrace economic change in favour of the middle and lower urban classes and for this purpose the political base of trade unions in the cities was of extreme help. Both the agrarian and labour stages of the reform, however, demonstrated the difficulties involved in attempting to match political democracy (within a non-democratic atmosphere) with economic modernisation (within a dependent feudal economy).

Given the local and international social tensions any reform created, it seemed as though the advent of an authoritarian form of government would be inevitable. Hence, in the analysis of the fall of Arbenz and the destruction of the reformist process in Guatemala, it is important to argue critically that once again we witness the fragility of democracy in the continent. As shall be seen further in this chapter, political democracy and political liberalism failed again to endure within the socio-political structures of the Central American region.

The Labour Code

One of the first changes that the Revolution aimed at was the transformation of labour relations. However, in more general terms what distinguished the spirit of the reforms were the initiatives of worker and peasant organisations that had suddenly gained a freedom of action previously unknown. Real wages received unusually effective enforcement, thanks in part to the efforts of Guatemalan Communists who possessed the kind of grass roots organisation needed to implement the social reforms. From this moment onwards trade unionism became a reality in Guatemala as workers became an important political actor.⁴⁰

Arévalo started a program of labour legislation which attempted to reverse conditions which had persisted in Guatemala since the times of the conquest. On 1 May 1947, after much careful discussion by both the congress and the executive a Labour Code was promulgated by

⁴⁰ Although the Communists had participated in the agrarian reform when Arbenz was in power, they did not have any determining participation (as the US argument went) in the overall design of the administration's policies. See chapter-6.

the government.⁴¹ In a public address to the Guatemalan workers in which he spoke of the new labour code, Arévalo said,

“This historical event places the inhabitants of Guatemala within a new style of moral, economic and social life ... thanks to the Labour Code those numerous inhabitants will become productive agents in order to become legal persons (“personas jurídicas”) with rights and obligations, with a sense of a social and a moral patrimony. And this liberation of the economically exploited citizens is the transforming event of our life ... [which] ... I consider it to be, without hesitation, a rebirth ... My government gives you this Code: may God give you the strength to defend it.”⁴²

A clearly articulated code, it asserted the fundamental rights of all workers in Guatemala. This was mandatory regardless of the workers’ ethnic origin or place of employment. It affirmed the right for the workers to unionise and strike within a conciliation mechanism. The code also stipulated a minimum salary, a forty-eight-hour-week, regulated the employment of women and adolescents, and established basic standards of health and safety in the work place.

The purpose of the labour code was to guarantee

“Guatemalan workers rights which they had been denied in the past. The results rapidly became apparent. Whereas the average salary for an agricultural worker in 1944 ranged from five to twenty-five centavos per day (one centavo equalled one US cent), by the time Arévalo left office in 1951 the figure had risen to close to eighty centavos. Even with adjustments made for inflation, this increase was dramatic. Large employers like the United Fruit Company charged that the government intended the Labour Code to harass foreign investors, but their arguments ignored these positive results.”⁴³

⁴¹ See M.Galich (1956:131-146). The key parties in congress during the Presidency of Arévalo were the *FPL*, *RN*, and the *PAR*. “In terms of age and social extraction, the leadership of the three parties was similar: middle-class urban youth, particularly those university students and teachers who had distinguished themselves in 1944.” P.Glejeses (1991:39-44).

⁴² J.J.Arévalo (1953:391,392,396).

⁴³ The figures, as referred by Guillermo Toriello who was the last Minister of Foreign affairs of Jacobo Arbenz and a remarkable personality during the confrontation with the State Department in 1954. See G.Toriello (1953:37), and L.Cardosa y Aragón (1954:224).

Some other important changes were carried out in the area of education and health. Educational reform was obviously Arévalo's pet project. As an educator, he was highly aware of the illiteracy conditions of the Guatemalan population which rated over 70 percent, ranked second after Haití among the countries of Latin America. In the rural areas alone where the population was mostly indigenous, illiteracy reached over 90 percent.⁴⁴ Hence the government dedicated great efforts to improve the country's educational system. In fact only in the last year of Arévalo's government the investment in education went beyond seven million dollars just on educational projects, which represented a much higher amount than "one-half of all state expenditures in Ubico's final year."⁴⁵ In terms of health, the Arévalo administration expanded and modernised the Ministry of Public Health and Assistance and initiated campaigns to combat epidemics and improve urban hygiene. Although these measures represented only a modest contribution to the enormous health problems of Guatemala, they were important, at least to help reduce the mortality rate by 2.5 percent average each year during the revolutionary period.⁴⁶

This was also the view of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) whose representative, Canadian economist George Britnell, on a visit to Guatemala concluded in his report that, "under existing circumstances the state must assume the major role in the advancement of the underdeveloped segments of the Guatemalan economy."⁴⁷ Addressing poverty and underdevelopment were at the heart of the government's programme. According to Britnell, the code was "a very important and necessary step toward defining the

⁴⁴ Cardoza y Aragón claim that "not surprisingly, members of the powerful landowners association advocate the preservation of rural illiteracy on the "patriotic" ground that education would cause a mass exodus from the land." See L.Cardoza y Aragón (1954:225). Dunkerley argues that "coercive government corresponded in more direct terms to the fact that the country had a very large indigenous population - at least 65 percent of the population of 1.8 million in 1930, and an equal proportion of that of 2.4 million in 1945." See J.Dunkerley (1992:302).

⁴⁵ On illiteracy and education standards see, M.Monteforte-Toledo (1959:251-253). "The progress was striking. Arévalo created the National Literacy Committee and, in 1949, replaced it with regional organisations. He built normal schools, special technical schools, municipal primary schools, kindergartens, adult night schools, industrial centres, and rural schools, until about six thousand places of learning were functioning throughout Guatemala." See R.H.Immerman (1982:56).

⁴⁶ See M.Monteforte-Toledo (1959:47-57).

⁴⁷ See G.E.Britnell (1951:472-473); and J.J.Arévalo (1953:165-166).

relationship between employers and employees.”⁴⁸ At the same time the US interest apparently had not been disturbed in any serious way for the United States ambassador to Guatemala, Edwin Jackson Kyle, Jr., emphatically upheld the code’s benefits when questioned about the program. He maintained at that time that, “it provided for the moral and economic improvement of the workers of Guatemala and definitely had not been aimed against the foreign interests in the country.”⁴⁹

- Arbenz and the (non-Communist) radicalisation of the (liberal) reform process

Almost seven years after the 1944 constitutional election, Jacobo Arbenz came to power in the context of increasing reform. He became president-elect on November 12, 1950 and was inaugurated on March 15, 1951. His victory had been overwhelming: he received 258,987 out of 404,739 votes cast.⁵⁰ Himself a military man and a main protagonist in the *October Revolution*,⁵¹ Arbenz represented (like Arévalo) the new political elite of young nationalist reformers whose main aim was to develop the Capitalist national economy, renovate the political system and offer fair options to the Guatemalan poor, especially the peasants. “He was a nationalist hoping to transform an oligarchic society.”⁵² He was therefore clearly a vanguardist element of a bourgeois revolution originating from above, but which unexpectedly, generated pressure from below.

⁴⁸ G.E.Britnell (1951:477-478).

⁴⁹ See R.H.Immerman (1982:54).

⁵⁰ P.Gleijeses (1991:83). Ydígoras Fuentes came second with 72,796 votes. Arévalo’s coalition was reinforced by that of Arbenz. The personalities who assembled at the founding Congress in September 1949 relied on impressive credentials: prominent journalists, congressmen, labour leaders and senior member of the PAR. The coalition behind Arbenz was formed by the PAR and RN and organised labour. The *PIN*, was included because it would lend an image of moderation to his candidacy. Still, Arbenz’s ruling coalition in Congress consisted of 51 deputies, out of which there were only 5 congressmen representing the PGT; among them, Jose Manuel Fortuny and Victor Manuel Gutiérrez, journalist and union leader were the most outstanding. See R.H.Immerman (1982:82-100).

⁵¹ Arbenz was a Colonel of the Guatemalan Army.

⁵² S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:49).

Accordingly, as the second freely elected president in Guatemalan history, Arbenz turned out to be a more radical reformer than Arévalo and thus a more committed moderniser, that in those precarious political times in the Continent, appeared too easily to make him a revolutionary, an *institutional* revolutionary. The latter classification follows from the constitutional nature that the Guatemalan process had, and thus, its carefully maintained legality within which nonetheless deep transformations were taking place in the economy and the polity. Once the essential political conditions of the reform process were settled, the main concern for the new government was the economy, and in particular the ownership of the land and labour relations.⁵³

In his inaugural address Arbenz established the basis of the continuation of the policies of the *October Revolution* initiated six years before. First, he referred to the 'epoch of Arévalo' as "the most democratic era of our country, and the beginning of the epoch of respect for our dignity as a nation."⁵⁴ And secondly, he set out his diagnosis and remedial regime for the health of the Guatemalan nation:

"it is in the economic construction of our country in which is to be found the source of our ills. [Thus] we have been able to see clearly that only by orientating our efforts towards change in the economic structure, modifying the characteristic of our economy, and increasing and diversifying production of all types, will it be possible to win more benefits and greater well-being for the people"⁵⁵

⁵³ A note on the political consciousness of the masses is necessary here. According to Jonas and Tobis this was, in its initial stages "very rudimentary and without a doctrine and was more concerned with labor demands, salaries, work conditions. The formation of the PGT was itself improvised ... the truth is, there were no Communists among them. It was a petty bourgeoisie that became radicalized and founded a party ... it was full of subjectivism, of excellent desires, of self-denial, of ignorance, of petulance, of yearnings to learn, to know, to serve its people with utmost honesty. But they were on the moon." See, S.Jonas&D.Tobis (1974:55). As will be seen further Jonas and Tobies assessment is somehow contradicted by the sense of responsibility demonstrated by José Manuel Fortuny and other PGT members when launching the process of reforms.

⁵⁴ See NA, (Box 3251), 714.11/3-2051, 20 March, 1951:1, *Inaugural Address of Colonel Arbenz delivered in the National Stadium, March 15, 1951*, (US State Department's translation).

⁵⁵ NA, *ibid.*, p. 4.

Thus the essence of the project was directed towards economic diversification and modernisation. For this purpose, he appealed to what he called a popular effort for the realisation of the program. By this he referred to:

“the patriotic collaboration of the national capitalists, the workers of the city and of the country, the technicians of the state, to whom I make a special call so that we may begin with assurance the road towards improving our economy and the popular well-being.”⁵⁶

And in this light he stated the main purposes of his program along the following lines:

“Our government proposes to enter on the road of the economic development of Guatemala, having the three following fundamental objectives: 1) To convert our country from a dependent and economically semi-colonial nation into a country economically independent; 2) to convert Guatemala from a backward country with an economy predominately feudal, into a modern capitalistic country; and, 3) to see that this transformation takes place in a manner which produces the greatest possible elevation of the standard of living of the great masses of the people.”⁵⁷

The Arbenz’s administration put together a comprehensive legislative program that included,

“the transformation of practically the entire economic infrastructure: the construction of factories, the improved exploitation and acquisition of mineral resources and other raw materials, the building of avenues of communication and transportation, and the development of modern banking institutions and systems of credit.”⁵⁸

Thus, the transition that Arbenz personified was clearly aimed at the gradual and peaceful transmutation of the nature of the regime by achieving first the modification of the economic basis of Guatemala in order to boost a structural strength for national development and the modernisation of both the instruments of production and of the economic infrastructure

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁸ R.H.Immerman (1982:64).

and institutions. The benefits of growth were to be achieved “from above” and within the context of Capitalism, as he said in the following terms:

"We do not pretend to be able to construct an industrialised Guatemala in six years. What we intend is to begin the process by fixing the foundations of our future economic development, to push the country along the *road to Capitalism*. It will be for us only to perform a part of this effort, leaving to later Revolutionary Governments the work of carrying it through."⁵⁹

He was concerned with building a broad class alliance behind the construction of an efficient economic system. This involved providing the private sector with both guarantees and the incentives to support the revolution. First of all, he cleared the way for compromise:

“ ... our economic policy will necessarily be based on the encouragement of private initiative, on the development of Guatemalan capital in whose hands must be found the fundamental activities of the national economy, and as for foreign capital, we must repeat that it will be welcomed, provided that it adjusts itself to *these special conditions* which are being created in the course of our development, and that it always subordinates itself to Guatemalan laws, co-operates with the economic development of the country, and abstains strictly from intervening in the political and social life of the Nation.”⁶⁰

Once the economic basis of the revolutionary reform within Capitalism were put forward, and the various groups were aware of what was the significance of the new stage of change in Guatemala, Arbenz’s main concern was directed to Agrarian Reform, his “pet project.”⁶¹ Again, as he had done during his campaign, he stressed that in order for the Agrarian Reform to be carried out, this

"will require the liquidation of the large primitive estates (*latifundios*), and the introduction of fundamental changes in the primitive methods of work, that is to say, it will require a better distribution of uncultivated land or land on which the

⁵⁹ NA, (Box 3251), 714.11/3-2051, p. 6, (my emphasis).

⁶⁰ NA, *Ibid.*, p. 5, (my emphasis).

⁶¹ On this important aspect of the October Revolution program, Arbenz continued what was already started ten years before by Arévalo. See P.Glejeses (1991:144). This was the main reason to oppose him and to overthrow him.

feudal customs are maintained, and we will incorporate science and agricultural techniques into our agrarian activities in general."⁶²

According to Torres-Rivas, these measures prepared the ground for the existence of a

“national revolutionary program - which bore no relation to other populist movements of the era - [and] saw two sides to the process of capital accumulation in Guatemala. On the one hand, the agricultural structure itself was considered to be an obstacle; on the other, it was believed that accumulation could be achieved under full national control.”⁶³

In this light, and given the Latin American standards of social and economic backwardness, the "agrarian reform would forge the political basis for the eventual radicalization of the Guatemalan Revolution,"⁶⁴ and by that time it would also signify the transformation of this process into an important archetype in regional affairs. Arbenz played the role of a *broker* between the tradition of national independence initiated by Arévalo in 1944 and the (radical) reformist times that followed from 1951 which precipitated important economic and political changes in Guatemala. To a great extent his mission was defined by the original principles and developments brought about by a petit-bourgeois movement. Still, his program accelerated the achievements of the Revolution, especially with regard to the problems of citizenship, unionisation, political democracy, “independent” economic development, and most critically land reform. Although his was virtually the same program announced by Arévalo at his inauguration, the difference was that Arbenz went farther than Arévalo in accentuating the role of the government in supervising this stage of national modernisation. Therefore the singularity of this Caribbean revolutionary model should be highlighted for it seems as though the US has been throughout recent Latin America history, (and according to its reaction to it) especially sensitive to any challenge to its supremacy through autonomous efforts towards change. Such is the Guatemalan experiment of this period. Hence the Guatemala of Arévalo, but especially that of Arbenz was one of these uncommon political experiences in the continent.

⁶² NA, (Box 3251), 714.11/3-2051, p. 5

⁶³ E.Torres-Rivas (1989:18).

⁶⁴ P.Glejjeses (1991:144).

The Agrarian Reform

The official name of Arbenz's agrarian reform was *Decree 900* which was enacted unanimously on June 17, 1952 by the National Assembly, one year after his election. The central aim of Arbenz's reform was the destruction of the *latifundio-minifundio* structure (very large and small sized rural property). The profound reform carried out in this field proceeded on the basis of a careful thus organised government study which had consulted various leading Latin American economists. An agreement was reached that the outmoded methods of agricultural production had to be replaced if a capitalist development was to be possible. It was within this basic economic framework that the nationalisation of the land was carried out: in order to achieve a modern framework for national development, growth of the Capitalist sector of the economy was necessary, and for this land reform was a prerequisite.

The purposes of the reform, expressed concisely in the law's first three articles were to eliminate feudal-type property in the countryside; abolish backward forms of production relations, especially forced labour and relics of slavery such as the *encomiendas* of Indians;⁶⁵ give land to agricultural workers who had none or very little; provide means of production and the technical aid necessary to improve methods of exploitation: expand agricultural credit to be available for all farmers, etc. In this way all forms of production would be transformed to prepare for the commencement of a period of industrialisation and modernisation.

Decree 900 affected land ownership but centred largely around the needs and aspirations of the individual families. It provided for expropriation of idle lands; of those not under cultivation either directly or on the owner's behalf; of those rented out in any form; of

⁶⁵ The *encomiendas* was the colonial assignment of an Indian to a Lord. Melville and Melville say that "the social prestige that came from land ownership was also obtained from the "ownership" of peons who worked these lands." See T.&M.Melville (1971:16). Jonas describes that the system of slavery upon which Guatemalan rural life was based, included the *repartimientos* (conscription) which established that "the Indians were compelled to perform a certain type of labour for designated masters. The *mandamientos* were another disguised form of slavery, under which a number of Indians from a village were ordered to work for criollos (residents of Spanish descent) at low pay." S.Jonas&D.Tobies (1974:17) (emphasis in the original); T.&M.Melville (1971:16).

municipal land under certain conditions; and of land necessary for urbanisation. According to Melville and Melville the census of 1950-51 had yielded the following situation:

“the largest *fincas* in the country were [the] 32 whose land extension was from 4,480 hectares to 8,960 hectares (11,066 acres to 22,131 acres) and another twenty-two *fincas* whose lands exceeded 8,960 hectares (22,131 acres). The total land held by these *fincas* was 696,251 hectares (1,719,740 acres) of which 637,725 hectares (1,575,181 acres) was not cultivated.”⁶⁶

So as not to be accused of being unjust Arbenz stipulated that the reform should permit those owners with holdings from 223 to 669 acres to keep one-third of the total fallow. Thus, all uncultivated land in private estates of more than 672 acres would be expropriated. Idle land in estates of between 224 and 672 acres would be expropriated only if less than two thirds of the estate was under cultivation; estates of less than 224 acres would not be affected. By contrast, the government-owned Fincas Nacionales would be entirely parcelled out. Consequently, the land which was expropriated came mostly from the 1,059 properties whose average size was 4,200 acres.⁶⁷

However, existing ownership of estates up to two *caballerías* (90 hectares) was respected, whether cultivated or not; and even larger estates were unaffected provided their lands were rationally used. The same would apply to indigenous communal lands and privately owned and rented lands used for commercial crops such as coffee, cotton bananas, sugar, cane, beans, cereals, etc., and also to forest reserves.⁶⁸ Land would be granted to peasants, tenant farmers, and farm workers on a lifetime usufruct, lease, or property basis according to the case. Land to be distributed among the beneficiaries were: a) land expropriated from individuals, b) state-owned lands, and c) state-owned farms in production (former German-owned coffee lands).

⁶⁶ See T.&M. Melville (1971:45). I provide figures in acres and hectares as most analysts do, so that the English speaking public from both the US (acres) and UK (hectares) can have easy access to this data.

⁶⁷ Arts. 9-12. For the text of Decree 900, see G.Selser (1961:162-188); and G.Toriello (1955:41).

⁶⁸ Art. 10. See G.Selser (1961).

Land expropriated from private estates would be given in lifetime tenure or private ownership in accordance with the recipient's wishes.⁶⁹ The reform was operated through a network of local agrarian committees which were organised by the PGT, the main governmental support (as was the case with reforms in general) These committees or *comités agrarios locales* (CAL) had a political configuration on which the success of the reform would rely. Each committee had five members, one appointed by the governor of the department in which the CAL was located, one by the municipality, and three by the local labour union. Where there was no labour organisation or where there was more than one, the peasants and the agricultural workers would elect their representatives in popular assemblies.

On the other hand the CALs would assess the validity of the request for land and forward its endorsement to the departmental agrarian committee (*comité agrario departamental* or CAD). The CADs would supervise the work of the CALs and report to the National Agrarian Department (the Departamento Agrario Nacional or DAN) in the capital's main quarters. And the DANs would review the CADs decisions.⁷⁰ Even though the reform was considered to be a moderate law cast in a capitalist mould, it is important to note that the support of grass-roots organisations was essential for its final success. According to an account by Fortuny leader of the PGT at the time, Arbenz campaign manager and one of his main supporters,

“We [the PGT] proposed the creation of peasant committees [CALs] in order to lay the groundwork for the eventual radicalization of the peasantry ... What we wanted was to foster the control of the reform from below. This would give the peasants a strong sense of their common needs. And if, from the system of lifetime tenure, co-operatives developed, the seeds of a more collective society would have been sown.”⁷¹

All beneficiaries of the agrarian reform would have to pay for lands received; payments would be made annually and would consist of a small percentage of the land's

⁶⁹ Art. 39, *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Arts. 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, *ibid.*

⁷¹ P.Glejjeses (1991:152).

annual production, during a determined number of years according to the type of beneficiary. Beneficiaries of land which had been expropriated in favour of the state would receive the land in lifetime usufruct and pay the government 3 percent annually on the value of the crop. Whereas those that had been previously in private hands paid 5 percent of the value of the produce derived. The law stipulated that these payments would go to the DAN. Also deeded lands could not be transferred nor mortgaged for twenty-five years; and, with respect to beneficiaries on a usufruct basis, they would lose their rights to the land if they stopped cultivating it for two years. In both cases renting the land to third parties would be allowed.⁷²

In addition to this and as long as land was still available, any person, farmer or not, who had capital to exploit them would have the right to rent nationalised lands. The limitations in this case were that no more than 279 hectares per person could be leased, and that the periods of lease would be not less than five nor more than twenty-five years, renewable at the end of any period. The maximum basis of tenancy was fixed at five percent of annual production, and subleasing was prohibited.⁷³

The way owners of expropriated lands would be composed was through agrarian bonds, guaranteed by the government, at 3% annual interest and with amortisation over periods varying up to twenty-five years. For this a ten-million-quetzal (local currency: 1 quetzal= 1 dollar US) bond issue was floated. With regard to the valuation of expropriated land, this would be the same value that had been declared by the *finqueros* for land-tax purposes, as recorded in the Register of Immovable Property before May 9, 1952.⁷⁴ In this regard, and especially in terms of the extent of expropriation, “the Guatemalan agrarian reform was far more moderate than either the Mexican reform which preceded it or the Cuban measures which would come a few years later.”⁷⁵ Concerning the fairness of the system of compensation installed in Guatemala, it is important to say that Guatemala was after all,

⁷² Arts. 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, G.Selser(1961).

⁷³ Arts. 36, 37, *ibid*.

⁷⁴ Arts. 42-48, *ibid*.

⁷⁵ See R.H.Immerman (1982:65); S.Jonas (1974:158-159).

following the US example: the US-directed reform in Japan and Formosa had also stipulated payment in bonds over a twenty-to-twenty-five-year period with annual interest rates of 3 percent. Ultimately the reform, according to David Stern, a US lawyer,

“was the blending of various traditions. One was the American land-grant tradition to open new frontiers. Another was the revalidation of the civil law tradition that all arable lands and national wealth are essentially endowed with the public interest. The third tradition in the new decree was its affirmation of the validity of private property notwithstanding its socialistic overtones.”⁷⁶

On the heatedly issue of compensation offered by Decree 900 and one of the main reasons of the coup against Arbenz, the United Fruit Company (UFCO)’s compensation was the result of the declared value of the property for tax purposes and no one had forced them originally to cheat on their tax returns.⁷⁷

Of course a fundamental aspect of the reform would be the financing of the new land owners. For this purpose the law provided the creation of the National Agrarian Bank (NAB) which was founded in July 1953. The Bank was a state entity of autonomous character whose primary goal was to provide credits to mostly small peasants and thus complement the agrarian reform.⁷⁸ Accordingly the NAB, which began its operations in October 1953, in less than two months had branches in Mazatenango (West), Cobán (East), Chiquimula (South) and Quetzaltenango (North-West) in addition to its central offices in Guatemala City. After a few months, the state bank extended credits to agrarian reform beneficiaries for US\$195,894 (agricultural co-operatives) and US\$189,030 (individual farmers who have received national lands). In July alone, 14,011 farmers received credits amounting US\$2,641,546 which meant an average of over US\$188 per person, a great economic achievement by Guatemalan standards. By the time Arbenz was ousted from power and the agrarian reform was

⁷⁶ See, T.Melville&M.Melville (1971:52-53).

⁷⁷ On the issue of UFCO’s taxes see below.

⁷⁸ Art. 50. G. Selser (1961).

dismantled, the NAB had provided US\$8,500,000 for loans and credits and other investments opportunities, and the capital of the Bank had risen to US\$8,000,000.⁷⁹

In short, by June 1954, after two years of law enforcement, the state had “over 1.4 million acres that had been expropriated (that is, one quarter of the total arable land of Guatemala)” available for farmers in search of land. Although the figures are controversial, for the records were destroyed later on by Castillo Armas, there is consensus among analysts that if distributed on an average of 7 hectares per worker, fair land distribution would have been established in the country and benefited a great majority of peasants. In a period of 18 months, from January 1953 to June 1954, 1,002 farms totalling 1,091,073 hectares were declared affected by the Agrarian Reform Law, which means that the Arbenz government delivered more land for small farmers than had ever been available before. Thus between 100,000 and 138,000 *campesino* families, or about 500,000 individuals, “received some land under the program, land that otherwise would have remained predominantly idle.” At the same time this revolutionary development in the Guatemalan economy represented an increase of the GNP of about 29 million of quetzales in two years.⁸⁰

As a result there was an obvious boost to the economy and the consumption power of the Guatemalans which galvanised the economy to levels never imagined before. The price of local food produce went down and the per capita purchasing power rose: Guatemalans could now afford radios, shoes, small appliances and even automobiles. The rural population started to travel to the cities, first to sell their produce and then to shop for themselves and their families. Even though Guatemala remained underdeveloped, there was discernible progress. Because of rising international prices (luck truly blessed Arbenz during his period), the value of Guatemala’s coffee commodity exports soared from US\$33,670,000 in 1949 to US\$68,229,000 in 1953, and US\$71,380,000 in 1954. The effect of this was dramatic. Guatemala’s balance of trade fluctuated during the years of the *October Revolution*:

⁷⁹ G.Toriello (1955:36-37); R.H.Immerman (1982:66); E.Galeano (1967:130).

⁸⁰ See P.Glejjeses (1991:155,156); R.H.Immerman (1982:66); and G.Toriello (1955:42).

Table 4.1. Guatemalan Balance of Trade (US\$)
(1946-1953)

	+	-
1946	475,000	
1947		5,286,000
1948		18,184,000
1949		15,757,000
1950		3,616,000
1951		4,761,000
1952	11,741,000	
1953	9,384,000	

In short, by the time of the overthrow of Arbenz, Guatemala had obtained an unprecedented steady course of growth and economic development. If any trend is discernible after eliminating cyclical fluctuations in world markets, it is from a moderate deficit of around US\$10 million in the early Arévalo years to a healthy surplus of around US\$5 million in the later period. 1953, the year of the agrarian reform, does not mark a significant economic setback, quite the contrary in fact. Similarly, as table 4.2 shows, foreign currency reserves remained robust through the later period including the years of agrarian reform, at around US\$40 million.⁸¹

Table 4.2. Guatemalan Foreign Currency Reserves (US\$)⁸²
(1950-1953)

	+	-
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⁸¹ See M.Monteforte-Toledo (1959:549-592).

⁸² For both tables the source is *ibid*:549-592.

1950	39.4 (millions)	
1952	44.0	“”
1953	42.4	“”

This was the kind of progress that reform boosted in rural Guatemala. Thus, it was both an appropriate constructive example to be followed and even encouraged, and also a challenge, not only to the potentially affected US economic interest but to the general implicit understanding that such progress, as will be shown in further chapters, could not be achieved without “American” blessing.

Infrastructure

Another relevant feature of this last stage of the *October Revolution* was Arbenz’s policy towards the ownership and organisation of electricity supply and the transport network. The roads, the railways and the ports were of central importance to the trading activities of Guatemala, and were going to prove strategically important in the light of the transformations that the country was undergoing. There were three strategic areas of the economy in foreign (US-owned) hands. In the field of the electricity, the Empresa Eléctrica Guatemalteca (EEG) was owned in 81.8 percent of its stocks by the Electric Bond and Share (EBS) subsidiary of American Foreign Power, leaving the remaining 18.2 percent in the hands of the most co-operative Guatemalan bourgeoisie. There was general agreement that exorbitant rates and bad service had become permanent features of Guatemalan electricity. The railway was owned by International Railways of Central America (IRCA) (the second largest private employer after UFCO) whose head of the Guatemalan branch, Minor C. Keith, was also Vice-president of the United Fruit Company (UFCO) which was the country’s biggest landowner. Likewise the country’s most important Atlantic port, Puerto Barrios, was virtually owned by IRCA, itself a subsidiary controlled by the monopolistic

UFCO.⁸³ Thus, UFCO, through IRCA owned all but twenty-nine miles of Guatemala's railway tracks.⁸⁴ "United Fruit effectively took over IRCA."⁸⁵

"By 1930 IRCA owned the major Atlantic port and 887 miles of railroad in Guatemala and El Salvador - virtually every mile in Guatemala, including the large sections financed by the Guatemalan people. Thus, the opening wedge of a mere sixty miles on the Northern Railroad had given IRCA monopolistic control over land transportation in Guatemala. Meanwhile, in 1901, the United Fruit Company ... had secured a contract to transport Guatemalan mail from Puerto Barrios to the United States in its shipping line, The Great White Fleet."⁸⁶

According to the World Bank (WB) IRCA's rates for all but (exported) UFCO bananas were the highest in the world so that its pricing structure tended to transfer value from Guatemala to the US. For these reasons Arbenz's government undertook three great construction projects to expand the infrastructure and improve the market in utilities by curtailing monopoly situations: a government-run hydroelectric plant, *Jurún-Marinalá*, would provide cheaper and better services than EEG; a highway to the Atlantic would compete with IRCA's expensive monopoly in transport; and a new Atlantic port, Santo Tomás, to compete with UFCO-IRCAS's Puerto Barrios.⁸⁷

As these companies' manoeuvres had made in the past a farce of the Guatemalan Constitution and laws, Arbenz's objectives were serious enough when he evidenced his intention to enforce Guatemalan laws and court rulings. Thus, in 1953 the government seized IRCA's assets on the grounds of non-payment of taxes. UFCO refused to submit to government arbitration and the administration refused to give in and countered with his own

⁸³ S.Jonas (1974:140-141).

⁸⁴ R.H.Immerman (1982:72).

⁸⁵ S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:70).

⁸⁶ S.Jonas (1974:141).

⁸⁷ See G.Toriello, (1955:37). On July, 1953, "Guatemala signed a contract with a subsidiary of the Morrison-Knudsen Company of San Francisco for the construction of the port of Santo Tomás, the future terminus of the Atlantic Highway. The contract stipulated that the port be completed within twenty-four months at a cost of US\$4.8 million. The government deposited this sum in foreign exchange in the United States as guarantee of payment, and the company posted a performance bond." See P.Glejjeses (1991:166).

demands on the Company. In the end, and in response to pressure by the company, Arbenz confiscated 26,000 acres from UFCO. This was part of the beginning of a short but bitter struggle between this company and the government which would eventually lead to the fall of Arbenz.

Land Reform and the interests of "La Frutera"

As we have already seen, UFCO, better known as "La Frutera" or "el Pulpo" (the octopus) had economic interests in almost every aspect of the Guatemalan economy, but especially those, like maritime and railway transport which were related to the oligopolic interests of the company; together UFCO interests represented 63.4 percent of the foreign investment in the country. By the 1930s, United Fruit reported an annual profit exceeding US\$50 million, more than twice the ordinary revenues of the entire Guatemalan government.⁸⁸

UFCO was given, first in 1904 under dictator Manuel Estrada Cabrera, and subsequently in the following years, an arbitrary concession to control large portions of land without any specific conditions, and within an agreement (1936) that granted a ninety-nine-year concession to operate and enabled the company to evade almost the entire Guatemalan tax burden: "the taxes it paid were negligible [for instance] IRCA, had not paid any taxes ... since its incorporation more than fifty years later."⁸⁹ Apart from the privilege of not having fiscal obligations to comply with, by the times of the reform, the UFCO owned more than 35 percent of productive land in Guatemala, most of which (the land on the Atlantic side) had been given in free concession by Ubico. Thus, as well as being the major foreign investor in the country, *La Frutera* became a dominating factor in Guatemala's banana industry and was

⁸⁸ See M.Monteforte-Toledo (1959:508,509); R.H.Immerman (1982:73).Although this amount was important, it was not a fundamental factor when deciding to sacrifice it (when clearing the way for the coup) for the sake of the defence of 'ideological security'.

⁸⁹ That United Fruit paid so few taxes on its huge holdings was well known throughout Guatemala, as was its fiefdomlike power over its properties. See, T.Melville&M.Melville (1971:52); S.Jonas (1974:142-143). Ubico renewed in 1936 the concessions of "La Frutera" until 1981, see M.Monteforte-Toledo (1959:519).

the most representative symbol of US private insatiable interest in the region. UFCO, through its subsidiary *Compañía Agrícola de Guatemala (CAG)*, was in control of 550,000 acres of land and only 150,000 were under cultivation, (around 15 percent).⁹⁰ *La Frutera* was also a central actor in the country's political life as it had been able to manipulate and pay off politicians for favours. As mentioned above UFCO had open-ended privileges in Guatemala. "Yankee imperialism" to the Guatemalans also meant UFCO's "long -held reputation for bribing politicians, pressuring governments, and intimidating all opponents in order to gain political and economic concessions."⁹¹

Given that the principal object of the reform was obviously UFCO's thousands of acres of land, the Company was affected by the law in different stages. According to Toriello, in March 1953 UFCO had expropriated 219,159,96 acres of idle land (Pacific zone) and was paid in compensation US\$627,572 in agrarian bonds. In February, 1954, the expropriation was for 173,790.47 acres of idle land too (Atlantic zone) and the payment was for US\$557,542. All together the full amount of expropriated idle land was of 392,950 acres and the compensation payment reached the amount of US\$1,185,115. Moreover, most of the nationalised land was paid for at above its real price at the time of the reform. UFCO received most for the land confiscated by the state, US\$2.86 per acre which represented almost double its real price (US\$1.48). As for the lands granted for free in the Atlantic region by Ubico to UFCO, Arbenz's administration paid to *La Frutera* US\$3.21 per acre.⁹²

The main problem with UFCO had in fact started when discussing the compensation figures offered by Arbenz. UFCO did not agree to receive the amount offered and they appealed to Washington for help to settle the terms of the agreement. It was at this moment that the State Department intervened in the dispute, beginning a diplomatic carefully planned

⁹⁰ G.Toriello (1955:56).

⁹¹ R.H.Immerman (1982:74).

⁹² G.Toriello (1955:57).

escalation which resulted in major obstacles for the full accomplishment of the reform, and the subsequent disastrous instability encountered by the government.⁹³

A revealing example of the above and of the classified and close links between UFCO and the Eisenhower administration is a confidential “Memorandum of Conversation” prepared by Raymond Leddy, who was the officer in charge of Central American and Pan-American Affairs in the Department of State, and a virtual acting CIA-Department of State day-to-day contact.⁹⁴

In his memorandum, Leddy reports that Mr. Sam G. Baggett, Vice President of UFCO, had told him that he

“had discussed the Department’s suggestion with President Redmond and it had been agreed that the company would not include in its annual statement any figure on the amount of the claim. That amount, Mr. Baggett confirmed to be US\$15,854,000.00 [adding that Mr. Baggett had agreed that] the figure would be removed [from the annual report] and the paragraph with reference to the claim would merely state that the company had filed with the Department of State a claim for the value of the land expropriated and resulting damage to the business.”⁹⁵

Leddy, according to his memorandum, had negotiated that UFCO accepted “to keep the figure from becoming public for the greater part, if not all, of the Caracas conference.”⁹⁶ At the same time, Leddy disclosed in his despatch, plans to launch a joint strategy for compensation at Caracas:

“I assured Mr Baggett [Leddy goes on] that the company’s cooperation was greatly appreciated and that the Department could see no difficulty at this time

⁹³ See chapters 5-6, 8.

⁹⁴ P.Gleijeses (1991:245).On the Caracas Conference see, Part-III.

⁹⁵NSA (NMD), Doc. 4, File “Guatemala-February”. Department of State (confidential) *Memorandum of Conversation (telephone)*, “United Fruit’ Company’s Claim Against the Government of Guatemala.” (February 4, 1954), p. 1.

⁹⁶NSA (NMD), *ibid.*, p. 1.

in disclosure of the figure of the claim at the time of the stock-holders' meeting. Meanwhile, I said that our Aide-Memoire to the Guatemalan Chargé here would probably be delivered tomorrow, February 5, and that we would take steps shortly thereafter to let the press know, informally, that the United States Government had suggested to the Guatemalan Government arbitration of the claim made by the United Fruit Company.⁹⁷

The terms of discussion and the UFCO'S refusal to comply

In this way, UFCO had made it possible to guarantee the support of Washington. UFCO had had to face in the recent past (not without bitter disputes and dubious success) to a great extent as a result of the new political atmosphere several labour conflicts that had taken place since the era of Arévalo between the company and its work force. Several strikes occurred in the late 1940s and the early 1950s. From May, 1951 to March, 1952, UFCO had been locked in an increasingly bitter conflict with its workers over the renewal of labour contracts. Both UFCO and IRCA had to deal with demands for salary increases and improvement of working conditions, such as welfare, which they refused on grounds of bankruptcy which the government rejected as false. In 1952, in the last one of these disputes UFCO was ordered by the Guatemalan labour court to take back workers dismissed in a recent strike and pay them US\$650,000 in back wages; if UFCO failed to comply the law provided for compulsory sequestration of all its properties. A settlement was reached whereby UFCO re-hired the workers with the stipulation that they would receive their back pay over the next three years (which of course did not happen as the coup interrupted the agreement).⁹⁸

For a long time there had been a strong impression among Guatemalans that UFCO had been persistently violating the labour code that Arévalo had promulgated in 1947, which under Arbenz had been operating in an even more systematic fashion. In 1954, however, another aspect of this systemic disagreement occurred. It basically consisted in UFCO's demands for 'fair' compensation for the lands that the state had taken over under the agrarian

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 1-2.

⁹⁸ "Guatemala: Banana Bonanza." *Newsweek* Vol. 39, No. 12 (24 March 1952), p. 24.

reform laws. At first the claim of UFCO had been that the land really was worth US\$19,355,000, a claim that was steadfastly endorsed by the State Department. According to Guatemalan official sources, the allegation on the part of the State department's on behalf of UFCO on 20 April, 1954 was for US\$15,854,849 which was rejected by Arbenz on 24 May on grounds that

“the Guatemalan government cannot accept [any] claim [of] which [the] main purpose is to give foreigners special treatment ... that not even Guatemalans have ... The expropriations carried out to UFCO's idle lands obey to the strict and legal practice of an internal law of the Republic of Guatemala that affects equally both foreigners and nationals ... The government of this Republic draws the attention of the Government of the United States regarding that its action in favour of the interests of the United Fruit Company and the *Compañía Agrícola de Guatemala*, which were affected by an internal law promulgated and applied in accordance to the sovereign of the Guatemalan state, represents an open intervention in Guatemalan internal affairs, that this government categorically rejects ... The government of Guatemala declares that it rejects the claim that the United States government presents on behalf of *Compañía Agrícola de Guatemala* - which according to the State Department it is subsidiary and belongs completely to UFCO - for Q. 15.854,849.00 (dollars) against the government of this Republic.”⁹⁹

Beyond the obvious importance that UFCO's pressure inflicted upon the gradual transformation of the economic and political life taking place in Guatemala in the 1950s, it is important to stress that the agrarian reform of 1952, and the expropriations of UFCO's uncultivated land in 1953, marked the culminating moments of the democratic and antioligarchic movement initiated in the mid-1940s.

To a great extent the events taking place in Guatemala before and after the military coup were the result of a long crisis stemming from colonial times. In this respect the crisis is one of the fundamental factors for developing a description and an analysis. In speaking of a crisis, the reference to an abnormal condition in the nature of the polity and the economy, in the reproduction of society, and an alteration of the foreseeable unfolding events is considered. The

⁹⁹ NA, Lot 57D618, Boxes 2 and 3; DOSB, No. 29 (July-Dec. 1953), p. 357-360; and No. 30 (Jan-June 1954), p. 678-679; “Pro-Memoria del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores a la Embajada de Estados Unidos en Guatemala.” (24 May, 1954), in G. Toriello (1955:255-258). This is the language used at the time. I have left it as it originally appeared. In some cases I include a few words in brackets.

analysis of the crisis has lent itself to various interpretations. It is either a crisis of legitimacy or a crisis of hegemony, or simply a crisis that begins at the level of politics and ends up affecting other dimensions of society. Yet, it is fundamentally a *crisis* that created conditions for other crises to exist, among which, the US-(always)-troubled interest was going to be included as one of the major premises.¹⁰⁰

Consequently, the complex dynamism of the conflict occurred as a result of the triumph of the traditional US-backed landlord culture over the attempts of the fresh middle class progressive groups to open the system for real political participation and economic development, which produced also a class shift within the superstructural level of Guatemalan political life. As part of this scenario, the guardians of this landlord culture could not avoid, however, the fact that during all this period a struggle occurred to gain the possibility of real political participation, which consequently took the form of either an open or a stifled confrontation with the oligarchy. This battle within the superstructure,

“inevitably produced new political actors. The participatory presence of new and renovated social forces was most evident in the activity of the urban middle classes. Those classes revealed themselves more clearly through the conflicts they led than through the material conditions of their existence. They were conscious of opportunities presented at the time and took advantage of them to pursue a new version of legality.”¹⁰¹

- Arbenz, the US, and the elites

Among the political traditions of Central America, the prevailing norm in relation to the “*American*” interest was submissive, deferential and protective. In Guatemala, Castillo Armas and his domestic regional allies are the confirmation of such a norm. Arbenz and the alliance

¹⁰⁰ As it turned out, Arbenz’s programme and praxis during his short period, “constituted the zenith of the antioligarchical offensive in Central America. The program not only tested the ideological consistency of the petite bourgeoisie through its criticism of the land tenure system, but also began to shift the initiative for change to the numerically dominant lower classes. Intended as a revolution from above, the Guatemalan experiment soon threatened to spill over into a revolution from below. Or, to use the terminology of that period, it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution bearing the seeds of a possible socialist outcome.” See E.Torres-Rivas (1989:18-19).

¹⁰¹ Ibid:54.

supporting the *October Revolution* were the exceptions. An initial argument can be made that the US was normally able to accomplish its purposes in this country in that it counted on the services of the most important domestic state institutions in order to promote socio-political and economic atmosphere conducive to the defence of its economic interest.

Among these state institutions, the Army especially was utilised (and eventually represented) by some (not so) prominent members of the Guatemalan political class who most generally could be found amongst the Army elite and the most powerful members of the economic class owners of the means of production, mainly the land and the natural resources, and who were eager to achieve personal political and economic power. Thus, this clique has been both disruptive to reform, and a *natural* candidate to be utilised as a medium in the process of imposing neo-imperialist policies.¹⁰²

As already mentioned in the critical context of this country and of the Central American region, these transformations appeared, for the local elites and their US partners, as subversive measures. Hence the great political impact but not so much surprise among Guatemalan society when it was realised the extent of the support from the local elites for the US intervention in 1954. Just to put forward one remarkable aspect of the US-supported coup let us mention that the reluctance of the pro-United States local elite to develop its *own* scope of action within the national economy and the polity was exhibited by the behaviour as such: to refuse nationalisation as a modernising measure meant an explicit denial on the part of the local capitalist class to reinforce its position of strength in the economic process.

Consequently, either for better or worse these elites have eventually agreed that it is easier to comply with US's aims in return for economic and political benefits (mostly on an individual or clique basis), than to oppose Washington's designs and thus to risk the loss of an ancient cluster of private privileges. This class' form of behaviour has existed generally to

¹⁰² On Dulles's embarrassment on the US allies support see chapter 8. The class alliance to which I have referred above was some how disintegrated and replaced by the representatives of the old regime, the large landowners and the most conservative sectors of the Army, which were already planning to betray Arbenz in alliance with the US, as referred by William Krieg, Chargé d' Affaires at the US embassy in Guatemala. See NSA (NMD), "William L. Krieg to The Honourable John E. Peurifoy, Central America and Panama Affairs, ARA, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 'Secret'." American Embassy, Guatemala, January 27, 1954.

satisfy US strategic interests. What is more, by accepting such a socio-political development, the members of this political and economic groups have demonstrated that, as far as their tactical view is concerned, long term national development has not been promoted as a serious priority.¹⁰³ Hence their historical class contradiction when it has come to supporting US interventionist policies for this has implied an implicit denial of capitalist national identity and independent economic progress: the 'centre-periphery' vicious circle repeated itself once more in the Central American sphere.

Although it is of major importance to consider the share of responsibility that the local elites have in order to explain the nature of the domestic dimension of the events - particularly the political earthquakes that shook the country - it is also important to bear in mind the weak and spoiled nature of these national elites. This and their historical conformation since the independence have made the nation and its people vulnerable to the power temptations placed before them by the Great Power. James Dunkerley argues in this respect that

“the post-war reformist experience in Guatemala ... initially derived [its] strength from the very weakness of domestic political forces, and ... it ultimately proved vulnerable precisely by virtue of the strength with which foreign interests were confronted. The fact that the project of democratic reform was defeated primarily by external forces undoubtedly corresponds to Washington's local and international requirements in the early 1950's, but should also be seen in the context of long-term domestic developments.”¹⁰⁴

As is the case with most Latin American countries, particularly in Central America, the national features of the Guatemalan elites have always depended on the clientelist relation developed before and after Independence in 1821.¹⁰⁵ After Independence Guatemala's

¹⁰³ See, T.&M.Melville (1982); and G.Selser (1961:"Texto de la Ley de Reforma Agraria.")

¹⁰⁴ J.Dunkerley (1992:302).

¹⁰⁵ On Guatemalan Independence see J.Dunkerley (1988). In 1823 the Central American Federation is created. Latin America's relatively recent liberation from Spain did not impede that this countries' colonial political systems remained, and thus shaped the political structure especially of the Central American countries. This domestic occurrence of the major importance (the composition of the social and political classes) can explain in part the tragic interaction taking place in most Latin American countries at the beginning of the century: the political fragility of society made it possible for the new and modern "creole state" (Creole=criollo person of - at least theoretically - pure European descent but born in the Americas and, by later extension, anywhere outside

international relations relied essentially on US economic and political interest which nurtured the obsequious character of both the military and the economic elites, and made it impossible for the country (except for the short period of ten years between 1944 and 1954) even to attempt to create a national project and thus to start taking charge of an independent economic national development. And yet, Arbenz's policies (like Arévalo's) responded to the liberal principles that were essentially those most respected by the liberal establishment both in the United States and Western Europe. These principles however were easily altered by means of imposing the US national interest.

Thus, the United States came to play the role of the new metropolis and a new interaction took place: the new nations of the continent, with their own development deficiencies still to be solved, appeared suddenly in the scene at the expense of a new strong player (the US) which eventually was going to continue the tradition, in line with the contradictory support of the local ruling classes, of sucking, (as Knight says paraphrasing dependency theory)

"resources from their actual or quasi-colonies, condemning them - so the theory goes - to underdevelopment, to a tragic cycle of export booms and busts [...] the United Fruit Company exercised an overweening authority - political and economic - in Central America."¹⁰⁶

The above may appear as an interesting example of the real potential that modern Capitalism has had in this region. Hence some relevant questions seem appropriate: is private enterprise possible in such a domestic and continental socio-political climate? Were countries like Guatemala prepared for regulated or deregulated Capitalism? Given the real levels of international Capitalism which were mostly regulated by trusts and (in Central America) by oligopolic interests a likely answer would be no. Domestic forms of Capitalism have not been found in the history of the so called third world, at least in independent forms.

Europe) to impose a post-colonial order whose features were not far from those inherited by the colonial times. On this aspect of Latin American development see B.Anderson (1983:21,50,53,59,64,73,78,108,139,142).

¹⁰⁶ See A.Knight (1994:17). Let me say in this respect that the new order to be imposed in Central America had both structural and societal conditions for it to be implemented without any great sign of protest by the elites. On the other hand, at the end of the century in 1889 the Cuban independence sets the new pattern of relations between the US and the continent, which was going to make it possible to pay tribute to the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine.

The main reason being that in underdeveloped countries trying to compress centuries into decades or even years, unregulated Capitalism did not work. In the end, a disordered transformation occurred. And big capital, which mostly comes from the US, defeated the *domestic capitalist impulse*, which, as seen in Guatemala, may contain an important degree of democratic features. Eventually big capital is placed in the domestic arena, instead of the domestic forces, as an *instrument* of the *mediation* of social relations. Under such conditions, big capital is naturally able to control most parts of the political processes as happened in Guatemala. Moreover, as argued here, it is turned into a *geopolitical instrument* to prevent (defence of ideological security included) the local socio-political process from achieving an independence of its own. The latter eventually guaranteed the direction of both domestic and regional order and as a result the consolidation of both a pattern and a balance of power.¹⁰⁷

In this regard let us turn again to Paz's insights on the matter. After stating that "Plutocracy provokes inequality", Paz describes inequality as the main obstacle for freedom and individual rights. Although he admits that US plutocracy "unlike the Roman," has been able to create abundance and that

"there are those who think that ... international inequality [within states] could also be, if not entirely eliminated, at least reduced to a minimum, [recent history], however, argues against this hypothesis. But even if it were to turn out to be true, an essential point is being forgotten: money not only oppresses; it also corrupts. And it corrupts rich and poor alike. On this score the moralists of antiquity, especially the Stoics and the Epicureans, knew more than we do. US democracy has been corrupted by money."¹⁰⁸

Although the above judgements touch closely on the political history of most of the countries of the continent, particularly Guatemala, it is still important to avoid the temptation of laying the responsibility of domestic political processes solely at the feet of US foreign policy. Although this responsibility does in great part exist, it is also insufficient when explaining the

¹⁰⁷ See, J.Gerassi (1963), and above chapter 3.

¹⁰⁸ O.Paz (1985:156). See the Conclusions.

whole picture of the events occurring in some of the countries of this region. Hence the above explanation on the critical interaction between domestic class versus US-interest. Therefore there is a complementary natural bond taking place here between the (actor's) 'domestic foreign needs' and the policies of intervention of the United States as a dominant hegemon, and the inadequacy of Guatemala's and most of the elites of the sub-region to carry out national plans for domestic and independent development.

They were two of a kind, namely: a neo-colonial strategy of dominance and a self-defeated, aloof political elite too concerned about both their own internal disputes and about how to find the easiest way to achieve quick-short run economic profits.¹⁰⁹ Hence there was a vicious circle taking place here: the loss of sovereignty inflicted by US secret and overt operations is both the responsibility of the "American" designs and the dependent and subservient condition of the elites.¹¹⁰

This was evident as the failure of the Guatemalan revolutionary experience revealed how arduous it was for national economic and political projects to be implemented with success. And also to be supported by an elite that was driven by short term economic and political goals and thus highly vulnerable to being constrained by external powerful interests.¹¹¹ Hence, via the nature of this class behaviour and the fact that the elite was through its history drawn to US influence, the *theological circularity* of the *frontier rationale* of the US national security defence policy was guaranteed and ultimately preserved through the coup itself.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Some authors refer to the Guatemalan dominant class as oligarchic without attending the possible differences there might be among the members of this group, see, for instance, E.Torres-Rivas (1989).

¹¹⁰ On covert operations motivations Prouty, himself a military man who was the person in charge at the Pentagon of all CIA military clandestine activities from 1955 to 1964, has an extreme view: "it must be made clear that at the heart of Covert Operations is the denial by the 'operator', i.e. the US Government, of the existence of national sovereignty. The Covert operator can, and does, make the world his play ground ... including the USA." L. Fletcher Prouty (1973:viii).

¹¹¹ On the class contradictions of the Guatemalan imbroglio see: Jaime Díaz-Rozzotto (1958:chapter-VI:221-292).

¹¹² I have referred in above chapters to the *theology of security* as the non-secular "American" instrument of foreign policy when it comes to the defence of security. It is in this missional sense that I refer to the concept once again, see chapters-1,5.

The shift in the class composition in Guatemala as well as the subsequent position of the government, as revealed by the above declaration of Arbenz, followed the polarisation of the terms of the settlement with UFCO. From Arbenz's public declaration (24 May) onwards, it proved impossible to reach an agreement and a bitter and decisive confrontation between the two governments took place, which eventually terminated with the *October Revolution's* successes. The fall of the government however, was also the result of a generalised aim of Washington. According to several NSC directives, there had been plans since the Truman presidency to interfere in the domestic affairs of countries where Communist subversion was thought to be carried out. In order to confront the threat of "subversion" typical of the atmosphere stemming from the post war period, several US agencies, like the CIA, were to be actively involved in foreign operations. Thus "black propaganda, primarily designed for subversion, confusion, and political effect, can be shown incidentally to benefit positive intelligence as a means of checking reliability of informants, effectiveness of penetration, and so forth."¹¹³

What followed these national security policy estimates were refined in subsequent initiatives. Among these, NSC-68 was decisive. It was requested by Truman in early 1950 as a review of foreign policy problems - which by then included the Communist victory in China, the Soviet development of the atomic bomb - and possible strategies for creating foreign policies. The document was drafted by a group headed by Paul Nitze then director of the State Department's Policy Staff, submitted to the President in April 1950, and approved in September. Nitze would characterise the draft as an effort to establish, "a broad conception of national security. [It was, in short] the definitive statement of American national security policy."¹¹⁴ Within the context of Truman's broad review of national security policy, however, it was not explained precisely how the Soviet Union *threatened* Latin America.¹¹⁵ If the

¹¹³ NSA, *US Intelligence Community, 1947-1989*, 00007/1947/09/25. Memorandum to the Director: "CIA Authority to Perform Propaganda and Commando Type Functions," (25 September, 1947), p. 1.

¹¹⁴ P.Nitze (1989:93); J.L.Gaddis&T.H.Etzfold (1978:385). One of the best analyses of NSC-68 and its implications may be found in J.L.Gaddis (1982:chapter-4). Other discussions about the drafting and impact of the report are in D.Yergin (1990:401-404); and S.E.Ambrose (1991).

¹¹⁵ The Truman Doctrine sent a warning to the USSR that the US was prepared to intervene in the relations between Communist and non-Communist, and that intervention against Communist expansion would take place only if and when it could be justified in terms of the national interest and international commitments of the US.

danger that the Soviets inflicted upon “world peace” was a central national security premise, the threat represented by this against *our little region over there* ... was somehow more polemical. Subsequently this was more obvious in NSC 5613/1, “US Policy toward Latin America”, where it was spelled out that,

“There is *no danger* of overt Communist attack against any Latin American country except in the context of general war. Communists have no present prospect of gaining control of any Latin American state by electoral means.”¹¹⁶

To the above there was an alternative explanation (and also a self-confession) as to what the main Cold War purposes of the USSR were:

“Moreover, the Soviet Union is seeking broader trade and economic and cultural relations with Latin American countries *not only* for economic reasons but in order to disrupt our friendly relations with Latin America ... The USSR seeks to distort our close relations with the other American republics by accusing the United States of dominating and subjugating Latin America and by accusing the Latin Americans of being subservient to the United States.”¹¹⁷

In the light of this diagnosis, therefore, “our friendly relations” with Latin America were considered in Washington to be placed under threat by the Soviet obsession to convince the others that the ruling elites of these countries were “subservient to the United States” (certainly not a Soviet discovery). It was also obvious the fear of a genuine economic and ideological appeal by *Communism* to the dispossessed which might then be exploited by Moscow. Without saying such, Washington was declaring an ideological war on “Communism in Latin America.” The Central American sphere, instituted as a theatre of this dispute, was eventually exposed to immediate implications as a result. Still, this euphemism was crucial when other estimations in the unfolding of the Latin American policy had to follow. Thus one general principle was at the centre of the bet: that “the Cold War is in fact a

Or, as stated in one of the founding principles of this policy, “it must be the policy of the US to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” See DOSB, Vol. XVI, Supplement, May 4, 1947, pp. 829-832.

¹¹⁶ NSC 5613/1 (September 25, 1956), “US Policy toward Latin America,” p. 2, (my emphasis).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2, (my emphasis).

real war in which the survival of the world was at stake.” In line with this several NSC directives were elaborated. For instance, NSC-5412/1 on “Covert Operations,” instituted that the United States had to respond to the attempts of “International Communism” (the USSR and Communist China)

“to discredit and defeat the aims and activities of the United States and other powers of the free world [determining] as set forth in NSC directives 10/2 and 10/5, that, in the interests of world peace and US national security, the overt foreign activities of the US government should be supplemented by covert operations.”¹¹⁸

Covert operations, therefore, were going to be institutionalised to counteract “Soviet capabilities” and with the aim of creating and exploiting “troublesome problems for international Communism” by

“a) [discrediting] the prestige and ideology of International Communism, and reduce the strength of its parties and other elements; b) counter any threat of a party or individuals directly or indirectly responsive to Communist control to achieve dominant power in a free world country; c) reduce international Communist control over any areas of the world; d) strengthening the orientation toward the United States of the peoples and nations of the free world, accentuate, wherever possible, the *identity* or interest between such peoples and nations and the United States as well as favoring, where appropriate, these groups genuinely advocating or believing in the advancement of such mutual interests, and increase the capacity and will of such peoples and nations to resist International Communism.”¹¹⁹

From the above definition of the defence against “Soviet capabilities,” there is a visible association between what should be the *orientation* of other countries towards the US, as well as the protection, through such a policy, of the (“*American*”) *identity* of the principles and the (“*American*”) *advancement* in the accomplishing of mutual objectives.

It is important to note, however, that the absence of Soviet (electoral) danger in the Inter-American sphere was accepted only two years after the overthrow of Arbenz, precisely

¹¹⁸NSA, NSC, 5412/1 (March 12, 1955). “US Intelligence Community (1947-1989), 00652, 1955/03/12, p. 1.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 1-2, (my emphasis).

on grounds of the potential danger that the PGT (a constitutional electoral force) posed to the elected government of Guatemala. Still this premise, as will be seen in further chapters, played a crucial role in the further developments in which the CIA-clandestine operation dissolved constitutionalism in Guatemala. Accordingly Guatemala, and (as a result of the US diagnosis of the transition occurring in this country) to a great extent the rest of the continent, remained vulnerable to the irrationality of bipolarity, which as seen and as to be seen in the words of Dulles himself, sometimes reached ludicrous extremes. This will be analysed further, especially in chapters 5-6.

CHAPTER 5

CHANGE VERSUS TRADITION. THE US IN GUATEMALA: PROTECTING *AMERICAN 'IDEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY'*

The Attempt to push society
in a certain direction will
result in its moving all right
but in the opposite direction.

Albert O. Hirschman¹

- Introduction

This chapter aims to explain how the ideological terrain was prepared for US predominance during the Cold War. I will argue that as a major actor in the Inter-American arena Washington was more comfortable to perform as *America* (the consummate hegemon) than as the United States (the modern republic). This was the beginnings of a metonymy taking place in the foreign policy making process in the post-World War II period.² As already shown this occurred simultaneously and as a consequence of the US twentieth century impetus for domination which resulted in an obsessive extrapolation of its national identity to subsume that of the continent. Most importantly these effects were all the more evident in the context of both the 1950s Cold War climate and the socio-political changes instituted in Guatemala, just described in chapter-4. The US responded to these changes with an ideological framework legitimating its intervention. This chapter prepares the way for assessing perceptions of the Soviet threat to US regional security (chapter 6) and analysing the *nature* of intervention in the study case of Guatemala (chapters 7-8).

¹ A.O.Hirschman (1991:11).

² I would argue that there is a causal sequence, i.e., metonymy vis à vis foreign policy acts. As will be elucidated further down a policy act *prima facie* presupposes a verbal foreign policy formulation so that once disentangled words and deeds, words have priority both temporally and the sense that a pronouncement leads to its effects is accomplished.

- The United States versus *America*: a confusing modernity

The political era following President F.D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbour Policy", the second post-war period, the nuclear era, established new (and many times more dangerous) conditions for the US tactical stand toward Latin American revolutions. On the one hand these were years of Cold War bipolar intemperance and of a renewed inception of US power into the entire region; these were the times of the Eisenhower Presidency whose foreign policy was challenged (as far as Latin American was concerned) by the omnipresence of Roosevelt's ghost. Conversely Eisenhower's was the presidency that was supposed to offer the US people guarantees permitting a new post-war order consolidating US dominance both world-wide and in its natural sphere of influence.³ These were also the years when McCarthyism launched the most critical offensive against the institutional stability of the United States, spreading an unprecedented socio-political crisis within the US establishment which inevitably extended to the foreign-policy making process.

Mentioning just one critical contemporary trial - the Alger Hiss case - can highlight the Cold War hysteria McCarthy fed on. I am aware, of course, that this is an issue where, 1) the truth is inherently difficult for historians to establish, 2) there are fiercely opposing view points, and 3) there exists disinformation and political spin from all sides. Still, since this case actually existed as a dominant topic within the US socio-political debate, thus, I stress the importance that the Hiss case especially had for further political decisions by John Foster Dulles. Hiss was allegedly a member of a Communist conspiracy operating within the ranks of the government where he was a State Department official, who was taken to testify to the House Committee of Un-American Activities. What makes this case relevant for my argument is that there were parallel motivations relating to domestic party politics: the need of Dulles to purge a State Department then under the strong influence of the Democrats; in this light, Hiss can be seen as one of the victims of this manoeuvre. Ambrose assesses that:

³ The best two accounts on Eisenhower's Presidency and foreign policy are in S.E.Ambrose (1984); and S.E.Ambrose (1981). On Eisenhower's foreign policy and anti-Communism see Blanche W. Cook (1981); R.Divine (1981); S.G.Rabe (1988).

“Dulles hardly needed the encouragement, as he had reasons of his own to conduct a purge. Virtually every senior official in the Foreign Service was a Democrat, most of them were guilty of personal devotion to [Dean] Acheson and had strong dislike for Dulles ... Nothing, Dulles knew, would please the Old Guard more than his firing men whom Acheson had defended from McCarthy ... In addition, Dulles had to prove his own anti-Communist zeal. The skeleton in his own closet, of which he was embarrassingly aware, was his endorsement of Alger Hiss as director of the Carnegie Endowment and his offer of deposition in Hiss’s behalf during Hiss’s subsequent trial. So Dulles, acting under Eisenhower’s direction, made a purge his first priority. On January 23, [1953] Dulles sent a letter to 16,500 State Department personnel demanding ‘positive loyalty’ to the new administration.”⁴

Achieving ‘positive loyalty’ and recovering consensus within the domestic and foreign policy establishment seemed a well-conceived state strategy, capitalising somewhat pragmatically on McCarthy’s offensive. Yet, the Eisenhower administration had considerable problems balancing its own political interest with the threat that McCarthy inflicted upon the political climate as a whole. As an example consider Eisenhower’s confrontation with McCarthy after the latter began investigating “Communist infiltration” in the Army: “this guy McCarthy [said Eisenhower] is going to get into trouble over this. I’m not going to take this one lying down ... He’s ambitious. He wants to be President. He’s the last guy in the whole world who’ll ever get there, if I have anything to say.”⁵ When White House and other federal personnel were subpoenaed, Eisenhower condemned the “complete arrogance of McCarthy,” declaring: “this amounts to nothing but a wholesale subversion of public service ... McCarthy is deliberately trying to subvert the people we have in government. I think this is the most disloyal act we have ever had by anyone in the government of the United States.”⁶

⁴ S.Ambrose (1984:83,64). Before being sentenced to five years in prison for perjury, Hiss held prominent positions during F.D. Roosevelt administrations, he had been at Yalta with Roosevelt and was one of the most important personalities of the New Deal, one of the “Ivy league faces” of those years. He stood alongside Roosevelt when the United Nations was inaugurated. Acheson, Secretary of State under President Truman, opposed and attacked the basic premises of the “new look” in US foreign policy under Eisenhower. In particular he was a strong critic of the retaliation policy. See D.Acheson (1954:81-83). This issue is to be developed below.

⁵ S.Ambrose (1984:162).

⁶ Ibid:187-189.

- A Nation divided

The above was one among many complex incidents expressive of a climate wherein the roots of wrath permeated the US polity. Although this represented the beginning of the end for McCarthy and his aggressive policies, from Eisenhower's account a turning point at the state level can be detected during that period. Thus, McCarthy's bitter attacks on civil liberties left deep wounds both within the US domestic socio-political process as the Hiss case show, and within the foreign policy spectrum, as Acheson's disagreements indicate: "It was a generation on trial and a nation divided," as Geoffrey Wheatcroft stresses.⁷

The Cold War turmoil was also reflected in the discomfort that Guatemala caused among Latin American foreign policy makers.⁸ As will be shown in later chapters, the Caracas Conference was instrumental in creating for the US a climate inimical to reformism in Guatemala.⁹ During this Conference - taking advantage of a notorious revived Monroeist spirit - Dulles's carefully prepared speeches were meant to fabricate consensus among the Latin American delegations in order to support a collective declaration against "foreign [communistic] intervention" in the hemisphere. This represented the last stage of the fall of the regime of Jacobo Arbenz and of the *October Revolution*.

⁷ See G.Wheatcroft (1998:8,9). Wheatcroft is referring to the book written on the subject by the Manchester Guardian US correspondent Alistair Cooke. Cooke's book was an early and vivid testimony of a direct observer of the Hiss episode - see, A.Cooke (1950). From the start of the Hiss case a young Republican played an outstanding part, as he remembers in one of his later accounts: Richard Nixon, future Eisenhower Vice-president, was, at the time, a junior representative in the US Congress. As a member of the House Committee of Un-American Activities Nixon cleverly identified the Hiss case as the gold mine he needed in order to boost his political career: it gave him and other ambitious politicians a license to use *vigilance* as a political weapon; in effect the controversial Hiss affair proved to be useful as Nixon's scapegoat to accomplishing this purpose. See the account on the Hiss case in R.M.Nixon (1962:1-71). Cooke stresses that the Hiss case, "brought back into favor the odious trade of the public informer. It gave the FBI an unparalleled power of inquiry into private lives that in the hands of a less scrupulous man that its present chief could open up for generations of mischief-makers an official wholesale house of blackmail. It tended to make conformity sheepish and to limit by intimidation what no Western society worth the name can safely limit: the curiosity and idealism of its young." See A.Cooke (1950:340; and on the role of Nixon during the trial see, *ibid*:53,55,59,71-81.

⁸ This was to be expressed at the Caracas Conference on 28 March, 1954, see chapter-8.

⁹ The OAS Caracas Conference took place in March 1954. It was instrumental for Washington's achievement of consensus among the Interamerican community to impose a US solution to the Guatemalan problem and thus towards the overthrow of Arbenz.

- “*America*” as a modern world-wide paradigm: change *versus* tradition I

This era is perhaps the moment of the post-war period when the spirit of “*Americanism*” for the defence of the “*American interest*” reached its zenith, while domestically strong anti-Soviet feeling constituted the main driving force towards US hegemony. This moment also represented the opportunity to encourage a policy where “good *Americanism*” and a spirit for future world-wide achievements were the essential pillars of a consensual foreign policy.¹⁰ “Good *Americanism*,” according to Eisenhower, (praising strong foreign policy), meant that, “no responsible individual - no political party - wants [...] to damage America.” Thus, by outlining that the “only treasonous party we have is the Communist Party,” he proposed that “no matter how deep may be our differences in other fields, in this *we are all Americans* - nothing else.”¹¹

In this light (in contrast to contemporary policy-makers like Dean Acheson or Adlai Stevenson) Dulles, in his crude exposition of retaliation had turned himself into the ludicrous conscience of the foreign policy establishment, to the public’s “confusion, consternation, and disbelief” as stressed by Townsend Hoopes.¹² The fact that these were the golden years of US mid-century hegemony under Eisenhower, facilitated the deployment of the public interest argument in an ideological crusade. Although this policy, as suggested above, had a dubious democratic essence, the necessity to protect security was central. In this case “security interests” meant the preservation of the US natural area of influence, which embodied first of all, the defence of the (ideological) right to impose *discursive notions* of progress, modernity and civilisation (often at the expense of order).¹³ Hence, the economic (as an extrapolation of

¹⁰ See chapter 3.

¹¹ DOSB, “Principles of US Foreign Policy,” (Address by the President), Vol. 31, No. 794, September 13, 1954, p. 362, (my emphasis). Note Eisenhower’s coincidence with Kennan’s early judgement on the ‘treacherous’ character of Soviet Communism.

¹² T.Hoopes (1973-1974:169). See also his biography of Dulles, T.Hoopes (1974). Apart from being his biographer, Hoopes was one of Dulles’s most severe critics.

¹³ A remark by Mexican historian Edmundo O’Gorman on the idea of civilisation which stresses the difference between both the Anglo-Saxon and the Hispanic-American worlds and to a certain extent the subsequent spreading of the neo-colonial order seems relevant: “at last it happened what someday had to happen: Iberian American colonies - flowers in the greenhouse of traditionalism - once they were responsible

the ideological) remained the incipient and the political paramount concern for US policy in the Central American region (the *theology of security*).¹⁴

Priorities in Latin America: defending 'ideological integrity'

As shown in chapters 1-4 the economic priorities, although indeed dominant in shaping policies, were not predominant in achieving results. They were a result, not a cause, of a primary geostrategic concern (without which the guaranteeing of the economic interest could not have been accomplished). This geopolitical calculation conceived the *ideological integrity* of the Latin American political order - and as a result the subsistence of the *status quo* - as the main concern in formulating foreign policy.¹⁵ Thus any alteration of the nature of the political regime of the subordinated countries, appeared unacceptable for Washington whose most common response was intervention.¹⁶ Thus the following formulation is in order to understand the prominence of the ideological over the economic in the context of the Cold War:

1) US= *America*

for their own destiny, entered fully in the great conflict they were born to (the Anglo-Hispanic civilisational conflict), but from which they had substracted themselves during three centuries of isolation." See E.O'Gorman (1977:20-21).

¹⁴ See chapter-1. For a critique of this principle of security see, C.Bergquist (1996).

¹⁵ A strong element of *ideological protectionism* has always been present in US foreign policy discourse in general, and with Latin America this was particularly so. Relevant first-hand policy exemplars include: DOSB, "Principles of US Foreign Policy," (address by the President), Vol. 31, No. 794, September 13, 1954, pp. 359-362; DOSB, "Partnership for Peace," (Address by Secretary Dulles), Vol. 31, No. 797, October 4, 1954, pp. 471-477; DOSB, "The Organization of American States and the United Nations: Rivals or Partners?," Vol. 31, No. 787, July 26, 1954, pp. 115-118; DOSB, "Inter-American Cooperation and Hemispheric Solidarity," Vol. 29, No. 748, October 26, 1953, pp. 554-559; DOSB, "United States-Latin American Relations," (Report to the president by Milton S. Eisenhower), Vol. 29, No. 752, November 23, 1953, pp. 695-717; DOSB, "Organizing Security in the Americas," Vol. 30, No. 779, May 31, 1954, pp. 830-835; DOSB, "Maintaining Free World Unity," (Statement by Secretary Dulles), Vol. 30, No. 781, June 14, 1954, pp. 921-925; DOSB, "A Standard for Americans," (Address by the President), Vol. 29, No. 747, October 19, 1953, pp. 507-517.

¹⁶ Such a *nature* is understood as the *nature* of the state and it was nourished by local governments which had: 1) a pro-US-Western both domestic political discourse and action, 2) as a result a US-type of anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism, 3) a subservient pro-US capitalist model, which despite nationalisation, worked towards capitalist integration, 4) an aggressive policy towards subversion, the latter being generally associated with anti-"*Americanism*," and, 5) the sharing of the essential principles of the defence of the *hemispheric integrity* understood as the defence of US national security. See chapter-3.

- 2) power politics > <balance of power= security
- 3) policy of security= protection of political atmosphere *vis à vis* Soviet threat
- 4) intervention and security in LA obtained v. foundations of liberal democracy
- 5 *America* against the US: hegemonic regional chaos imposed

As explained in chapters 3-4, intervention within the Inter-American sphere has had a unique feature: it is associated with the particular gestures and habits of the hegemon. On the one hand the United States has been instrumental in introducing the concept of order and balance of power.¹⁷ On the other, there have always been a latent atmosphere of disorder and chaos in the interaction taking place between the US and some states considered to be hostile to the “*American*” interest. Thus, taking into account that the world imagined and constructed after World War II, itself constrained within historical limits imposed by the Cold War atmosphere, is the reason why it is plausible to discuss that the post-war order had structural imperfections from the outset, for it created potential instability rather than a coherent course towards progress. This situation had major repercussions particularly in the Latin American region, of which, the “Central American laboratory” was most exposed.¹⁸

The principle maintaining that “US policy toward Latin America has sought, fundamentally, not to make the region safe for democracy but to make it safe for the interests of US capitalists” as Bergquist argues, is accurate, as far as the economic priority is concerned.¹⁹ Yet, it is also the belief that, in order to accomplish this aim, indispensable ideological basis were required. Hence, as argued throughout the writing of this work, it is important to argue that it has been upon both the anti-change and the fear-of-change stigma (end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries respectively), and the second post-war anti-Communist axiom (so the overall need to preserve an exacerbated notion of security) that the (non-secular) basis of US foreign policy have been put together in order to *convince (if*

¹⁷ Wight says that, “the idea of a *pattern* of power enables to generalize about international politics in relations to their geographical framework.” See M.Wight (1966b:149,150).

¹⁸ See chapter-3.

¹⁹ C.Bergquist (1996:82).

the devil did not exist we would invent it) the other American cousins down South of the “benefits” of both (“*American*”) progress and (“*American*”) Capitalism.²⁰

This process was a great opportunity for “*Americanism*” to re-establish - in the light of the McCarthyism offensive - the essential conditions for the frontier mystique to re-appear; this time within the realm of foreign affairs: i.e., Eisenhower’s military setting of the power boundaries of the US, and Kennedy’s Revival of American pride - Camelot included.²¹ Hence the need to recycle, accordingly, the main features of both discourse and policy (this time making use of anti-Communism for the sake of the defence of *America’s* security) in order to appropriate the right (through a general imposed strategy of regional security) to embark, as the vanguard actor, on the launching of a policy of protecting major US interests in Latin America. Incidentally the “geographical framework” - as Wight says - set by the United States goes in line with a doctrinaire generalisation in the region where the US exported an alien (and non-suitable) policy as far as the domestic conditions were concerned. This would explain the aggressive tone and methods used against the Guatemalan reformist movement, not to mention others of subsequent decades. Thus, the emphatic and endless (interventionist) circularity of this *mystique* that ensured once more Washington’s position of strength in the making of international politics.²²

²⁰ The above concept is my adaptation of a phrase which Goethe arguably ascribed to Diderot during a conversation with J.D.Falk of January 25, 1813: “Man hat es Diderot sehr verdacht, daß er irgendwo gesagt: wenn Gott noch nicht ist, so wird er vielleicht noch.” (“if God does not exist yet, perhaps he still might”). See F.Biedermann (1909:175). This reflects that divination within the process of knowledge was a core element of the debate of ideas, and of course the existence of God and its opposite represented a main aspect of the philosophical discussion. See below chapter-7.

²¹ See the Introduction.

²² In the 1970s in the light of Salvador Allende’s accession to power, Henry Kissinger raised the voice of alert concerning the threat against cultural and ideological hegemony in the following terms which are worth to be quoted here: “Nixon and his principal advisors were convinced that Allende represented a challenge to the United States and to the stability of the Western Hemisphere. Allende’s commitment to nationalising American-owned companies *was not* our principal worry ... Allende was different, not merely an economic nuisance or a political critic but a *geopolitical challenge*. Chile bordered Perú, Argentina, and Bolivia, all plagued by radical movements. As a continental country a militant Chile had a capacity to undermine other nations and support radical insurgency that was far greater than Cuba’s, and Cuba has managed to do damage enough ... Two Democratic administrations preceding Nixon’s had made the same judgement that a victory for Allende would imperil our interests in the Western Hemisphere.” See H.Kissinger (1982:376), (my emphasis). Some time before, in his memoirs, Kissinger had stated: “Our concern with Allende was based on national security, not on economics. Nationalisation of American-owned property was not the issue. The challenge to our policy and interests posed by Allende was fundamentally different. He was not just nationalising property; he avowed his dedication to totalitarian Marxism-Leninism. He was an admirer of the Cuban dictatorship and a resolute opponent of ‘American imperialism’.” H.Kissinger (1979:656-657).

Of course, seen in the framework of Cold War hysteria, the Guatemalan affair was only the first expression in Latin America of Cold War policies which had been already tested elsewhere some time before. There are two relevant cases of the type in other regions worthy of mention which perhaps closely parallel Guatemala. In 1953 Iran experienced a CIA-organised and directed coup against Premier Mohammed Mossadegh in support of the return of Sha Mohammed Reza Pahlevi. In Europe Greece faced Washington's intervention during the Civil War (1946-1949) which has been characterised as “the formal proclamation of the Cold War” between the “Free World ... and the forces of Communism.”²³ Simultaneously with this intervention, representing the first counterinsurgency campaign of the Cold War, the Greek army's organization of civil para-military forces during the Civil War and afterwards was notable as an early instance where the US supported a system that had political indoctrination in anti-Communism as a primary task.²⁴ Hence, the significance of the warning to the USSR through the Truman Doctrine.²⁵

- The ghost of progress: tradition *versus* change II

When it comes to the nature of US interest in Guatemala, it is important to note, for instance, that the US, through the Office of Intelligence Research (OIR) of the State Department had relatively little criticism of some technical aspects of the agrarian reform in Guatemala, acknowledging the fact that “of 241,191 private agricultural holdings only 1,710 would be affected.” The OIR went on to voice what seemed to be its main concern about some aspects of *Decree 900*: that the successful implementation of the reform would strengthen the ‘government’s authority’ and ‘prestige’ in the countryside and would provide the communists

²³ Lt.Col.R.W.Selton (1966:68). See chapters-6,8.

²⁴ Of course the USSR was not exactly an innocent participant. It was also involved in the bipolar dynamic and its behaviour as a great power reflected this.

²⁵ See chapter-4.

with “an excellent opportunity to extend their influence over the rural population.”²⁶ In the same line, anthropologist Richard Adams argued that change in the Guatemalan countryside was

“an awakening of profound import did take place ... a ‘sociological awakening’, for it amounted to a realization that certain of the previously accepted roles and statuses within the social system were no longer bounded by the same rules, and that new channels were suddenly opened for the expression of and satisfaction of needs.”²⁷

In contrast in the impact that the *October Revolution* had within Washington state circles the ideological was paramount to the subsequent benefit of the “American way”. Although the policy in Guatemala was carried out in the name of economic interests, by its very nature, it implied a guarantee for the (obsolete) cultural and ideological subsystems of the local body politic to subsist. Modernity and progress (“elusive ghosts” as Paz has referred) within the realm of the hegemonic sphere were meant to be carried out in accordance to the essential interest of the US, not in (apparent or real) opposition to it. Therefore, in the very moment when the Guatemalan modernisation was conceived and carried out as a relatively independent process, is when Washington prepared for the organisation of its dismantling. When referring to this type of behaviour, Robert Cox says that local leadership, when in search for fair internal and external conditions for development, “at best they will help transfer elements of modernisation to the peripheries but as only as these are consistent with the interests of established local powers.”²⁸

²⁶ See Office of Intelligence Research (OIR), “Agrarian Reform in Guatemala,” No. 6001, 5 March, 1953, pp. 4, 5. This is a remarkable observation in that it stresses the fear of the “Communist influence” as a major concern, beyond the mere economic aspects that the reform in itself had. On the other hand, the setting of the amount of compensation as we will see in the following pages, was largely a result of this ideological premise for the difference in the totals discussed by the State Department and Arbenz did not amount to a significant economic discussion as much as it was, in fact, a political quarrel.

²⁷ Quoted in P.Glejeses (1991:161). Another remarkable statement made in the 1970s by a foreign policy executive concerning the fear that foreign threat represented to “ideological integrity,” was that of Edward Korry, ambassador in Chile when Salvador Allende was elected. He said that, “Chile voted calmly to have a Marxist-Leninist state *His margin is only about one percent but it is large enough in the Chilean constitutional framework to nail down his triumph as final.* It is a sad fact that Chile had taken the path to Communism with only a little more than a third (36 percent) of the nation approving this choice, but it is an immutable fact. *It will have the most profound effect on Latin America and beyond; we have suffered a grievous defeat; the consequences will be domestic and international; the repercussions will have immediate impact in some lands and delayed effects in others.*” Cited in H.Kissinger (1979:653). The italicised sentences, according to Kissinger, were underlined by Nixon when he sent the report to the president.

²⁸ R.W.Cox (1983:173).

In line with this convention, the United States support for the dictator Ubico had already typified its traditional policies toward the Latin American dictatorships. A noteworthy journalistic sample of this policy of tolerance towards authoritarianism within mass media circles is an article in the 1940s influential *Harper's Magazine*. In this piece Ubico is praised for "working hand in glove with us in the common cause." The article described Ubico as a despot "who hates to be called one" and an "honest admirer of democracy in a country that has never known the meaning of the word." And in order to complement the US state rationale, the article concluded that even though Ubico might have been despotic, he was an "enlightened," "benevolent" despot, just what the country (and Washington) needed.²⁹ Subsequently the policy, this time in 'support' of democracy, would be reflected in the launching of the Alliance for Progress.³⁰

One main interest for this chapter is to analyse why the US intervened so furiously in Guatemala, turning it into an archetype. Here, again, the problem of *exceptionality* is raised. While the Guatemalan case is a remarkable movement in itself, the response to it by the United States is problematic in terms of dealing peacefully (and coherently) with such "anomalies" (as Guatemala and Cuba in Latin America, Iran and Greece, and perhaps also Indo-China and Korea); thus Washington's violent response to socio-political change abroad seemed to suggest its intolerance to the originality of democratic change in other nations: in essence there was a refusal to accept the validity of exceptional processes (in that they were exposed to disadvantageous endogenous conditions) towards democratic progress.

²⁹ See, L.Martin&S.Martin (1942:418-427). Grieb contends that Ubico was accepted, and even liked among the Indians. It must be noted that Grieb based his conclusions on Guatemalan press coverage, which he admits was controlled by the general-president, on interviews with Ubicos' supporters, and on reports by US officials like ambassador Sheldon Whitehouse, with whom Ubico was "particularly close." This author also estimates that the "wily Caudillo sought to ingratiate himself with the Yankees," and he certainly was successful. See K.J.Grieb (1979:35-41,67-75).

³⁰ On the Alliance for Progress see, E.R.May (1963:757-774); for a critical appraisal see, E.Frei-Montalva (1967:437-448).

The ideological struggle: rephrasing the foundations of hegemony

When evaluating the nature of this contest within the context of regional policies that were based on a wider strategy, an appeal was made to the defence of essential values. For instance Eisenhower remarked: “the world is in an *ideological struggle*, and we are on one side and the Iron Curtain countries are on the other. This struggle we now are in we call the ‘Cold War’.”³¹

President Eisenhower was right in as much as it was not only the “Red” anti-Capitalist policies which were under scrutiny in the context of this new discursive emphasis, but also an anti-red US *rephrasing* of the basis of hegemony. Such a “rephrasing” reached its climax during his years in office. It was elaborated from within the state with the aim of searching for a new legitimacy, hence for a *new identity* (Truman’s policies were “ambiguous” according to Dulles). And yet, what the President and his Secretary of State did not say - perhaps, given their ideological blindness they did not envisage it - was that this exercise also constituted both an intensive and a systematic effort to *construct* a discourse against threat through which a symbolic archetype was being manufactured: that of the anomaly. Thus, the maximum antithetical representation of this political ventriloquism, *Sovietism*, was confined into the amorphous condition of the *otherness*. It is within this rhetorical space where political *identities* were drawn by a religious-ideological sense of measuring, and a *theological inference* in the demarcation of the sites of historical belonging (“the right side,” “the wrong side,” etc.). In 1954 Eisenhower articulated the boundaries of this notable corollary as follows:

“Two world camps, whose geographic boundaries in important areas are mutually shared, lie farther apart in *motivation* and *conduct* than the poles in space. One is *dedicated* to the *freedom* of the individual and to the right of *all* to live in *peace*; the other, to the *atheistic* philosophy of materialism and the effort to *establish its sway* over all the earth.”³²

³¹ DOSB, “The Courage to be Patient,” (Statement by the President), Vol. 31, No. 807, December 13, 1954, p. 887, (my emphasis).

³² DOSB, “Education and Freedom-Core of the American Dream,” (Address by the President), Vol. 30, No. 781, June, 14, 1954, p. 899, (my emphasis). In the light of this rephrasing of the terms of domination, I argue that *America* becomes the dominant device to reach this outcome.

This important aspect of the policy was emphasised by Eisenhower in a patriotic speech made to the American Legion at Washington, in August, 1954. He claimed that a Communist “dictatorship - ruthless, strong, insatiable” - was “determined to establish its sway over all the world,” using “every imaginable weapon to achieve its ends: it uses force and the threat of force. It uses bribery subversion and sabotage. It uses propaganda.” Eisenhower conceived that the latter was an outstanding weapon of the “ideological struggle.” It is, he said, “one which emphatically requires from us new and aggressive countermeasures. There is a dangerous disproportion between our country’s efforts to tell the truth about freedom and our Nation’s objectives on the one hand and the propaganda of the Red dictatorships on the other.”³³

Dulles contributed to this crusading impetus by extraordinarily appealing to the values of Christianity and freedom as known in the Western tradition in order to “confront dictatorship” for the benefit of the highest “human desire”: freedom.³⁴ Thus, with a mixture of religious and political principles, human beings, Dulles announced,

“... for the most part, want simple things. They want to worship God in accordance with the dictates of their conscience. But that is not easily granted by those who promote an *atheistic* creed ... There are signs that the rulers are bending to some of the human desires of their people ... That does not prove that the Soviet rulers have themselves *converted*. It is rather that they may be dimly perceiving a basic fact, that is that there are limits to the power of any rulers indefinitely to suppress the human spirit. In that God-given fact lies our greatest hope.”³⁵

³³ DOSB, “Principles of US Foreign Policy,” (Address by the President), Vol. 31, No. 794, September 12, 1954, p. 359.

³⁴ I shall elaborate on this further on, see chapters-6,8.

³⁵ DOSB, “The Evolution of Foreign Policy” (address by Secretary Dulles), Vol. 30, No. 761, January 25, 1954, p. 110, (my emphasis).

- The need for affirmation and its dangers

It thus follows that the *genuine* way of this tradition to reassert itself was by using conversion through politics. Or as Hoopes says, there “was a doctrinaire tendency [on the part of US leadership] to elevate every issue of foreign policy to the level of deadly clash between opposed moral absolutes.”³⁶ Thus, although there have been understandable economic arguments to defend a national security policy, there are a number of signals that reveal the extent to which US foreign policy has been also (and perhaps mainly) the result of a national affirmation necessity.³⁷ As the US pioneers conceived it, the foundational nature of the nation would be reflected in the pillars upon which the construction of an exceptional country was going to be built. The significance of this feature was that the spirit of manifest destiny prevailed both in the US political culture and in the foreign policy making. Although the frontier impetus faded in the 1890s, there remained, as stated in chapters 1-2, a missionary notion of political action. Thus in the light of Dulles’s mystique in boosting the “nation of God,” foreign policy did not quite differentiate itself from, for example, Lyndon Johnson’s *mission civilisatrice* in south-east Asia;³⁸ or Kennedy’s “New Frontier” spirit in Latin America.

The epic past of the US created a present of intolerance not as much as a result of ideological blindness as of the urgency to keeping (the recently created) tradition alive, which in itself meant the inauguration of an ideological tradition of its own. This moment included - in the context of US foreign policy - the need of conceiving, in Gill’s rephrasing of Weber, “the Calvinist capitalist hero as a [key] agent of history.”³⁹ And this feature of both US thinking and policy-making has resuscitated most especially when it has come to confronting anything that does not correspond to this rhetorical figure, such as revolutions.

We find here then the self-imposed idea that the US is responsible for what happens in the world at large, “an inherent right - a sort of Modern Manifest Destiny”: “to intervene in

³⁶ T.Hoopes (1973-1974:171-172).

³⁷ As a recent example of this see, Albright’s words quoted above in chapter-3.

³⁸ A.Goldman (1969:63).

³⁹ S.Gill&J.H.Mittelman (1997:9).

other countries internal affairs’.”⁴⁰ Christopher Coker has correctly emphasised this in *Reflections on American Foreign Policy since 1945*. He stresses the great affinity there is when succeeding in accomplishing this mission, between state institutions such as the CIA and the Congress. ‘The idea of manifest destiny still survives’ quotes Coker when depicting US Senate belief on this matter.⁴¹ Coker adds that “officials often made sweeping declarations of the United States’s world mission, and frequently committed the nation to policies and programs far beyond its resources.”⁴²

I argue that the political elite of contemporary US (as Eisenhower’s and Dulles’s exalted speeches indicate) has made of the foreign policy-making process the instrument *par excellence* to prove this exceptionality. Alternatively this was to be done by using religion for ideological means. As one of the two great powers, the United States was obliged to implement a strategy accordingly. However, as in the case of any other relevant historical actor attempting to impose such an original and prominent position upon the other actors of the world concert, a price had to be paid in return.

- The uncertainty of solitude: in search of a Nation

To some extent this self-induced exceptionality backfired, re-placing the United States in an isolated position: as a unique power (shown exhaustively in Latin America), the US remained as the sole actor in the construction of the new order. This is especially so from the mid-1940s onwards. This outcome implied a paradox: the United States, by deciding (correctly) to intervene in the war against Nazism, interrupted the course of traditional isolationism only to end up, after the allied success, 1) as a sole true victor, for the US, predominantly alone, had to take control of the organisation of world affairs, and 2) this was carried out confronting Sovietism in a similar vein as the US had done against Nazism, as Dulles’s remarks shall

⁴⁰ Coker quoting Marchetti and Marks, see C.Coker (1989:18). See also V.Marchetti&J.D.Marks (1974).

⁴¹ C.Coker (1989:18).

⁴² Ibid:18.

indicate further on.⁴³ Paul Veyne questions the place that a foreign policy such as this has within a more politicised domain and at a larger level of aggregation, that of the state. Discussing ancient Rome's imperialistic practices, Veyne offers an ironic reversal: "Rome incarnates an archaic form, not of imperialism but of isolationism. She denies the pluralities of nations; she behaves, as Mommsen said, as if she were the sole State in the full meaning of the term."⁴⁴

Accordingly, I would argue that the US measure of power and subsequent predominance in world affairs would be reflected on a significantly similar measure of detachment. Victory and defeat (as the Vietnam War showed), regardless of their qualitative historical difference, were two outcomes of one single condition. The modern United States was not an ordinary individual country but it was one placed in a condition of unlimited power and of relative solitude, by virtue of which this country would be provided with the instruments (and the autonomy) to secure its national security and to carry out the defence of its national interest at any cost. At the same time, this modern insular condition granted Washington the incomparable opportunity to accomplish its foreign policy aims without relying on uncontrolled compromises with the Western allies: the US was *alone* in its project of dominion, but it also travelled accompanied whenever this was considered acceptable and decisive for obtaining favourable results. It is important to stress that one of the peculiarities of the US as a Great Power has been that this historical condition of 'solitary predominance' has resulted in different kinds of outcomes, the most outstanding one being a reckless obsession for securing abroad the spaces for the imposition of both its immediate and mediate world-wide and regional undertaking.

As a "world unto itself" and as a multiracial nation, the United States experienced difficulties in *belonging* to a civilisatory tradition, the latter being an essential condition to be

⁴³ Dulles compared Stalin's *Problems of Leninism* with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. This work (Stalin's) he said, "has become to the Communist Party what Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was to the Nazi party." See T.Hoopes (1973-1974:165). It is true that the USSR had the strength to challenge the US, especially in the military arena. Yet, the Soviets were the weak winners of the World War II for both their economy and society were exhausted by the military confrontation with Hitler.

⁴⁴ See P.Veyne (1982:177).

achieved by the modern nation.⁴⁵ Accordingly a *tradition* of its own had to be established.⁴⁶ The United States of the 19th century (and although differently very likely of modern times too) might be the case of a country located *beyond* the boundaries of the Nation, or perhaps that of a national entity just laying within the geographical confines of a *Nation*. And yet, a State-Nation still struggling to find a way of belonging and achieving its own identity, which would explain why the limits of foreign policy became the plausible laboratory to arrive to this moment. Although Dulles, as Eisenhower admits in his diaries, “[was] not particularly persuasive in presentation and at times, seems to have a curious lack of understanding as to how his words and manner may affect another personality,”⁴⁷ he was, however, successful through his dramatic rhetoric, in chiefly institutionalising the essential perspective of the Cold War both within the US and in other regions. The result being that the Eisenhower administration’s encirclement “led at times to the almost total diplomatic isolation of the United States.”⁴⁸

However, the foreign policy of the second post-war was essential to restore the beginning of the affirmation of such an identity and Dulles and Eisenhower seemed to fulfil the requirements to make the above possible: the US isolation (the *American solitude*) within

⁴⁵ The first concept I elaborate in the Introduction and chapters-1-2. On the issue of race, I do not use the term “melting-pot” because I consider it an excess. Within the realm of multiculturalism in the US has prevailed, parallelly, what I consider to be a *consensual racism*. Although a paradox in itself, and despite that the US is to a great extent, and in some regions more than in others, an inter-ethnic society, I consider that deep problems concerning racism and integration had occurred throughout modern times (especially in the 1950s and 1960s) and are still occurring even today, as can be observed from several incidents such as the Oklahoma bombing of 1995 and the racial murders occurred in the south from the mid 1990s onwards, all of which have been perpetrated by individuals sharing the Ku-Klux Klan creed *Aryan Brotherhood* (AB). These racist-motivated incidents, among many others of the past, remind us of the sub-human condition to which inferior races had been confined in the US. Thus, from domestic and international aspects of the US policy making process, it is more or less clear that this nation, especially in southern states and mostly at the lowest class level, is still in a stage of racial struggle and enduring a process of achieving a sense of identity concerning race, class and economic integration. On racism and society in the US see chapter 1 and J.Wilson (1998); R.Drinnon (1990); V.Deloria (1973). On one of the incidents referred to, and occurred in Jasper, Texas in the summer of 1998, see E.Vulliamy (1998:9-11,13-14,16).

⁴⁶ In his “notebooks” Gramsci argues, when referring to “Americanism and Fordism,” that the US had the privilege of being a rich nation, thus, the fact that “America [did not] have ‘great historical traditions’” does not imply (rather the contrary), that a “formidable accumulation of capital” takes place. This, Gramsci discusses, “has taken place in spite of the superior living standard enjoyed by the popular classes compared with Europe.” See A.Gramsci (1971:285).

⁴⁷ Entry from May 14, 1953, in R.H.Ferrell (1981:237).

⁴⁸ T.Hoopes (1973-1974:177).

the Iberian-American context implied that the only way of possessing the tools for imposing traditions was to exert control and dominance through a coercive and extravagant foreign policy. This tradition was indeed inaugurated from the very moment when “*America*” started its expansionist features as seen in chapter 1. And, of course, the Cold War was both the particular modern time and the prime historical opportunity (and the US made the most of it) to put power politics into motion. In other words, reinforcing (or re-inventing) identity through a morally superior policy, was one of the central priorities in the second post-war US policy makers’ mentality, regardless of their orientation, ideology or systemic allocation within the confines of the state sphere as the performance of the *Vital Center* revealed.⁴⁹ Thus, a general principle prevailed in the defence of US security which overcame (temporarily) the pragmatic collective or personal ideological limits: that of protecting the values of the *free world* from the threat of alien undertakings. In the achievement of this “one key premise was that the Communist system was not only morally inferior to the rest (which few doubted), but also inherently inferior in material terms (which a good many doubted).”⁵⁰

- Ideological uniformity, the affluent society and global ascendancy

A capital expression of this juncture had been indeed Truman’s containment and ultimately one of its major documents, NSC-68. According to Efram this essential foreign policy document was the result of an ideological mixture from which neo-conservatism might have stemmed. In the first place, his author, Paul Nitze, was encouraged by both the ideological current and an important Cold War liberal coalition known as *The Vital Center*, which was inspired on the book of the same title by Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.⁵¹ As mentioned in chapter 4, NSC-68 had prepared the basis for US National Security policies on grounds of containment. Such a policy was supported, on the one hand, by liberal intellectuals members of this current such as Schlesinger himself, and others like Reinhold Niebuhr who at the time

⁴⁹ See further down in this chapter.

⁵⁰ T. Hoopes(1973:173).

⁵¹ It was one of the first modern anti-Communist books produced by the liberal establishment in the US in the 1940s. See A.M.Schlesinger,Jr (1988), see especially the part on Nitze and NSC-68.

was already an utopic socialist disappointed with real socialism, and on the other, George Kennan and Irving Kristol among others. In light of this, it is somehow unclear as to what were the real differences between ideological positions within the sphere of the state, or between liberals like Schlesinger and conservatives like Kristol.⁵² Furthermore, except in the tone, what was the difference, within the context of such an ideological blend made up of a clear liberal marking, between the first containment policies of the Truman era, and Neoconservatism? It seems, then, that the liberal-grounded ideological background that established the essential basis for the (anti-Communist) defence of national security after World War II triggered the foundations of Neoconservatism.⁵³

Thus, as far as the outcomes of the policies go and in so far as intervention in Latin America is concerned, there has not been any substantial difference between the ideologies and the policies guaranteeing the protection of US national interest. Furthermore, neither realism nor idealism (at the policy making level and within their own domestic bipolar and chaotic *tete à tete*) seemed to be schools of thought that had any concern with this part of the world. They were focusing on Europe and the Soviet Union. In this context Latin America did not matter nor *existed*, let alone the tiny Central American region. This was a region of the world which was not central in the general undertaking of the bipolar strategy. It was a myth among myths: on top of the already existent myth of Latin America as a *unity*, there was the myth that “*America*” made of the Latin American countries as a territorially integrated whole at the continental level. Consequently a pragmatic policy of involvement had to be conceived. Hence, given the absence of doctrine, the immediate approach to the problems of the subregion resorted to what Alan Knight considers as a “normative approach.” It prevailed, he says, “a predisposition to preach, to tell the Latin Americans where they went

⁵² See J.Ehram (1995:chapter-1). In order to follow the debate taking place at the time in the US on the Soviet issue and the beginning of bipolarity, I suggest to consult the editorials of *The Nation* and *New Republic*. See mainly: "A New Three-Power Conference," *Nation*, October 27, 1945, p. 420; "Relations with Russia," *New Republic*, November 5, 1945, p. 692; "Sixty Days to War or Peace!," *New Republic*, November, 26, 1945, p. 692. These two journals were the core of the intellectual debate among liberal intellectuals about the Soviet question and world politics.

⁵³ This question is addressed in the Introduction.

wrong, where - let us say - they have done those things they ought not to have done and, even more commonly, left undone those things they ought to have done.’⁵⁴

While the policy enforced within Latin America had taken for granted both at the discursive level and in the manufacturing of the policies the predominance of the “American way”, in Europe a different reality prevailed. Let us mention in support of my argument that an interesting example of this is the importance conferred by the US to the World of Fairs. Specifically to the 1958 Brussels Universal and International Exposition, the first world’s fair of the post-war period. In it the Eisenhower Administration installed a Pavilion in which the features of what, J.K. Galbraith had called the “affluent society”, were displayed. This exhibition was actually an extension of the bipolar confrontation and a necessity to “increase American prestige overseas [and] combat Soviet propaganda inroads in Western Europe.” The US pavilion exhibiting the “American cultural landscape” was finally opened “on a site between the Vatican and Russian buildings, or as one pundit observed, ‘between heaven and hell’.”⁵⁵

Gertrude Stein once elaborated on the US national condition perhaps having in mind the problem of this country’s national belonging. She said that “the United States was the eldest Nation of the world because it was the first modern Nation.”⁵⁶ Hence, the importance of representation in the stressing (through the foreign policy making process) of such a condition of modernity. Meaning that the rationalisation of the struggle to consolidate the idea, the need, and the categorical actuality of US strength in Latin America and, thus, the stand against those critical and uncomfortable cases such as Guatemala and Cuba, had to be done in the name of a concrete abstraction: the defence of “liberty against Communism.” Concrete, because the USSR actually existed, so it was an ideal pretext for such a policy to be sent forth; and an abstraction, because it was, within the Guatemalan context, a deliberately *vague* notion of foreign threat.⁵⁷ In this respect Hoopes contributes to this discussion with the

⁵⁴ A.Knight (1994:7).

⁵⁵ See R.W.Rydell (1993:193,194,197,201).

⁵⁶ See R.Cordera&C.Fuentes (1992:34).

⁵⁷ On anti-Communism see the following works: R.J.Alexander (1957); J.Gerassi (1963); D.Caute (1978).

following assessment when he refers to Dulles's foreign policy, all the which can be applied to the general case of US foreign policy:

“... the confident architect of pressure [Dulles] in the first Eisenhower term became the exhausted fire-fighter in the second, dashing distractedly from one blaze to another in a frenzied effort to stifle the flames of national rebellion and revolution in the Third World.”⁵⁸

After applying mechanically the doctrine of nuclear retaliation to a variety of situations over the 1950s, US foreign policy (secretly) dismantled (we would learn later in Guatemala, Cuba, Chile, Nicaragua et al) those relative autonomous domestic movements willing to encourage the development of national projects of economic and political progress. At the same time such a policy contributed, at least in the Central American region, to the long-run break up of the precarious political establishments and the destruction (Guatemala) or the attempt to do it (Cuba) of the domestic economic and political capabilities of these countries.

- The Western Hemisphere, *Americanism* and good fortune: the functionality of dominance

In one word, US involvement was considered by Washington as the (pervasive) preservation of the Inter-American order within and on behalf of the Western Hemisphere. Throughout the time order turned (via the US-supported coups), into a dysfunctional order. This ('successful') condition guaranteed the existence of basis of dominance for the US to be able to impose its pattern of economic and political development as stressed in chapter 4 and as will be discussed here, and in chapters 6-7 on the disastrous outcome of the Guatemalan intervention. The latter criteria, as it will be seen, being shared by some of the representatives of the standard official thinking in Washington's establishment such as former CIA agent Howard Hunt.⁵⁹

Incidentally, the term *Western Hemisphere* is linked to the archetypal geopolitical notion prevalent in the United States whereby the Western tradition (and/or the “*American*”

⁵⁸ T.Hoopes (1973-1974:174).

⁵⁹ See chapter-6.

version of it) had to have conditions for settling itself within a geographical piece of the American map. I argue that this term is a *territorial extension* (and an ontological representation) of the US conviction that the “American creed” and thereafter, the “American way,” were the philosophical pillars of its conception of civilisation (i.e., the Monroe Doctrine’s motto: “America for the Americans,” and the subsequent irrational imposition of the rules of containment and retaliation upon Latin Americans). Following this geopolitical code, Michael Shapiro has challenged the resulting conception of security imposed by the US. In order to give an example of this method of “representation” (to which I will be referring comprehensively in chapter 7) he uses the case of Guatemala. Shapiro argues that

“The initial discourse within which Guatemala was known was thus based on two metonymies, one ethnic and the other geographic. For us, Guatemala was to be Spanish and part of the Western Hemisphere (understood in a strategic sense). With the use of the former, we affirmed the domination of the Hispanic elements in the population, and with the latter, we identified Guatemala within our own security-policy practices. These two figurations for representing Guatemala remain the prevailing meaning-giving mechanisms with which the foreign-policy discourse constructs Central American nations.”⁶⁰

The “American way”, was, then, a strategic axiom to guarantee the tools (both material and ideological) in order to enforce hegemonic policies embraced in the Monroe Doctrine. In all other respects, the “Western tradition” arrived in Latin America in 1492, quite a long time before the existence of the Thirteen Colonies. In this regard, Latin America preceded the US (or “*America*”) as a bearer of the Western tradition understood as the result of the European heritage. As the latter mixed up with the Indian traditions, it turned this part of the continent’s cultural conventions into the basic foundations of America. In other words, America already existed before “*America*” developed its hegemonic concerns in the name of the consolidation of the United States paramount world power blueprint. Likewise, Iberian-*America* had shown a clear disposition to have a life of its own, before (Anglo) “*America*” happened to aspire to the control of the former’s geography and resources. America is first used by the German geographer Martin Waldseemuller (1507) [or else Martinus Hylacomylus] in his *Cosmographiae Introductio*. He suggested the name apparently unaware of the discoveries of Columbus in recognition of the voyages of the Italian explorer Americ[g]o Vespuccio. The term

⁶⁰ M.J.Shapiro (1988:112).

Mundus Novus or New World, commonly used in reference to land in the Western Hemisphere, first appeared in one of Vespucci's letters published in 1504.⁶¹

How to link *Americanism* both with the theory and practice of foreign policy and with intervention? If we accept that intervention has been a deterrent tool as argued in chapters-2-3, we will have to consider that US modern intervention - in the context of balance of power - has turned into an ideal weapon of foreign policy for this exceptional outcome to be reached successfully. Simplifying, exceptionalism equalled *Americanism*, the latter justified intervention, and intervention equalised deterrence. All this connection being embraced by uniqueness as an attribute to conform an identity and a function for the US to be displayed within this trilogy. In this context intervention was conceived not only as an international legitimate instrument of foreign policy to which the actors could resort, providing that the international bodies' normative framework would permit it. It was also carried out (in Central America) to fulfil (or to be the continuation of) the “*American*” need to *officialise* its exceptional condition both as a nation and global power. This condition, let us summarise, was so especially after World War II when the US became the essential intermediary in the making of the new world order, and in the light of this obsession, it was to remain in control of Inter-American affairs.

- The *American* order and universality

Although somehow chaotically, the intrusion of the *American order*, (understood as an ideological reservoir) in the Inter-American sphere was based on a pattern which was *universal* in conception. Or, as Cox argues, global hegemony, “... [was] in its beginnings an outward expansion of the internal (national) hegemony established by a dominant social class. The economic and social institutions, the culture, the technology associated with this national

⁶¹ *Cosmographae Introductio (Introduction to Cosmography)*. Guaterus Lud: Saint Die, Lorraine, vij.kl: Maij, 1507. See The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1994). London: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., Vol. 1, p. 336. Subsequently the Latin American intellectual tradition in order to liberate from the Spanish metropolis, adopted the so called western culture through Positivism, see L.Zea (1974:33).

hegemony become patterns for emulation abroad.”⁶² In order to secure such an environment, Cox argues, peripheral zones of the world economy, “try to incorporate elements from the hegemonic model without disturbing old power structures.”⁶³ Thus, if any meaning *Americanism* has had within the Inter-American sphere, particularly the Guatemalan, this was that safeguarding a progression that incorporated the rules of world hegemony was imperative.

World hegemony is thus

“... describable as a social structure, an economic structure and a political structure; and it cannot be simply one of these things but must be all three. World hegemony, furthermore, is expressed in universal norms, institutions and mechanisms which lay down general rules of behaviour for states.)”⁶⁴

In this way Guatemala was placed notoriously, within the context of the 1950s, as a pilot case of this policy: its *individual* plight in front of the US attention was established as a model of the *universal*. In the light of the Guatemalan case let us, perhaps, consider the relevance of Paz’s assessment when stressing the US frame of mind:

“All that does not have a part in the utopian nature of America does not properly belong to history: it is a natural event and, thus, it doesn’t exist; or it exists only as an inert obstacle, not as an alien conscience. Evil is outside, part of the natural world (like Indians, rivers, mountains and other obstacles which must be domesticated or destroyed) ... If American reality is the reinvention of itself, whatever is found in any irreducible or unassimilable is not American. In other places the future is a human attribute: because we are men, we have a future; in the Anglo-Saxon America of the last century, the process is inverted and the future determines man: we are men because we have a future. And whatever has no future is not man.”⁶⁵

⁶² R.W.Cox (1983:171).

⁶³ Ibid:171.

⁶⁴ Ibid:171,172.

⁶⁵ O.Paz (1992:10-11).

- The legacy of history in foreign affairs: a symbolic search for truth

Both Paz's and Stein's images may easily epitomise a dominant avenue utilised by the US to dealing with the legacy of history. If conceived as historical categories these images also typified the relatively low value that the US has perhaps, conferred to the concerns of other national actors. This legacy, within the context of both the "American" neo-imperial *voyage* abroad and, thus, of the inevitable encounter with the representation of the "otherness" provided a reason that helps to explain intervention (in particular in Latin America) also as a result of the existence of the opposite: if the *other(est)*, which coincidentally held less or null power, *existed* and did so in a challenging different fashion to the *American*, thus, its immediate correction was priority. While according to realism the predominance of the state is going to be the main consideration for constructing a world order rationale, intervention is understood (within the realm of this school of thought) as the (natural) resulting rational exercise of power. This outcome is also to be understood, I maintain, as the result of having, as a major player, a different strategic perspective, as well as a different perception of political events than that of the other actors of the international arena including, of course, the Central Americans.

Thus, it is significant (and not surprising) that the US hegemonic discourse which stemmed from the stand against difference appealed to a spiritual determinism. The latter, as will be seen in the coming two chapters, resulted in a Manichean manipulation of symbols (i.e. "atheistic," "evil," etc.) as a way to create the appropriate climate to carry out national traditions and to sanction means of securing power. In this respect, Bourdieu provides with a useful account on symbols in social life in the following terms,

"symbols are the instruments *par excellence* of 'social integration': as instruments of knowledge and communication, they make it possible for there to be *consensus* on the meaning of the social work of consensus which contributes fundamentally to the reproduction of the social order. 'Logical' integration is the precondition of 'moral' integration."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ P.Bourdieu (1991:166), (emphasis in the original).

On this aspect I would argue that apart from the facts of political life, what was involved behind this particular notion of (foreign) policy was the need, among other things, of convincing the *other* actor, peacefully or not, that the (*American*) *truth* in the sense of Lipset's utilisation of the term, was to be found where the *logic* of power prevailed. In order to be able to accomplishing this, the manufacturing or even the sole existence of perceptions was the necessary result.⁶⁷ 'Perceiving' a problem (the threat of Soviet aggression in the form of Arbenz's presidency) was mostly (although taken to the extremes as a preconceived construction) an act of faith: *we believe what we do not see thus we believe what we know not*. Thus, when it has come to the involvement of power into this operation, it has been for both supremacy and hegemony to deal with it: they were bound to create *the need* 1) to understanding a problem in a certain fashion, even if this exercise went against one's (and others') own expectations and values for it was an exercise which main tendency was directing the energy of the other (be it rival or partner) towards the creation of a cultural climate in which both, subordinations of various types and the awareness that the latter was inevitably to occur in this interaction took place; and 2) that they (supremacy-hegemony) were there with the purpose of conducting political action in order to accomplish a specific purpose. The United States intervention in Central America has resorted to the need of creating (diluted) consensus about the problem (foreign threat) and its solution, to the extent that the subordinated actors have been functional towards the legitimisation of this hegemonic rationale through the use of, for instance, international organisations such as the Organization of American States (OAS).

- A framework for legitimate intervention: the appearance of vacuums and the emergence of political fissures in the American tradition

Washington's appeal to creating the grounds for widespread consensus was, indeed, a necessity. For this purpose rules and international institutions "are generally initiated by the state which establishes the hegemony."⁶⁸ Since consensus lacked a climate of peace in order to be turned into a *hegemonic consensus*, the latter, as a result was constituted under the umbrella

⁶⁷ See the Introduction.

⁶⁸ R.W.Cox (1983:172).

of the *Pax Americana*: the United States, Cox argues, “took the initiative to construct an open world political economy, exclusive of the Soviet sphere, in which Western Europe [i.e., the World of Fairs] and Japan and what came to be known as the Third World were all to be incorporated.”⁶⁹

The crystallisation of this new sphere of world politics was, as mentioned in chapter 3, the creation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which according to Cox, was a “short lived condominium” for this order’s ultimate expression has been polarisation which “quickly became the postwar pattern.”⁷⁰ Cox argues that institutions such as UNSC or OEA, “embody rules which facilitate the expansion of the dominant economic and social forces,” and whose features are the following:

“1) they embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders; 2) they are themselves the product of the hegemonic world order; 3) they ideologically legitimate the norms of the world order; 4) they co-opt the elites from the peripheral countries and 5) they absorb counter-hegemony ideas.”⁷¹

Thus the *fashioning* of an asymmetric condition occurred. Accordingly, intervention as a geopolitical phenomenon took place when there was strong enough (institutionally organised) asymmetry in order to develop, as a first reaction, a tactical means to confront conflict. Generally, asymmetries in world politics were found in a domain of influence where there were actors more dependent than others, as well as actors who were more powerful than others. In the end, the intervention tended to take place when a process of social unrest developed in those nations trying to solve their own domestic differences either by legal and pacific means (Guatemala) or by the launching of a process of transformation that overcame the normative (or legitimate) framework prevalent in that country's international environment (Cuba).

The above is perhaps the case when the US has found itself confronted with the need to define whether or not *the difference* (i.e., socio-political change) must be acceptable or else to

⁶⁹ R.W.Cox (1987:211).

⁷⁰ Ibid:211.

⁷¹ R.W.Cox (1983:172).

play a decisive role in the resolution (generally an annulment of it if happened to be related to socio-political change) of a specific problem. Previous to the idea that the use of force is an everyday issue in world politics, it is relevant to stress out that according to the empirical and theoretical data there is on this matter, the intervention (in Guatemala) was not an isolated act, but rather a social and political phenomenon.⁷² Moreover, it meant to establish and guarantee an essential frame of US strategic dominance. In this respect and despite that intervention has had a strong military content, more generally in the level of its outcome, intervention was something more than a military event: it was part of the early stages of a political process occurring in both the global and regional sphere.

If the consummation of such an undertaking had been already carried out by the US securing a predominant role in economic and political world affairs (i.e., the creation of the UN, the Plan Marshall, the IMF and the WB), the interaction taking place within the other international arenas such as Central America (OAS), was plausible in that the (weak) actors recognised their inherent condition of difference (and inferiority) to the United States. To some extent this response fulfilled Washington's ethos of exceptionality for US existential identity has necessarily been inseparable from the "Other" by virtue of the fact that the *US-Other* association exist within an hegemonic relation. Yet, this condition entailed that the *other* accepted the likelihood of being converted (if the need arouse) into *otherness*: the maximum representation of the difference taken to the extreme.

It has been in this historical moment that the United States has been able to play its most crucial function, and also the time to resort to instruments of foreign policy such as interventions and covert actions: it is for this reason that these actions have to be understood as one of the features of the privilege that "*America*" attributed itself in order to solve all the predicaments emerging in world affairs that were potential threats to the US political creed and its immediate national interest. From this it follows, that interventions were instruments that secured specific foreign policy interests. They constituted an avenue whereby the United States of the second half of this century was able to guarantee not being left detached as the central global actor in any major tactical or strategic manoeuvre, as some of the testimonies of

⁷² See R.Little (1975:1) and chapters-6,8.

Eisenhower and Dulles have revealed. As a result the US enjoyed the best of two worlds: a relative detachment but when the need arose, the assurance of counting on allies that, via their especially-required performance, were functionally vital at any particular moment, hence the *need* for “*America*” to endure. More importantly, as a dominant power the US, needed the other states in order to remain, within an ideal rational understanding, as variable components of a particular order.⁷³

I would argue that this condition (ambiguous self-identity) turned US foreign policy towards Central America into a policy of having a *non-policy*. Meaning that the latter was more the result of a sense of insecurity regarding what had to be done with abstract and concrete enigmas such as “foreign threat”, “fascism”, “nationalism”, “Communism”, “sovereignty”, “revolution”, and ultimately “democracy”. The chaotic *policy* towards these problems and/or the actors involved in their appearance in world affairs (in particular in Central America during the analysed period) has been just the contradictory result of this incapacity *to be*, and to inhabit a foreign policy/relations cultural universe in which “*America*” appeared to be always much more comfortable than the “US”. Therefore, the pattern and the subsequent rationale for controlling was dominated by a vacuum, or by the *absence* of content as far as a fair understanding of the regional socio-political cosmogony was concerned.⁷⁴ An understanding, it is assumed, that might have made it possible for US policy to go beyond the “*American*” own perspective of reality, sense of history, of themselves and of the others (or the *otherness*).⁷⁵ When observed in perspective, as Hoopes

⁷³ Before, during and after the intervention occurs, states mutual interdependence persists. When it comes to interventions against other states a climate of ‘normality’ is predominant. Walzer points out that “the word (intervention) is not defined as a criminal activity, and though the practice of intervening often threatens the territorial integrity and political independence of invaded states, it can sometimes be justified. It is more important to stress at the outset, however, that it always has to be justified.” See M. Walzer (1992:86).

⁷⁴ Controlling Inter-American affairs was to a great extent an “*American*” inauguration of the US dominant exercise of power in the international concert.

⁷⁵ Following this line of analysis, a note on “territorialisation” follows. There seems to be a direct correlation between the constitution of the state and the instauration of what Clausewitz considered in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna as the “territorial unity.” Following Machiavelli, Foucault analyses the basic conditions for the power of the Prince to be assembled, namely, “that for Machiavelli the object and, in a sense, the target of power are two things, on the one hand the territory, and on the other its inhabitants.” Likewise, this administrative aspect of modern democracy and of the art of government has as a main objective, in a Foucaults’ rephrasing of La Perrière, the governing of “men and things”: “To govern a state will therefore mean to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and *the wealth and behaviour* of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of the family over

says about post-war world history during the Eisenhower-Dulles's years, "the tragedy of this situation is that there might well have been a different outcome."⁷⁶ This may be also the case of US Central American policy.

And yet, progress was betrayed by tradition. This is particularly true when Washington tried wrongly to understand Latin and Central America through the prism of the Soviet Union as referred in chapter 4 and to be seen in chapter 6. Let us stress how this "understanding" eventually influenced in the handling of the Guatemalan case as a "Soviet-Communist dominated issue," in itself, an overloaded and, thus, an ill-equipped policy. In this line, Ambrose argues that the United States failed to understand the Soviet Union properly. This was so, especially during the Eisenhower-Dulles's period of foreign policy-making, perhaps one of the reasons being the obscurity inflicted upon the issue as a result of McCarthy's pressure which converged with the bitter anti-Communism of both Dulles and Eisenhower.⁷⁷ To a certain extent (although with a similar intention to that of the US establishment), concerned with the above events, and with a need to understand Latin American affairs, Robert Alexander has suggested that

"the first necessity in the struggle against Communism in Latin America is for the people and government of the United States to take more interest in the affairs of the Latin American countries, to become better informed, and to act in an enlightened and intelligent manner toward our Latin American neighbours."⁷⁸

his household and goods." *"America's"* tradition in Latin American affairs was not going to be the exception of this complementary sphere of political transition. See, M.Foucault (1991:88,92,93), (my emphasis).

⁷⁶ T.Hoopes (1973-1974:175).

⁷⁷ See S.Ambrose (1984:186-211). During his diplomatic career Dulles's personality raised controversial opinions. Churchill, for instance, called him "the only bull I know who carries his china closet with him"; and regarding Dulles's obsession for dominating the centre of the scene, Churchill added: "Mr. Dulles makes a speech every day, holds a press conference every other day, and preaches on Sundays. All this tends to rob his utterances of any real significance." Sir Oliver Franks, the British Ambassador to Washington in the early 1950s said of Dulles: "Three or four centuries ago, when Reformation and Counter-Reformation divided Europe into armed camps, in an age of wars of religion, it was not so rare to encounter men of the type of Dulles. Like them he came to unshakable convictions of a religious and theological order. Like them he saw the world as an arena in which forces of good and evil were continuously at war." Journalist James Reston considered that, like most crusaders, Dulles possessed a "wide streak of hypocrisy" expressed in "the constant contradiction" between the "moralistic man" and the "shrewd political and diplomatic operator." T.Hoopes (1973-1974:154).

⁷⁸ R.J.Alexander (1957:402).

Perhaps unaware of the latter taking place, as also of the historical, geographical and political *fissures* it was initiating via the intervention, Washington contributed to the creation of a tradition in the whole region but most boldly in Central America: by being deprived of their freedoms to figure out their own destiny, a number of regional actors discovered that a new way of national affirmation relied on anti-Americanism.

The implications of this condition will be explored in the coming three chapters.

PART III
CHAPTER 6

**‘GUATEMALA GOING COMMUNIST’: THE US CRUSADE AGAINST SOVIET
UBIQUITY**

Westward the course of the Empire takes its way
The four first acts have already past;
A fifth shall close the drama with the day
Time's noblest offspring is the last.¹

It is true that most of the people who go by
the name of 'Communist' in Latin America
are a somewhat different species than in
Europe. Their bond with Moscow is tenuous
and indirect.
G. Kennan²

- Introduction

Did the *October Revolutionaries* constitute a real threat to the United States, or was this inflated by Washington? A secret State Department memorandum, “Guatemala and the Discussion of Communism at the Tenth Inter-American Conference,” suggests the latter.³ In this document Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American affairs John Moors Cabot prepared the ground for the ideological confrontation at the Caracas Conference. Incidentally, Cabot himself had mentioned earlier of his encounter with Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Under Secretary of State: “I went to Bedell Smith and said that I thought that a CIA-organized coup

¹ Bishop G. Berkeley's “prediction” on the Imperial destiny of the US reproduced in the *National Messenger*, Vol. I, No. 8, Georgetown, DC, October 31, 1817. For a view on the eccentricity of US expansionism see J.Fuentes-Mares (1980).

² George Kennan memorandum to Acheson, 29 March, 1950, in R.H.Immerman (1982:185,255).

³ NA 714.00/2-1054, US Government, Secret Office Memorandum (“Draft Memorandum on Handling of Guatemalan at Caracas”), (“Secret File”), February 10, 1954.

was the only solution [in Guatemala]. He nodded and smiled, and I got the impression that the plan was already underway.”⁴

The most important analysts discussed in this work and as accepted by central policy makers, as shown in the archival and primary data which I have systematised in this thesis, are unanimous that the Guatemalan regime was neither communist, nor a real danger to the US. This country was destined to be *turned* into a communist menace so that the US intelligence community could legitimise and persevere in its proposed stand.⁵ As established in the aforementioned “Office Memorandum” this aim was to be satisfied since:

“It would be difficult for the United States, the most powerful country in the hemisphere, *convincingly* to maintain that Guatemala constituted a *threat* to its political independence or territorial integrity, and to invoke the Rio Treaty on those grounds. Politically the United States should avoid appearing as leading a movement against any one of its small neighbours. Such appearance would inevitably cause opposition from a number of other Latin American countries. However, it seems clear that as a result of Guatemala’s own action at the [Caracas] Conference, or through other developments, a *specific* discussion of Communist penetration in Guatemala will take place.”⁶

- Guatemala going communist?

While in chapter 5 the ideological bases for anti-Sovietism have been established, in this chapter I focus on the *scale* of the Soviet problem, most particularly in the context of

⁴ Cabot’s remarks (September, 1953), are quoted in P.Glejeses (1991:243). Richard Feinberg has said that “an exaggerated sense of threat (and, sometimes, the need to extract resources from Congress) has led successive administrations to claim that US ‘credibility’ world-wide depended on honoring commitments to particular Third World regimes. The inherent importance of these countries to the United States was vastly inflated.” See R.E.Feinberg (1983:183). Bedell Smith had to accept, at Eisenhower’s insistence, this post in January 1953, and to “give up his intelligence” post as a CIA director to Allan Dulles. The move revealed how intimate the Eisenhower circle was. In 1955, as already stressed - perhaps as a reward for good service in the Guatemalan case - Smith was appointed to the Board of Directors of UFCO. See S.Jonas&D.Tobies (1974:62-63).

⁵ See DOSB, Vol. 31, No. 802, “The Communist Conspiracy in Guatemala,” (November 8, 1954), pp. 359-362. See chapters 4-5,7-8.

⁶ NA 714.00/2-1054, “Draft Memorandum on Handling of Guatemala at Caracas,” (February 10, 1954), op. cit., p. 1, (my emphasis). This declaration expressed the main strategy to be prepared for the Caracas Conference, see chapters-7-8.

Pan-Americanism. Was Mackinder's *Pivot Area* in fact, a consistent modern menace for US (territorial) security in Guatemala and its adjacent region? Was Guatemala and the rest of the region a site where, as Dulles said, "the Communists are trying to extend their form of despotism"? Or, as he informed the Cabinet in 1954, was it at all reasonable to try to "convince" Latin Americans that Communism was "an *international conspiracy*, not an indigenous movement," which intended, as he said to the Brazilian president, "to separate each American state from every other American state in order that politically and in a military sense we would not be as strong or as co-ordinated an enemy in the event of another war"?⁷ Was Guatemala the evidence of the above?

In the following lines I will refer to the aforementioned questions on the basis of, a) the supposed communist nature of the Guatemalan regime as accounted for by several analysts and policy makers, b) US domestic pressures, including an intricate extended network of powerful political economic interests, fighting (and also *constructing*) the communist threat, and c) the contradictions of the foreign policy-making process that Dulles confronted in the light of criticisms of retaliation and "roll back", stemming from inside the political establishment. Eventually the nature of US foreign policy as a whole reflected ominously in the nature of the Guatemalan outcome, especially in the light of the subsequent results that this policy - applied mechanically in the rest of the Latin American countries - had in the Inter-American theatre.

When addressing the problem of Communism in Latin America, Alexander argued that "the communist problem in Latin America is not primarily a military one. It is a problem of winning or keeping the *loyalty* of the peoples of Latin America for the democratic way of life and of fortifying them in their determination not to *succumb* to the blandishments of the Communists." This was in the same (anti-Communist) line as his concern to understand the countries of the continent.⁸ Since the coup in Guatemala ("the liberation," Dulles dixit) there

⁷ Telephone conversation, Dulles to Allen Dulles, February 25, 1954, and Cabinet meeting, February 26, 1954, see S.G.Rabe (1990b:161); FR, "Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Kubitschek, January 6, 1956," Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, 7 (FR) (1986), Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, p. 685-689. (my emphasis).

⁸ R.J.Alexander (1957:402), (my emphasis). This was to anticipate the Alliance for Progress (and Vietnamisation) policies later on (to secure "hearts and minds"). See chapter-5.

has been a recurrent polemic about the nature of Arbenz's regime. In effect, as commented in above chapters, there were those who considered Arbenz's as a communist administration which was uncomfortable for the US and a Soviet threat to the latter's security in Central America. On the other hand, an example of the polemical approach to the issue is Ronald Schneider's view - by no means a sympathetic one: his discussion of the nature and role of the Communists during the government of Arbenz is especially informative:

"the Communists ... impressed Arbenz as the most honest and trustworthy, as well as the hardest working of his supporters ... As the politicians of the other revolutionary parties lapsed into opportunism and concentrated upon getting the lion's share of the spoils of office, the Communists' stock rose in the President's eyes. The Communists worked hardest in support of the President's ... agrarian reform, and were able to provide the background studies, technical advice, mass support and enthusiasm which the project required."⁹

As Schneider's remarks continue a question follows: how is it that a scholar considered to be representing the interests of the US espionage establishment, also "discovers" some of the political (and also human) features that may have characterised both the Communists supporting Arbenz and the political rationale behind the Arbenz's government tactical alliance with them? He continues:

"The struggle for the enactment of the Agrarian Reform became a dividing line in the eyes of Arbenz; those who opposed it were his enemies and those whose support was only lukewarm dropped in his esteem ... In contrast to the other politicians, the Communists brought him answers and plans rather than problems and constant demands for the spoils of office."¹⁰

⁹ R.Schneider (1959:195,196). Some analysts refer to Schneider as a "Cold War scholar" and argue that, "the author was given free access to more than 50,000 internal documents of the Revolutionary governments in Guatemala, which had been gathered by the Guatemalan Committee of National Defense against Communism (*El Comité de Defensa Nacional contra el Comunismo* whose motto was the falangist: "Dios, Patria y Libertad" - "God, Fatherland and Liberty"), photographed by US officials, and brought to the United States 'for careful analysis' ... his book made no mention of US involvement in the "Liberation." When he wrote the book, Schneider was employed by the University of Pennsylvania's right wing Cold-War think tank, The Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI); in fact, the FPRI had gotten exclusive access to the documents and had placed them at his disposal. Arthur Whitaker, an associate of the FPRI, the 'Supervisor' of the study, and author of its 'Foreword', claimed that he had gotten the documents through 'State Department contacts'. It seems more likely, however, that his contacts were with the CIA, which was funding the FPRI (as was revealed in 1967)." See S.Jonas&D.Tobis (1974:83-84).

¹⁰ R.Schneider, (1959:196-197). Another work in the same vein as Schneider's is L.F.Bouchey&A.M.Piedra (1980).

A third way towards reform: new democracy vis à vis old capitalism, the problem of administration

In this context, thus, there was no confusion: Guatemalan Communists seemingly followed the way of reform for the sake of guaranteeing political stability. In effect, besides the commitment to Agrarian Reform and PGT's loyalty to Arbenz, the Communists' commitment with the stability of the process remained unscathed. Considering, on the one hand, the atmosphere of plots that surrounded the *October Revolutionaries* from the outset, and on the other, the somehow antidemocratic character of the Central American left, this was a remarkable achievement.¹¹ The leaders of the PGT were convinced that reformism could best facilitate the transition in Guatemala from feudalism to a modern capitalist economic system. In fact, their political position, though frequently subjected to questioning by some of the local elites and by US officialism, remained consistent with the capitalist foundations of the programme proclaimed by Arbenz since the day of his inauguration. In short, if Schneider's account was produced by request of the US government as S. Jonas argues, in order to generate anti-Communist consensus immediately after the coup, as testimony it is to the contrary. For instance when referring to the nature of the reformist process, Schneider mentions that the Communists

“... made it ... clear that ... in the present stage of Guatemalan economic and political development ... they would *support* a program designed to do away with the remains of feudalism and set Guatemala on the path of *capitalistic* development. The Communists felt that the President's project, under present conditions, was both the *most* that could be done and the *least* that should be done.”¹²

¹¹ To this innovative example on the part of this political force, there was a striking different response on the part of the opposition. This occurred from the beginning of the revolution. Immerman says that “despite Arévalo's conciliatory rhetoric and moderate policies, supporters of the traditional order in Guatemala perceived the revolutionary program as tantamount to class warfare. Arévalo had not been in power one month before he faced his first revolt, and by the time he ended his six-year term as president he had successfully survived over twenty-five attempted coups.” R.H.Immerman (1982:57). For his part Castillo-Armas (see chapter 4) had been imprisoned in 1950 as a result of an assault against a military base in which 17 men lost their lives. Arévalo assesses that “he [Castillo] managed to escape through a tunnel the other end of which, on the field next to the prison belonging to IRCA, was kept open.” J.J.Arévalo (1964:125).

¹² R.Schneider (1959:75), (my emphasis). Guatemala had a pre-capitalist mode of production which resembled in various respects a feudal (surplus value included) economic mode of production. See chapters-4-8.

Other analysts have attempted to reduce Washington's encouragement and support for dismantling the Guatemalan regime to the question of economic interest.¹³ A more consistent approach, which is shared in this work, argues that neither the economic interest, nor the alleged (form of) *presence* of Soviet Communism can account for the US reaction against Arbenz. Cole Blasier's interpretation, for instance, is that there was no convincing evidence for the existence of Communism infiltration in Arbenz's government:

"for example, none of the Arbenz cabinet ministers were Communists ... There is no question that the Soviet Union could have been in contact with the Arbenz government through its own or East European government agents, unmonitored. I have however, found no convincing evidence of direct Soviet contact."¹⁴

For his part Rabe explores the systemic circumstances that contradicted the US official version of the Guatemalan events. He argues that,

"in any event, what is remarkable is that the [Eisenhower] administration prepared and executed a *golpe de estado*, a coup, when it knew its case against Arbenz was based on 'circumstantial' evidence. On 11 May 1954 Dulles admitted to the Brazilian ambassador that it would be '*impossible to produce evidence* clearly tying the Guatemalan Government to Moscow; that the decision must be a political one and based on our deep conviction that such a tie must exist.' In early June, the Secretary of State pleaded with the US Embassy in Honduras to produce evidence linking strikes against United Fruit in that country to agitation by Guatemalan Communists, the embassy gloomily reported 'facts few, convicting and convincing evidence scarce.' After the *golpe*, intelligence agents combed through the Guatemalan army; but a year later, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence, W. Park Armstrong informed [J.F.]Dulles that 'nothing conclusive' had been found linking Guatemalan Communists with Moscow."¹⁵

Analyst of Communism, Raymond Carr, considered that "although the Communists could control hitherto amorphous labour movements and popular parties, they could not make

¹³ Among these authors, see C.Bergquist (1996); and V.Perlo (1957).

¹⁴ See C.Blasier (1976:156,158).

¹⁵ S.Rabe (1988:57), (his emphasis; my underlying). Armstrong is originally quoted in R.Immerman (1982:185).

them fight for a Communist-controlled state.”¹⁶ Carr’s is accurate insofar as excepting only Cuba from 1959 and to some extent Chile 1970-1973, no Latin American state, least of all the Guatemalan, had been able or willing to organise a Communist regime, not to mention to erect a Soviet-like state.¹⁷

With his own account of the communist *presence* in the government, Schneider himself contributed to dismantling the myth pre-fabricated by the Eisenhower team which insisted on linking some members of the Arbenz government to Moscow. Schneider says in this respect, that “almost without exception [the Guatemalan Communists were] indigenous to the area and are Mexico-trained rather than Moscow-trained, although some have visited the Soviet orbit and may have received brief instruction there.”¹⁸

In a similar vein Rabe concurs with Blasier. He says that Arbenz had neither an institutional commitment with the Communists, nor any intention to involve them in state policies, apart from that of organising the agrarian reform. Arbenz, Rabe argues,

“did not appoint any Communists to his Cabinet, and he did not permit Communists in key departments such as the military, the police, and the foreign ministry. Furthermore, Guatemala did not exchange diplomatic representatives with the Soviet Union, and both Arévalo, and Arbenz consistently supported US positions at the United Nations on issues such as the Korean conflict. Moreover, the government retained US military missions. And even with the expropriation of United Fruit’s ... lands, the Guatemalan economy remained tied to the United States: Guatemala sent over 80 percent of its exports to the north.”¹⁹

Dulles provided his own account of Communist penetration in the region as early as 1950: “Soviet Communism [he said] has not ... made any major effort in Latin America, except

¹⁶ See R.Carr (1967:164).

¹⁷ See N.Miller (1989).

¹⁸ R.Schneider (1959:197 and chapter-8).

¹⁹ S.G.Rabe (1988:47); see also S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:56-63).

in the normal way of spreading propaganda and helping to invigorate the local Communist parties.”²⁰

Richard Adams, on the one hand, argues that the lack of bureaucratic experience from the beginning of the *October Revolution* was a serious limitation when undertaking the broad series of governmental and national reforms (especially the agrarian reform) that were to be introduced. The absence of a professional class of bureaucrats resulting from authoritarian times meant that Arévalo and Arbenz became pioneer statesmen in the art of government. This required an independent modern conception of politics and administration, two functions in itself both highly complicated in a country with no democratic experience and a sign of insubordination in the face of US priorities. On the other hand, Adams says that “the issue of Communism in Guatemala” deserved a special and a direct treatment in any understanding of the developments in this country for it has been “the specific issue over which the United States has argued its right to internal intervention in the affairs of other countries.”²¹ In the light of this administrative naiveté, however, this author ponders that

“The leaders in the new government were unquestionable Guatemalans, many of whom had been in exile. Of these, some returned to the country with convictions about socialism and Communism. It would be difficult to demonstrate, however, that many were more concerned with the flowering of socialism than with the flowering of Guatemala. For the most part, there was a generalized revolutionary, progressive interest that can best be characterized as nationalistic.”²²

- Forgetting the past and managing the present

Despite the lack of objective evidence of Communism in Guatemala (accepted by Dulles himself) President Eisenhower decided to accept the inheritance of Truman. Even before the Eisenhower administration started complaining about Guatemala going Communist, there were clandestine efforts to get rid of what was considered a bad example for the rest of the Latin

²⁰ J.F.Dulles (1950:150). In this assessment, Dulles, perhaps unwittingly, contradicts some of his subsequent arguments. But his early judgement on this issue concurs with the contention stressed in this work.

²¹ R.N.Adams (1970:185).

²² Ibid:185.

American countries. From the beginning of the 1950s, Truman's officials, convinced that the situation in Guatemala necessitated greater involvement, attempted to "establish some means by which, without 'risking improper identification, even by implication, with any movements in Guatemala against Arbenz,' they could better control the direction of the government."²³

Thus, a rehearsal of what was to be *Pbsuccess* was implemented.²⁴ Moreover, in the summer of 1952 President Truman discussed and approved a plan developed by CIA director Walter Bedell Smith to foment resistance against the *October Revolution*: the US would clandestinely arm Anti-Arbenz Guatemalans, using Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza as a conduit.²⁵ And yet, despite this attempted plotting, the Truman administration did not try, in the end, to overthrow Arbenz. Furthermore, according to first-hand testimonies collected by Rabe, Dean Acheson and his State Department officials, opposed intervention "and were able to waylay whatever plans existed to arm rebels."²⁶

Also, as stressed above, there was no official evidence on the part of the Eisenhower administration to make the point of Soviet penetration in Guatemala. Hence the potentially weak US rationale in the argumentation for the 'soldier of fortune' adventure that took place in the summer of 1954.²⁷ There are various examples in this regard. For instance, President Eisenhower insisted in following the path of accusation against Guatemala when, in January 1954 he informed Guillermo Toriello at the time Guatemalan Ambassador to Washington that, because the United States was "determined to block the international communist conspiracy," he "couldn't help a government which was openly playing ball with Communists."²⁸ In his memoirs, Eisenhower's opinion goes that, "from March to May, 1954, the agents of international Communism in Guatemala continued their efforts to penetrate and subvert their

²³ R.H.Immerman (1982:109).

²⁴ See chapter-4.

²⁵ R.I.Immerman (1982:118-122); S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:102).

²⁶ S.G.Rabe (1988:48,49).

²⁷ See G.Toriello (1955:chapters-3-6); and G.Selser (1961).

²⁸ S.G.Rabe (1988:47).

neighbouring Central American states, using consular agents for their political purposes and fomenting political assassinations and strikes.”²⁹ Rabe recounts that, the Guatemalans “replied” to the accusations, that Guatemala “was a democratic country” and

“that Communists could be controlled best in the open, and that their reforms, like the redistribution of land, would undermine the appeal of Communism. As they saw it, the key issue between the United States and Guatemala was not Communism but the recalcitrance of United Fruit. The Eisenhower administration rejected these explanations, deciding that ... Arbenz was either a Communist ‘dupe’ or worse. As ... Peurifoy put it, after his first conversation with Arbenz, ‘if the president is not a Communist he will certainly do until one comes along’ ... He had all the earmarks.”³⁰

Furthermore, according to Toriello who provided his own testimony of the meeting of 16 January, 1954, Eisenhower was “although naive, understanding on the Guatemalan situation.” Especially so when he informed the surprised Eisenhower, that “Dulles and Cabot, who was present in the interview,” were both shareholders of UFCO.³¹ Consequently in the eyes of foreign policy operators such as Peurifoy, Arbenz *had* eventually to be presented as a Communist at any cost. An example of the confusion on alleged Sovietism and/or Communism dominating Guatemalan life can be observed in the following declaration of Peurifoy before the aforementioned Congressional Subcommittee on Latin America concerning the communist penetration during the Arbenz’s years. Contrasted with the aforementioned Dulles’s acceptance of the ungrounded accusations of Communism made against Arbenz, the statement by Peurifoy is also one more in the collection of flamboyant (and contradictory) declarations on the subject:

“It is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that the purpose of your hearings is to determine: 1. Whether or not the government of President Arbenz was controlled and dominated by Communists; 2. Whether or not the Communists who dominated Guatemala were in turn directed from the Kremlin; 3. Whether or not the

²⁹ D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:424). For more on Guatemala in these memoirs, see *ibid*:425-427.

³⁰ S.G.Rabe (1988:47). Peurifoy’s utterance is literal, including the last phrase which can be found in, US Congress, Subcommittee on Latin America of the Select Committee on Communist Aggression, *Ninth Interim Report of Hearings: Communist Aggression in Latin America* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, October 8, 1954), p. 12. In the light of this atmosphere of intimidation it is relevant to ask whether there was anything the Arbenz government could have done (short of resigning) that would have stopped US intervention? Perhaps there was one thing: that Arbenz had not existed as a reformer in the first place.

³¹ G.Toriello (1955:80-84).

Communists from Guatemala actively intervened in the internal affairs of neighbouring Latin American republics; 4. Whether or not this Communist conspiracy which centered in Guatemala represented a menace to the security of the United States. My answer to all four of those questions is an unequivocal 'yes'.³²

The Ambassador had to prove his point. Not satisfied with this baroque declaration, Peurifoy continued in the following dramatic terms which are contradicted by the evidence of subsequent scholarship and presented throughout this chapter:

“The Arbenz government, beyond any question, was controlled and dominated by Communists. Those Communists were directed from Moscow. The Guatemalan government and the Communist leaders of that country did continuously and actively intervene in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries in an effort to create disorder and overthrow established governments. And the Communist conspiracy in Guatemala did represent a *very serious* menace to the security of the United States.”³³

In this way an ideological issue was turned into a concrete case by the US state machinery. Accordingly, it is important to argue that Guatemala was one more among many cases to come, where domestic events later blamed by the US as the reasons for carrying out intervention, were the result of a persistent construction of reality (see the following chapter). This results from Washington's pressure to get rid of independent voices carrying on policies for the establishment of economic conditions for long-run development and for the institutional basis for political progress.

Without being quite aware of this, Arbenz's policies nourished, challenged, and eventually strengthened (though exposing it) the US bipolar rationale whose purpose was to set an example to the widespread independent national spirit of the 1950s in the continent in the name of anti-Soviet Communism.³⁴ For instance, by the time of the confrontation between the

³² US Congress, Subcommittee on Latin America of the House Select Committee on Communist Aggression, (Peurifoy testimony), op. cit., pp. 12-13. Cited also in D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:422-423). For an alternative full version of this testimony consult, DOSB, “The Communist Conspiracy in Guatemala”, Vol. 31, No. 802, (November 8, 1954), pp. 690-696.

³³ See, D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:423), (my emphasis).

³⁴ See L.Bethell&I.Roxborough (1992:1-32).

State Department-UFCO and Arbenz the former had made important allies within Guatemala which eventually would prove useful for the purposes of the *coup d' etat*. At the same time Arbenz's agrarian reform had already polarised public opinion and shattered the Revolutionary coalition of 1944. However, as already suggested in this thesis, the most important features of this dispute pointed to a different field of Guatemalan public life - the ideological and not the economic sphere. And this is confirmed interestingly by the following declaration by Dulles:

“if the United Fruit matter were settled, if they gave a gold piece for every banana, the problem would remain just as it is today as far as the presence of Communist infiltration in Guatemala is concerned. That is the problem, not the United Fruit Company.”³⁵

- The (non secular) limits of the (political) operator: Dulles

On the question of the overestimation of the Soviet threat by the Dulles-Eisenhower administration, Rabe's analysis of Dulles's diplomacy summarises its results as a “distorted perception of the Soviet Union, a nuclear arms race, and, as in Vietnam, ominous commitments around the world.”³⁶ Still, the above statement by Dulles should not be surprising: it reflected a paradigmatic ideological stand. If it is considered to be worth of mention in this thesis, this is because it was quite influential in the decisions taken regarding Guatemala. As Hoopes put it when studying Dulles's tactical mind in his managing of international affairs:

“An impressive, headstrong man ... Dulles was far [more] a tactician than a systematic strategist and planner ... [He] more substantially misperceived (or misrepresented) [reality] ... He resisted any earnest search for accommodation, for his goal was not really coexistence based on calculated compromise and a balance of force; it was superiority and mastery based on a vague expectation that the West would maintain a permanent power preponderance.”³⁷

³⁵ DOSB, “US Policy in Guatemala,” (news conference statement by John Foster Dulles on 8 June, 1954), Vol. 30, No. 782, June 21, 1954, p. 951. Also in United States Department of State, *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955*, Basic documents, I, p. 1310.

³⁶ S.G.Rabe (1988:1).

³⁷ T.Hoopes (1973-1974:170,172,173).

At the same time Dulles's extreme anti-Communist background developed from deep-seated religious (almost theological), philosophical and intellectual beliefs, as well as from profound concern for the political impact of McCarthyism. As the son of a Presbyterian minister and former leader of the Council of Churches,³⁸ he inherited something of the Good Shepherd that has characterised most US foreign policy makers when it has come to turning religious convictions into political norms. Dulles viewed the Cold War as a confrontation between two antithetical universal faiths (Christianity against atheism), which converged with his sincere faith in the capitalist system: religion and political economy were constant themes for the politician and foreign policy operator who started his professional career as a big business lawyer. Next to his assessment of the state of politics at the international level, at the global level, when making considerations about Communist adversaries, Dulles had, according to West German Ambassador Albrecht von Kessel, one single belief: "that Bolshevism was a product of the Devil and that God would wear out the Bolsheviks in the long run."³⁹

In an address at the First Presbyterian Church in New York, in August, 1949, when talking about a "just and durable peace," Dulles explained where in his conception the contrast between the "Western democracies" and other regions of the world was to be found, namely, "*in the belief that there is a God.*" Arguing that "wherever these elementary truths [God as the author of a moral law] are widely rejected, there is both spiritual and social disorder."⁴⁰ In order to illustrate the origins of this "social disorder", Dulles explained it in the following way:

"That fact is illustrated by fascism and Communism. These are, in the main, atheistic and antireligious creeds. Orthodox Communists believe that there is neither God nor moral law, that there is no such thing as universal and equal justice, and the human beings are *without soul* or sacred personality ... Communists are, of course, entitled to have their own belief as to what is best for men ... But since there is God, since there is a moral law, since human

³⁸ H.P. Van Dusen, inspired by the Platonic ideal state, presents a biographical sketch of Dulles. But first he states that "statesmen should be philosophers" and "philosophers, statesmen." Van Dusen, perhaps a bit confused over Dulles's dubious secularism embracing state service, wrote: "Christianity envisions a loftier and more demanding conception of public leadership: the minister of state - *a minister of Christ in his sacred calling*. It is difficult to name anyone in our day who has more fully discharged that high vocation [referring to Dulles]." H.P. Van Dusen (1960:xiv), (my emphasis).

³⁹ Quoted in T. Hoopes (1973-1974:173).

⁴⁰ H.P. Van Dusen (1960:7).

personality is sacred, no human rulers can rightly use *ruthless* and *violent* methods and pitilessly crush all within their power who do not conform to their particular dictation.”⁴¹

And in making explicit the target of these reflections provided by the statesman turned into a religious man, Dulles targeted against Communism and Fascism indistinctly which he considered as “hateful”, “... because of the consequences of their *godlessness* [thus], it is equally true that they can be successfully resisted only by societies imbued with strong spiritual convictions.”⁴² He referred to the supremacy of Western societies, particularly to the Western democracies which “have had great prestige and authority in the world ... because their practices developed under the dominating influence of religious beliefs.”⁴³ These societies had not been challenged before making it possible that

“for one thousand years Western civilisation grew in power and influence and was not seriously challenged. There was such a challenge by Islam one thousand years ago, and now we have the challenge of Soviet Communism. Whether or not we peacefully surmount the present challenge depends on basic things and most of all on whether our people love the Lord their God and *their neighbours*, and act accordingly.”⁴⁴

At this point the non-secular-religious circle reached its time of maturity: Dulles’s ideology contained the right quota of religious faith in American-like politics and economics; the necessary degree of anti-Sovietism which eventually turned anti-Communism; and the deep conviction that these two features were only going to be plausible in that revolutionary change which he was going to understand as an unnatural “social disorder” (wherever it was, but the closer the more dangerous) and that by definition was being directed against the “*American* interest,” was to be stopped and discouraged from its very roots. By the end of the Second World War, around the same time of his address to the Presbyterians, Dulles

⁴¹ Ibid:7-8, (my italics). On Dulles’s analogy between Fascism and Communism see chapter-5. Note the resemblance with Nixon’s views on the matter, see above chapter-5.

⁴² H.P.Van Dusen (1960:8), (my italics).

⁴³ Ibid:9.

⁴⁴ Ibid:9, (my italics).

“had concluded that there could be *no reasonable* compromise with the Soviet objective of world domination and ... he was particularly sensitive to the potential threat in Latin America ... Even after Stalin died in 1953 and his immediate successor expressed an interest in peaceful coexistence, Dulles remained girded for a permanent global struggle.”⁴⁵

- Targeting Guatemala: against moderation and economic concerns

Incidentally, that same year several signs of conciliation had started to be noticeable in Moscow, as the account of Charles Bohlen, US Ambassador in Moscow reflected. Hoopes makes a recollection of Bohlen’s account in the following terms: “[Bohlen] believed in retrospect that the spring of 1953 had presented a rare opportunity for Western Diplomacy. There were serious rumours in Moscow that the Russians were considering ‘the possibility of giving up East Germany’.”⁴⁶ Eisenhower had recognised these signs of conciliation in a speech (a plea for peace for the majority of people) he made on April 16 before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in which he suggested that “negotiations” should “proceed.” In this speech he took note of Stalin’s death and appealed to the Soviets for a mutual reduction of strategic nuclear arms suggesting that, “we could proceed concurrently and constructively with the next great work - the reduction of the burden of armaments now weighing upon the world.”⁴⁷

Meanwhile, Dulles remained irrevocably against any moderate arrangement. In an extraordinary formulation about Eisenhower’s moderate speech, which perhaps defined completely the course of the Cold War years, Dulles gave a clear signal that, “only a policy of pressure had made the President’s speech possible, and that a policy of pressure would continue.”⁴⁸ In this light, Dulles’s suggestion was that such a “plea for peace,” however, “might have been interpreted as a sign of weakness or a mere gesture of sentimentality ... it was first

⁴⁵ R.H.Immerman (1982:17), (my underlying).

⁴⁶ Quoted by T.Hoopes (1973-1974:167).

⁴⁷ D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:144-145).

⁴⁸ T.Hoopes (1973-1974:167).

necessary to demonstrate the will and capacity to develop foreign policies so firm, so fair, so just that Soviet leaders might find it expedient to live with these policies rather than to live against them.”⁴⁹ On this feature of Dulles’s political style, Townsend Hoopes, went further when he claimed that Dulles, “seemed to require temperamentally a form of Communist opposition whose goal was no less than the total conquest of the world in the most literal and physical sense.”⁵⁰

In his own way, (at least as far as Central America is concerned) Eisenhower shared the essential creed of Dulles and also in the same fashion he applied mechanically (and wrongly) the principles of “roll back” in the region. His belief that “surprise has always been one of the most important factors in achieving victory”,⁵¹ surely stemmed from his times as a military man and it represented a very useful disciplinary rule when it came to the launching of certain policies in the international arena. No doubt clandestine measures were in his plans when he considered a solution to settle the Guatemalan problem. When evaluating it, according to his memoirs, Eisenhower considered that

“something had to be done quickly [to counteract] communist actions [in Guatemala]. The first task was to marshal and crystallise Latin American public opinion on the issue. The opportunity presented itself in at the Tenth Inter-American Conference of the Organization of American States ... At that meeting the United States urged the adoption of a joint condemnation of Communism, contending vigorously that it should not be permitted to control any state in the Western Hemisphere.”⁵²

In the same vein Eisenhower confessed, as accounted by Ambrose, that his real concern was actually “not the loss of American profits in Guatemala but rather the loss of *all* Central America.”⁵³ Ambrose adds:

⁴⁹ Ibid:167. On this historic event and Eisenhower’s recollections of Dulles’s response, see also D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:143-150).

⁵⁰ T.Hoopes (1973-1974:166).

⁵¹ “Excerpts from a letter to Winston Churchill,” (January 25, 1955). In D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:609).

⁵² Ibid:423.

⁵³ S.Ambrose (1984:197), (my emphasis).

“In Eisenhower’s nightmare, the dominoes would fall in both directions, to the South of Guatemala toward Panama, endangering the Canal Zone, and to the North bringing Communism to the Rio Grande. ‘My God,’ Eisenhower told his Cabinet, ‘just think what it would mean to us if Mexico went Communist!’ He shook his head at the thought of that long, unguarded border, and all those Mexican Communists to the South of it. To prevent the dominoes from falling, he was prepared to, and did, take great risks over tiny Guatemala.”⁵⁴

From his own evaluation, Eisenhower perhaps also reckoned that Communism did not present a real threat to US security in Central America. Why, then, the strong anti-Communist argument in order to carry out policies of intervention in Guatemala? One possible answer is that there were indeed in both Eisenhower’s and Dulles’s minds strong doctrinaire reasons for putting forward the anti-Communist argument. Besides, given the political climate, it was extremely fashionable at that time (so the argument could be deployed with impunity) to pay tribute to anti-Communism as the most respectable principle of any foreign policy; thus, it was not a surprising outcome: it was a *must*. In other words, launching *the policy of non-policy* in “our little region over here which never has bothered anybody” was sanctioned by the possibility of viewing it as an implicit component of the American quest, so that it took on a plausibility and naturalness (despite its irrationality).

An alternative explanation is that, in the light of anti-Americanism in Latin America, the economic argument behind US involvement could not be produced easily or often. One of the reasons being that it was too obvious to the eyes of foreign and domestic observers that the open defence of US economic private interest in the region placed the US, within the Central American context, in an outrageous position given the unrestrained Capitalism represented by most US investors, particularly UFCO. Thus, the need to disguise the national security policy by making use of both an anti-Soviet and an anti-Communist discourse. Since the latter was a legitimate political weapon, it did not result difficult to impose the argument of the defence of the “continental integrity” against Communism. This represented a continuity of the spirit prevalent from the times of the Manifest Destiny. Hence there was no reason for consternation

⁵⁴ Ibid:197.

when the resulting interventionist outcome came as a result.⁵⁵ Accordingly, and considering UFCO's issue

“it would be greatly oversimplifying to ascribe Washington's course solely to protection of the company's interests. The Cold War and its domestic reflection, McCarthyism, were then at their most intense period and were a major factor in the determination of that course. The relationship would appear to have been reciprocal. Whereas the Cold War and anti-Communist hysteria provided the public cover for government action on behalf of the company, United Fruit personnel facilitated the CIA's Cold War task of subverting the Arbenz government.”⁵⁶

- UFCO or 'Communism': a state dilemma for the State Department

As mentioned above, UFCO had important allies inside Guatemala, among whom the hard-liners within the Army were outstanding. At the same time the polarisation of public opinion had started to follow its own dangerous course. The conflict of interests present in the Guatemalan case from the outset of the crisis, between the defence of the particular interests of UFCO and the defence of the general interests of the Eisenhower administration (represented by Secretary Dulles), had been already a matter of polemic.

On the one hand, the Dulles's brothers and the US ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge were accused by both the media and the Guatemalan government of representing, as corporate lawyers with S&C (the law firm representing UFCO), the interests of the company. On the other, there was a refusal to accept these charges by the US officials. Although there is evidence to show that these high-ranking government officials were indirectly

⁵⁵ By stating the above I am not accepting the 'economic argument'. Putting forward the economic argument was, perhaps, problematic for the US. But the absence of this argument in the realm of Realpolitik was, ultimately, useful for the representational dimension of Cold War foreign policy discourse. In the following two chapters I shall show, when reviewing the original official documents, the means and methods resorted to by policy makers to carry out regional power politics.

⁵⁶ M.Gordon (1971:154-155).

representing economic interests, "no doubt ... they were wiser than to risk their reputations and the verdict of history on behalf of the United Fruit profits."⁵⁷

This is why the *idea* of a threat against Guatemala had to be constructed without recognising any immediate economic reasons for the crisis, and indeed in denial of such reasons. However, against the calculations of the State Department the allegations presented against the US officials in charge of designing the policy in Guatemala were a matter of concern in Washington after the story was published by the Mexican and the Guatemalan press under the headline, "Dulles is one of the main shareholders of UFCO." In these press reports Alfonso Bauer Paiz, former Minister of Economy and Labour, and former President of the National Agrarian Bank, stated that

"during my time as Minister of Economy and Labour I received a confidential document of June 20, 1950 ... where it can be proved that ... Mr. Foster Dulles belongs to the financial circuits of the United Fruit Company ... In one of the parts of the document the following is stated: 'both IRCA and UFCO had as corporate lawyers two of the most prestigious firms in the United States: ... Davis, Polk, Wardwell & Kendal and Sullivan and Cronwell'. To the latter belongs the influential Republican politician, until now special advisor of the State Department, John Foster Dulles."⁵⁸

Dulles was, thus, at the centre of the conflict of interests controversy. The State Department had to respond even at the expense of exposing the contradiction between economic determinism and economic reasons (which were subsumed by ideology). Aware of the potential damage that these allegations posed to the Guatemalan policy, a plausible way to refute the accusations against Dulles was conceived in the following suggestive manner (later on proved

⁵⁷ See C.Blasier (1976:166). In June, 1954 Cabot Lodge, the US ambassador, rejected the Guatemalan plea to the UN to mediate in the aggression arguing that the conflict was "a struggle of Guatemalans against Guatemalans." He is also remembered as saying that "the man from the North always imposes his will on the man of the tropics."! See L.Cardozza y Aragón (1956:143).

⁵⁸ See El Imparcial, January, 23, 1954. On the same story and the polemic about it, see also Diario del Pueblo, January 23, 1954 (front page), Nuestro Diario, January, 23, 1954, Tribuna Popular, January 23, 1954 and Diario de Centro America, January 23, 1954. Apart from El Imparcial, the rest of these papers are Guatemalans. At the initiative of New York governor and former candidate for the White House, Thomas Dewey, Dulles became Senator on July 8, 1949. That same day he resigned to S&C putting an end to his law career and beginning his political adventure. See T.Hoopes (1974:75-76).

to be a very effective one) by William L. Krieg, Peurifoy's deputy at the US embassy in Guatemala. In a "confidential" dispatch sent to his boss he said:

"We realize the disadvantages of becoming engaged in a polemic regarding Mr. Dulles's past affiliations. The circumstance that S&C are the attorneys for the IRCA could be used by the Guatemalans to *confuse* the issue. Nevertheless, if it is deemed advisable to attempt to clarify the matter, we will be glad to arrange suitable publicity at this end. Or you may prefer to wait until the Caracas meeting and, if the charge is raised there by the Guatemalans, refute it effectively before the assembled representatives of the American Republics."⁵⁹

- Big business in the US and power politics in Guatemala: Eisenhower concedes

UFCO's connections within the Eisenhower White House cannot be ignored in the context of this thesis. Moreover, as Dulles's case showed, they serve as examples of both the direct links and ideological affinities that existed between (and among) many government and company officials. At the time, there was no reason to think that there should be a divorce between multinational corporation business' and state interest. Rather the contrary, this was a natural outcome of the way capitalist development ought to occur. In fact, Dulles's highly spirited speeches indicated that a link between freedom, Christianity, free market, and democracy as he understood them, was permissible: these were, of course, governmental aims which might be (and were) achieved in association with private entrepreneurial groups. Consequently, post-war capitalism was not conceived without the tactical support of central government. In this respect Jonas argues that

"In defining and delimiting 'interests', we start from the premise that, in general, the ruling class in the United States acts *as a class* in making foreign policy, to preserve the world-wide capitalist system and US hegemony within that system. But within that class, there are specific economic interests which coalesce around *financial groups*. Historically, these groups - and the control over state power in the US - have been concentrated on the East Coast, particularly on Wall Street (The Rockefeller-Chase Manhattan-Chemical Bank

⁵⁹ NSA, UFCO/65, William L. Krieg, The Foreign Service of the United States of America, American Embassy, Guatemala, January 26, 1954, p. 1, (my emphasis). All the official efforts in this regard had already started to point to the Caracas Conference as the regional front for the legitimisation of the Guatemalan policy.

Group, the First National City Bank Group, The Morgan Group, The Boston Group).”⁶⁰

According to Victor Perlo, the so called Eastern Group formed a “financial, or East Coast oligarchy”, exercising political power mainly through the state apparatus. The Eastern Group however was not alone in this. It had to make alliances with other smaller or secondary financial groups whose origins mainly came from the Midwest and the South and the Southwest (of this, the electronics, aerospace, defence-related and independent oil producers “Sunbelt” industrial groups from Texas, Southern California, and Florida were crucially important). These alliances were perhaps clearly reflected in the appointment of Richard Nixon as Eisenhower’s vice-president. However, the Eisenhower Administration was dominated by the interests of the financial oligarchy, and more specifically by the Rockefeller Group, the head of the Eastern Group whose latest leader and great admirer of Latin America assets (especially the Venezuelan oil), Nelson Rockefeller, became Nixon’s sponsor and vice-president.⁶¹

These alliances were charted by Perlo in his book. In it he draws out the tactical relations that the members of the NSC had with powerful economic interests. Of the entire group, six out of the total of its members were connected with the Rockefeller Group: the two Dulles’s brothers (lawyers, advisors to S&C, UFCO’s law firm (associated with Rockefeller interests), and which in turn had connections with the Chase Manhattan Bank, thus with the Rockefeller Brothers, Inc., and Secretary of State, and CIA Director respectively), Lewis L. Strauss (Financier, self-made millionaire, and Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission), Harold Stassen (Politician and Mutual Security Director - in charge of foreign-aid programs), C.D. Jackson (Financier, *Time-Life*, and presidential speech writer), Percival F. Brundage (Accountant and Director of the Bureau of the Budget). One of them (Jackson) had links with the Morgan Group, the Dulles’s brothers were associated also with the National City Group, and finally, there is Eisenhower, to whom Perlo attributes connection with “all major groups.”⁶²

⁶⁰ S.Jonas&D.Tobies (1974:65) (emphasis in the original).

⁶¹ See V.Perlo (1957:288,306ff).

⁶² See *ibid*:156,289; and S.E.Ambrose (1984:25,38,132).

- The “La Frutera” Connection

Although in a more specific sphere of attention, there was the link between the economic and the political interests within UFCO. Together with Foster Dulles, who joined S&C in 1911 through the intervention of his grandfather, former Secretary of state, William Foster, other members of the family were also part of the board of directors of UFCO. For instance, John Foster’s brother and Director of Eisenhower’s and Kennedy’s CIA, Allen Dulles, John Cabot, Henry’s brother, who became assistant secretary of state for Inter-American affairs in 1953 and had served earlier as Ambassador to Guatemala, held a substantial amount of stock in United Fruit.⁶³

The list of officials with UFCO connections goes on. Other members of the government with substantial interests in UFCO included Sinclair Weeks, the Secretary of Commerce, while General Robert Cutler, first special assistant to the President for national security affairs and thus head of its planning board, had been chairman of the company’s transfer bank, Old Colony Trust, which also made him chairman of United Fruit. Former High Commissioner of Germany John J. McCloy, Eisenhower’s close friend who as president of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development had ordered the study of Guatemala’s agrarian difficulties, was a United Fruit director. Robert Hill Ambassador to Costa Rica, was a member of the diplomatic team that participated in *Pbsuccess*. Hill was a former vice-president of W.R. Grace&Company, a US food and agribusiness multinational with large interests in Guatemala, and later became director of UFCO. Ann Whitman, Eisenhower’s personal secretary, was the former wife of UFCO’s director and then vice-president for public relations, Edward Whitman. On the Council on Foreign Relations, Whitney H. Shephardson was an IRCA officer, and Robert Lehman served on the UFCO board. Lehman, who was a high-ranking investment banker, was related by marriage to Frank Altschul, the Council’s secretary, who was responsible

⁶³ Schlesinger and Kinzer reproduce congressional data and say that Senator Henry Cabot Lodge denounced from the Senate the Labour Code “for discriminating against United Fruit.” Cabot Lodge, whose family owned stock in UFCO, strode onto the Senate floor in 1949, (“he repeated his castigation of Guatemala in 1954 as the US ambassador to the United Nations”). S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:83-84). See above and chapter-8.

for the influential National Planning Association report that contended that the Communists were in complete control of Guatemala. And finally General Walter Bedell Smith became a director in 1955, immediately after resigning from the government where he had been under-secretary of State, and briefly Director of the CIA. Smith had served as an Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1946 to 1949, a strange choice: Smith was so anti-Communist that he is said to have warned Eisenhower that Nelson Rockefeller was a Communist.⁶⁴ In short, a team of big political personalities that, from the ranks of government, defended, in the name of the republic's national security, the right to neutralise (by means of force) the Guatemalan communist menace.

- A Policy of Boldness: retaliation, roll back and the disagreements

Within the general Cold War consensus, there were, however, certain differences over foreign policy in the Eisenhower administration, “with Dulles, Nixon, and the military men on the more aggressive side.”⁶⁵ Perlo quotes the well known *New York Times* columnist James Reston, who in August 1955, described how Dulles's “control of foreign policy [had] been almost complete. But at critical points, usually when he seemed to be veering close to war with the Communists, the President [has] intervened and imposed a more moderate line.”⁶⁶ If Dulles was the hard-liner in the foreign policy making process, there also was President Eisenhower whose more moderate rhetoric allowed him to command foreign policy decisions. This feature obliterates the myth of Eisenhower as “an ineffectual leader who left the conduct of foreign policy to his militantly anti-Communist secretary of State.”⁶⁷ Nevertheless, it must be noted, as an analysis of foreign policy making outcomes makes clear, that these differences of emphasis were, in the end, subordinated to the general consensus over the manner of execution of foreign policy. This was recognised by Dulles himself in

⁶⁴ See S.Jonas&D.Tobies (ed) (1974:59-66); R.H.Immerman (1982:124,125); P.Glejeses (1991:361-366); S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:chapter-5). See also S.Ambrose (1984:56).

⁶⁵ V.Perlo (1957:310,313).

⁶⁶ Ibid:313.

⁶⁷ S.G Rabe (1988:1).

1954 in a speech made before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. In his description of the “Evolution of Foreign Policy” he evaluates the state of international politics region by region, excluding only Latin America.⁶⁸ In this speech after praising the US stand against Communism as the “acts of a nation which saw the danger of Soviet Communism; which realised that its own safety was tied up with that of others; which was capable of responding boldly and promptly to emergencies [he added significantly] Also, we can pay tribute to congressional bipartisanship which puts the nation above politics.”⁶⁹

Coincidentally bipartisanship had its importance in that congressional consensus was particularly significant because it was a conservative Congress that Dulles and Eisenhower had to deal with. Poole says, in this regard, that “in retrospect, it seems plain that he was positioning himself as Ike’s [Eisenhower] indispensable aide in dealing with a conservative Congress. [However] On broad policy, he invariably deferred to the president.”⁷⁰

The pertinence of selecting the “liberation” (“roll back”) motto on behalf of Eisenhower had an effect in getting Dulles the Republican conservatives support to be nominated as Secretary of State.⁷¹ He lobbied for that position during Eisenhower’s campaign and wrote an extremely ideological article, *A Policy of Boldness*, published in Life in 1952, which impressed Eisenhower. Presented as a response to what he considered to be Truman’s “inadequate” containment policy, the article argued that in dealing with the Soviet threat, “there was a better way ... a strictly military one,” in order to show that the “free should not be numbed by the sight of this vast graveyard of human liberties. It is the despots who should feel haunted. They, not we, should fear the future.”⁷²

⁶⁸ In his book *War or Peace*, Dulles dedicates only one page and a half to Latin America. He does so, in spite of his own consideration that, “South America has, for the time being, been treated as a secondary theatre.” See J.F.Dulles (1950:150-151).

⁶⁹ DOSB, “The Evolution of Foreign Policy,” (address by Secretary Dulles), Vol. 30, No. 761, January, 25, 1954, p. 107.

⁷⁰ P.A.Poole (1981:65).

⁷¹ Ibid:67.

⁷² J.F.Dulles (1952:64,66).

Addressing the question: “How do we defend freedom?”, Dulles suggested: “*there is one solution and only one: that is for the free world to develop the will and organize the means to retaliate instantly against open aggression by Red armies, so that, if it occurred anywhere, we could and would strike back where it hurts, by means of our choosing.*”⁷³ To succeed, the “free world” would need for its “common defense” *anti-red* “community punishing power,” comprising three factors:

“1) The creation, at whatever are the convenient places, of means to hit with shattering effectiveness the sources of power and lines of communication of the Soviet world; 2) The determination in advance, by common consent given by constitutional and United Nations processes, that this power would be used instantly if, but only if, the Red armies ... engage in open armed attack; 3) The continuous maintenance of observers along the frontiers enjoying protection, who would immediately report if such armed aggression occurred ... Such a community punishing power could conclusively deter open armed aggression.”⁷⁴

In proposing retaliative deterrence as the “only” response to the danger of Sovietism, Dulles also suggested that, as “the *historic leader* of the forces of freedom,” the US must inevitably “promote liberation.”⁷⁵ Dulles continued:

“... liberation from the yoke of Moscow will not occur for a very long time, and courage in neighbouring lands will not be sustained, *unless the United States makes it publicly known that it wants and expects liberation to occur.* The mere statement of that wish and expectation would change, in an electrifying way, the mood of the captive peoples. It would put heavy new burdens on the jailers and create new opportunities for liberations.”⁷⁶

⁷³ Ibid:67, (italics in the original), (my emphasis).

⁷⁴ Ibid:67.

⁷⁵ Ibid:70, (my emphasis).

⁷⁶ Ibid:70, (italics in the original). The rhetoric of ‘liberation’ that follows from the Orientalism of Cold War ideology in the Soviet state as the ‘other’ of Western freedom is necessarily constituted as ‘despotic’.

- Political offensive as an act of faith

So, conceived Dulles, (Soviet) “political aggression can then be ended.” He thought that “once the free world has established a military defense, it can undertake ... a political offense.”⁷⁷ To guarantee the success of this endeavour he commended following “three truths”:

“1) The dynamic prevails over the static; the active over the passive. We were from the beginning a vigorous, confident people, born with a sense of *destiny and of mission*. That is why we have grown from a small and feeble nation to our present stature in the world; 2) Nonmaterial forces are more powerful than those that are merely material. Our dynamism has always been *moral* and intellectual *rather than military* or material ... *But we always generated political, social and industrial ideas and projected them abroad where they were more explosive than dynamite.*”⁷⁸

Dulles’s discourse elaborates a central idea of the US becoming a world-wide political vanguard at the expense of a gradual weakening USSR. Eisenhower’s acceptance of such a strategy can plausibly be attributed to the president’s military instincts, (presupposing *military strength* as both desirable and, given the international conditions, indispensable) and to the manifest buoyancy of the US economy (boosted in fact by the strengthening of the industrial-military-complex).

There was something of the Christian missionary in Dulles the diplomat, for he incorporated into his strategic analysis conspicuously and militantly religious premises which attached to the religious content of his political thinking that we have already noted. Thus there was a third “truth” to be considered:

“There is a moral or natural law not made by man which determines right and wrong and in the long run only those who conform to that law *will escape* disaster. This law has been trampled by the Soviet rulers, and for that violation

⁷⁷ Ibid:68.

⁷⁸ Ibid:73,68-70, (my emphasis).

they can and should be made to pay. This will happen when we ourselves keep faith with that law in our practical decisions of policy.”⁷⁹

Several regions of the world, as observed in Turkey, Iran and Greece, were cases in point. Furthermore, they were to be exposed, as Guatemala and Central America were, to this crude rationality. Of course, the importance of Europe was obvious in this exercise of political ventriloquism. Consequently, Western Europe, through the setting up of NATO years before on August 24, 1949, and the post-war policies of economic normalisation, was to a great extent the most important region of containment, which can be noticed from the importance given to the World of Fairs in Europe as referred above in chapter 5. This occurrence satisfied the Cold War directives of the United States. In Dulles’s own words, the “need of allies and collective security” made it necessary to rely “on deterrent power” rather than depend “on local defensive power” (Acheson strongly disagreed). “What the Eisenhower administration seeks” he added, “is a similar international security system. We want, for ourselves and the other free nations, a *maximum deterrent* at a bearable cost.”⁸⁰ Finally, he concludes by reinforcing his argument uttered two years before: that “local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power.”⁸¹ Thus, to carry the banner of freedom, as Dulles had lobbied previously elsewhere, was the United States’ responsibility:

“The ‘great American experiment’ was a source of *hope* and *inspiration* to men everywhere, and especially to those living under despotism. Our dynamic *example of freedom* drew many to our shores and inspired others, in the Old World and the New, to emulate our course.”⁸²

⁷⁹ J.F.Dulles (1952:70), (my emphasis). The duality of Dulles personality is explained by Hoopes as follows: “The twin aspects of his family heritage [his father, the Presbyterian minister and his Grandfather Foster the diplomat] were not, however, easy to reconcile, and the inner conflict between them deeply affected Dulles personality and manner.” T.Hoopes (1973-1974:157).

⁸⁰ DOSB, Vol. 30, No. 761, op. cit., p. 108, (my emphasis).

⁸¹ Ibid.,108, (my emphasis).

⁸² DOSB, John Foster Dulles, “Policy for Security and Peace”, Vol. 30, No. 770, March 29, 1954, p. 459. (Article prepared for publication in the April issue of Foreign Affairs), (my emphasis). This reasoning allows a note to reinforce my argument that there is no difference between Dulles’s spiritual determinism and, for instance, Ms. M. Albright’s end of the century obsession with the rhetoric of hegemony.

And yet, given the highly ambiguous US *modus operandi* in the region, Latin America, (among many others of the US map) although an area where Washington's anti-Communist policies prevailed, was not a meaningful component of the "roll back" rationale. However, it was virtually included as one of those "places of our own choosing" where Washington might use its "punishing power" and decide to attack the "lines of communication of the Sovietized world" and, thus, intervene if the need arose. This occurred precisely where and when the "natural and moral order" was "violated", hence the obligation to punish Guatemala, and any other alleged transgressors.

- The disagreements

Dulles's foreign policy was subsequently opposed by some important personalities of the foreign policy establishment. Dean Acheson, Secretary of State under President Truman, attacked the basic premises of the "new look" foreign policy under Eisenhower. He was particularly critical of the retaliation policy. He commenced his criticism by considering that there was reasonable expectation, "that the normal course of events in 1954 would produce a great national debate on the foreign policy of the United States." And he stressed the need to accept that "we must by our very nature be defenders, not offenders."⁸³ Thus, within this atmosphere, although from an opposite and much more discerning perspective to Dulles's, Acheson joined the national creed on the US supreme prerogative in world affairs. He argued that

"it became increasingly plain as our third post-war debate on foreign policy in half a century went on that the United States is and must remain, *in and of the world*, and that coexistence of the victors and the maintenance of peace demanded the re-creation of a balancing power to the power of the Soviet system."⁸⁴

However, in his opinion, the main mistake of Dulles and Eisenhower, was to ignore the possibility of accomplishing this through a "coalition diplomacy" of "free and independent

⁸³ D.Acheson (1954:81,82).

⁸⁴ Ibid:81, (my emphasis).

nations.”⁸⁵ Similarly, Acheson criticised most of the new policy as the “subnormal” use of “our current fear of [Soviet] Communism at home to raise doubts about our allies and to attack those, whether Republican or Democrats, who insist upon the fundamental importance of the coalition policy.”⁸⁶

The above Dulles declined to accept. The core of the problem with Dulles’s mentality was “simplicity itself”, Acheson added: “France and Italy [who] have substantial Communist parties” should then be “unreliable”, as well as unreliable should be “Britain, India, Pakistan and others [who] recognise or trade with Communist China.” In short, his argument suggested that anti-Communism was a new form of isolationism. He regretted that “we must be isolated, because *only we are worthy of trust* - and not so many at that.”⁸⁷ In a final judgement, Acheson attacked retaliation by saying that it

“is not [an] initiative, but is the *reaction* to someone else’s initiative. So by all means let us abide by the cardinal principle of being scrupulously honest with ourselves [and set a defensive program that] protects the interests of all nations concerned. It cannot be successful if it sacrifices the interests of some nations to others. It will certainly fail as a coalition policy if it sacrifices the interests of *all* the other nations to those of *one*.”⁸⁸

Stevenson questioned whether the policy suggested by Dulles represented a “new look” or it was the return to the

“pre-1950 atomic-deterrent strategy which made some sense as long as we had a monopoly of atomic weapons ... But, you say, we did not use the bomb against Russian and Chinese targets for fear of enlarging the war. Exactly! and

⁸⁵ Ibid:81.

⁸⁶ Ibid:82.

⁸⁷ Ibid:82, (my emphasis).

⁸⁸ Ibid:83, (my emphasis). Although referring to nuclear capability, there is another relevant criticism to a *Policy of Boldness* came from Adlai Stevenson, Democratic presidential candidate in 1952. Against Dulles’s idea of retaliating “instantly, by means and places of our own choosing,” Stevenson argued that if this meant “anything,” “... that if the Communists try another Korea we will retaliate by dropping atom bombs on Moscow or Peking, or wherever we choose, or else we will concede the loss of another Korea - and presumably other countries after that - as ‘normal’ in the course of events.” See the same issue of US News & World Report, “Atomic ‘Retaliation’ Plan is Old Pre-Korea Defense, says Adlai Stevenson” (April 9, 1954), p. 82.

if we should now use them in retaliation that way it would certainly mean World War III ... and our cities are *also susceptible to destruction.*⁸⁹

- Boldness and the ‘significance’ of Central America

Both Acheson’s and Stevenson’s criticism provided an alternative vision to the policies of retaliation: on the one hand, the latter would both endanger even more the position of the US and the world as opposed to the strength of the USSR. Also they would isolate the United States even more from its allies in the world. On the other, and perhaps because it happened as a result of not being such a strategic component of these policies, the Central American sphere was conceived nonetheless, as a zone of a relatively high pragmatism and significance. And yet, mostly of empty, vain policies (as Peurifoy’s appointment seemed to show). Hence a plausible explanation is to be stressed here as to the wide margin of manoeuvre (during the Eisenhower and the Kennedy administrations mostly) that Washington’s foreign policy bureaucracy granted itself (through simplistic judgements) in order to conduct most interventionist policies in the region under the umbrella of the widespread stratagem of communist fear drawn by Dulles. This in itself corresponded to what I have mentioned in above lines, as an empty policy. Alternatively, Latin America, and most dramatically Central America, were easy prizes (though accidental tokens of this gamble) to be found there (as an ideal game preserve) whenever the need arose.⁹⁰ This idea provides grounds to suggest that in its own way, before and after independence, and from the start of the times of the Manifest Destiny Iberian-*América* experienced, as much as Anglo-*America*, a condition of solitude. The only difference was that *America* remained, from the beginning of the century, under an hemispheric hegemonic standing; whereas *América* moved, within a bewildered peripheral condition, towards the consummation of a somehow self-denied and non-completed encounter with the reign of both democratic self-government and economic modernity. It is at this point that the collision between the ‘two Americas’ is strongest.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ibid:82, (my emphasis).

⁹⁰ See chapter-3.

⁹¹ For more on this, see chapter-5.

The chaotic containment policy with its component “retaliation” doctrine - both understood as the embroiled extrapolation of modernity and progress - which the US displayed in the form of interventions in Central America, started a new era of unfinished decline.⁹² Present, past and future in the continent, as had already happened after independence, encountered and collided within their accidental temporality. In the light of this, again, as Paz says, the telltale mirror had betrayed the Latin American imagined illusion for a place in the future of modernity, and this resulted just for the benefit of a logic of domination, as Cox has underlined.

The widespread dynamic of international capitalism abroad (which was additionally strengthened by oligopolistic power) was for Washington’s state interest a strategic objective. So it was a tactical ideological-political instrument for achieving goals in the light of doctrinaire anti-Communism. It was also useful for the imposition of “*Americanism*” through the instrumentalisation of policies such as retaliation for the success in carrying out such a strategy was of enormous advantage for the establishment’s achievement of the *legitimacy* to sort out the foremost historic undertaking of Washington. For this reason, the essential protection and achievement of economic interests were successfully mediated by the *ideological representation* utilised for the accomplishing of this purpose. At the same time, *American* political ideology was guaranteed a place in this process, both as a cultural instrument and as a mechanism for the US to place itself as the predominant actor in the world contest (“the historic leader of the forces of freedom,” as Dulles said). Such was the price (although in some - loyal - cases turned into a reward) that the international actors, and to some extent US citizens too, had to pay to permit “American exceptionalism” to spread its world-wide influential domain. Thus, according to Coker “for the United States, the American dream - the creation of wealth - and its use to improve the republic’s position in the world is not cause for guilt but congratulation.”⁹³

⁹² Again, Kissinger’s ‘prediction’ appears as both an inevitable explanation and an ill-prophecy on the Latin American condition. Let us remember his words to the Chilean Foreign Minister: “... Latin America ... is not important. Nothing important can come from the South ...” See chapter-3.

⁹³ C.Coker (1989:17).

- Doing the ‘right thing’ for the ‘wrong reason’: mercenaries or statesmen?

In the light of this it is possible to argue that the anti-Communist crusade that is launched by the US against Guatemalan reformism (disguised as a defence of free capitalism) with the support of its Central American accessories, was part of an extensive machination whereby state institutions were used to defend particular interests against socio-political change. In fact, in the period of the Eisenhower presidency the Cold War was pervasively institutionalised in the US. Whether with or without his acknowledgement (but most likely with it), Eisenhower’s administration (as an infra-class clique with a “politics-and-business as usual” ethos) ultimately provided state legitimacy for prosecuting at the regional level what went beyond the political national interest, official public statements, and the general public’s knowledge.

With this, perhaps, in mind, Howard Hunt, *Pbsuccess* political Operations Director (later of Watergate fame), declared in a 1979 interview:

“I’ve often said of that project [Guatemala] that we did the right thing for the wrong reason. And I always felt a sense of distaste over that. I wasn’t a mercenary working for United Fruit. If we had a foreign policy objective which was to assure the observance of the Monroe Doctrine in the hemisphere then fine, that is one thing; but because United Fruit or some other American enterprise had its interests confiscated or threatened, that is to me no reason at all.”⁹⁴

Thus, according to Hunt, intervening for the ‘wrong reason’ (defending UFCO’s interests) did not pay off in that it ignored the core problem (i.e., Communism) which was, nevertheless, to be a wrong reason to legitimise acting against Guatemala (in that *it* was to be sanctioned as ‘non-viable’ within official circles). A vicious circle and a gigantic confusion indeed!

The criticism of Acheson and Stevenson highlights the paradox of retaliation, which far from re-solving an international crisis, exacerbated tensions whose crudest expression were fierce Cold War and bipolarity. Consequently such a confrontation was inevitably behind the handling of the Guatemalan case. Both Eisenhower and Dulles tacitly accepted that Guatemala

⁹⁴ Howard Hunt interviewed by Ambrose. See S.E.Ambrose (1981:217-218).

represented neither a Soviet threat in the region, nor a menace to the “continental integrity” and US national security. And yet, this country had to take in the implications of this policy which reflected ultimately in Washington’s successful effort to create the conditions for the overthrow of Arbenz.

Both the means and the actual policy used to accomplish this aim will be discussed in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 7

THE DISCURSIVE FRAMING OF THE US INTERVENTION IN GUATEMALA: RETURNING TO AUTHORITARIANISM

Here it takes all
the running you can do,
to keep in the same place
Alice in Wonderland¹

- Introduction

In the light of the last three chapters it is worth asking from the US point of view, what was to be done after successful reform had taken place in Guatemala, especially within the framework of the foreign policy of anti-Communism which resulted in historical interventionism? By the beginning of 1954, given the arduous process of reform in Guatemala, it seems as though there was even more urgency than in previous years to topple Arbenz at the first opportunity.

In this and the following chapter I will suggest a description of the features that both characterised and influenced the US response and subsequent intervention against the *October Revolution*. This outcome can be understood as the result of the doctrinaire framework imposed upon the foreign policy-making process during the most important years of the Cold War.² As already seen, this was a period of consolidation in the construction of a *single* “*American*” identity. It was also a time when a conspiratorial tone and a paranoid mentality prevailed within US political life, most importantly, Eisenhower and Dulles adhered doggedly to this doctrine. The atmosphere generated by these views and the ideological force by which they were projected skewed both diagnoses of Guatemala’s internal affairs and political decisions taken within the country. Consequently, these were decisions that ultimately altered violently the

¹ Quoted in A.O.Hirschman (1991:11).

² See chapters 2,5-6.

nation's socio-political culture marginalising and alienating for more than forty years those groups which had played a significant political role in reforming the polity.

The importance of the Guatemalan case, as this thesis demonstrate, lay in the way it was represented through the prism of the national security needs of the US - the *geopolitics of security*. Logically - for it is ultimately a direct result, not a cause, of this policy - the military component of US foreign policy that prevailed in the area in the following years, was of considerable importance at the time of (and after) the Guatemalan coup. Accordingly, the problem of democracy *vis à vis* authoritarianism occupied a position of great significance within the *American* implementation of Washington's power politics in the region. Having said the above, this account will be made in the light of both the predominant argument of the preceding chapters and of the following guidelines.

The US supported the coup throughout. It used the full might of the state by securing the strengthening of the discursive and socio-political *construction* of the "Guatemalan problem", hence of the Guatemalan reality. Let me say that I understand "discursive construction" as the building up, through an ideological discourse - which is produced within a web of meanings - of an idea of "threat" stemming from a very general framework of defence of the national interest. This *discourse* has 'codes of intelligibility' "through which experiences are classified and invested with meaning ... therefore [they are] not the possession of individuals; instead they pre-exist any particular individual."³

Thus, the importance of the *discursive framing* at the level of state action which included a geopolitical design. This action has normally occurred, in the Latin American context, with no previous warning (apart from the broad claim of the existence of a "communist danger") of the nature or the intensity of the threat as such. As argued above, the US claim when 'confronting' the outside world has often included the necessity of doing so from the conviction that there has always been 'something' likely to be threatening "*American*" national interest. Along these lines the Guatemalan case was not an exception and state action followed within the aforementioned ideological climate and with the subsequent consequences. Thus, Guatemala *existed* (and it was designed accordingly in order

³ See S.Hall (1985:105); and J.Weldes and D.Saco (1996:371).

to induce the public imagination) within the US foreign policy discourse from the instant in which it questioned (through both its expression of sovereignty and its recovering of its *voice* within a solicitous continent) the US pattern of political power. Therefore, US power imposed Guatemala in 1954 with a *subjective* existence which did not seem to result from an objective diagnosis of this country's crisis. Thus my argument on overestimation when accentuating the *external* confines (Soviet menace) in the characterisation of the existence of problems which are a central component of the crisis of US foreign policy in the region.

The interest created by the discourse was satisfied first, through Peurifoy's good offices, and thereafter supplemented by Dulles's direct intervention - as already shown - and on a number of simultaneous fronts: political, financial, and the providing of military training, and CIA-based strategic assistance to the "freedom fighters" who had threatened Arbenz's government from the beginning; this approach ultimately was to be presented by the US as an "internal rebellion."⁴

At the same time, the US was aware, at the highest levels of decision-making, that, **a**) there was a fertile domestic atmosphere for a coup especially during 1954 which is the year that will be focused on in this and the subsequent chapter; and, **b**) Washington had to make use of the incipient internal opposition to, complementarily, assemble the tools to provide widespread support in order to overthrow Arbenz. About this the US was clearly aware as can be seen in various secret documents, such as a report issued on Guatemala on 1 February, 1954. In this summary, US officials learned that a group of Guatemalan politicians and newsmen belonging to the antigovernment faction "[had] often reiterated the 'desirability' of having the Government and the policy established following the *October Revolution* overthrown by foreign intervention. They have declared the 'inevitability' of such intervention, and that it would enjoy 'inevitable success'."⁵

⁴ This argument was used at the UN by the US delegation during the final stage of the overthrow of Arbenz.

⁵ NSA, "Details of Anti-government plot given," TGWA Guatemala City (Official), Guatemalan Home Service, Feb. 1, 1954, 0145 GMT--W, p. J1. On the internal opposition and the US link to it, see also: NSA, NA 714.00/1-2754, "William L. Krieg to The Honourable John E. Peurifoy, Central America and Panama Affairs, ARA, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 'Secret'." American Embassy, Guatemala, January 27, 1954., Washington, D.C.

After the shipment of arms to Puerto Barrios in the Swedish ship, the *Alfhem*, on May 15, 1954, which will be explained further, Eisenhower and Dulles decided that they did not have any intention of allowing Arbenz's government to remain in power any longer. Consequently they had to bring to an end the "communist infection" in Guatemala and expel "red Arbenz" for the sake of "continental integrity."⁶ And for this effect the shipment of arms represented a useful artifice in order to put in practice some alternative (and effective) ways to intervene. This seems to be confirmed by the recommendation of William Krieg who, by stressing "the question of timing," advised Peurifoy that

"of course [timing is] particularly important since most of these measures [support to the army among others] are designed to create an atmosphere favorable to effective activity by dissident Army officers and others, if they can be influenced to act [and he concludes in a hopeful mood]: I hardly need [to] say that we will eagerly awaiting your return *with news* of the *views* in Washington."⁷

As a result of this *approach* (see above), the orchestration of an international campaign in order to legitimise the last leg of US intervention followed. This campaign reached its crescendo at the Tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas in March, 1954 where Dulles made his best and final effort to construct a *climate* of consensus around the idea that Arbenz's government represented a (Communist) "threat" against hemispheric security. Hereinafter, and once this front was secured, other efforts by the US led the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to dismiss the request placed by Arbenz to this international organisation on the eve of the final *putsch*. Still, from the above words of Hunt it is noticeable that there were some "practical" doubts within the US foreign policy-makers and yet, these doubts perhaps will never be disclosed accurately.⁸

⁶ Memorandum of NSC meeting, February 18, 1953 (February 19, 1953), see S.G.Rabe (1990a:161-162).

⁷ NSC, NA 714.00/1-2754 "William Krieg to the Honourable," op. cit., p. 3, (my emphasis). Peurifoy's process of consultations in Washington included difficult negotiations with soft-liners within the State Department and the CIA. On Krieg see chapter-6.

⁸ For further analysis of this issue, see Hunt's considerations in chapters-6,8.

- Ideological framework

The importance of the policy toward Guatemala was that, considering a rational state appraisal, it was consensual determination which drove the ultimate US decisions in that country regardless of specific doctrinaire approaches to the so-called Latin American question. Therefore, as already stressed, emphasis must be provided on the following: ‘the rational state appraisal’, that is, the tactical approach conceived by US officials, lacked strategic content because the policy was conducted according to the pragmatic needs of US power under the general obsession of purging any sign of *evil* Sovietism in the region for, “closer relations between the Soviet Union and Latin America [were] against the security interest of the United States.”⁹ Consequently, since the Communists, so the argument went, “are trying to extend their form of despotism in this hemisphere ... the time to deal with this rising menace in South America is now.”¹⁰ However, in the face of the actual reality of the Guatemalan situation this explanation was not enough. Moreover, it is worth bearing in mind that the main ideological framework that dominated the Cold War confrontation, bipolarity, had already been responsible for setting the conditions to carry out indiscriminately the process of intervention in Guatemala.¹¹

Subjectivity: ‘Soviet Warfare’ or the mis-perception of reality

In the light of the threats facing Washington in Central America (i.e., “Soviet warfare”) bipolarity was the unmistakable *context* in which to handle the Guatemalan affair. Thus, the policies were carried out in accordance with the rational needs of Cold War politics (which in Central America meant reversing social change ‘covertly without sending the marines’). The US involvement in the events of Guatemala was, to a great extent, the Latin American show case *par excellence*.¹² Since the intervention was basically a CIA-sponsored coup, it was in this

⁹ NSA, (NSC 5613/1) (September 25, 1956), *op. cit.*, p. 3, (my italics).

¹⁰ J.F. Dulles in a telephone conversation with his brother Allen, the director of the CIA, “Dulles to Allen Dulles,” February 25, 1954: S.G.Rabe (1990a:161); and J.F.Dulles (1950:150-151).

¹¹ See the Introduction and chapters-4-6.

¹² See chapter 8.

country that the agency learned to “overthrow Latin governments engineering the 1954 coup ...”¹³ It was, then, a foreign policy strategy which became typical for Latin America and was used unsuccessfully in Cuba in 1961 and successfully in Chile in 1973.¹⁴

From this explanation already stressed at the beginning of this thesis and reinforced in chapters-5-6, follows my argument on the disastrous consequences of doctrinaire anti-Sovietism inherited by US policy in the continent. Contrary to the dominant belief among policy makers in the Eisenhower administration, **a**) Guatemala was not a Soviet beach-head in the continent in the mid 1950s (as already shown in chapters-4-6), and the military intervention that ensued from this position, was in fact unnecessary. Therefore, **b**) the (realist) interpretation that argues that state action ought to defend security against foreign threat, did not account for the case of this country. US State Department officials accepted the above in their confidential despatches. For instance, William Krieg made an explicit recognition of this when reporting the arrival of a Soviet bloc ambassador to Guatemala, in the following terms:

‘Non-Resident Czech Minister Presents Credentials: Vladimir Pavlicek, Czechoslovak Minister to Guatemala, resident in Mexico, presented his credentials to President Arbenz on February 2 [1954], establishing the first diplomatic contact between Guatemala and the Soviet orbit in some years. The minister is scheduled, however, to return to Mexico and there has yet been no suggestion that a resident mission is planned.’¹⁵

Since this was a very small state the assumption that Guatemala represented an (external) objective threat to the United States was challenged by Guatemala’s relative economic weakness and its negligible military power. In this light, it can be argued that the

¹³ “If you were to pick a place where the CIA still has a cowboy mentality, it’s there [Guatemala],” says a former top official with the Agency. See D.Waller (1995:1).

¹⁴ A recent declassification of documents on Chile in the light of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in the US have clearly stated the involvement of the Nixon government to “make the [Chilean] economy scream” (Richard Helms Director of the CIA’s dixit). According to the CIA mission in Santiago, the coup was celebrated as “an almost perfect coup.” See E.Galeano (1998). The destabilising strategy by the government of Nixon started before Salvador Allende took power. ITT which was in monopolic control of the communications network in Chile contributed to the efforts in which the CIA was involved in order - in the words of syndicated columnist Jack Anderson - to “plot to stop the 1970 election of leftist Chilean President Salvador Allende.” See, United Congress Committee on Foreign Relations (US Senate), Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, (June 21, 1973), p. 1.

¹⁵See NA 714.00(W)/2-554, February 5, 1954, (Department of State, foreign service despatch, no. 671), p. 6, (underlying in the original, my emphasis).

ideological framework on which the US relied in order to *explain* its policy in this country, was from its very origins subjective.¹⁶ Subjectivity in foreign affairs is conceived in terms of what goes on in the mind of individuals, meaning that subjective beliefs mediate people's understandings of the external world, this being a crucial component of realist thought. As a result, let us emphasise that Guatemala was utilised as an experimental case of Cold War politics in the continent resulting from the 'belief' that this country represented a menace to US security and, thus, an example had to be set. Hence the practical (and fragile) application of 'perceptions' as a means to understand a foreign policy problem.¹⁷

- Legitimising authoritarianism: cultivating dictators

Since the coup endorsed the return to authoritarianism in Guatemala it is worth stressing that there existed a considerable awareness among the main policy-makers of the likely authoritarian outcome that intervention might produce within the polity. For instance, Dulles was convinced that democratic regimes, such as Arbenz's, could be dispensable, whereas dictators were dependable allies of the United States. As long as these dictatorships "took a firm stand against Communism," Dulles's instructions were clear: "do nothing to offend them" for "they are the only people we can depend on."¹⁸ Indeed, Washington's foreign policy-makers evidence an awareness of the pragmatic usefulness of a subordinated and *kleptocratic*-oriented ruling elite in the continent, which un-hesitatingly has sacrificed modernity on the altar of

¹⁶ On how complex the grasping of reality is, in the same way as it is possible to (*re*)create it as a result of what Feyerabend has named a *political manoeuvre*, see chapter-1. I agree with Paul Veyne who has written elsewhere that "... history exists only in relation to the questions we put to it. Materially, history is written with facts; formally, it is written with a problematic and with concepts ... Historical facts are not organised by periods and peoples, but by notions. They do not have to be returned to their respective periods of time ... facts no longer have individuality except in relation to the concept." P.Veyne (1982:174,191-192). See above chapter-2.

¹⁷ See, for example, H.Sprout&M.Sprout (1957:309-328). I shall not elaborate any further on realism. See the Introduction and chapter-1.

¹⁸ From the Papers of A.Berle (1973:654). The same stance on dictators was evident during Nixon's tour of Central American and the Caribbean in early 1955, just a few months after Arbenz's fall. At the advice of State Department officials he did not raise the question of civil liberties with despots. Loyal Nixon did more than obey these instructions. In a toast to Fulgencio Batista of Cuba, for instance, he compared him to Abraham Lincoln. Yet, at the same time he unrepentantly declared that, "Spaniards [have] many talents, but government was not among them." As reported by Nixon to NSC and as taken from Nixon Papers by S.G. Rabe(1990a:162).

tradition.¹⁹ Although it is agreed that Dulles was a severe policy maker, this aspect of Dulles's thinking is not widely recognised in studies referring to the Secretary of State's political features. Moreover, personal features had much to do with the implementation of politics and the case of Dulles represents inexcusably an important example of this.

On the other hand the consensus among both top foreign policy makers and analysts is that president Eisenhower, despite allowing Dulles to take the front line in many foreign policy decisions, was at the centre of the foreign and national security policy machinery, including Latin American policies.²⁰ However, and given the nature of Dulles's strong disposition, he emerged as an integral actor in the sphere of formulation as well as implementation. Thus, it appears to be most accurate to say with Immerman that, "on some occasions Dulles took the lead; on others it was Eisenhower. [However] they were in a real sense a team."²¹ Whether or not Eisenhower used Dulles's extremism to "take the heat that [foreign policy directives] generated," the two of them functioned ideally as two relatively balanced components (the former playing moderate, the latter acting sometimes in the extreme) of what was intended as a coherent and rationally unified foreign policy unit.²² It is in this context that, what has been considered in this thesis as a) the construction of the scenario, b) from which the manufacturing of the policy, c) in order to confront the problem, took place.

Once this link between Eisenhower and Dulles has been made, it is worth noting that the president was fond of a number of Latin American dictators, as entries from his diaries have shown. In fact, Washington's best friends in the continent were the dictators. Eisenhower never raised questions about civil rights violations with any Latin American dictator during his two terms. All the contrary, he confided to his diary that Anastasio Somoza, the legendary autocrat of Nicaragua, and General Alfredo Stroessner, the military dictator of Paraguay, "stood out"

¹⁹ I suggest the term *Kleptocratic* to refer to a corrupt (Kleptomaniac) aristocratic elite. I owe this concept to Francisco Valdés-Ugalde to whom I am grateful. *Kleptocracy* is a widespread state security phenomenon in Latin America and it is linked to a number of political and economic problems. Its inclusion here intends to establish the complex relation existing between domestic corruption and national security vis à vis the US defence of its continental security interests. On my criticism on corruption among Latin American elites see, chapters 4,5-6.

²⁰ See, R.H.Immerman (1982).

²¹ R.H.Immerman (1990:9).

²² Ibid:9. See Eisenhower's magnanimous view on how to keep Latin Americans 'happy' in the Introduction.

among those he had met. Stroessner earned Eisenhower's favour by declaring that "Paraguay was one-hundred percent anti-Communist and would continue to be so," while the obsequious Somoza told him that "if the United States desired a canal in Nicaragua, it was all right with him." Another US favourite dictator was Marcos Pérez Jiménez, dictator of Venezuela (host and venue of the Tenth Inter-American Conference in March, 1954) whom Eisenhower had honoured with the Legion of Merit for his "spirit of collaboration and friendship toward the United States," his encouragement of the "expansion of foreign investments ..., his constant concern toward the problem of communist infiltration," and his recognition of the "similarity of interests of the United States and Venezuela."²³

Militarism

Accordingly Eisenhower's views were not surprising if we consider that through training and assistance programmes to the military (which amounted to US\$400 million during the 1950s) his administration managed to have access to the Latin American military caste, a bulwark of anti-Communism. This predilection towards despots was also expressed by US Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins who, in supporting military aid for Somoza noted that, "the Latin American officers who work with us and some of whom come to this country and see what we have and what we can do are frequently our most useful friends in those countries." In like manner and in the face of Dulles's argument against building up "large military establishments in [the] Latin American Republics," at a NSC meeting, Admiral Arthur Radford of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was emphatic in his response to Dulles: he said that if the US abruptly changed its military aid policy, it would be hard to "keep the Latin American republics *in line*." To this Dulles agreed in order to guarantee that "additional armament come from US stocks [rather] than from some foreign resources."²⁴ Dulles, then, was convinced by the

²³ Entry for July 25, 1956, in R.H.Ferrell (1981:328); Memorandum of Eisenhower conversations with Stroessner and Somoza, both July 23, 1956, quoted by S.G.Rabe (1990a:172). Generally a blind eye towards dictators has been the norm in the behaviour of US presidents this century; see G.Kolb (1974:142-143).

²⁴ NSA, (NMD), "Memorandum of meeting between State Department and Joint Chiefs of Staff," May 22, 1954, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (FR), 1952-1954, 4 (1983). Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, p. 150-153; Memorandum of NSC meeting, September 6, 1956, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (FR), 1955-1957, 6 (1987). Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, pp. 107-113, (my emphasis).

reasoning of his senior military advisers. The above indicates that there was substantial agreement between Foggy Bottom, the Chief of the Executive and the military command, the core of US political establishment, over the need for a substantial military component in order to maintain security in Latin America in the 1950s.²⁵

Still, and without attempting to elaborate further on the particular prevalence of the military content upon foreign policy decisions (an entire subject in itself which, although highly relevant, goes beyond the scope of this thesis), this feature appears to confirm the premise that the State Department was confined - when it came to major foreign policy decisions - to the condition of a “junior partner” of the military-industrial complex, as the following congressional account of US foreign policy of the second post-war suggests, “... as ... said before, being the most richly endowed of all the executive departments, the Department of Defense is naturally the most powerful. Even in foreign affairs, the State Department is - realistically speaking - a junior partner ...”²⁶ From this panorama, it appears that the 1950s, and consequently the 1960s - the core decades of the Cold War era, “the age of anxiety”, as alluded elsewhere - represented the emergence of a long period of consolidation of the military influence in foreign policy decisions, and this, as seen in Vietnam thereafter more vividly, was an outstanding feature of the behaviour of the US abroad.²⁷ Accordingly, the position of the military establishment was similar - coincidentally - to the conservative approach of the Republicans: to decrease economic aid to the third world and to increase military assistance.

Eventually the private sector was left in charge of most programmes of economic “assistance.”²⁸ Secretary of Treasury George Humphrey had a formula for assisting the

²⁵ Foggy Bottom is a pseudonym for the State Department.

²⁶ See, “Defense Department Sponsored Foreign Affairs Research”, Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, US, Senate 9th Congress, Second Session, part 2, 28 May, 1968, p. 20. Certainly this occurred during a difficult stage of the Cold War. Still, subsequent developments at the regional level stressed the perception on the military component that foreign policy decisions had, being among the myriad of examples the support to the contras in Nicaragua during the 1980s, and the Panama invasion of 1989.

²⁷ On the quote on the Cold War as ‘the age of anxiety’ see, R.E.Walters (1974:180).

²⁸ Incidentally, this was one of the main explanations, later on, for the failure of the Alliance for Progress. See, W.W.Posvar&J.C.Ries (1965). Economic development was seen as an obstacle for programmes of internal security, see: C.Wolff (1969:25-45). For more on the institutional aspects of the rising of the military in US politics, see: C.W.Mills (1956); J.K.Galbraith (1967); I.L.Horowitz (1967); W.F.Barber&C.N.Ronning (1966).

region: “If we could find a first-rate businessmen and send them as our ambassadors to the key Latin American nations, it would do far more good than any amount of money we could *dole out*.” Both Eisenhower and Dulles tended to share Humphrey’s views. For instance Dulles’s warned Assistant Secretary Cabot in early 1953, “I want you to devise an imaginative policy for Latin America - but don’t spend any money.”²⁹ And yet, there were paradoxes in the views of militarism among politicians. For instance, in his last official address to the nation delivered by television and radio on January 17, 1961, President Eisenhower warned of the possible dangers to liberty of the huge military-industrial complex which appeared to permeate the life and culture of US society. He said:

“This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence - economic, political, even spiritual - is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted.”³⁰

This view seems to contradict the emphasis placed on military strength during his administration as one of the features to oppose Sovietism and impose the “American example.”³¹ In this speech Eisenhower seemed to concur, at the end of his presidency, with the position of Dean Acheson, when the latter criticised Dulles’s retaliation policies, on the need to turn US military policy from an offensive to a defensive one (“we must by our very nature be defenders, not offenders” said Acheson).³²

²⁹ See P.Gleijeses (1991:269), (my emphasis); J.M.Cabot (1979:87).

³⁰ D.D.Eisenhower (1961:173), (taken from the original in DOSB, Vol. 44, February 6, 1961, pp. 179-182).

³¹ See, DOSB, “A Standard for Americans,” (Address by the President), Vol. 29, No. 747, October, 19, 1953, pp. 507-510.

³² For the quote of Acheson, see chapters-5-6.

The pre-construction of the 'other': ideological penetration

I would argue that appealing to the need to launch either a 'defensive' or an 'offensive' policy on the part of foreign policy makers appeared as a disguised way of claiming (and legitimising) the US role as defender of a 'peaceful', democratic' and 'free world' as opposed to 'Soviet totalitarianism'. Michael J. Shapiro states that "pacification and containment of the Other is the dominant practice, and to the extent that it is practised in a *totalizing* way, it is waged more with economic than military strategies."³³ This account by Shapiro confirms my approach in this analysis. To stress economic over military strength is not contradictory if we focus on the way the US *extensive* strategy towards exerting its influence embraced both the polity and the economy indistinctly in that this exercise permitted and resulted in ideological penetration. His insight on "economic and military strategies" thus, goes hand in hand with the idea of the need to associate both levels of state action in Guatemala within the process of achieving one single objective: to defend "continental integrity" in order to protect "*American*" economic and political interests. In this exercise another process of construction seemed to take place; or as Shapiro said, "there exists a powerful impetus to violence in the form of armed interference by the modern state, and, as was the case with Rome, its ideational supports can be linked to foreign policy, to the ways in which the self and the Other are *constituted* and estrangements between the two are affected."³⁴

- Realpolitik: legitimising authoritarianism, the relative importance of economic development, and the framing of Guatemala

In the light of the features of the policies toward Latin America and Guatemala (not of least importance their military content), and the moral limit having been overcome (this being justified by the vital fight against Communism), the way was cleared for *Realpolitik*. Thus came into being the institutionalisation of the idea that the US had to be prepared to protect itself and its allies from an external threat. In the context of the panorama of regional partnership, and

³³ M.J.Shapiro (1988:101), (capitals in the original, my emphasis).

³⁴ Ibid:101, (my emphasis).

given the explicit assurances that the US would be given support by its regional allies, it was not a mistake, then, to orchestrate the overthrow of Arbenz. Precisely because this was an act resulting from a diagnosis (discourse included) typical of *Realpolitik*, it is important to note that this paradigmatic involvement against Guatemalan democracy occurred in spite of declared principles about “freedom” and “world peace” that had been voiced by Eisenhower in many public addresses. These military-orientated episodes in the Central American region occurred even though - in the words of Eisenhower - the “[US] basic objective [was] peace [and] we [the US] must ceaselessly affirm our belief in the blessing of the hearts of free men and must inspire their every free action and decision.”³⁵

As stressed previously the extensive (and chaotically unsuccessful) preparations to carry out the coup against Guatemala had started in the early years of the *October Revolution* with the various attempts to topple Arévalo. The bases for the Latin American policy had already been conceived within the framework of the Truman Doctrine. Originally - as mentioned in chapters 4-6 - NSC-68 and subsequently, NSC 141, NSC 144/1, and NSC 5613/1 delineated indiscriminately the US task in Latin America in the following terms:

“In Latin America we seek first and foremost an orderly political and economic development which will make the Latin American nations resistant to the *internal* growth of Communism and to Soviet *political warfare* ... Secondly, we seek hemisphere solidarity in support of our world policy and the co-operation of the Latin American nations in safeguarding the hemisphere through individual and collective defense measures against external aggression and internal subversion.”³⁶

Seen in the light of further declassified documents on the Eisenhower presidency, the postulates of Truman’s policies, which proved very useful, seemed to match Dulles’s and Eisenhower’s defence plans. For instance, secret NSC 5613/1, prepared in order to draw the

³⁵ DOSB, “Principles of US Foreign Policy,” (address by the President), Vol. 31, No. 794, September 13, 1954, p. 361-362. It is important to point out that a statement such as this appeared ultimately as a component of a discourse by virtue of which a mixture of signals were sent. Let us emphasise that this feature has to be considered within the framework of Cold War policies.

³⁶ NSC-141: “A Report to the National Security Council by the Secretaries of State and Defense [Dean Acheson and Robert Lovett] and the Director for Mutual Security [W. Averell Harriman] on Reexamination of United States Programs for National Security,” 19 January, 1953, Modern Military Branch Reference, (my emphasis).

policy in the region, stated in writing precisely what in practice had been already emerged in Guatemala two years earlier, namely, that,

“In planning its own defense, the United States must take account of Latin America in view of its *geographic* proximity and our dependence on Latin American resources ... [Consequently] ... we should be prepared ... to take action appropriate to the occasion if a Latin American state establishes close economic or other ties with the Soviet bloc ... [And since] ... Latin America provides bases important to our security ... we should be prepared ... to assist them to maintain internal security ... when this will contribute to the *defense* of the hemisphere.”³⁷

In short, a thoroughly geopolitical display of specific principles and actions to be followed if the attack against the “one American nation’s” security demanded it. The same axioms displayed in NSC 5613/1 which were disclosed a few times after Arbenz’s fall were those used to give a rational framework to the Guatemalan coup. In the light of the Guatemalan case these axioms were put into practice before and during the coup, and thus became the basis for further intervention which took place in the three following decades. As a result these principles followed mechanically the logic of those stressed from the very (earlier) Cold War years and became the foundation for future approaches to the region.

All the State Department and CIA documents repeated monotonously - as already emphasised, this is of the greatest importance to evaluate the relative failure of the policy - the interpretation that Inter-American affairs had to be conceived *solely* within the sphere of the US-URSS confrontation rationale. This interpretation had little to say about economic development, democratisation of the regimes, or human rights (coinciding broadly with Eisenhower’s and Dulles’s own views). Apart from the vague and universalised idea (of Eisenhower) that the US favoured, “a strong free world economy,” supported “orderly political and economic development” in Latin America, and wanted to “encourage the development of stable political systems along democratic, representative lines,” there was nothing there substantially useful for Latin American economic development. As a matter of fact, the achievement of “economic development” in order to make the economies “resistant” was

³⁷ (NSA) NSC 5613/1, op. cit., pp. 2, 4, (my emphasis). See chapter 4.

eventually frustrated (and contradicted) by the obsession to imprint upon the policies a national security criterion.³⁸

The essential objective, by means of eliminating the “menace of internal Communism” and “Soviet bloc and Communist influence in the area,” was to achieve, “a greater degree of hemispheric solidarity” in order to secure “the strengthening [of] the OAS to make it a model of relationships among free nations, *utilizing* it wherever feasible to achieve our objectives.”³⁹ The importance of obtaining from Latin Americans a balanced (unconditional) support at the UN and other international organisations to the general strategy of defence brought about by the US during the Cold War years was nothing less than imperative.

Consequently the tactical umbrella, in place in order to put into practice the successful “safeguarding” (of the US *vis à vis* Latin America), was meant to include, as a main component, the attempt to legitimise (more than explain or use rationally) Washington’s policy. This had been embraced by the strategy of containment, inaugurated by Kennan some years before as seen in chapter 2, which Dulles modified with retaliation and roll back, although with no concrete results in terms of offering a specific - and useful - policy to the continent. This meant that the very general appraisal of resisting both “Communist aggression” and “Soviet political warfare”, embracing, of course, military containment as an appropriate means of dealing with Latin America and other “critical cases”, was the only original contribution if indeed there was any.⁴⁰

And yet, as would be the case in a number of other countries of the region, Guatemala did not represent the *ideal* space where these classical bipolar military arrangements were applicable. For this reason Guatemala lacked *bipolar certitude*. And this feature is perhaps one of the main premises (although a contradictory one) explaining the significance of constructing

³⁸ DOSB, “Principles of US Foreign Policy,” (address by the President), Vol. 31, No. 794, September 13, 1954, p. 361; NSC 5613/1 (September 25, 1956) p. 5. The Latin Americans’ feeling that economic priorities had to be underlined was present, as it had already been on other occasions, at the polemical Tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas in 1954. See chapter-8. It seems to be a conflict between market economy and democratic development. I have explored this relationship elsewhere, see: J.L.Valdés-Ugalde (1995), and J.L.Valdés-Ugalde (1997a).

³⁹ NSC 144/1 (March 18, 1953), NSC 5613/1 September 25, 1956), *op. cit.*, p. 5, (my emphasis).

⁴⁰ See G.Kennan (1947:566-582); and W.LaFeber (1967):35-37).

a problem (thus *framing* Guatemala) and also producing greater emphasis upon the policy of covert interventions. Both of these features were also, later on, of great use when it came to the utilisation of the OAS and the Caracas Conference as the *feasible* tools to remedy the Guatemalan difficulty.

- The construction of the problem: ‘representation’ and Guatemala as a fragile self

Both the ‘constitution’ of the actors (the United States and Guatemala) and their ‘estrangement’ allowed for the arriving at a kind of new relationship; a ‘relationship’ that *liberated* the two actors (within their *non*-mutually arranged scope, and *non*-mutually agreed sphere of interaction) to such an extent that an asymmetry and a reason (a rationale?) for it to exist were produced. All this brings us to a point that has to be made here on the importance that *differentiation* has within the atmosphere of “representation.” In effect, as referred to in other chapters (see chapters 1,3,5) the existence of the *Other* in the foreign policy making of the US, has required, in order to make the objectives of the policy more attainable, “the exoticising of the Other [which] almost invariably amounts to the constitution of that Other as a less-than-equal subject.”⁴¹ This view implies that the discourse in foreign policy is a fundamental *agent* to “make strange something which one could instead identify or accord the status of another self with equal dignity and importance.”⁴² I would argue that this operation of constructing an *identity* is the result of a differentiation of *self*: a deliberate construction of separate identity (mine and yours) through a presentation of policy and presentation of difference. Thus, the operation also embraces the establishment of own and other’s qualities through a reorganisation of the *implications* of own or other’s qualities, so that *otherness* equals not what *you are* but what I (need to) make you (for my own purposes). Thus, *closeness* and *remoteness* are both contradictory (but conciliatory) bridges of contact between two or more actors. This is related to what Shapiro has referred to as the “making of the Other” which in the formulation of foreign policy amounts to the idea of turning (typically) most of the *Others* into “indirect threats.” This explanation focuses on the dilemma of the defence of (the dominant actor’s) security at the

⁴¹ M.J.Shapiro (1988:100).

⁴² Ibid:101.

expense of the Other's scope of interests. Or as Veyne argued in referring to imperial Rome, when achieving security there are two possible ways: "to share semi-security with another from day to day, or to seize the definitive whole security for oneself by placing another in a total insecurity."⁴³ As a result of the above an *opposition* is, then, produced; an 'opposition' (which is turned into a dichotomy, a partition) to be solved by means of the exercise of the (already distributed) quotas of concrete political power existing in the international arena. In other words:

"a self-construed with a security-related identity leads to the construction of otherness on the axis of threats or lack of threats to that security, while a self identified as one engaged in 'crisis management' - a current self-understanding of American foreign-policy thinking - will create modes of otherness on a ruly-versus-unruly axis"⁴⁴

- The construction of the context: the vehemence of counter-representation

And this concerns the case of Guatemala in so far as its *existence* 'affected' the very core of the dynamic in which all the actors were situated. Therefore in seeking to discern how "such an object as Guatemala is produced as a kind of foreign object, then, we must turn our attention not only to the modes within which we have represented Guatemala but also those within which we have represented ourselves."⁴⁵ It is in this way that the *context* is constructed and thus, the *policy* (the means) is permissible. This is expressed in the way the Eisenhower government administered (sometimes by means of a *counter-representation*) the other actors' responsibilities when dealing with the crisis of Guatemala. For instance, when the crisis was at its peak and imminent invasion was already decided, Dulles was asked on June 8 1954, whether he had any comment on the suggestion by President Arbenz that he meet with President Eisenhower to "iron out differences between the two countries," the Secretary of State declared:

⁴³ P.Veyne (1982:178). This is the foundation of the sum and zero game, which means a concept of international security as a game of strategy with a "zero algebraic sum - these gain what the others lose, and it is impossible for two neighbouring states each to be in complete security," *ibid*:178

⁴⁴ M.J.Shapiro (1988:101-102).

⁴⁵ *Ibid*:102.

“There is a persistent effort of the authorities in Guatemala to *represent* the present problem there as primarily a problem between Guatemala and the United States relating to the United Fruit Company. That is totally false presentation of the situation. There *is* a problem in Guatemala, but *it is* a problem *in* Guatemala which affects *other* American States just as much as it does the United States, and *it is not* a problem which the US regards as *exclusively* a United States-Guatemalan problem.”⁴⁶

In the light of Dulles’s view and as accounted for in the above chapters and as will be shown in chapter 8 when describing the stratagem used by the administration to convince the other actors of the actions to be carried out, it was all about the need to launch a predetermined resolution to intervene in a *Guatemalan* problem, *not* a *US* problem. A problem which, not long ago (see chapter 4), had been conceived explicitly (and “exclusively”) by US policy makers as an “*American*” problem due both to its economic features (UFCO) and because it represented a threat against the Monroeist pact (Soviet penetration).

- The making of fashionable policies: ‘denarrativization’ and pseudoscientific vindication as a means to action

Accordingly, it was about a policy of power and thus of the power to *impose* the policy upon an actor’s polity. Ultimately, it was about what the authors of *Force without War*, call, the “use of discrete military moves to influence a particular situation.”⁴⁷ And this highlights the methods used in foreign policy. In the context of the study of Guatemala this is even more important, notoriously so when it is understood how military decisions (or “moves”) were directed (indiscreetly) towards the solution of a “situation” (Guatemala) which was considered to be provoked by “the Soviet-supported Arbenz government.”⁴⁸ Therefore, in the face of such a critical phase of decision-making, considering that it meant military intervention, and that this intervention made the Guatemalan regime collapse, a reason had to be found in order for this to

⁴⁶ DOSB, “US Policy in Guatemala,” (News Conference Statement by Secretary Dulles), Vol. 30, No. 782, June 21, 1954, pp. 950-951, (my emphasis).

⁴⁷ B.M.Blechman&S.S.Kaplan (1978:4).

⁴⁸ Ibid:48.

be carried out in an *undisturbed* fashion (even make it *fashionable*).⁴⁹ And the reason was not difficult to detect along the lines already indicated. Certainly, it was taken for granted in the analysis itself: “[Guatemala has] succumbed to communist infiltration.”⁵⁰ And this ‘reason’, consequently, was not distant from the official analysis (and political action) that was elaborated by policy makers. Blechman and Kaplan explain the problem quite clearly: “It is *fascinating* that the 1954 decision by the Arbenz government in Guatemala to *accept* military aid from the Soviet bloc was sufficient to occasion a *major* response from the United States.”⁵¹

At this point, as will be seen further, the ideal images for the handling of the “Guatemalan situation” were already in motion. As a result the theatre of confrontation consisted of, on the one hand, 1) a *Soviet supported-Arbenz government* in Guatemala, and, on the other, 2) a *decision* by the Arbenz government in Guatemala ‘to accept military aid from the Soviet bloc’. And, thus, these images were ‘sufficient’ explanation to orchestrate a major response. In these circumstances, “to overthrow” a government of such characteristics was logically the *natural* outcome to pursue. Shapiro argues that such a diagnosis has, as a major effect, that of “supplying a pseudoscientific vindication of aggressive US foreign policy.” He concludes that

“this decisionist way of speaking is ... linked to one of the primary *legitimizing* moves of decision-making practice. When decision makers understand themselves to be responding to what they call a “situation,” which they see as [a] set of events independent of the practice-related perceptions through which they are apprehended, they are effectively exonerating the practices with which they *construct* the world that requires what they think of as ‘decision making’.”⁵²

In view of this, once the discursive content was vindicated and the strategic means settled (thus exonerated), it was clear that Guatemala had become (objectively or subjectively) a

⁴⁹ I argue that turning ‘fashionable’ the Guatemalan case was of the highest importance for further policies in the region.

⁵⁰ DOSB, “United States-Latin American Relations,” (Report to the President by Milton S. Eisenhower, Special Ambassador), Vol. 29, No. 752, November 23, 1953.

⁵¹ B.M.Blechman&S.S.Kaplan (1978:51), (my emphasis). To the incident of the arms shipment in the *Alfhem* Dulles expressed himself as, “... this surreptitious shipment of arms from behind the Iron Curtain.” See DOSB, “US Policy in Guatemala,” op. cit., p. 950. I will be referring to this incident in the following chapter.

⁵² M.J.Shapiro (1988:99), (my emphasis).

security priority for the US. This vindication includes, the “explicit acceptance” of observers that “American foreign policy as it is” reflects the “tacit acceptance of the representational codes with which” the official analysis of the problem “identifies subjects, objects, and events.”⁵³ Therefore it was important to secure an operation (the ends) which had been in preparation for a long time. Furthermore, the problem as such had even more importance in the context of the new military considerations produced by the bipolar environment. Along these lines Latin America in general and Guatemala in particular were in the 1950s (and in the following three decades) trapped dramatically (and quite unnecessarily) into a globalised theatre of bipolar confrontation; hence the necessity to attend the problem with a pragmatic approach (when considered convenient). From this arose the need to build upon the creation of what has been considered, when pondering Kennan’s view of the Soviets, as the *representation of danger*;⁵⁴ which, later on, particularly in the face of the Cuban revolution, was going to have an even more important utilisation.

On this “representation” lies the most important component of the intervention in Guatemala insofar as it is the result of an “impoverished, dehistoricized image” of Guatemala. It is about what Shapiro calls the “denarrativization,” which was central to

“the United States’ legitimization of its participation in destroying Guatemala’s democratic institutions. If the story were extended we would learn that Arbenz first sought American military aid and was refused and more important perhaps, that the lack of security felt by the Arbenz regime, which was finally expressed in the acceptance of Soviet bloc support, is tied to a whole series of American moves that made it *reasonable to feel a threat*.”⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid:100.

⁵⁴ See D.Campbell (1992:27). Campbell brings to our attention some of the thoughts of Kennan in the famous ‘Long Telegram’ which underlined the ideological roots from which containment stemmed: “it is not Russian military power [Kennan said] that is threatening us; it is Russian *political* power ... If it is not entirely a military threat, I doubt that it can effectively be met entirely by military means.” Kennan’s strong ideological view was significantly more rhetorical in its characterisation of the Soviets, he was actually discerning a broader threat: “the present system of Soviet Russia is unalterably opposed to our traditional system, that there can be no middle ground or compromise between the two.” Quoted in *ibid*:27. See also G.Kennan (1947:566-582); and above chapter-2.

⁵⁵ M.J.Shapiro (1988:99-100), (my emphasis). Although I agree with the general idea exposed by Shapiro, there is some polemic on whether there actually was such a thing as “the acceptance of Soviet bloc support.”

And the implications in the design of the ('fashionable') policy resulting from the above polemic correlation will be the subject analysed in the following chapter, and in the Conclusions.

CHAPTER 8

OPERATION “PBSUCCESS”, GETTING INTO GUATEMALA: THE FINAL *PUTSCH*

Nuestra historia se reduce a
un diálogo entre un liberalismo
claudicante y una casta conservadora ...

La tercera voz, rara vez
ha sido la del pueblo,
sino la voz dominante
del amo extranjero,
del monopolio internacional,
que las oligarquías
se aprestan a servir
sin condiciones ni escrúpulos.
Enrique Munoz Meany

Dulce Guatemala antigua
doble filo entre dos mares,
el nuevo rostro del crimen
te invade. Ay!
Duro, atiranta tus arcos
tenaz flechera del aire,
David, pastor y pequeño
abatíó al monte más grande.
Tú, quetzal, David de América,
serás la más alta y grande
Rafael Alberti¹

- Introduction

In the following pages I will describe and explain the actual workings of the policy of intervention in Guatemala and the execution of the overthrow of the Arbenz government. While following the general discussion developed in previous chapters, the argument of this chapter will be that the US resorted consistently to its anti-Soviet policy - despite the absence of evidence of Soviet involvement - to a great extent because it lacked any other argument to convince the other actors that the roots of the crisis were mainly economic and not political. Anti-Communism was an established and legitimated weapon of US foreign policy at the time, hence the usefulness of this ideological stratagem to *dismantle* the *political regime* represented by the *October Revolutionaries*. In view of this, militant anti-Communism was wielded as a

¹ Both epigraphs are quoted in G.Toriello (1955:21,241).

strategic instrument. It reflected more domestic political preoccupations, fear of a spreading communist contagion. This obsession with narrow ideological interests renders legislators myopic to long-term diplomatic considerations, against a *political domestic enemy* within an open broad ideological dispute only in order to achieve a short-term end without considering the importance of building up - by foreseeing beyond its immediate ideological interest - a consistent long-term consolidation of reciprocal links with the countries of the region.

The US disregarded the diplomatic course. The means used to achieve a consensus for the destruction of the Guatemalan regime made this apparent. If any reason must be stressed for this latter point to be explained, it was that Washington considered its relationship with its neighbours as a given: the submissive stand of most of the Latin American rulers at the time meant the US had never to face any objective dissent to its policies in the region, (see chapter 6). It had long established control of the region without the need of any political-diplomatic undertaking. The United States was not prepared to enter the modern political regional arena with something new to offer. It remained wedded to a fanatical, strongly ideological, coercive national security policy.

- Operation *Pbsuccess*: the first adversities

The design of the policy in Guatemala, as described in chapter 7, could not avoid revealing various contradictions during the foreign policy making process, for example, the overwhelming confusion among administration officials during the first days of the military intervention (June 18-27, 1954). The reason for this crisis was that Eisenhower was told that a disaster had overtaken the CIA's modest air force, which consisted of a few World War II P-47 Thunderbolts. One had already been shot down in action and another had crashed outside Guatemala City. In the light of the success enjoyed by Jerry Fred DeLarm's raids on Guatemala City the director of the CIA, Allen Dulles, urged that the destroyed aircraft be replaced immediately and the invasion continued. Yet, the downing of US aircraft prompted Henry Holland, the senior official for Latin America in the State Department, to oppose Dulles vigorously.

Holland argued that further involvement would unnecessarily expose the US to the hated charge of intervention in the continent's affairs.² Since US participation was secret, the downing of aircraft and news of the President's action might be leaked, so Holland reasoned. This reinforced his opposition to Dulles. Dulles, however, felt that there could be no stopping at that point, especially after the preceding months of careful preparation and support for Castillo Armas (see chapter 4). On June 10, 1953, President Eisenhower himself recorded the dispute between his key advisors:

“ ... different people, including Mr. [J.F.] Dulles and a member of the State Department and so on, came into my office to give their differing views. A meeting was arranged that afternoon (June 22) with J.F. Dulles, A. Dulles, and Henry F. Holland. The point at issue was whether the US should cooperate in replacing the bombers ... The sense of our meeting was far from unanimous. Henry [Holland], a sincere and dedicated public servant and a real expert in Latin American affairs, made no secret of his conviction that the US should keep hands off [Guatemala] ... Others, however, felt that our agreeing to replace the bombers was the only hope for Castillo Armas.”³

What follows, however, is quite representative of the particular way in which this decision was taken and of the personal involvement of Eisenhower in the operation:

“... ‘What do you think Castillo's chances would be’, I asked Allen Dulles, ‘without the aircraft?’ His answer was unequivocal: ‘About zero’. ‘Suppose we supply the aircraft. What would the chances be then?’ Again the CIA chief did not hesitate: ‘about 20 percent’. I considered the matter carefully ... It seemed to me that to refuse to cooperate in providing indirect support to a strictly anti-Communist faction in this struggle would be contrary to the letter and spirit of the Caracas resolution ... In any event, our proper course of action - indeed my duty - was clear to me. We would replace the airplanes. [Later on] I told [Dulles], ‘Allen, that figure of 20 percent was persuasive. It showed me that you had thought this matter through realistically. If you had told me that the chances would be 90 percent, I would have had a much more difficult decision’ ... [He told me later], ‘Mr. President when I saw Henry [Holland] walking into your

² Although this was proved true at the Caracas Conference, Latin Americans, except for a few delegations, did not dare oppose openly the pre-arranged mandate that Dulles's delegation imposed when the final resolution was drawn up. See below in this chapter and in the Conclusions.

³ D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:425).

office with three large *law books* under his arm, I knew *he had lost* his case already.”⁴

That was the kind of atmosphere in which major state decisions at the outset of intervention in Guatemala were taken. If there were any doubts as to whether President Eisenhower was directly in charge of the militant anti-Communist policies advocated by Foster Dulles, they were cleared up by this intervention. In his memoirs Eisenhower described the Guatemalan case in great detail and with pride.⁵ The elimination of Arbenz (for which Eisenhower later boasted a major responsibility), was in fact the only CIA covert operation he mentions. At the end of June, at a news conference he declared that he *had heard* that the “Communists and their great supporters were leaving Guatemala. If I would try to conceal the fact that this gives me great satisfaction, I would just be deceitful. Of course it has given me great satisfaction.”⁶

On the other hand, the extraordinary interest that the approach by Eisenhower unveils, appears to contradict Dulles’s contention that the Guatemalan problem was a *non-United States* problem. This apparent contradiction gives considerable weight to the thesis that the US *politics of representation* toward Guatemala emerged from confused and contradictory bureaucratic proposals and a pervasive atmosphere of clandestine plotting within certain branches of the bureaucracy and administration. The following description of the main facts of the intervention, then, is made in view of these features.

The Model: a “New Basic Concept” of foreign policy

At the same time as the doctrinaire tools of foreign policy mentioned above were produced, a more comprehensive plan of action was formulated. This was embodied in a “New Basic Concept” of US foreign policy. The new concept was embraced by “Operation Solarium,”

⁴ Ibid:425-426, (my emphasis). Note the flamboyant terms of Dulles’s reasoning.

⁵ See *ibid*:421-427.

⁶ S.Ambrose (1984:196). The tone of this statement shows the frivolous arrogance of statesmanship. This is the textual use of English in Eisenhower’s expression as quoted by Ambrose.

an initiative that Eisenhower heartily approved. For the purposes of this initiative he appointed eighteen national security officials to convene for several weeks in order to establish a strategy for confronting the SU. The immediate result was a resolution to “take selective aggressive actions of a limited scope, involving moderately increased risks of general war, to eliminate Soviet-dominated areas within the free world and to reduce Soviet power in the satellite periphery.”⁷

One of the immediate results of that approach was *Pbsuccess*. As has been stressed above,

“Eisenhower, not John F. Kennedy, presided over [US’s] first modern ‘counterinsurgency operations’. Unlike Kennedy’s failed effort at the Bay of Pigs counter-revolution in Guatemala was backed up by air support and a thorough and long-lasting ‘cover-up’... For almost thirty years, that cover-up served to obscure and trivialize public knowledge of Eisenhower’s activities. Yet, the overthrow of Dr. Mossadegh, in Iran, and ... Arbenz, in Guatemala, have from that day to this served as models of successful [US] intervention. Repeated again and again, the events that occurred in Iran and Guatemala during 1953 and 1954 globalized that aspect of [US] foreign policy known as ‘gunboat diplomacy’.”⁸

It is believed that operation *Pbsuccess* (“slug” in CIA jargon) had an estimated cost of US\$5 to US\$7 million. It involved 100 US citizens, as well as many other mercenaries from Central America. It included numerous diplomats. And it involved a select intervention cast (the joint *CIA-State Guatemalan Group*):

“Virtually all of the CIA’s chief officials played important roles. At the top was Allen Dulles. [Richard] Bissell, Dulles’s special assistant during the ... operation and deputy director of plans for the later attempt to oust [Fidel] Castro, states that Dulles ‘was closer to the Guatemala operation than he was to the Bay of

⁷ W.B.Pickett (1985:1-10); B.W.Cook (1981:181-183).

⁸ Ibid:218. Such is the importance of the Guatemalan case even now that for decades, documents that related to these events were and are kept not only secret but hidden. As noted in chapter 6, Ronald Schneider was the only beneficiary of the removal of the fifty thousand documents from the Guatemalan National Palace in July 1954 by the CIA-supported *Guatemalan National Committee for Defence Against Communism*. These documents were microfilmed and brought to the US through a clean-up organised by a CIA-State Department, see chapters-5-6. As pointed out in above chapters, the documents were later processed, analysed, and used to form the basis of Schneider’s book. Recent declassified material exposes the CIA inform on the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961, see, “CIA exposes own bungling,” *The Guardian*, February 23, 1998, p. 11.

Figs. [Frank] Wisner, the deputy director of plans in 1954, was directly in charge of preparations, and he received significant support from Tracy Barnes, another top assistant. In the field the major figures were Colonel J.C. King; Al Haney, the 'field commander'; and E. Howard Hunt, the chief of political action."⁹

The model for *Pbsuccess* was *Ajax*, the CIA coup the previous year in Iran, both being early (post-World War II) triumphs in the field of overthrowing governments. Kermit ("Kim") Roosevelt, who was the CIA chief operative for project *Ajax*, recalled, the CIA's success in Iran so inspired Eisenhower and Foster Dulles that they wanted to duplicate it in Guatemala.¹⁰ The *technique* for the coup, as in Iran, involved turning the Army against Arbenz, frightening him into leaving the country (hence the importance of the bombing of Guatemala City), then staging a coup. Eisenhower's guide-lines to the CIA were that there was to be no direct US intervention (which was later contradicted by his decision to send more US-piloted airplanes to save the operation from disaster). As a military man and as Army Chief of Staff (November '45 to February '48) and the virtual commander of Allied forces in World War II, Eisenhower strongly believed in the value of clandestine operations (moreover, he was fascinated by them, thus his interest in the Guatemalan operation was not the exception); as a result he was perhaps the best man to evaluate both the advantages and disadvantages for this kind of Cold War assignment. This skill was put to use in Guatemala quite efficiently after securing the support of the military.¹¹

The evaluation of domestic conditions

Whilst a sophisticated evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of clandestine military operations existed, an exploration of the regional conditions of the Guatemalan problem was required. And for this purpose, Adolf Berle was appointed as Eisenhower's representative. Adolf Berle was a high ranking corporate lawyer, closely identified with the

⁹ See R.H.Immerman (1980-1981:641). For more on the intervention cast and lobby, see S.Jonas&D.Tobies (1974:59-66).

¹⁰ Roosevelt was offered command of the Guatemalan mission which he declined. See K.Roosevelt (1979:106-108,210). See also S.E.Ambrose (1981).

¹¹ Ibid:155-178,215-234.

Democratic Party, and former Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. He was also a prominent member of the Council on Foreign Relations. After spending some days in Central America in 1953, Berle stressed in a confidential report that

“the Guatemalan situation is quite simply the penetration of Central America by a frankly Russian-dominated Communist group ... There should be no hesitation in tackling diplomatic exchanges with surrounding governments, in *quite overtly* working with the forces opposed to Communism, and eventually backing a political tide which will force the Guatemalan government either to exclude its Communists or to change’.”¹²

This view is not surprising coming from the US officialism of those times. It tended to think and proceed in terms of black and white, good and evil, (it was *the age of anxiety* as Walters reminds us, see chapter 7). Berle was convinced (to a great extent a result of his agreement with José Figueres, the Costa Rican president) that a local alliance against Communism was necessary, for the “United States cannot tolerate a Kremlin-controlled Communist government in this hemisphere.” Consequently, Washington should organise a “counter movement”

“capable of using force if necessary, based on a cooperative neighboring republic. In practice, this would mean Nicaragua. It could hardly be done from Mexico ... The course of action I should recommend is ... to work out Central American ‘Political Defense’ action, using ... Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica as chief elements, with what help can be obtained from Honduras ... The key to such action ... seems to be Costa Rica ... A theatre commander for a job like the Guatemalan operation does not, apparently, exist in Central America ... Guatemala is an unfriendly country and our own people - or Costa Ricans and Salvadorians friendly to us - ought to go in and organize in the country. This would have to be sub-rosa. In other countries whose governments will be brought to cooperate, the organization can be in the open and it should be done by nationals of those countries ... A quiet understanding should be reached between the governments of Costa Rica, Salvador, Honduras and at least some powerful elements in Nicaragua ... The result ought to be an organization of a party of Democratic Defense in the five Central American republics, taking as its first job the clearing out of Communists in Guatemala.”¹³

¹² Quoted in R.H.Immerman (1982:128), (my emphasis). See also A.A. Berle (1973). A similar mission followed in the same year, headed by the President’s brother, Milton; see, DOSB, “United States-Latin American Relations,” op. cit., and chapter-7. Although the above premises provided a reason for the intervention, it is still surprising to find how easily these *reasons* were just thrown into the arena as axioms of the geopolitical game without the production of any proof.

¹³ Quotations from Berle Diary, Apr. 1, 1953, A.A.Berle (1973:615-619).

The US was able to carry out the policies of intervention in Latin America because its defence of “*American*” values (thus, the national interest) implied that those values had to be both preserved and promoted through the use of police-role like measures. Intervention became both a necessary and a rational tool. This outcome occurred because there were local political actors willing to accept and to facilitate extreme forms of involvement in the affairs of the countries of the continent. In order to be able to carry out this policy, the US allies’ regional support was decisive. The historical record shows that the US plot against Arbenz was launched from and centered in Managua. The US enjoyed the direct support of Anastasio Somoza and General Rafael Trujillo, the dictators of Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. It was also supported by President Juan Manuel Gálvez of Honduras. The coup also obtained the support of the Costa Rican president-to-be, the Social Democrat José Figueres, who, as stated in Berle’s memoirs, as early as March 1953 originally instigated it. Berle reports: “Figueres ... said that he and all his friends fully recognized that a Kremlin-Communist government was impossible ...”¹⁴ Hence the need to destroy the Guatemalan regime.

- Regional alliances, domestic opposition and military might: the covert operation

As a result, the means to guarantee the success of this clandestine operation was the organisation of an infrastructure of regional consensus among the main actors surrounding Guatemala. It was about the manufacturing (as the Caracas Conference showed graphically) of a network of alliances in order to guarantee, as stated above by Shapiro, the safety of “the *primary* legitimating moves of decision making practice”¹⁵ This infrastructure included, **a)** a network of local states which supported the plan, **b)** an inner circle of US officials (including ambassadors) who assisted in the planning and execution of the operation, and, **c)** a domestic incipient climate of opposition which functioned as the trigger against Arbenz. In short, a good example of what was subsequently, the (“decisionist”) model, which followed in the *fashioning* of continental alliances.

¹⁴ Ibid:616.

¹⁵ M.J.Shapiro (1988:99), see above,(my italics).

Whiting Willauer, US Ambassador to Honduras during the coup openly discussed (as far back as 1961) the CIA's role. In a little-noticed testimony before a Senate Committee, Willauer declared that after the Guatemalan coup he received a telegram from Allen Dulles. In it, the CIA Director "stated in effect that the revolution could not have succeeded but for what I did. I am very proud of that telegram." Then the questioning, as shown by the Senate Committee Hearing, went as follows:

"Q. Mr. Ambassador, was there something of a team in working to overthrow the Arbenz government in Guatemala, or were you alone in the operation?

A. There was a team.

Q. Jack Peurifoy was down there?

A. Yes, Jack was on the team over in Guatemala; that is the principal man, and we had ... Ambassador Robert Hill, in Costa Rica ... and we had Ambassador Tom Whelan in Nicaragua, where a lot of activities were going. And, of course, there were a number of CIA operatives in the picture.

Q. What was Mr. Dulles's involvement in that area?

A. Mr. Allen Dulles?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, the CIA was helping to equip and train the anti-Communist revolutionary forces.

Q. Would you say you were the man in charge in the field in this general area of all these operations?

A. I certainly was called upon to perform very important duties, particularly to keep the Honduran Government - which was *scared to death* about the possibilities of themselves being overthrown - keep them in line so they would allow this revolutionary activity to continue, based in Honduras."¹⁶

¹⁶ Internal Security Subcommittee, US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 87th Congress, 1st Session, *Hearings on Communism in the Caribbean*, part 13, July 27, 1961. Testimony by Whiting Willaver, pp. 865-866, (my emphasis).

Willauer's testimony reveals the pressures behind the other Central American republics' actions. They were, according to Willauer, "scared to death" to be overthrown. Perhaps Willauer understood the might of the US to ensure compliance and alliance between the local hard liners and US government officials. The consummation of the other's *existing* relied on the following axiom: the submissive states acquiesced to their powerful neighbour; and this created both the conditions and atmosphere for an asymmetric correlation to take place in a very concrete (and representational) sphere. As a result, there was, on the one hand, the significant, and in most cases explicit and highly symbolical, acceptance of these countries' elites to grant to the US a right to intervene. On the other hand there was strong pressure from the US through different kinds of alibis in creating an *active consensus* among Guatemala's neighbours.

This explains why, apart from the success in popularising the idea that Arbenz was a Communist, Dulles and his team - most prominently John Moors Cabot - created "the test for determining United States policy toward Latin American countries was whether they were with us or *against* us."¹⁷ The evidence suggests that they *were with* the United States as already stressed above. Hence, the charge of Arbenz that the plot had the "acquiescence of the Government of the North."¹⁸ Arbenz contended that the operation was known by the code name *El Diablo* (the Devil) and that rebels were trained at *El Tamarindo*, President Somoza's plantation, at Puerto Cabezas (which became the air base for the Bay of Pigs operation seven years later), and on the island of Momotombito in Lake Managua. The Guatemalan Government also charged that a Colonel Carl T. Struder, who was retired from the US Army, was training the sabotage teams. It said (later acknowledged by US secret official despatches) that:

"[after] Colonel Tachito Somoza, the [Nicaragua's] President's son, had put at Castillo Armas' disposition an arms offer made by H.F. Neordes & Company of Hamburg including machine guns, mortars, napalm bombs and Vampire Jet aircraft. Funds to pay had been partially assured by Tachito's signature and

¹⁷ F.Kirchwey (1954:21). Let us bear in mind Lipset's view on the policy makers' approach to international conflict which, as a reflection of a popularised Manichean culture ("black and white"), permeated foreign policy decisions, (see chapters-3,5-6).

¹⁸ NA 714.00 (W)/2-554, February 5, 1954, op. cit., pp. 1-6. William Krieg said in his confidential report that the allusion "did not cite the United States by name, but it was evident that it sought the impression that the US stood behind the coup." The naïveté of this statement confirms either that Krieg did not know about the plot, or that the cover-up included explicitly ignoring it in the official communiqués in the name of the operation's success, see, NA 714.00 (W)/2-554, *ibid.*, p. 2. See further on in this chapter and above.

partly by ‘other sources which had provided Castillo Armas with ‘rivers of money’.’¹⁹

The training of Castillo-Armas forces, “after obtaining President Somoza’s permission”, was in fact taking place on Momotombito, a volcanic island. In this context Castillo Armas planned to

“disembark troops sailing from Nicaraguan ports on the Guatemalan Pacific Coast, bomb neighbouring towns and seize Pacific Coast airports, simultaneously attack across [the] Honduran frontier and join internal elements which would rise in his support. Arms for this purpose had already been brought clandestinely to Guatemala City and Tiquistate, the latter by way of [US-owned] IRCA Railroad.”²⁰

All of this was accomplished with the support of the CIA’s Air Force: the handful of P-47 Thunderbolts and C-47 transports which operated out of Managua International Airport (piloted by US officers).

What was not said at the time was that the military equipment provided to the ‘liberation’ movement through Nicaragua, particularly new aircraft, was of dubious origins. Nicaragua directly acquired these planes. They had been ‘sold’ by the US Air Force to the government of Somoza in order to mask the United States involvement in Guatemala, which, by that time, was being discussed at the United Nations. Accordingly, as an alibi for the transaction to take place, Nicaragua had to

“put down US\$150,000 in cash to purchase the planes. After some interesting financial legerdemain, Nicaraguan Ambassador to Washington Guillermo Sevilla-Sacasa managed to come up with cover payment, and the new planes were dispatched to Nicaragua. Ultimately, it was CIA money that paid for them. The planes were flown down unarmed, to be armed upon arrival.”²¹

¹⁹ NA 714.00/1-2954, January 29, 1954, (State Department Telegram), pp. 1, 2. State Department officials in Washington said they would not comment because that would ‘give the story a dignity it doesn’t deserve’.

²⁰ NA 714.00/1-2954, *ibid.*, p. 2.

²¹ D.Wise&T.B.Ross (1964:178).

The purchase followed one of the Joint Chiefs of Staff guide-lines to be followed in order to defend the “Hemisphere against aggression from non-American states [for which purpose] the co-operation of other American republics in resisting such aggression would be highly desirable, if not absolutely necessary.”²² In view of this, in J.C.S. 629/8 the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that “They [J.C.S.] feel that, from the long range point of view, [the] national interest will be served best by supplying these republics with standardized equipment of American manufacture in amounts appropriate to the size and composition of the forces each country should maintain for purposes of hemispheric security.”²³

According to an article by journalist Frida Kirckwey, and subsequently confirmed in the review of some of the archival materials (almost immediately after the coup) the policy was launched with the agreement of the main actors of the political establishment in Washington. There was essential consensus on Capitol Hill about how to deal with the Guatemala problem:

“Right-wing Senators echoed the Administration’s line. As early as January 14 [1954] Senator Alexander Wiley, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, charged that Guatemala had ‘become a serious beachhead for international Communism in this hemisphere’. A few weeks later he referred to the expulsion from Guatemala of two US journalists as the ‘latest sickening demonstration of the Communist octopus at work’. News reports obviously stemming from State Department sources began explaining that the time was at hand when “we” would have to do something about the ‘Communist threat in Guatemala.’”²⁴

²² NA, State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, “Military Objectives in Latin America,” Box 23, Central Decimal File, Record Group 218, 1946-1947, 092 (1-18-45), SWNCC 18, 7 February, 1945, p. 5.

²³ NA “Military Objectives in Latin America,” op. cit., p. 5.

²⁴ F.Kirckwey (1954:21). The two journalists referred to were Marshall Bannell of the National Broadcasting Company and Sydney Gruson of the *New York Times*. Gruson had written an article which was considered, in the official communiqué, to have “systematically defamed and slandered this republic.” See “Sydney Gruson expulsado del país,” *Diario de Centro América*, Feb. 2, 1954, p. 1 (in which the official communiqué is included); “El periodista no es un difamador público,” *Diario de Centro América*, Feb. 4, 1954, p. 1; “Guatemala Ousts Two US Newsmen,” *The New York Times*, Feb. 3, 1954, p. 7.

Peurifoy enters the scene: the last stage

Some time before the regional political network was shaped, Peurifoy had already entered the scene. He did so as a reliable intermediary, making real Dulles's strategic thinking, and putting in motion the entire strategy of intervention. The first step that the Eisenhower administration took was to provide the *agents* of intervention - among which the ambassador was the central figure - political ammunition to plot (via the discrediting of Arbenz and his reformist policies) the overthrow of the Guatemalan government.

It is quite significant that Peurifoy - former Ambassador to Greece during that country's civil war - was subsequently appointed as the US representative in Guatemala in late October 1953. Schlesinger & Kinzer have written about him in the following terms:

"Peurifoy had drawn considerable attention in Washington for his aggressive behavior in Greece from 1950 to 1953, when he jumped into the Greek political fray and rammed together a right-wing coalition government acceptable to the United States ... Leftist Greek guerrillas had nicknamed him the 'Butcher of Greece'. The flamboyant, tough-talking Peurifoy ... was just what the Dulles brothers wanted. He was a brassy anti-Communist in diplomat's clothing who loved action and never entertained doubts about his mission ... Like the Dulles brothers, he did not seem to recognise any shading of beliefs. He spoke no Spanish and knew nothing about Guatemala, but he expressed himself with certitude on the issue of 'Reds' in the Arbenz Government. As in Greece, he also understood how to scare a small country ... Peurifoy was a crude but potent gun aimed at the head of the Arbenz administration."²⁵

To that characterisation US journalist Flora Lewis contributed her first-hand account published in the *New York Times Magazine*, shortly after the coup. In it she argued that it was "jarringly wrong" to call Peurifoy a diplomat. Lewis' assessment adds to Peurifoy's wife's naive account (see footnote) on the true personality of her husband: "he is much more the

²⁵ See S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:132,133); See also D.Wise&T.B.Ross (1965:110); and M.McClintock (1992:chapter-12). Immerman argues that "Peurifoy's appointment is perhaps the best evidence that by summer's end the United States project was gaining momentum," see, R.H.Immerman (1982:137). Peurifoy's wife, Betty Jane, unwittingly describes these features in the following poem that she wrote the day of the coup: "*Sing a song of quetzals, pockets full of peace! The junta's in place, they've taken out a lease; The Commies are in hiding, just across the street; To the embassy of Mexico they beat a quick retreat. And pistol-packing Peurifoy looks mighty optimistic For the land of Guatemala is no longer Communistic!*" See *Time*, July 26, 1954, p. 34.

politician than the diplomat [Lewis wrote] ... but he is striking at it because he goes politicking around foreign countries instead of at home among the voters.”²⁶ This kind of diplomat (and diplomacy) *articulated* the most important features of US discourse and action on Communism and the Soviet question.

It is, with the arrival of Peurifoy on 29 October, 1953 as an ambassador, that the US efforts to intensify the pressure against Arbenz are most significant.²⁷ Gleijeses described one of Peurifoy’s particular methods when getting involved in domestic affairs. He refers to a meeting that took place between the two men and their wives in the following way:

“Peurifoy had one serious conversation with Arbenz, a six-hour dinner on December 16, 1953. Only the ambassador, the president and their wives were present. Since Peurifoy knew only two Spanish words [‘muchos (sic) gracias’] Dona María [Arbenz’ wife] served as interpreter ... Peurifoy played the role of the inquisitor, besieging his host with precise questions about communist influence in Guatemala; Arbenz, on the defensive, offered lame responses.”²⁸

Days after this encounter the ambassador sent Dulles his five-page report with the following legendary assertion: “I am *definitely* convinced that if the President is not a Communist, he will certainly do until one comes along.”²⁹ Thus, while Guatemala represented the first Cold War crisis in the continent, it was a *guinea pig*, the first ever such occurrence in this region of the world (see chapter 7). As a result, the intervention in Guatemala was turned into the first *modern* US intervention in Latin America after World War-II; a remarkable achievement without resort to US marines. This “event [argues Immerman] was a significant link in the unfolding chain of Cold War history.”³⁰

²⁶ See, F.Lewis (1954:9).

²⁷ Let us stress that this occurred while President Eisenhower’s diplomatic missions (e.g., his brother’s and Berle’s) were in motion. This might explain why these missions might have been a good way of masking the real policy towards Guatemala.

²⁸ P.Gleijeses (1991:255).

²⁹ Ibid:255, (my emphasis).

³⁰ R.H.Immerman (1980-1981:629); It was also, as Gregorio Selser says, the “first dirty war.” See G.Selser (1961).

In line with the above, between the time Peurifoy was appointed and the fall of Arbenz in January 27, 1954, the ambassador travelled frequently to Washington for “consultations.” During these trips, Peurifoy was presumably involved (this from the tone of his associate’s, William Krieg, secret despatches) in a series of intense meetings with Secretary Dulles and the CIA in order to establish the conditions for the arrival of Castillo Armas. Although not even the declassified archival materials establish the real context and climate in which the main facts about intervention were discussed, as well as some of the most secret resolutions, those secret meetings were essential to the decisions concerning the intervention. These plans formulated in those meetings represented the crystallisation of old arrangements which had started from the very moment of Arbenz’s arrival to the presidency. The plans were secret, and apparently not even Peurifoy’s immediate deputies, such as Krieg, knew about them. Gleijeses, quoting one of his interviews with Krieg, argues that

“the rest of the embassy staff was not informed about a covert operation against Arbenz. It was only in February or March 1954 [either right before or right after the Caracas Conference] that Peurifoy told ... Krieg and a few other embassy officials (including the military attachés and members of the military missions) that a plot was underway ... In fact he was ‘very involved’. Before he left for Guatemala, the CIA ‘made certain that it would have a direct line to him at all times’; to avoid leaks, the agency communicated with Peurifoy through ‘back channels.’ Once received by the CIA Guatemala station, the messages would be hand-carried or conveyed verbally to the Ambassador by Birch O’Neil, the CIA station chief.”³¹

The Secret planning

In a “secret” 1952 Department of State “Memorandum of Conversation” an account on “Central American plots and plans” is provided. The document shows how the Guatemalan issue had been raised within state circles in Washington. It reveals the extent to which the State Department had learned and was informed of (indeed, involved in) the plans on “what to do with Guatemala” and how to “cut the cancerous [Communist] growth in Guatemala.” As the account of the interview with Guillermo Sevilla-Sacasa, Ambassador of Nicaragua, goes, we learn, for example, that (Edward Miller, Assistant Secretary of State)

³¹ See, P.Glejeses (1991:252-253), also in S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:135).

Miller reported that “in connection with the Panama talks the Ambassador [Sevilla Sacasa] also made a point to indicate that the group (Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Cuba) was thinking about Col. Castillo Armas, who was now in Honduras, possibly to lead the ‘plan’.”³²

A further example of this strategy is found in a “secret” dispatch sent by William L. Krieg to Peurifoy in January 27, 1954. After stating that in order to succeed in the “revolt in the near future,” he suggested that Peurifoy consider, laying “the ground while you are in Washington for going ahead with our *longer range* plans for increasing the pressure on Guatemala.”³³ He added:

“It might now be a good idea to see what can be done along the lines set forth in your letter to Mr. Cabot of December 28 in which you recommended *the Guatemalan Armed Forces as a primary target*, conjointly with the economic and other pressures recommended in your telegram 163 of December 23. In this connection, Opposition people who at the beginning of last week feared that the present ruling clique in the Army would take over the Government before they could act now see such a possibility as the only means of driving the Communists out of their positions in the near future.”³⁴

Krieg disclosed to Peurifoy, in the same despatch, the opinions of “two contacts” and provided his “own feelings” on the matter as well as the possible action to be followed:

“... the top Army leaders are not likely to act unless they believe their present comfortable positions to be in danger. Thus if they *believed* the Communists were about to take over the Government lock, stock and barrel, they would probably act to prevent such a move. The difficulty is that there is no *reason to believe* the Communists have any such plans for the present.”³⁵

³² NA, Box 3241, 714.00/7-3150, September 26, 1952, pp. 1,2. This testimony indicates that Washington orchestrated a plot which later was explained by the US ambassador (Henry Cabot Lodge) to the UN, as an “internal conflict among Guatemalans.”

³³ NSA, “William L. Krieg to The Honourable John E. Peurifoy, Central America and Panama Affairs, ARA, Department of State, Washington, D.C. ‘Secret.’” American Embassy, Guatemala, January 27, 1954, p. 1. Krieg is the same official who, in an interview with Gleijeses, said in coincidence with what Ronald Schneider later wrote, that the communist leaders “were very honest, very committed. This was the tragedy: the only people who were committed to hard work were those who were, by definition our worst enemies”, see, P.Gleijeses (1991:7) (my underlying). See also chapter-6.

³⁴ NSA, “William Krieg to the Honourable,” op. cit., p. 2, (my emphasis, capitals in the original).

³⁵ NSA, “William Krieg to the Honourable,” *ibid.*, p. 2, (my emphasis).

This view of Krieg revealed to a certain extent the *relative* influence that the Guatemalan Communists had - contrary to the public allegations made by the US - over the workings of government. In the light of Krieg's reasoning, it seemed troublesome for Washington to increase the pressure on the government by pressing the Army to intervene. That a highly involved official such as Krieg accepted that the Communists did not have "any such plans [of taking over] for the moment," reflects, a) the US acknowledging the absence of *total* communist power within the Guatemalan state, and, b) the need for the US to inflate (discourse included) such a presence in order to emphasise (politically) the need to intervene. Accordingly, a legitimised rationalisation of the policy had to follow. After depicting the local scenario as uncertain and unfeasible for a likely "*American* action", Krieg suggested what should be the course to follow in the near future:

"Our complementary line of offense is of course the pressure which can be brought on Guatemala through the Caracas Conference and through some at least of the measures outlined in your telegram 153 under reference. These seem to me to be an important preliminary for the Army or anyone else *to act* in view of the current developments."³⁶

In another "secret" foreign service despatch from Krieg (no. 643), labelled, "Guatemalan police rounds up suspected conspirators and other opposition elements," he refers to a conversation with the representative of Ydígoras Fuentes, Guillermo Dávila, in an eerie manner:

"... all that was needed to galvanize the anti-Communist opposition was for a leader with the necessary material support to move. He [Dávila] indicated that Ydígoras was the leader, as Castillo Armas' faction was infiltrated by Guatemalan government agents and hinted that the US might furnish the necessary material aid. He was told [the reports adds] that the US *was committed* to a policy of non-intervention, that how this applied to communist penetration would be decided at the Caracas Conference in March, and that meanwhile *neither* the US nor the hemispheric community could choose

³⁶ NSA, "William Krieg to the Honourable," *ibid.*, pp. 2-3, (my emphasis).

among the rival anti-Communist leaders as this was an affair for the Guatemalan themselves.”³⁷

By detaching itself from the leaders of the counter-revolution (“an affair for the Guatemalans themselves”), and by granting the Caracas Conference the high responsibility of arranging a solution to the crisis, Washington maneuvered the regional powers into supporting its institutionalisation of a diplomatic pattern. This was revealed in the negotiations that Peurifoy carried out both in Guatemala City and Washington. And yet, the same pattern was implemented at the Caracas Conference in a more *open* fashion. For this time, it signified the beginning of a diplomatic offensive aimed at exerting the final putsch against the Arbenz administration.

As it turned out, Ydígoras’ rank and role in the operation were over-estimated. Ydígoras himself has acknowledged that he was “in complete agreement, that he [Castillo-Armas] was to lead an armed invasion to overthrow the Arbenz government, and immediately after to convoke *free elections*. I was to urge the fullest support, strategic and financial, to the movement.”³⁸ In his memoirs Ydígoras declares further: “I patiently waited word from Castillo regarding our ‘gentleman’s pact’, and the promised ‘free elections’. My patience at length was exhausted, for I heard nothing, and my next move was to approach the Guatemalan Embassy in San Salvador to solicit an entrance visa for my country.”³⁹

The above reference to ‘free elections’, particularly those that made possible Arévalo’s and Arbenz’s accession to power, underlines the irony of Ydígoras’ utterance. It is complemented by the cynicism of Thomas Mann, a senior State Department official involved in the overthrow of Arbenz, who said that their ‘free elections’ proved the US should not “support all constitutional governments under all circumstances.” This reasoning on ‘bad’ and

³⁷ NA, 714.00/1-2754, “Guatemalan Police Rounds Up Suspected Conspirators and Other Opposition Elements,” Secret Foreign Service Despatch, The Department of State, Washington, D.C., January 27, 1954, pp. 2-3, (my emphasis). As the evidence indicates, this is a false statement. Again, either Krieg ignored the plot or quite cynically he omitted the fact that Castillo Armas was already the man chosen by Washington to perpetrate the invasion.

³⁸ M. Ydígoras-Fuentes (1963:51), (my emphasis).

³⁹ Ibid:52.

'good' constitutional governments was firmly rooted in the minds of Nixon and Kissinger when the US-sponsored coup in Chile took place successfully in 1973.⁴⁰

In another section of the same memo, Krieg assured ambassador Peurifoy that his "present visit in Washington will give you an opportunity to talk these measures over thoroughly with *interested* persons in the Department to determine which of them are feasible." But above all Krieg stressed to the ambassador what seemed to be one of the urgent needs of the US in order to solve definitively the Guatemalan problem, an emphasis which Peurifoy himself shared, if attention is paid to the underlining he did on this secret dispatch while completing the reading:

"the question of timing is of course particularly important since most of these measures are designed to create an atmosphere favorable to effective activity by dissident Army officers and others, *if they can be influenced to act.*"⁴¹

The Army

In a 1956 account of the overthrow, Arévalo's ambassador to Moscow (1945-46), Luis Cardoza y Aragón, cited an interview with Arbenz in the Havana periodical *Bohemia*. In it Arbenz insisted that Peurifoy had pressured army officers to demand his resignation.⁴² The civil opposition to his government was to have military backing. Moreover, it was organised by a military vanguard approved by the US and commanded by a leader who embodied the *new basic concept* of foreign policy of "Operation Solarium." On 26 January, for instance, a State Department "secret office memorandum" reported the imminent resignation of Colonel Elfego Monzón, a middle-ranking army officer of the Army who served in four of the *juntas* after the

⁴⁰ On Mann's statement, see S.Jonas&D.Tobies (1974:68).

⁴¹ NSA, "William Krieg to the Honourable ...," op. cit., p. 3; I am quoting here the underlined section, (my emphasis).

⁴² Cardoza mentioned this in the chapter "*La Renuncia del Presidente Arbenz*," L.Cardoza y Aragón (1955:177-195). Incidentally, Cardoza's ambassadorship lasted only one year. The Soviets failed to open a legation in Guatemala despite diplomatic relations between the two countries having been established in April 1945. However, Arévalo made use of the opportunity of this lack of reciprocity to shut the legation in May 1946. This event further demonstrates the lack of Soviet presence in Guatemala.

fall of the government. According to that memorandum, Monzón wished to leave as a result of what seemed to be a decision of Arbenz who sought to withdraw Army control of numerous national defence duties. The report stated that

“Colonel Monzón was shocked to learn that the Guardia Civil [the police] had recently received 500 sub-machine guns from Belgium and he was particularly annoyed that despite his position in the Guatemalan Army this delivery had been effected without his having been informed ... My informant was of the opinion that the police are now better equipped for fighting inside the city than is the Army.”⁴³

The import of arms represented one of the few timid attempts by Arbenz to protect his government from the growing CIA-sponsored revolt, which Arbenz’s government denounced on 29 January (1954). On that day the government’s Information Office released a lengthy statement charging that the “Government of the North” had acquiesced in the international plot to overthrow the government. Although the statement did not quote the US by name, it was evident that it sought to convey the impression that the US stood behind the plot. Shortly after the release of this, the

“Department of State issued a press statement saying that it was ‘*ridiculous and untrue*’ that the US government had acquiesced in a plot against Guatemala, that it was the policy of the US not to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations; and that the United States viewed the issuance of this false accusation immediately prior to the Caracas Conference as a Communist effort to disrupt the work of that Conference and Inter-American solidarity.”⁴⁴

Despite the US accusation that Arbenz was a communist (which was made a day after Arbenz denounced the plot to overthrow his government) senior army officers remained loyal to Arbenz until the end.⁴⁵ This was confirmed by CIA special agent, David Atlee Philips in his

⁴³ NMD, United States Government, “Secret Office Memorandum,” To: Mr. Krieg, From: A.B. Wardlaw, January 26, 1954, p. 1.

⁴⁴ NA, 714.00(W)/2-554, “Joint Week No. 5 from State, Army and Air Departments from S.” The Department of State, Air Pouch, Washington, 5 February, 1954, pp. 2-3. (my emphasis).

⁴⁵ On the charges of Communism see “Cargos de hacer una propaganda mendaz con el Complot rechaza: Gobierno no es Comunista, ni trata de quebrar la solidaridad internacional,” El Imparcial, Feb. 6, 1954; “Enérgica Respuesta de Nuestra Cancillería,” Diario de Centroamérica, Feb. 6, 1954; “Rechaza, por mendaz, la consideración sobre que las publicaciones oficiales son maniobras comunistas encaminadas a desbaratar la Conferencia de Caracas,” Tribuna Popular, Feb. 6, 1954.

book *The Night Watch*. Phillips was sent to Guatemala in 1954 to supervise the broadcasting from Nicaraguan territory of the mercenary radio station *La Voz de la Liberación* which proved decisive in creating a climate of opinion favourable to the coup.⁴⁶ According to his testimony, a senior officer from the Directorate of Plans (DDP) at the CIA headquarters in Washington in charge of briefing Phillips on his mission, Tracy Barnes, was aware that

“the enlisted military seems to be largely apathetic, and the senior officers generally support the President [Arbenz]. One who doesn't is [Colonel] Carlos Castillo Armas ... He is organizing a anti-Communist resistance against the ... Government and will invade if he can recruit enough soldiers and obtain enough military hardware.’ ‘I gather’ [Phillips said] ‘that he will find this support’. ‘Yes’ Barnes replied, ‘that’s why we are here’.”⁴⁷

However, it is clear that a *military conflict* was growing within the confines of the Guatemalan state. Arbenz seemed convinced (though too late) that given the potential and actual disbanding of the Army, the only avenue of salvation left was the enforcing of a militia force among civilians and peasants in order to defend his government.⁴⁸

From the ‘secret’ communiqués on the strategic role of the Army, it can be shown that as early - or as late - as 1954 the US knew what the “real intentions” of the Communists were. Hence they had deliberately to provoke “the reasons” “to believe” that the communists had a real design to take control of Guatemala. Yet, Phillips maintained that the Soviet involvement was non-existent. While describing the briefing meeting of CIA officials involved in *Pbsuccess* and Eisenhower at the White House, he quoted the following conversation between the President and his Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Matthew Ridgway:

⁴⁶ On 6 May, 1954, Krieg informed that according to a reliable informant “he had listened to the clandestine radio station last night and that reception was excellent,” see, NSA, “Clandestine Radio Station in Guatemala,” 6 May, 1954, (Declassified per Executive order 12356, Section 3.3.NND 775111), (one page).

⁴⁷ See D.A.Phillips (1977:34).

⁴⁸ As will be seen further in this chapter, the shipment of arms on the Swedish ship, the *Alfhem*, served that purpose. Although it consisted of a few weapons for an agonising regime, the US, notably John Foster Dulles, inflated the event to the extent that it became the turning point of the invasion and the beginning of the end of the Arbenz’ administration.

“Eisenhower turned to [Ridgway], ‘What about the Russians? Any Reaction? General Ridgway answered, ‘They don’t seem to be up to anything’.”⁴⁹

In the face of the Eisenhower Administration’s acceptance of the non-existent foreign (Soviet) threat in Guatemala there ensued an overwhelming desire to establish its *existence*. This was vital in order to ensure the success of US strategy. The Caracas Conference represented the ultimate forum to carry out the last (constructivist) leg of the (representational) modus operandi convincing potential allies to follow radical measures against the Guatemalan government.

- The Caracas Conference: “making things more natural”

The Tenth Inter-American Conference at Caracas was the climax. As will be seen, the Eisenhower administration focused at *constructing* an apparently reasonable strategy to defend, at that Conference, the US position over Guatemala. Dulles struggled to impose US might upon the Organisation of American States (OAS). The Caracas Conference, and its approved resolution (see further on in this chapter), was designed to be a diplomatic cover up and a propaganda tool. It would serve, as Eisenhower put it, as a “charter for the anti-Communist counter-attack that followed.” As J.F. Dulles told his brother, the Caracas resolution might also “make other things more natural.”⁵⁰ Although this proved partially correct, especially in the face of the Latin American cherishing of the non-intervention principle, we will see how Latin Americans were once more ambushed by Washington’s manoeuvres to retain and control power in the region. The reinforcement of that principle resulted partially from foreign interventionism.⁵¹ All of which complicated further ‘rational’ official policies in the continent, such as Kennedy’s instrumentalist policies and Carter’s acts of contrition. This presented Washington with further political difficulties in its foreign policy making process. Yet, in the

⁴⁹ D.A.Phillips (1977:50). Had the Soviets shown some intent, this was not seen, however, during the whole Guatemalan process.

⁵⁰ D.D.Eisenhower (1963:424); Dulles to Dulles, 7 April 1954, 3-4/54 (I) folder, box 2, Telephone series, Dulles papers in S.G.Rabe (1988:54).

⁵¹ See my contention on anti-Americanism in chapter-5.

short and medium term this proved not to be a serious obstacle to Washington having an overwhelming and indiscriminate influence upon Central American foreign policies in the coming four decades: it still counted on the elites' tacit (and submissive) acceptance that the reasons for power dominated the essential reasons of political reasoning, with critical implications for a region lacking a mature domestic political elite.

The Caracas Conference and the reasons of power

Such was the atmosphere into which the American delegations arrived in March, 1954 when the OAS Conference took place (1-28 March). Both the Guatemalan and the US delegations had been prepared extensively for a Conference originally thought to focus discussion on economic matters, but which ended up being - if unwillingly for most of the countries - a conference whose main issue was the Soviet equation. Many events had already occurred to underscore the importance this Conference would have for the future of Pan-Americanism. Two perspectives predominated: on the one hand Washington insisted on discussing the ideological problem of Soviet influence. On the other, the Latin American governments sought US aid

“in the form of development loans, higher prices for their raw materials, and easier access to the US market. These had been their demands since the end of the Second World War. They had been repeatedly rebuffed by the Truman administration, which gave less aid to the twenty Latin American countries combined than to Belgium and Luxembourg.”⁵²

Seeking to defeat that demand, publicly, the United States stated that what these countries needed was private investment, not US loans. In this respect the National Security Council (NSC 144/1) had already plainly recommended the same as Milton Eisenhower and the Secretary of the Treasury had suggested: “[that] Latin American governments [should] recognize that the bulk of the capital required for their economic development can best be

⁵² P.Glejjeses (1991:267).

supplied by private enterprise and that their *own self-interest* requires the creation of a climate which will attract private investment.”⁵³

By responding in that way to Latin American economic requirements (‘create the conditions for private investment’) the US reinforced its strategy of *convincing* its obedient neighbours (and other allied countries elsewhere) that from then onwards the *other’s* problems’ solution relied on the other’s *disposition* to permit US capital to intervene in the economic development of those countries. And yet the truth was that these countries’ elites and societies were not entirely independent to decide what the ‘right’ measures were in order to boost internal development. This aspect is all the more contradictory if we consider that the domestic confines to ‘create’ the conditions for capitalist investment were themselves limited by the objective socio-political conditions prevalent in most of those countries since the 19th Century; hence the critical implications of that upon national political economies. A vicious circle in itself, indeed. This Latin American predicament which boosted reforms, revolutions and revolts, and ultimately refuted the US-suggested patterns of progress, was the same that Washington had refused to recognise or help to solve, instead sticking obsessively to the ideological (anti-Soviet) national security principle, as the Guatemalan affair seemed to demonstrate. Thus, the need to guarantee a “suitable climate” to make that happen relied solely on the ‘acceptance’ of Latin Americans to comply with the rules of the game without necessarily counting on Washington’s willingness to acknowledge the actual roots of both domestic economic needs and social unrest.

Accordingly, it emphasised, via the foreign policy modus operandi that the essential need for preserving the philosophical and ideological features of the Inter-American

⁵³ NSA (NSC), 144/1 “United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Latin America,” March 18, 1954, p. 6, (my emphasis). Here was the same spirit indeed as that of Secretary of the Treasury as stated above, (see chapter-7), and which also was expressed by Milton Eisenhower’s un-imaginative report on Economic Co-operation: US companies, he noted after his trip in some of the countries of the continent, were already playing “an important role in promoting better understanding and friendship among the peoples of the American republics.” Although Eisenhower foresaw a difficulty: the Latin Americans’ “misunderstanding and lack of information [on Washington’s economic policy. Fortunately, he stated] the misunderstandings we found with respect to economic affairs are not matched in other areas. We were delighted to find a growing understanding of the US as a nation and as a people ... [and] a genuine pride in the Inter-American system. [With one exception, the Latin American republics] share our desire for peace, freedom, and independence, and continue to cooperate effectively in the political councils of the world.” See DOSB, “United States-Latin American Relations,” (Report to the President by Milton S. Eisenhower, Special Ambassador), Vol. 29, No.

relationship - a main argument in this thesis - was a central goal for the United States' strategy. By this means the US also denied the existence of progress itself, which turned - contradictorily - into the core obstacle (and fatal aim) of this whole process of achieving economic development. Within this dynamic, *progress* evolved into an area of experimentation for US manoeuvring; it was also sacrificed in the name of the same security principle that was behind the above rationale. Consequently the US agenda which emphasised the menace of Sovietism was entirely vindicated by that argument. The over-emphasising of the ideological aspect over the argument on economic progress was, then, justified and stated as the precondition for the latter to be viable.

This type of moral and economic extortion exerted by Washington at the Caracas Conference, apart from relatively undermining long term relations, became a modern paradigm of Inter-American relations. In effect, this paradigm as shown below in the description of the tactical approach followed by the US delegation in the Conference, was even clearer in the face of the immediate economic effects that the US intervention had: as a result of having reached power after expelling Arbenz from the former's country, Castillo Armas returned UFCO nationalised lands and other assets to US owners, and in consequence re-establishing semi-feudal economic relations.

This contrasting panorama presented two problems: firstly, it exhibited the tremendous distance - a dichotomy - between the priorities of the so-called "two Americas", revealing the falseness of the existence of the *One American Nation* as US officials referred propagandistically to the spirit of national unity among the nations of the continent; and secondly, it exposed the inconsistency of the United States' discourse on its support for economic capitalist development. Ultimately, this outcome turned out to expose, to the Latin Americans' dismay, that

"decades of submission and 'sordid calculations [based on] the hope of receiving a *quid pro quo* on economic issues' ensured the pitiful capitulation. Those Latin Americans who had sold Guatemala for the lure of US dollars were robbed of the payment."⁵⁴

752, November 23, 1953, pp. 695-717, (the obvious 'one exception' was of course Guatemala which 'has succumbed to Communist infiltration').

Diplomacy vis à vis national interest: in search of legitimacy at any cost

Given the historical background to Inter-American relations, and in the face of the Caracas Conference, the US officials in charge of outlining their national policy were aware of the awaiting difficulties. That was revealed in various secret memos. In one of them, entitled, “Guatemala and the Discussion of Communism at the Tenth Inter-American Conference,” assertions were made that, “It would be difficult for the United States ... *convincingly* to maintain that Guatemala constituted a threat to its political independence or territorial integrity.”⁵⁵ Rather US policy makers were concerned at the risk of the United States “appearing as leading a movement against any one of its small neighbours [for] such appearance would inevitably cause opposition from a number of other Latin American countries.”⁵⁶

Consequently, the United States should have as a “minimum objective at Caracas” and “with respect to the Communist item ... to achieve adoption of a resolution which will lay ground work for subsequent positive action against Guatemala by the Organization of American States. Our maximum objective would be the adoption ... of effective multilateral measures against Guatemala at Caracas.”⁵⁷

At this point the attempt to pretend that the intervention was not openly directed against Guatemala was refuted by the evidence already stated by Berle and pointed out above in this chapter (“[the US was] quite overtly working with the forces opposed to Communism.”)⁵⁸ However, aware that historical distrust among Latin Americans could be an obstacle, the US

⁵⁴ P.Gleijeses (1991:276).

⁵⁵ NSA, 714.00/2-1054, “Guatemala and the Discussion of Communism at the Tenth Inter-American Conference,” United States Government, “Secret File” Office Memorandum, February 10, 1954, p. 1, (my emphasis).

⁵⁶ NSA, 714.00/2-1054, “Guatemala and the Discussion of Communism at the Tenth Inter-American Conference,” op. cit., p. 1.

⁵⁷ NSA, 714.00/2-1054, *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵⁸ See above in this chapter.

government prepared its delegation in Caracas by giving them clear instructions on how best to proceed. First of all, it was planned that preventing Latin Americans feeling threatened by a likely US penetration strategy against any of the countries, it was necessary to promote the suggestion that “through Guatemala’s own action at the Conference, or through other developments, a specific discussion of Communist penetration in Guatemala [would] take place.”⁵⁹ Likewise, the US was certain that “Guatemala will attend the Caracas Conference not in the role of defendant but with aggressive intent to disrupt constructive discussion of the Communist problem by making charges of intervention against the United States.”⁶⁰ Since the United States attended the Caracas Conference anxious at the prospect that some kind of Guatemalan ‘response’ to its preparations to intervene, it was imperative to “present the Guatemalan case there with cleverness and determination.”⁶¹ As a result Dulles made sure that the US delegation be granted a full margin of manoeuvre to act in the following manner:

“The US must exercise leadership [the document stressed] at Caracas to insure: (1) that Guatemala does not divert the Conference from constructive discussion of agenda item five [the Communist issue]; (2) that Guatemala does not achieve prolonged discussion of alleged United States imperialism under any Conference agenda item; and (3) that a Guatemalan attempt to wrest the initiative is countered by full exposure of Communist penetration of that country. Such exposure should be made by a delegation or delegations other than ours, preferably for countries not on the extreme right wing.”⁶²

Thus, ‘countering’ Guatemala by ‘exposing’ it as a ‘Communist penetrated’ country had to be built up by ‘attracting’ docile support. Dulles referred to this question, notably when in the middle of the Guatemalan imbroglio, and of his lobbying Latin Americans to obtain their support for the US cause, he agreed that “we needed support from others than the Somozas in the hemisphere.”⁶³ The risk of the US being linked to the extreme right in the

⁵⁹ NSA, 714.00/2-1054, op. cit., p. 1.

⁶⁰ NSA, *ibid.*, p. 1

⁶¹ NSA, *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶² NSA, *ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶³ See S.G.Rabe (1988:53). Isidro Fabela, when considering the importance of this aspect in the vote against Arbenz, stated: “It would not be impossible for the United States to get the necessary two thirds majority [for the anti-Communist declaration to go through]: there are dictators in our Latin America who are beholden to Washington.” See I.Fabela (1954:12).

Continent was, then, fairly clear; on this particular occasion it was important to avoid any identification with its extreme right historical allies. This preoccupation was highlighted even more in subsequent decades in those countries where Washington had some kind of (regrettable) involvement. Although this was not in theory a major obstacle given the favourable existence of McCarthyism, I argue that the US tried - by detaching itself from extreme right regimes - to keep a 'balance' and avoid being exposed unnecessarily to Latin American nationalism.

The government of Eisenhower then, was prepared for any kind of contingency or counter-attack which threatened its plans to overthrow Arbenz. Indeed, the scenario was assembled as the strategy was put in place, a strategy which was to a great extent assisted by the preparation of a discursive and smoothly rhetorical display. The accomplishment of the above, particularly "considering the possible tactics of the Guatemalan delegation at the Conference" was of major importance. For this reason

"attention [had to be paid] to the following possibilities: (1) The Guatemalan delegate [Foreign Minister Toriello] may enter the discussion of agenda item five by impugning the motives of this government in sponsoring such item; (2) the Guatemalan delegate may, in an opening speech, make a simple accusation against the US along the lines indicated above without calling for any other action; (3) the Guatemalan delegation may attempt to inject their complaint against the US into the discussion of some other agenda item, such as that of 'Peaceful relations Among Governments'; (4) the Guatemalan delegate may seek the convocation of a meeting of consultation of Foreign Ministers at Caracas to consider charges of US intervention."⁶⁴

It was quite clear that Dulles was entirely determined to obtain all the support he could from Latin Americans in order to make the anti-Communist issue consistently go through and ensure US legitimacy through the following stage of activity. The entire strategy of the United States was, thus, the dismantling of the Guatemalan government's attempt (the nature of which the US was obviously aware of, for it was self-conscious of its involvement in the intervention to overthrow it) to address the issue of the US threat. This it achieved through a deliberate use of the (mostly grotesque) association of socio-political reform to the

⁶⁴ NSA, 714-00/2-1054, op. cit., p. 2.

'menace' of Communism. Thus had Guatemala decided to act in terms of defending its sovereignty arguing neo-imperialist penetration, or had it accepted not to confront Washington, either was going to have the same result:

"From the US viewpoint, the injection by Guatemala of its charges into the discussion of item five would be more advantageous than elsewhere in the Conference proceedings since this would constitute an invitation by Guatemala itself to discuss and expose the extent of Communist influence in that country. [So] if the Guatemalan charges are released in plenary session [...] the US considers these obviously false charges irrelevant to any item on the agenda of the Conference."⁶⁵

In this context the United States was ready to reach its "minimum objective", namely, "to press for adoption of a resolution which, without mentioning Guatemala by name, could be supported by every nation but Guatemala."⁶⁶ The realisation of this aim transformed the accuser into the *accused*, for any attempt to implicate the United States reverted and became Washington's *instrument* to turning the other - Guatemala - into a Communist and/or any other even worse calamity. Hence in order to accomplish that objective, Dulles was clear that the best way was that the US should seek

"to *prevent* the discussion of alleged American intervention at the Conference. However, if and when Guatemala introduces the subject, the US should immediately cause it to be linked with the subject of Communist penetration of Guatemala. Having established the link, the US should seek to confine discussion to Communist penetration, and prevent return to the topic of alleged intervention."⁶⁷

Furthermore, Washington's strategy attempted to cover all fronts. Since UFCO's lands had, just prior to the Conference, been nationalised by Arbenz, Peurifoy warned Dulles in the following way in a telegram on 25 February:

"It seems possible that President Arbenz confirmation of expropriation [of] UFCO's Bananera properties (EMBTel 350 February 24) may have been

⁶⁵ NSA, *ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁶ NSA, *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁷ NSA, *ibid.*, p. 3, (my emphasis).

calculated to provoke strong reaction from US Government on [the] eve [of the] Caracas Conference and thus strengthen Guatemalan contention that [the] main issue between [the] US and Guatemala [was] not Communism, but [the] protection [of] US companies. UFCO [was] formally notified of [the] President's ruling this morning."⁶⁸

The following sent a clear sign as to the real importance that the United States attributed to the issue of economic development. But above all, addressing this issue in such a manner, was important insofar as it sought to cancel, at a stroke, one of the main reasons that brought about the intervention in the first place:

"The United States should make it clear that the two questions of Communist penetration of the hemisphere and treatment of American commercial interests abroad are entirely separate; and that the US Government would continue to regard the Communist growth in Guatemala as potentially dangerous to the hemisphere even if the Guatemalan Government were to make, through the available normal methods, a complete and satisfactory settlement of its differences with American companies."⁶⁹

The above view by the United States had been already stressed by Dulles, as pointed out in former chapters when analysing the Secretary of State's account on this issue. It ostensibly showed that Washington's need to effect a *political intervention* (thus the resorting to manoeuvring against the Soviet ghost) was greater than the need to protect the economic interest required of the US involvement.

The Caracas Declaration: anti-Communism institutionalised and polarisation

In this way Caracas became the scenario by which light was shed over the internal and crude aspects of the Inter-American relations of the 1950s, and in particular the US view of these relations. Moreover, the conference was the turning point of *Pbsuccess* for it represented the guaranteeing of the diplomatic facade which was extremely beneficial for the US in order to guarantee the success of the final leg of the intervention which took place three months later, on

⁶⁸ NSA, 814.2376/2-2554, "Incoming Telegram No. 352," Department of State, From: Guatemala City, To: Secretary of State, February 25, 4 p.m.

⁶⁹ NSA, 714.00/2-1054, op. cit., p. 3.

18-27 June, 1954. In the preparation of this diplomatic facade Dulles counted on the very valuable (although in some cases reluctant) assistance of most of the Latin American nations as seen above. And this support was morally compromising even by the US's extravagant standards. When Dulles referred to the support from US allies, the Caribbean and South American dictatorships, this was, he confessed in Congressional testimony, "sometimes a bit embarrassing."⁷⁰ In another part a similar complaint was produced: "It was embarrassing to see all the minor dictatorships of Latin America rush to support the United States', complained *Hispanic American Report*'."⁷¹ In spite of these features of the regional alliance - or perhaps due to its very nature - the spirit of Pan-Americanism had been fatally wounded as the following acquiescent declaration by a Uruguayan delegate shows: "We contributed our approval without enthusiasm, without optimism, and without feeling that we were contributing to the adoption of a constructive measure."⁷² Once again the dimension of the Latin American elite's subordinate condition had been, thus, exhibited ominously.

As a result Dulles had flagrantly produced - and was going to produce - an explicit stand on the US's essential Inter-American needs of the moment and, thus, the means to accomplish them. Concerning Dulles's aforementioned position, it was not surprising then, that Dulles travelled bereft of economic concessions or proposals: his one and explicitly accepted concern was his anti-Communist resolution, the attack on Guatemala, as shown in the above documents which were discussed before attending the conference. For his part Guatemalan Foreign Minister, Guillermo Toriello, presented his position defiantly. He had no intention of retreating from the positions defended by Arbenz in terms of the economic reform and the independence of its foreign policy. And the Guatemalan Government's criticism of the 'Government of the North' designs had already showed the above. The two views and the polarised predicament created by the US position exhibited the extent of the unwillingness on the part of the United States to understand its neighbours in any vein other than that of the pure

⁷⁰ See his testimony, in HCFA, Selected Executive Session Hearings, 1951-56, 16:502-15. See above chapters-4-5.

⁷¹ P.Glejjeses (1991:274).

⁷² See "Guatemala reafirma su actitud frente al voto anticomunista," El Imparcial, Mar. 16, 1954, p. 1-2, (quoted from p. 2).

defence of its national interest priorities. 1954, thus, meant the above and more: Latin America found itself suddenly exposed extraordinarily to the might of the neo-empire of the nuclear Cold War era. This was the beginning of a Cold War diplomacy (gunboat diplomacy for some) which lasted three more decades.

The struggle between morality and politics: between Bolívar and Monroe and the question of 'timing'

One day after the conference started Peurifoy, writing in code to Krieg on 2nd March, stated: "While I am looking forward to the outcome of Caracas, I can't help but feel that these boys [Arbenz and Toriello] are entrenching themselves more and more each day and that before too long we will really have to take action - I mean along the lines of my cable of late December to the Department."⁷³

Since what the ambassador mentioned in the aforementioned cable is quite obscure, presumably - given the time of the year - the above referred to another subject mentioned on the same page of the letter concerning "military agreements," probably the sending of weapons to Castillo Armas through the Central American allies. Still, Peurifoy suggested discretion, for "It just seemed to me that, as Toriello is certainly going to use any action that we take as an indication of United States pressure, we might not wish to shoot all of our ammunition prior to the Conference."⁷⁴

The implication points to a clear suggestion to take care of 'the timing' to get involved in the Guatemalan affair as soon as the opportunities allowed. But above all, it is important to accentuate that this statement was being produced while at the same time Dulles was about to utter his opening words at the Caracas Conference, where he was granted the privilege to address the delegates before any one else. He started by quoting Simón Bolívar (at the end he

⁷³ NA, To: W. Krieg, From: J. Peurifoy, "The Foreign Service of the United States of America" (official, informal, secret), American Embassy, Guatemala, March, 2, 1954, p. 2.

⁷⁴ NA, *ibid.*, p. 1.

quoted Monroe), stressed Eisenhower's concern for the economic well-being of Latin America, assailed the international communist conspiracy that threatened the hemisphere, and then said before the plenary session:

"The unity which generally prevails between us at international gatherings is nothing that is artificial. It is not indeed primarily geographic. It is a unity which exists because of a harmony of the spirit. It has been my experience that the Governments of the American Republics usually act alike internationally because their peoples believe in the same fundamentals."⁷⁵

Dulles went further and provided his vision of diplomacy between countries, elaborating upon his pastoral view of politics:

"We believe in a spiritual world. We believe that man has his origin and destiny in God. We believe that this fact requires human brotherhood. We believe that just as every human being has dignity and worth so every nation great or small has dignity and worth and that international relations should be on the basis of mutual respect and equal dignity ... [and] ... that nations like men are subject to moral law and that in the international field the task is to develop international law and to conduct international affairs in accordance with the standards of moral law. That is the conception of my Government. I believe that it is a conception which the nations here generally share. Of course *we are all fallible*. None of us realizes fully his ideals. But the essential is to have and to try to practice them. I expect that we shall do so here."⁷⁶

A lesson on morality and a warning on politics is what Dulles gave his Latin American colleagues at that important continental summit. Of course, he said more than that. He implied that the 'non artificial' relationship, which was 'not geographical', but a reflection of 'unity' and a concert of 'shared beliefs', accepted within it a *fallibility* as a possible part of every one's reality.⁷⁷ And yet, it had to be punished if the need arose, and this in turn meant pursuing those

⁷⁵ DOSP, (No. 109), "Address by the Honorable John Foster Dulles Secretary of State and Head of the US Delegation, before a plenary session of the Tenth Inter-American Conference," Caracas, Venezuela, March 4, 1954, p. 8.

⁷⁶ DOSP, (No. 109), "Address by the Honorable," op. cit. p. 4, (my emphasis).

⁷⁷ By claiming Bolivarian values Dulles cynically denied the essence of the geopolitical Monroeist priorities in the continent with the only purpose of making it possible for his anti-Communist (and, thus, anti-Guatemalan) declaration to gain momentum and, thus, to get through in the final conference's resolution. Without realising so, Dulles, in his speech, had placed both Monroe and Bolívar in a irreconcilable position as it is stressed further by Fabela's statement on the Caracas Declaration, see above in this chapter and in chapters-1-2.

responsible for the ‘cancellation’ of that (US sense of) uniformity. It was at this moment that ‘Guatemalan Communism’ (the hidden ghost of the conference) was openly on trial in Caracas and Dulles knew that he ought to use this diplomatic opportunity to ‘put the house in order’. That was the diplomatic vein in which Dulles announced the US assessment of the America’s *understanding*.

Naturally what came as a result was in fact the real question which had been on Washington’s agenda long before March, 1954, and which had created a strange climate among the continental delegates. This subject was spelled out in another of Dulles’s many and long speeches when trying to explain to the Latin Americans the menace represented by ‘International Communism’: “It may next be asked whether this international communist apparatus actually seeks to bring this hemisphere, or parts of it, into the Soviet orbit. The answer must be in the affirmative.”⁷⁸

The prisoner’s seat: Dulles versus Toriello vis à vis freedom

The resemblance of this latter statement to Peurifoy’s own assessment in previous Congressional hearings is obvious.⁷⁹ That, then was Dulles’s response to Toriello’s demand for clarification as to what the US delegation understood as International Communism, a request which Dulles found “disturbing if the foreign affairs of one of our American republics are conducted by one so innocent [Toriello’s Guatemala] that he has to ask that question.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ DOSP, (No. 121), “Statement by the Honorable John Foster Dulles Secretary of State and Head of the US Delegation, before the Political-Juridical Committee of the Tenth Inter-American Conference, Caracas, Venezuela, March 8, 1954, p. 3.

⁷⁹ See above chapter-6. Peurifoy’s testimony can be found in, US Congress, Subcommittee on Latin America of the Select Committee on Communist Aggression, *Ninth Interim Report of Hearings: Communist Aggression in Latin America* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, October 8, 1954), pp. 12-13. For an alternative full version of this testimony consult, DOSB, “The Communist Conspiracy in Guatemala,” Vol. 31, No. 802 (November 8, 1954), pp. 690-696.

⁸⁰ DOSB, (No. 121), “Statement by the Honorable,” op. cit., p. 1.

Innocence or not, along with the above Cold War emphasis from the US delegation, the full idea and response to the question of Communism had been already included in Dulles's initial address in the following way:

“We here in the Americas are not immune from the threat of Soviet Communism. There is not a single country in this hemisphere which has not been penetrated by the apparatus of international Communism acting under orders from Moscow ... The Communist conspiracy is not to be taken lightly ... None of us want to be maneuvered into the position of defending whatever Communists attack”⁸¹

Thus the United States wanted to state clearly through Dulles's disquisition that “we stand resolutely and unitedly against that form of danger.” And in a reference to the ‘Guatemalan situation’ Dulles made clear that what he suggested was not

“to involve any interference in the internal affairs of any American Republic. There is ample room for natural differences and for tolerances between the political institutions of the different American states. But there is *no place* here for political institutions which serve alien masters. I hope that *we can agree* to make that clear.”⁸²

At this point what is clear is that the tolerance towards different ‘political institutions’ meant to recognise - in the context of the US national security umbrella - that only ‘acceptable’ political regimes were to be included within this agreement. We also learn that these regimes were those that (authoritarianism included) contributed to the *American* cause the main aim of which was defend ‘whatever Communists attack’. This last issue is of great relevance since it is from this that the entire US disguised strategy of intervention took off.

Toriello responded to Dulles's offensive and it was “at Caracas [that he] became a hero,” as Gleijeses has stated.⁸³ However, his success was going to be proved short and not precisely sweet. His performance took place within the framework of a bitter confrontation between his position and that of Dulles, a confrontation which obscured the possibility of

⁸¹ DOSP, (No. 109), “Address by the Honorable,” op. cit., p. 2.

⁸² DOSP, (No. 109), *ibid.*, p. 3, (my emphasis).

⁸³ P.Gleijeses (1991:273).

seeing the essential unpleasant roots of the continental relations - the fragile political economy of the Latin American nations. At the same time it was a duel that reached a deeply personal clash between the two men, both in terms of the presentation of the Communist (Guatemalan) problem by the US, and also the ideological polarisation that this represented for Latin Americans.

First, Toriello stated that the Guatemalan delegation attended the conference enthusiastically and trusting that the “democratic doctrines” embracing by the October Revolution were directed towards the establishment of the conditions to achieve “integral progress, i.e., political and economic independence.”⁸⁴ Toriello stressed that the Guatemalan efforts towards “full economic development” were launched in the light of the principles of “representative democracy” in order to achieve three essential aims:

“1) the hastening and absolute respect for democratic freedoms, 2) the increase in quality of life of the Guatemalan people leading to the transformation of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial economy, into a capitalist one, and, 3) the defence of sovereignty and national independence.”⁸⁵

He explained the importance of terminating the old “underdeveloped privileges” in his country in order to enhance the conditions for long-lasting development. In his defence of the right to freely decide the course of the national process Toriello responded to Dulles by refuting, at the same time, the implied Communist threat that, in terms of Dulles, Guatemala represented; Guatemala - Toriello claimed - was a peaceful country whose only aim was to achieve prosperity and progress within the context of the capitalist system. By doing so he rose in defence of the principle of non-intervention which was embraced by the Rio Treaty of 1947. Thus, after concentrating in elaborating upon the economic and democratic needs of Guatemala, Toriello turned to the Communist question raised by Dulles minutes earlier. He regretted that these important economic and political changes in process in his country had to be stigmatised under “the label of Communism”:

⁸⁴ G.Toriello(1954), in G.Toriello (1955:259).

⁸⁵ Ibid:260.

“It is painful that any nationalistic or independent movement has to be classified like that, as well as any anti-imperialist or anti-monopolistic action on the part of countries for a long time under economic exploitation. And the most critical of all is that those who qualified in such a way a democracy, do so in order to destroy that same democracy.”⁸⁶

Without mentioning it by name, he implied the United States and its *buffer states* by “invoking again the sacred word of democracy” and repeating the absurd pretext that Guatemala was a ‘beach-head of Communism in America’,

“and thus, that the small republic represented a threat against continental security, [would] dare to commit the last assault, not only against Guatemala, but against the most solid foundation of Pan-Americanism when promoting an open intervention against the Guatemalan government. Where is the reason of this defamatory policy? What is the real and effective cause that our government is labelled a Communist one? Where does the accusation that we threaten the continental solidarity and security come from? Why is there a purpose to intervene in Guatemala?”⁸⁷

Toriello’s speech did not help to decrease the level of escalation. On March 5 Dulles responded by arguing that Toriello “had made clear that he opposes any declaration by this Conference against International Communism.” Not only did he oppose any new action, but also, Dulles underlined:

“he goes further and says that his government considers invalid the prior resolutions [the condemnation of International Communism] for which his government voted at the Ninth Inter-American Conference of 1948 and at the fourth meeting of the American Foreign Ministers of 1951.”⁸⁸

Dulles went further in his openly bitter response to Toriello and stated to the press:

“We do not intend to let this issue be obscured by the *abusive* attack made upon the United States. We deplore the fact that this Inter-American Meeting should have been used as a platform for efforts which seek to *defame* other American

⁸⁶ Ibid:263.

⁸⁷ Ibid:264.

⁸⁸ DOSP, “Statement by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles Chairman of the Delegation to the Tenth Inter-American Conference,” Caracas, Venezuela, March 5, 1954 (one page, no number).

states and to exploit every possible difference with a view to disrupting the harmony of our gathering.”⁸⁹

Accordingly, to Toriello’s anti-interventionist fervour Dulles responded by equating Monroe with the “other great American patriots and defenders of human liberty.” By doing so he stated again the risks of paying “the price of freedom” in the region. This price included the risk of exposing US integrity to the eyes of the world for, Dulles accepted: “my government is well aware of the fact that there are few problems more difficult, few tasks more odious, than that of effectively exposing and thwarting the danger of international communism.”⁹⁰ However, the Inter-American tradition of non-intervention had to be approached cautiously, given the fact that - Dulles argued -

“as we have pointed out, that danger cloaks itself behind fine-sounding words; it uses the cover of many well intentioned persons, and it so weaves itself into the fabric of community life that great courage and skill are required to sever the evil from the good. The slogan of ‘non-intervention’ can plausibly be invoked and twisted to give immunity to what is, in fact, flagrant intervention.”⁹¹

This was indeed a great piece of rhetoric from Dulles the sophist, but only at the expense of distorting the libertarian inheritance of Bolívar himself and perhaps even that of Jefferson, Lincoln and F.D. Roosevelt. Dulles went on:

“The fact, however, that the defense of freedom is difficult, and calls for courage, is no adequate excuse for shutting our eyes to the fact that freedom is in fact endangered. Freedom is never preserved for long except by vigilance and with dedicated effort. Those who do not have the will to defend liberty, soon lose it ... Today we face a new peril that is in many respects greater than any of the perils of the past. It takes unaccustomed form ... However, we need not fear ... We have greater solidarity and greater trust born out of our past fraternal association.”⁹²

⁸⁹ DOSP, “Statement by Secretary,” March 5, 1954, *ibid.*, (my emphasis).

⁹⁰ DOSP, (No. 121), “Statement by the Honorable J.F. Dulles,” *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁹¹ DOSP, (No. 121), *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹² DOSP, (No. 121), *ibid.*, pp. 7-8. The point on ‘vigilance’ is also referred to in chapters-3,5.

Dulles, then, insisted that “identifying the peril” included the recognition that danger “assumes an unconventional form, so our response may also need to be different in its form.” And this response had to develop

“the will to meet it *unitedly*, if ever united action should be required, and meanwhile to give strong *moral* support to those governments which have the responsibility of exposing and eradicating within their borders the danger which is represented by alien intrigue and treachery ... Of course words alone will not suffice [in] our common cause against [‘our collective independence’s’] enemies... It is in that spirit and in that hope that the United States presents its resolution.”⁹³

This display of eccentricity on the part of Dulles produced a rewarding final resolution. Clearly Dulles did not go to Caracas to make friends; his main objective was to reinforce Cold War policies in the region. It is patent that the ambush set for Guatemala had been successful, and so was the strategy delineated by Dulles prior to the Caracas Conference: Guatemala had addressed the problem of US intervention, and by doing so, it had incriminated itself, making itself liable to be accused (by the Inter-American community commanded by the US) of playing the Communist. Thus, Guatemala had been set up for the Inter-American altar of sacrifice. It had paid the price of rebellion against the old authoritarian order which transformation was regarded with indifference by Washington. Dulles added to the above:

“Guatemala’s position with respect to ‘Intervention of International Communism in the American Republics’ will be put to the test when this agenda item is taken out [Dulles referred to the vote by the delegates]. We are confident this Conference will reaffirm the position of the Ninth Conference on this question, and will go on to declare that domination and control of the political institutions of any American state by the International Communism movement would constitute intervention by a foreign political power and be a threat to the peace of America.”⁹⁴

The Caracas Declaration

⁹³ DOSP, (No. 121), *ibid.*, p. 8, (my emphasis).

⁹⁴ DOSP, “Statement by Secretary,” March 5, 1954, *op. cit.*

Fifty-one amendments were outlined by Argentina, Uruguay and Mexico, designed to weaken the resolution. Dulles was able to fend off fifty of them, many by votes of 11 to 9. In the end he only accepted one change to the original draft of the resolution that the US delegation had prepared, and only one inclusion. After starting with a condemnatory statement on the oft-repeated question on Communism, the only change accepted in the final declaration was to one of Dulles's key paragraphs ("and would call for a meeting of consultation to consider the adoption of measures in accordance with existing treaties") which would read as follows: "and would call for a *meeting of consultation* [of OAS foreign ministers] *to consider the adoption of appropriate action in accordance with existing treaties.*"⁹⁵ Dulles also tacked on a final paragraph:

"This declaration of foreign policy made by the American Republics in relation to dangers originating outside this hemisphere is designed to protect and not to impair the inalienable right of each American State freely to choose its own form of government and economic system and to live its own social and cultural life."⁹⁶

On the scenario which resulted from the quarrel to make the final declaration go through, Gleijeses stresses that,

"to most Latin Americans and to a handful of sensitive observers, these traits [Dulles's manoeuvrings] were very much in evidence at Caracas. After days of debate, it was clear that the democratic and semidemocratic governments of Latin America - notably Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, and Argentina - were unimpressed with Dulles's arguments ... On March 13, the resolution was approved. Seventeen countries voted in favor. Argentina and Mexico abstained, Costa Rica was absent, but Figueres immediately endorsed the resolution. Guatemala cast the only negative vote."⁹⁷

In the light of the final outcome, the "embarrassing association" with the (mostly) authoritarian allies was accepted and Washington had acknowledged its instrumentalist vocation. Still, Rabe

⁹⁵ See DOSP, "Declaration of Solidarity for the Preservation of the Political Integrity of the American States against International Communist Intervention," (mimeo, no date), p. 2.; and P.Glejeses (1991:274), (emphasis in the original).

⁹⁶ See DOSP, "Declaration of Solidarity," *ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁷ P.Glejeses (1991:274-275).

underlines that Dulles was “particularly troubled” by Mexico’s abstention on the final resolution. Foreign Minister Luis Padilla Nervo made an indirect reference to the issue of both political and economic progress. He expressed himself quite eloquently in the interview with Dulles when the former struggled together with Argentina's and Uruguay's foreign ministers to avoid the condemnation of Guatemala: "I remember the time when Mexico stood alone and we were going through an economic and social reform, a revolution, and if at that moment you had called a meeting of the American States to judge us, probably we would have been found guilty of some subjection to foreign influences."⁹⁸

As the Mexican Minister made his point and defended the right of Guatemala to reach its own domestic decisions without having to be exposed to the indictment of being a "Communist threat" in the region, Dulles concluded as a result of this statement that Mexico's position was due to "a real infiltration of Communist or [fellow] traveller influence into the Mexican government itself."⁹⁹

- Dulles’s triumphal return from Caracas

On his return to Washington Dulles rounded off his remarkable diplomatic success in a statement to the press. At a news conference in Washington DC he informed the press how the important matters been dealt with at the conference, “particularly in the social and economic field.” The latter two problems, as we know, were dramatically the great absents from Caracas. Yet, he meant to mention them only in order to address the successful following achievement of what his central priority was. Dulles declared:

“the Conference has made history by adopting with only one negative vote a Declaration that, if the international communist movement came to dominate or control the political institutions of any American State, that would constitute a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of all the American States and would endanger the peace of America.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ S.G.Rabe (1988:52).

⁹⁹ Dulles testimony in HCFA, Selected Executive Session Hearings, 1951-56, 16: 502-15. See also S.G.Rabe (1988:chapter-3); and R.H.Immerman (1982:chapter-3).

¹⁰⁰ DOSP, (No. 138), “John Foster Dulles Press Statement concerning the Tenth Inter-American Conference at his return to Washington, D.C.,” March 16, 1954, p. 1.

From the vote obtained at Caracas Dulles had achieved for the United States an extraordinary legitimate stature to erect itself in the defence of the *American* integrity. This authority had been granted by the Inter-American community. In this way the US had made possible the preservation, in the context of the Cold War confrontation, of its position as the dominant actor of the *Western Hemisphere*. The safeguarding of the Americas, was, then, in *the hands* of the United States (as was also partially in its hands the regulation of bipolar escalation), and so was the rhetorical instrumentalisation to make *acceptable* the US intervention in regional affairs. The US was not going to withdraw from keeping the honourable (and very real) role of *Guardian* in the affairs of the continent.¹⁰¹ Dulles strongly believed that “this action” (the vote),

“if its properly backed up, can have a profound effect in preserving this hemisphere from the evils and woes that would befall it if any one of our American States became a Soviet communist puppet. That would be a disaster of incalculable proportions ... It was time that we should have acted as we did because international communism is making great efforts to extend its political control to this hemisphere.”¹⁰²

Dulles expressed the view in this final statement that the Declaration adopted at Caracas, and particularly the “sentiments” which were expressed during the course of the debate, “show an awareness of the danger and a resolution to meet it.” Dulles was, in this way, cleverly articulating (as his own and the US’s) the rationale of the collective interest and the means to preserve it, and in doing so, he resorted to his recently obtained extraordinary authority. In this light, then, Dulles concluded that

“It is significant of the vitality of our American system that *no one* of the American Republics, even the most powerful wanted to deal single-handedly with the danger, but that it was brought to the Inter-American Conference table as a matter of *common concern*.”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ On the concept of the US as a global *Guardian*, see S.Huntington (1968:227-228).

¹⁰² DOSP, (No. 138), op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁰³ DOSP, (No. 138), *ibid.*, p. 2, (my emphasis).

Furthermore, Dulles uttered while referring (textually) to the last paragraph of the *Declaration of Solidarity*,

“the declaration, as adopted, contained in substance the words of President Eisenhower, expressed in his great peace address of April 16, 1953, that the declaration ‘is designed to protect and not to impair the inalienable right of each American State freely to choose its own form of government and economic system and to live its own social and cultural life’.”¹⁰⁴

Contrary to Dulles’s euphoria, lamented the prominent Mexican jurist Isidro Fabela, Caracas “marks a deplorable assault on the principle of non-intervention which is the keystone of Pan-Americanism.”¹⁰⁵ Referring to the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Inter-American Conferences at La Habana (1928), Montevideo (1933), Lima (1938), and Bogotá (1948) respectively, where substantial agreements on the non-intervention issue were reached, Fabela accepted that Latin Americans were wrong in believing, in good faith, that the principle was going to be respected:

“We were wrong completely, because at the Caracas Conference we went back to the bad times of the Big Stick and the Dollar diplomacy which we thought were proscribed for ever in both the theoretical and practical Pan-Americanism. The imperialist and obstinate attitude of Mr. Dulles showed us, in the face of the eloquence of the consummated acts, two disappointing things: first, that the Good Neighbour Policy had not validity any more, but just in the words uttered by the politicians in Washington, and second, that solidarity among Hispano American Governments, the beautiful dream of Simón Bolívar, which would have been enough in our international life, collapsed in the hands of the signatories of the final Declaration right in the land of the Libertator and not too far from his grave.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ DOSP, (No. 138), *ibid.*, p. 2. I have referred to this peace address in chapters-5-6.

¹⁰⁵ IFabela (1954:32).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*:36.

- Arms to an agonising regime and the US response

After the diplomatic strengthening of the US at Caracas occurred, on 15 May, 1954, a shipment of weapons from Czechoslovakia arrived in Puerto Barrios on the Atlantic side of Guatemala. It was disclosed by CIA agents who were vigilant on every movement of the Arbenz regime. This represented the beginning of the end, and it was only part of a circular motion of events directed to destabilise the government.

The US had refused to sell weapons to Guatemala since 1949. In 1951, it made arrangements to stop the efforts of the Arbenz administration to purchase arms from other countries, to the disappointment of the Guatemalan officer corps. By doing this, the US not only isolated the government but the Army too. As a result the latter would have less reasons to support a regime which was provoking its turning into a pariah in the context of the (very pro-US) regional military mainstream. From interviews with José Manuel Fortuny, the PGT's leader, Arbenz's wife and other important actors, the following account is provided on this important and decisive incident:

“ ... in October 1953, when Arbenz learned ... that the United States was plotting his overthrow, he and the Secretariat of the PGT responded with a desperate gamble. Secretly, they would import weapons from Czechoslovakia, and secretly, some of these weapons would be given to the PGT to arm workers' militias should the need arise. It would be the first time that ... a Soviet bloc country had sent arms to the Western Hemisphere. The project was dangerous, for its discovery could trigger a military coup. But Arbenz had little choice. Fear of the United States threatened to undermine the army's loyalty.”¹⁰⁷

Although on November, 1953, Fortuny had been sent to Prague by Arbenz to negotiate successfully the acquisition of arms, on January 1954, Alfonso Martínez, the head of the National Agrarian Department (NAD) flew to Prague to conclude the last details of the delivery. The sending of Martínez abroad by Arbenz was accomplished in a brilliant fashion. In order to distract the attention of the press and public opinion, and taking advantage of old disagreements between Martínez and the PGT, Arbenz simulated a public personal political quarrel with Martínez (pretending that meant yielding support to the PGT's position). The trick was

¹⁰⁷ P.Glejeses (1991:279).

successful to convince public opinion, but not US officials. On 22 January the Department of State appeared to be better informed than expected on this. It had monitored the departure of Martínez and stated a report, “Martínez Leaves for Switzerland Unexpectedly”, which established that he had “unexpectedly” boarded a KLM plane on January 18 with a ticket for Zurich,

“ ... No announcement of his departure was made, and his National Agrarian Department associates and other intimates told conflicting stories that he was going to Europe in connection with some unspecified matter of ‘high policy’. These satisfying no body, rumors flew that he was abandoning the country because Arbenz would not back him against the Communists ...; that he had been sent on an secret official mission behind the Iron Curtain; and that he had been sent to Switzerland to hide money for President Arbenz and nervous government officials or to buy arms for the government. At the end of the week it was still not clear just why he had gone.”¹⁰⁸

The Alfhem: the escalation starts

On February that year, Martínez returned to Guatemala. “Smiling and relaxed” at a press conference, he explained that he had been in a Swiss sanatorium attending to a heart problem. Martínez’s satisfaction was the only aspect of the operation which was not faked for he had secured the Czech shipment and arranged a date for its arrival. Not only had the secret been maintained,

“but he brought back the news that Prague would soon send two thousand tons of light weapons seized from the Germans in the Second World War. Captured German equipment was common in Europe and would mask the identity of the supplier. The Czechs would arrange the transportation. ‘Payment’ Martínez later explained, ‘was made directly from the Banco de Guatemala to a secret account at the Union des Banques Suisses in Zurich’. The first dispatch of weapons from

¹⁰⁸ NSA, 714.00 (W)/1-2254, “Joint Week No. 3 from State, Army and Air Departments, from SA,” (Confidential Foreign Service Despatch, from AMEMBASSY, Guatemala), The Department of State, Washington, DC, 22 January, 1954, p. 2.

the Soviet Bloc to Latin America was neither a gift nor a loan. It was a sale, to be paid, at once, in cash.”¹⁰⁹

Compared to the pattern of military acquisitions by the Armies in the region, this was not, by any standard a menace to the military equilibrium in which Guatemala was clearly in a disadvantageous position. However, US officials disagreed and it reinforced their urgent demands to support Guatemalan neighbours and protect them from the spreading of ‘Communist contagion’.¹¹⁰

Although not disclosed at the time, by May, 1954 after the US had come back victorious from the Caracas Conference, and the incident on the shipment of arms had been already disclosed, the controversial Soviet issue was regarded by the British Foreign Minister of Churchill, Sir Anthony Eden, as stated in his memoirs, in the following way:

“In May 1954, American anxiety [on the Guatemalan affair] was sharpened by the arrival in Guatemala of the Swedish freighter S.S. *Alfhem*, with a cargo which was said to include two thousand tons of arms from behind the Iron Curtain [...] Mr. Dulles asked for our co-operation. He said that, whatever the law might be and the formal view we might take, he hoped that we would in practice agree to whatever action was necessary in order to prevent further arms reaching Guatemala [...] It seemed to me that their fears of communist ‘build-up’ in Guatemala were probably exaggerated, and our reports were that the supplies were mainly, if not entirely, small arms.”¹¹¹

Sir Anthony Eden was not mistaken in his estimations on the real threat that the weapons posed to Guatemala’s neighbours. In the light of the net gains that traditional US allies had achieved since the aggression against Guatemala started, the arrival of the *Alfhem* was - as can be also noted by the above official testimonies - only a long-awaited pretext to act. The Guatemalan regime had at last started to crack and give way as a result of the enormous

¹⁰⁹ P.Glejeses (1991:283). According to this same source, the payment was made with funds from the budget of the Atlantic Highway. On the amount paid, which is polemically agreed to have been of US\$1 million, Glejeses quotes Department of State, nos. 269 and 328 from 4 and 19 October respectively (NA 714.00).

¹¹⁰ The US embassy sent a report dated May 14. Three days later, the State Department announced that the *Alfhem* had just landed at Puerto Barrios. For the text of the State Department press release see DOSB, May 31, 1954, p. 835. See also “Communist Arms Unloaded in Guatemala by Vessel from Polish Port, US Learns,” *NYT*, May 18, 1954, p. 1.

¹¹¹ A.Eden (1960:134).

pressure. Howard Hunt reported that the *Alfhem*'s incident "became paramount in all our planning."¹¹² It was, thus, a reasonable pretext which had to be used accordingly and in line with the policy already placed in motion from the moment of Arbenz's ascent to power. This is best expressed by Krieg in a secret memorandum of 27 April: "there is a general agreement that our immediate objective should be the *creation of an atmosphere* in Guatemala propitious for the elimination of Communist influence as represented by the Arbenz Government."¹¹³

So, once the 'atmosphere' was organised the policy might go ahead and the Guatemalan government became almost instantly the menace that the US always wanted to construct in order to make the "Guatemalans understand the serious character of the Communist infiltration of the Guatemalan Government and that they should react favorably should an effort to overthrow it be made."¹¹⁴ The *Alfhem* incident was, then, an *expected* outcome. The US officials

"had evidently known about the arms shipment for a long time. A full year before, on 4 April, 1953 [the Deputy Director of Plans of the CIA] Frank Wisner asked the CIA chief of the 'Western Hemisphere Division' [as it is learned from a 'sanitised' document] for further information on the subject ... that arms from Czechoslovakia were being clandestinely introduced into Guatemala (with or without the assistance of the Russians)."¹¹⁵

Still, not until 17 May, 1954, was Dulles able to produce some kind of "hard evidence" to present to public opinion. The *Alfhem*, a Swedish ship chartered by a British company, was loaded at the East German port of Stetin with - as recounted by Eisenhower - "two thousand tons of small arms, ammunition, and light artillery pieces manufactured by Skoda arms factory in Czechoslovakia." Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs: "This quantity far exceeded any legitimate, normal requirements for the Guatemalan armed forces." So, in order "to help counter the danger created by the Czech shipment" - Eisenhower continued - the United States "was airlifting arms to Honduras and Nicaragua to help counter the danger created by the Czech

¹¹² As quoted by Cook from the official data, see B.W.Cook (1981:266).

¹¹³ NSA, "Considerations Regarding US Foreign Policy Towards Guatemala," To: The Ambassador, From: William L. Krieg, 27 April, 1954, (Declassified NND 82241), p. 1, (my emphasis).

¹¹⁴ NSA, *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ B.W.Cook, (1981:266).

shipment. Our initial shipment comprised only fifty tons of rifles, pistols, machine guns, and ammunition, hardly enough to create apprehension in neighbouring states.”¹¹⁶

Eisenhower also assured Congress that the US would act to stop “suspicious foreign-flag vessels on the high seas off Guatemala to examine cargo” under the “Caracas resolution” and invoking the OAS consensus.¹¹⁷ In the context of this “international scandal,” on 10 May, Holland produced a top secret report in which he “stated that he had been authorised by the Secretary [of State] to move to obtain OAS action against the Communist problem in Guatemala.” Further in the same report, Holland announced that “we should move toward application of the Caracas resolution to Guatemala” along the following lines:

“I. Take straw vote on resolution condemning Guatemala and applying sanctions, (a) Handle this approach so that if we abandon the project there will be no loss of prestige, (b) Beginning with Brazil and the most important countries ..., (c) Try to conclude this stronghold within ten days. II. If straw vote indicates we might succeed at OAS meeting, call in Walter Donnelly to take charge of meeting, (a) First guarantee any doubtful votes that are necessary to complete requisite two-thirds majority, (b) then try to get as many additional votes as possible, (c) By June 15 determine, if possible, whether we are strong enough to call an OAS meeting.”¹¹⁸

The next day Dulles had a meeting with the Brazilian ambassador, Joao Carlos Muniz. In it, Dulles told Muniz that “he had come to the conclusion that the time had arrived when we must consider joint action regarding the Guatemalan problem.” Dulles had made it possible at last for this long-expected event to arrive, and he made the best out of it. In this meeting he insisted to the Ambassador that “it appeared to us that the penetration of communism in that Government was steadily extending and that it appeared to be spreading to surrounding

¹¹⁶ D.D.Eisenhower (1963a:424).

¹¹⁷ Ibid:424. It is worth stressing that Eisenhower, and the Dulles’s brothers were aware that the US was violating international laws by enforcing blockade measures in international seas. Even Sir Anthony Eden, who had received pressures from Dulles to support the measure, had to comply at the personal orders of Prime Minister Churchill, see A.Eden (1960:134-137). This action can be seen, however, as a rehearsal of the Cuban blockade during the Missile crisis.

¹¹⁸ NSA, 714.00/5-1054, “OAS Action Against Communism in Guatemala,” (Top Secret), The Department of State, 10 May, 1954, p. 1. Donnelly was a former diplomat then working for the United States Steel Corporation.

countries.” And finally, Dulles, in the face of the obvious lack of evidence to prove Soviet penetration, produced his famous declaration:

“we must realize that it will be impossible to produce evidence clearly tying the Guatemalan Government to Moscow; that the decision must be a political one and based on our deep conviction that such a tie must exist.”¹¹⁹

The Ambassador complied and he obediently conveyed the message to Rio. This is described by Holland after a meeting with the Speaker of the House and the Brazilian Ambassador before the latter took off for consultations with his government:

“I told Mr. [Joe] Martin [Speaker of the House] that Mr. Dulles had asked Ambassador Muniz to undertake a very delicate mission which would make it necessary for the Ambassador to be away from Washington on a date when he had planned to entertain the Speaker ... I told the speaker that in the conflict between the forces of communism and the free world there were recurring points of frontal contact ... I said that such a point of frontal contact existed today in Guatemala ...”¹²⁰

Dulles was clearly demanding domestic consensus in the face of the imminent overthrow of Arbenz. In order to achieve that consensus he made use of US allies, such as Brazil, the most powerful of all. Holland explained further to the Speaker that

“Mr. Dulles did not want to undertake such an effort [invoking the Caracas resolution] without first consulting with the Government of Brazil who with us carried the greatest responsibility for maintaining the peace of this hemisphere ... The Speaker ... expressed his appreciation to the Ambassador for his willingness to undertake this mission.”¹²¹

However, as frequently tends to occur when it comes to the achievement of forcible consensus in seeking political arrangements, some contradictions came out from this agreement. As Holland himself acknowledged it when the turn for the Ambassador to make his point came;

¹¹⁹ NA, 714.00/5-11-54, “Situation in Guatemala,” Department of State (Secret Memorandum of Conversation), 11 May, 1954, (one page).

¹²⁰ NSA, 714.00/5-1354, “Situation in Guatemala,” Department of State (Secret Memorandum of Conversation), 13 May, 1954, p. 1.

¹²¹ NSA, 714.00/5-1354, op. cit., p. 2.

Muniz said (“to my satisfaction” as Holland remarked) that “we must recognize that the tie between Moscow and the movement in Guatemala could be established only by circumstantial evidence and that the decision must be political.”¹²² However, the Ambassador made clear - perhaps without being aware at that moment of the obvious repetition of his saying - “the urgency that we supply him with the *most concrete* evidence possible [to submit] to his Government.”¹²³ This evidence as already accepted by Dulles himself did not exist. Thus, the tone and nature of this statement by the Ambassador - incongruity included - was exactly that of Dulles. The priority was, then, to put the Caracas Declaration to work as planned and, hence to boost *Pbsuccess*.

- The OAS and the fall of Arbenz: the final putsch

What followed after the *Alfhem* scandal was easy to establish. In another “memorandum of conversation” Holland informed of the outcome of a lunch meeting he had with Dr. Alberto Lleras Camargo, the Secretary General of OAS. Holland discussed with Lleras “in general terms the gravity of the Guatemalan situation and the possibility that we might eventually have to invoke the Caracas resolution.” According to Holland’s memorandum, Lleras Camargo appeared to consent on that measure:

“He said that he felt opinion generally was not ready for such an action, but that it could be prepared in such a way that we could hope for success. He urged that I make a number of rather strong speeches on the subject. He recommended that in such speeches I take the position that I was confident that the nations of America would not permit the establishment of a satellite nation here by the communist organization, and that I refrain from any indication that the United States would act unilaterally.”¹²⁴

Whether the above is accurate is difficult to say. Still, from the results and final resolution of OAS it can be maintained that the Secretary General was on the side of the US

¹²² NSA, 714.00/5-1354, *ibid.*, p. 2.

¹²³ NSA, 714.00/5-1534, *ibid.*, p. 2, (my emphasis).

¹²⁴ NA, 714.00/5-1254, “Guatemalan Situation,” Department of State (Secret Memorandum of Conversation), 12 May, 1954, (one page).

orchestration. The 'spirit' of Caracas had, in this way, succeeded and ensured the United States with a position of strength to produce a 'solution' to the Guatemalan situation in line with the prevalent geopolitical arrangements of the time. Meanwhile, as mentioned before (see chapter 6), in the light of the impossibility that no OAS body would conduct any investigation (of US involvement) against the will of the US, on June 21 Toriello turned again (unsuccessfully and for the last time) to the (UN) Security Council, asking it to take 'whatever steps necessary' to save the flow of foreign assistance to the rebels. Dulles lined up the votes and instructed Cabot Lodge, the Council's president, to delay a meeting, hence the US gained time until the last leg of the intervention was accomplished.

While a OAS meeting to invoke "consultative procedure under [the] Rio Treaty was called", on 14 May Assistant Secretary Holland recommended "that promptly the US invoke the Organ of Consultation specified in Article VI of the Rio Treaty to consider the problem of the penetration of Guatemala by International Communism."¹²⁵ The proposed venue for the meeting was Montevideo, the date, 1 July. In the meantime

"Guatemala alone of the OAS members had been excluded from the preliminaries. No Latin American government had informed the Arbenz administration of the nature of the sanctions under discussion. 'It was a miracle', marvelled ... Holland on June 10, 'that the secrecy of the resolution had been preserved'. To the Guatemalans, Holland's miracle was a nightmare: they could only speculate about the gravity of the sanctions that were being hammered out even before the conference began, and they imagined the worst."¹²⁶

At the same time, there were other, very important simultaneous events which followed the arms shipment. As reported by the Argentinean newspaper, *La Nación*, on 18 May in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, a military assistance programme was agreed; through this agreement the US was going to contribute with training to the Honduran Army.¹²⁷ On May 19, the

¹²⁵ NA, 714.00/5-1454 Csth, "Recommendation that the US Invoke Consultative Procedure under Rio Treaty to Consider Problem of International Communism in Guatemala," Department of State, Washington, DC., 14 May, 1954, p. 1.

¹²⁶ P.Glejjeses (1991:314-315).

¹²⁷ See, *La Nación*, (a), 19 May, 1954. This appears to be the military agreement referred to by Peurifoy in his memos to Krieg, see above footnotes in this chapter.

Nicaraguan diplomatic mission was withdrawn from Guatemala with no advance announcement, the day after, Somoza announced the rupture of diplomatic relations with Arbenz arguing that when in 1951 it resumed diplomatic links with the Guatemalan Government it did so trusting that Arbenz would not follow “the communist direction that had characterised Arévalo,s administration.”¹²⁸ Regional actors were taking important positions in order to be ready for the escalation towards the final putsch.

Three decades later Gleijeses brought the testimony of one of the senior members of the Guatemalan Group who provides an illuminating account on the plans to organise the Uruguayan meeting. Looking back at the “curious timing” of the Montevideo Conference, Deputy Assistant Secretary Robert Woodward uttered: “I am beginning to think that the preparations for Montevideo were part of a cover-up and that there was never any intention of holding the conference.”¹²⁹ Now that we learn that the set time for the invasion of Guatemala was mid-June, Woodward’s revelation has a paramount importance.¹³⁰

Finally, on June 18th, the bombing of Guatemala started and Castillo’s band composed of about two hundred mercenaries started the invasion from neighbouring Honduras. Meanwhile as explained at the beginning of this chapter, the aeroplanes had started their raids over the capital. On June 27 Arbenz resigned, handed power to his Generals, and sought refuge in the Mexican embassy only to flee to that country days later. Castillo Armas would seize power with Peurifoy’s support until July 8 only to be assassinated by a right-wing follower in 1957.

The years of spring in the land of ‘eternal tyranny’ had abruptly ended.

¹²⁸ La Nación, (a), 21 May, 1954.

¹²⁹ P.Glejeses (1991:316).

¹³⁰ The invasion of Castillo Armas’ troops started 17-18 June, Arbenz handed out power on 27 June, 1954.

CONCLUSIONS

ON HOW *SUCCESS* IN GUATEMALA PRODUCED POLITICAL BLINDNESS: PROGRESS OR BARBARISM?

World history is a
house that has more
staircases than rooms¹

Let no one mourn my ruin or my destruction
since for my ashes, when I die,
Hannibal will be the epitaph,
Carthage the urn²

The fatherland is a compound in the desert
Tibetan Text

- The US approach to revolution and democracy

This thesis has concentrated on US foreign policy in the context of US geopolitical undertakings and in relation to socio-political changes in Latin America, during a critical stage of the Cold War. As history shows, the first radical armed revolution of the century took place in México. Consequently there were various similar developments among which Cuba is outstanding in that it signified a radical confrontation of the regional *status quo* and the first Marxian revolution in the continent. This event drastically transformed the nature of the Latin American social and political fabric. By contrast even though the Guatemalan reformist process was conceived years before by its leaders as a revolution, the *October Revolution* in the country was a constitutional reformist process that aimed at the gradual transformation of the regime. It was not a classic military insurgency. Still, the measures carried out by the *October Revolutionaries* represented a radical shift (thus in many respects, given the regional context, a revolutionary one) in terms of the organisation of the polity and the economy.

¹ Bome quoted in R.Blackburn (1991:255).

² Quevedo, who lived amid decadence and hence was a great expert on forms of envy and rancour, places in the mouth of Scipio Africanus, the general who defeated the Carthaginians but was defeated by his fellow Romans, these arrogant words. Quoted in O.Paz (1985:24)

As we have seen the constitutional character of the process of steady socio-political transformation of the Guatemalan regime was enough reason to dismantle it, for in the context of the time and place it constituted both a novel *revolutionary mentality* that in Washington's view could not be allowed to be an exemplar or to spread to other countries, and a threat to US "Lockean nationalism" that postulated *Americanism* as the major doctrine to defend US preferences abroad.³ Americanism is basically an opposition to any change other than that on the US small government model, and particularly that which Washington's decision-makers of the time deem a threat to their security interests.

Change was represented in US discourse as an intolerable threat. Why did the dismantling of the Guatemalan regime by the US occur given the fact that the process was not truly radical, unlike that in Cuba seven years later? The very existence of this question is what makes this process relevant and also what makes the US exercise of power intriguing. I would argue that my contribution in this thesis has been to lay bare the conditions that made Washington react against a socio-political transformation which aimed just at the 'capitalist modernisation' of the country (not an insignificant aim in the light of local standards of development). Although this represented a loss for US investors, this was not the essential reason for the US establishment to envisage the overthrow of Arbenz, but the need to protect the socio-political security of a continent allegedly exposed to the Soviet threat.⁴ In fact what threatened 'US security' was both the democratic character of the transformation of capitalism in the region and the utilisation of the capitalist socio-political order as a means to transform the polity. Democracy was to be hidden and detached from an inclement political reality and from

³ S.Huntington argues that "the Lockean American is so fundamentally anti-government that he identifies government with restrictions on government. Confronted with the need to design a political system which will maximize power and authority, he has no ready answer. His general formula is that government should be based on free and fair elections. In many modernizing societies this formula is irrelevant. Elections to be meaningful presuppose a certain level of political organization," see S.Huntington (1986:7). See also L.Hartz (1991), R.A.Packham (1976).

⁴ Although Castillo-Armas returned land to UFCO, he went on with some aspects of the agrarian reform as instituted by Arbenz. It was a state priority to keep such an strategic asset and seemingly Washington did not complain. In regard to the Cuban and the Chilean cases, the former's economic priority has been obviously secondary for Washington. It has preferred to follow the route of the blockade than to re-establish links with the island in order to recover US economic assets. In Chile, Pinochet kept control over the copper industry and reserved a share of 10% of the total export revenue of this resource for the Army. In the light of these examples, the relegation of the 'economic interest' is conspicuous. A recent discussion on the US-Cuban problem is in J.L.Valdés-Ugalde (1997b).

the opportunities offered by a free domestic political struggle; otherwise, democracy would become a threat to national security. This brings us to the first important question at the conclusion of this research: Has 'capitalism', in the way we understand it in Central America and Guatemala, been a betrayal of democracy?

The above explanation perhaps can be best complemented by Louis Hartz's arguments. According to Hartz most US foreign policies - including that of war - have reduced complicated social issues

“to the simple lines of the battle chart. Because the ... struggle against Communism is in significant part an ideological competition for human loyalties, it has brought into the plainest view America's psychological pattern [...] Since the American liberal creed is a submerged faith [...], it is obviously not a theory which other peoples can easily appropriate or understand. Its very absolutism depends of course on this aspect of its character. At the same time this is not antithetical [...] to a crusading 'Americanism' based on the absolute mood which this very character of American thought inspires.”⁵

Hartz goes further on the problem of revolution and the contrasting approach that the US has used in order to justify its presence in world affairs, especially when it comes to its intolerant response to revolutionary regimes in power (that may be the expression of what he calls “the danger of unanimity”), which is, as he defines it, a “manifestation of irrational Lockeianism, or of 'Americanism,' to use a favorite term of the American Legion [...] Has not Locke suffered a relativistic beating at the same time?”⁶ In line with the issue of traditionalism Hartz suggests that

“not only have we been told that our history provides us with an 'American Proposition' applicable to all countries East and West, but we have also been told that it is we, not the Russians, who are the most 'revolutionary' nation on earth. Nothing is farther from the truth [...] It is the absence of social revolution which is at the heart of the whole American dilemma. Not only does this produce the quality of our absolute thinking, Locke never having been contrasted with Filmer and hence never with Marx, but in a whole series of specific ways it enters into our difficulty of communication with the world [...]

⁵ Louis Hartz (1991:305).

⁶ Ibid:11,13.

No insularity in the West, not even the English, has been so acute as the American: no international involvement, again not even the English, has been so deep.”⁷

Is this US involvement produced by the fear of “losing” the sense of *American identity*? Thus, was security defended for the sake of a rational principle towards the maintenance of an (economic and political) order or as a result of US sense of insecurity in its foundational national principles as opposed to those of the others? All in all, even though the US may have remained extremely liberal and antiradical in world affairs, these experiences and beliefs made it difficult

“for Americans to perceive, understand, and appreciate the positive role that radicalism and revolution, with the intense conflict and violence that often attend them, may play under certain circumstances in other countries. The typical American response to the great historical revolutions, for example, has been initially favorable and then, when they did not ‘emulate the American pattern of quickly leading to orderly, democratic societies,’ one of disappointment and even hostility.”⁸

As R.A. Packenham claims that US policy towards revolutions “seems to have been to react negatively to genuinely revolutionary political systems.”⁹ On this aspect Hartz has provided an approach that perhaps points interestingly to another side of the *American question*: “from the French revolution onward the American response to revolution abroad is like a love affair which is constantly turning sour, like an infatuation which is forever ending in disenchantment.”¹⁰

Although the entire issue of US involvement in revolutionary processes addresses the problem of the distribution of power (“Americans pay more attention to how power is distributed than to the amount of power”)¹¹, this approach is carried out based on a view that

⁷ Ibid:305-306, 284.

⁸ R.A.Packenham (1976:138).

⁹ Ibid:140.

¹⁰ Quoted in ibid:139.

¹¹ Ibid:153.

“was erroneous because American society was only superficially divided and in conflict; more profoundly it was unified and consensual around the inarticulate assumption of the migrant culture of the Lockean, liberal tradition.”¹² The US arrival at modernity was the result of less effort than expected and thus this nation had the advantage of arriving at a “state of democracy without having to endure a democratic revolution” and its citizens “were born equal and never had to worry about creating equality” as Alexis de Tocqueville has argued. At the same time there was an absence of feudal social institutions to be overcome in order to establish power to the extent that US “society could develop and change without having to overcome the opposition of social classes with a vested interest in the social and economic status quo.”¹³ In this context it is possible to agree with Pakenham when he maintains that

“American history has not been propitious from the point of view of enabling Americans to understand and appreciate the need in Third World countries for accumulating power and authority. Since the Americans have never had to worry greatly about the problem of creating a powerful government, of accumulating a large quantum of power, in order to modernize, they have been peculiarly blind to the problems of creating effective authority in modernizing countries.”¹⁴

The above expresses a modernity resulting from a capitalist society that was the consequence of the “absence of feudal institutions” and proved unable to measure the problem of power in a foreign revolutionary context. Moreover, if revolution meant on most occasions challenging the *status quo* and the achievement of essential conditions for economic modernisation and democracy, this represented an unlikely intersection with US interests, especially when the latter addressed the problem of security as its first and last priority. Such an event brought about a clash between one world and another, and between competing strategies towards progress.

¹² Ibid:153-154.

¹³ S.Huntington (1986:126). See also L.Hartz (1991:43).

¹⁴ R.A.Pakenham (1976:154).

As argued in this thesis, the ultimate importance granted to security - discourse included - relatively downgraded economic priorities in the very process of executing Washington's Guatemalan policies. For this very reason, perhaps, the *capitalist* issue at the local level was also insignificant. Securing markets was largely seen as consequential on national security. Once this strategic stage had been secured, then it was possible to collect the surplus of 'capitalist production'. Above all a national security regime had to be imposed in Guatemala, implying the insignificance of democracy. In short, the (capitalist) economy and the polity were not in themselves priorities for Washington.¹⁵ Modernity was overshadowed by the obsession with securing the principles of security, by a high degree of narcissist nationalism, and by the dubious post-feudal US idea that any revolutionary change - even the most moderate - was radical (and threatening) in itself in that by disrupting the *American* tradition it was a non-benevolent response to Washington's expectancy about social change in Latin America.

On the other hand, the very fact that a US intervention in Guatemala occurred in 1954 provides us with the essential reasons to enquire into the degree of contradiction that exists between the macro-economic sphere of the modern capitalist project and its regional subsidiaries. As I have shown the intervention in Guatemala destroyed a reformist socio-political transformation which was being efficiently carried out by liberal democrats within a 'capitalist context'. The US intervention contradicted the substance of the official (democratic) discourse and an entire region of the US sphere of influence was left exposed to the forces of extremist actors that led to both the systematic dismantling of the polity and a widespread barbarian disorder. This rationale aiming at the defence of security at any cost allowed the US to reach the level of accomplishing a mission and securing the territorial and ideological terrain for power politics in the region, but it involved an evident contradiction between discourse and reality.

How did the 'mission accomplished' by *Pbsuccess* influence future United States policy in the region? The Guatemalan 'liberation' presaged the features of future operations of this type in Latin America, like that in Cuba in April, 1961. This success led Washington to an over-

¹⁵ See chapters-5-6.

estimation of the importance of covert operations in the zone, which in turn represented a long-term strategic mistake at the expense of Latin American security. This arose from the imposition of bipolarity as a result of the Cold War. From NSC 68 onwards US policy in Latin America was considered part of the US response to the perceived threat of Sovietism, and Guatemala was an early regional site for bipolarity, taken to the extreme. What is more, it is important to understand that the *moment* of this policy (in Guatemala) coincides with the reproduction of an *identity* in the US. Thus, the ‘culture of security’ is a significant component of American identity after World War II.¹⁶

It is a paradox that Guatemala was (and became) ‘too important’ despite the fact that the threat that it represented in itself was very small! This is why it had to be confronted resorting to the rationale of power (in that it was not possible to demonstrate its intrinsically threatening nature) and, thus, sacrificing political reasoning (in that a reasonable solution was not in order for an irrational purpose). One among many results of this was the primacy granted to military solutions to solve socio-political crises, which in itself is one of the major aspects of the critical failure of US policy in the region. Richard Barnet has established in the *Economy of Death*, that from 1946-1968 the taxpayers of the US spent, in the name of national security, more than one trillion dollars:

“each year the federal government spends more than 70 cents of every budget dollar on past, present, and future wars. The American people are devoting more resources to the war machine than is spent by all federal, state, and local governments on health and hospitals, education, old age and retirement benefits, public assistance and relief, unemployment and social security, housing and community development, and the support of agriculture. Out of every tax dollar there is about 11 cents left to build American society.”¹⁷

This represents an entire war economy, a trend which has not yet stopped despite the tragic end of the Cold War. The predominance of the Industrial Military Complex seemed to have been established by the end of Eisenhower’s administration, as preceding chapters show. Also declassified documents have offered essential testimony to the severe escalation occurring

¹⁶ See chapter-5.

¹⁷ R.J.Barnet (1969:5).

while designing Cold War policies as a whole and in relation to US spheres of influence. As shown in this thesis Latin America was chosen as one of those regional contexts of military escalation.¹⁸

- Geopolitics against political rationality

It has been one of the contentions of this thesis that, contrary to US efforts, it is quite insufficient, as Clive Ponting has argued, “to reduce the complexities of world history in the twentieth century simply to a conflict between two different economic and political systems.”¹⁹ By embracing this interpretation in the very actions of politics, history was exposed to an inevitable backlash. From the bipolar ideological struggle stemming from the impact of World War II, a regional policy was left exposed to arbitrary ideological forces. The United States extrapolated its obsession with its domestic witch-hunting and brought it to the confines of the regional theatre: Central America, and particularly Guatemala as the major test case in question, were submitted to a severe form of experimentation from outside. This kind of exercise was prevalent during the years of the Cold War, but especially during the most critical years of McCarthyism, which were also the first and most important years of the Eisenhower administration. As also shown in preceding sections of this thesis, the President and his Secretary of State were themselves exposed to this structural crisis which became a political-ideological confusion - not to mention embarrassment.²⁰

At this point, geopolitical axioms (the defence of continental security) were located as the essential strategic principles to support the ideological reasoning of US foreign policy makers (anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism). At the same time the geopolitical tools of the policy imposed limits on a constructive foreign policy, most importantly in the light of the growing trend towards socio-political change in the continent as a whole, but most particularly

¹⁸ See above chapters-2-3,5-6.

¹⁹ C.Ponting (1998:4). See also above chapters-1-3.

²⁰ See chapters 2,4-7.

in Central America and Guatemala. As shown in chapters 2-3 the modern exercise of foreign policy required a dialectical interaction between the principles of power politics and the geopolitical axioms. To this extent, then, power politics were both exposed and executed. The fact that the United States was the only real power in the region pointed to another critical inadequacy - having unique degree of control over the workings of Pan-Americanism, shown in the OAS's historically dysfunctional performance - which turned US exercise of power into a form of tyranny: given the non-existence of an alternative foreign power the insistence on turning Guatemala into a *buffer state* was extremist. The pattern of power politics the US instituted in the (Westernised) Inter-American order smashed - authoritarianism included - the precarious regional equilibrium resulting from the post-World War II arrangements. The balance of power did matter in Latin America insofar as it was a component of containment. Otherwise, in the absence of a Soviet threat it did not matter, in that there was no imbalance to be corrected. We may recall, quoting again Martin Wight's words: "The word 'balance' has entirely lost its meaning of 'equilibrium'. There is less notion of stability ..." ²¹ Thus, it was the *nature* of the distribution of power which seemed to be the core problem of regional stability.

Certainly this conceptualisation did not concern the 'Western Hemisphere' as it did Western Europe.²² However, it did not conceal a (local) reality: the denial, within the realm of foreign policy, of tolerance and pluralism as the two essential principles of liberal democracy, not least because of the potential incompatibility there was between the latter and the principles of balance of power. To some extent within the context of an unjustly organised global concert they were mutually exclusive. If (*American*) *Westernisation* (as opposed to Sovietism) meant anything, it was that security had to be the foundation of a 'new' order, in the context of a globalised and chaotic race for power. However, when a marginal actor such as Guatemala, resorted to "Westernisation" as a source of democratic development by carrying on a constitutional reform, this action was not valid in that it was dysfunctional for the purposes of supremacy.²³ Hence the 'coherence' there was between the real objectives of Washington's

²¹ See M.Wight(1966b:155). See above chapter 3.

²² I am referring to the times of the intervention in Guatemala.

²³ For more on this dichotomy see below. I explain *Westernisation* here as the liberal-philosophical framework to accomplish socio-political change.

policy and the means to accomplish them which elucidates also the contradiction pointed out above between discourse of democracy and reality. Somebody - especially the weak - had to pay the historical and inevitable price of deception; but all the actors involved, big and small, were inevitably exposed to the consequences of historical judgement. This price was generally reflected, as happened in Guatemala, in interventionism as the ultimate response. I argue that the paradox displayed in this thesis, which has been present in US foreign policy history in Latin America, is to a great extent a result of geopolitical thinking: it was the commencement of increasing structural disorder.

- The Construction of Self and Other

As shown in Parts II-III, the US emphasis upon imposing its security principles on Guatemala in the name of the defence of the continent had a dramatic effect both upon Guatemalan and Pan-American affairs. The United States portrayed *América* as being the same as *America* and, thus, the interests of both were seen as part of the whole, in the same *context*. US foreign policy was based on a metonymy.²⁴ And yet, the eloquence of the continental panorama contradicted the axiom: the “two Americas” represented two radically opposed views of their condition of belonging. Thus, in the end, the appropriation of ‘America’ (ontologically and politically) was ineffectual in terms of the US’s long-term strategic aims, among which, supposedly, was that of securing political stability. To the latter the US did not pay proper attention and it persisted in its hard-headed policy of imposing the need to defend (and *create*) security.²⁵ This situation produced an ahistorical conceptualisation on the part of Washington and its local allies, of social and political realities in the region, resulting in a steady external involvement in Latin American affairs.

The existence of *America* as a supreme continental actor and a global hegemon created various problems for freedom in the continent. The syndrome of the haunted country always to be invaded from abroad produced, during the Cold War, a generally tense atmosphere and US

²⁴ See chapter-5.

²⁵ See chapters-1-2.

foreign policies were trapped by this dynamic. Consequently, in the context of the foreign policy making process in the *American backyard*, this circumstance altered dramatically the two main ideological pillars of the US political tradition, libertarianism and egalitarianism. Paz has argued that the contradiction of the United States - what gave it life and may cause its death - can be summed up in a pair of terms:

“it is at once a plutocratic democracy and an imperial republic. The first contradiction affects the two notions that were the axis of the political thought of the Founding Fathers. Plutocracy provokes and accentuates inequality: inequality in turn makes political freedoms and individual rights nothing more than illusions. Here Marx's criticism went straight to the heart of the matter. Since US plutocracy, unlike the Roman, admittedly creates abundance, it is able to lessen and lighten the burden of unjust differences between individuals and classes. But it has done so by shifting the most scandalous inequalities from the national scene to the international: the underdeveloped countries ... The second contradiction, intimately linked to the first, stems from the difference between what the United States is domestically - a democracy - and what its actions abroad make it - an empire. Freedom and oppression are the opposite and complementary faces of its national being. In the same way that plutocracy begins by giving rise to inequality and ends up manacled freedom, the arms that the imperial State brandishes against the enemies abroad are, by an imperceptible process ... inevitably turned into instruments that the political bureaucracy uses against the country's independent minded citizens. The first contradiction put an end to the republican institutions of ancient Rome; the second, an end to the very life of ancient Athens as an independent city.”²⁶

The 20th century *Mayflower* pilgrims' descendants confused their ancestors' original solitude which allowed them to shape, within an unrestricted atmosphere, their religious convictions into norms of life, with an extreme form of nuclear isolationism. Paradoxically, within a modern political world and concerning the Latin American reality, isolationism meant also the negating - when the need arose - of liberties for the sake of the imposition of a pattern of power. As argued in chapter 3 and above in these Conclusion, this type of isolationism moulded an *efficient* balance of power. Hence the pertinence of explaining (anti-Soviet) 'hemispheric exclusion' as a cover for regional intervention.²⁷

²⁶ O.Paz (1985:155-156,157).

²⁷ Ponting discusses that “the fact that one of them [the two powers] was eventually victorious tells us something about world history, but is very far from being the whole story,” see, C.Ponting (1998:4). Hubris - that overweening arrogance which courts disaster - was inevitable: the arrogant use of power always exacts a price, in

Incidentally by implementing the rules imposed by the balance of power, and, thus, denying the essential principles of liberal democracy, the US was also nullifying the existence of a civilising agent in the foreign policy making process. Accordingly this dynamic spilled over into un-civilised and anti-democratic conduct among domestic Latin American actors, which had a generally beneficial result in terms of the American quest for supremacy. These actors understood US actions as the emergence of a “convenient stage” of disorder and viewed the situation as the opportunity to achieve various kinds of gains throughout the period. Ultimately, this outcome crystallised in the dismantling of the polity (assuming that there was one) and the installation of authoritarian military regimes that in most cases - as in Guatemala - were to last for several decades. The neo-colonial obsession of Washington with preventing both the consolidation of a mature capitalist class in Latin America via the control over the main sources of economic development and the modernisation of the polity was counter-productive. It created - paradoxically - an ideal scenario for “inevitable revolutions”. The latter represented the extreme outcome to which the region was left exposed after the US alliance with fanatical anti-modern domestic political actors.²⁸ In the case of the coup against Arbenz, a paradigm of Inter-American relations was inaugurated for the sake of security.²⁹

this case through a blinkered isolationism. This arrogance goes for the two superpowers, yet it was the ‘winner’ of the Cold War confrontation, the US, who performed most accordingly. See chapters-3,6.

²⁸ I stressed this problem in chapter 5. I argue that the US and its local supporters aimed at the appropriation of the fruits of ‘modernity’ for themselves; the pre-requisite for this to happen was not ‘too much’ political or economic progress (see below). Although Arbenz’s tactical stand (vis à vis the US) was not openly anti-American, I would argue that the appearance of the *October Revolution* expressed old nationalistic claims. See also parts-II-III. See Kennedy’s quote in the Introduction. President Kennedy was much more Machiavellian at the time than thought, and his contradictions in Latin America were critical. The irony was that during the gradual (though slow) transition from the chaotic political economy of authoritarianism to the times of the formation of an atmosphere relatively conducive to achieving order and progress, significant members of the Latin American ruling elites, to the US satisfaction, started increasingly attending, in the US educational system, the most important schools of business, economics, politics, and military training. A significant pioneer example of this is the Chilean “Chicago boys” generation. During the 1960s and 1970s and most clearly from the 1980s onwards this was a widespread phenomenon in the most advanced countries. R.Camp has produced a representative example on the Mexican case. See R.A.Camp (1984).

²⁹ In what seems to be a generalised opinion, the overthrow of Arbenz was carried out "in perhaps the most open and emphatic example of US Cold War interventionism to be seen in Latin America." See J.Dunkerley (1992:300). See chapter-4.

An *Other* was created through an interventionist impulse in Central America which did not discriminate from one case to the other (the whole of Central America was seen as a critical and insufferable *mess*, least of all natives), found itself in need of resorting to a means of disguising reality (Central America was, after all, “our little region over there ...”).³⁰ Given that the ideological postulate was dominant in the defence of the security interest and in the light of Cold War polarisation, the US fabricated foreign threats, among which the Guatemalan was the main one in post-war Latin America. As a result the US foreign policy process displayed elements of constructivism.³¹ Dealing with the *Other*, understood as the *unbearably different*, was the subsequent assignment to be accomplished. Although this question had been already addressed by the barbarous Christianity of the conquistadores, the principle, inherited by *America*, perfected itself in the further (modern) exercise of (US) foreign power.³²

The above occurred, in the case of Guatemala, by means of distorting this country’s political reality and by inserting its regional geopolitical circumstance into a notionally *Sovietised* sphere. It was in this way that Guatemala became a “Communist threat” to the US and to the continental “political integrity”. Furthermore, from the archival data analysed in former chapters, it is possible to recognise that even US officials, like J.F. Dulles, accepted that despite the impossibility of proving Soviet involvement, it was important to impose this idea for

³⁰ Although this is not the place to clarify it, of course there are important differences from one case to the other. Bulmer-Thomas has argued that “[not] for the first (or last) time in Central America, the outcome in one republic (Guatemala) had a profound impact on the outcome elsewhere (Honduras) and both events carried major long-term implications for democracy and the labour movement in the two republics.” V.Bulmer-Thomas (1987:140). Although I partially agree with Bulmer-Thomas, let me say that when the argument is put forward on the subject of authoritarianism as a widespread phenomenon, this must be done in the light of the generalised crises experienced by both national societies and states in the region as part of the transition to authoritarianism. The cases of El Salvador and Nicaragua are two good examples, let alone the Argentinean (1976), Brazilian (1964), Uruguayan (1973), and the Chilean (1973) among many others. I agree with Roxborough that “to each of the forms of economic development there corresponds a particular form of politics and form of state apparatus.” However this generally hypothesised approach does not contradict the fact that attempts at radical economic reform have been brought about as a consequence of authoritarian outcomes across the whole Latin American spectrum. On militarism in Latin America, see I.Roxborough (1979:chapter-8), and J.L.Valdés-Ugalde (1998). See chapter 1.

³¹ Constructivism has been discussed in this thesis in terms of the importance of discourse in determining *who* the actors are and *what* rules they must follow. *Language* is a key not for textual analysis but as the trigger for action: it does not just reflect meaning but is in fact also practice and behaviour. This issue has been discussed in the most recent round of debates of International Relations. See K.Booth(1998); K.Booth&S.Smith (1995); and K.Booth,S.Smith&M.Zalewski (1996). See chapter-7.

³² After all, “the emergence of *America* into world history is a product of [the] period of transition between the medieval and the modern.” See D.Campbell (1992:106), (my emphasis).

the sake of “common sense”. The “liberation” of “red Guatemala” was, thus, accomplished only on the basis of “circumstantial” evidence. And yet, in the absence of evidence to prove Soviet involvement, the decision to intervene had to be a “political” one and based on “our deep conviction” that “such a tie must exist.”³³

It was, then, in this fashion that Washington was able to meet the geopolitical maxim: a (regional) “context” for (power) politics. Therefore, a *climate* to “protect” security (i.e., ‘ideological integrity’), was, in this way, secured.³⁴ The truth, however, was that as one of the world territories relatively little exposed to the great geopolitical game Latin America in the times of Arbenz represented no danger as far as the Soviet threat was concerned.³⁵ The real danger, the US was to learn later (and too late), was the critical loss of the domestic democratic strength in the region that interventionism had inevitably (and irreparably) caused. Guatemala became the first modern liability of this dynamic.

It is important not to overlook the extreme political consequences that prevailed in Guatemala as a result of the imposition of the *American* order. Most important was the Guatemalan ethnocide that took place in the years following the coup. A recently released report, “Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio” (*Guatemala: Memory of Silence*) produced by the Guatemalan *Historical Clarification Commission*, commonly referred to as the “Truth Commission” - *Comisión de la Verdad* - revealed that from the end of the 1950s up to 1990s, there were 42, 000 victims of violations to human rights, out of which 29, 000 were “executed” or “disappeared”. The total amount of dead and “disappeared was over 200, 000 persons, the majority of them Mayan Indians.” The Commission, whose head is German historian Christian Tomuschat, states in this report that “93% of the documented violations were committed by the Army and para-military groups, 3% by the guerrilla and another 4% by non-defined actors.” The genocide, which was “monitored by US intelligence services - the CIA - and ordered by the high military command, was undertaken by the espionage services, especially the so-called *G-2* and the *Estado Mayor Presidencial* (EMP) the military body in charge of protecting the

³³ See chapters-6,8.

³⁴ See chapter-2.

³⁵ See chapters-4-6.

president”, that were directly responsible, in the words of Tomuschat, for “the massive extermination of entire defenceless Mayan communities which included children, women and elderly people who were accused of links with the guerrilla; the cruelty of the methods used causes horror to the moral conscience of the civilised world.”³⁶ This report states that the Guatemalan political institutions were systematically weakened from the end of the 1950s onwards: “in 1961 the Army had 6 military zones in all the country ... in 1983 the Army had 23 military zones in Guatemala. According to a study quoted by the Commission, the “‘fundamentalist’ aim was to create a highly organised and regimented society, including the smallest population unit. All under military control.”³⁷

As recently as March 11, 1999 President Clinton acknowledged the dark and long-buried episode of US foreign policy: its support for brutal right-wing governments in Guatemala during the long civil war. Clinton declared in Guatemala: “For the United States, it is important I state clearly that support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong and the US must not repeat that mistake.”³⁸

Accordingly, apart from being a study of the complex specificities that link (and split) capitalism and democracy, sovereignty and justice, and ultimately order and democracy,³⁹ this

³⁶ See, CEH (1999). This Commission was appointed in 1996 by the Guatemalan government once the peace was agreed with the guerrilla organisations. Its head is Christian Tomuschat, other members are prominent Guatemalan personalities, such as Alfredo Balsells and Otilia Lux. It accounts for the events taking place from 1960 onwards. See also, “Estado y Ejército, culpables del genocidio en Guatemala”, El Universal, 26 February, 1999, (international section), (my translation). See also, “Guatemala Truth Report”, The Guardian, 26, February, 1999, p. 16. A controversial view on the inform can be found in: P.Canby (1999). This report was preceded by the inform “Guatemala: Nunca Más”, see above chapter-4.

³⁷ See CEH (1999), “Debilitamiento de la Institucionalidad Estatal,” p.2; and F.Beltranena-Falla (1992:4,7).

³⁸ See, “US ‘sorry for death squads’,” The Times, March 12, 1999, p. 12; See also “American reckoning, Clinton finally says sorry,” The Guardian, March 13, 1999, (editorial page). Documents released by the National Security Archives in Washington the same month reinforce claims of US official involvement in the ethnocide. For instance, in a 1966 memo, a State Department security official said that he had established a “safe house” inside the Guatemalan presidential palace where local security agents could meet their US contacts. The premises became the head-quarters for officers waging Guatemala’s “dirty war.”

³⁹ I argue that pursuing national sovereignty has to be done by accomplishing justice first; likewise national order will only be possible when the strengthening of the democratic foundations is consummated. Ultimately ‘a sovereign order’ will be the result of the above pre-conditions being accomplished.

has been also a thesis about the polarity between progress and barbarism within the international system; and most particularly within the context of the foreign policy of a dominant country towards a peripheral nation: it has been to a great extent a study of the difficulties that the pace of the movement towards national modernity confronts when dealing with supreme power. By referring to progress and barbarism as two antithetical principles of civilisation I discuss, in the context of this interpretation of Guatemala *vis à vis* the US, the extent to which an omnipresent foreign policy turns dysfunctional in terms of the essential foundations of a *civilisatory* order. Guatemala represents a paradigm of the barbaric consequences of extremism as a result of the tragic imposition of authoritarianism, raising serious doubts as to the real usefulness that consensual politics have in the modernisation of the polity. This conflict is even more remarkable when considered that it took place in one of the regions of the globe where fragile underdevelopment has had a significant added value. In this context an alternative question emerges: did the exercise of long-lasting orthodox Cold War policies in Guatemala and the region represent the antithesis of what we now understand as capitalist modernity?

One of the central aims of my work has been to explore through the Guatemalan prism and in the context of the industrialised modern political reality, the extent to which the Inter-American relationship can be seen as part of the history of progress, understood, as the development of socio-political conditions to allow the fair distribution of the fruits of economic growth and democratic modernity. In short, to see whether there can be a Latin American context for the elaboration of the cultural, political and economic conditions that make national virtuousness possible.⁴⁰

- The impact of Guatemala

Did intervention in Guatemala negate political democracy in the continent as a whole? Yes and no. It also provoked both recurrent revolution (i.e., a trigger towards potential democracy) and consecutive further interventions, a vicious circle in itself. On the one hand

⁴⁰ The issues of progress and modernity addressed here have been emphasised repeatedly throughout the entire thesis. See especially the Introduction and chapters-1-7.

Guatemala and the other cases which followed, such as Chile in 1973, seemed to demonstrate that US involvement was to a great extent responsible for altering the course of the polity.⁴¹ On the other, the Cuban revolution in 1959 - which has been such an impediment to the US quest for supremacy in the region - showed that intervention also created conditions for boosting socio-political change and a hope for democracy. Although the reasons for the Cuban Revolution occurring in such a very particular fashion are mostly endogenous, it cannot be denied that the exogenous factor played a great influence. It was not just that the (successful) model of *Pbsuccess* was used by the US to carry out operation *Mongoose*⁴². A secondary scenario was in course. The very fact that the Guatemalan process occurred and ended as it did had already made some contributions towards the boosting of the Cuban revolutionary movement. This usefulness consisted, ironically, in the Cuban revolutionary leadership (as had occurred with Arbenz too) arriving at the conclusion that any national movement towards socio-political change had to be autonomous and independent. This was successfully demonstrated by the originality of the *October Revolution* in Guatemala and it was implemented, up to 1962 - by when its links with the USSR were obvious - by the Cuban revolution.

The Western political tradition has dominated modern American history. The United States is the earliest consolidated expression of this tradition. At the same time, domestic political processes in Latin America - *l'extreme occident* - were not exempted from this reality. Moreover, both the processes of independence and revolution in this part of the continent were permeated to a great extent by Western political traditions resulting in constitutional arrangements resembling French, Spanish and US conventions. Democrats such as Arévalo and Arbenz praised F.D. Roosevelt's political principles, as did at first Fidel Castro, Ernesto "Che"

⁴¹ Newly available material seems to demonstrate clearly US intervention in Chile. In the light of the Augusto Pinochet extradition process to Spain a leaked memorandum reveals the length to which Henry Kissinger went to cover up atrocities in Chile and give comfort to the regime of General Pinochet. Kissinger's complicity has always been suspected but the new data reveals details of major importance. It shows how Kissinger bolstered Pinochet while hundreds of political prisoners were still being jailed and tortured. For instance, at a OAS meeting in Santiago in June 1976, he told Pinochet: "In the US, as you know, we are sympathetic with what you are trying to do here. I think that the previous government was headed toward Communism. We wish your government well." On the issue of human rights he told him, "I will treat human rights in general terms and human rights in a world context ... I will say that the human rights issue has impaired relations between the US and Chile. This is partly the result of congressional actions. I will add that I hope you remove those obstacles ... I can do no less without producing a reaction in the US which would lead to legislative restrictions. The speech is not aimed at Chile." See, "Kissinger covered up Chile torture," *The Observer*, 28 February, 1999, p. 3.

⁴² The CIA's code name for the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Guevara and many others struggling to achieve the consolidation of their *imagined communities*. These Latin American leaders had the right to be considered part of the Western democratic tradition and also claimed to be the bearers - as Robert Kennedy claimed for his own country - of the moral leadership underpinning the conduct of politics.⁴³

Still, the political-cultural similarity contradicted and came into conflict with the established tradition of power politics in the region. Even though the “two Americas” were meant to be similar this myth was challenged in that the southern part was overshadowed by the might of the revisited (Anglo-American) *mission civilizatrice*.⁴⁴ Being “similar” to such an extent was for Iberian-*América* a liability: it played the inferior role in the power contest. Still it was bound to be ‘equal’ as far as the *American* security priorities were concerned. For this reason the “two Americas” had to be similar at the geopolitical level; but different in terms of their entitlement to secure their means for national development and political progress: they were *individual* countries only insofar as they were ‘non-significant’ fractions of a *confused whole*. Guatemala represented the ultimate Cold War expression of this contradiction and in 1959 Cuba led the first structural rebellion against an order that stopped states from reaching endogenous solutions to peace and prosperity. Thus, the US success in Guatemala was the immediate antecedent of the US failure in Cuba. But, above all, it is of great importance to understand that this historical split stems from the same tradition, that on the one hand affirms and on the other denies.

I would argue that a significant contribution of this thesis has been to elucidate how the movement for social and political change in Guatemala et al, represented the first significant move in the West towards refuting the rationale of post-World War II power politics. For these reasons the revolutionary outcome represented both a novelty and a threat to constituted order.

⁴³ Eisenhower recognised that Castro was “a hero of the masses,” see S.Brown (1983:131). Robert Kennedy declared in his acceptance speech as candidate for the Presidency that the US had the “right to the moral leadership of this planet.” See D.Halberstam (1972:41).

⁴⁴ See chapters-1-2.

The Guatemalan drama contributed to the hastening of the above contradiction (affirmation and denial). One of the most important assets of these two processes was the emergence of the Argentine revolutionary "Che" Guevara whose radicalisation occurred precisely while he was in Guatemala on one of his expeditions, this time as a "revolutionary tourist", when Arbenz was deposed. This was the case of two men of different ideologies who never met during Arbenz's term, but were to meet later on, when the Cuban Revolution was in power. Their lives were marked - if within two different ideological experiences - by the formidable task of both breaking the rigid political and economic structures of the Latin American countries and confronting the US's excessive eagerness to achieve complete control of the continent. If there is any resemblance to be stressed between Arbenz and Guevara (and thus between the Guatemalan and the Cuban movements) it is that despite their different strategic focuses on the use of the means, the ends of their struggle were, in principle, strikingly similar: they both, in their own way, were responsible for reinforcing a new political tradition whereby national independence and radical reformism were the two main features of their political action. They were both men belonging to the same political time. Equally, their defeat reflected the Latin American failure to pursue an alternative path towards development, to the "*American way*."

Guevara joined Castro with the deep conviction that Guatemala had meant for him a precious lesson. He told Castro: "We cannot guarantee the revolution before cleansing the armed forces. It is necessary to remove every one who might be a danger. But it is necessary to do it rapidly, right now."⁴⁵ The irony of it all is that Guevara's experience in Guatemala was more than a mere opportunity to fly to México to meet the Cuban revolutionaries. He had also the occasion to witness from a privileged position the roads of political and economic reform and the endogenous and exogenous difficulties of such a programme in the light of the US's deeply entrenched strategic interest. What the Guatemalan affair demonstrated, among other things - and Guevara would never forget the lesson of this - was that even moderate social reform was regarded with suspicion by the US, and thus it was impossible to achieve

⁴⁵ Quoted in S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:184); also in P.Glejeses (1991:372); and C.Blasier (1976:178). See also R.Immerman (1982:187-189). For an account of Che's experience in Guatemala, see the memoirs of his first wife H.Gadea (1973:54-57).

successfully when waiting for Washington's approval in order to implement it.⁴⁶ Accordingly the Guatemalan experience was going to be central in developing Guevara's anti-imperialism and his theories in guerrilla warfare which he was to put in practice in the Sierra Maestra.⁴⁷ In an article entitled "I saw the Fall of Jacobo Arbenz," which he wrote while helping in the impotent popular defence against Castillo Armas' invasion, he concluded with the following sentence: "the struggle begins now."⁴⁸

Subsequently, in the light of Washington's determination to fight the alleged threat of Communism in the continent and in the context of US victory in operation *Pbsuccess*, Guevara stated at the Latin American Youth Congress in Havana in the summer of 1960, where Arbenz was present in the audience:

"We would like to extend a special greeting to Jacobo Arbenz, president of the first Latin American country which fearlessly raised its voice against colonialism; a country which, in a far-reaching and courageous agrarian reform, gave expression to the hopes of the peasant masses. We would also like to express our gratitude to him, and to the democracy which gave way, for the example they gave us and for the accurate estimate they enabled us to make of the weakness which that government was unable to overcome. This allows us to go to the root of the matter and to behead those who hold power and their lackeys at a single stroke."⁴⁹

⁴⁶ In a reply to the Argentinean writer Ernesto Sábato, in which Guevara discusses the whereabouts of the "revolución libertadora" (libertarian revolution) in Latin America, he remembers that the word liberty for better or worse, had been "left behind in a Guatemala which I had just left defeated and disappointed." E.Guevara (1970:676).

⁴⁷ The Sierra Maestra was the main theatre of the Cuban insurgency. On guerrilla warfare see E.Guevara (1972); E.Guevara (1961).

⁴⁸ The phrase was recalled by Gadea. This first political article by Guevara was never found. According to the recollection of Gadea, "the article ran about ten or twelve pages. Unfortunately I made only one copy [Guevara dictated the article to Gadea]; he kept the original and I kept the copy. The special circumstances that befell us, the persecution suffered by Ernesto and my being jailed, account for the disappearance of both copies." Guevara quoted in H.Gadea (1973:54,56).

⁴⁹ R.Immerman (1980-1981:651). Che's permanent comment had been "I was and still am an ardent admirer of the Arbenz government." in R.Immerman (1982:187,195). See also P.Gleijeses (1991:372,391n). Schlesinger and Kinzer have said that "Guevara had originally come to Guatemala in January 1954, attracted by its climate of social reform ... When the air raids began, he volunteered to go to the front ... He tried unsuccessfully to organize units to guard the capital. In the final hours, he helped move a cache of arms to a putative resistance brigade. After Arbenz's fall, he thought the former President should retreat to the mountains with a band of armed workers and peasants and fight on indefinitely," see S.Schlesinger&S.Kinzer (1982:184). Guevara, according to Gadea's version, "was absolutely certain" that if Arbenz had armed the people his government would not have fallen: "I believe if Arbenz

A radical statement indeed! It seems as though those were times of an undeclared state of war impacting the entire continent's political existence. History, which does not ask for permission, had reunited two men within the same historical time and whose destiny it was to conclude their lives tragically in the search for the few essential answers to the many basic questions about the future of the continent.⁵⁰ José Martí's maxim, it seemed, appeared still to be haunting the collective imagination: "our América [Martí said] springs neither from Rousseau nor Washington, but from itself."⁵¹

What of the United States itself? Did it truly enhance its own security interests through the intervention in Guatemala? The fall of Arbenz impacted upon the political dynamism of the region and the political processes in some other countries of Latin America. On the one hand, it encouraged and realigned political movements which eventually went underground, as the Guatemalan case itself demonstrated, for many former civilians entered into the bloody guerrilla warfare movements.⁵² On the other hand, the overthrow of Arbenz radicalised some national regimes in uncertain conservative direction, whose main themes were a furious anti-Communism and a strong military authoritarianism. This can be observed in the number of pro-US right-wing coups taking place from the 1960s on throughout the region. In other words, the CIA-Castillo Armas' plot renovated a version of the traditional regional type of authoritarianism. Thus, Guatemala is relevant to the understanding of the polarisation of the political processes in all those countries in need of radical socio-political reform. This is true of

repudiates his general staff and goes after the support of the people, giving them arms, he can go up to the mountains and fight no matter how many years it lasts." Gadea's account is in Gadea (1973:53,57).

⁵⁰ Press reports reveal that once exiled in México 'the welcome [to Arbenz] was cold': "The Mexican authorities were sensitive to pressure from Washington, and they had, in any case, little sympathy for the Red Jacobo ... They wanted to be rid of Arbenz ... Thus when he told them in December 1954 that he wanted to go to Europe for a few weeks, they promised that he would be allowed back, but when he tried to return, the Mexican embassy in Paris refused to give him a visa ... In 1970, he was allowed back into México, but on a visa that had to be renewed abroad every six months. 'My longing is to live the last months of my life near Guatemala,' he told a journalist in October. He died in January 27, 1971, in México, a lonely man." See P.Glejjeses (1991:390,392).

⁵¹ J.Martí (1974:212). Also in J.Martí (1977:102). Another interesting book by Martí on the subject of both *América* and "*America*", is, J.Martí (1975). See the Introduction.

⁵² See the chronologies and above in these Conclusions.

the whole Central American region - with the relative exception of Costa Rica - and the entire Southern Cone between the 1960s and the 1990s.⁵³

Instead of solving the critical aspects of the Cold War confrontation between the US and the USSR at the Pan-American level the intervention arguably worsened it, indirectly through the developments in Cuba between 1959-1962 but also by radicalising in various ways domestic movements throughout Latin America, and by impoverishing even more the (liberal) political and ideological context so far as reformist socio-political movements were concerned. It also created difficult conditions for the future of calm interaction between the US and the Latin American countries.

The consistency in US policy with regard to revolutions and socio-political change, as seen in chapters-3-6, was all too evident. And yet, an inconsistency emerged: the US applied indiscriminately - and at the expense of the strategic coherence of its own foreign policy - the same assumptions in one case as in others (Iran and Greece, Guatemala and Cuba, and thereafter Chile and Nicaragua), without regard to the specific conditions lying behind the processes of change, and with a considerable lack of success. As a result, external intervention recurred, at several levels of the polity, as the sole response to socio-political crisis. From 1954 the emphasis on secret operations became widespread, and was used to deal (with varying degrees of success) with Castro's Cuba from 1961 on, Allende's Chile in 1973, and with Sandinista Nicaragua from 1979. These policies were to cause Washington more security problems than they solved.⁵⁴

As displayed in this thesis the weakness of US policy was to a great extent solved by using the banner of anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism to mask the compulsory need for intervention, and for fulfilling the necessities of power politics. Accordingly, it has been shown

⁵³ The institutionalised authoritarian order in Mexico stemming from the post-revolutionary constitutional arrangements of 1917 explains to a certain extent why Mexico did not face radical revolution during this stage. Yet, the denial of full democracy by a dominant party system in the country, resulted in urban and rural guerrilla movements in the 1970s which were neutralised by efficient state co-optation. The most recent significant result of Mexican authoritarianism has been the emergence of neo-Zapatism, the EZLN, in the South, the so-called first end-of-the-century post-modern guerrilla movement.

⁵⁴ See M.McClintock (1992:22-23).

that the USSR, except for the case of the missile crisis, was not originally directly involved in Latin American affairs at least as the US tried to present it, until and after the consolidation of the Cuban Revolution. Following the inflated accusations against "Guatemalan Communism" such a charge was, for the Cuban situation and to the subsequent regret of the US and to the dismay of important sectors of the Latin American political class, a far more authentic prospect. The paradox, given the adroit vigilance demonstrated by Washington's security establishment is that this outcome was not predicted accurately by Washington.⁵⁵ As a result, from then on the big question appeared to be how the US was going to adapt to having Communism in its "backyard", something which has been one of the greatest humiliations suffered by the US as the great anti-Communist crusader. Was the US suffering, in its own "Caribbean Mediterranean", a response which was a measure of its own lack of understanding of history and, thus the fragility of its foreign policy?

After all, there was a profound post-Guatemalan consensus in Washington on approaches to Central America. The Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961 was implemented by Kennedy. It was only the incompetence of its execution which led to recriminations and some reconsiderations. Eisenhower himself stated that "the chief apparent causes of failure [of the Bay of Pigs invasion] were gaps in our intelligence," and he added that, "there are certainly factors now unknown, that will finally come to light under searching scrutiny. The purpose of this scrutiny is not to find any scapegoat, because the president [Kennedy] does seem to take full responsibility for his own decision, but rather to find and apply lessons for possible future action."⁵⁶ When it came to a general assessment of responsibility for the Cuban fiasco,

⁵⁵ According to Anderson's account it is still an enigma when the first contacts between the leaders of the *26th July Movement* and the Soviets occurred. Anderson discusses: "[it is] a mystery that has endured over the years ... Although 'involvement' is probably too strong a term to use, the earliest contacts between ... Castro's revolutionaries and Soviet officials took place in Mexico City during the summer of 1955. By a curious coincidence, a twenty-seven-year-old Soviet Foreign Ministry official whom Raúl [Castro] had met two years earlier was also in Mexico City [when the younger Castro was already residing after his liberation from prison]." See J.L.Anderson (1997:173). The reference is to Nikolai Leonov who had met Raúl Castro in 1953 at the European Youth Festival. Later on, when the revolutionary expedition reached its height and links between Cuban revolutionaries and the Soviet embassy were suggested in the Mexican media, "there was discomfiture in the Soviet embassy resulting from the unwelcome publicity over the links between members of Castro's group with the Instituto Cultural Ruso-Mexicano. In early November, Nikolai Leonov was recalled to Moscow as a 'punishment' for initiating contact with the Cuban revolutionaries without prior approval." See *ibid*:206. Thus, it seems that there is no evidence of precise USSR influence at the state level in the Cuban process even as late as 1961.

⁵⁶ R.H.Ferrell (1981:386,387).

Eisenhower repeated “a generalization that I had expressed on other occasions - that when it came to problems of foreign operations, then an American traditionally stands behind the constitutional head, the president.”⁵⁷ The Cuban problem, inherited by Kennedy, was in fact “invented” in the last stages of Eisenhower’s administration following the general line that, as in Guatemala, the problem created by the revolutionaries could be avoided by covert military action.⁵⁸

- History repeating itself: the tragic lesson of Guatemala

The US adventure in Cuba in 1961 was not only an obvious failure, but it confirmed, to a great extent, the emergence of both a Latin American political tradition against US intervention and the strengthening of Washington’s anti-revolutionary and interventionist strategy which dismantled the "Good Neighbour Policy" established by F.D. Roosevelt. To a great extent the coup in Guatemala had fractured the Rooseveltian tradition in Latin America. The Alliance for Progress of 1963 seemed to continue this tradition but in fact was very much the product of events in Guatemala and then Cuba. The Alliance was conceived as a response to the Cuban Revolution, which in its turn had been partly a reaction to Washington’s use of force in Guatemala. Its purpose was to avoid the radicalisation of social movements and revolutions in the continent by injecting economic resources into the national economies. Aid was also meant to be allocated to defence and security. Kennedy established, as Rabe says, that "his military aid policy would focus on internal security and civil action. His administration also expanded the CIA training programs for Latin American political reformers and trade-union leaders."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid:387,389. After the Bay of Pigs’ invasion attempt (*Playa Girón* for the Cuban ethos), Kennedy regretted his failure above all because it was a defeat; I suggest that had it been a victory, probably not even the Alliance for Progress would have existed. Later on this unsolved contradiction was to be reflected in the launching, by the Kennedy administration (1961-63), of this economic initiative.

⁵⁸ See J.Weldes&D.Saco (1996). See also Ambrose’s biography on Ike’s responsibility in the Guatemalan experiment, see, S.Ambrose (1984).

⁵⁹ See S.G.Rabe (1988:149); and E.Frei-Montalva (1967:437-448). Frei-Montalva, former Chilean President, argued that even though the Alliance brought about many beneficial changes, the problem was "that what was fundamental to the Alliance for Progress - a revolutionary approach to the need for reform - has not been achieved ... Many Latin American governments have used the Alliance as a bargaining lever to obtain increases in US aid

Conditional economic assistance and military aid to sort out domestic turmoil was the sole US response. The paradox - in the light of the Guatemalan affair - could not be more typical. As Guevara mentioned at the Inter-American Economic Conference held in August 16, 1961 at Punta de Este, Uruguay, this new US policy ironically pursued precisely the same reformist changes (as far as agrarian reform was concerned) that the Eisenhower administration had helped to destroy in Guatemala in 1954.⁶⁰ As seen in this thesis, if Guatemala was the end of what started as a serious systemic strategy by democratic representatives of the political elite, whose main focus was political modernisation and economic progress, the "Cuban way" was going to add to this a gradual - and by Latin American standards, extreme - shift towards the transformation of the socio-political process and of the nature of the regime. Thus the Cuban response was from its beginning a refreshing historical response to the US-supported authoritarian rigidity prevailing in the continent.

It was in fact the very operation in Guatemala that was to signify the beginning of US failure in Cuba, and henceforth, in some other (Central American) countries of the continent. On the one hand, the Cuban revolution came to demonstrate a new way of solving the obstacles that Arbenz allegedly did not see in his confrontation with Washington, and on the other it became the main and most bitter issue in the agenda of every US foreign policy maker from Dulles onwards. As Guevara stated, the Cuban Revolution "has made the world empires' blood boil out of anger, and those of the unprotected of the world out of hope."⁶¹

While it is correct to say that "history is the entire memory of the world," it is relevant to stress with Veyne that "events count for two, even if they are repeated, because they will occur at two different moments in time. Here we discover the truth in the comforting myth of the

precisely so as to avoid changing their domestic situation. These governments have committed themselves to internal reforms which later they knowingly allowed either to become a dead letter, or worse, to be completely controlled or used for the benefit of those in power." Ibid:442-443. See chapter-8.

⁶⁰ See E.Guevara (1970:420-468).

⁶¹ Ibid:431.

incomparable period.” This being a reasonable recognition of the value of history understood as the inventory of differences:

“our favourite myth is that of a period, the period and its ineffable originality. In its way, this myth expresses our double claim, an inventory of all events and an individualisation of each event. No event is duplicated, and no event is reducible to an abstraction.”⁶²

Accordingly, Guatemala was for Cuba what Cuba was for the subsequent tradition (be it insurrectional or not) in the continent. Hence, we have, in the light of these two cases and their respective distinctiveness, two paradigmatical archetypes whereby Latin American politics can be understood. The above allows an opportunity to suggest a concluding *context* for this thesis - in itself an assembling of an ontological climate, a critique of the US method of exercising power in the context of Inter-American affairs. Indeed, Paz provides this opportunity with the following discussion of history:

“ ... for all civilizations, barbarians have been, invariably, men ‘outside of history’. This condition of being ‘outside of history’ has always referred to the past: barbarism is pure anteriority, true original condition of men before history ... [The US is] a country without ruins. What is most surprising is that Americans, with a few rare exceptions, accepted this verdict: a people ‘outside of history’ was a barbarous people. Hence they endeavored by every possible means to justify their anomaly ... Today, thanks to the unexpected appearance of decadence, the historical anomaly has ended and the United States has entered into normality. The United States is a part - and an essential part - of the general crisis of civilization.”⁶³

It is not clear, however, whether the US’s sudden entry into history and the loss of its anomalous status - being ‘outside of history’ - will save itself from the ruins of its political past and transform it into a future in today’s unipolar, but still conflictual world system. The United States may therefore, find itself incapable of transcending the limitations of what has historically been its understanding of Latin America and of political change in the region, epitomised by its unhappy intervention in Guatemala.

⁶² P.Veyne (1982:186,187,186).

⁶³ O.Paz (1985:22,23,27).

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CHRONOLOGIES¹

- **Latin America**

Sept. 1947	Inter-American Treaty of reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) Brazil and Chile break off diplomatic relations with USSR
Mar. 1948	Charter of Organisation of American States (OAS)
April 1948	Ninth Inter-American Conference in Bogotá: the US declares its support to the Latin American military regimes
October 1948	Washington recognises Odría's military coup in Perú
November 1948	US 'Diplomatic' support to the coup against the constitutional government of Rómulo Gallegos in Venezuela
June 1950	Start of Korean War
1950-1953	US support to Colombian dictator Laureano Gómez who sent a war battalion to Korea to support the US
1951	US recognises and supports General Hugo Ballivián who repudiates president-elect Paz Estenssoro
Mar. 1952	The US supports Fulgencio Batista's coup against constitutionalism in Cuba
1952-1954	<i>Pbsuccess</i> : the US develops its plans to overthrow the <i>October Revolution</i> in Guatemala
Mar. 1952	Brazil-US Military Assistance Agreement. Between 1952 and 1955 agreements signed with Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay
1953	Nicaragua and Washington plan and agree the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz
Mar. 1954	Declaration of the Tenth Inter-American conference in Caracas

¹ Sources: Jonas, S. and D. Tobis (1974:10-11); Selser, G. (1957:125-160); Woods N. (1996:174-176); República de Cuba (n/d:1-16); *Crónica, La Nación (a), La Razón, La Prensa, El Diario de Costa Rica, La Nación (cr), The Panama Star, Clarin, Noticias Gráficas, Crítica.*

declares that 'domination or control of the political institution of any American State by the international communist movement' constitutes 'a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of the American states' and thus a threat to international peace.

Spring 1954	US covert intervention and sponsorship to overthrow Arbenz's government in Guatemala
May-June 1954	Guatemala denounces the intervention in the UN and OAS
Jan 1959	Cuban Revolution
1959-1960	Aeroplanes from Florida bomb Havana and sugar plantations
Mar 1961	Kennedy announces Alliance for Progress
15 April 1961	Simultaneous US-supported bombing of Havana, San Antonio de los Banos y Santiago de Cuba
17 April 1961	US-supported Bay of Pigs intervention against Castro
1961-1963	Seven civilian governments overthrown in military coups
Jan 1962	Suspension of Castro's government from the OAS
22-27 Oct. 1962	Cuban Missile Crisis

- **Guatemala**

300-900 AD	Classic Maya period, centred in Tikal in Petén. Theocratic society ruled by priests, loose federation of semi-autonomous states
900-1524	Rebellion of Indian masses, abandonment of major cities. Arrival of Quiché and Cakchiquel tribes from Mexico. During 14th century Quiché consolidate political hegemony over area, built capital city at Utalán. Period of intense war and trade
1524	Spanish Conquest led by Pedro de Alvarado. 2/3 of Indian population dies. Indians dispossessed of their lands. Guatemala becomes Spanish colony; cacao main export
Sept. 15, 1821	Independence from Spain
1823	Creation of the Central American Federation
1826-1829	Central American war between Liberal and Conservative factions of ruling class
1831-1838	British economic penetration supplants Spanish. Major land concessions in Petén
1838	Dissolution of Central American Federation
1871	Coffee becomes main export crop. Church and Indian lands are confiscated, and distributed to <i>latifundistas</i> for coffee production. Beginning of German economic influence
1901	First UFCO shipping contract in Guatemala
1912	IRCA (UFCO-controlled) takes over all railroads
1914-1917	Increased US economic penetration
1924	Formal land concession to UFCO to grow bananas
1931	Jorge Ubico becomes president. Vagrancy laws replace other forms of forced Indian labour
1940's	During WW-II, US forces Ubico to nationalise German coffee interests
June 1944	Popular pressure forces Ubico to resign, Military triumvirate takes power

Oct. 10, 1944	<i>October Revolution</i> : coalition of urban petty bourgeoisie, students intellectuals and dissident military officers overthrow military junta
1945	Juan José Arévalo elected president. New constitution abolishes vagrancy laws, grants freedom of speech and press, suffrage to all adults except illiterate women. University guaranteed autonomy from government control
1947	Labour Code provides for organisation of workers, grants right to strike and other basic worker's rights
1949	Law of Forced Rentals obliges landowners to rent unused land to peasants
1950	Jacobo Arbenz-Guzmán elected president by 63% of the vote
1951	PGT (Communist Party) legalised (founded in 1949)
1952	Agrarian Reform law adopted with PGT's advice and support
1953	Arbenz government seizes IRCA's assets for non-payment of taxes; confiscates 400,000 acres of unused land from UFCO; begins land distribution (to 100,000 families by mid-1954)
March 1954	OAS conference in Caracas, US secures passage of resolution directed against Guatemala, for hemispheric defence against "Communist aggression."
May 1954	Arrival in Guatemala of the Swedish freighter S.S. <i>Alfhem</i> , with a cargo which according to Washington included two thousand tons of arms from 'behind the Iron Curtain'
June 18-27, 1954	Castillo Armas' mercenary force invades Guatemala from Honduras CIA aerial bombings; Arbenz resigns and starts exile in Mexico. The years of spring in the land of 'eternal tyranny' had abruptly ended.
1954-1996	War of extermination
July 8, 1954	Counterrevolution begins: Castillo Armas installed as president; land distributed through agrarian reform is returned to landowners; worker and peasant unions disbanded (labour movement reduced from 100,000 to 27,000; Committee of National Defence Against Communism is established to carry out witch-hunt

1955	New Petroleum Code, granting of sub-soil rights to foreign oil companies, influx of US oil companies
1957	Castillo Armas killed by right-wing follower
1958	Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes elected president
1960	Ydígoras breaks relations with Cuba; allows US to train Cuban exiles in Guatemala for Bay of Pigs invasion
1960	First civic action program begun by US military advisers
1961	PGT passes resolution in support of armed struggle
Sept. 1961	Military leaders of five Central American countries meet and recommended formation of joint defence council (later to become Consejo de Defensa Centro Americano- CONDECA)
Dec. 1962	Guerrilla organisation Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR) formed as alliance between PGT and dissident Army officers
March 1963	Ydígoras deposed by a military coup led by Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdia. Military government abrogates Constitution
June 1964	FAR splits into MR13 and PGT
1964	CONDECA is formed to co-ordinate alliances among all the Central American armies
1965	Eximbal receives 40-year mining concession Chief of US Military Mission, Colonel Houser killed: state of siege New Constitution adopted , elections planned
March 1965	Second FAR is formed, as PGT, Edgar Ibarra Front merge. MR13 remains separate organisation
1985	Vinicio Cerezo (PDC), first civilian president is elected
29 Dec. 1996	Peace Accords between the civilian government and the guerrilla
25 Feb. 1999	The Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission (the Truth Commission) releases its report, "Guatemala, Memoria del Silencio" (<i>Guatemala Memory of Silence</i>) and reveals that from the mid-1950s up to 1990s, there were 42, 000 victims of violations to human rights, 29, 000 were

'executed' or 'disappeared'. The total amount of death and 'disappeared' "was over 200, 000 persons, the majority of them Mayan Indians." The Commission, whose head is Christian Tomuschat, from Germany states in this report that "93% of the documented violations were committed by the Army and para-military groups, 3% by the guerrilla and another 4% by non-defined actors." The genocide, which was "monitored by US intelligence services - the CIA - and ordered by the high military command, was undertaken by the espionage services, especially the so-called *G-2* and the *Estado Mayor Presidencial* (EMP) the military body in charge of protecting the president", that were direct responsables, in words of Tomuschat, of "the massive extermination of entire defenceless Mayan communities which included children, women and elderly people who were accused of links with the guerrilla; the cruelty of the methods used causes horror to the moral conscience of the civilised world."²

² See CEH (1999). See the Conclusions.

- *Pbsuccess*

(1954)

May

- 18 Military agreement signed between the US and Honduras
- 19 Nicaraguan diplomatic mission leaves Guatemala for consultations

Dr. Alfredo Chocano, business attaché in Washington leaves a gala gathering after Republican Senator for Wisconsin, Mr. Wiley, declared that the shipment of arms to Guatemala constituted “the clearest proof that international communism intervenes in Guatemala.”
- 20 Somoza suspends diplomatic links with Arbenz arguing the “communist attitude of the government”

George Smathers, Democrat Senator proposes to invoke the Monroe Doctrine in the light of the shipment of arms
- 22 The State Department announces that it has information that other two arms shipments are on their way to Guatemala. They accept that there is not confirmation

The Bolivian military attaché in Washington offers his country as central air base for the US in order for the US “to organise missions anywhere in the continent”
- 24 Washington announces the shipment of weapons to Nicaragua and Honduras in response to the Alfhem affair
- 25 Florida Democrat congressman, Robert Sikes declares in Washington that it was possible to talk of a “communist invasion”

Latin American diplomats in the US agree on the need of a continental consultation
- 26 Massachusetts representative, John W. McCormack declares that the shipment of arms to Guatemala equals “a Soviet ship entering New York port to place a time nuclear bomb.”

Eisenhower considers calling an Inter-American emergency meeting

Fear among the Guatemalan army that the arms shipment means the start of East-bloc domination of the Armed Forces

27 Guatemala proposed to sign a pact of friendship and no-aggression with Honduras

A C-47 drops anti-Communist propaganda on Guatemala. Toriello protests

J.F.Dulles invokes the Caracas resolution and the Rio Treaty. He states that if the need arose the US would participate alone

28 Democrat Senator, George Smathers declares that the “mysterious” arms shipment constitutes a challenge to the US that cannot be eluded

The Democrat leader, Senator Lyndon B. Johnson declares that the US should impose an embargo against “any shipment of communist arms to the Western Hemisphere”

29 President Arbenz declares that he is willing to meet with President Eisenhower and states that Dulles’s declarations are exaggerated: Guatemala, he utters, “does not intent to attack any of its neighbours”

The Guatemalan government closes the national air space to all private flights; prohibits all coded or non-Spanish telegrams

The Washington Post argues that Guatemala is becoming the representative of Iron Curtain colonialism

JUNE

1 The British Government warned Guatemala that it should abstain of any “interference in British Honduras (Belize)

The Costa Rican President, José Figueres, recommends “to act with serenity and avoid hysteria”

2 Washington increased its military aid to Honduras

Persistent rumour that the American nations are preparing a meeting on Guatemala

Chilean assembly rejects by 35 to 10 votes the "intervention in the internal affairs of other countries"

5 US marines forces patrol the Caribbean sea, especially the maritime routes to the Central American countries. The Pentagon acknowledges this new development

6 The Guatemalan Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC) plans to mobilise peasants and urban workers to support the Arbenz government

The State Department expresses its wish that the American nations "condemn Communism in Guatemala."

7 Latin American Diplomatic sources accept that an agreement has been reached to hold an OAS summit (at Uruguay). Still, a condemnation of Guatemalan communism "is unlikely because of the non-intervention principle."

8 Foster Dulles states that the US "is confident that there is basis for an American summit" Dulles declares that the Guatemalan problem "has nothing to do with UFCO's problems and that the Guatemalan government has been trying persistently to present the conflict between the US and Guatemala as an UFCO problem."

The Guatemalan government suspends individual rights and freedom of speech. It argues that this is the result of the conspiracy to overthrow it

The US government suspends indefinitely its program of foreign aid to Guatemala

10 Dulles trusts that the American nations, through OAS, "will help Guatemalans to free themselves from foreign despotism."

"Guatemala has purchased all necessary weapons for its defence therefore, there is none to acquire," says Guatemalan agent, Colonel Hubert Fauntleroy Julian, president of Black Eagle Associates,

Arms, Military Equipment from New York

Honduras rejects Arbenz's peace proposal

11 Dulles declares that any attempt to establish European political systems in South America will be seen as a threat against the US

12 The three main political parties in the government, PAR, PRG and PGT, issue a declaration of support to Arbenz

An official radio broadcast in Santo Domingo announces that the revolution against Arbenz "will detonate next week." That same day a Somoza agent in Buenos Aires informs that Guatemala will be invaded on June 19

According to former President Arévalo, US Ambassador, Peurifoy confesses that he is preparing the official guests list for the 4th of July celebrations. Peurifoy jokes that he will not include the members of the Arbenz government

13-14 Various dispatches of weapons to Guatemala are intercepted by German customs. The versions are that these arms come from either Eastern Europe or from Switzerland. Specialists state that it is about "cheap munitions"

14 Three hundred journalists arrive to Guatemala City to cover the events

The US rejects coldly Guatemalan Foreign Minister's proposal to meet as soon as possible to solve US-Guatemalan dispute. The US considers that this an attempt to abort OAS meeting at Montevideo on July 1

Rumours that the Army has presented Arbenz with an ultimatum to resign the following day at the latest. This was expected news in Washington

15 Arbenz declares as false the rumours of Army's ultimatum. The "Alianza Femenina and the Students Federation protest against the threat of foreign intervention

Guatemalan Defence Minister, Colonel Carlos Enrique Díaz, denies "categorically" the ultimatum to Arbenz

Dulles declares that undoubtedly Guatemala “exercises generalised communist terror.” He refuses to comment on the US support to an American summit

16 The Uruguayan government announces “its consent for an American meeting” in this country

Pan-American Airways suspends its flies over Guatemala

President Eisenhower declares during his weekly press conference that the US is very concerned about the suspension of constitutional guarantees in Guatemala. He says that this is the type of situation that the US wanted to prevent when the Caracas Declaration was launched

Eisenhower declares that the US is consulting all the American nations

The Navy acknowledges that their ships have established a “permanent service of vigilance around Guatemala” and to follow the movements of all commercial vessels

The PGT accuses the US of “organising and directing the conspiracy against the democratic system of Guatemala.”

17 Immigration officers remove US Colonel Hubert Julian’s passport

Republican Representative from Ohio, Ms. Frances Bolton warns that Castillo Armas had at his disposal US\$150,000 monthly to prepare the invasion

A Platoon of the mercenary forces marches through Tegucigalpa, Honduras’s capital.. The Honduran government does nothing to impede this despite Guatemalan pleas

The US considers to interrupt technical aid in Guatemala for US\$188,000. Among the projects in process there is the construction of a 1,000 beds hospital. Officials declare: “we would like to go on, but there are serious obstacles to keep working successfully in current governmental conditions.”

The State Department declares that thanks to the co-operation of "our friends" the US has impeded the shipment of new arms to Guatemala. The British Government accepts the blockade but refuses that vessels be stopped or searched: the British as an old naval power, the governments says, has always supported the free circulation of the seas

18 Guillermo Toriello announces that as from 4pm Guatemala is being bombed from the air and that mercenary troops from Honduras are ready to invade Guatemala. He declares to the press: "the battle of Guatemala has started."

Eduardo Castillo Arriola, Guatemalan representative to the UN presents an official protest to the Security Council

The president of the Security Council, US representative Henry Cabot Lodge, declares that there is no foreign involvement and that the Guatemalan conflict is a national one

27 Arbenz resigns and the Army is left in charge of the government Arbenz finds asylum in the Mexican Embassy. He will never return to Guatemala. He dies in January 27, 1971, in Mexico, a lonely man.

Table 1 US military interventions in other territories 1798-1984

Average annual number of countries experiencing US interventions by decade and by theatre of intervention.

period	Americas	Elsewhere	Total
1798-1809	0.7	0.4	1.1
1810-1819	1.9	0.6	2.5
1820-1829	0.5	1.1	1.6
1830-1839	0.6	0.3	0.9
1840-1849	0.5	0.6	1.1
1850-1859	1.1	1.3	2.4
1860-1869	0.6	0.8	1.4
1870-1879	0.5	0.3	0.8
1880-1889	0.3	0.4	0.7
1890-1899	1.0	1.2	2.2
1900-1909	1.9	1.5	3.4
1910-1919	4.8	3.4	8.2
1920-1929	3.6	3.3	6.9
1930-1939	0.6*	1.9	2.5
1940-1949	0.0**	2.3**	2.3**
" "	(0.7)***	(5.7)***	
(6.4)***			
1950-1959	1.6	11.4	13.0
1960-1969	5.7	8.3	14.0
1970-1979	3.8	4.3	8.1
1980-1984	5.6	1.6	7.2

* ends 1934

**excludes WWII

***includes WWII

Sources: W.Blum (1986); B.R.Beede (1985).

NB The groupings of decades are indicative of probable periodizations.

Table 2 US military interventions: Americas vs elsewhere.

Average annual number of countries experiencing US interventions 1798-1984 summarised by time-periods derived from Table 1. with the ratio Americas: Elsewhere (A:E) for each period.

period	Americas (A)	Elsewhere (E)	A:E
1798-1849	0.83	0.60	1.38
1850-1889	0.63	0.70	0.90
1890-1929	2.82	2.35	1.20
1930-1949	0.30**	2.10**	0.14**
" "	2.32***	3.16***	
0.73***			
1950-1984	3.97	7.09	0.56

**excludes WWII

***includes WWII

Sources: W. Blum (1986); B.R. Beede (1985).

NOTE ON THE COMPILATION OF TABLES

Apart from the sources mentioned, Chapter 3 (n33) uses G.García-Cantú (1971) and P.Girot&E.Kofman (1987) in reference to US interventions by target and by time period.

The tables are based on data from the Congressional Records for 1798-1945 and for the period 1945-1984 on interventions listed in W.Blum (1986) and B.R.Beede (1985): W.Blum (1986), Appendix II "Instances of use of US Armed Force Abroad 1798-1945" is derived from the US Congress Records Foreign Affairs Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress (Washington DC: USGPO, 1975); the body of the book covers the period 1945-1984 but this is not exhaustive. B.R.Beede (1985), again this is not exhaustive, but the picture is similar to that of Blum. Combining the two can be expected to produce a more accurate estimate.

Method of counting: if there was more than one incident involving a particular country in a year, these were only counted separately if there was a distinct cause for each; where an intervention lasted more than a year, it is counted once for each year in the time-period that it persists.

The Americas includes all interventions taking place in that theatre regardless of whose sovereignty was infringed.

e.g. the undeclared war with France over the Dominican Republic 1798-1800 gives a count of three years for Americas in the time-period 1798-1809.

Although the table is a bit rough and ready, the data are collected on a comparable basis for Americas and for the rest of the world. The main problem is the different basis for counting in the period 1945-1984.

Total country-intervention-year events are comparable with the figures given in Ch 3 (around 740 interventions 1800-1969):

period	Americas	Elsewhere	
1798-1849	43	31	
1850-1899	35	41	
1900-1949	116	158	
1950-1984	139	248	
TOTAL	333	478	811

(over the period 1800-1969 this would total about 700)