

can the Sandinistas be faulted for developing a “realistic” political and military strategy? Pastor is to be congratulated for presenting an often critical look at policies to which he contributed.

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*Reagan versus the Sandinistas: The Undeclared War on Nicaragua.* Edited by THOMAS W. WALKER. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987. Notes. Tables. Figures. Index. Pp. xiv, 337. Cloth. \$30.00.

*Iran-Contra Affair: Report of the Congressional Committees.* U.S. Senate Select Committees on Secret Military Assistance to Iran and the Nicaraguan Opposition, and the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran, November 17, 1987. Pp. 690. (Senate Report No. 100-216, House Report No. 100-433, with Supplemental, Minority, and Additional Views.)

In December 1981, President Reagan decided to organize and fund a group of Nicaraguans—the “Contras”—whose objective was to overthrow the Sandinista government. To persuade the American people and Congress to support an unpopular, illegal war, he portrayed the Sandinistas as Communist clients of the Soviet Union, and the Contras as the “moral equivalent of our founding fathers.” These two books respond to Reagan’s charges.

Thomas Walker assembled 15 other scholars to document what he calls “one of the great human tragedies of the second half of the twentieth century” (p. xiii). As is true of most edited books, the contributions are not of the same quality, but they are all single-minded in their defense of the Sandinistas and their assault on the Reagan administration. Chapters describe U.S. “economic aggression” and military exercises and U.S. “manipulation” of the Indians and religion in Nicaragua. A good chapter by William Goodfellow describes the diplomacy, or rather the lack of it. The second part of the book, on the “home front,” contains well-written chapters on Congress by William LeoGrande and on the administration’s overselling of its policy by Eldon Kenworthy. As a whole, the book reads like a legal brief against the Reagan administration. For those who need or want ammunition for their attack on U.S. policy, this book provides it. Some authors argue that Reagan exaggerates both the threat and the value of his “solution”; others take their argument beyond the evidence to suggest that U.S. concerns are cut of whole cloth, or reflect a wish to preclude Nicaraguan independence and restore an unjust system.

Some of the information on the secret war that is developed in the report by the House and Senate committees to investigate the Iran-Contra affair was available beforehand, as Peter Kornbluh shows in his chapter in Walker’s book. The value of the committees’ report, however, is its definitive accounting of Reagan’s policies. This is permitted by unprecedented access. The two select committees

interviewed 500 people, took public testimony from 28 witnesses during 40 days of hearings that went from May 5 to August 3, 1987, and reviewed 300,000 executive branch documents totaling more than 1,000,000 pages. The footnotes in the report cite White House documents, and the report offers a crisp description of the evolution of the policy as Congress and the president debated its value.

The real focus of the congressional report, however, is on the two-year period from May 1984 to November 1986 when Congress cut off funds to the Contras, and Lt. Colonel Oliver North established a covert entity outside the government—"The Enterprise"—to run that war. "Enough is clear," according to the report, "to demonstrate beyond doubt that fundamental processes of governance were disregarded and the rule of law was subverted" (p. 11). In the pursuit of democracy in Nicaragua, the Reagan administration lost sight of it at home.

The two books complement each other. Walker's describes the impact and implications of the policy on both countries. The congressional report provides an authoritative description of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua since 1981. But the conclusion of both volumes is that the Contra strategy has harmed the United States almost as much as it has damaged Nicaragua.

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*Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952-1986.* By MORRIS H. MORLEY. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Appendixes. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 571. Cloth. \$59.50. Paper. \$16.95.

Morley's objectives, clearly stated at the very outset, are to detail and—even more importantly—interpret U.S. policy toward and relations with Cuba from the early 1950s to the latter half of the 1980s. Both objectives are fully achieved. The details of policy and relations have been told and retold in many places, and little new of any significance is provided here on either count. That is not meant as criticism. The recounting of these details is necessary to the overall purpose of the study, and the details of policy and relations are presented here in excellent fashion. What is both valuable and thought provoking about Morley's work is the interpretation that he advances. It is somewhat controversial, and not all will agree with it. The interpretation falls within the dependency school of analysis/explanation.

The interpretation that Morley gives centers on the concept of the United States as a capitalist imperial state: "... a state with boundaries for capital accumulation located far beyond its geographical limits" (p. 1). Elsewhere, describing the nature or essence of the U.S. imperial state, Morley writes: "The U.S. imperial state can be defined as those governmental bodies charged with promoting and protecting the expansion of capital across state boundaries by the multinational corporate community" (p. 14).