THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

CANADIAN RESPONSES TO AMERICAN INTERVENTIONS
IN THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

CASE STUDIES OF CUBA, GRENADA, PANAMA, NICARAGUA AND EL SALVADOR

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A
MASTERS DEGREE IN POLITICAL STUDIES

BY
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WINNIPEG, MANITOBA
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ISBN 0-612-13264-1
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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

Canada has recently become a member of the Organization of American States and has also pursued an economic policy which includes the expansion of a hemispheric Free Trade Zone. Due to this increased Canadian interest in Latin America in general, it would be helpful to look at some aspects of the Canadian role in the region. This thesis will assess Canada’s involvement in the Caribbean and Central America crises since 1962 and specifically those which involved the intervention of the United States. The main focus of this thesis is on how Canada has responded to these interventions. The basic premise here is that when the United States intervenes in regional political crises, Canadian responses are hesitant, somewhat inconsistent, and tend to avoid antagonizing the United States. Canadians focus primarily on economic and human rights issues but avoid controversial issues of where the blame lies.

This thesis will concern itself with five case studies: Cuba, Grenada, Panama, Nicaragua and El Salvador. While not fully comprehensive, this should provide sufficient evidence to document the pattern. Each of the chapters will outline the Parliamentary, media and scholarly debate on the country, or crisis, selected for scrutiny. This will be followed by a brief contextual account of the scope of Canadian involvement in aid, trade, and human rights in the region.
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CANADIAN RESPONSES TO AMERICAN INTERVENTIONS IN
THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the nature of Canadian responses to American interventions in the Caribbean and Central America and determine the adequacy of the responses. All of Latin America is becoming increasingly important to Canada, and since Canada has been accepted as a member of the Organization of American States (OAS) a clear and independent response to any intervention in the affairs of member nations may be presumed to be a significant aspect of this country’s role in the international community. To some critics, the role thus far in this regard may seem woefully inadequate. To others, precipitate excursions into the unfamiliar labyrinth of Caribbean and Central American politics may seem unwise.

What appears to stand out when reading the various Parliamentary documents is that Canada’s interests in Latin America have been primarily economic, and secondly concerned with human rights. While this is admirable, it is a narrowly limited commitment. As a respected nation in this hemisphere, Canada could conceivably assume greater responsibility in monitoring, and possibly helping contain, critical events that may tend to destabilize the region. In the past, such a constructive role could have included involvement in the mediation process, in such crises or disruptive developments that occurred in Cuba, Grenada, Panama, Nicaragua and El Salvador. What is abundantly clear when reading the literature on these incidents is that Canada was little involved in these
events. Furthermore, Canadian political leaders, while expressing concern over the lack of information, have also demonstrated a lack of interest. Evidence of the indifference or disinterest of Canadian political leaders is apparent in Parliamentary statements, speeches and interviews.

Such comments were mainly ad hoc reactions to the various crises. What appears to have been missing is any policy continuity or awareness. If there was much involvement on Canada's part it was evidently not given much publicity in Parliament or elsewhere. Perhaps reflecting this, there is little academic literature on the subject. Because the subject appears to warrant more attention, this thesis will attempt to describe Canadian policy in this area, and in particular to focus on Canadian government's responses to the specific events that precipitated American interventions in the region.

This thesis will primarily deal with three case studies: Cuba, Grenada, and Panama. But it will also refer to two other countries in the region, Nicaragua and El Salvador, where Canadian fact-finding missions and electoral scrutiny teams have from time to time been active with varying success. In these two latter cases, US intervention was not officially sanctioned as a direct military occupation leading to the removal of the existing authority. The reason for selecting Cuba is twofold: the Bay of Pigs and the missile crisis had serious international repercussions; and that country continues to aggravate the US, which in turn maintains an increasingly controversial embargo. Thus there is a lengthy period of potential Canadian interest and policy concern to survey.

Chapter two will deal with the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and summarize the continuing Cuban conundrum. Describing the Canadian response may show the extent of
policy interest, or lack of it, by Canadian politicians and media outlets. Canadian attitudes toward Cuba should be explained in this analytic chapter. Chapter three will likewise focus on Canadian opinion on the Grenada invasion of 1983. As in 1962, with Cuba, Canada’s involvement was by no means extensive, but it nonetheless warrants attention within the general regional context. Chapter four will consider the invasion of Panama, in 1989, and the reactions, such as they were, of Canadian authorities. While the Canadian Prime Minister had a good relationship with the American President, it appears that no more consideration was given to the incident than in the earlier cases. Some Canadian leaders defended the US actions, and whether this reflected any general position regarding these interventions will be assessed. Chapter five will consider the Canadian responses to the US policies in Nicaragua and El Salvador. These did not constitute specific invasions; the survey accordingly covers a much larger time period. In the case of these two countries, Canadian authorities had considerably more time to assess the situation, obtain first hand information, and subsequently determine how to respond. Chapter six will conclude the thesis with an explanation and statistical documentation of some of the relevant trade, aid and human rights activity in which Canada has been involved.

Each of the above chapters is to consist of four parts: a) a general description of the crisis or incident; b) an explanation of the Canadian government’s response, including debate, if any, in Parliament; c) an examination of selected editorial reaction; and d) a review of relevant academic or scholarly commentary.

The concluding chapter will show that Canadian political leaders have been unable or unwilling to exercise much influence, independently of the US, in the Central American
and Caribbean region. Beyond this negative finding, the conclusion will attempt to verify if this official policy accurately reflected Parliamentary attitudes, media attention and public interests.

The sources to be used will include House of Commons Debates, External Affairs Statements and Speeches, and other publications by the Canadian government on international affairs. There will also be secondary sources by academics and journalists to augment the documentary evidence, supported in turn with newspaper and periodical references.

It may seem that this is too large a subject for an M.A. thesis. In defence of the approach here it may therefore be advisable to emphasize that, while the regional issues in each case study were far-ranging and complex, research has established that the Canadian role in each case was modest. Accordingly, the material to be scrutinized will be manageable. It is by no means the intent here to undertake the impossible; so the scope will be tailored to the availability of material that is clearly relevant to a survey of Canadian governmental and public interests, however slight, in certain selected issues of Caribbean and Central American politics since 1960.
CHAPTER II

CUBA: THE MISSILE CRISIS OF 1962

a) Description of Crisis:

During the Cuban Missile Crisis the world was placed closer to a nuclear exchange than at any other time of the Cold War. No other incident in this era produced as much tension between the two superpowers. Yet, this incident was not without warning, in view of the 1961 Bay of Pigs incident. With that US sponsored invasion of the Cuban mainland it was quite clear that there would be no tolerance whatsoever of an unfriendly neighbour so close to the American border. It was also quite clear that the US would strongly respond to any evidence of a military buildup in that country, despite the desire of the Soviet leadership to do exactly that. This earlier event and the Cuban Missile Crisis served to demonstrate the resolve of the rival superpowers. The Missile Crisis also demonstrated the leadership abilities of several world leaders, including Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. Leadership, or lack of it, had a great deal to do with the inadequate consultation by the Americans with their Canadian allies.

With the discovery in Cuba of the construction of both medium (MRBM) and intermediate range (IRBM) ballistic missile bases, American President John F. Kennedy determined that this was a flagrant violation of the peace in the region and a threat to the security of North America in general and the United States in particular. In addition, the existence of these bases contradicted the publicly stated Soviet position that no missiles of this type were in or going to Cuba. Consequently, Kennedy demanded the cessation of construction, the removal of bases designed to house “offensive” missiles that were

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originally believed to be only "defensive" missiles, and finally the removal of all missiles and their transport back to the Soviet Union\(^2\). To force compliance, President Kennedy ordered the blockade or quarantine of Cuba in order to prevent any further offensive military equipment from being delivered to the island. This blockade also included the boarding and searching of ships from the Soviet Union. It was this action that produced the crisis and near nuclear exchange between the superpowers. In addition, it was the lack of prior consultation, regarding this action and the state of military readiness in the event of conflict, that produced tensions between the United States and Canada, or more precisely between the two countries' leaders. The response by the Canadian government to the American action became a controversial issue\(^3\).

When the United States placed their military forces in the state of readiness, DEFCON \(^4\), they expected the Canadian military to follow suit since Canada and the US shared the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD)\(^5\). Prime Minister Diefenbaker refused to take immediate action, despite pressure from Defence Minister Douglas Harkness. Diefenbaker preferred a cabinet meeting at a later date to discuss the situation and was adamant that blindly following American policy was not going to be his policy\(^6\). While Diefenbaker was not openly, nor even necessarily, casting doubt on the American decision, his actions certainly produced this impression. This hesitation elicited

\(^2\) "Offensive" missiles refer to surface-to-surface or intercontinental range missiles. "Defensive" missiles refer to surface-to-air or anti-aircraft missiles which are considered acceptable for general defense.

\(^3\) While most writers have criticized the government's actions, some, such as Peter Haydon, argue for a reassessment of the situation. On the other hand, Harkness vilified Diefenbaker in his memoirs.

\(^4\) DEFCON translates to "Defense Condition" alert status. It starts with condition 5 and as the condition becomes more serious, its number is reduced towards 1 which is war.

\(^5\) Canada does not subscribe to DEFCON status. This is a US term and structure. Canadian forces would have to be placed on an alert condition roughly similar to the American DEFCON.

strong criticism from United States officials and nearly produced a cabinet revolt in Canada, led by Harkness\(^7\). The stronger the objections to the delay, however, the stronger became the resolve of the Prime Minister to stall a decision. The result produced strained relations between the US and Canada and between the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet and the Chiefs of Military Staff. What resulted was a lesson in how not to conduct crisis management. From this point on the relations between Canada and the United States during the crisis was a series of what may be described as misunderstandings and, for the most part, animosity. Consequently, the Canadian-American relationship reached its lowest level in many years.

b) Canadian Government Responses:

On October 22, 1962 Prime Minister John Diefenbaker addressed the House of Commons to deal with the television announcement one hour earlier by American President John Kennedy on the ordering of a military quarantine of Cuba. Diefenbaker’s speech to the House members was, interestingly enough, precipitated by an earlier call from Lester Pearson, the Leader of the Opposition, urging the Prime Minister to make a statement, as if he were reluctant to do so. Diefenbaker stated that his comments would “understandably” be brief since the President’s television speech was “somber and challenging”\(^8\). Apparently, he was not prepared to deal with the issue at that time but was unable to avoid doing so. While he carefully outlined, to the members of the Commons, the nature of the American concerns in Cuba, he was also careful to understate the

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problem. His words suggested that his willingness to speak on the matter was only
dictated by his desire to promote "calmness" and to "avoid" panic at this time. He
strongly recommended that the United Nations (UN) be charged with the responsibility of
determining the method of handling this serious problem and sending an inspection team
to Cuba to determine if the Cuban bases were indeed designed for purposes other than
defensive in nature. What he wanted was more information before committing Canada to a
definite position militarily or otherwise. This gesture, as J.L. Granatstein suggested,
"...implicitly suggested that the American president and his photographs were not entirely
honest". This was the government's first public response to the American initiatives and
was not well received in the United States.

On the following day, October 23, Prime Minister Diefenbaker found it necessary
to explain his previous day's remarks to the members of the House of Commons. He
clarified his position by stating that he had not cast doubt on the facts presented by the
American president but rather had agreed that there was "ample evidence that bases and
equipment for the launching of offensive weapons have been constructed in Cuba and exist
in sufficient quantities to threaten the security of this hemisphere". Having said this, the
Prime Minister re-emphasized his position that the United Nations should put in motion
steps for an on-site inspection of the Cuban bases. However, he continued his clarification
with a toned-down version of the reason for his request so that he would not look as if he
were attempting to upstage the US:

The suggestion I made was not intended to compete with any proposal of the United States that might be placed before the Assembly, but rather to supplement it by providing a way in which the United Nations could begin the heavy task of exercising its primary responsibility in respect of the maintenance of international peace and security.\(^{12}\)

Pressures from within his cabinet also likely provided some impetus for his open clarification in the Commons. The very intense disagreement that Douglas Harkness writes about in his memoirs suggests that this was likely\(^{12}\).

As Leader of the Opposition, Lester Pearson responded to the first day’s announcement with an affirmation of the Prime Minister’s desire to prevent “the shock from resulting in either a feeling of despair and helplessness on the one hand or panic on the other”\(^{14}\). He further agreed that the United Nations was the proper forum for resolution of the crisis and that the United States should use that forum to aid in resolving the conflict. He added his belief that the UN and the OAS should both be used to verify what was really happening with Cuba. This was the extent of the first day’s questions. Curiously, Pearson had not questioned the process of consultation between the allies prior to the American military initiatives. That task was left to the fourth speaker in Parliament, H.W. Herridge (N.D.P.: Kootenay West), who asked the precise question: “The members of this group are interested to know if the Canadian government was consulted or informed before this momentous statement was made and this policy laid down”\(^{15}\). But a clear answer was not forthcoming, on this day.

\(^{12}\) Ibid, p.821.
\(^{13}\) Ottawa Citizen, “The Harkness Papers”, October 22, 1977, p.36-37.
\(^{14}\) Ibid, p.806.
\(^{15}\) Ibid, p.807.
It was on the second day of parliamentary debate, October 23, when Lester Pearson finally questioned the Prime Minister on whether the government was “asked by the United States for its cooperation and assistance in the plans announced for the quarantine of Cuba”\textsuperscript{16}. Pearson’s request was supported by another question from Mr. Herridge on the same issue. The Prime Minister finally responded with a short comment that the government of Canada had been informed, but he provided no further explanation. The only other relevant question asked on this second day was from Paul Hellyer (Liberal: Trinity) who requested confirmation that Canada’s military had been alerted and given special orders. The response from Defence Minister Harkness was that the military’s status had not changed, but no detailed explanation was given and none was requested.

Therefore, after two days of somewhat cursory parliamentary discussion, little was revealed on the nature of the consultative process and Canada’s role in the decision-making process. In fact, little debate actually occurred in Parliament. What concerned several members was the international forum being used and who was representing Canada. The greatest debate, to this point, came with the acknowledgement that Canada’s highest ranking cabinet ministers were not representing the country in the UN, and that the Minister for External Affairs, in particular, was not being dispatched to the UN\textsuperscript{17}. The concern of the opposition was not so much policy as it was procedure, and what it considered to be appropriate representation at the world summit. But the requested clarification was not to occur.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, p.821.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, p.805.
It was not until the fourth day, October 25, that any real discussion on the quarantine of Cuba occurred in Parliament. Lengthy statements were made on Canada's military readiness and the government's willingness to follow the American lead. The Prime Minister announced that Canadian forces in NORAD were now in the same level of readiness as their American counterparts. Contingency plans in the event of an escalation in the crisis were also outlined. The Prime Minister finally expressed his understanding of the threat of the Soviet missiles in Cuba and of the threat they posed to Canada. He called for the dismantling of the bases in Cuba and stated that it was the Soviet Union which had "disturbed the balance", so restoration of that balance must therefore come from Moscow and Cuba. He further explained that the West had refused to proliferate nuclear weapons in the same manner, so the Soviet Union now had to restore that balance:

There are countries in all parts of the world in which nuclear weapons could have been installed by the West. A deliberate decision was made not to do so. We in Canada have shown responsibility in this connection in order to avoid the proliferation of these dangerous weapons throughout the world.

His speech was supported by Lester Pearson who affirmed support for the American position and the use of the UN to resolve this crisis. Pearson went considerably further in his unequivocal support of the US position and suggested that Canada should not hesitate in openly following the American lead.

However, it was another opposition member, R.N. Thompson (Social Credit: Red Deer), who actually questioned the consultative process and the respect for Canadian

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sovereignty. He commented on the question of leadership and claimed that Canadians did not have to “bend ourselves to all the whims of those who are much more powerful than we are”\(21\). In his view, Canadian sovereignty required that Canada not be treated as a “vassal state”\(22\). He further argued that the crisis provided Canada with the opportunity to give the leadership in this hemisphere that the two great world powers evidently could not provide. Canada, he concluded, might “move on to assist many of the countries in Latin America which need assistance and which are looking for leadership”\(23\).

With respect to other government reports concerning the crisis, there is, unfortunately, surprisingly little that is available or easily accessible. The Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs provides a half page on the crisis. It states only that the Canadian government restricted Soviet requests to continue to land in and fly over Canadian territory on route to Cuba since the Soviet Union was not a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and that flights from other Soviet Bloc countries would be more carefully inspected for military arms cargo\(24\). In addition, it mentioned the efforts of Canadian authorities to deal with the crisis in the United Nations. The balance of the report generally dealt with economic issues pertaining to Latin America in general, inter-American conferences, and Caribbean-Canadian issues from an economic and developmental perspective. The comments suggested that the region’s problems were rooted in economic underdevelopment and political instability, which adversely affected living standards and human rights.

\(21\) Ibid, p. 915.
\(22\) Ibid, p. 915.
\(23\) Ibid, p. 916.
\(24\) Canada, Department of External Affairs, Annual Report, 1962, p. 31.
The Standing Committee for External Affairs and National Defence met on October 26, 28, 29, and 31 but concerned itself primarily with military issues relating to NATO and other general defence issues. Included in its discussions were issues relating to the costs of running these two departments. Little else was discussed that was not directly related to budgetary matters. The Cuban Missile Crisis received no further public consideration from those in government authority. In fact, the entire Latin American region received little mention.

On October 29 the Soviet Union offered to dismantle the Cuban bases and the crisis ended. However, the role played by Canada’s Prime Minister John Diefenbaker and his closest cabinet ministers needs to be scrutinized more carefully. While the public and parliamentary forum provided little in the way of information on the decision-making process, it was obvious that there was much debate behind closed doors in Cabinet and in the military leadership. Cabinet solidarity was not there25. As for the military, its Chiefs of Staff would naturally desire clearer indications of political direction for the heightened state of readiness during the superpower confrontation. Since the US was directly challenging the Soviet Union and had placed its forces firstly on DEFCON 3 alert followed by DEFCON 2 alert, the Canadian military command was perplexed about the delay in being placed on immediate alert. The Prime Minister’s decision to delay the order to the military caused understandable concern and therefore, some critics say, needs closer examination.

c) Select Editorial Reaction:

Following President Kennedy's public announcement of his decision to quarantine Cuba and forcibly prevent Soviet ships from delivering any more "offensive" weapons equipment to that island, the media reaction was swift but uncertain. In their influential role, the media undertook to explain the situation from a variety of perspectives, and weighed the threat of nuclear war that conceivably could result from the US action. The public response to this latter possibility understandably escalated to tension and alarm.

However, few people really understood the situation or the policy of the Canadian government. Few understood the government's seemingly casual approach to the crisis and the lack of immediate acceptance or denial of support for the American president. As the days progressed, the media responded with a few editorials that questioned Diefenbaker's apparent indecision. While they were not unanimously in support of the US quarantine, they demonstrated a general frustration with the Prime Minister's unwillingness or inability to be openly decisive. A wide variety of Canadian newspaper journalists scolded the Prime Minister for what they saw as his hesitation or vacillation.

The Toronto Globe and Mail left no doubt regarding its editorial viewpoint:

Any attempt to sit on the fence in this period of crisis, to remain uncommitted, would be interpreted around the world as a rebuke to the United States and as aid and comfort for her enemies. Such a course is unthinkable.

The Winnipeg Free Press also demonstrated concern with Parliament's seeming inaction in a typical editorial:

In the circumstances President Kennedy had no alternative to the course he has taken. Parliament would have reflected

\[27\] Ibid, p.6..
Canadian instincts more accurately had it spontaneously affirmed this country’s fidelity to its neighbour and to its collective security.28

The Ottawa Journal was also candid in its editorial comments:

Well we might be understanding of the Americans. Their danger is our danger, their fears our fears and we are bound to them by formal alliance and old association.29

However, leading the opposition to the American action and agreement with Diefenbaker’s unwillingness to immediately affirm support was this editorial in the Ottawa Citizen:

President Kennedy’s decision to blockade Cuba is wrong because it violates the principle of the freedom of the seas, a principle for which the United States itself has fought since the country’s beginnings. His decision was wrong, also, because the blockade is a mild form of preventative war. Prime Minister Diefenbaker suggested that the eight neutral members of the Geneva Disarmament Conference might be asked to inspect and report on the military bases which have created this crisis. It was a useful suggestion.30

While generally continuing to endorse the Prime Minister’s desire not to alarm the public and to agree with his suggestion that the United Nations ought deal with resolution of this crisis, the press did continue to condemn the government’s inaction in a variety of editorials31. What the writers were mainly saying was best summed up by an editorial in The Globe and Mail, which stated that there should not be any quarrel with President Kennedy’s judgment on the necessity for action, but only on the way in which he had responded.32 Most agreed that full Allied support during the crisis had to be maintained,

with debate possible only on the procedures deemed most appropriate\textsuperscript{33}. The risk of nuclear war clearly frightened many writers, who felt that an alternative method of applying pressure to the Soviet Union, possibly in the United Nations, should have been used first. Only after this had failed should a threatening quarantine have been implemented. The explicit message in most of the media was that the Prime Minister had not shown the necessary leadership and, instead, had caused a split in the Western ranks demonstrating weakness to the Soviets at a time when a world crisis demanded solidarity with Canada's allies\textsuperscript{34}.

The news reports, in the first few days, were relatively muted but did provide a clear public record of the events. Most of what was printed was on regional problems that presumably had produced depressed living conditions and on general defensive matters related to the NATO Alliance. Public criticism of the government's handling of the crisis was mostly withheld until the real danger had largely passed. Only then did real criticisms emerge in considerable quantity. Initially, headline news covered an occasional page or part of a page; later on there was little else of substance. A case in point was The Globe and Mail, which devoted a few pages over the first few days of the crisis but only a brief commentary on Canada's failure to respond to the American initiatives. It cited a variety of newspapers, in one or two sentence comments, in which the general reaction to the crisis was determined, for the most part, to be in favour of President Kennedy's actions\textsuperscript{35}. Others did criticize the American President, but the most excited commentary was on the American action in the Atlantic and potential Soviet retaliation. In addition, there were

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p.6.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, p.7.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, p. 6.
several articles summarizing other countries’ responses to the crisis and describing Cuba’s economic and political history. There were also only a few responses in magazines, such as *Maclean’s*, which expressed little concern with the decision-making process or the protocols of bi-lateral consultation.

In general, Diefenbaker’s reactions to the American quarantine seemingly were not considered to be appropriate but few commentators went beyond moderate reproach. As for the lack of debate in Parliament, few members participated in the debate on the subject or openly demanded clearer government action. Evidently, Canadian politicians had little to say publicly. The most notable exception was Prime Minister Diefenbaker himself.

When the crisis was resolved, he appeared to take full credit for “decisiveness” and “assistance” to the Americans:

...the early prospect of removing the Cuban missile threat has resulted from the high degree of unity, understanding and cooperation among the Western Allies. In this, the Canadian government has played its full part.36

It would appear that the Prime Minister disagreed with the general feeling that he had “let down” his American Allies, and at least some of his cabinet members. But a more vigorous debate on the Canadian role, or lack of it, would not occur until major books and journal articles by established professionals in the field of foreign policy were finally published. In addition, some later editorials in newspapers and magazines dealt with the cabinet conflicts as that information became known from various sources such as the Harkness Papers, published in the *Ottawa Citizen* in three parts in 1977, when the former Defence Minister denounced former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker.37 Harkness

apparently wanted the public to know the facts on the Cuban Crisis, as he knew them, and to correct what he felt was misinformation being published in Diefenbaker’s newly published memoirs, *One Canada: The Tumultuous Years*.

Harkness claimed that the government had been notified at 10:00, on the morning Kennedy’s television announcement, that Livingston Merchant, Kennedy’s representative, was being dispatched to Ottawa with an important message to be delivered in the afternoon. (The Kennedy announcement on television was scheduled for 7:00 in the evening). At this meeting, Diefenbaker had a different interpretation of what was required, since he would not allow the military to be placed on full alert.

The debate has continued to the present, and it must be pointed out that not all commentators have condemned Diefenbaker. Some writers, such as retired naval commander Peter Haydon, believe that the Cuban Missile Crisis must be reviewed with a new perspective and “in a new light”\(^{38}\). He does agree that his view on the decision-making process of that crisis is still a minority view but he believes it will gain support when more documentation becomes declassified. While his argument has merit, it supports the view that the political process was not an important factor in this crisis since the military had a mandate to deal with crisis situations that would enable it to prepare adequately without direct orders from the politicians.

d) Scholarly debate and Literature:

Haydon, among others, has pointed out that the overall consensus always supported the view that Diefenbaker handled the Cuban missile crisis so badly that it

\(^{38}\) Peter Haydon, 1993, p.216.
contributed to his political decline. Another writer, a former CBC anchorman, writes: "While Diefenbaker seemed indecisive and petulant, Kennedy seemed heroic to most."

According to another historian, Lawrence Martin, Kennedy showed foreign policy decisiveness, while Diefenbaker allowed personality differences to cloud his judgment and produce a split in Allied policy. In simple terms, Diefenbaker's leadership ability has been suspect.

The problems surrounding Diefenbaker were greater than just his personality clash with Kennedy: they extended to his inability to keep his cabinet fully united, and able to meet or understand the military need for immediate and clear instructions. What happened in cabinet was nothing short of a catastrophe, since a crisis of this nature required not only thorough debate but also solidarity, and coherent decisions. That none of these was evident, has been pointed out by many writers. J.L. Granatstein has stated that Harkness was unable to persuade the cabinet to put the military forces immediately on full alert, although despite his frustration he eventually did what he felt was necessary, albeit without clearcut authorization. Only when US forces were placed on DEFCON 2 alert did Diefenbaker reluctantly allow himself to be persuaded by Harkness to follow the American lead, well after the fact. Knowlton Nash has suggested that the alert status, in its original unauthorized form, actually was taken much further than even Harkness expected: the military gave "full" cooperation to their American counterparts and subsequently

39 Ibid., p.40.
achieved a heightened state of readiness earlier than would normally have been possible. This position was also suggested by Haydon who argued that Canadian forces were able to act somewhat independently of civilian control. This allowed the Canadian forces to be aware of what their American counterparts were doing and maintain a position of action-readiness despite government orders, or lack of them.

Haydon differs somewhat from Nash and the others, with respect to the working relationship between Canada and the United States. He believes that Nash’s account of the situation paints too narrow a picture of Canada-US relations at the time that does not necessarily reflect the true nature of the working relationship between the two countries. He stresses that the close cooperative relationship between the armed forces of the two countries prevails over any temporary political differences between their respective leaders.

In reality, however, it was the political, not the military, dimension which produced a problematic appearance of indecision. It was Diefenbaker’s indignation over not being “sufficiently” notified in advance of the decision to quarantine Cuba which led to the problems. He claimed: “Canada certainly had the right to expect notice longer than two hours, if military measures were to be involved.” Diefenbaker and many politicians believed that the NORAD agreement and the crisis with Cuba required, even demanded, more prior consultation than just a simple “notification” from Washington, before the Canadian cabinet could justifiably order Canadian forces to be placed on full alert.

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46 John Diefenbaker, 1977, p.78.
Haydon believes that expecting any more extensive prior consultation is unrealistic, considering the conditions at the time. His view may be supported by Charles Ritchie:

The handling of the crisis involved speed, accuracy of timing, and secrecy. In view of the reluctance of the Canadian government to be involved in any action likely to be provocative to the USSR, it is hardly to be wondered at that the Americans did not wish to become embroiled in discussion with us of the daring moves that they were contemplating to meet the Russian threat. Their reluctance to consult no doubt seemed to them justified when Ottawa hesitated to put Canada on a state of alert, only finally doing so on October 24.\textsuperscript{48}

The issues surrounding the Cuban crisis involved more than just the lack of communication regarding the alert status of Canadian forces. In fact, the issue also included questions about nuclear weapons on Canadian soil and American intrusion into Canadian air space. Charles Doran explains that the Canadian criticism of the US partly arose because “Canadian air space was threatened by US initiatives vis-à-vis Cuba which had not been extensively discussed in advance with Ottawa”\textsuperscript{49}. He argues that since Canada was totally dependent on the US for national security it was therefore concerned about the use of force entangling it in quarrels abroad, particularly with the Soviet Union, thereby placing Canadian territory under increased risk of attack\textsuperscript{50}. This view was reflected by the Prime Minister in Parliamentary debates during the crucial week of the crisis.

Similarly, the debate continued in Parliament, in cabinet, and among other interested parties, about the practicality, or the morality, of having US nuclear warheads on Canadian soil, whether they be on Canadian or American controlled aircraft or bases.

\textsuperscript{50} Doran, 1984, p.96.
Peyton Lyon wrote that External Affairs Minister Howard Green was convinced that it was imperative to keep all warheads off Canadian soil and out of Canadian hands entirely\(^{51}\). The seriousness of the nuclear weapons issue was reflected in the *Harkness Papers*. So fearful was Diefenbaker of the possibility of being dragged into a nuclear war that he wanted to bar Strategic Air Command (SAC) bombers from the use of Canadian air fields during the crisis\(^{52}\).

While the nuclear issue was a major factor in the diplomacy during this crisis it was secondary to personality conflicts and animosities on both sides of the border. The literature available supports the view that Diefenbaker might have been able to avoid some of the problems associated with consultation during the crisis had he not felt slighted by the American President. Similarly, Kennedy might have avoided some of the misunderstandings had he not allowed his animosity towards Diefenbaker to cloud his judgment on Canada and impair the diplomatic process by not taking, at least, the Canadian ambassador in Washington into his trust\(^{53}\). From this perspective, there had been mistakes on both sides, if not mutual failure in leadership. While both leaders failed to communicate with each other at the correct time, however, it was mainly the Prime Minister who carried the problem to an extreme. Very few in Canada, at the time, believed that Diefenbaker had not seriously harmed the situation by his refusal to support the President. His actions were considered by some to be susceptible to interpretation around


the world as a rebuke of the United States and even as an encouragement to the enemies of both countries\textsuperscript{54}. However accurate it might have been, this perception would have a later effect on US foreign policy regarding future consultations with Canadian governments. Unfortunately, Diefenbaker was so firmly opposed to automatic acceptance of the American initiatives in the quarantine of Cuba, until the issues could be further discussed and assessed, that he created a foreign relations imbroglio.

What has not received sufficient consideration, perhaps, is the possibility that Diefenbaker was not really anti-American, as his actions appeared to suggest, but only unwilling to risk making a decision that could conceivably hurt Canada. Basil Robinson has described Diefenbaker as an ardent nationalist who had an intense desire not to be bullied into accepting US solutions to international problems nor to be pushed into adopting American concepts of foreign policy\textsuperscript{55}. The weight of the evidence may in fact support this position. In any case, what occurred in 1962 was a prelude to subsequent Canadian-American relations: a lack of consultation between Allies and neighbours.

The issue for Canada was not necessarily that the US had failed to consult with Canadian authorities sufficiently early. The main point may have been, as Granatstein has suggested, the sudden realization that Canada's contribution to any fast-moving confrontation between East and West was unimportant, and would likely always be so\textsuperscript{56}. Thus, Diefenbaker's reaction was only a symptom of the process by which the Canadian

\textsuperscript{54} Globe and Mail, Oct. 24, 1962
role in the Western Alliance was being relegated to an unavoidably subordinate position. His contribution to the process may best be described by Peyton Lyon: "Mr. Diefenbaker had the distinction of presiding during the years of the most intense cooperation with the United States and also the most intense conflict, in direct succession!"57

What was missing from this period of crisis was a clear view and debate on Canada's policy towards Cuba itself, as well as towards the region in general, in the context of regional security. This shortcoming became more evident during the 1980's and 1990's, after more crises occurred.

While the United States continues its questionable embargo of Cuba, Canada has allowed trade, albeit limited, with the Caribbean island. In addition to trade, it has been Canada's desire to re-establish Cuba's full participation in regional affairs after that country's American led exclusion. Pierre Trudeau initiated the government's interest in establishing clearer policy towards Latin America and was later followed by Joe Clark.

In a written statement by Clark in 1990, he emphasized the need to remove the isolation of Cuba. He did not ascribe blame but simply stated: "The current problems in Latin America could become more manageable if Cuba were brought back into the family of hemispheric nations."58 This was a simple, clear statement, but unfortunately, little follow-up resulted. The region still continued to be dominated by the American ideological position. The incidents of conflict in Nicaragua and El Salvador, which the Americans have determined to be, at least in part, the responsibility of the Castro regime in Cuba59, contributed to making the region more unstable. While this conundrum continued

Canada's main concern was directed at the economic well-being of the region and encouraging moves toward more democratization. Thus far, however, it has not publicly confronted the possibility that US pressures are inextricably linked with regional economic problems. This cautious attitude was apparent in the House of Commons debates, and in the Statements and reports of External Affairs. Canada's foreign policy towards this region of Latin America has remained hesitant; and in this regard over the next three decades was not radically altered. With regard to Cuba in particular, it maintained, and promoted, a good trading relationship, in defiance of the US embargo; but it did not openly challenge the fundamental anti-communist assumptions that were the basis of US counter-revolutionary strategy. Twenty years after the Cuban Revolution, these assumptions were especially apparent, in the Grenada crisis.
CHAPTER III

THE INVASION OF GRENADA

a) Description of Crisis:

With the establishment of a Marxist regime in Cuba two decades earlier, the door opened for other countries in the region to follow suit. Grenada, located so close to Cuba, attempted just that in 1979 with a coup led by Maurice Bishop, a somewhat moderate Marxist. Bishop led the country to closer relations with Cuba60. In fact, the Bishop government soon fell into the category of those states in the region that defied US policy. Presidents Carter and Reagan both strongly objected to Grenada’s new friendship with Cuba61. As Reagan’s displeasure became more marked, the other nearby countries became more careful of their associations with that Grenada62. Thus the small island republic became more ostracized, and isolated. Such was the influential nature of the US in the region.

On 19 October 1983, Bishop and one third of his cabinet were killed by a dissident faction within his own party, which subsequently seized power. An unstable political situation resulted with the Marxist extremists in the military solidifying their control. This was unacceptable to the leaders of neighbouring countries who feared it might encourage similar coups elsewhere in the region. The possibility of prolonged disorder in Grenada could have jeopardized the security of these neighbouring governments63. As a result, the

members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), suspended trade and commercial arrangements with Grenada. They were convinced that orderly government could not be restored by the Grenadians themselves. Therefore, they looked to the US for guidance and the US responded.

Within a few days the US dispatched a small naval task force, diverted from its destination in Lebanon. It included Marines, sent as a “precautionary measure” to rescue, if necessary, about 1000 American citizens from the threat posed by the new Marxist military regime and its Cuban allies, including workers and soldiers already stationed in the country to help build an airfield. This initial rescue action served as the prelude to an actual invasion to restore what the US believed would be a “democratic” ally, and to expel the Cubans in the process.

President Reagan, still disturbed over the U.S. failure to remove Castro from power and concerned that Castro was behind the Grenada problem in an attempt to assert more regional power while spreading Marxism, acted swiftly and decisively. With the support of Grenada’s concerned neighbours (Barbados, St. Lucia, Dominica, Antigua, St. Vincent and also Jamaica), about 2000 American troops landed in Grenada on 25 October 1983 and, following a brief but fierce battle, secured control of the entire country within two days. The American soldiers did engage in battle with a relatively small group of Cuban military engineers, who were working on the airfield, supported by a number of...

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regular soldiers considered to be of battalion strength. Their provocative presence provided the Americans with additional justification for the invasion. But the US estimate of 1500 Cubans on the island may have been exaggerated to rouse public and allied support for the invasion.\textsuperscript{67}

Even so, the European allies voiced strong objections to the invasion. The British, in particular, felt overlooked or ignored in the whole affair, considering their past relationship with the island, and in light of their "special relationship" they supposedly had with the US. Most Latin American countries were similarly incensed about the invasion, which awakened memories of American interventions in the past.\textsuperscript{68}

Once again this invasion created a problem for Canadian-American diplomatic relations. As was the case with the Cuban Missile Crisis, concerns emerged over US consultations, or lack of them, with Canada prior to the invasion. Furthermore, debate and discussions over the political issues surrounding the problems in the Caribbean, and the invasion in particular, were generally quite inadequate. Once again, a hemispheric problem was apparently determined to be outside Canada's realm of concern, nor did Canada's government evidently feel its actions to be of major consequence. The public debate appeared to support this modest appraisal.

\textbf{b) Canadian Government Responses:}

Unlike the Cuban Missile Crisis, this situation actually did produce a some significant debate in the House of Commons. Some members first engaged in discussion of the Grenada issue on October 20, several days prior to the invasion, when the new

\textsuperscript{68} Reynold Burrowes, 1988, p. 91.
Progressive Conservative leader, Brian Mulroney, questioned Prime Minister Trudeau on “the position of the government of Canada in regard to the Marxist takeover in Grenada which was accomplished by murdering the Prime Minister, a number of his colleagues, and leading trade unionists on the island”. Trudeau’s response was to say that he shared the sorrow for Bishop’s death and to express his unwillingness to condone the general violent actions of the Marxists rebels. However, he refused Mulroney’s request to consider withdrawing foreign aid from Grenada and review the diplomatic relations Canada had with that country prior to the military coup.

On the following day the questions in Parliament dealt with the recognition of the new government of Grenada. The main opposition objections were to what it considered the government’s apparent willingness to recognize the Marxist regime. This, in fact, was not quite what the record indicated was the government’s response. What was actually stated was the following comment by Jean-Luc Pepin, Minister of State for External Relations:

...among the factors which are borne in mind in the process of deciding whether or not recognition of a government should be given, is the conduct of that de facto [sic] in its relationships with neighbouring countries. One way in which we come to our decision is by looking to and consulting with neighbouring countries on what they will do. If ... all the neighbouring countries of Grenada should decide not to grant recognition for a period of time...I am sure this would be a major consideration in the decision Canada would have to make.

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This response only produced further debate on whether the government of Canada should have had discussions with the US and the heads of other Caribbean countries on granting recognition.

It soon became obvious that the Trudeau government was unwilling to acquiesce uncritically to American foreign policy and this drew comment from the official opposition party in the Commons. Since the Americans had so repeatedly demonstrated in the past that they alone would determine regional policy, the perennial questions of cooperation and consultation now beset Trudeau as they had bedevilled Diefenbaker. Trudeau would likely hesitate to allow interference with Canadian policy.

On October 24, Mulroney asked the Prime Minister whether Canada would sever trade with Grenada, as had other regional nations, and withhold diplomatic recognition from the new regime. Once again, the response was inconclusive and demonstrated that the government was not yet prepared to openly declare its position. This sparked more heated debate on when the “crimes” of the new Grenada government would become too heinous to ignore and force Canada to change its relationship with that country. Furthermore, the safety of Canadians living in Grenada was questioned in the context of overall Canadian policy during this crisis. The government’s response was non-committal, once again. Suspicion soon arose that the uncertain Canadian position on Grenada possibly led to the American decision not to inform Canada on the planned invasion of the next day.

When the invasion occurred, the Canadian House of Commons erupted with questions about the government’s official position, in light of the American actions. Brian

71 Debates, Oct. 24, p. 28252.
Mulroney, an obvious supporter of President Reagan’s Caribbean policy, questioned the Prime Minister on the process of consultation with the Americans and with other Caribbean countries. But the lack of thorough consultation prior to the invasion was not considered surprising, since the Canadian government had already presumably demonstrated its willingness to consider Grenada’s “right” to determine its own political system.

One reason for the invasion had been given as “protection” of American citizens, along with other foreigners including Canadians, but Trudeau said he was skeptical. In the Commons, he argued that he was not in possession of all the facts on the US decision to invade and hence did not know whether there was any other alternative open to them.

I understand that Secretary Schultz will be explaining the reasons for the invasion this afternoon and I am prepared to wait to hear the explanation of the American government on why they found it necessary to invade the island in order to protect their nationals. In the case of Canada I know we had permission from Grenada to evacuate our nationals...\(^{72}\).

Following more questions on Canada’s position, Trudeau responded, apparently angrily, with the following:

I cannot see any reason for invading to protect their nationals when you can protect them by getting them out....If the Leader of the Opposition is satisfied with the bland explanation that invasion was necessary to protect nationals, then he obviously knows more than I do. I do not know why invasion was necessary....I would ask him what would happen if the United States gave itself authority to invade any country where the democratic system did not exist? \(^{73}\).

This reaction by the Prime Minister suggests that he was personally opposed to the American action in Grenada but was not yet ready to go on record with that view. Obviously, like John Diefenbaker in 1962, he was annoyed or angered by the lack of consultation. In addition, Trudeau and his colleagues probably favoured what he had long maintained was the right of self determination by small nations. It was no secret that Trudeau disliked what he considered to be overbearing American imperialism. The Parliamentary debates continued, accordingly, with the Prime Minister engaged in verbal sparring with opposition members.

The next day the Trudeau government clarified its official position. In a statement to the House, Warren Allmand (Lib: Notre Dame de Grâce) condemned the invasion:

"There is no doubt that the invasion of Grenada...is a clear violation of international law, the United Nations Charter and...constitutes an act of war against Grenada" 74.

This was followed by opposition questions regarding the evacuation of Canadians from Grenada and the government answer that the US had refused to allow Canadian transports to land there. While the opposition argued that it was government lethargy that produced this problem, government forces countered with the charge that the invasion itself had stopped an earlier rescue attempt by Canadian forces.

The debate in the Commons further focused on the consultation process when the Minister of State for International Trade, Gerald Regan, reaffirmed that the government’s position rested on the belief that: "...military intervention into another country should only be taken, if at all, after the widest possible consultation among the other countries

involved" 75. He then advised the House that the US had not yet offered any concrete evidence of justification for the invasion. The debate continued in this manner for the remainder of question period. The only voice in support of the government’s actions was that of Edward Broadbent (NDP: Oshawa) who encouraged the government to send a message of condemnation immediately to the United States. The Prime Minister indicated that the message already had been conveyed to the United States Ambassador. Accepting that a message was sent, some members still doubted whether a sufficiently strong condemnation was in fact clearly stated. That point was expressed in the House.

Further debate, the next day, rested on the wider implications of the invasion to other countries of the region, such as Nicaragua. Questions on the potential of another intervention by the US were raised, but little debate ensued. What did occur was Brian Mulroney’s offering of a quote from the US Deputy Secretary of Defense who explained that Canada was not consulted, “...because of concerns on the security side that the invasion shouldn’t be too widely known” 76. This was considered to be an astonishing remark and Mr. Mulroney asked if the Prime Minister had received clarification of this from the American President. He urged the Prime Minister to resolve this “disturbing” and “serious” matter with the President. Trust between allies, he emphasized, was of the utmost importance.

This period of questioning ended with the Prime Minister indicating that many questions remained unanswered regarding the details of the invasions and the reasons for a

lack of consultation with major allies around the world. On balance, the debate was more animated than what had occurred in 1962.

The Department of External Affairs Annual Report later provided only a brief two paragraph comment on the episode. It questioned the legality of the US intervention and suggested that an assistance plan be prepared to counter the social and economic effects of the intervention. The Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence also gave some time to the subject. On the “hot seat” was A.J. MacEachen, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, who had to defend the government’s position, or lack of it, and explain precisely how the government planned on following up the issue. At the time, the committee did not itself pursue the issue but instead chose to concentrate more on budgetary matters and general problems in Central America and the Caribbean.

It was not until March 13 of the following year that the committee resumed consideration of the issue, particularly the lack of advance intelligence information. Bob Ogle (NDP: Saskatoon East) had asked the Defence Minister, Jean-Jacque Blais (Lib.: Nipissing), why Canadian government authorities and, apparently Canadian military intelligence (or DND) as well, were caught by surprise by the American action. The result was a testy exchange:

Mr. Ogle: “...What kind of military intelligence do we have about potential enemies if we do not have any intelligence about our friends?"

Mr. Blais: “...We tend to have more trust in our friends, and therefore we tend to anticipate that we will not need to have intelligence-

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gathering operations against our friends.”

An observer could be excused for considering such discussion another case of too little, too late, and wondering why thorough debates had not occurred earlier. As in the Cuban controversy two decades earlier it seemed that Canadian concerns warranted greater debate, and consultation, but the Canadian government was still largely “locked out” of the decision-making process by the U.S., and so had to rely on “trust”.

The Department of External Affairs, in its 1985 paper, *Directions for Canada’s International Relations*, managed a cautious observation that it was doubtful “a more active Canadian security presence in the Caribbean region would have a stabilizing influence and help to diminish superpower rivalry”80. In a similarly detached disposition, the Department of Defence “White” paper, *Challenge and Commitment*, in 1987 failed to mention the Caribbean at all81. The official Canadian position on the region seemed to be a mixture of disinterest and reticence, with official communiques typically skimpy on details.

c) Selected Editorial Reaction:

The invasion of Grenada received a fair amount of press coverage. On October 22, days before the US invasion, an article was published in the *Montreal Gazette* about the US naval task force (10 ships) heading to Grenada with a large complement of about 1900 marines to protect the American nationals in Grenada, in view of the recent political

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assassination and military coup that destabilized the country. On October 24, the paper featured an article on the possibility of an American led invasion of Grenada but then dropped the story. The Globe and Mail contributed an editorial on October 24 that suggested Caribbean leaders would intervene in Grenada, backed by the Americans and provided a little background information on the Grenada revolution itself. On the other hand, the Ottawa Citizen printed articles, on October 24, explaining the fear Grenadian citizens in Canada had that Caribbean neighbours would invade their country. Further articles outlined the problems which Canada had in attempting to evacuate Canadian nationals from Grenada because of the refusal of landing rights by Grenadian military officials. Little was mentioned in the Canadian newspapers about Grenada of any involvement of the Canadian government in the evolving crisis, until the actual invasion occurred.

The day following the invasion, October 26, produced substantial coverage in the major Canadian newspapers. Editorials dealt with the question of Canadian aid to Grenada and the feasibility of trade sanctions against the discredited military junta. Major stories described the war itself and the responses of other world leaders, most notably in Moscow, and speculated on the effect that the invasion might have internationally on the American image. The question of the safety of Canadian citizens, among others, was also important to the media, as was the need expressed by some critics to condemn the American action. There was little or no discussion of Canada’s role, or lack of it, in the decision-making process leading up to the regional crisis.

Once again, the press did not appear to give much coverage to the issue of lack of prior consultation. What was deemed important was mainly the efforts of the US to take control of the island and the subsequent conversion of that country from a Marxist state under military rule to a friendly, somewhat democratic, pro-American neighbour. Another issue of concern was the safety of Canadians living in Grenada. Meanwhile, another event eclipsed the news from Grenada: a terrorist attack killing many Americans in Lebanon on October 23. Coverage of that attack immediately occupied the news media, distracting and diverting them from the development in Grenada.

The media debate began in earnest on October 27 when Canada’s position on the invasion was made public. Headlines stated that Canada had officially rebuked the US over the invasion of Grenada\textsuperscript{84}, it was also reported that the US had refused to allow Canadian transport planes to evacuate Canadian nationals\textsuperscript{85}, and editorials had suggested that Canadian officials had been warned or “tipped off” about the invasion four days earlier\textsuperscript{86}. Over the next few days, more articles summarized world criticisms of the invasion, the lack of any Canadian involvement, and the surprising ferocity of the Cuban and Grenadian defenders. What now predominated was a skepticism, expressed by many world leaders, Canada’s included, that there had ever been any real danger to Grenadian civilians or foreign nationals. Instead, a consensus emerged that the American invasion served little purpose other than to expel Castro’s soldiers, to install a government favourable to the US, send a warning to other neighbouring countries thinking of leaning towards Socialism.

or Marxism. The invasion was also judged a public relations success, in contrast to the “Bay of Pigs” fiasco and the failure of the US to depose Castro in the intervening years.

The Globe and Mail now featured a lengthy editorial by Thomas Walkom that illustrated the consequences of the invasion to Prime Minister Trudeau’s efforts to act as an international mediator between the superpowers. When the Prime Minister had embarked on an extensive peace initiative, he was rebuked by the Americans for interference. The Grenadian invasion and the lack of input by Canada was testimony to Trudeau’s failure to impress the Americans or to place Canada in the forefront of regional and NATO decision-making. Instead, Canada had been relegated to a subordinate role, once again, which exposed the general failure of Trudeau’s foreign policy. However, with Trudeau’s failure to support the American action in Grenada, Walkom concluded that it was hardly likely the Americans would have welcomed Trudeau’s worldwide peace initiatives that attempted to bring the superpowers into some disarmament agreement, or at least bring them to the negotiating table:

The invasion of Grenada has dealt a severe blow to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his plan to act as an international mediator between the superpowers. This action has cast serious doubt on suggestions that Mr. Trudeau, the urbane and experienced statesman, is treated with special regard by President Ronald Reagan.  

What was evident in the media reports was that Canada was once again left out in the cold with respect to regional foreign policy decisions. The consultation process was seemingly no better in the 1980’s than it had been in the 1960’s. The Globe and Mail came

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to the conclusion that Canada was being ignored or misled by its allies, deliberately or otherwise. This assessment appeared to be shared by other media outlets as well. The general feeling was that Canadian political leaders and officials had again failed to present Canadian policy interests in a manner that our allies were willing to consider and accept.

Coverage of the invasion of Grenada in periodicals was much less extensive; and insofar as Canada’s involvement was concerned, there was little comment offered in the latter part of 1983 and the early part of 1984. Maclean’s featured three lengthy articles on November 7 and 14, but these dealt exclusively with the dynamics of the military operation and the potential for other American-led military operations in the region. On the other hand, Canadian Forum published a brief editorial on the interventionist tendencies of the US in the Caribbean and Central American regions, noting that the US had a long history of interventions and always sought to cover its imperial adventures with “false pretexts.” This article also defended Trudeau’s opposition to the invasion. While this editorial opinion might have been in the minority, it demonstrated that there was some real debate on the issue with both sides being represented.

When it came to American political or military interventions in the region, Canada was apparently not expected to participate extensively. Therefore, little was written in the various periodicals that related directly to Canadian policy. Writers, like officials, had a propensity to focus on economic and human rights issues in Latin America, not on foreign policy issues concerning the actions of the regional leader, the United States. Little of

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consequence was offered in the periodicals, except in the general context of the regional issues, and this pattern would recur later as more crises appeared in areas such as Panama, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

d) Scholarly Debate and Literature:

For a number of years, the crisis in Grenada produced an extended academic debate. What was written, however, centred mainly on the US role and what it sought to accomplish in the region. Considering that the US had demonstrated its willingness to use force to eliminate any Marxist threat to the region and in the process create only friendly governments, the debate focussed on the legal and moral aspects of this foreign policy; but generally it did not argue for greater Canadian participation in the region.

While official Canadian comments were generally considered to be peripheral to American concerns in the region, however, Canada’s somewhat angry reaction to the American-led invasion of Grenada clearly demonstrated, as Stephen Clarkson pointed out, that Canada was not afraid to voice its opinion despite the risk of displeasing Washington. Clarkson was not alone in this view. Others, such as J.L. Granatstein, also commented on the Canadian willingness to oppose the Americans. Still, the consensus was that Trudeau’s rhetoric served little purpose other than to elicit US resentment while leaving Canada still without any real input in regional political affairs and conflicts.

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What is evident in the literature is that scholarly interests in Caribbean and Central American regional affairs centred on the region as a whole and not on a specific country. The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies in a 1985 Forum on *Canada, The Caribbean, and Central America* published findings which suggested that the region “seems to be the great unknown for Canadians” 94. The authors further argued that although the Caribbean was a principal area for Canadian investment (including over $15 billion in direct bank loans), Canada had “shied away from political involvement in the area” 95. This was said to contribute to its lack of influence, especially with the Americans, with respect to securing some consultation before an American intervention. The published proceedings of this forum demonstrated that the interest of Canadian authorities was to work with regional leaders but only when asked. One example of this was John Graham’s Forum presentation on the Canadian involvement in the *Contadora* process 96 which provided assistance to a group of concerned countries to develop their own regional peace proposals 97. He emphasized the question of “invitation”, which underscored Canada’s reluctance to impose itself on hemispheric problems. Unfortunately, the question of American-led interventions and Canada’s responses to them was basically ignored.

On a related topic, James Greene and Brent Scowcroft have argued that countries such as Canada, Japan and those of Western Europe have a greater willingness, than the US has, to accept significant social change, even including a revolutionary period, as being

96 “Contadora group” was formed in January 1983 to provide a regional solution to Central American conflicts to offset the greater US involvement in the region. It consists of four states, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama.
compatible with their interests\textsuperscript{98}. In fact, they argue that the Canadian view supports the notion that "...political change is more likely to protect fundamental Western interests in the Caribbean Basin, and in the Third World generally" \textsuperscript{99}. However, Greene has acknowledged that Canadian and other Western nations' interests are also becoming more focused on the political and military security of the Caribbean Basin\textsuperscript{100}.

The Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS), established by Parliament in 1984 to promote scholarship and increase knowledge, published an occasional paper in 1984 which dealt with the Caribbean Basin. Geoffrey Pearson authored this booklet and submitted his analysis on the region's problems. His assessment was centred on the superpower rivalry, partly in Grenada, and on the deeply rooted hostilities in that country towards the US, in effect lending support to the Canadian government's negative reaction to the invasion\textsuperscript{101}. While his analysis did deal extensively with the Grenadian revolution and subsequent turmoil in 1983, he had very little to say about the issue of Canadian participation in the regional decision-making process, or any potential for independent Canadian initiatives. In other words, the policy implications for Canada in the Caribbean Basin apparently deserved little consideration by an organization established by the Canadian Parliament.

\textsuperscript{98} James Greene and Brent Scowcroft, \textit{Western Interests and U.S. Policy Options in the Caribbean Basin}, (Boston: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1984), p.20.
\textsuperscript{99} Green and Scowcroft, p.20. The "Caribbean Basin" includes the islands and the countries of Central America along with Columbia, Venezuela, Panama, Surinam, Mexico, and Guyana. This is employed by the US to integrate the region for strategic purposes. Many scholars reject this utility of the basin because it embraces two distinctly different geographic regions.
\textsuperscript{100} Howard Wiarda, "Changing Realities and U.S. Policy in the Caribbean Basin" in \textit{Western Interests and U.S. Policy Options in the Caribbean Basin}, James Greene & Brent Scowcroft, editors, (Boston: Oelgeschlager, 1984), p.82.
James Rochlin has also provided an opinion on Grenada in his recent book, *Discovering the Americas*\(^{102}\). He pointed out that because of Canada’s strong historical ties with the Commonwealth Caribbean, some Canadians were incensed over the lack of consultation prior to the invasion. But beyond this he had little else to say on this subject, and in that regard was typical of general Canadian reticence.

The Canadian-Caribbean relationship was apparently based on economics, education, tourism, development assistance, immigration, trade and human rights issues. Despite the long and somewhat special relationship between Canada and parts of the Caribbean, surprisingly little has been written on the subject\(^ {103}\). Furthermore, Canada has seldom shown more than a passing interest in the strategic importance of the region, despite its problems and proximity\(^ {104}\). Although, Canada for many years has had a standing invitation to join the Organization of American States (OAS), it was not until 1990 that Canada accepted the invitation. Earlier political involvement in the OAS, perhaps could have produced better communication and consultation. At least one writer, James Guy, has emphasized that Canada could demonstrate more commitment to the region through the OAS\(^ {105}\). It is, therefore, understandable that without such commitment Canada’s influence in the region’s political problems has been minimal. But under different circumstances it possibly could have prevented the embarrassment of the failure of Canada to be consulted prior to the Grenadian invasion. Indeed, one of the Caribbean leaders

\(^{102}\) James Rochlin, *Discovering the Americas: The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Policy Towards Latin America*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994, p.120.


\(^{104}\) Brian Tennyson, p.2.

stated that she did not have Prime Minister Trudeau’s telephone number, and for this singularly simple reason could not inform him of the pending invasion\textsuperscript{106}.

Canada has had a special relationship with some Caribbean countries, especially the Commonwealth Caribbean nations, and this region could well have a higher priority in Canada’s foreign policy, as Canadian officials are frequently quick to point out. However, as Edgar Dosman argues, there actually has been little systematic discussion of the security factor in Canadian-Caribbean relations. He recommends that to deal with future challenges in the region, there is a need for more innovative long-range security planning to strengthen Canada’s special relationship at least with the Commonwealth Caribbean\textsuperscript{107}. Regardless of this, he concludes that Canada’s position in the region is ultimately dependent upon US good-will.

\textsuperscript{106} J.L. Granatstein, 1990, p.333.

CHAPTER IV

THE INVASION OF PANAMA

a) Description of Crisis:

Panama was a different situation for the US than Cuba and Grenada. In Panama it was not a case of Marxist ideology and Cuban influence that precipitated US intervention. Instead, it was the clash between the dictator, General Manuel Noriega, and the US over power and control of resources, what little there was of it. It was a struggle over how much power Noriega would have to manipulate his people, deal in drugs, govern the use of the canal, and ignore the wishes of the US. What it was not was precisely the excuse the US used to launch an invasion - the protection of American nationals in Panama. To better understand the intervention it is necessary to briefly present some of the relevant history, specifically in the preceding decade. The reasons for this intervention did not emerge suddenly in 1989, but developed over a number of years.

In 1979 the Panama Canal Treaty was signed. It provided for the transfer of ownership of the canal to Panama in 1999. In the meantime, the US would share joint administration of the canal, which was essentially US property. After the death of the Panamanian leader General Omar Torrijos, who had negotiated the treaty, the country’s leaders began dismantling his foreign policy and replacing it with somewhat contradictory policy. The country’s military leaders had differing views on the direction the policy

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108 Jennie Lincoln. "Central America: Regional Security Issues" in The Dynamics of Latin American Foreign Policies, edited by Jennie Lincoln and Elizabeth Ferris, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984) p.211. Jennie Lincoln points out that the clearest case of this contradiction was evident in Panama’s position concerning the conflict in Central America. Panama was a member of the Contadora Group which proposed the removal of foreign troops and cessation of the arms buildup. However, some Panamanian authorities, notably Noriega himself, indicated his preference for a military solution to Central American crises rather than a diplomatic one and further excluded certain Panamanian boundaries from the decisions.
should take. While some felt that closer ties to American policy was the correct path, others felt that an independent path was preferable. On one hand, some policies appeared to support the Third World orientation of Panama under Torrijos; on the other hand, some appeared to move closer to the US.

Panama was an original member of the Contadora Group which had sought reasonable political solutions to Central American and regional problems, but without the US. It offered a diplomatic solution to regional crises. However, the US was not in favour of any organization that excluded its involvement, and due consideration of its interests. It was in this environment that General Noriega assumed a more influential role as head of the National Guard, since he preferred a more military solution to regional problems.\textsuperscript{109}

The beginning of the breakdown of US-Panamanian relations that eventually led to direct US intervention probably began here.

Noriega had a long association with the US authorities during his tenure as commander of the Panamanian military forces. The US tolerated him due to their important security interests in the region: they wanted continued implementation of the Canal treaties, access to facilities for intelligence gathering, support for the Contras, and hopes for obtaining a post-treaty military base agreement.\textsuperscript{110} To accomplish this, the US basically looked the other way while Noriega consolidated his power and expanded the scope of his corrupt and illegal activities.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, p.212.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, p.2.
During 1987, US government officials and agencies decided that Noriega must be ousted from power. Up to this point, he had served the US fairly well, but had become a liability. Detailed accounts of his illegal drug activities, involving US markets, had become a source of many media stories and, consequently, an embarrassment to the US. It was reported that he was operating in conjunction with the Drug enforcement Agency (DEA) while reaping many benefits from the illegal drug trade. This was finally too much controversy to ignore, but for some two years, the US efforts to oust Noriega through economic, political, and diplomatic pressures, or through promoting an internal coup, failed. President Bush was severely criticized for his unwillingness to back his rhetorical opposition to Noriega with more concrete action. The resort to force was rapidly becoming the only viable option.

In full defiance of the US, Noriega seized power in May 1989 after he ignored the results of a general election. The democratically elected government members were not only deposed but were abused, beaten and terrorized by Noriega’s supporters in what some would call a reign of terror. The environment became dangerous for opponents of Noriega’s rule, including some US nationals, whose protection was ostensibly one purpose of the US intervention. By this time, Noriega had been indicted by American authorities on charges of drug dealing. Noriega’s reaction was to basically disregard the American

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115 Ibid, p. 197.
actions and continue his somewhat brutal management of his country. A war of nerves
between Panama and the US now began to move toward hostilities.

On September 1989, Noriega installed a personal friend, Francisco Rodriguez, as
provisional president, after elections were unexpectedly canceled a little earlier in the
year\textsuperscript{117}. He hinted that new elections might be held if relations with the US improved\textsuperscript{118}. This was not to happen. Instead, the US broke diplomatic relations with Panama and
imposed further sanctions.

On October 3, 1989 several of the younger Panamanian military officers, led by
Major Moises Giroldi, decided that the hostilities had gone far enough and launched a
barracks coup against General Noriega\textsuperscript{119}. At first, the US government claimed that it was
not involved, but later acknowledged a limited role. In fact, Brent Scowcroft, the US
national security advisor, later confirmed that President Bush had authorized the US
Southern Command to draw up a plan to use covert forces to apprehend Noriega, but by
that time the coup had already failed\textsuperscript{120}. The failed coup constituted a turning point in the
situation in Panama and for US objectives. The failure meant that the US had to resort to
other means to depose Noriega, and that could be direct intervention.

On December 15, 1989, Noriega's subservient National Assembly named him
Panama's chief of government, just as its predecessor had done for Omar Torrijos in
1972"\textsuperscript{121}. The evening of December 16, 1989, after the National Assembly of Noriega's
personally controlled government representatives declared Panama to be in a "state of

\textsuperscript{117} Michael Conniff, 1992, p.161.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, p.161.
\textsuperscript{119} Margaret Scranton, p. 185.
\textsuperscript{120} Linda Robinson, p.202.
\textsuperscript{121} Michael Conniff, 1992, p.163.
with the US, a US Marine Lieutenant was shot and killed by members of the Panama Defence Forces, following a period of abuse by his captors. The death provided, what the US considered to be, “just cause” for direct military intervention and the arrest of General Noriega, who the Americans considered to be illegally in power. Therefore, at 12:45 a.m. on December 20, 1989 US forces launched an invasion on Panama with the intention of arresting General Noriega and restoring the democratically elected government and order to the country.

The invasion, named “Operation Just Cause” as an American reminder of the reason for this military venture, was swift and involved about 26,000 soldiers in the biggest military operation since Vietnam. Most of the forces were Army, but Marines and even the elite Navy Seals were also deployed. This invasion force routed Noriega’s forces swiftly in about 18 hours, although some pockets of resistance continued for several days. But Noriega, who took refuge in a Catholic church, was not apprehended until January 4, 1990, some two weeks after the invasion. While Noriega was eventually arrested and tried in the US courts, whether the US succeeded in restoring democracy, order and prosperity to the country might be debatable.

Noriega began the new year as US Prisoner #41586 at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre outside Miami, Florida. He remained defiant of the US jurisdiction in the matter and his lawyer argued that Noriega was a “political prisoner”, brought to the US illegally, and claimed immunity as a “head of state”. This claim was never accepted.
by the US authorities and the judge ruled against Noriega. The deposed Panamanian leader went to trial, was convicted, and currently remains in prison.

b) Canadian Government Responses:

The House of Commons generally ignored the activities in Panama prior to the invasion itself. The first actual discussion or debate occurred on December 20, the day of the invasion, and centred on the justification for the US action. Despite the general consensus in Parliament that Noriega’s actions had been reprehensible, several opposition speakers felt the American invasion was not justified. Since a large American military presence already existed in Panama, they argued that a full American invasion had not been necessary. Accordingly, they asked the government to officially condemn the American action at both the Security Council and the OAS. Jesse Fils (Lib: Parkdale) made the following statement:

At both emergency sessions of the Security Council and of the OAS, I call on the government to state categorically that it cannot and will not support any violation of the principle of non-intervention which would include military invasion of Panama by the United States. 126

Prime Minister Mulroney refused and made it clear that in the OAS Canada would not support any condemnation of the US invasion of Panama. He cited an official statement issued by the Canadian government that indicated Canada’s regret for the need to use force but also “understands and is sympathetic to the American action in the circumstances” 127. Mulroney’s argument centred on Panama’s declaration of war against

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127 Ibid, p.7252.
the United States, the murder of American citizens by Noriega, and by his security threats. He repeated his claims that the US acted properly to protect the interests of their nationals in Panama. This argument reflected the American position totally, thereby demonstrating official Canadian support for the invasion.

Another issue emerged when it was revealed that Mulroney had been contacted by President Bush regarding the invasion but only after it was already underway. In other words, Mulroney did not fare much better, with respect to consultation, than had his predecessor during the Grenada crisis. At that time, he had criticized Trudeau for the lack of consultation by the Americans and suggested that the poor relations between the two countries stemmed from Trudeau’s refusal to support the US on various policy initiatives.

The quick and apparently unconditional approval given by the Mulroney government provided the opposition in the House of Commons with fuel for debate. It was Audrey McLaughlin, the newly elected leader of the NDP, who first asked the Prime Minister if Canadians were left to believe the US has the freedom to use force when it disapproved of a government and, since Canada avoided criticism of US actions in El Salvador, if this meant that Canada had no independent foreign policy. She further stated:

If Canada supports the actions of the American government, does this mean we believe the United States or any other nation is free to use force when it disapproves of a government? What is Canada going to say to the Organization of American States and the UN security Council about these issues? What about the role of intermediary power that this government wanted Canada to play within the Organization of American States?

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129 Ibid p.7252.
130 Ibid, p.7253.
131 Ibid, p. 7253.
The Prime Minister did not directly respond to this lengthy question but continued his insistence that Panama had seriously threatened US interests and nationals, thereby provoking the intervention. He maintained that he would not be critical of the US action regardless of any Parliamentary pressures to do so:

General Noriega declared war against the United States. A US citizen was killed by the general’s forces and his wife was threatened. The United States intervened following this declaration of war, to protect American citizens living in Panama, and it did so legitimately, by virtue of an international treaty concluded many years ago.  

Further questions in Parliament dealt with the principles of non-intervention as enshrined in international law and the United Nations Charter. The allegedly dangerous precedent that this invasion could provide was hotly debated. The opposition pursued the government on the basis of the lost credibility Canada would experience if it allowed any exception to that principle, even where the US is concerned. The government’s response was given by Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, who agreed that this kind of intervention did indeed create a dangerous precedent. However, he argued that “when all else fails and when circumstances are unique” there was justification for military intervention of the kind pursued by the US. He further argued that other countries in the region, such as Costa Rica (officially regretting the action but not willing to enter into condemnation), had also not condemned the US action. This Canadian approval was legitimate, according to the government’s logic.

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132 Debates, p. 7253.
133 Ibid, p.7254.
134 Ibid, p.7254.
While all parties expressed their disapproval of Noriega as a brutal dictator and their outrage at the death of an American, they sharply disagreed on the methods employed by the US. Bill Blaikie (NDP: Winnipeg-Birds Hill) pointed out several instances of brutal killings in other countries in the region that had not provoked an American invasion to restore some semblance of order and justice, including the case of four American nuns murdered in El Salvador\textsuperscript{135}. Because Americans had often been attacked throughout the world, without responding with military intervention, he felt that the American government was hypocritical in singling out Panama for punitive action:

I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs this. Is he at least prepared to acknowledge that there are many other instances in which regimes attack Americans, attack their own people, attack their clergy, attack their human rights activists, and yet Washington does nothing? \textsuperscript{136}

Joe Clark avoided a direct answer but did suggest that the opposition try some “new thinking” and consider the special circumstances that often exist in such crises \textsuperscript{137}. What he meant was not clarified, at that time.

At the latter part of the first day of debate on the US invasion of Panama, the members of the House of Commons agreed that it would be appropriate for each of the three parties to express their respective positions on the events. Clark was first to speak and restated his government’ s earlier position on the matter. He emphasized the difference between the Panama situation requiring US intervention and other incidents in the world which adversely affected American nationals but received no armed intervention. He pointed out that the US was in Panama in the first place because of a treaty, a legal

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, p.7257.  
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, p.7257.  
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid, p.7257
agreement, that gave it the right to be in that country and, furthermore, that it was Panama’s leaders who first declared that a state of war existed between their country and the US. He then reaffirmed the right of the US to protect its nationals, who had the legal right to be there in the first place, and concluded his statement with a clarification of his earlier remark about the “new thinking” that he felt should prevail138. He suggested that members of the opposition needed to move away from stereotypes, whether those stereotypes were about Americans and their motivations or about small but proud countries such as Panama139. The government’s intention, Clark indicated, would be to make the most of the new situation created by the events in Panama. He concluded by affirming a Canadian role in the region:

We have a role to play in helping to prevent Noriegas. We have a role to play in helping to provide alternatives to intervention because our presence can strengthen initiatives and institutions like the Organization of American States. 140

Clark was followed by Jesse Fils, of the Liberal opposition, who opposed the US invasion of Panama as a violation of the principles of the UN charter on non-intervention and a failure to consult with allies. He argued that when one member of the OAS attacked another member without consulting other members, the result was a useless organization141. The comparison to Grenada was drawn; the Trudeau government did not support the invasion immediately because it had not obtained enough information from the US, in contrast to the Mulroney government which gave immediate support with

138 Debates, p. 7287.
139 Ibid, p. 7288.
140 Ibid, p. 7288.
141 Ibid, p. 7288.
insufficient information. Fils reminded the government that the US had 12,000 troops in Panama at the time of the invasion and those troops, in his party’s view, were quite capable of defending American citizens without a massive invasion using “special forces” trained in highly aggressive tactics.\(^{142}\)

The third and final speaker was Bill Blaikie who reminded the Secretary of State for External Affairs that it was his party that had pressed the reluctant government for an emergency debate on the issue. He argued that Noriega had only become offensive to the Americans when he decided that he would no longer follow American plans but instead sought to create his own policies. He further reminded the government that Latin America was full of dictators who abused their citizens, and cited both Duvalier in Haiti and Somoza in Nicaragua who were apparently not offensive enough to the American government to be threatened with intervention.\(^{143}\) This kind of American selective support for dictators was the main focus for his opposition party’s objections. As Fils had before him, Blaikie also warned that there were many other trouble spots in the region which could provoke similar American intervention. Already, in view of the Panama invasion, Nicaragua had placed its troops on full alert; thus the Panama invasion, he argued, set a dangerous precedent that should be wholly unacceptable to Canada.

With the end of the first day’s debates came the end of all debate on the Panama invasion. The Parliament adjourned for the Christmas season after one day of discussion of the issue and members made no further reference to the question when it reconvened.

\(^{142}\) Debates, p.7289.
\(^{143}\) Ibid, p.7290.
January 22, 1990. It would seem that one day's discussion of the issue was deemed sufficient.

The Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade met four times between December 20, 1989 and Feb. 1, 1990. Its official Report to the House centred on the impact of Canada's officially joining the OAS as well as the invasion of Grenada and other trouble spots in the region. It stated that in rapid succession over the past few months there had been an escalation in the civil war in El Salvador, a breakdown in the cease-fire in Nicaragua, and an American invasion of Panama. Canada was expected to actively participate in the quest for solutions to these problems."}

The Report stated that because Canada had a long history of involvement in Latin America, both through government and non-government organizations (NGO's), Canada should bring to the OAS its strength, purpose, and distinctiveness to support the guiding principles for its position in that organization. Two of the principles mentioned were an independent voice and an aptitude for bridge-building. With these qualities Canada would provide its own commitment to promote the policies and objectives of the OAS. While admiring the idealism of this statement, a critic might consider this a high expectation for Canada in view of the responses thus far to the events in the region.

The report addressed the Panamanian crisis and the apparent division of members on whether the American invasion should be supported or condemned. However, the report specifically stated what Committee members believed Canadian policy should be:

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145 Ibid, p.35.7.
We are also agreed that it is unacceptable and self-defeating for any one country to continue playing the role of hemispheric policeman. Canadian policy in the OAS should be directed not to an uncritical reaffirmation of the traditional doctrine of absolute sovereignty but to the development of multilateral, not unilateral, means of addressing such situations.146

This report also stressed Canada’s development priorities in Latin America and its concentration on trade and general development assistance, partly through aid packages. Furthermore, it expressed the view that Canada’s role in the OAS would provide a greater opportunity for participation in human rights commissions, which had always been Canada’s main interest in the region.

In the Department of External Affairs Statements and Speeches, Joe Clark’s February 1, 1990 submission argued that Latin America was definitely a priority for Canada and that this country had major interests and real influence there. Dictatorships, he claimed, were now very much the exception and the trend to democracy in that region should be applauded147. He firmly rejected what he felt was a perception that since Latin America was in the US “backyard” Canada would therefore “be forced to toe the American line - and thus be rendered impotent and irrelevant...or risk Washington’s wrath”148. Canada, he maintained, could freely agree, or disagree, with the US, as it pleased, for its own reasons:

It is perverse to argue that, whenever Canada agrees with Washington, we are doing so for American reasons. Canadian interests do not automatically coincide with those of the United States. But neither do they automatically conflict.149

146 Ibid, p.35:10.
148 Ibid, p.3.
149 Ibid, p.3.
Referring to the invasion of Panama by the United States, he forcefully reaffirmed his government’s previously stated position that the US had been left with no other option but to invade. Reaching this conclusion, he argued, in no way supported the perception that his government had little independent policy from that of the US.

c) Select Editorial Reaction:

The invasion of Panama received fairly comprehensive media coverage with respect to the details surrounding the military action and the difficulty in arresting General Noriega. Furthermore, the event itself was preceded by editorials citing the Panamanian authorities as having declared their country to be in a state of war with the US. The media coverage was small but concise articles outlining the controversy as they saw it. Later, the coverage centred more on the conditions in Panama and on the US insistence that Noriega was a “middle man” in the exportation of illegal drugs, primarily to the US. Therefore, the Americans considered their failure to recognize Noriega’s leadership, and his detention, to be totally justified. There was a little attention given to the shooting of the American marine by the Panamanian defence authorities but even less given to the American shooting of a Panamanian policeman two days earlier. These incidents were apparently judged to be incidental to the whole affair, although in reality, they were possibly the sparks that precipitated violent confrontation.

The media began focusing their attention on Panama immediately following the American invasion of that country. Now, coverage was considerable including the editorials discussing the background to the confrontation and its justification, or lack of it.

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The American inability to capture Noriega received its share of editorial attention. In fact, what was written almost appeared to be entertaining because the substantial American military presence was stymied by the tactics of Noriega. Even the sizable reward offered by the US for Noriega’s capture was heavily publicized. The various media finally found a source of much controversy on which to focus.

In contrast with the hesitation and uncertainty shown earlier regarding Cuba and Grenada the Canadian government had an immediate response to the Panama invasion. It was reported that Prime Minister Mulroney fully supported the American position, citing justification for invasion to oust an illegitimate dictator and, as Mulroney stated, a “thug”. He publicly reaffirmed his full support for what he considered to be a legally and morally justifiable action and, furthermore, refused to criticize the US for failure to consult with him and other allies prior to the invasion. This was much more forthright than in the earlier incidents; and perhaps because it was, it did not go unchallenged by the editors who differed from the Prime Minister on the justification offered by the US. The Montreal Gazette was a prime example with its comments stating that it was “Ludicrous for Washington to maintain it has legal right...Canada was remarkably quick to jump on US bandwagon”.

Shortly after the US action the media began their criticism of the invasion and official Canadian support for it. The same newspaper published articles titled: “Cloak of Legality Fits Badly in Panama” and “Experts Cast Doubt On Legal Authority Cited By

\[152\] Montreal Gazette, December 21, 14.
\[153\] Ibid, p.2.
US"\textsuperscript{154}. \textit{The Globe and Mail} joined in the criticism with articles titled: “Intervention Adds Notch To US Gun” and “The Invasion Should Be Condemned”\textsuperscript{155}. The \textit{Ottawa Citizen} was similarly explicit with an editorial: “Panama Landing Inexcusable” which also condemned Washington for the suggestion that it was legal to invade; and it followed with editorials saying “US Has Long Legacy of Invasions” and “Canada, Britain Alone in Defending Invasion”\textsuperscript{156}. When reading the details of these and other articles and editorials it became obvious that opinions were generally strong in opposition to the US action and to the surprisingly swift and virtually unconditional support by the Canadian government. It would have been difficult to find any “real” support for the invasion across the country.

The media coverage, and condemnation, was quite relentless for many days. While most sources agreed that General Noriega should have been removed from power, the media disagreed with the method employed by the Americans. They almost unanimously decided that Noriega was to be toppled, but without the use of a major invasion force. Diplomatic means were considered to be preferable, but were considered underused by the Americans. Furthermore, the US was believed to already have a considerable military presence in Panama thereby negating the need for American “special forces” to invade.

One writer on this theme suggested that the US had itself created “the monster” of Noriega and only removed him when he was no longer an asset but instead an embarrassment\textsuperscript{157}. Such criticisms continued for several days, reinforced by particularly strong reports of the tragic consequences for the population of Panama caught in the

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid, p. 2-3.
\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Globe and Mail}, Dec. 21, p.3, 6.
\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Ottawa Citizen}, Dec. 21, p. 2, 6-7.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, p.6-7.
aftermath of the invasion and the surprisingly effective method employed by Noriega of evading capture.

Since the Canadian government had devoted very little time in Parliament to the invasion of Panama, and given Mulroney’s quick acceptance of the US position in this affair, the media found much to condemn. For its part, however, Parliament spent no further debate on it, and the Prime Minister refused to debate his actions, or lack of it, evidently considering the matter closed. Consequently, no further activity was undertaken. Once the arrest of Noriega took place, all political parties appeared to drop the matter. It was left to the media to continue the debate, and the criticisms.

d) Scholarly Debate and Literature:

As Jorge Castafieda noted, the invasion of Panama was “the first attempt by the United States to justify the use of force abroad on the grounds of drug enforcement” 158. This was precisely what he considered the invasion to be about, and not the suggestion that there had to be a restoration of democracy to that country for some altruistic reasons. This US action was denounced by the OAS and by the rest of the countries in the Americas, except Canada and El Salvador. While Costa Rica officially regretted the action, it would not enter into actual condemnation. The Canadian government insisted that Canada had an “active and independent role to play in the hemisphere” 159. However, Canada’s actions, with such unequivocal support for the US, appeared to be at variance with the position of most members of the OAS. This is the underlying message that many

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159 Cameron, p.111, (quoted by Cameron from a statement by the Right Honourable Joe Clark)
scholars state. Furthermore, Canada’s actions could potentially undermine its position as a new member of the OAS, which would take effect on January 8, 1990. Credibility as a member truly independent of the US was at stake here.

While Canadian policy had sharply differed from that of the US in past years, the welcome that accompanied Canada’s decision to officially join the OAS was somewhat muted by the policy of the Canadian government in the invasion of Panama less than a month earlier. James Rochlin expressed this view when he pointed out that Canada was the only nation in the western hemisphere besides El Salvador, a staunch American client state, that had virtually unconditionally supported the US action. He also noted that this was exactly the kind of episode that Ottawa had feared OAS membership would entail; having to side either with the US or with an overwhelming majority of Latin American states on highly contentious issues.

Regarding Panama, Canada’s position in the OAS, according to the critics, only echoed that of the US, and likely left other Latin American leaders with the perception that Canada was subordinate to US policy. The result was something of a diplomatic embarrassment for Canada and in the future left the Canadian position, with respect to its independence regarding American interventions, somewhat suspect.

Apart from raising this warning, the Canadian scholarly responses to the invasion of Panama were somewhat sketchy. Little has been written about it and, aside from economic and trade issues and to some degree the aftermath of the invasion’s effects on

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the plight of the Panamanian population, discussion centred on the general regional problems which precipitated interventions of this sort. A few writers went beyond this to comment on Latin American problems with influential military dictators, who have placed their countries in precarious difficulty. Such was the case in Panama, as Hal Klepak and David Haglund pointed out in several of their writings. While Panama was not singled out by them, their comments demonstrated that this kind of situation was at the root of the problems in many Latin American countries, including Panama. It was here that Canada could play a role, by promoting assistance for democracy and human rights. Furthermore, it was suggested that Canada’s security interests were tied to those of Latin America in general. However, what was not argued by the scholars was the degree of independence from the US that Canada’s policy should project to give credibility to its position in the OAS. For example, while pointing out that US interventions in Panama and other Latin American countries had negative consequences for the American image, Klepak argued that they might have succeeded in removing thorny problems for the US and, in the long run, achieve a higher degree of security in the region. While this might have had some truth, he did not conclusively demonstrate how this validated the Canadian position of almost unconditional support for the invasion of Panama or the possibly negative perceptions of Canada’s credibility regarding its respect for the self-determination of other members of the OAS.

CHAPTER V

THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA AND EL SALVADOR

a) Description:

The United States repeatedly intervened in Central America, over a great many years, and during the tenure of many presidents. However, the most recent problems in this region involved basically three American presidents: Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush. These presidents, in one way or another, had influenced the political development in Nicaragua and El Salvador and the extent that American intervention would affect the civilian and military dynamics of Central America. Whether or not American involvement assisted or disrupted the resolution of the political crises in Nicaragua and El Salvador may be arguable, nevertheless, the US demonstrated a strong desire to intercede in this region’s problems, resulting in a crisis for the American image internationally.

Nicaragua was a different situation from the three cases discussed in the previous chapters. The US did not invade Nicaragua, or its neighbour El Salvador, by direct military means. In these countries, the US influenced decisions or indirectly aided one side or the other in the revolutionary civil wars. In the case of El Salvador, the US supported the government of that country, with both financial and military aid, and dispatched military “advisors” to assist by advising that government in its fight against rebel forces, that were allegedly being supplied by the governments in Nicaragua and Cuba. In the case of Nicaragua, its Sandinista government was strongly opposed and harassed by the US, for example in mining the harbour outside of Managua. Furthermore, there was some
suggestions that American CIA agents were actually physically assisting the Contra rebels in their struggle against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. While the US intervention in these Central American countries was substantial, it did not include direct military invasion. The question is why, and precisely how, did Canada respond differently in these situations in light of the apparent American military restraint?

US involvement in all of Central America has had a long history. For example, Nicaragua was actually occupied by the US in the early part of this century, finally withdrawing in 1932 after ensuring that General Anastasio Somoza was entrenched firmly in power for some forty years. After the overthrow of the Somoza government by the Sandinistas in 1979, as Calvin Bricker has noted, American attitudes reached new levels of concern:

The Sandinista overthrow of the US-backed Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua marked a watershed in the development of US-Central America relations. Previously, the United States had taken a disinterested - though at times interventionist - view toward activities in the region. The coming to power of a new revolutionary government in America’s “backyard”, however, was cause for a significant restructuring of American foreign policy toward Central America.

The revolution in Nicaragua offered the Soviet Union another opportunity to infiltrate the US zone of influence; and the cool American reception of the new “leftist” regime facilitated this development. With few available options, the Sandinistas accepted Soviet assistance, which further annoyed the US government, and persuaded many Americans to want the Sandinistas removed from power as quickly as possible.

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As the Sandinistas began a conversion to the “socialist” system of government, they began a “purge” of non-Marxist officials from influence in the country which further alienated the US\textsuperscript{167}. Whether or not “socialist” was an accurate depiction may be considered irrelevant since perception was enough to create the opposition. Within Nicaragua, meanwhile, local opposition to the Sandinistas took shape in another revolutionary group, the Contras. In time, the latter became recipients of considerable American assistance enabling them to pose a strong alternative to what US President Ronald Reagan’s administration viewed as “a dangerous Marxist-Leninist revolutionary dictatorship directly threatening US national security”\textsuperscript{168}. In this way, the conflict in Nicaragua escalated. The escalation was extremely detrimental to the general Nicaraguan population.

El Salvador was a somewhat different situation for the US. Here, the US aided the existing government against a revolutionary rebel force that reportedly had support from the neighbouring Sandinistas and from Cuba. The US propped up the right-wing regime which could not even control its own military factions allegedly responsible for numerous severe human rights violations, all in the name of democracy.

However, the situation in El Salvador was actually somewhat more complicated than this. In 1972, amid charges of election fraud, the existing leadership had not allowed the apparent election winner, Jose Napoleon Duarte, to become president. Instead, the government authorities declared Colonel Arturo Molina to be president\textsuperscript{169}. Molina did not implement the widely expected reforms and exiled or imprisoned opposition leaders.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid, p.14.
\textsuperscript{169} Liisa North, \textit{Between War and Peace in Central America}, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990), p. 75.
Monstrous human rights violations allegedly escalated under Molina’s successor, General Carlos Romaro, finally prompting US President Jimmy Carter to suspend military assistance to El Salvador. Small groups of radical Marxist nationalists emerged and began guerrilla warfare, supported, it is believed, by neighbouring Nicaragua under the new Sandinista regime. The growing repression in the country provided the guerrillas with greater popularity. Radical “death squads”, tied to the regime’s military-security forces, also emerged producing even more chaos.

In 1979, a military-civilian junta was formed through a *coup d’etat*, but it excluded the revolutionary groups. By March of 1980, only the right-wing remained in the government to provide a civilian facade. Further realignments eventually produced a reconstituted junta consisting of reactionary military officers and right-wing elements led by Duarte. It was this final group that was eventually supported by the US. By this time, the country was in the midst of a full scale civil war. The only result of this tragic situation was an increase of human rights abuses. While Duarte was successful in the 1984 presidential elections, becoming the country’s first civilian head of state since 1931, the conditions for reform and democratization remained elusive and the civil war continued. US assistance failed to achieve an early and effective improvement. Throughout all this chaos, representatives of the Canadian government and non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) remained fairly active and vocal, particularly in denouncing flagrant violations of human rights.

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171 Ibid, p.75.
Notwithstanding their differences, the situations in El Salvador and Nicaragua were inextricably linked in the US assessment, which blamed the Marxist element in both countries for prolonging conflict and instability. The US appeared to disregard the human rights abuses in El Salvador, which were apparently caused by government forces, while any suspicion of abuses by the government of Nicaragua was strongly opposed by the US. However, the Contra rebels, who were also suspected of atrocities, received continued and very substantial American assistance (according to one estimate,$100 million in 1986 alone). This ambiguity in American policy toward the Central American states produced considerable Canadian responses, both official and non-official. These responses will be the subject of the subsequent sections of this chapter.

b) Canadian Government Responses:

Since the situation in Central America was troubling for many years, the responses from Canadian authorities were more extensive and intensive than was the case in Panama and Grenada. But there was no single crisis, invasion or event, that elicited a reaction from Canadian authorities and NGO's. This was mainly a human rights issue in which Canadians were allowed more time to consider their responses to the complex situations.

El Salvador received most of the attention during the debates in the House of Commons through the 1980's as tragic human rights abuses were publicized. In 1980, Pauline Jewett (NDP: New Westminster- Coquitlam) forcefully raised the issue with her request that the Trudeau government urge the US to cease its intervention in El Salvador.

and halt military aid to what she characterized as a repressive regime, that was discredited by the political murders reportedly being committed by the ruling junta. However, the government response that the US aid was purely of a “defensive” nature, but that it would take another look at the situation to determine if its policy required a reassessment. It was obvious that the government was clearly reluctant to make any hasty decisions, involving the US actions in El Salvador, which could have unforeseen repercussions.

In 1981, the questions and subsequent debate on the Central American conflicts were most extensive. Not many sessions escaped some questions or commentary on the US actions, which several members of Parliament perceived to be so detrimental to the region as to add more fuel to the fires there. In a motion on March 9, 1981, Edward Broadbent (NDP: Oshawa) condemned the government for its failure to protest publicly against American support for the military junta in El Salvador, and he called upon the Prime Minister to take a stronger position. He followed this motion with a lengthy speech outlining his party’s position on what it believed to be at the root of the problem in Central America. He outlined in detail the region’s history and relationships with its powerful neighbours to the north, both the US and Canada. This speech was one of the longest and most significant of the year. Furthermore, it was followed by lengthy presentations by other members of the Commons, who also wanted their views known on Canada’s role in Central America, especially El Salvador and Nicaragua. These two countries represented the cornerstone of Canadian and American policy in the region.

Broadbent’s presentation depicted fairly gruesome atrocities in El Salvador by its repressive government. He cited a former US Ambassador who had reported that the

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government of El Salvador was responsible for the murders and executions of thousands, all "covered up by the so-called reformist agrarian proposals which have been... a sham". He also described what he called a gruesome act involving murder of more than 600 peasants by Salvadoran national guardsman as these peasants attempted to flee to Honduras. For some time, he continued his relentless attack on the perpetrators of the problems. The following passage illustrates the tenor of his remarks:

The reality is that El Salvador is in a state of bloody civil war produced by a right-wing regime. This fact is obscured by the present United States government, which keeps portraying the present junta as representing moderation between the violent extremes of the left and right. The reality is quite different. The junta is part of the extreme right and is bereft of any popular support in the country.

Broadbent concluded his speech with an appeal to the government to discontinue its vacillating positions on the moral and practical issue of foreign policy and take a firm stand: "It is time to get off the fence. It is time to take some initiative to bring peace to this troubled land".

One of the responses by the Secretary of State, Mark MacGuigan, involved a criticism of the suppositions in Broadbent's motion. He stated that the fundamental problem with motion was that its drafters were people with an "obsession with black and white" and that "black is always to be... deemed the colour of the American side and white that of the fighting left". He continued what appeared to be the policy of government

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176 Ibid, p.8028.
178 Ibid, p.8030.
179 Ibid, p.8032.
not to condemn the US so dogmatically; although he acknowledged that the situation in El Salvador was being torn apart by brutal excesses.

For the opposition Progressive Conservative Party, Flora MacDonald claimed that the Central American crisis was more complicated than just US intervention. She argued that the Canadian government needed to be particularly concerned with the situation in that region since the stream of potential refugees could produce difficulties for Canada. This verbal sparring continued throughout the session, without agreement.

One of the most intensive debates on Central America in the House of Commons pertained to the mining of Nicaraguan ports in 1984, reportedly by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on the approval of President Reagan. Debate began by considering whether this action required a strong condemnation. Opposition member, Jim Fulton (NDP: Skeena), called the American action an act of terrorism and compared it to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He was then chastised by Acting Secretary of State, Gerald Regan, for condemning the US with insufficient proof that they were indeed responsible, although Regan did agree that the mining of any port would be a breach of international law. Next, Prime Minister Trudeau confirmed his disapproval of the US action, if indeed they were responsible, but restated his Minister’s earlier comment that there was no absolute proof that the mining was done by agents of the government of the United States. Fulton’s response, in turn, was to remind the Prime Minister that reports from the US Senate had confirmed that President Reagan had indeed given the order to mine Nicaragua’s harbours.

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180 Debates, April 11, 1984, p.2936.
181 Ibid, p.2937.
Broadbent also reminded the government that the Speaker of the US House of Representatives had himself acknowledged that the mining of the harbours clearly was legally indefensible. He then urged the Prime Minister to condemn the action because it would only undermine efforts to achieve peace in the region. The government response again came from Gerald Regan who assured the House that the Canadian government had already expressed its concerns to the US. Beyond this, three opposition attempts to extract a more direct commitment from Prime Minister Trudeau were unsuccessful.

The heated exchanges continued throughout the day’s question period, with opposition members repeatedly condemning various American activities in Central America, while the government members sparred with them on the interpretation of the evidence and how strong Canada’s response should be. This kind of on-going debate indicated the greater importance parliamentarians attached to the civil wars and general deterioration in the Central American region, than had earlier been the case with respect to Grenada, Panama and Cuba.

This was probably so because international peace and security clearly involved, and the numerous local conflicts were now taking on international or Cold War significance. For this reason, the government was continuously criticized for its alleged lack of action to reduce tensions in the region. For example, Mr. Skelly argued that very point:

The CIA has organized, funded and armed rebels who have killed 13,000 Nicaraguans to date. Canada was silent on that. The CIA has assisted in the mining of three major ports in Nicaragua to destroy the economy. Canada has been silent on that. The CIA has provided aircraft which have bombed refineries in Nicaragua. Canada is silent on that. Canada has not responded to calls from other nations to become actively involved in seeking

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peaceful solutions to the conflict in El Salvador. In essence, Canada has acquiesced to the United States.  

This criticism was echoed by others, but the Trudeau government was adamant in maintaining that it had already provided adequate criticism of US. Warren Allmand (Lib: Notre Dame de Grâce), speaking for the government at the time, indicated that the Canadian government was supportive of the Contadora proposal for peacefully negotiated solutions to the Central American conflicts. This reaction by the government was customary in the regular debates on the issues of international conflict. Regardless of the government’s apparent philosophical differences with the US on foreign policy issues, it evidently felt more comfortable in not condemning the US openly and vigorously. Instead, carefully chosen, and often non-committal, comments were judged to be sufficient and appropriate.

The issue of the trade embargo imposed by the US on Nicaragua in 1985 was raised frequently, but in one particularly strong exchange between Prime Minister Mulroney and Jean Chretien a clear picture of their respective positions on the subject resulted. Past arguments in the House now returned to haunt the members. Chretien launched the encounter with a question:

> Could the Prime Minister inform the House whether communications with President Reagan have deteriorated to the point that the Prime Minister is no longer notified of decisions that shock Canadians, such as the embargo on trade with Nicaragua, especially since last year in the House he said it was an insult that President Reagan had not given the Prime Minister advance notice of the invasion of Grenada? Does the Prime Minister not think he should take the same position on this latest decision, where the economic survival of the poor people of Nicaragua is at stake?  

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183 Ibid, p.3198.
The Prime Minister's response was one of agreement and he emphasized that the US embargo was indeed a unilateral action, which was being strongly opposed by the government of Canada. This opened the door to further criticism of an apparent difference of opinion with Joe Clark, the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Following President Reagan's announcement in May of 1985 that the United States was imposing economic sanctions against Nicaragua, Joe Clark had attempted to distance himself from the President's announced policy. He was reported by the Toronto Star to have stated: “It's their policy, not ours”, and indicated that he was committed to maintain developmental assistance to Nicaragua. Clark further publicly stated: “I think we should have been notified”. However, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, from Bonn, Germany, publicly disagreed with his minister by saying he was not displeased with the lack of consultation. This public disagreement did not escape the members of Parliament, who used it to embarrass the government, suggesting that the general public, not to mention the officials of other countries, would be a little confused by the apparent contradictions in Canadian policy. In this vein, Jean Chretien, had quickly pointed out that if Mulroney did not agree with the Secretary of State then the Canada public should have been informed, and he asked Mulroney: “Who is speaking for Canada when we are talking in this House and abroad about external affairs?” The Prime Minister conveniently side-stepped this question with another affirmation of his opposition to the American embargo.

187 Toronto Star, May 2, 1985, p.3.
188 Debates, May 6, 1985, p.4431.
Subsequent debates produced a continuous flow of questions about the situation in Central America. In the following years, Liberals and New Democrats repeatedly attempted to embarrass the Prime Minister for his apparently unconditional support of all American actions. Since Mulroney had always maintained that a friendlier relationship with the US and endorsement of US actions internationally would likely earn more advance notice in the event of aggressive action by the US, the opposition members in Parliament now exploited the opportunity for criticism of Mulroney’s foreign policy. They ridiculed the Mulroney method as servile, but ineffective in securing any more consultation than had been the case with earlier governments.

The question of human rights violations in El Salvador and Nicaragua frequently surfaced in the Commons. In 1986, Ontario New Democrat, Dan Heap (NDP: Spadina), was at the forefront of the attack on the government for supplying aid to El Salvador despite the many documented cases of human rights violations by El Salvador’s Treasury Police. The government’s response was usually one of agreeing to investigate the allegations and responding at a later date. Usually, little of substance ever came of these promises.

In 1987, the opposition, again spearheaded by Heap, relentlessly attacked the government for condoning the considerable US aid to the Contras, despite their reported responsibility for numerous deaths and torture of innocent civilians. He graphically described details of the killing of an innocent mother after her baby was taken from her, the burning of some 25 houses, and the grisly killing of a fourteen-year-old boy. His

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pleas for Canadian government intervention to protect the civilian population of Nicaragua were virtually ignored. The Prime Minister refused to accept the facts as presented, and refused to lay blame on the US.

Such attacks by opposition members continued for several years. The Iran-Contra scandal, arising from the illegal sale of arms to the Contras, produced a prolonged controversy in Parliament. The opposition continued its condemnation of US efforts in Nicaragua while the government tried to defend the US actions, but without fully supporting them. In this regard, the Mulroney government was little different from the Trudeau government. It indicated concern over events in Central America, but remained careful not to aggravate or disrupt its newly acquired friendly relationship with the US government. Nothing much changed except that Mulroney was even less inclined to concede any points to the opposition than his predecessors had been. He was, by temperament, more combative.

The situation in Central America also received fairly extensive coverage by the various Standing Committees on External Affairs throughout the 1980’s. In 1980, the committee members acknowledged the crisis and debated the various possibilities. Numerous recommendations were presented to the government on Nicaragua and El Salvador, in particular. Aid and development considerations, human rights, political stability in specific countries, refugee problems, and social service to the troubled nations were the basis for the recommendations. The August 1981 report to Parliament reflected the committee’s concerns and suggestions, but did not confront the question of US interventions.
The July 1982 Report to the House of Commons by the Standing Committee on External Affairs similarly expressed clear concern over the region’s difficulties. After a trip to the area, the members of the committee identified what they referred to as a potentially dangerous situation in Central America:

In Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua we were made aware of the danger of existing tensions and conflicts escalating into a region-wide war...Costa Rica is also concerned about instability in other parts of Central America. It is particularly worried that Nicaragua is both the object of outside hostility and is itself pursuing a course of increased mobilization.  

While discussion at these committees on Central America were extensive, the recommendations that resulted appeared to be carefully designed not to offend anyone or place blame in any one direction, on Washington, the Sandinistas, the right-wing death squads, or the Soviets. The regular annual statements and speeches by the External Affairs Ministers also expressed official concern over the regional crisis, but avoided direct judgments that might be construed as provocative. Mark MacGuigan’s speech in 1982 was indicative of this kind of response:

In many parts of Central America, and particularly in El Salvador, we see with shock and horror widespread violations of elementary human rights, atrocities, torture, massacres, and murder on an appalling scale. These crimes against humanity are perpetrated by forces on both extremes of the political spectrum. The Canadian government continues to protest against this wave of violence. But we cannot understand political terror in Central America simply by blaming a clash of ideologies or great-power interests.

In December of 1986, Joe Clark similarly responded to the Report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons. This committee was created to consider and report upon the issues raised and to make recommendations concerning the future objectives and conduct of Canada’s international relations. The report reflected the Mulroney government’s new attitude toward US foreign policy actions. It stated that Canada was committed to fostering close and cooperative relations with the United States; and Clark provided assurances that the government’s strategy over the past two years has been to “seek to restore harmony to Canada-U.S.A. relations” and that “Canada and the United States regularly consult on global political and economic issues”.

While Clark mainly dealt with general global policy issues, he did address, in small part, the situation in Central America. Since the report suggested that Canada should oppose all outside intervention in Central America, Clark’s response was that his government “…disapproves of both the export of revolution and third party intervention in Central America”. He added that Canada had strongly backed the Contadora peace initiative, despite US coolness to that process.

In 1988, there was another significant report presented to the House of Commons on the peace process in Central America. This report, Supporting The Five, was significant because it dealt exclusively with the problems in that region and cited a wide range of contributors from Canada, the US, and Central America. The committee had a

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194 Ibid, p. 4-5.
195 Clark, Response, p. 78.
wide mandate to explore all the various problems and their possible solutions. Apparently non-partisan, its findings did not point an accusing finger in any direction and were considered to be only advisory to the government. At the time many felt that it was nonetheless a useful venture, but there appears to have been few definite results since the report was submitted to Parliament seven years ago.

c) Select Editorial Reaction:

From the late 1970’s, newspaper and magazine editorials have frequently dealt with some aspect of the explosive situation in Central America and, to some degree, questioned the hesitant Canadian responses. Only a few of the more typical editorials need to be considered here in order to demonstrate their general views.

Under public pressure and questioning by the media, Joe Clark indicated he would prosecute any US subsidiary in Canada complying with the American embargo of Nicaragua\(^{196}\). His threat was muted when US officials announced that American subsidiaries in Canada could ship to Nicaragua if there was substantial change in the product. Apparently, this action by the US was sufficient for Clark and the government. By this time, the media editorials had given considerable coverage to the issue, however, and the damage to Canadian government credibility might have been already done, particularly after Clark reportedly indicated to the US that Canada would not allow Nicaragua to avoid the embargo by importing goods through Canada and subsequently breaking US sanctions\(^{197}\).

\(^{197}\) *Toronto Star*, May 21, 1985, p.3.
In October of 1989, Mulroney announced that Canada would officially join the OAS on January 1, 1990. This was news and the editorial writers responded. A Globe and Mail editorial on October 28, 1989 commended the decision but warned that Canada would have to earn respect in the OAS:

Until now, Canadian politicians have been more comfortable whispering their disapproval of US policy in Central America or Cuba in the ear of the president of the day. Now Canada must very publicly assert an independent policy or find itself dismissed as a characterless weakling. 198

This type of editorial reaction was indicative of the times. What Canada’s government did that supported or challenged US policies would thereafter be carefully scrutinized in various editorials, expressing public reaction and occasional criticism. Consequently, various members of Parliament and government officials seemingly became more cautious in their comments and actions. Despite this, however, public airing of contradictory statements continued, as expected.

d) Scholarly Debate and Literature:

Scholars have written extensively on the conflicts in Central America, but mostly from an international perspective involving the former superpower rivalry and Marxist ideology. With the concentration of the literature on the US and its perspectives on Latin America in general, there is little readily available material on specifically Canadian perspectives and Canadian involvement. There is, however, some interesting material by a few Canadians.

198 Globe and Mail, October 28 1989, p.3.
The uniquely Canadian perspective is that Canada had historically played an extensive role in Central American security and its development process. Hal Klepak has argued this exact point noting that the NGO’s have long been active in human rights issues in that region, even though there are only limited links between Canada and Central America, and that our historic experiences were significantly different, as were our languages, cultures, and values on sharing. He has acknowledged the effects of the Central American crises on Canadians in general, holding the attention of a large part of the Canadian public over a sustained period of time. The issues of human rights in Central America while certainly pervasive had hardly been unexpected, he has pointed out, since democracy in the region had generally been “feeble and embattled”.

What Klepak has emphasized was that Canada’s decision to seek closer links with Latin America by joining the OAS was justified, but he cautioned that Canada’s increased role in Central America could serve to further distance this country from the United States once a more independent foreign policy was adopted. This qualified enthusiasm was also demonstrated in Edgar Dosman’s claim that Canada now had a clearer foreign policy goal. Canada, he stated, is an “influential and independent actor in the area.” These views were somewhat parallel to the continuing debate in Parliament, which cautiously welcomed the opportunities provided by Canada’s entry into the OAS.

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Liisa North has also extensively written on Central America and Canada’s involvement. She has differed from Klepak, however, in that her approach is from the perspective that the effects of foreign involvement in the region have been detrimental to the impoverished people there, who were forgotten casualties in the ideological struggle of the Cold War. She has also placed the blame on failed economic and development policies that have not helped and sometimes have hurt, the poor\(^{204}\).

The general, somewhat understated perspective in this literature is that Canada’s role in Central America has been unduly subservient to that of the US and Canada should concentrate more on the moral issues in the region and less on political accommodation to Washington. This is what seems to be the message. It suggests that there is room for increased Canadian participation and involvement in the region but mainly through developmental organizations, directed toward helping the landless victims of discrimination, persecution and exploitation.

James Rochlin, Research Fellow at the Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at York University, has argued that Canada in the final Trudeau era did not accept the new economic and political agenda characteristic of the neoconservative revolution in Reagan’s US\(^{205}\). He has further suggested that the formation of well-organized and well-informed interest groups, following the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in 1979, motivated the government to take a more independent role.

Clearly, political and security problems in Latin America had become an important Canadian concern. Ottawa, during the Trudeau years, formulated an independent policy in Latin America, which included some

\(^{204}\) Liisa North, *Between War and Peace in Central America: Choices for Canada*, Toronto: Between the Lines Publ., 1990, p.29.

important support for Nicaragua. While Canadian relations towards Central America would move closer to US policy during the Mulroney years, Canada’s quite significant role in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the isthmus solidified a relationship with the major Latin American powers.\textsuperscript{206}

Calvin Bricker has been a little more precise in his evaluation of Canada’s independent role in Central America during the 1980’s and beyond. While critics charged that Canadian governments generally had adhered faithfully to US foreign policy in the region, a fair examination of Canadian policy, according to Bricker, actually revealed a very different assessment. He has argued that there were, and continue to be, significant differences of opinion between Ottawa and Washington on the conflict in Central America.

For instance, while the Kissinger Commission regards revolution in the area as influenced heavily by the Soviet Union and Cuba, the Canadian analysis suggests that the cause of difficulties in Central America can be attributed primarily to economic structures, rooted deeply in the past.\textsuperscript{207} A further difference of opinion concerns the extent to which the Sandinistas represent a serious threat to the security of the West.\textsuperscript{207} Canada has been willing to give the Nicaraguan government the benefit of the doubt on this question.

Bricker further argued that the nature of the causes of conflict in Central America have led Canadian and American decision makers to adopt different views on the utility of the Contadora peace process. The US demonstrated its lack of confidence in the process, while Canada had supported these peace initiatives led by Central American countries themselves. In fact, as Bricker has pointed out, Canada took the extra step of responding favourably to the Contadora group’s request for assistance.\textsuperscript{208}

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid, p.232.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid, p.30.
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid, p.31.
David Haglund has also supported the view that Canada indeed has had a Central American foreign policy independent of the United States\(^{209}\). He, too, maintains that Canada has been a consistent supporter of the Contadora process, even though it has been viewed in Washington as, "...a deliberate and insulting attempt to constrain United States foreign policy in Central America on the part of an officious gaggle of diplomatic upstarts"\(^{210}\). Consequently, Canada’s position is, at least to a degree, at odds with that of Washington. Similarly, Liisa North has also argued that Canadian support for the Contadora process may have been the most satisfactory policy for this country, together with its support for human rights and continued economic aid in the region, and its opposition to supplying military arms to the areas of conflict\(^{211}\). While she has acknowledged the positive Canadian initiatives, she has been critical of the continued human costs to the region, produced by continued civil conflict and outside interference in the region’s political affairs. This may be viewed as a contradiction in her argument. However, some consideration should be given to the changing dynamics of the region over the years which can affect the perceptions of many. What results from this debate is the apparent agreement that there is still much improvement needed in Canadian policy toward Central America.

There are on-going discussions among academics and other concerned parties on Central American-Canadian relations and Canada’s general role in that region. However, these discussions are far-ranging and encompass the entire Latin-American region. Within


\(^{210}\) Ibid, p.809.

this context, those scholars who concern themselves with Central America in particular, such as Liisa North and Hal Klepak, tend to deal with the subject either from a perspective of regional security in an international context, as Klepak does, or from a human rights and developmental perspective, as North does. Concern with Canada’s response to US interventionism in the area is less direct, and like the posture of the Canadian governments through the years, somewhat more hesitant, and cautious.
CHAPTER VI

TRADE, AID AND HUMAN RIGHTS

a) Trade:

Even though its government policy toward the Caribbean and Central America has been inconsistent, hesitant, and particularly cautious in response to American interventions, Canada has maintained a much more positive and consistent relationship in terms of promoting trade and providing aid. While Canadian involvement has varied over the years with different governments’ perceptions of need and opportunity, it has remained sizable in comparison to other Canadian commitments abroad.

Cuba has been probably the most shining example of Canadian commitment to economic ties to this region. While Canada has had an active trade relationship with Cuba since the 19th century, formal diplomatic relations date from 1945, when a Canadian legation was first established in Havana.212 But the most important aspect of recent Canada-Cuba relations has been that Canada did not break relations in the early 1960’s and, instead, stood by Cuba during its many years of economic and diplomatic isolation.

Kari Levitt has noted the importance of this decision:

This was the single most important political decision affecting Canada-Caribbean relations in the post war period, and continues to have a profound effect on current Canadian relations with the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean.213

As Tables I and II demonstrate, Cuba remains the largest Canadian trading partner, in relation to the Caribbean and Central America countries, despite current threats from the

United States to impose punitive measures against countries trading with Cuba. In contrast, Canada trades very little with Grenada, especially with respect to imports, resulting in that country being at the bottom rung of Canada’s trading partners. This is a typical weak spot in Canada’s relations with several Caribbean countries, whose exports could benefit from greater access to Canadian markets.

Canadian economic relations with Nicaragua have never been extensive, but a few investments have been of some consequence. Most notable perhaps was the Noranda Mines project that was initiated during President Somoza’s regime, but nationalized by the Sandinista government in 1987\textsuperscript{214}. The US embargo in the 1980’s also negatively affected Canadian ties with that country. The Sandinista government accused Canada of bending too far in the US direction, but nevertheless continued to seek increased trading ties with Canada. The trade and investment limitations imposed by Canadian officials on Nicaragua were reputed to be due to the continued Contra insurgency and the desire not to diverge too sharply from US policy\textsuperscript{215}. Since Nicaragua changed its government in 1990, when the Sandinistas were defeated in a surprising election upset, the conditions have become more conducive to increased trade. (see Table III)

Canadian trade with El Salvador, although not substantial, grew during the 1970’s but levelled off during the 1980’s, when evidence of human rights abuses increased. As El Salvador is a desperately poor war-torn country, it is unrealistic to expect trade and investment to increase much in the near future. The most important Salvadoran export to

\textsuperscript{214} Jonathan Lemco, p.58.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid, p. 59.
Canada is coffee, while Canadian exports to Salvador include asbestos, aluminum, electronic equipment, food products, paper, and pharmaceuticals\textsuperscript{216}.

Panama has imported more Canadian products than its neighbours have, but has exported less back to Canada than most others did (see Table). Canada runs balance of trade deficits with all Central American countries, except Panama. Panama evidently has less to offer than its neighbours, although this may change as its economy, following Noriega's departure, becomes more stable and productive.

b) \textbf{Aid:}

Undoubtedly, one of the most important contributions that Canada makes to Central America is developmental aid, also referred to as official development assistance (ODA). A significant amount of assistance also comes from Canadian nongovernmental organizations (NGO's), while the federal government makes aid available primarily through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Founded in 1968 as successor to earlier aid agencies dating from 1950, CIDA concentrates its aid in such sectors as rural development, forestry, flood control, communications and transport\textsuperscript{217}. Canada has also given generous support to the Central American programs of such international organizations as the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

CIDA has designated Central America as a priority region for ODA, resulting in this region becoming one of the largest recipients, per capita, of worldwide Canadian aid.

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid, p. 65.
Canadian development assistance to all of Central America increased rapidly in the 1980’s. By the fiscal year 1987/88 total direct aid to the region more than doubled from the 1981 figures, and exceeded $55 million\textsuperscript{218}. However, cutbacks at CIDA have resulted in reduced aid during the more recent period.

While CIDA’s written policy states that aid allocation decisions will be based on recipients’ commitment to manage aid effectively, the quality of social policies, and human rights records, however, the reality in Central America is that political considerations influence aid disbursements\textsuperscript{219}. Evidence of this lies in the Mulroney government’s decision to renew aid to El Salvador and Guatemala, despite continuing human rights violations, while apparently lacking commitment to grant substantial aid to the Sandinista government of Nicaragua\textsuperscript{220}. On the other hand, CIDA’s increased aid to Nicaragua, after 1990, probably reflected the Mulroney government’s desire to have more amicable relations with the US. In any event, it increased aid to the point that Nicaragua became the largest recipient of Canadian aid in Central America\textsuperscript{221}. The timing of this policy change suggests that Canadian aid disbursements may follow US priorities.

It should be noted that aid to Cuba is conspicuously absent from the CIDA figures. This is evidently one way in which Canada has respected, to some degree, the American desire to boycott Cuba. While no direct aid appears in the statistics, other forms of aid may very well have reached the island.

\textsuperscript{218} Liisa North, 1990, p. 96-97.
\textsuperscript{219} Sarah Cox, \textit{Canada’s Aid Policy in Central America}, (Toronto: CAPA, 1992), p.3.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid, p. 3-4.
c) **Human Rights Concerns:**

Canada was a vocal supporter of the Contadora Group when it drew attention to the causes of war in Central America by recognizing that development with democracy, social justice, and respect for human rights were essential for the attainment of durable peace and security. The Canadian government frequently voiced similar concerns. For example, at the UN General Assembly in 1985, Canada’s representative stated the government’s “frustration” over the lack of progress toward democracy:

> We view the upheaval in Central America as primarily a function of chronic social and economic injustice, coupled with... frustration over the failure to institute... reforms to meet even the most basic popular expectations.

The Canadian government also endorsed the vision of human rights expressed by NGO’s, churches, and other human rights groups. For instance, the June 1986 report of the Special Joint Committee on Canada’s International Relations summarized the need for more action in securing and protecting human rights:

> We believe with the Canadian Council of Churches that “basic needs - food, shelter, water - {are also} inviolable rights, without which it is impossible for human beings to sustain life.” Of equal importance, we affirm Canada’s support for collective, as well as, individual rights, including the rights of workers and women and of religious and cultural minorities.

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As part of Canada's commitment to human rights issues in Latin America, it facilitated entry for Central American refugees into Canada through the "political prisoners and oppressed persons designated class" program\textsuperscript{225}. This program permitted the acceptance of Central American political prisoners, refugees and their families in the early 1980's. However, in the mid-1980's in response to recession, this policy became more restrictive and, by curtailing refugee acceptance, resulted in Canada's being less able to help all refugees who sought admittance. In fact, legislation was introduced and came into effect on January 1, 1989 which imposed even more stringent restrictions on those who qualified as refugees from Central America\textsuperscript{226}. This change in policy appeared to contravene the Central American peace accord which Canada claimed to support\textsuperscript{227}.

In March of 1989, Canada sent a delegation to observe the elections in El Salvador. This was a further demonstration of Canada's interest in maintaining a semblance of democracy in at least one trouble spot in Central America. In November of that year, Canada accepted a UN Security Council invitation to participate in a newly formed military observer group for Central America (ONUCA). Canada's long and favourable history in peacekeeping missions was considered valuable to the UN. Canada had previously demonstrated support for various regional peace processes such as Contadora and could offer the UN mission valuable advice.

\textsuperscript{225} North, p.158.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid, p.160.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid, p. 160.
d) Tables:

The following tables provide a partial listing of the Canadian trade and aid to the Caribbean and Central America. These figures are meant to demonstrate that Canada has indeed been active in its traditional areas of concern; trade, aid and human rights. The disbursements of governmental aid come in many forms, too varied to be detailed here, but the general patterns are nevertheless clear enough. Furthermore, aid from NGO’s and other private organizations such as the Mennonite Central Committee, are also not fully listed, but are no less significant in showing the dedication of private Canadian citizens and their organizations.

Table I

**Government to Government Assistance Disbursements (1986-1993)**

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Table II
Humanitarian Assistance (1986-1993)
(CIDA Funds in thousands of $ Can)

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Table III
Canadian Imports by Country (1987-1993)
(thousands of $ Can)

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<td><strong>Cuba</strong></td>
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<td>January-December</td>
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<td>62147</td>
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<td>January-December</td>
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<td>1195</td>
<td>886</td>
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<td>January-December</td>
<td>44363</td>
<td>41730</td>
<td>28695</td>
<td>17400</td>
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Table IV

Canadian Exports by Country (1987-93)
(thousands of $ Can)

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cuba</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>January-December</td>
<td>272891</td>
<td>229413</td>
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<td><strong>Grenada</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>January-December</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>4225</td>
<td>4272</td>
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<td><strong>El Salvador</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>January-December</td>
<td>15610</td>
<td>23105</td>
<td>10913</td>
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<td><strong>Nicaragua</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>January-December</td>
<td>9820</td>
<td>21177</td>
<td>20109</td>
<td>11500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Panama</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>January-December</td>
<td>34365</td>
<td>34936</td>
<td>16870</td>
<td>22600</td>
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</table>

Source: *Statistics Canada: Canadian International Merchandise Trade*, 1994, p.54, 56, 70, 72, 94, 168, 176, 178
Table V

NGO's Total Aid Disbursements 1986-93
(CIDA Funds Plus Others)
(millions $Can)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
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<td>.12</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
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<td>.97</td>
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<td>.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
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CONCLUSIONS

The issue of Canadian responses, as documented in this thesis, has been mainly one of differing views between Canada and the US on the appropriate response to political and social change in Third World countries. It has been argued by a number of scholars, such as James Green and Brent Scowcroft, that the US has focused on its security interests, while Canada has concerned itself mainly with human rights. When political change hurt average citizens in a country, then Canadian public and private authorities became involved and concerned. Security interests were not a factor. Notwithstanding arguments to the contrary by scholars such as Hal Klepak, Edgar Dosman and by certain members of the government or Parliament, Canada, in this century, has never been substantially or directly threatened by any adverse forces in this hemisphere. On the contrary, Canada has seldom taken action in response to destabilizing events and crises. Its government and its private agencies have been more interested and active in confronting less spectacular issues of refugee movements and economic development.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the one exception where Canadian authorities, with some difficulty, actually took a firm and independent stand. The Diefenbaker government refused to support the US initiatives without greater scrutiny of the origins of the crisis. However well intended, the rhetorical belligerence and intransigence only created an environment of distrust between Canada and the US that affected their relationship for many years afterward.
It would seem that the US seldom took Canada seriously, acknowledging any need to consult prior to major hemispheric interventions or policy initiatives. No Canadian Prime Minister had much impact on US policy, including Prime Minister Mulroney, even though he pursued amicable relations with both Reagan and Bush. Nor did Canadian parliamentary officials and committees give much consideration to the consultation process or to any actual interventions. Likewise, academic scholars spent little time dealing with the specific crises and the Canadian reactions. Everyone focused mainly on international security issues and rights. Latin America received less attention than it warranted, especially since the nations in this hemisphere were now considering greater economic integration.

Certainly, in the past three decades, there have been strongly expressed opinions. The Cuban Missile Crisis produced considerable disunity in the federal cabinet, bordering on revolt. The invasion of Grenada produced testy exchanges in Parliament with both sides eventually agreeing that the US had acted precipitately if not irresponsibly. The Panama crisis drew some concerned editorials, but not much more. Both Nicaragua and El Salvador occupied Parliament and editors for many years on questions ranging from right wing juntas to left wing revolutionary regimes. The US embargo on trade with Cuba remains in effect to this day and continues to be opposed by Canada.

It would appear that Canadian responses to American interventions have been inconsistent and weak, regardless of political party. Furthermore, Canadian responses appeared to be different when directed at an immediate crisis, such as an unexpected invasion, than when they were grappling with long-term situations, such as in El Salvador
and Nicaragua. In general, perhaps in keeping with the cautious tradition established by Mackenzie King, Canadian authorities have preferred to express a need for more information before taking any decisive action. Political parties, in fact, have tended to be more critical of US actions while in opposition; but when in office they tend to be concerned with improving relations with the US, even if that meant acquiescing in accepting controversial US policy. For example, Joe Clark suggested that his government’s strategy was to restore harmony to relations with the US and achieve greater consultation on global issues. Whether the government achieved that result is arguable.

It may be concluded that the Canadian role in the Caribbean, Central America, and possibly all of Latin America has not changed significantly since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. There has been at least one positive change, however, and that was Canada’s decision to officially join the OAS in 1990. From inside this organization, Canada can now present its point of view more directly and also vote to influence regional policy. This was something it was unable to do effectively during past regional crises. At present, it would seem that Canada, with its usual caution, is still in the process of determining its role in the OAS. Until now, Canada’s policy has generally been circumspect and reluctant to challenge even the more controversial US actions. There has been little evidence of any noticeable change in that policy with respect to Central America and the Caribbean. The Canadian voice in regional affairs remains, for the most part, pretty quiet.

Canada has not had a long policy of involvement in this region. However, there has been some recent evidence of increasing Canadian interest, for example in connection with
the recent expansion of the Free Trade Agreement, but nothing comparable to its considerable involvement in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Europe, Asia and Africa. Yet it appears that Latin America may now be attracting more attention in this country. This can be beneficial to all parties concerned. One reason for this renewed interest may be the perception that Canada could make a legitimate contribution and therefore a real difference in Latin America. Development aid, peacekeepers and advice could all be useful to the region and Canada’s role could be significant, despite the current fiscal situation in this country requiring financial cutbacks.

Overall, as Jonathan Lemco argues, Canada’s recent interest and support of the Central American peace process constitute an admirable development. Whether Canada’s influence will actually make a difference remains to be seen. However, the Canadian interest in this region is still an indication that its concerns have developed beyond the familiar interests in the United States and Europe.

It would seem that Canadian policy towards Central America and the Caribbean, or for that matter all of Latin America, may be beginning to mature. Recent criticisms by the government on the continued American embargo of Cuba, and especially the threat of American actions against friendly sovereign countries violating that embargo, may be evidence of that maturity. While the prognosis may be favourable, it will require considerably more effort to become a reality.

---

A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

January 1, 1959: Fidel Castro entered Santiago de Cuba after the flight of Batista.

April 16, 1961: A force of US supported Cuban exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs. Within 72 hours, the invaders were routed. Castro claimed victory.

October 22, 1962: Kennedy ordered naval quarantine of Cuba with the discovery of Soviet missile bases there. US military forces went on alert, shortly after.

October 25, 1962: Prime Minister Diefenbaker officially placed Canadian forces on same alert status as US forces.

October 27, 1962: Soviet Union accepted U.S. conditions for a cessation of hostilities. Cuban Missile Crisis considered over.

January, 1976: Pierre Trudeau visited Fidel Castro in Havana, where he established a good rapport with the Cuban leader. This meeting was believed to have created difficulties for Trudeau's relations with the U.S.

March 13, 1979: People's Revolutionary Government, led by Maurice Bishop, came to power in Grenada.

July 24, 1979: Canada recognizes FSLN government in Nicaragua.


November 1981: Canada ends government-to-government aid to El Salvador due to deteriorating political conditions that threaten security of Canadian aid personnel.

July 1982: Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Latin America and the Caribbean recommended that Central America receive higher priority in Canadian Foreign policy.

October 19, 1983: Maurice Bishop and one third of his cabinet were killed by a dissident faction in his own party.

October 25, 1983: US led invasion force landed in Grenada, seizing control of the country soon after.

March 1984: Canada sent official delegation to observe Salvadoran elections.
November 1984: Canada did not send observers to Nicaraguan elections but Secretary of State for External affairs, Joe Clark, did meet with unofficial NGO/church delegation upon its return.

December 1984: Canadian bilateral aid to El Salvador was resumed.

February 1987: Canada ended its policy of not deporting people to El Salvador and Guatemala.

October 1987: Nicaraguan vice-president, Sergio Ramirez visited Ottawa, on the invitation of the Canadian government.

July 1988: The House of Commons Special Committee on the Peace Process in Central America recommended an increase in development assistance and a special leadership role for Canada in promoting the peace process.

March, 1989: UN drafts plans for a 160 person Central American peace-observing unit to monitor the halt in aid to Contras proposed by the Central American presidents in February. Canada was mentioned as a possible participant.

March 1989: Canada sent a delegation to observe the Salvadoran elections. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney spoke to the American Society and refrained from making any statement about US policy towards Central America.

May, 1989: General Noriega officially seized power in Panama after two years of hostilities with the US.

September 1989: Canadians participated in the UN reconnaissance mission to Central America to define the operational requirements for the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), which will monitor the security provisions of the Esquipulas II accord. Clark announced that Canada will provide $700,000 in assistance to the Supreme Electoral Council of Nicaragua for the holding of the February 1990 elections.

November 16, 1989: Clark denounced the killing of six Jesuits at the Central American University in San Salvador and reiterated his September call for a negotiated settlement of the civil war.

November 24, 1989: Canada temporarily suspended bilateral development assistance to El Salvador due to war conditions.

December 16, 1989: Panama’s National Assembly declared Panama to be in a state of war with the US.

December 20, 1989: US forces launched invasion of Panama. Control of the country is rapidly achieved. However, Noriega escaped and went into hiding.

July, 1990: In a surprise election result, Nicaraguans rejected the Sandinista government and voted in Violeta de Chamorro.

January 1, 1990: Canada officially became a full member of the OAS.

January 4, 1990: Noriega finally surrendered to the US.

1995: American Congress considers punitive action against Canadian companies trading with Cuba.
GOVERNMENT SOURCES:

Canada. House of Commons Debates. October 1962


SECONDARY SOURCES:

A) Books:


Bernstein, Barton J. “Reconsidering the Missile Crisis: Dealing With the Problems of the American Jupiters in Turkey”, _The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited_ (James A. Nathan Editor), New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992, p.55-130.


Cameron, Maxwell. “Canada and Latin America”, _After the Cold War_. Edited by F.E. Hampson and C.J. Maule, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991


B) Journals:


C) **Newspapers and Magazines:**

**Canadian Forum.** October 1962; December 1962; December 1983


**Ottawa Citizen.** October 23-29, 1983; December 16, 20-23, 1989


**Toronto Star.** May 1985

**Winnipeg Free Press.** October 23, 1962.