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Policy may now reflect tough talk

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WASHINGTON — President Reagan and his inner circle of advisers have taken direct control of U.S. policy on Central America in a move that may toughen the administration's role in the turbulent region.

A hardened position would be clearly in tune with recent Reagan rhetoric about the priority he places on stopping Marxist subversion in Central America. Since March, the President has made six major speeches that touched on the issue, including an exceptional appearance before a joint session of Congress April 27 in which he warned that the region's violence could threaten "the safety of our homeland."

Speculation that the tough Reagan position will get tougher gained currency May 27 with the ouster of Thomas O. Enders as the State Department's chief Latin American specialist. Administration officials said Reagan personally ordered Enders' dismissal.

Reagan has since stressed that Enders' dismissal as assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs did not mean a change in policy. "Contrary to some reports... we are not changing the policy I outlined to the Congress," he said Wednesday.

But interviews with half a dozen State Department and White House officials indicate that Enders' removal could result in any or all of these developments:

- More active and overt support for pro-American governments in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica, as well as the CIA-backed rebels fighting Nicaragua's leftist regime.

- Preparation of a reluctant American public for increased U.S. military involvement in Central America, perhaps even including the dispatch of U.S. combat troops.

- An end to the interagency feuds on Central American policy that sometimes created the impression both here and abroad that the United States was confused on how to deal with Central America.

- New tactics in dealing with Congress, which has failed to enact Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative, cut part of his requests for military assistance to El Salvador and tried to curtail CIA assistance for anti-Sandinista guerrillas.

- More personnel changes.

The day Enders' departure was announced, the Pentagon and State Department released a strongly worded background paper on Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan meddling in Central America. Enders was said to have opposed it as "warmed-up leftovers." At the same time, administration officials announced a decision to send 100 additional U.S. military advisers to Honduras and leaked a proposal to send 20 or 30 others to Guatemala.

Some State Department officials said these developments could reflect a desire on the part of some White House officials to prepare public opinion for an escalation of U.S. involvement in the region.

Hard-line White House and Pentagon officials contend that only an increased and more active U.S. military presence in Central America would check the advance of leftist guerrillas in El Salvador and the growing military buildup in Nicaragua.

Privately, these officials say they believe that only a dramatic increase in the number of U.S. military advisers in El Salvador — from the present 55 to 100 or 200 — will bring about victory.

Some of the Pentagon experts also argue that a limited number of advisers should be given permission to accompany Salvadoran units on combat operations in guerrilla-controlled areas.

This differs sharply with Enders' formula for El Salvador. He sought not a military victory, but only enough U.S. military aid to help the

local government hold off the rebels while it pressed for social, political and economic reforms to eliminate the roots of the conflict.

Although some of Enders' friends believe his removal does not spell any major change in policy — "It can't go any further to the right than it already has," quipped one of them — many say that his departure clears the decks for harder U.S. initiatives.

A State Department source sympathetic to Enders said that "circumstantial evidence" suggests that Reagan may be considering deploying U.S. combat units in Central America — not necessarily in the actual conflicts of El Salvador or

Nicaragua but on the periphery, perhaps Honduras — to act as a deterrent force.

Pentagon sources said that such a deployment would only be likely in the event of war between Nicaragua and Honduras or a dramatic increase in the number of Cuban military personnel in Nicaragua.

A legislative aide to an influential Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee commented that Enders' removal and a Reagan statement May 27 "clearly indicated" to him that the White House was considering deploying U.S. troops.

Although Reagan had steadfastly ruled out the possibility of sending combat troops to Central America, he seemed to change his stance in a chat with reporters just before the Williamsburg summit at the end of May.

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Asked if he was considering the use of combat troops, Reagan replied: "So far, there has been no indication, or no hint from any of those countries that this is what they want." Pressed on what would happen if some country asked for troops, he said: "You're getting into an area where I just don't think we should be openly discussing."

One National Security Council aide acknowledged that some ranking Central American military officers have suggested that the United States send combat units, but have made no formal request.

"They have told us that, privately, they would cheer the dispatch of the Marines, but that publicly they would have to condemn the United States," the aide said.

The source also noted that Reagan has been asked by two influential persons, Sen. Barry Goldwater (R., Ariz.), and Gen. Wallace Nutting, the recently departed chief of the U.S. Southern Command, to stop ruling out the possible use of U.S. combat troops and leave his options open.

It is not known whether Enders opposed the open-ended commitment to Central America that Goldwater and Nutting suggest. But there appear to have been sufficient other differences between the assistant secretary and Reagan's aides to have triggered his dismissal.

Administration officials said Enders was ousted because Reagan's national security adviser, William Clark, and U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick were dissatisfied with the way he implemented policy on Central America.

"Tom was simply too pragmatic and wanted to explore the possibility of a negotiated settlement in El Salvador," said one aide. "He was a moderating influence between the left in Congress and the right in the White House, and finally he fell on his face."

The aide said Clark and Kirkpatrick, both conservatives, believe that the only solution in El Salvador is to crush the guerrillas and not to talk to them.

Enders' aides said he was not a liberal who wanted victory for the guerrillas. Rather, they said, he believed that the Salvadoran government should be encouraged to settle the conflict politically by attracting the more moderate rebel leaders into negotiations.

lieved, that further confrontation with Congress over military aid to El Salvador could be avoided.

Administration officials said the immediate result of Enders' removal will be a shakeup of the State Department's Latin American policy-making division.

"There will be ambassadorial changes, changes at the policy-making level, all of it designed to bring in people the White House can trust," said one White House source. "No longer are we going to leave our policies in the hands of people who are only interested in their careers and who undermine our interests in Central America."

Enders will be replaced by Langhorne Motley, a Republican, former lobbyist, one-time land developer in

Alaska and current U.S. ambassador to Brazil. Motley emphasized at a news conference last week that he was "going to be working here for George Shultz."

The U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, Deane Hinton, was replaced Thursday. It had been expected that Hinton would be replaced by Gerald Thomas, a retired Navy admiral now serving as the ambassador to Guyana and reportedly a close friend of Clark's.

Thomas' consideration, however, apparently triggered open discontent among the State Department's career diplomats who took their case to Shultz. The result was that Thomas Pickering, a veteran diplomat now serving as ambassador to Nigeria, was named to replace Hinton.

Others who are leaving or have left in recent days include Francis McNeil, the ambassador to Costa Rica, and Gen. Nutting, who moved from the Panama-based U.S. Southern Command to the U.S. Readiness Command at McDill Air Force base near Tampa.

Officials said Motley may change the ambassadors to Nicaragua, Anthony Quanton, and Guatemala, Frederic Chapin, when he assumes Enders' job and could choose new assistants for himself.

"What we are trying to do is revitalize our policies toward Central America, to give them a sharp focus and a clarity which they did not have before," said a National Security Council source.

"We need to speak with one voice in the administration so that our friends in Central America feel confident that all our actions are designed to help them, not undermine them," he said.

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U.S. Decision-Makers on Latin Policy



Ronald Reagan:

Taking increasing personal role in-formulating Central American policies. Most visible effort April 27 in rare appearance before joint session of Congress aimed at convincing lawmakers and American public U.S. credibility and national security at stake. Reportedly took personal role in-recent realignments of key administration personnel involved with Central American policy.



George P. Shultz:

As secretary of state, Shultz said to be handling personally day-to-day supervision of Central American policy in wake of personnel reshuffling. Shultz, 62, previously devoted major attention to Middle East and Europe. Held key cabinet posts in Nixon Administration, active in Reagan's 1980 election campaign. Replaced mercurial Alexander Haig as secretary of state in June 1982.



Langhorne A. Motley:

Reagan loyalist currently U.S. ambassador to Brazil. Administration choice to succeed Thomas Enders as State Department's top Latin America specialist. Informal style and fluent Portuguese gained for Motley, 44, during two years in Brazil. Born and raised in Brazil, son of a half-Brazilian mother and American petroleum executive. Motley became Alaska's biggest real-estate dealer in 1970s. Gained lobbying experience before Congress during Alaskan land debate. Active in Reagan's 1980 election campaign. Close to Reagan, Shultz and National Security Adviser Clark.



William Casey:

Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. World War II veteran of old Office of Strategic Services (OSS), World War II veteran of old Office of Strategic Services (OSS), forerunner of the CIA. Reagan's campaign manager during presidential bid. Also headed transition team once election won. As CIA chief, Casey, 70, heads Reagan's secret agenda in Central America. Reportedly supervises personally CIA covert program for anti-Sandinista forces in Nicaragua.



Fred Ikle:

Swiss-born undersecretary of defense for policy. Sanchez' immediate boss. Ikle, 59, came from Hoover Institute, California think tank known for emphasis on studies of communism. Regarded by critics as hardline ideologue. Emerged over past year as major force behind evolution of administration policy toward Latin America.

Gen. Paul Gorman:

Gorman, 55, new commanding officer of U.S. Southern Command, headquartered in Panama. Responsibilities include U.S. military activities in Central America. As assistant to chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff before Panama assignment, Gorman their principal briefer on Central America. West Point graduate with master's degree in public administration from Harvard. Member of delegation to U.S.-Vietnam peace talks in Paris 1970-71. Detailed to CIA 1979-80.



William Clark:

Reagan's national security adviser come long way since 1981 when he unable to identify prime ministers of South Africa and Zimbabwe in congressional hearings on nomination as undersecretary of state. Member of tight circle of Californians that surround Reagan. Clark and U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick considered among most influential advisers in formulation of Central America policy.



Jeane Kirkpatrick:

U.S. ambassador to United Nations, Kirkpatrick, 57, attracted candidate Reagan's attention with article for Commentary magazine on "U.S. Security and Latin America." Was professor of political science at Georgetown University and resident scholar at conservative American Enterprise Institute. Emerged in recent months as one of administration's most influential officials on shaping Central America policy. Believed to be at least partly responsible for removal of Thomas Enders as assistant secretary of state.



Thomas Pickering:

Career diplomat and ambassador-designate to El Salvador. Currently ambassador to Nigeria, formerly to Jordan. No Latin American experience but Pickering, 51, described by colleague as "among the brightest, most capable and widely respected foreign service officers." Reportedly administration's second choice for Salvador post after a political appointee. Expressions of rising discontent and sagging morale in State Department by ranking officers caused reconsideration.



Richard Stone:

Former conservative Democratic senator from Florida, Stone picked by Reagan as special trouble-shooting ambassador for Central America. Stone, 54, started 10-nation "fact-finding" tour in El Salvador Thursday. Stone easily confirmed by Senate although questions raised over earlier role as paid lobbyist for Guatemalan government of President Romeo Lucas Garcia, widely condemned for human rights record. Special envoy position created at urging of Rep. Clarence Long (D., Md.), chairman of a powerful House subcommittee, who set it condition for approving administration emergency aid request.

Nestor Sanchez:

Deputy assistant secretary of defense for inter-American affairs and Pentagon's top Latin American policy official. Strong advocate of more military aid for El Salvador and is directly involved in supervising it. Sanchez, 57, a longtime CIA officer in Latin America before taking Pentagon post. Served as CIA station chief in Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala.



John Negroponte:

Ambassador to Honduras. A hard-charging career diplomat with reputation as can-do man. Reportedly oversees not-so-secret-war against Nicaragua funded by CIA. Educated at Exeter and Yale. Negroponte, 43, a political officer in Saigon during height of Vietnam War. Member of U.S. delegation to Paris peace talks.