

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A1LOS ANGELES TIMES
16 June 1985

U.S. Shapes New 3rd World Role 'Reagan Doctrine' Would Actively Support Anti-Leftist Rebellions

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WASHINGTON—The Reagan Administration is developing a sweeping new foreign policy doctrine that provides for a more assertive U.S. role in the Third World. From Nicaragua to Angola, from Afghanistan to Cambodia, Administration officials say, the United States should actively—and overtly—back rebellions against unfriendly leftist regimes.

Born largely of necessity in the congressional fight over aid to the anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua, the idea of publicly backing "freedom fighters" around the world has been elevated to a basic principle of foreign policy by President Reagan.

Hawks in the Administration, allied with hard-liners in Congress and conservative lobbying groups outside the government, are working to promote a steadily wider application of what some call the "Reagan Doctrine."

'Must Not Break Faith'

"We must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours since birth," Reagan declared in his State of the Union Address this year. "Support for freedom-fighters is self-defense."

Asst. Secretary of Defense Richard L. Armitage, one of the architects of the new doctrine, said: "If a group is fighting a repressive regime and shares our values and our goals, then we have very little choice but to support them. For us, the issue is not whether freedom fighters deserve our support; the real question is what support should be offered."

Behind those ringing words, there is continuing disagreement

within the Administration and among its outside supporters over exactly how a policy of support for anti-communist rebels should be carried out. At issue are such questions as how much aid should be sent, to whom and how openly.

Senate conservatives, for example, advocate a major increase in overt aid for a wide range of insurgent movements. State and Defense Department officials, by contrast, tend to argue for more covert aid, and more caution.

Formulating Doctrine

"We're still working on a doctrine on this," a senior State Department official said. "I don't think anybody had thought about it in global terms before. . . . It's all been on a case-by-case basis."

As the new doctrine gains public visibility, officials acknowledge that they will have to answer some fundamental questions. Among them:

—Should the United States adopt the Soviet strategy of promoting revolutions against governments it dislikes?

—How should the President choose which regimes to destabilize and which to leave alone?

—Will U.S. support for insurgencies make peaceful solutions more difficult?

Nonetheless, although the details are subject to debate, the Administration has clearly settled on the basic theme of a new policy toward Third World conflicts. The United States has a right and a duty to help rebels who take up arms against leftist regimes—and an opportunity to help topple some governments.

"After years of guerrilla insurgencies led by Communists against pro-Western governments, we now see dramatic and heartening examples of popular insurgencies against Communist regimes," Secretary of State George P. Shultz

told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee earlier this year. "If we turned our backs . . . we would be conceding the Soviet notion that communist revolutions are irreversible while everything else is up for grabs."

A Defense Department official said more bluntly: "We're talking about getting involved in insurgency now—rather than what we did in the '60s, which was mainly counterinsurgency. Socialism is not irreversible. . . . We do not rule out playing by the same kind of rules the Soviets do. Up until now, we haven't been playing on a level field. We'd like to even it out a little bit."

Moral Duty Seen

In the past, U.S. involvement in uprisings against leftist regimes has been limited in scope and, normally, as clandestine as the CIA could make it. The United States supported an abortive insurgency in Albania in 1949, successful coups in Iran and Guatemala in 1954, the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 and the opposition to Chile's Marxist government in 1973. But those actions were neither publicly announced nor raised to the level of a general "doctrine."

Today, however, Reagan Administration spokesmen argue that the rash of new pro-Soviet regimes which came to power after the fall of South Vietnam in 1975—in Cambodia, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Afghanistan—prompted spontaneous rebellions from their citizens, and that the United States has a moral duty to lend them at least political support.

Ironically borrowing a phrase once used by Americans who complained that the U.S. government too often supported repressive regimes abroad, proponents of the Reagan Doctrine contend that it is putting this country "on the side of history."

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Perhaps surprisingly, the basic premises of the new Reagan Doctrine have drawn little criticism from Democrats in Congress. Some have fought the President on aid to rebels in Nicaragua. But some, like liberal Rep. Stephen J. Solarz (D-N.Y.), have actually led the drive for more overt aid to insurgents in Afghanistan and Cambodia.

Administration officials suggest that Solarz "does that so he can attack us on Nicaragua without looking soft on communism."

But Solarz waves away the accusation, saying: "In the debate between internationalism and isolationism, I definitely come down on the side of internationalism. We should not try to be the world's policeman, but we can't afford to be a naive bystander watching with indifference while the Soviet Union and its surrogates subvert countries."

A few lonely voices on Capitol Hill still inveigh against intervention in the Third World in tones reminiscent of the Vietnam War era.

Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa), a moderate GOP maverick, complained: "We're doing things just because the Soviets and their surrogates are doing them, and that puts us in the same gutter with them. Where has American intervention ever helped in the Third World? I'd rather play on our field, by our rules."

But Leach admitted that the tide is running against him. Last week, the Democratic-led House voted solidly to renew U.S. funding for the Nicaraguan rebels known as contras, reversing two years of opposition to the once-covert program. And the Senate voted to repeal the 1975 prohibition on aid to Angolan rebels, a measure that had been a landmark of anti-interventionist sentiment after the debacle of Vietnam; the House has yet to act on the issue.

The new doctrine of aiding anti-communist rebels, proponents say, is a logical outgrowth of the developments of the last decade. After the fall of Vietnam, pro-Soviet regimes came to power in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Nicaragua; communist Vietnam invaded neighboring communist Cambodia; and, in 1979, the Soviet Union itself invaded Afghanistan.

In all those countries, Administration officials argue, the new leftist regimes proved to be belligerent and repressive, and pro-Western insurgencies formed to

fight them.

An equally important factor may be the return of both the Democratic and Republican parties to the moralistic tradition of American foreign policy—the Democrats in the human rights crusade of Jimmy Carter, the GOP in the fervent anti-communism of Ronald Reagan.

"The United States today is not the United States of a decade ago, one that was full of self-doubts," the Pentagon's Armitage said. "We're a different nation now. We're a very confident nation. Under Ronald Reagan, we're a stronger nation. We aren't afraid to stand up for what we believe in, and that includes human rights. . . . Under communist regimes, human rights are not highly regarded."

Although the political climate may have turned friendly to the kind of indirect intervention the Reagan Administration endorses, debate continues over how many insurgencies the United States should sponsor, what kind of aid it should give, and whether the U.S. role should be covert or publicly declared.

The Administration, in a series of case-by-case decisions, has come to adopt a patchwork of positions that senior officials concede is inconsistent.

• In Afghanistan, it secretly sent more than \$380 million in military aid to the anti-Soviet rebels before pressure from Senate conservatives prompted it to acknowledge openly that it has supplied small amounts of "humanitarian aid" as well.

• In Nicaragua, the Administration began by secretly sending the contras more than \$80 million in military aid as well as CIA commando teams, but found itself forced to go public with support for the contras after Congress—angry over a covert effort to mine Nicaragua's harbors—cut the rebels off.

• In Cambodia, the Administration wanted to aid anti-communist rebels indirectly, through other Southeast Asian countries, but Solarz and others in Congress are insisting on at least a symbolic \$5 million in direct, overt U.S. aid.

'Rebel Fund' Weighed

Conversely, in Angola, the Administration has been barred by law from helping pro-Western rebels, but officials say they have made no decision on whether they would want to do this. And in Ethiopia and Mozambique, the Ad-

ministration has looked at anti-Soviet guerrilla movements and decided that they do not deserve U.S. support.

Conservatives such as Sens. Steven D. Symms (R-Idaho), Robert Kasten (R-Wis.) and Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), backed by a growing number of would-be rebel lobbyists, want the Administration to increase its aid to insurgents, especially the Angolans and Mozambicans.

Kasten, chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations, is considering a proposal to give the President an unrestricted \$50-million "rebel fund" for the insurgents of his choice.

The conservatives charge that the State Department has been resisting any expansion of rebel aid, despite Shultz's frequent speeches on the subject. Some even complain that the CIA has been insufficiently enthusiastic about the Afghan rebels. Wallop has proposed a new White House "office for freedom fighters" to take charge of promoting insurgents' causes.

"The bureaucracy doesn't always work the way it should," Symms complained. "Our overwhelming urge to be diplomats sometimes overcomes our ability to lay down the gauntlet."

Invasion the Test

Prof. Charles A. Moser of George Washington University, one of the organizers of a new Resistance Support Alliance, charged: "There's great resistance from the State Department every time someone suggests adding another country to the list. George Shultz seems to be saying he's glad to see these people fight for freedom, but he won't do anything about it."

State Department spokesman Edward P. Djerejian responded: "The idea that there's an institutional resistance here to containing Soviet expansionism is nonsense. Our support for the Afghan rebels, our support for the Cambodian resistance and our policy in Central America should be clear on that point."

On the other side of the issue, Democrat Solarz has argued that the Administration should finance rebel movements only in countries under foreign invasion—a test that would allow aid to the Afghans and Cambodians but not the Nicaraguans, Angolans or Mozambicans.

"We need to make these decisions in a conceptual framework

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that will not lead to us getting involved in all kinds of conflicts that may not be in our national interest," Solarz said. "There are those who think the only criterion should be whether the rebels oppose the Communists. . . . That seems to me to be a formula for widespread interventionism."

Solarz said he opposes aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*, for example, because "we would be supporting an effort to overthrow an internationally recognized government."

Within the Administration, the debate is narrower. Officials say Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and the Pentagon are enthusiastic about expanded aid to rebels, while Shultz's State Department is more cautious. Defense Department officials have argued in favor of overt aid, but Shultz and National Security Adviser Robert C. McFarlane are said to prefer covert aid.

"Covert action is carried out for the most part in cooperation with somebody else—some friendly government that is often weak, anxious and fearful of the cost of open dependence on us," Donald R. Fortier, a McFarlane aide, said in a recent speech. "We have to be sensitive to (our allies') weaknesses and vulnerabilities."

Rebel Lobby Growing

Meanwhile, the Administration's conservative allies—and prod-ers—are busy creating a new factor on Capitol Hill: a rebel lobby.

Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, former ambassador to the United Nations, and former Treasury Secretary William E. Simon are making speeches and raising money for the Nicaraguan *contras*. Moser and an assortment of other anti-communist activists have formed the Resistance Support Alliance.

And conservative GOP activist (and millionaire) Lewis Lehrman, who airlifted Nicaraguan, Afghan and Laotian opposition figures into the Angolan bush two weeks ago for a first-ever convention of "freedom fighters," has undertaken a new project: a professionally staffed Washington lobbying office for the rebels.

"These guys haven't really been able to articulate to Congress how they should be helped," said Jack Abramoff, a former Republican National Committee staff member and Lehrman aide. "We hope to give them some help on that. We see this as a contribution to the overall Reagan Doctrine. Every time we've worked with anybody in the Administration, we've gotten nothing but help. . . . It's a trend and we're on the move."