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Is US Military Intervention Effective in Promoting Democratic Practices in Latin American Governments?

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Is US Military Intervention Effective in Promoting Democratic Practices in Latin
American Governments?

By

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A Plan B Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

Of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

In

Political Science

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Logan, Utah

2011

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. William Furlong for his endless hours of guidance and encouragement. Without his support and belief in me, this thesis would not be possible. Additionally, I am grateful to my committee members, Dr. Shannon Petersen and Dr. David Goetze for their time and words of sound advice.

I would also like to thank my parents Dennis and Jan Jones for helping me accomplish my goals and for instilling in their children a desire to better themselves. To my sisters, thank you for your unwavering support throughout my education. To my friend Abby Evans, I owe special thanks for editing my papers and thoughtful insights.

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THE CARIBBEAN BASIN



Introduction

The United States is an influential superpower with military, political and economic prominence throughout the world. Since the Spanish American War of 1898, the US has been the hegemonic power in the western hemisphere. Because of its strong influence, US military involvement in other countries is highly scrutinized both internationally and domestically. During the Cold War, the US perceived that Latin America had a weakness towards communism. Therefore, US military interventions were justified as actions for preventing communism and for promoting democracy. Intervention used to further US objectives can be military actions, economic trade or coercive diplomacy, such as when the US threatens to suspend economic assistance to its poorer allies. Is US intervention effective in promoting democratic practices in Latin American governments?

Latin American nations have not had much international power or influence; nevertheless, they have been subject to many US interventions. Why, then, has the US bothered to intervene in the political systems of small, generally poor countries in Latin America? According to Paul Drake, in the 20th century, US attitudes of ethnocentrism and racism influenced the decision to intervene in “weaker, darker, poorer countries” (Lowenthal 1991, 7). Essentially, the perceptions of the US of the people of Latin America were viewed as not being able to govern themselves and needed the guidance of the US. Also, in what the US refers to as “America’s backyard”, the Caribbean Basin holds US strategic and economic advantages that improve US security.

From 1948 to the end of the Cold War against the communist Soviet Union in 1990, the US put more focus on its national security, acting on the alleged threats of communism in Latin America. The US accomplished this by removing presidents who were susceptible to

communism and by supporting authoritarian regimes that were anti-communist. Though the main purpose was to contain communism, many interventions were justified as also promoting democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

Generally, US interventions in Latin America have been primarily motivated by US national security needs. The possibility of Soviet nuclear weapons, troops and bases in close proximity of the US mainland would have been detrimental to the safety and protection of the US and its citizens. Armed conflict and the deployment of military personnel are generally, unpopular among the people of the US. A positive justification by US leaders, such as promoting democracy, builds support within their constituencies. Does US military intervention and coercive diplomacy actually result in the establishment of stable Latin American democracies, or is national security the only aim of US action?

Democracy is more than holding elections to elect government officials. To have a true democracy, all constituents must have the opportunity to vote, run for office and voice their own opinions without the fear of retribution (Smith 2005, 8). Also, those who were elected to power must peacefully relinquish their positions when the time comes.

When it comes to promoting democracy abroad, US officials see themselves as “the guardians and promoters of a set of moral principles” (Herrick and McRae 2003, 2). Such moral principles referred to by Herrick and McRae are the promotion of democracy and respect for the law. When those without our morals and values come into a position of power threatening our own, the US is motivated to intervene. Although US intervention is to protect US interests and national security, it is also a quest to promote democracy.

My hypothesis is that US intervention is effective in promoting democratic practices in Latin American governments. Types of intervention for this study are direct military intervention and indirect intervention as was the case in Nicaragua.

The Dominican Republic (1965), Panama (1989) and Nicaragua (1979) will be used to test my hypothesis. These particular countries were chosen because of US president's statements citing the need to promote democracy and to gain an understanding of US foreign policy in the region. The government prior to the intervention and 12 years after the invention will be analyzed. The core stated goals of US foreign policy will be examined and why the spread of democracy is beneficial to the US as stated by US foreign policy makers. Although the US has intervened in Latin America in many different ways, through this research, I hope to gain an understanding if military intervention is an effective way of promoting democracy.

Literature Review

According to Dinorah Azpuru and Carolyn M. Shaw, the relationship between the US and Latin American prior to 1948 was mainly based on economic benefits for the US (Azpuru and Shaw 2010, 253). Democratic promotion was not a high priority and the US supported authoritarian governments if it was in the best of interests of national security (Azpuru and Shaw 2020, 253). As a capitalist nation, the US is interested in promoting its domestic business and foreign trade. The financial prosperity of the US is vital for maintaining its dominant position in the world. And US trade with Latin America, from an economic perspective, can be mutually beneficial. Free trade between the US and Latin America secures markets by giving both countries a common interest in each other's success. According to the authors, democracy is promoted in Latin America through trade with the United States because it encourages

individuals to succeed, businesses to thrive, and empowers employees economically with good jobs.

In Understanding Central America: Global Forces, Rebellion and Change, John A. Booth, Christine J. Wade, and Thomas W. Walker write that U.S. national security became a priority in Latin America during the Cold War (2006, 177). The US was concerned that the Soviet Union would spread communism and extend their influence into Latin America, curtailing U.S. control in their own backyard. According to Booth, Wade and Walker, national security and stopping the spread of communism “was the major force driving U.S. policy” during the Cold War with the Soviet Union (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006, 178). This strategy was known as containment. The main purpose of containment was to stop the spread of Latin American governments supporting the Soviet Union. According to the authors, it wasn’t until after the Cold War and the perceived threat of communism diminished that the US was interested in promoting democracy in Latin America (Booth, Wade and Walker 2006, 202).

According to Peter H. Smith, In Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S. –Latin American relations, it is the political mission of the US to spread democracy throughout the world (Smith 2000, 38). Smith contends that throughout history “imperial powers justified their actions in terms of a higher mission” (Smith 2000, 39). US imperialism and interventions in Latin America were justified as promoting the spread of democracy (Smith 2000, 38). More democratic governments in the Western Hemisphere would increase the likelihood of success for US foreign policy goals. If there is a worthy purpose, such as the principle of democracy, the use of military intervention or coercive diplomacy is more acceptable to members of congress and the US general population.

In The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, Samuel P.

Huntington contends that three waves of democratization have occurred in the world (1991, 15).

Huntington states that democratization involves: 1): the end of an authoritarian regime 2): the installation of a democratic regime and 3): the consolidation of the democratic regime

(Huntington 1991, 35). The first two waves of democratization were followed by a reverse wave, in which the countries that had previously transitioned to a democratic government reverted back to nondemocratic rule (Huntington 1991, 16).

US victories in World War II provided opportunities to increase American global influence, and focus US interests on national security. Also, after battling a totalitarian superpower, American policy makers could see the definite need to promote democracy and other American ideals worldwide.

Scholars such as, Sean M. Lynn-Jones argues the spread of democracy is beneficial to the US for the following reasons (Lynn-Jones 1998, 9):

1. Democracies will not go to war with the United States.

Known as the democratic peace theory, the concept promotes the idea that democracies never (or rarely) go to war with each other (Layne 1994, 8). This does not mean that democracies do not go to war at all, but democracies do not threaten or fight other democratic regimes. The more democratic regimes worldwide, the fewer conflicts the US will have to engage in. Therefore, enhancing the national security of the US and creating a more peaceful world.

2. Democracies don't support terrorism against the United States.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and Pentagon in Washington D.C. brought a new sense of insecurity to the US. Then US President George H.W. Bush initiated a global war on terrorism and against those who wanted to harm the US and US allies (Smith 2005, 341). Lynn-Jones contends terrorists often come from authoritarian regimes and not democracies. Authoritarian regimes are severely limited in political participation. These organizations combined with poverty, unemployment and anti- US ideologies, produce the perfect government for terrorists. For that reason, the spread of democracy affects US national security by minimizing the number of terrorists in authoritarian regimes.

3. Democracies produce fewer refugees.

Thousands of refugees escaping from political oppression, ethnic or religious conflicts often flee to the US in search of a more stable and secure life. For example, many Cubans risk their lives each year to escape poverty and oppression imposed by Dictator Fidel Castro. Lynn-Jones argues that the more democracies world-wide, the number of refugees that immigrate to the US will be reduced (1998, 9).

4. Democracies will ally with the United States.

The international spread of democracies promotes American interests by creating more allies for the US (1998, 9). Even though the US has a strong military, in times of war, allies are able to provide the US with strategic, military and economic support. In return, allies also gain invaluable military, foreign assistance and trade support of the US.

5. American ideals flourish when others adopt them.

The US has a genuine interest in seeing its ideals spread. Lynn-Jones argues that the advantages of American ideals spreading is that the American democracy “will be healthier when other nations adopt similar political systems” (1998, 9). As the US promotes democracy in other nations, the US has a sense of self-satisfaction of being able to spread its democratic principles.

6. Democracies make better economic partners.

As a capitalist nation, the US is interested in pursuing relationships with nations that will enhance the US’s prosperity. In most cases democracies are politically stable and have strong market economies. Market economies, are run by citizens and businesses and must be free from government influence. Therefore, an economy may not flourish under an authoritarian regime where the economy is under tight control.

Several studies indicate that democracy does not always result from US military intervention. For example, according to the Congressional Research Service report for Congress Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of US Foreign Policy?, the promotion of democracy has potential downsides. For example, democracy promotion can have a destabilizing effect on the entire country (CRS 2007, 10). During the transition process, the country can become unstable and susceptible to attacks from neighboring countries. A 2005 Harvard study stated that “our research shows that incomplete democratic transitions-those that get stalled before reaching the stage of full democracy-increase the chance of involvement in international war in countries where governmental institutions are weak at the outset of the transition” (Mansfield and Snyder 2005, 4). Ultimately, the authors claim that democracy promotion will lead to war and not a democratic government.

The Congressional Research Service report for Congress also contends that a potential downside of democracy promotion is the high financial cost (CRS 2007, 9). Foreign aid, military intervention, and diplomacy all require a substantial amount of money. US constituents are skeptical about foreign actions that are not guaranteed that a democratic government will be achieved.

In Resolved: That the United States Should Intervene in Another Nation's Struggle for Democracy, Sidharth Oberoi contends that democracy promotion constitutes as an act of imperialism (2011, 12). The author argues that US foreign policy makers are invading other countries merely for the benefit of the US. Also, the new government will be devoid of legitimacy, as the government was forced upon them.

On the other hand, there are also many studies which indicate that US military intervention is effective in promoting democratic governments. James Meernik conducted a study which examined why the US intervenes in the affairs of others to promote democracy and if the use of force is an effective tool in promoting democratic change. The sample population consisted of twenty seven international countries, which involved a U.S. military intervention. Meernik focused on three time periods to analyze, which included 3- Year Pre and Post-intervention differences, 3- Year Post-Intervention Difference and 1- Year Post Intervention Difference. Meernik codes the results as the following: negative changes are coded as -1, no change as 0 and positive changes as 1.

Based upon his findings, Meernik contends that the US is interested in promoting democratic change to "bring greater stability in one's region and make it easier to influence the

targeted nation” (Meernik 1996, 392). Thus, the US is interested in more than promoting democracy, but also to gain the ability to influence a nation’s policy.

Also, Meernik found that U.S. military interventions generally do not promote democratic changes (Meernik 1996, 395). However, Meernik does argue that nations that have U.S. involvement have a better chance of moving towards democracy compared to nations that have not experienced US intervention (Meernik 1996, 396). There are many factors that the US can contribute to countries democratization. For instance, the US has the financial ability to invest in the economy of a nation to help economic development.

As seen in table one, Meernik’s overall results showed there was an increase in democracy one year post US intervention in the Dominican Republic. However, three years post US invention showed there was no change in democracy. Nicaragua showed there was no increase in democracy one year post intervention, with an increase in democracy three years after the intervention. Nevertheless, Panama showed an increase in all three time periods after the interventions (Meernik 1996, 396).

The majority of the 27 nations studied had no democratic change at all. Despite Meernik’s claim that most nations retain their current level of authoritarian or tyrannical regimes after a U.S. military intervention, there are limits to his study. First and foremost, his study only focuses on 27 countries. A larger sample must be used to achieve a more accurate portrayal to determine if U.S. interventions can result in a more democratic nation. Secondly, Meernik examines the democratic growth of a country only three years post intervention. Democratic growth is a slow process, especially if the country has no democratic history to learn from. Ample time must be given to a country to fully implement the democratic process.

Despite Meernik's results that most of the countries retained their current level of democracy, he contends that countries are more prone to democratic tendencies with US intervention (Meernik 1996, 397). Although these results seem contradictory, he clearly states "that when comparing the progress of democracy in nations which did experience US intervention with those which did not, the former group boasts greater movement toward democracy" (Meernik 1996, 396).

Therefore, my hypothesis that U.S. military interventions and coercive diplomacy can result in stable democracies are confirmed by Meernik's study. While US military intervention does not lead to democracy in every situation, a country is more likely to experience democracy when it has experienced intervention, compared to countries that had not experienced US intervention.

Table 1. US Military Interventions and Their Effects on Democratic Change

Year	Event Description	3-Year Pre and Post-Intervention Difference	3-Year Post-Intervention Difference	1-Year Post-Intervention Difference	Target Nation
1950	Korean War	0	0	0	South Korea
1951	Security of Yugoslavia	-1	1	1	Yugoslavia
1954	Guatemala Gets USSR Arms	-1	-1	-1	Guatemala
1954	Tachen Islands Fighting	0	0	0	Taiwan
1957	Syria Coup and Crisis with USA	-1	0	-1	Syria
1958	Invasion of Lebanon	0	0	0	Lebanon
1958	Quemoy and Matsu Crisis	0	0	0	Taiwan
1959	Laos Civil War	1	0	0	Laos
1961	Congo Civil War	1	1	1	Congo
1964	Panama Riots	0	0	0	Panama
1964	Fighting on Cyprus	-1	0	0	Cyprus
1964	Laos Rightist Coup	0	0	0	Laos
1964	Congo Civil War	0	1	-1	Congo
1964	Vietnam War	0	0	0	South Vietnam
1965	Dominican Republic Civil War	1	0	1	Dominican Republic
1970	Civil Disorder in Trinidad	0	0	0	Trinidad
1970	Jordan Civil War with PLO	0	0	0	Jordan
1974	Cyprus Military Coup	1	0	1	Cyprus
1978	Angola Rebels Invade Zaire	0	0	0	Zaire
1981	Ecuador/Peru Fighting	1	0	0	Ecuador
1982	Problems with Sinai Transition	1	0	1	Egypt
1982	Security of Honduras	1	0	0	Honduras
1982	US Marines in Lebanon	0	0	0	Lebanon
1983	US Invasion of Grenada	1	1	1	Grenada
1988	Nicaraguan Civil War	1	1	0	Nicaragua
1989	US Invasion of Panama	1	1	1	Panama
1990	Invasion of Kuwait	0	0	0	Kuwait

$n = 27$.

-1 = Decrease in democracy, 0 = no change, 1 = increase in democracy.

Margaret G. Hermann and Charles W. Kegley Jr. conducted a study that examined the success of US military interventions in promoting democracy. Eighty nine worldwide countries which experienced US military interventions between 1945 and 1992 were used to test their hypothesis that military intervention can lead to democratic institutions. Sixty four of these interventions included some type of military commitment, which ranged from sending military advisors to deploying large numbers of troops. Twenty of these interventions, which is the control group, involved military personnel, but the intervention was not intended to advance democracy in the targeted nation (Hermann and Kegley 1997, 94).

To determine if there was a negative or positive change to a country's democratic level, the mean degree before and after an intervention was measured. The Polity III democracy and autocracy scales designed by Ted Robert Gurr and Keith Jagers were used to "assess the competitiveness and regulation of political participation in government, the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment and the degree of constraint on the chief executive" (Hermann and Kegley, 1997, 95).

In the Polity III study, to determine the level of democracy, Gurr and Jagers evaluated the country based upon their: 1): competitiveness of political participation 2): regulation of political participation 3): competitiveness of executive recruitment 4): openness of executive recruitment and 5): constraints on chief executive (Jagers and Gurr 1995, 472). A score of 0 indicated a low democracy, while 10 was considered a high democracy (Jagers and Gurr 1995) 472).

The Hermann and Kegley study confirms my hypothesis that US military interventions and coercive diplomacy can promote democracy. The authors contend that US interventions have

more often worked towards enlarging democratic governments, rather than restricting democracy (Hermann and Kegley 1997, 108).

Also, they state that “the purpose of the intervention, however, helped define the direction of any change that occurred, whether toward becoming more or less democratic” (Hermann and Kegley 1997, 98). For example, if the US government had a stated goal of promoting democracy, the US intervention was more likely to result in a democratic government.

Hermann and Kegley focused on the time period directly after the intervention, which is a limitation of this study. To get a more accurate portrayal of whether or not democracy was able to withstand the test of time, at least ten years after the intervention should be researched.

Table 2. Effect of Reform- Oriented Interventions on Democraticness of Target

<i>Means and t-Tests</i>					
	<i>N</i>	Mean Before	Mean After	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Type of Intervention					
Reform Intervention	64	-1.50	-0.62	1.98	0.03
Intervention Not Focused on Reform	25	-3.20	-3.84	-1.43	ns
<i>Analysis of Variance</i>					
	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between Interventions					
Type of Intervention	217.14	1	217.14	3.60	0.06
Error	5242.98	87	60.26		
Within Interventions					
Change in Democraticness	0.50	1	0.50	0.09	ns
Change by Type Interaction	20.63	1	20.63	3.94	0.05
Error	455.38	87	5.23		

Laos	1961	1963 *
South Vietnam	1961	1963 **
Thailand	1962	1963 *
India	1962	1963 *
Haiti	1963	1963
South Korea	1963	1964 *
South Vietnam	1963**	1973
Panama	1964	1964
Cambodia	1964 **	1969
Laos	1964	1968 **
North Vietnam	1964	1975 **
Dominican Republic	1965	1967 *
South Korea	1965	1969
Thailand	1966	1975
Cambodia	1969 **	1974 *
Laos	1969	1974 *

Laos	1973	1975
South Vietnam	1975 **	1975
Thailand	1975	1975
Cambodia	1973 ***	1975
Guyana	1978	1979 *
Iran	1980	1980
Nicaragua	1981	1988
Lebanon	1982	1982
Lebanon	1982	1984
El Salvador	1983 **	1989 *
Italy	1985	1986 *
Philippines	1985	1988
Libya	1986	1986
Honduras	1986	1988
Bolivia	1986	1987 *
Guatemala	1987	1987
Honduras	1988	1988
Panama	1988	1989 *
Nicaragua	1989	1990
Panama	1989	1990 **
El Salvador	1989	1991
Liberia	1990	1991 *
Panama	1990	1991 *
Iraq	1991	1991
Kuwait	1991	1991
Somalia	1991	1991

Methodology

Independent Variable: US intervention

US intervention is not limited to the deployment of military personnel, the use of surrogates and/or supporting insurgents against the standing government. Intervention can also be economic, such as installing economic sanctions, cutting off foreign aid with the intent to challenge and/or change the current regime and replace it with a government more acceptable to the US. For this study US military intervention will include direct military invasion, indirect military intervention through the use of surrogates and/or threats of the use of the military such as “gunboat” diplomacy.

Dependent Variable: Promoting Democracy in Latin America

Democracy is a term that is widely used in the political world, but many times is not completely understood. There are many disputes as to what is considered a true democracy. Therefore, it is important to define democracy. For this research I will be using the definition as termed by Robert Dahl. According to Robert Dahl (Smith 2005, 8) there must be eight minimum requirements for a government to be considered democratic. These democratic values include:

1. Freedom to form and join organizations
2. Freedom of expression
3. The right to vote
4. Eligibility for public office
5. The right of political leaders to compete for support and votes
6. Alternative sources of information

7. Free and fair elections
8. Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference (Smith 2005, 8).

Indicators

For the purpose of this study, I will use free and fair elections, the ability of the opposition to win elections, freedom of expression, freedom to form and join organizations and the availability of alternative sources of information as indicators of democracy. Another measure of democracy can be determined if a party or group that takes power relinquishes their position and if the winners of the later elections turn over power as well (Huntington 1991, 266). Known as the two-turnover test, surrendering power is an essential part of the democratic process.

On paper, a democracy can easily be written. However, a functional and stable democracy does not occur overnight, especially in a nation that has been dominated by a tyrannical government for decades. It is a practice that must be continually nurtured and allowed to take effect. Therefore, I will focus on twelve years after the intervention to determine if there was democratic change. Nevertheless, I will use a longer period of time in the case of the Dominican Republic as democracy developed very strong there.

This research study will use Most Similar Systems (MSS) method to gather information regarding the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Panama. According to Timothy C. Lim, it is important when using MSS to compare at least two systems that share a plethora of similarities such as political, social or cultural qualities (Lim 2006, 34). Similarities in these particular case studies include US military interventions, all the countries were ruled by dictators and each had

strong authoritarian roots as they were all colonized by absolutist Spain. Also, primary and secondary sources were used to gather information.

Limitations of the Study

As with any research technique, there are limits of the MSS method. For instance, examining a small number of cases limits the amount of information that can be gathered (Lim 2006, 38). Therefore, one cannot make large claims from the small number of case studies that are examined. Another limitation of MSS is that no two countries are exactly alike (Lim 2006, 38). Although countries may share many similarities, there are many differences that must be taken into account. Differences may include the culture, the economy of a country or if there is a prior history of democracy. Despite the similarities of the Dominican Republic, Nicaraguan and Panama, the countries are diverse politically, economically and socially

Dominican Republic

Political repression and lack of democracy increased in the Dominican Republic during the rule of Dictator Rafael L. Trujillo. From 1930 until his assassination in 1961, Trujillo severely limited political and civil rights (Crandall 2005, 48). To maintain control over the nation, Trujillo created his own political party Partido Dominicano (PD), which gave him the power to make all decisions regarding policy and maintain control. Additionally, Trujillo abolished all other opposition political parties and made voting mandatory (Hartlyn 1998, 43). With no political competition and total control of the military, Trujillo easily won reelections and remained in power. Actions by Trujillo denigrated democracy.

Controlling information is necessary to maintain an undemocratic regime. Unlimited access to news sources, media and outside information threatened the survivability and

legitimacy of the Trujillo regime. The regime rightly assumed if Dominicans were exposed to the conditions and freedoms of other nations, they would chose to defect and live abroad. A mass exodus from the Dominican Republic would kill Trujillo's legitimacy both domestically and on the foreign stage. Therefore, Trujillo restricted incoming information by jamming foreign radio programs, censoring mail, controlling news media and only a limited number of Dominicans were able to travel internationally (Hartlyn 1998, 46). Also, phone tapping was not uncommon and foreign diplomats and journalists were under surveillance (Hartlyn 1998, 46).

Trujillo's rise to power was likely due to the US's policy of nonintervention during the President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy. Regardless of Trujillo's status as a dictator, he understood the importance of good relations with the US. For example, he had forged good relationships with US military officers and leaders during past US occupations. More importantly, he also touted a strong anti-communist stance during the Cold War with the Soviet Union (Hartlyn 1998, 51).

US attitude towards intervening in Latin American countries changed dramatically after the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Cold War fears in the US were reinforced when Communist leader Fidel Castro took control of the Cuban government. The possibility of Communism and Soviet Union power and influence sprcading into Latin America was increasing.

International pressure from the US and Organization of American States (OAS) resulted in economic sanctions against the Dominican Republic, which were instituted after an assassination attempt on Venezuelan President Romulo Betancourt in 1960 (Black 1986, 28). In addition, the Dominican Republic was found guilty of human rights violations, which contributed to the economic sanctions (Hartlyn 1998, 70).

Trujillo's title as a dictator proved accurate. Public dissent was not tolerated and critics were murdered or jailed without trial (Herring and Herring 1968, 449). Trujillo's enemies could not escape his wrath on foreign soil as deaths or disappearances were not uncommon (Herring and Herring 1968, 449). Trujillo had to be removed from power.

On May 30, 1961, Trujillo was assassinated by eight conspirators while driving outside of Santo Domingo. The conspirators had allegedly been supplied with weapons from the CIA (Crandall 2006, 48). Vice-President Joaquin Balaguer immediately became president after the assassination. The US used the assassination of Trujillo as an opportunity to gain more political influence in the Dominican Republic. To keep the Trujillo family from gaining power, the US supported the Balaguer regime.

The Organization of American States (OAS) had a role in working out future elections following Trujillo's assassination in 1961. The Dominican Republican government set up a system of electoral boards to administer free elections with impartial personnel. The Central Electoral Board, the highest board consisted of three members and was appointed to serve twelve year terms (Haggerty 1991, 140). The responsibility of the Central Electoral board was to print and distribute ballots, equipment and voting materials. All actions were to eliminate the possibility of fraud.

The 1962 elections were the first held after the death of Trujillo and the first democratic elections since 1924. Democratic elections were held mainly due to the involvement of the US (Hartlyn, 1998, 78). Multiple opposition parties were active rather than oppressed. Juan Bosch won a majority with 58.7 percent of the presidential votes, compared to opponent Viriato Fiallo of the National Civic Union (UCN) who only received 30.1 percent (Hartlyn 1998, 78). The U.S.

showed their approval by supplying the country with \$100 million in financial assistance allowing the US to influence public policy (Crandall 2005, 51). Despite the free and fair elections, Bosch was overthrown in a military coup only seven months after assuming the office of the president.

In April 1965, an attempt to bring back Bosch and to place the PRD back to power erupted in violence. A civilian junta, known as the Triumvirate, had taken control of the country after the removal of Bosch. Political instability ensued as former military leaders and party leaders planned to overthrow the Triumvirate. On April 24th, supporters of Bosch, known as Constitutionals and civilian personnel overtook the National Palace and placed Rafael Molina Urena as president until the return of Bosch (Haggerty 33, 1991). Led by General Elias Wessin y Wessin, conservative military forces, known as Loyalists attempted to remove the Constitutionals from power.

Fearing the possibility of a communist takeover from the members of the Constitutionals, US President Lyndon B. Johnson became involved in the violent civil war. On April 28th claiming that American lives were at stake Johnson deployed over 23,000 U.S. troops to protect and evacuate American citizens (Crandall 2005, 67). This action was known as Operation Power Pack.

Perceived by the US as communists, Juan Bosch and the Constitutionals did not have the support of the US during the civil war (Haggerty 1991, 33). Therefore, in the minds of US officials, the return of Bosch would inhibit the possibility of a democratic nation. The US supported the Loyalists and after sixteen weeks of fighting, the Loyalists won.

An inter-American peacekeeping force (IAPF) was established to keep members of the Organization of American States (OAS) updated on the situation. To keep the number of American soldiers at a minimum, 1600 Latin Soldiers from Brazil, Paraguay, Honduras, Costa Rica and El Salvador participated in the attempt to stop Constitutionalist from gaining power (Palmer 1989, 72). The peace force made Latin American countries part of the decision- making process and gave the US validation for the intervention.

The decision to intervene was based upon the “loss” of Cuba to communism and the fear of a communist Dominican Republic. President Johnson did not want communism to spread on his watch and was willing to take the necessary measures to prevent it. A democratic country would help alleviate communist fears and prevent another Latin American country from succumbing to communism.

OAS Ad Hoc Committee met with members of the Constitutionalist and Loyalists to gain insight for negotiating purposes (Palmer 1989, 88). On August 31 1965, major fighting ceased as Constitutionalist and Loyalist leaders signed the Acts of Reconciliation and Institutional act (Greenburg 2003, 5). Under this act Hector Garcia Godoy was placed as provisional president. To prevent economic instability and promote democratic change, the US provided emergency financial assistance to the poor, neglected country (Hartlyn 1998, 90).

The 1961 assassination of Dictator Rafael Trujillo created years of political instability in the Dominican Republic. Juan Bosch, constitutionally elected as president in 1961 was removed as president during a coup (Crandall 2006, 49). A countercoup was initiated to restore Bosch to power. Fearing a possibility of a communist takeover and the return of Bosch, US President Johnson deployed over 23,000 troops (Crandall 2005, 67). According to Russell Crandall, during

the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson there was a concerted effort to use the Organization of States to promote a political system and a set of leaders in the Dominican Republic who were supportive of an American model of democracy (Crandall 2006, 79).

Jonathan Hartlyn contends the 1965 U.S. military invasion in the Dominican Republic had a negative effect on the possibility of democracy in the small nation (Hartlyn 1998, 89). National security, not democratic promotion, was the underlying reason to invade the Dominican Republic (Hartlyn, 1998, 89). The United States was more interested in stopping the spread of communism in American's backyard than promoting democracy. Therefore, a successful democratic structure was not seen as a priority. Jonathan Hartlyn contends that despite the attendance of prominent members of the United Nation (U.N.), Organization of American States (OAS) and U.S. officials, the 1966 elections were neither free nor fair (Hartlyn 1998, 91). Despite what Hartlyn assumed, the US was also interested in creating a democratic system.

Nevertheless, Russell Crandall writes that the U.S. intervention was a key factor in bringing democracy, albeit flawed, to the nation (Crandall 2006, 94). Although Balaguer ruled in an autocratic manner, he allowed for a democratic process to evolve and for competitive elections to occur, despite his partial control of them (Crandall 2006, 93). Two consecutive competitive elections demonstrated that the Dominican Republic were capable of moving towards a stable democratic nation.

The 1966 elections in the Dominican Republic were the first elections to be held after the U.S. intervention. Former president Juan Bosch and Joaquin Balaguer of the Partido Reformista (PR) party were contenders for the presidential office. US supported Balaguer assumed the office as president as he was voted into office by winning 57 percent of the vote (Haggerty 1989, 33).

The US hoped that Balaguer would restore democracy and political stability to the conflict prone nation.

Nevertheless, Balaguer ruled in an authoritarian manner where civil rights violations were rampant. While opposition political parties were legally allowed to operate openly, critical political opponents and journalists were jailed or killed (Kershaw 2002). Also, Balaguer had congress alter the 1963 constitution that enhanced presidential powers and removed term limits on presidential reelections (Hartlyn 1998, 102).

Balaguer dominated the next twelve years as president and then was re-elected to office in May 1970 with 55.7 percent of the votes and May 1974 with 85 percent of the vote (Black 1986, 51). Both elections were largely won with intimidation. For example, although opposition forces were present during these elections, many refrained from participating due to harassment from the Balaguer controlled military (Hartlyn 1998, 101). Additionally, only one million registered voters bothered to turn out to participate in the voting process (Black 1986, 51).

Soon after the 1970 elections, President Balaguer stated that “a democratic society has to resort to illegal and arbitrary measures if it is threatened by people seeking to bring about chaos” (Black 1986, 48). Censorship of the radio was introduced by Balaguer to further control the information that was broadcasted. Balaguer also used violence as a method to remain in power. El Nacional, the Santo Domingo newspaper reported that there was 186 political murders and 30 disappearances that occurred in 1970 (Black 1986, 48).

The 1978 presidential elections were an integral part of democracy in Dominican history. Balaguer’s power was slipping and he faced a viable opponent, millionaire Antonio Guzman of

the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD) (Kryzanek 1979, 53). The competition between the two candidates would determine if free and competitive elections were possible in a country that touted a democratic process, but lacked main democratic rights and freedoms. Also, the election outcome would have the power to undermine or strengthen the US's role in present and future foreign diplomacy.

Election Day was held on May 16th. Guzman had an early lead over Balaguer when on May 17th military units conducted a raid on the Central Electoral headquarters in the capital city of Santo Domingo (Kryzanek 1979, 58). The objective of the raid was to confiscate ballot boxes and prevent the win of Guzman. This action demonstrated that the elections were still susceptible to tyrannical, military actions.

On May 19th, US President Jimmy Carter validated the US's continued ability to influence the small nation by promising the withdrawal of US military and economic support depending on the "integrity" of the election (Kryzanek 1979, 58). President Carter's concern for human rights created an important change in US foreign policy. The pressure from the US prompted Balaguer to allow the continuation of counting the votes. Guzman received 50 percent of the vote compared to Balaguer's 41 percent (Kryzanek 1979, 58). Election turnout reached a record high with 75 percent of the electorate participating in the election (Kryzanek 1979, 58). August 16th Guzman was inaugurated as president in a historical peaceful change of power.

The 1978 elections allowed a new opportunity for democracy to flourish. Guzman restored civil liberties and basic human rights that were not found during the Trujillo regime (Black 1986, 54). Nevertheless, President Guzman had many political challenges. For instance, Balaguer's Reformist Party (PR) had a sixteen- to- eleven majority in the senate, which gave

them the opportunity to veto any of Guzman's bills (Haggerty 1991, 35). Guzman did not finish his term as he committed suicide in July 1982. Vice-President Jacobo Majluta assumed the office of presidency for 43 days until the May 1982 elections.

The 1982 elections saw the PRD was triumphant again with the nomination of Salvador Jorge Blanco with 46 percent of the vote. The next viable opponent, Joaquin Balaguer received 36 and former President Juan Bosch only 10 percent. The elections were fair, honest and competitive (Haggerty 1989, 142). Under Blanco's government, human rights violations and civil liberties were not violated (Haggerty 1989, 142). The elections were accepted by the general population and media as legitimate (Furlong, 2011). Democracy continued to thrive as freedom of press and speech improved under the new administration (Furlong, 2011).

In Latin America, the level of democracy fluctuated from year to year. The Fitzgibbon Survey of Scholarly Images of Latin America determines the democracy rating of countries. Over the years, the survey requested ten Latin American scholars to rank the countries according to specific criteria to determine the level of democracy. Some indicators are freedom of press, free elections and government administration. The democracy ranking is coded as 1 presenting the strongest democracy and 20 presenting worst democracy.

According to the study, the Dominican Republic was ranked 19 in 1955 during the reign of Trujillo. After the 1965 US intervention the democratic ranking improved to a 14. Democracy continued to improve as the ranking was an 8 after the 1978 elections. In 2005, the democracy ranking had remained an 8 (Fitzgibbon 2005).

Freedom House, an online study, provides analytical reports and numerical ratings for 196 countries and territories, which determines their overall freedom, political rights and civil

liberties. The political rights and civil liberties categories contain ratings between 1 and 7 for each country or territory, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free. The report codes the countries general freedom as free, partly free or not free.

According to the 2011 Freedom House report, the Dominican Republic's overall freedom is free, political rights and civil rights are all ranked as 2 out of 7. This score indicates that, although not perfect and slow in taking form, the Dominican Republic was able to maintain democratic practices instilled after the 1965 US military intervention.

Democracy improved after the 1965 US military intervention as seen by the ability of Dominican Republic citizens to participate in free and fair elections. For example, the 1978 and 1982 elections in which President Balaguer faced a viable opponent Antonio Guzman. A high number of constituents were able to participate in the electoral process and freedom of expression increased as people were not afraid to voice their opinions. The elections allowed multiple political parties to participate in the campaign and electoral process, which was not allowed before the intervention.

Since the 1996 elections, the Dominican electoral process has been seen as free and fair (www.state.gov). Freedom of expression and the availability of alternative sources of information have continued to increase. As mentioned earlier, Freedom House ranks the current political and civil rights 2 out of 7. One being the highest scores possible and 7 the worst score possible.

Nicaragua

Democracy in Nicaragua struggled under the Somoza and the Sandinista regime. The Somoza family first obtained power when National Guard commander Anastasio Somoza Garcia had Augusto C. Sandino assassinated in 1934 (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006, 71). Somoza and his two sons, Luis Somoza Debayle and Anastasio Somoza Debayle held power from 1936 until 1979 (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006, 71).

During the Somoza reign of power, the infrastructure for democracy was only found on paper. To “legitimize” the Somoza regime, elections were held in 1936. Additional elections were held in 1946, 1951, 1957, 1963, 1967 and 1974 (Jonas and Stein 1990, 17). Although opposition parties were allowed to campaign, they held no true political influence and were unable to replace Somoza (Jonas and Stein 1990, 17). Elements of a democracy were manipulated to keep the Somoza’s in power making it extremely difficult for opposition to gain political success (Tulchin and Walter 1991, 247).

Support from the US helped the Somoza regime maintain power for over four decades by providing millions of dollars in much needed economic and social aid to the struggling Nicaraguan economy (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006, 71). The pro- US and anti-communist position of the Somoza family helped ensure the continued support of the US during World War II and the Cold War (Tulchin and Walter 1991, 246).

Many Nicaraguans overlooked the abuse of power because the country was prospering financially. However, stronger opposition parties gained influence after 1974 when the Nicaraguan economy quickly weakened and constituents called for government reform (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006, 71)

In 1974, Anastasio Somoza Debayle demonstrated his ability to inflict terror after a Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) hostage taking incident. Thousands of citizens were assumed to be Sandinista sympathizers and murdered within a three year period (Booth, Wade and Walker 2006, 74). The Carter administration pressured Somoza to stop the terror and protests against the regime rose. Repression against citizens increased, which in turn drove thousands to join the Sandinistas (Booth, Wade and Walker 2006, 75).

Under the Somoza regime freedom of speech was cut off. For example in 1978 Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, critic and editor of the anti-Somoza newspaper, *La Prensa* was assassinated (Moreno 1990, 51). The newspaper was closed down for more than a year during 1986-1987 due to printing anti-Somoza literature (Booth and Wade 2011, 177). The Carter administration held to their policy of non- military intervention; deploying troops was not an option for replacing the infamous Somoza (Moreno 1990, 57). Conditions in Nicaragua were suitable for a revolution.

After gaining power, on July 19th 1979 the Sandinistas, with the support of the public, were able to overthrow Somoza. To maintain influence with the new government the US congress approved over \$8 million in emergency aid and a long term package of \$75 million (Moreno 1990, 63). New financial loans and emergency relief aid in 1979 to 1981 from U.S. agencies were also offered to the Sandinistas to extend diplomatic ties and gain influence (Moreno 1990, 63).

The new Sandinista government promised to replace the Somoza regime with a participatory democracy and to hold elections before 1985 (Booth, Wade, Walker 76, 2006). Under the Sandinista government civil and political rights improved. A new Sandinista Police

Force and Sandinista Popular Army were established, which were used to prevent the abuses of power.

After taking office in 1981, US President Ronald Reagan viewed the Sandinista government as detrimental to US national security because of their communist leanings. Despite the decline of power of the Soviet Union, Reagan was still fearful of communism spreading throughout Latin America. In an attempt to gain US public and congressional support, Reagan painted the Sandinistas as a puppet of the Soviet Union and therefore necessary to remove them from power (Carothers 1991, 96).

Domestic opposition made US military intervention impossible (Cottam 1994, 138). Therefore, to force the Sandinista's from power, the Reagan administration financially supported a rebel group known as the Contra's. The Contras were primarily composed of the Nicaraguan Democratic Forces (FDN) and other smaller factions, such as Miskito Indian groups and the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) (Carothers 1991, 84). In 1981, Reagan approved a \$19 million of covert assistance to the Contra's. Congress openly approved \$24 million of military assistance in 1984 to the Contra's (Carothers 1991, 85). The CIA also supported the Contra's with intelligence and training (Carothers 1991, 85). The main objective of the US intervention was to politically undermine the Sandinista's and remove them from power. US foreign policy in Nicaragua was designed to remove the perceived threat of the communist Sandinistas from power by using diplomatic, economic and military pressure (Cottam 1994, 130).

During the Contra War, against the US supported Contras, the revolutionary government felt threatened and suspended many civil rights, including freedom of speech and began

censoring the news media (Booth, Wade, Walker 83, 2006). Freedom of Religion was generally free under the revolution, but the government was intolerant of religions that touted anti-Sandinista rhetoric (Booth, Wade, Walker 83, 2006). However, with an upcoming election most civil rights were restored in 1984 to gain favor with the voting Nicaraguans.

As well as financially supporting the Contra's, the US stopped the Nicaraguans from receiving loans from the World Bank the Inter- American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Booth and Wade 2011, 49). Also, the US reduced the amount of sugar imported by 90 percent from Nicaragua. These actions economically hurt the economy, but did not do the damage the US hoped for (Booth and Wade 2011, 51). Nicaragua turned towards the Soviet Union for financial assistance and trade.

To rally support from his US constituency, Reagan portrayed the Contras as "freedom fighters", struggling to bring democracy to the country (Carothers 1991, 100). Reagan also compared them to the US founding fathers and their fight for independence and democracy (Carothers 1991, 100).

The Reagan administration's goal in Nicaragua in 1984 was to promote democracy in Latin America (Carothers 1991, 97). Promoting democracy provided the US a positive justification while at the same time attempting to remove the Sandinistas. Reagan claimed the only way to a democratic outcome was through supporting the Contras (Carothers 1991, 98).

I have only 3 years left to serve my country; 3 years to carry out the responsibilities you entrusted to me; 3 years to work for peace. Could there be any greater tragedy than for us to sit back and permit this cancer to spread, leaving my successor to face far more agonizing decisions in the years ahead? The freedom fighters seek a political solution. They are willing to lay down their arms and negotiate to restore the original goals of the revolution, a democracy in which the people of Nicaragua choose their own government. That is our goal also, but it can only come about if the democratic resistance is able to bring pressure to bear on those who have seized power.

President Reagan associated Communism to cancer to portray the seriousness of the situation in Nicaragua to the American public. The term Freedom Fighters was important to describe the Contra's as those who wanted a democratic and free nation.

Nevertheless, another clear sign of democracy developing was a high level of citizen involvement and the competition of seven different political parties running for the presidential position (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006, 81). Prior to the elections, the opposition parties could contribute input to the form of government Nicaragua could undertake. Among the components they wanted were freedom of speech, regular elections, freedom of the press and freedom of organization and movement (Reding 1985, 556). A remarkable 93 percent of eligible voters registered and 75 percent of registered voters participated (Jonas and Stein 1990, 19).

Despite US support for the Contra and a trade embargo against the Sandinista government, Daniel Ortega of the FSLN party won the presidential election with 67 percent of the vote (Carothers 1991, 89). The next viable opponent, Clemente Guido Chavez of the Democratic Conservative Party of Nicaragua (PCDN) received only 14 percent of the vote (Carothers 1991, 89).

The 1984 elections were deemed free and fair by the Latin American Studies Association (LASA 1984). Not all opposition parties participated in the elections, therefore they were not fully competitive. US supported Arturo Cruz and the Cordinadora Democratica (CD), believed to be the strongest opposition party, boycotted the elections due to conditions he deemed unfit for free and fair elections (Jonas and Stein 1990, 20). The Reagan administration sought to discredit

the elections and deemed them as meaningless and a “Soviet-style sham” (Jonas and Stein 1990, 20).

The 1984 elections were the first elections since the revolution against Somoza and fulfilled the Sandinista promise of holding elections. The Sandinista government cancelled restrictions on the press and granted access to government owned television and radio (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006, 81). During the elections, the Reagan administration strengthened efforts to remove the Sandinistas from power. A trade embargo was issued as well as \$27 million in “non-lethal” aid to the Contras (Williams 1990, 19). In October 1985, the Nicaraguan government reestablished restrictions stating that “restrictions on political liberties were necessary as long as the revolution was under attack from external forces” (Williams 1990, 19).

The 1990 presidential elections were an important step in consolidating democracy in Nicaragua. Nevertheless, the elections were only allowed by the Sandinista’s due to the diminishing role of the Contra’s in the civil war and the main agreement to the Arias Peace Plan (1987), which called for an end to outside aid for guerrillas and peace talks (Carothers 1991, 104). The US was extensively involved in the election using \$2.5 million of US dollars to strengthen the National Opposition Union (UNO) a group of 14 smaller political parties against the Sandinistas (LASA 1990, 16).

The 1990 elections saw an increase in voter turnout of 86 percent, compared to 75 percent in 1984 (LASA 1990, 34). The increase can be attributed to a stronger opposition party and conditions more suitable to free and fair elections. Additionally, opposition parties had increased television access, the unpopular military draft was revoked and the government granted amnesty to the remaining Sandinista political prisoners (Williams 1990, 22). The

government allowed official observers from the United Nations and Organization of American States (OAS) to monitor the elections (Williams 1990, 22). The presence of international observers would help detect fraud and legitimize the electoral results.

Presidential candidate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro won the elections with 55 percent, while Daniel Ortega of the FSLN received 39 percent (Booth, Wade, Walker 2006, 86). Chamorro was the first female to be president in a Latin America country. The deterioration of the economy, the Contra War and a desire for improved US relations hurt the re-election chances of Daniel Ortega and the FSLN (LASA 1990, 40). The contra war and US economic sanctions damaged the Nicaraguan economy and infrastructure.

The 1990 Nicaraguan elections were deemed free and fair by the Latin American Studies Association and President Daniel Ortega relinquished power peacefully to President elect Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. Prior to the elections, the news media was able to express a plethora of political information, providing constituents with access to unbiased material.

The US officially recognized Nicaragua as democratic after the 1990 elections (Booth, Wade and Walker 2006, 171). During President Chamorro's nearly 7 years in office, Nicaragua was more democratic, and elections were more competitive (Booth and Wade 2011, 177). Additionally, the government achieved major progress toward consolidating democratic institutions, advancing national reconciliation, stabilizing the economy, privatizing state-owned enterprises, and reducing human rights violations (www.state.gov).

Repressed under the Somoza regime, the media gained valiant strides after the elections (Booth and Wade 2011, 183). Newspapers, TV and radio stations were able to express different political views with minimal repercussions from the government. This allowed citizens to gain

information from a plethora of new sources that were not controlled by the government, allowing them to form their own opinions.

The 1996 presidential elections were the first post- Contra war and third consecutive elections since the overthrow of the Somoza regime. The opportunity for opposition parties to participate continued; nevertheless the elections were primarily between the Liberal Alliance and Sandinistas (FSLN). Approximately 24 political parties participated; the majority of them under the Liberal Alliance (LA) led by Presidential candidate Arnaldo Aleman (Close 1999, 175).

Aleman received 51 percent of the vote, while former President Daniel Ortega received 38 percent (Booth, Wade and Walker 2006, 89). Ortega and other presidential candidates claimed the victory was illegitimate (Booth and Walker 2011, 68).

In January 2000, Aleman and Ortega created a pact that would divide power between the Liberal Alliance party and Sandinistas, provide legal immunity for current or prior wrong doings and authorize new electoral reforms that would limit the number of parties that were able to participate in future elections (Allison 2006, 143). These actions inhibited the democratic advancements that Nicaragua had made.

In the 2001 presidential elections, Enrique Bolanos of the Constitutionalist liberal party won with 56 percent of the vote compared to Daniel Ortega who received 42 percent (Allison 2006, 143). Former US President Jimmy Carter, with the council of presidents, was there to observe the campaign and voting process deemed the elections to be free and fair as they had been in all of the elections from 1990 on.

Shortly after assuming the presidency, Bolanos worked with the National Assembly and repealed the Aleman- Ortega pact to reduce corruption (Booth, Wade and Walker 2006, 91).

Aleman was later sentenced to a 20 year jail term on charges of laundering \$100 million to party candidates and embezzling \$1.3 million for his own personal use (Booth, Wade and Walker 2006, 91).

According to the Fitzgibbons Survey of Scholarly Images of Latin American study, in 1975 before the revolution, the overall democratic ranking was 18. In 1991, after the 1990 elections, democracy was ranked as a 10. Nevertheless, the democratic ranking fell to 11 in 1995 and 2000 all the way to 16 in 2005 (Fitzgibbons, 2005). Freedom House indicates that Nicaragua's overall freedom is partly free, while political rights and civil liberties are both ranked 4 out of 7 since 2011 (www.freedomhouse.org).

Democratic advances include freedom of press and elections were considered free and fair. Also, the opportunities for opposition parties to participate in elections were greatly enhanced and those in power peacefully relinquished power.

Despite the advances democracy in Nicaragua, the country eventually experienced a reverse wave in democratization and reverted back to a more nondemocratic government. The Aleman-Ortega pact of 2000 began to reduce democratic advances and by 2006 election with the Ortega victory the reverse wave became much stronger. Government intimidation and harassment of journalists have all increased under the Ortega administration making freedom of speech and press difficult and dangerous (www.state.gov). The Nicaraguan Supreme Court has allowed Ortega to run for office again, even though the Constitution prohibits a sitting president from seeking re-election (www.nytimes.com).

Panama

Democracy in Panama was limited under the authoritarian rule of military regimes from 1968 to 1989. After President Anulfo Arias was removed from office for a third time after a coup in 1968, Lieutenant Colonel Omar Torrijos established a military junta (Furlong 1993, 19). US Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon and Gerald Ford supported Torrijos due to his anti-communist and pro-US stance. In 1977 US President Jimmy Carter's willingness to negotiate with Torrijos gave the dictator some legitimacy. Under their leadership, the Torrijos-Carter treaty was negotiated and ratified. The treaty scheduled the elimination of the US in the canal- zone and provided the transfer of the canal to Panama on December 31, 1999 (Sanchez 2007, 153). Informally there was an agreement that Torrijos would oversee a transition to civilian rule (Robinson 1989, 188).

Torrijos stepped down in 1978, turning over power to the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) that he had created to maintain his ideology, which included nationalism and national sovereignty (Robinson 1989, 188). Unfortunately, the military remained largely in power continuing to repress the general population. Under the military dictatorship freedom of speech and press were curtailed and civil organizations were repressed (Furlong 1993, 20).

The sudden death of General Torrijos in a suspicious plane crash in 1981 created a power vacuum in Panama that eventually placed General Manuel Noriega as ruler of Panama. Noriega took control of the Guardia Nacional (the military) and renamed it the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF). Noriega had been providing intelligence to the US as an informant since the late 1950's. Despite providing valuable information to the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense and the US National Security Council, Noriega was working as a double agent

providing Cuba with intelligence (Meade 2010, 301). Additionally, Noriega was heavily involved with drug trafficking, prostitution and money laundering (Millet 1988, 51).

General Noriega did not use terror and human rights violations to maintain his power as past Latin American dictators had. Instead political opponents were threatened with restriction on news media, economic pressure and the occasional arrest to install fear into his enemies (Millet 1988, 51). However, in 1985 he became more repressed and was accused of many human rights abuses and the murder of some of his political opponents. For example, dissident Dr. Hugo Spadafora publicly accused Noriega of illegal drug and weapon trafficking. His decapitated and mutilated body was found stuffed in a US mailbag (Sanchez 2007, 166). This was a warning to the US and others who were against Noriega.

At the beginning, the Reagan Administration supported Noriega despite his involvement in electoral fraud and his support of the Contra war in Nicaragua (Meade 2010, 301). Also, Noriega provided intelligence that resulted in the occasional capture of drug traffickers (Robinson 1989, 190). Although the U.S. had employed Noriega as an intelligence source, his continued involvement in the international drug trade, and his questionable involvement in fixing elections and his alleged involvement in the murder of Panamanian General Omar Torrijos caused the US to reevaluate their relationship with Noriega (Crandall 2005, 189). Additionally, US government officials did not want Noriega to be in control of the canal when the US transferred all power to the Panamanians on December 31, 1999 (Sanchez 2007, 168). US pride, hegemony and future influence in Panama was at risk.

Two elections were held during the military regimes rule, which were tainted with violence and fraud. Opposition parties were allowed; nevertheless they held no real voting

power. In 1984, former President Arnulfo Arias and Manuel Noriega's candidate Nicolas Ardito Barletta were the two presidential candidates. Initially Arias won the election, but after the military altered the votes, Barletta was declared the winner and the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) came to power (Furlong 2003, 19). Despite the electoral fraud, the US supported the new government and increased military and economic aid (Perez 2000, 126).

The Presidential candidate in the 1989 elections was Guillermo Endara of the original Arnulfo Arias party and his two vice presidential candidates Ricardo Arias Calderon and Guillermo Ford. Noriega picked Carlos Duque of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) as his preferred candidate. Despite excessive fraud, the exit polls conducted by the Catholic Church and the Carter Center showed Endara received 55.1 percent and 39.5 percent for Duque (Crandall 2006, 196). Noriega demonstrated his discontent by cancelling the elections and destroying all official ballots (Furlong 1993, 20). In September 1989, Noriega declared Francisco Rodriguez, whose name had not appeared on any ballot, as provisional president (Furlong 2003, 20).

The crisis in Panama partially stemmed from the inability of the US to remove General Manuel Noriega. Noriega was working as a double agent, providing intelligence information to Cuba and Colombian drug lords as well as to the US. Noriega's involvement in drug trafficking and harassment of US military personnel created the opportunity to remove Noriega. Economic sanctions and covert operations were not effective, which led to the deployment of 20,000 US troops.

For nearly 2 years, the United States, nations of Latin America and the Caribbean have worked together to resolve the crisis in Panama. The goals of the United States have been to safeguard the lives of Americans, to defend democracy in Panama, to combat drug trafficking, and to protect the integrity of the Panama Canal treaty. Many attempts have

been made to resolve this crisis through diplomacy and negotiations. All were rejected by the dictator of Panama, General Manuel Noriega, an indicted drug trafficker.

George H.W. Bush (bushlibrary.tamu.edu)

To gain the support of US constituents, President Bush used the protection of American lives, democracy and the moral dilemma of drug trafficking to present Noriega as a threat to the American way of life and national security. Bush claimed that all diplomatic opportunities were used before deciding to deploy troops and there were no other options available. This manipulation of the situation was used to justify the removal and replacement of Noriega with President Guillermo Endara.

On December 16, 1989, a US marine was killed in Panama City. This action, public knowledge of Noriega's drug trafficking and years of trying to remove Noriega from power led to US military intervention on December 20. US President George H.W. Bush ordered 24,000 US military personnel into Panama to protect American citizens, the canal, apprehend Noriega and promote democracy (Crandall 2005, 172). Known as Operation Just Cause, the large numbers of US troops easily defeated the Panamanian troops. The US troops were able to eventually capture Noriega, where he was brought to Miami for drug-trafficking and money laundering charges (Crandall 2005, 206). He completed his sentence in September 2007 and was then extradited to France where he is currently serving a 10 year prison sentence for money laundering.

After the 1989 US intervention, Endara, Arias Calderon and Ford were declared the official winners of the 1989 elections and sworn into office in the Panama Canal Zone (Furlong 2000, 34). The new government was faced with the challenge of installing democracy into a country that had been ruled by a military regime for twenty one years. Although the

administration had won the 1989, they faced legitimacy problems because they were placed in office by the US military intervention (Sanchez 2007, 174). Additionally, the small nation was struggling economically after years of economic sanctions imposed upon the US during the Noriega years (Furlong 1993, 21).

The 1994 and 1999 elections were “the freest and most competitive in the nation’s history” (Perez 2000, 127). The conditions which the 1994 elections were held were significantly different from previous elections in Panama. For instance, to reduce the amount of fraud an independent, nonpartisan Electoral Tribunal supervised the casting of ballots (Scranton 1995, 88). Also, presidential candidates were chosen through primary elections, rather than through party leadership and a quota laws were instituted which called for a certain percentage of women to run for political office (Sanchez 2007, 188).

Additionally, the US played a neutral role in the elections compared to previous years (Scranton 1995, 82). Historically the US had interfered in Panamanian elections to place candidates in positions that would benefit the US. A new political party entered the political scene known as Papa Egoro, which was founded and led by Ruben Blades. Overall, there were a total of 7 presidential candidates and 16 political parties that were able to participate in the 1994 elections (Sanchez 2007, 179). The voters had a plethora of choices at the polls.

An indicator that Panamanian politics was becoming more democratic was the willingness of incumbent President Guillermo Endara Ernesto to accept defeat and relinquish power to incoming President Perez Balladares of the PRD in the 1994 elections (Scranton 2000, 113). Historically, leaders have been unwilling to relinquish their positions. This is a strong indicator that democracy in Panama is increasing.

After being voted out in the 1989 elections, the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) was once again a strong political force during the 1994 elections. The PRD, the party founded by General Torrijos was associated with the military regime. Many people feared that the PRD would not give up political power once they regained control of the government (Sanchez 2007, 188). Weak political candidates and platforms accounted for the PRD victory (Scranton 1995, 74).

The May 1999 elections were also held without interference from the US. The democratic process was solidified in Panama by holding two free and fair elections consecutively. Three presidential candidates and thirteen political parties were able to participate in the elections. Martin Torrijos, son of former leader Omar Torrijos and Mireya Moscoso were the top two presidential candidate contenders. Mireya Moscoso, widow of three time president Arnulfo Arias won the election with 44.8 percent of the vote, while political rival Martin Torrijos received 37 percent of the vote (Sanchez 2007, 190). Moscoso was the first female president of Panama.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) mission declared the following assessments of 1999 general elections (IFES 1999):

1. The electoral process on May 2, 1999 occurred in peace and tranquility
2. The transfer of materials by the electoral tribunal was conducted according to established plans and permitted voting nationwide to open on time with all necessary resources on hand.
3. As they cast their votes, in massive numbers from dawn to afternoon, Panamanians held a “fiesta democratic”, marked by high levels of civility and an evident desire to participate in this exercise of democracy.

4. The transparency of the process was made possible by the highly professional work and conduct of persons at every level of the Electoral Tribunal, the Electoral Attorney's office and among the Corp of Electoral Delegates. Also notable was the extensive participation of Panamanian youth, who assumed the duty of staffing polling places to enable others to vote, as well as exercising their own right to vote. Equally important and noteworthy was the participation of Panamanian women as poll workers and poll watchers.
5. Tolerance, harmony and respect were the salient characteristics displayed by the political parties during the election; these attitudes facilitated the success of the electoral process.
6. The continuing work of the Justice and Peace Commission in Panama's electoral process, as observers and through various Ethical Pacts, promoted and provided higher levels of tolerance and mutual respect among the actors in Panamanian politics.
7. The role of the media of communication played a determining factor for promoting transparency of the electoral process.

According to the Fitzgibbon Survey of Scholarly Images of Latin America, during the reign of Torrijos in 1970, the democratic ranking was an 11. After the 1989 elections, the democratic ranking raised to 15, with 20 being the worst democratic score. Democracy improved in 2005, the democratic ranking was a 7 (Fitzgibbons, 2005).

Freedom House 2011 ranks the overall freedom of Panama as a free, while political rights is a 1 and civil liberties are a 2 (freedomhouse.org). These scores indicate that Panama was able to maintain its democratic government despite many struggles to implement a democracy.

For twenty one years, 1968 to 1989, democracy was severely limited under the rule of the military. Only two presidential elections were held, in which Panamanians were unable to fully participate. After the 1989 intervention, Panama has held four free and fair elections.

Additionally new political parties emerged and freedom of speech and press improved as political opponents were able to express themselves without fear of retribution. President Endaras willingness to accept defeat and relinquish power to incoming President Balladares, indicated that democracy was prospering.

Conclusion

Democracy promotion in Latin America is a controversial topic in the foreign policy field. There is a continuing debate among scholars and public officials whether or not US military intervention can result in democracy promotion. Based upon my research, I conclude my hypothesis that military intervention and coercive diplomacy can result in democracy promotion is correct.

Before the US military intervention in 1965, free and fair elections, freedom of expression and alternatives forms of information were all repressed under the rule of Dominican Republic President Rafael Trujillo. After the assassination of Trujillo, Democracy continued to struggle under the rule of Joaquin Balaguer. It wasn't until the 1978 elections that democracy was able to flourish. President Antonio Guzman restored many civil liberties and basic human rights that were absent under Trujillo and Balaguer. After the 1982 elections, essential elements to democracy such as freedom of speech and press improved under the Jorge Blanco administration.

Since 1996, regular competitive elections in the Dominican Republic have been held in which opposition candidates have been elected as president. Freedom of speech continues to improve as there are five national newspapers and there are more than 300 private radio stations and 40 television stations (www.freedomhouse.org).

Indirect US intervention, such as supporting the Contras and economically pressuring the Sandinistas, was implemented to force the Sandinistas from power. Democracy was solidified under the administration of President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. Following the elections, President Daniel Ortega peacefully relinquished power to Chamorro. Under the Somoza regime, freedom of the press was repressed. After 1990, the news media gained valiant strides as newspapers, TV stations and the radio were able to express many different political views.

Despite the democratic progress in Nicaragua, many other problems still exist. As mentioned earlier, Nicaragua has suffered from a reverse wave of democratization under the 2006 election of President Daniel Ortega. Electoral fraud has been present in the 2008 municipal elections and the democracy that was achieved has been overshadowed by high levels of poverty, unemployment, crime and violence. Currently, Daniel Ortega has sought to build closer ties with Iran, Russia, and Venezuela (www.state.gov). These relationships could further damage the relationship with the US, as Russia and Iran have access to nuclear weapons and Venezuela dictator Hugo Chavez has a vehement hatred towards the US.

From 1968 to 1989 democracy in Panama struggled under the reign of military dictatorships. Under the military dictatorships of Omar Torrijos and Manuel Noriega, freedom of speech and press were curtailed and civil organizations were repressed. Also, only two presidential elections were held during this time. Both elections were tainted with fraud and corruption and were held only to help legitimize the leadership.

After the 1989 US military intervention, the unofficial winners of the 1989 elections Guillermo Endara and his two vice presidential candidates Ricardo Arias Calderon and

Giullermo Ford were placed into office by US officials. Democratic practices greatly improved as the 1994 and 1999 elections were “the freest and most competitive in the nation’s history” (Perez 2000, 127). In a historic election, President Endara peacefully transferred power to the winner of the 1999 election. Freedom of speech and press continue to improve as there are around 100 private and radio stations and several TV networks (www.freedomhouse.org).

Through my research, I discovered that the success of democracy is dependent upon the leaders of a nation who must be fully committed in seeing democracy flourish. Effective democratic leaders are more concerned with the general well-being of the constituents and not increasing their own political power and influence. A good example of a leader not supporting democracy is Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

I also discovered that economics can play an important role in the degree of democracy. During the Contra War in Nicaragua, the termination of foreign aid and loans had a negative effect on the agricultural system and overall economy. While the economy is suffering, the promotion of democracy is often overlooked.

Additionally, different cultures can have an effect on the promotion of democracy. Every nation has a unique cultural background. Therefore, democracy should not be based upon the US political system, but should be established for that particular country.

There is no telling if the democratic advances in the Dominican Republic, Panama and Nicaragua are solely based upon the intervention of the US. There is a possibility that the advances would have been made without military intervention or coercive diplomacy of the US. Therefore, further research should be conducted to determine if there are more variables that can influence democracy promotion in Latin America.

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