

CONCLUSION

Wars or armed conflicts have been historically waged to achieve a wide range of objectives, from securing economic gains for access to markets and raw materials to the securing of monopolies of trade. Armed conflicts have been fought for security reasons to protect the state's territorial integrity and sovereignty, to promote political, ideological or religious faith. Such wars fought to achieve ideological and political interests have assumed the form of intervention in a civil war or internal armed conflict. In the post Second World War era such interventionist policies of the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union have sought to aid and abet revolutionary/counterrevolutionary movements and groups with local roots in foreign nations. Aiding such movements would facilitate imposing of ideologies and government conducive to the geopolitical/strategic interests of the superpowers. Such interventions were made possible by the creation of such circumstances where already the civil society in the target state had been already polarized within itself. The nuclear parity and the strategic nuclear stalemate arrived between the two superpowers precluded direct military confrontation with each other. The risks were demonstrated during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 and brought home the dangers and risks of engaging in such brinkmanship.

Wars or armed conflicts especially fought for ideological objectives included installing of governments abroad with congenial ideologies-a rationale for the justification of American intervention abroad be it in Guatemala (1953-54), Cuba (1961), Dominican Republic (1965), Vietnam (1964-1975), Chile (1973), Grenada(1983), Nicaragua (1981-1990), and later Panama (1989) and Haiti (1994). Doctrines such as the Monroe Doctrine (1823), the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1904), the Dollar Diplomacy of William Howard Taft (1912-1916), the Truman Doctrine of Containment (1947) or the present focus of this study the Reagan Doctrine of Rollback of Communism or Containment-Plus (1981-1988) were used to provide moral justification of United States blatant interventionist policies in

the global order and more particularly in the affairs of the countries of the Western Hemisphere spanning the Nineteenth and the Twentieth century. Interventions made to prevent the European countries from interfering in what the United States perceived to be its sphere of influence, namely the Western Hemisphere. It was the Manifest Destiny of the United States to propagate its economic, political and ideological interests in the global order which was combined with the United States sense of mission. Interventions in Latin America was based also upon the United States self perception of support for liberty and justice, or to advance and protect American businesses and its investments in other countries.

The Vietnam War wrecked so much of political, economic and social dislocation not only on the target state but also brought about severe repercussions on the intervening state itself. Never in the history of the United States did the country saw such an unprecedented hostile and intense public reaction on the part of the American public against the country undertaking costly interventions and adventures in remote regions which were considered not vital to the interests of the United State. The American public fired by the anti-Vietnam fervor was not willing to underwrite another intervention by the United States in regions not only vital to the geopolitical/strategic interests of the United States but even in those regions which directly affect its interests. In order to protect its ideological, political, military, economic and strategic interests both the superpowers chose to intervene in the internal armed conflicts of the Third World nations through the military policy of low intensity conflicts fought through the sponsorship of the revolutionary/counterrevolutionary movements, proxy forces against incumbent governments or on the side of the insurgents.

However much of these insurgency movements that the United States financed and underwrote in its campaign against Communism and the Soviet Union expansionism in the global order, movements be it the UNITA rebels in Angola, RENAMO guerrillas in Mozambique, the Majaheeden in Afghanistan or the Nicaraguan Contras were nothing more than mercenaries who

participated in these conflicts to serve their own narrow political and economic interests, a bunch of thugs who raped, murdered and tortured their opponents and hit against targets of the revolutionary order in order to cripple the revolutionary process and to prevent the ordinary people securing the benefits of the revolution.

The ideological struggles between communist and anti-Communist forces, neo-colonial and radical nationalist forces have taken violent forms more in intra-state conflicts, especially in the post-World War II era. Civil wars of such nature are not confined to the domestic sphere but have their repercussions and impact on the international system. Civil wars or internal armed conflicts are internationalized by the virtue of intervention of outside powers in them, narrowing down the distinction between what is international armed conflict and internal wars. In such civil wars armed factions, sub-national groups have emerged as violent actors in the international system, setting their own agenda and posing a challenge to the system itself.

Shifting to the new military strategy of low intensity conflict, fought through the use of proxy forces, mercenaries, covert operations and limited war strategy seemed inevitable and an unfortunate development. To counter the Soviet/ Communist thrusts in the global arena in the post-Vietnam debacle phase required a new strategy. The military/ political strategists in the United States simply reworked the counterinsurgency strategy and doctrines, borrowed some aspects of Marxist-Leninist guerrilla and limited warfare tactics and strategies so successfully implemented in China, Vietnam and Cuba, poured new wine into old bottle and termed this new strategy as low intensity conflict to be implemented in the killing fields of the Third World . This genre of conflicts used all the weapons, political, economic, military to a limited extent, psychological and ideological, to counter the Marxist governments (Angola and Nicaragua) and rebel movements such as in El Salvador and Guatemala. Other variations of low intensity conflicts included urban guerrilla wars, civil wars, separatist movements, insurrection and terrorism. Threats to the security of the United States took the form of

messianic ideologies as Marxism-Leninist, Islamic and other kinds of religious fundamentalism. Since many of these governments received financial and logistical support from the Soviet Union and its allies in the 1980s many of the rebel guerrillas movements such as the Afghan Mujahideen, the National Union for the Total independence of Angola (UNITA), and the Nicaraguan Contras had no other option but to wage a protracted insurgency and low intensity warfare and a war of attrition, ably supported by the United States and its allies under the policy framework of the Reagan Doctrine. Many of these conflicts as in Nicaragua were initiated and begun by the United States.

The East-West struggle for influence and hegemony was thus replicated on to the various theaters of conflict in the Third World. This strategy meant that the costs of the war in terms of men and material would be comparatively less than if the United States had directly committed its troops into the combat and the killing and dying would be more in the target state. United States did not have to deal with the painful reality of body bags, or so the logic of waging such low intensity conflicts and wars of attrition went. Such conflicts resulted in political polarization, social dislocation and economic destabilization which affected the lives and futures of the ordinary people caught up in these long protracted conflicts.

United States since the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine on 2 December 1823 and regarded and continues to regard the Western Hemisphere as its exclusive zone of influence and hegemony. This is evident in the manner in which it defined its and defines its relationship with the nations of Central America and the Caribbean. Any threat to the United States from adverse and antagonist political and ideological systems had to be countered by any means possible. The Monroe Doctrine was used as a justification to interfere in the internal affairs of the Western Hemisphere countries by the United States With the enunciation of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in 1904 the United States assumed the role of international policeman for the whole of the western hemisphere. Any perceived threat to the security and hegemony of the United States would

immediately involve sending in the Marines in a classic show of Gunboat Diplomacy. The Dollar Diplomacy that was initiated by the Howard Taft Administration in the years 1912-1916 was used to advance and protect American businesses in other countries and its investments resulting in many of the countries of Central America and the Caribbean and their economies completely controlled by the United States multinational corporations, resulting in these nations turned into what is now termed the classic expression, Banana Republics. The Truman Doctrine of 1947 globalized the Monroe Doctrine as well as the Roosevelt Corollary and the United States unilaterally assumed to play the international policeman in the global arena. This along with the Containment policy of the Truman Administration proclaimed that the Soviet Union/ Communist projection of power and influence would be effectively countered by an equal if not more application of United States might and power in strategic areas vital to its security interests.

The Reagan Doctrine went a step further. It not only sought to prevent communist gains in the global arena but also rollback communist/ Soviet gains from areas it had retrenched itself in many parts of the world. United States toleration of alien systems in its soft underbelly, its backyard in Central America and the Caribbean was especially on a short fuse especially after the Cuban/Castro revolution in 1959. Another Cuban type regime was categorically ruled out. Monroe Doctrine was the foundation of the United States policy towards Latin America and the Reagan Administration ensured that the legacy continued in the 1980s. The fact remained that the Monroe Doctrine was used as a justification for all the interventions that the United States interventions in the Western Hemisphere since its enunciation. The records in Mexico in the early part of the twentieth century, Guatemala in 1954, Cuba since 1961 in myriad forms, Dominican Republic in 1965, Chile in 1973 which resulted in the assassination of its progressive President Salvador Allende. Nicaragua in the early part of the twentieth century and in the 1980s, Grenada in 1983, Panama in 1989, and Haiti in 1994 bore the brunt of the United States aggression and interventionism .

The Reagan Administration continued the United States legacy of interventions in Latin America. The low intensity conflict and the contra war that it directed towards Sandinista Nicaragua was the most comprehensive of all interventions that the superpower undertook with the exception of Cuba the other thorn in the flesh of the United States. Never in the history of Latin America was there a country treated with such aggressiveness and the foreign policy of the United States obsessed with Sandinista Nicaragua. The logic of its involvement was that if the United States could not and did not counter threats to its hegemony and interests in its own backyard how could it defend its interests and that of its allies in much more crucial, critical and vital regions elsewhere in the global arena.

The pathological hatred that the United States harbored towards the Sandinista regime could be reflected in document after documents that emanated from the United States government. All for the fault of the Sandinista regime choosing to have a political, economic and social system most suitable to the Nicaraguan conditions and which addressed the pressing needs of the people, who wanted to exercise control over their own lives. These civil wars have a major spill-over effect on to the neighboring states brought about by common inspiration or by emulation .

Revolutionary political system of Nicaragua which undertook the much needed reforms and economic and development efforts to bring the benefits of modern civilization posed a threat to the entrenched corrupt, brutal and repressive right wing regimes supported by the United States. To take the title of OXFAM report on Nicaragua, quoted elsewhere in this thesis, the Sandinista regime posed a threat of a Good Example. Hence the Reagan Administration by its foreign policy termed the Reagan Doctrine supported and even caused a civil war in Nicaragua. Systematic pursuit of acts of state-sponsored terrorism, undermining of diplomatic solutions to the conflicts in Third World countries such as Nicaragua, destruction of the prospects for independent development were the major objective of United States .

The Reagan Doctrine stood for dictatorship, bondage and human exploitation . Under this policy framework the United States thwarted democracy, stifled freedom and trampled upon the human rights of the people of the Third World. It ousted popular leaders and prevented popular movements waging struggles to initiate desperately needed social and economic reforms. Official explanations of the primacy of Soviet and Communist threat were too ludicrous to say the least to be taken seriously as evidence. In such a vicious atmosphere all talk of improving the living standards of the common people, human rights and initiating a process of rapid democratization and the promotion of democratic ideals as also the rabid anti-Communism has become useful for the justification for the self interests of a self serving rapacious elite in not only the United States but also the countries of the Third World. Once the popular leaders and regimes were ousted and the United States control and hegemony over these small Third World Countries were established the foreign policy of the United States would veer from blatant interventionism to benign neglect and the target country would be placed on the back burner or would disappear from the public eye altogether.

The Reagan administration, so taken up with the Contra and the anti-Communist cause was willing to break its own rules and laws to wage its highly controversial contra war against the Sandinista Government as exemplified by the Iran -Contra affair which almost cost President Reagan his Presidency and the country another prospect of a humiliating impeachment. Once the Congressional prohibition on Contra aid was in force the surrogate network of junior level officials of the National Security Council, the CIA clandestine agents, arms dealers, the third countries such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, Taiwan, Brunei, Rambo type operatives with the tacit consent and the knowledge of the highest officials of the Reagan Administration went into its operations of keeping the contras afloat.

The Reagan administration which had in its early days proclaimed that it would never negotiate with terrorists and terrorist nations were not only

forced to open talks with Iran which it had proclaimed as a rouge state, sell it the much needed to get the release of the hostages taken by the Iranian supported Hezbollah fundamentalist group in Lebanon. It not only sold arms to Iran but in clear violation of the Congressional ban on Contra aid diverted the profits made on these sales to the contras. The Iran-Contra affair showed to the world the underbelly of the United States foreign policy. Rambo style operatives, known arms dealers, shredding of important documents, junior level officials involvement in vital foreign policy matters, use of friendly third countries, allowing the National Security Council, an extra constitutional authority which was primarily established to advise the president on vital foreign and defense matters and had no role and authority vested in it by the United States Constitution, to direct critical foreign policy was the sordid saga of the Iran-Contra affair. A massive cover-up of the role of President Reagan in this whole affair by the principal characters in this drama foreclosed any moves of impeachment of the President.

A nation impoverished, a satellite of the United States for more than a century and a half, a pawn in the great power and later superpower rivalry and politics since its independence in 1821, ruled by self-serving puppet regimes installed by the United States which was in complete disregard to the aspirations/needs of the Nicaraguan people. Such a nation also bore the brunt of forty years of a brutal, corrupt and dictatorship of the Somoza Dynasty with a record of gross violations of human rights in all of Latin America. Incidentally Anastasio Somoza Debayle proved the adage "those who live by the gun will also die by it", when on 17 September 1980 he was assassinated by a group of leftist Argentinian Revolutionary Workers Party, in Asuncion, Paraguay. This small country had to endure a brutal, no-holds barred United States-sponsored counter revolutionary war in the 1980s' the brutality of the contra forces especially the Nicaragua Democratic Front (FDN) which was one of the most brutal of the contra outfits. This force was portrayed and projected as the alternative force to rule Nicaragua, which lacked the democratic credibility nor the resources to counter the Sandinistas

or win over the rearguard, the Nicaraguan people. Torn asunder by the war, ravaged by natural calamities, Managua had not yet recovered by the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 25 December 1972.

The attacks by the contras grew vicious with every passing day and the country was also subjected to the attacks by the CIA-led Unilaterally Controlled Latino Assets(UCLA's), terrorist attacks, the United States imposed embargo which brought the country on to the brink of financial and economic ruin. This war led to the political/ ideological polarization of the society, destruction of crucial infrastructure and led to a massive diversion of resources from crucial development to wartime economy and a massive mobilization of precious resources to counter Reagan's war. The country also faced bombardment, loss of civilian lives, subjected to the most vicious propaganda war to undermine the credibility of the Sandinista regime in the eyes of the international community. Even the freest elections that the country had in over a century and a half was undermined by the Reagan administration. Compounding the problems due to the war the eastern coast of Nicaragua, the war zone and the most vulnerable of all the regions of the country was hit by the Hurricane Joan in October 1988.

In the initial years of the contra war and the low intensity conflict in Nicaragua efforts were made by both sides the United States and Nicaragua to bring a peaceful settlement to the conflict through bilateral negotiations. But the manner in which these negotiations were conducted and the issues that were negotiated seemed like terms that were dictated by a victorious power, which no self-respecting sovereign nation would ever negotiate. The mining of the Nicaraguan harbors in January-March 1984 eventually put an end to the ongoing negotiations.

Peace, reconciliation and relief to the people came in form of the regional initiatives of the Central American and other Latin American countries *vide.*, the Contadora Peace Process (1983-1986) and later the Esquipulas II Peace Accords (1987-1990), the cease-fire between the Sandinista government and the Nicaraguan Resistance in March 1988. Much

efforts were done by the United States to scuttle the regional peace process. Eventually a war weary population simply capitulated and succumbed to the United States pressures amid veiled threats of a continued contra war in the event of a Sandinista victory and voted out the Sandinistas and voted in a new moderate rightist coalition the Nicaraguan Opposition Union (UNO) led by the redoubtable Senora Violeta Chamorro , the widow of the assassinated journalist and opposition leader Pedro Joaquin Chamorro on 25 February 1990. With the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas the country collectively heaved a sigh of relief. The Sandinistas won the battle as the Contra outfits were a spent force by the end of 1987, but had lost the elections which they were so sure of winning and pre-election surveys projected a Sandinista victory.

An election which was fought under the shadow of the threat of renewed contra war in the event of a Sandinista victory and the barrel of the gun. In the recent November 2001 elections in Nicaragua the pre-election surveys foresaw a renewed Sandinista victory, but in the best tradition of the United States policy in the region and precedent set by the Republican administration of George Bush Sr (1989-1992), the present George Bush Jr., Administration (2001-2004), forestalled a Sandinista victory by issuing dire threats to the Nicaraguan population of a renewal of the Contra war and the economic sanctions in the event they chose to elect the Sandinistas once again. So much for the democratic choice of the Nicaraguan population and the right to elect a government of their choice. All these dire threats were not considered as interference in the democratic process and internal matters of Nicaragua and its people. Nevertheless in Central America the United States sought to maintain the basic order of quite undemocratic societies, avoid populist change that might upset the established economic and political orders and move to a leftist direction and risk upsetting the traditional structures of power with which it had been traditionally allied with.

Legal rules devised by the international community are a reflection of the social standards as law is the expression of the general will. They are

minimum standards of civilized behavior. Once they have been accepted by the states parties they become binding upon the signatory States, mandatory principles which has to be complied upon. If we take a very realistic view there are probably more countries in the world which systematically violate various international laws than countries which adhere to these provisions. United State which was largely instrumental in bringing about the United Nations and had become signatory to the various treaties had the moral and the legal obligations to ensure that it complied with its provisions. Laws are not founded on expediency alone. It has been framed to meet certain political, social, or economic needs of nation states. These international laws form an organic part of the international order. In this interdependent world there is no state however powerful that may not need the help of other states to ward off antagonistic forces ranged against it. One cannot be a Robinson Crusoe and isolate oneself in an increasingly interdependent world where in the era of globalization state boundaries are increasingly rendered irrelevant. Hence subjection to international laws and norms are a matter of necessity rather than that of consent.

The Reagan administration by its support, sponsorship, training, equipping and financing of the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionary forces, the contras had violated the norms and the principles of sovereignty, right to self-determination and non-intervention and non-use of force in international relations as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations of 24 October 1945 and the Charter of the Organization of American States. Whatever may be the policies, programs and alliances and the decisions made by the Sandinista Government of Daniel Ortega there was no reason for justification of the use of force (*jus ad bellum*) for the Reagan Administration for perpetrating aggression and intervention on a small nation Nicaragua albeit through the use of proxy forces. The acts of mining of the Nicaraguan harbors were acts in contravention of international law and neutrality of the seas. Such acts committed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) ran against the War Powers Act of 1973 provisions and above the normal procedures of

Congressional Intelligence Oversight and also brought international condemnation of the United States.

The International Court of Justice in its landmark judgment of 27 June 1986, though condemned the United States aggression on Nicaragua but failed to make the United States accountable and responsible for the violations of the international humanitarian law by the contras by insisting on a higher threshold of essential control test and the agency control test. Acts that the contras had committed during the decade long low intensity conflict against the Sandinistas were if not directed by the United States was indirectly supported by the Reagan Administration. Hence the United States should have been held accountable for the violations. The International Court of Justice should have held the United States responsible and accountable for the humanitarian law violations by the Nicaraguan contras thereby sending a powerful message to all the nations across the world that such support to proxy forces would not be tolerated.

This land mark judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 was of such importance that it found its echoes in the judgments issued from the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), sitting at The Hague. The ICTY also felt that the World Court had not been stringent in its criticism of the United States sponsorship of the Contras and the international humanitarian law violations perpetrated by them. The standards of effective control test and the agency test being set very high it precluded attributing the violations of the international humanitarian law violations and non compliance of the Nicaraguan contras to the United States, the sponsoring state. United States by it citing the Optional Clause provision of the Statute of the Court and withdrew from the Proceedings of the International Court of justice when it became clear that it was losing the case and later accepted that the ultimate goal of the United States was to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Thus removing any alibi that it had for its intervention in this hapless country.

Also the withdrawal from the World Court signified that when it came to national interests and foreign policy concerns it will not have any respect to the sanctity of international norms and standards and for the authority of the Court. The United States withdrawal sent a powerful signal that if an international organization does not serve the interests of the United States and its allies, interests that govern United States foreign policy there is little reason for it to be allowed to survive. This was the prime example of Nicaragua , being aware of the asymmetry of power between it and the United States, to use peaceful means of countering United States terror acts when it took the issue of United States aggression, a crime against peace, and for other acts which were perpetrated by the Contras, to the International Court of Justice and the United Nations, the twin venues of international justice. The United States not only vetoed the Security Council resolution initiated by the Nicaraguan government condemning United States aggression but also refused to pay the reparations that the World Court had awarded to Nicaragua. Once it withdrew from the World Court proceedings the United States sent a powerful message of its intentions to pursue its unilateral policy in the global arena. A policy which has continued even as of today as seen in its efforts to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussain of Iraq. Such was the pressures that was exerted by the George Bush Sr. Administration on the Violeta Chamorro government that in exchange of much needed aid it was forced to withdraw its claim to the reparations. The promised aid however never came. The contras or the Nicaraguan Resistance were of course one of the most brutal of the rebel forces as they were primarily made up of the members of the much hated National Guard of the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle and had a record of human rights and humanitarian law violations during the Sandinista revolution.

Unfortunately low intensity conflicts are of that genre that it makes no distinction between the combatants and the civilian population. An insurgent may be a civilian in daytime, going about his normal course of business and during the night don the military fatigues and join in the war. The line between

the civilian population and the combatants is increasingly blurred. Any counterrevolutionary warfare which is aimed at undermining the revolutionary order and its subsequent overthrow increasingly targets the visible signs of that order be it the economic, social, the infrastructure or the civilian population. Nicaraguan conflict saw many violations of international humanitarian law directly by the United States supported Contras and indirectly by the United States by its bankrolling these forces especially the provisions of the Common Article 3 of the Four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and certain provisions of the Additional Protocol II of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 Relating to Non-International Armed Conflicts of 8 June 1977.

All the provisions pertaining to the Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions relating to violence to the life and person, which included murder, body mutilation, cruel treatment, torture, taking of hostages to the contra cause, rape, gross outrages on personal dignity and inflicting humiliating and degrading treatment were violated by the Nicaraguan contras, President Reagan's Freedom Fighters. The official orders were to attack soft targets such as undefended civilian targets such as agricultural collectives and health clinics and to expressly avoid the Nicaraguan army. The main problem of application of the Additional Protocol II in its entirety was that the Nicaraguan Resistance (Contras) did not occupy any territory in Nicaragua. The only territory that they occupied was in various bases in Honduras and to a smaller extent in Costa Rica, the northern front and the southern front respectively. From these bases the contras launched their attacks on the Sandinista Government and installations and committed atrocities on the hapless civilian population. Occupation of territory was the pre-condition for the complete application of the Additional Protocol II. the complete application of the Additional Protocol II. Yet some of the provisions relating to prohibitions on attacks on installations releasing dangerous forces, forced movement of population, are prohibitions which apply to any government forces and to the insurgents even if they had not occupied the territory. As they were

considered part of the customary international law. It assumes utmost importance that Additional Protocol II which contains many more provisions than Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions should be applied and enforced in the stringent manner in intra-state conflicts irrespective of whether the insurgent forces occupy territory or not. This rule should be modified considering the facts that such conflicts are increasingly getting brutalized with every passing day, atrocities against the civilian population and property are on the rise and such internal armed conflicts have seen wanton destruction and devastation in recent times.

Protection of victims and to the civilian population and the others not taking part in the hostilities should be the top priority of the international monitoring agencies. Non-application of the provisions of Additional Protocol II on insurgent forces who have not occupied any territory and have traditionally operated from bases across national borders will have major repercussions for countries like India which is facing cross-border militancy and insurgency from insurgents operating from Pakistan. Serious implications will arise if the precondition of territorial control is made mandatory as it would deprive the civilian population of the protections and the rights that they are entitled to and richly deserve. It would prevent the international community to hold those insurgent forces responsible and accountable for the acts and the atrocities that they had committed during the internal armed conflict. And to bring them to justice.

The Nicaraguan contras violated every rule in these Conventions (Common Article 3) and the provisions of the Additional Protocol 11. Attacks on civilians and civilian properties, violence to the life and person such as murder, mutilation, cruel treatment, torture, outrages on personal dignity, taking of hostages, kidnapping, rape, taking of hostages, acts of terrorism, pillage, attacks on objects indispensable to the civilian population such as health clinics, agricultural cooperatives food stuffs, attacks on works and installations containing dangerous forces such as the attack on the oil tanks in the port city of Corinto, were perpetrated by the contras as well as the by the

parts of the world as well as the foreign policies that it follows towards Third World regimes. International humanitarian law therefore is the casualty. So since the insurgents/counterrevolutionary forces or the guerrillas feel that since they are not parties to these treaties they can violate them with impunity. Making them accountable and responsible for the acts that they have committed in the course of the counterrevolutionary warfare becomes an uphill task of the international community and the international legal institutions which are mandated to bring these forces to trial and justice. Also holding the state which wages wars of aggression and low intensity conflicts and supports these so-called Freedom Fighters, accountable and responsible for violations of the laws of war and international humanitarian law is the most pressing concerns of the international community.

Such violations made the international community to work for the establishment of the International Criminal Court in 1998, which of course the United States President Bill Clinton had signed but the present political dispensation has refused to ratify for the fear that the United States would be made accountable for the actions of not only its own personnel but also acts of the regimes and armed groups that it bankrolls to suit its foreign policy interests. This refusal not only exhibits a contempt for the new World Court, but also the streak of unilateralism in American foreign policy.

Human rights violations were the casualty in this counterrevolutionary warfare. States in emergency as a result of armed conflicts are known to violate many human rights as enshrined in the international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. A country beleaguered by the counterrevolutionary war and blatant aggression by the united States was deeply suspicious of the moves made by the Roman Catholic Church, the opposition newspaper La Prensa, the media such as Radio Catolica and the labor and business groups such as COSEP, which were the targets of the ire of the Sandinista government of national Reconstruction. Censoring of the freedom of press, restrictions against the Roman Catholic Church, restrictions

on the business and the labor unions and the declaration of the state of emergency from time to time was in itself a derogation on the human rights of the people of Nicaragua. Yet the conditions that were created by the counterrevolutionary warfare and the United States aggression justified much of the human rights restrictions. The restrictions on the opposition newspaper La Prensa had become imperative what with this daily siding with the country that was perpetrating aggression on Nicaragua. No country or its government would ever tolerate the presence of a newspaper or journal or a magazine which behaved like a mouth piece of the aggressor state with which it was at war with, even the most democratic states of the world, not even the United States itself. With States in emergency and facing counterrevolutionary warfare and aggression from the world's superpower and the big brother of the north there was bound to be certain human rights violations. Nevertheless there was no presence of death squads and other mechanisms of repression as existed in other neighboring nations El Salvador and Guatemala.

The election of 4 November 1984 was fair and free by any comparable standards. Yet it would have acquired more legitimacy if the opposition political parties were allowed to contest by the United States. Not even the best of liberal democracies can really boast of completely free and fair elections as seen reflected in the 2000 Presidential elections which brought the Administration of George Bush Jr. to the American Presidency. However there was considerable suppression of political dissent by the Sandinistas through the Turbas or the Sandinista supporters. All in all the country facing low intensity conflict and aggression showed a much better record of human rights than many of the countries that the United States portrayed as the examples of democracy.

The economic costs of the war and the United States embargo made it impossible for the Nicaraguan government to provide for the economic, social, health and educational needs of the people as the country was devastated by the war and the economic crisis. Thus the rights enshrined in

the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights of 1966 remained on paper and unfulfilled by the Nicaraguan Government. The human rights of the minority indigenous Indian populations of the Atlantic Coast regions which were largely ignored, overlooked and in many instances violated by the Sandinista regime in its efforts to integrate them into the national mainstream and into the new revolutionary order led to the flight of much of these communities into neighboring nations. Many of them were also forcibly relocated to the fire free regions on the principle of military necessity. The relocation and the disregard of the ethnic and cultural sentiments of these communities were not only a cause for much heart-burning among them but the enraged Indian communities either took flight across the borders into Honduras and to Costa Rica. It also led to the deep alienation and politicization of the Indian Communities. These communities formed their own organizations like the MISURASATA and the MISURA, later the KISAN and the YATAMA groups espousing the indigenous rights but also clamored for the autonomy of the Atlantic Coast region. Another fall out of the human rights violations of the Indian communities was much of the Indian leadership joined ranks with the contra organizations as the Nicaragua Democratic Front (FDN), which was an unfortunate but very much avoidable development. However the YATAMA Accord in 1988 which the Sandinista government reached with the Miskito and other indigenous Indian communities facilitated their early return, repatriation and the subsequent reintegration process even before the conflict ended.

The new Nicaraguan Constitution which was adopted on 9 January 1987 was done through the democratic, participatory approach by including in the Constitution-making committees persons from across the ideological/political spectrum. Decisions were taken through a consensual methods and through intensive deliberations. The Nicaraguan Constitution itself contained extensive political, social, economic and cultural rights for the Nicaraguan population as well as a number of guarantees and rights for the ethnic populations of the country. The manner in which the Constitution was

made and adopted itself indicated that the people of Nicaragua were not living in a totalitarian dungeon and a repressive state as was portrayed by the United States administration. An examination of the rights and guarantees given to the Nicaraguan people by this Constitution indicated that the Sandinista government was democratic by its actions and had reached out to every man, woman and child by protecting their basic, fundamental rights.

Document after document released by the United States department that were responsible for foreign policy harped on the human rights violations by the Sandinista government, while they very much overlooked the gross violations of human rights elsewhere in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, South Korea, Israel, and other parts of Latin America and Africa. All these regimes were roped into the United States grand crusade to bring the benefits of democracy and human rights to the oppressed peoples of the Third World. however much of what the United States did was to contain democracy and human rights and mobilized its state power to ensure its own interests and that of its allies. Though there were violations of international humanitarian law and human rights by the Nicaraguan government, yet they were not of such intensity and brutality and were confined to a few regions the rest of the country was fairly free of the conflict, which made it possible for the process of peace and reconciliation to take place in a more easy manner than was expected. Given the context in which the Sandinista government found itself located in and the disparity of power between the United States and itself the paranoia in Managua was perhaps more understandable, especially in the light of the relocation that it undertook of the ethnic communities of the Atlantic Coast, the censorship and the restriction of civil liberties of the Nicaraguan Citizens and other emergency measures it had to adopt to cope with the combined threat from the United States and the Contras.

Violations of international humanitarian law and the human rights by both the Nicaraguan government and the Nicaraguan Resistance, the brutality of the war, attacks on the civilian population and the economic hardships caused by the war and the economic embargo, the conscription

into the military, the Atlantic coast Indian communities became discontented by the Sandinista regime and its political indoctrination and the escalation of violence and conflict led to the large scale displacement of indigenous Indian Communities and the fleeing of large numbers of refugees to neighboring countries Honduras and Costa Rica and to Mexico and to the United States. Much of the Miskito and other Indian communities were reluctantly evacuated to relocation camps, which unfortunately widened the chasm between these communities of the Atlantic coast region and the Sandinista government in Managua. However these issues were resolved through negotiations with the indigenous Indian and other organizations. Even nations like El Salvador and Guatemala were facing low intensity conflicts from Marxist rebel guerrilla forces that the outcome was the outflow of refugees that spilled into the other countries in the region.

Such was the magnitude of refugee flows that the Central American Nations deemed it adopt the Cartagena Declaration on the Refugees in Central America on 22 November 1984 to address the refugee issue and to establish the legal mechanism to deal with the refugees in Central America. The Cartagena Declaration expanded the definition of the refugee to include victims of conflict and massive violations of human rights. The Esquipulas Accords in August 1989, the YATAMA accord with the indigenous Indian communities facilitated in the return of the refugees, the internally displaced persons, externally displaced persons and the returnees to Nicaragua. Once the conflict ended in February 1990 with the electoral defeat of the Sandinista government of Daniel Ortega and the inauguration of the Violeta Chamorro government in April 1990 as also the initiatives taken by the Sandinista government during the period 1988-1990 to address the grievances of the Miskito and other Indian communities, facilitated the process of repatriation and reintegration of the population who had fled Nicaragua during the decade long conflict.

The creation of refugee warriors was a new phenomenon. Unfortunately it was hard to distinguish between the really genuine refugees

who were fleeing persecution , the economic migrants who had fled the country unable to bear the hardships of the war and the others who had left to join the contra ranks in Honduras and Costa Rica. The presence of such refugee warriors went against the letter and spirit of the norms established by the Refugee Law. Politicization of the refugee camps was the inevitable consequences of such mixed flows as also militarization of the camps. These developments were and is still the major concern of the international humanitarian organizations mandated to care for the welfare and offer protection to the refugees. Many of the contra ranks were filled with people who were either kidnapped, forcibly conscripted into the contra ranks with promises of a better life and future and lured with prospects of making some good money. A dangerous trend which is much evident in many of the trouble spots of the world today.

Offering protection and humanitarian assistance to the refugee populations from Nicaragua in Honduras and Costa Rica was the most difficult task of the UNHCR. This was true in the context of deepening politicization, militarization of the camps and the escalation of violence among the refugees in these camps. Much of the vulnerable refugee populations are put at increasing risk due to the availability and the massive proliferation of weapons and small arms in the hands of the refugee communities. In the context of rabid anti-Communist sentiments that characterized the Reagan administration and the ongoing anti-Communist struggles in Central America UNHCR found it increasingly difficult to maintain its neutral stand that it was mandated to uphold as it was heavily dependent on the funds that it received from the United States government. It found itself drawn into the East-West political/ideological struggles that was being enacted in the Central American region and was placed on a very sticky wicket. Cutting down on the funds available for the UNHCR rendered the administration of the humanitarian tasks mandated to it a very difficult proposition. Thereby it had to adopt a carrot and stick policy and gave incentives in form of cash to those who wanted to leave and cutback on the daily rations and cash to those who did

not desire to leave the refugee camps, thus putting much of the vulnerable population at increasing risk and forcing them to take shelter in the contra camps run by the various right-wing humanitarian organizations.

It is understood that humanitarian assistance and aid should be based on the principles of impartiality, neutrality and non-discrimination. But during the Nicaraguan conflict we saw a plethora of right-wing humanitarian organizations which sprung up ostensibly to render humanitarian aid and assistance to the refugees and other beleaguered people. But they were nothing but front organizations to divert millions of dollars worth of aid to the Nicaraguan contras to fight their war against the Sandinista government and overthrow it. This aid being banned by the United States Congress by its Boland I (December 1982) and Boland II (June 1984) Amendment to the Defense Appropriations Bill banning all aid to the Nicaraguan contras by the United States government institutions. These right wing humanitarian organizations became conduits for the distribution of aid to these contra forces. The activities of these right -wing organizations not only broke the Congressional ban on Contra funding but also undermined the nature of humanitarian aid which was nothing but lethal in nature. These organizations violated the principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity and grossly undermined the activities of the international aid organizations who were mandated to render emergency humanitarian assistance, an unfortunate development. If only legal mechanisms such as the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement and the London Declaration on Internally Displaced Persons which came up in 1998 and 2000 respectively had existed during the 1980s when the low intensity conflicts and the insurgencies were going on the Central America and Africa, the internally displaced persons in these conflict regions would have secured better protection and assistance .

Repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration all durable solutions to the problems of refugees, the externally displaced persons, the returnees and the internally displaced persons with the territory of nation states can be possible only through the political settlement and political will of the parties involved in

the conflicts. Conflict resolution and the settlement of all outstanding disputes and removing the causes of conflicts, the trigger factors, is the only way out of finding durable solutions. The Central American nations had shown to the global community the path to the conflict resolution through political will and initiatives. Conflict resolution and peace building was a very complex process and a multi-component, interagency integrated endeavor involving diverse actors.

Once it became understood that the Reagan Administration was not really interested in resolution of conflict through bilateral negotiations with the Sandinista government of Daniel Ortega and the main objective of sponsorship of the Contras was the overthrow of the Sandinista government. The Central American nations and the other countries of Latin America decided to take matters into their own hands. Conflict resolution and pacific settlement of disputes was sought to be reached first by the Contadora initiative (1983-1986) which sought to defuse the conflicts in El Salvador and Nicaragua and to prevent escalation of the conflict in Guatemala. All these based on the principles of non-intervention and de-escalation of the conflict by banning foreign advisers and removal of foreign bases, and limiting the acquisition of defense materials. All these conditions were not favorable to the United States and then its allies El Salvador and Honduras who were not in a position to take an independent stance due its dependent relationship that it shared with the United States. Going against the principle of pacific settlement of all disputes as enshrined in the United Nations Charter the United States not only scuttled the bilateral track of peace negotiations as also the regional initiatives undertaken first by the Contadora Group and later the Esquipulas Peace Process by the five Central American countries.

The Arias Peace Plan (February 1987) and the Esquipulas II Peace Accords of 7 August 1987 set the stage for the Central American countries to come together on a common platform and interests to resolve the ongoing conflicts in their respective countries to ensure regional peace and stability. Changes in leadership in their respective countries, political and military

policies, economic decline and crises, burdened with the vast numbers of refugees in each of the five countries which burdened the already declining economy, a desire for peace and political willingness to end the civil strife in the region brought about the process of peace building and resolution of conflict in the region. By 1987 the Nicaraguan Resistance was a spent force and revealed their ineffectiveness as a military force. The declining willingness to underwrite the contra war especially in the revelations of the Iran-Contra scandal which hit the Reagan administration placed limits on the United States interventionism and the Contra war. This scandal almost brought down the Reagan administration and revealed the murky side of covert operations. Realization that the only way out for the contras was to come to the negotiating table made the Sandinista government and the Nicaraguan Resistance declare cease fire by signing the Sapoa Agreements on 23 March 1988 with the Sandinista Government. A series of agreements facilitated the process of democratization and elections which saw the surprise defeat of the Sandinista Government of Daniel Ortega and the election of the Violeta Chamorro administration. Thus it was only one day of voting that effectively put an end to the contra war.

These elections were supervised by the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Elections In Nicaragua (ONUVEN). The smooth transfer of power to the UNO led Violeta Chamorro government on 25 April 1990 was facilitated by the United Nations Observer Force for Central America (ONUCA) which also was mandated by the United Nations to supervise the demobilization, disarmament and the reintegration of the forces of the Nicaraguan Resistance. The ONUVEN/ONUCA was the first time that the United Nations had its Observer Force in the Western Hemisphere considered to be the traditional sphere of influence of the United States which no other power or force was ever allowed to enter. YATAMA Accord of February 1988 recognized the rights of the indigenous Indian communities in the Atlantic Coast. These rights were the rights of these communities to determine their own political, economic, social, cultural, educational, religious

and legal development. This agreement facilitated the return of the internally displaced persons to their homes, the return of the refugees and their successful repatriation to Nicaragua. Reintegration of these Atlantic Coast Indian communities was possible in a spirit of reconciliation and by recognizing that they too have dignity and rights. The International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) on 29-31 May 1989 enabled the UNHCR to repatriate the refugees, returnees and the externally displaced persons back to Nicaragua and to integrate the internally displaced persons within Nicaragua. The UNHCR was helped in this process by the excellent disposition of the Sandinista government without which the process of repatriation was just not possible.

These processes were heavily influenced by the new international order that was shaping up. The change of administration in the United States with the George Bush administration taking office in January 1989, the policies of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* of Mikhail Gorbachev which spelled the end of the Soviet Empire with the democratization of Eastern Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the union of the two Germanys, the end of communism and the cold war which saw the dismantling of the Soviet Empire and the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union itself. Winds of change enveloped the Central American states themselves which saw the end to the political/ideological conflicts in the region. The peace process in Central America was a part of this transformation in the global order.

Once the objective was achieved by the United States namely the ouster of the Sandinista government, and the United States traditional control was finally established the country collapsed into a major humanitarian disaster, declining into chaos, misery and hopelessness. Reconstruction and rebuilding of the devastated economy and the lives of thousands of people, refugees, returnees, internally displaced as well as externally displaced persons and the ordinary people caught up in the civil conflict, finding durable solutions to people affected by the conflict, was the top priority of the Nicaraguan government. A task of such magnitude could not be performed

alone. Into this devastation stepped the Program for the Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America (PRODERE). This major initiative combined the experience of the UNHCR in dealing with the emergency situations and in rendering humanitarian assistance along with the expertise of the UNDP in sustainable development efforts.

This was a UNHCR/UNDP initiative through its strategies of democratic decentralization, working through the local bodies, NGOs, local initiatives in a true spirit of participatory approach and mainly through its Quick Impact Projects (QIPS) ensured that sustainable development projects could be initiated in Nicaragua. Financing of micro projects and enterprises, repairing of roads, highways, vital bridges, rehabilitating of the agriculture sector was the primary emphasis of this program. Its goal was to create self-sustaining development by financing micro-projects and integrating them into the national development plans and policies. PRODERE was a multi agency project which worked the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP), the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNFPA and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).through the Quick Impact Projects(QIPS) long-term sustainable development could be taken up in health, education, sanitation, transportation, crop and livestock production, infrastructure rehabilitation, repair or rebuilding. These projects by involving the people, the refugees, the internally displaced persons and the demobilized and the disarmed contras aided in healing the wounds of war, removed the sense of alienation that had enveloped much of the Atlantic Coast communities.

Founded on the principles of non discrimination this PRODERE program was an example of reintegration process which did not differentiate between the refugee, returnees, the internally displaced persons and the externally displaced persons as well as a fine instance when even the former combatants were brought into the purview of the reintegration, rehabilitation and reconciliation process. The welfare of these returnees, refugee, internally displaced persons and externally displaced persons were made an integral

part of the national development plans of the concerned states. Aiding in the reconstruction and sustainable development efforts were a vast number of non-government organizations through whom the PRODERE programs and the Quick Impact Projects (QUIPS) were implemented. Without the active and comprehensive participation of the states of Central America, UNHCR, NGOS, donor countries and the local communities and their leadership and the local governments these programs would not have been brought about.

However the dwindling of the enthusiasm of the donor nations and the lack of making adequate funds available to these programs led to the curtailment of these projects in Nicaragua. A coordination of all these organizations was crucial to the success of these projects undertaken by the international community, which could be replicated in similar post-conflict situations elsewhere in other parts of the world. International humanitarian organizations such as the UNHCR, the ICRC and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs(OCHA) are of the viewpoint that early resolution of the conflicts by negotiated settlement and political willingness of the contending parties to the conflict to all outstanding disputes would solve the humanitarian problems caused by the conflicts and result in finding durable solutions to the vast numbers of populations displaced by the conflict.

The economic, political and ethnic problems were exacerbated by the two massive hurricanes that struck the eastern coast of Nicaragua Hurricane Joan (October 1988) and a decade later Hurricane Mitch (October-November 1998). These hurricanes were accompanied by mudslides, landslides, flooding of the rivers, breaking of the crater of Casitas Volcano which buried the villages in its wake, the washing away of people and homes. Whole communities were either washed away or lay buried under the mud. International community rushed in emergency humanitarian assistance. But in the two occasions the Nicaraguan government found the assistance barely adequate. Environmental degradation deforestation, rapid urbanization, conflict which depleted the resources to a large extent, people living in high risk areas such as river banks or near the foothills of the volcanoes, lack of

early warning systems or ignoring the warnings that were put out by the Meteorological departments were found to be the causes responsible for the devastation and the high incidence of the casualties especially during Hurricane Mitch.

While the Sandinista Government during Hurricane Joan had heeded to the early warning systems and evacuated the population from these high risk areas thereby keeping the casualties low. As was expected the United States when Hurricane Mitch struck Nicaragua in 1998 did not give Nicaragua the aid that it had asked for. Thus proving the theory that once the objectives of the United States is achieved, which was the overthrow of the Sandinista government, the country was once again put on the back-burner of the foreign policy of the United States. Such natural disasters of such magnitude set back the economy by many years and the people were the ultimate sufferers. International relief organizations poured in emergency humanitarian assistance and attempted to bridge the gap between the relief and reconstruction. The large-scale evacuation that were undertaken due to the two natural disasters posed an ugly remainder to the Atlantic Coast communities of the evacuations that were undertaken during the decade long conflict and brought back bitter memories.

Another fallout of these disasters especially during Hurricane Mitch was that the painstaking work of de mining operations that the Nicaraguan government had undertaken along with the international community, the International Committee of the Red Cross, France etc., for seven years came undone . These mines were located in the conflict zones in the Atlantic Coast regions, planted both by the Sandinista armed forces and the Nicaraguan Resistance, and were dislodged from their locations. These land mines and anti-personnel mines were swept away by the swirling and overflowing rivers which deposited them several miles downstream in new mine free locations. This set back the de mining program by a good two years and a renewed search had to be launched to locate the new locations of the mines. Another aspect of peace and conflict resolution was to remove the signs of the conflict

which was the thousands of land and anti-personnel mines which still continued to kill, disable and cripple people. Thereby reminding the people of the horrors of the decade long conflict.

As far as the Sandinista Party is concerned it split into two factions over the issue of Daniel Ortega's domination over the party. The former Vice-President Sergio Ramirez, an internationally-renowned poet and literary figure, left the Sandinista Party and formed his own political party called the Sandinista Renovation Movement in May 1994. When in 2001 elections, it looked like that the Sandinistas Party led by Daniel Ortega was coming back to power in the Presidential and Assembly elections, the present Bush Administration exerted its maximum pressure on the Nicaraguan people to prevent a Sandinista victory. This signifies that the same policy outlook and the same pressures on Nicaragua continues to this day.

Years of conflict, United States aggression and interventionism and economic pressures, destabilization of the economy, devastation and destruction of the economy and social infrastructures, violence against the civilians reaching frightening levels, led to massive forced internal displacements of people and the flight of tens of thousands of refugees and other people from Nicaragua.

Low intensity conflicts as in Nicaragua pivot around the struggle for power, security, and scarce resources. These struggles leads\ to widespread loss of life and damage to the infrastructure. Conflicts of this nature results in scant respect for international laws, international humanitarian law and human rights of the people. These conflicts have diverted precious resources from economic and social development and have created a war time economy. People have suffered immensely with inadequate state and community structures already weakened or destroyed by the conflict. Low-intensity conflicts have exacerbated the vulnerability of the populations who have less access to basic health services, education, clean water, and sanitation and food security. Large areas of productive land has been severely restricted by the presence of land and anti-personnel mines

embedded in the soil. Land and anti personnel mines prevent access to land resources and infrastructure and hamper the emergency humanitarian operations. large number of displaced and refugee populations have faced difficulties of reintegration and resettlement. Most of them returned to their homes damaged or completely destroyed, whole communities destabilized without food, shelter, having their capacity to earn their livelihoods crippled and faced the lack of employment opportunities. All these factors hinder vulnerable populations from achieving self-sufficiency in post-conflict nations. in order to achieve peace. Reconciliation and put the economy on the path towards self sufficient sustainable development. A major aspect of the healing process is the successful demobilization and disarmament of the former combatants and their reintegration into the economic and productive life of the nation.

The natural disasters that hit Nicaragua, though were set apart by a decade, yet the causes for the widespread loss of life and damage to property were the same. This devastation and damage is linked to concentration of populations in areas of high urbanization and poverty living in ecologically sensitive areas and geographically unstable high risk locations. Environment degradation, widespread deforestation, inadequate shelters, poorly designed buildings and infrastructure had rendered the populations living in these regions in Nicaragua vulnerable to such natural disasters and contributed to the deepening of the poverty and the misery of the people further.

It is imperative that issues of relief and rehabilitation should be considered at the outset development plans, strategies and tools should be implemented at the earliest to bridge the gap between relief and development as a transition to sustainable development. Sustainable development can be possible only when emphasis is placed on strengthening the capacity of the national governments and the local communities with special emphasis on disaster prone regions. Regional organizations and mechanisms should necessarily play a coordinated role in offering response to natural disasters and complex emergencies. Conflict resolution, establishing of peace and

democracy, rehabilitating and reconstruction of conflict-torn economies and societies to put them on the path of sustainable development requires a great degree of coherence and coordination. All these should be done among the regional organizations, political peace keeping, humanitarian and human rights organizations, regional and international development organizations. Imperative is also interagency emergency and development assistance coordination, completion of the unfinished political and humanitarian rights agenda. Nation states right to self-determination, right of people under which they can make political decision freely and pursue economic, social and cultural development must be respected. All this should be achieved without the fear of external states intervention and aggression. Sustainable development can only be possible by working with national governments, non-governmental agencies, international development organizations and civil society through the participatory approach. Nations and the international community should necessarily address the needs and the concerns of the most vulnerable members of the society such as the poor, women, children and the indigenous and minority peoples.

Conflicts no matter what their nature is are the scourge of humanity. Finally it is peace and coexistence between the nations and peoples of different and differing ideologies, political and economic systems which is the underlying condition of development. Sustainable development is possible when nations and international community recognizes and adheres to the principles of non-intervention and non-aggression, respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and self-determination of nation and the peoples.

For Nicaragua however the conflict that was waged in the 1980s has its impact in the twenty first century, what with the economic problems which were caused on account of the war still proving a major impediment to complete the process of reintegration and reconciliation as the old wounds and rivalries have not healed. The country is poor structurally, lacking in skills and infrastructures, rampant unemployment persists, the economy and the

infrastructures run down on account of years of brutal, corrupt regimes, blatant intervention by the big brother of the north, ravaged roads, communication facilities, farms, water distribution systems, raved by the natural disasters of immense magnitude, disruption of human relationships and sensibilities. Cease fires, elections, political power sharing, demobilization of the armed groups, does not really bring forth reconciliation. These are mere formal peace settlements which formally declare an end to the hostilities, but the bitterness and the antagonisms that were caused by the conflict remain alive. The lack of economic opportunities, faced with psychological humiliation and persecution by the community, the availability and access to weapons can at any time re ignite latent antagonisms and rivalries, especially if these demobilized members of the armed factions are not effectively utilized in the process of rebuilding.

Post Conflict Nicaragua was plagued by the rampant corruption of the Arnuldo Aleman Government 1996-2001, disregard for the welfare of the poor, the war ending promises made by the Violeta Chamorro 1990-1995, with regard to the settlement of land and private property tenure issues not yet resolved, a post-conflict economy wholly dependent on western aid, which effectively handed over the economic control to the international lenders, all have exacerbated class tensions.. All these issues that the new government led by Enrique Bolanos, which was elected to office in November 2001, have to address to prevent the country from sliding into deep morass and chaos. Nicaragua is today a society characterized by political instability, insecurity and everyday violence, and a fragile peace which can be shattered by the smallest trigger. Though the war was over a decade ago yet the causes which led to the deep polarization of the society, the schisms, the divisions within the national fabric of society still persists.

If only the United States learned to live with nations of alternative ideologies, political and economic systems and with revolutions in the global order, without intervening into the affairs of such nations, exploiting the indigenous roots of conflict for hegemonic/political/economic/strategic or

military reasons, the world would have not seen so much of suffering, pain, turmoil. The 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States would not have occurred. Much lessons have to learned by the United States and its policy makers that supporting of the forces of terrorism, insurgents and other armed groups and following the policies of supporting these groups, for any reasons whatsoever, would in the long run be counterproductive and such forces have the tendency to turn on their sponsors.

The Nicaraguan conflict, the contra war and the low intensity conflict though over a decade ago has its reflections in the present day with the administration of George Bush Jr., inducting the most notorious principal key players of the administration of President Ronald Reagan in the most crucial posts of the United States government. Elliott Abrams who was Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs and who had pleaded guilty for lying to Congress during the Iran-Contra hearings of the Congressional investigating committees, is now back as Director of the National Security Council's Office for Democracy, Human Rights and International Operations. The other significant appointee of the George Bush administration is Otto Reich , the former director of the Office of Public Diplomacy which was the Office directing the massive propaganda and disinformation campaign against the Sandinista government and had covered up human rights violations and massacres perpetrated by the Salvadoran Military which was bankrolled by the United States, is now back as Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere. Third most critical appointment is the induction of John Negroponte, the former United States ambassador to Honduras (1981-1985), as the United States Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations. Negroponte was the person who oversaw the smooth flow of weapons and other supplies to the Nicaraguan contras and the United States-sponsored terrorism in Honduras and the human rights violations by the Honduran military during the Nicaraguan contra war. This appointment is made over the protests of the Latin American Countries and a wave of protests within the United States Congress which had no other option

but to confirm these appointments in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States. In such a volatile scenario in an effort of bipartisanship the Congress was willing to give anything that the President asked of it. Three firebrands of the Reagan Administration represent the continuity of the foreign policy, in charge of critical foreign policy making bodies in the present day's changed global scenario. Developments that does not portend well to the countries of the Developing World. It only consolidates the deep-rooted and severe distrust and suspicion of the intentions of the United States among the Third World nations and its peoples.

By its intervention in Nicaragua and the directing the contra war and the low intensity conflict in the 1980s United States, in short, exhibited an arrogance of power. An arrogance which has increased by leaps and bounds with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of Communism in the global arena and the United States emergence as the world's only superpower having the massive capability to dictate terms to the international community. The only losers of such interventionist and hegemonic policies are the poor majority in the most impoverished countries of the Third World. As Cicero pointed out, "laws are silent amidst the clash of arms". And the ultimate result of such ideological civil conflicts is best summarized in this proverb, "When two elephants fight it is the grass that suffers". In short United States of America has and will continue to subordinate international laws and standards as also international institutions to its foreign policy concerns and will continue to follow policies of unilateralism to achieve its objectives in the global arena. These foreign policies are in complete disregard to the interests of the Third World and the effects such policies are on such highly vulnerable states in the global arena. As is seen in the present day policy it is following with regard to Iraq and President Saddam Hussain.