

effort to reduce the role of foreign business interests. This is inevitable in view of their ideological orientation and the sources of their mass support. But in both the Cuban and Nicaraguan cases, the pace of such efforts was determined in part by the desire of these regimes for access to US skills, markets, credit and aid. It was only after the United States pulled the plug on them that the pace of internal socio-economic transformation accelerated.

With regard to conservative, friendly regimes (Jamaica, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala), the United States should urge these states to address the local socio-economic and political sources of regional crisis in order to prevent the development of violent revolutionary challenges to their rule. In particular, the United States should state its support for land reform where relevant, its support for the organization and integration into national politics of groups whose political and civil rights have traditionally been denied and its opposition to abuse of the human and civil rights of opponents of incumbent regimes. In instances where such initiatives are ignored, there is probably more to be gained from dissociation from such regimes than there is from continued support. These policy prescriptions may seem rather remote from reality. But it bears recalling that such positions were at the heart of the Carter Administration's approach to instability in El Salvador in 1979-80.

In addition, the United States could do much to alleviate many of the "North-South" aspects of the economic crisis in the region through increasing economic assistance, facilitating debt re-negotiation and access to new lines of credit, and improving regional access to the American market. Many of these measures were included in President Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative and subsequently died in Congress. Measures of this type might go some distance towards avoiding the kind of civil and regional conflict which presents the Soviet Union with opportunities for involvement.

Finally, given its rather unfortunate historical reputation in the region, the United States would do well to rely to whatever extent possible on efforts by regional actors to contain and resolve the area's conflicts. This would reduce the possibility of a hostile regional response to what is perceived as US meddling. Moreover, it could enhance US relations with important regional actors, such as Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia and Panama, who are involved in this. The Soviet Union and its allies are far less likely to try to circumvent or undermine regional attempts at conflict resolution,