

SSICsim 2017

IRAN CONTRA OPERATION

BACKGROUND GUIDE

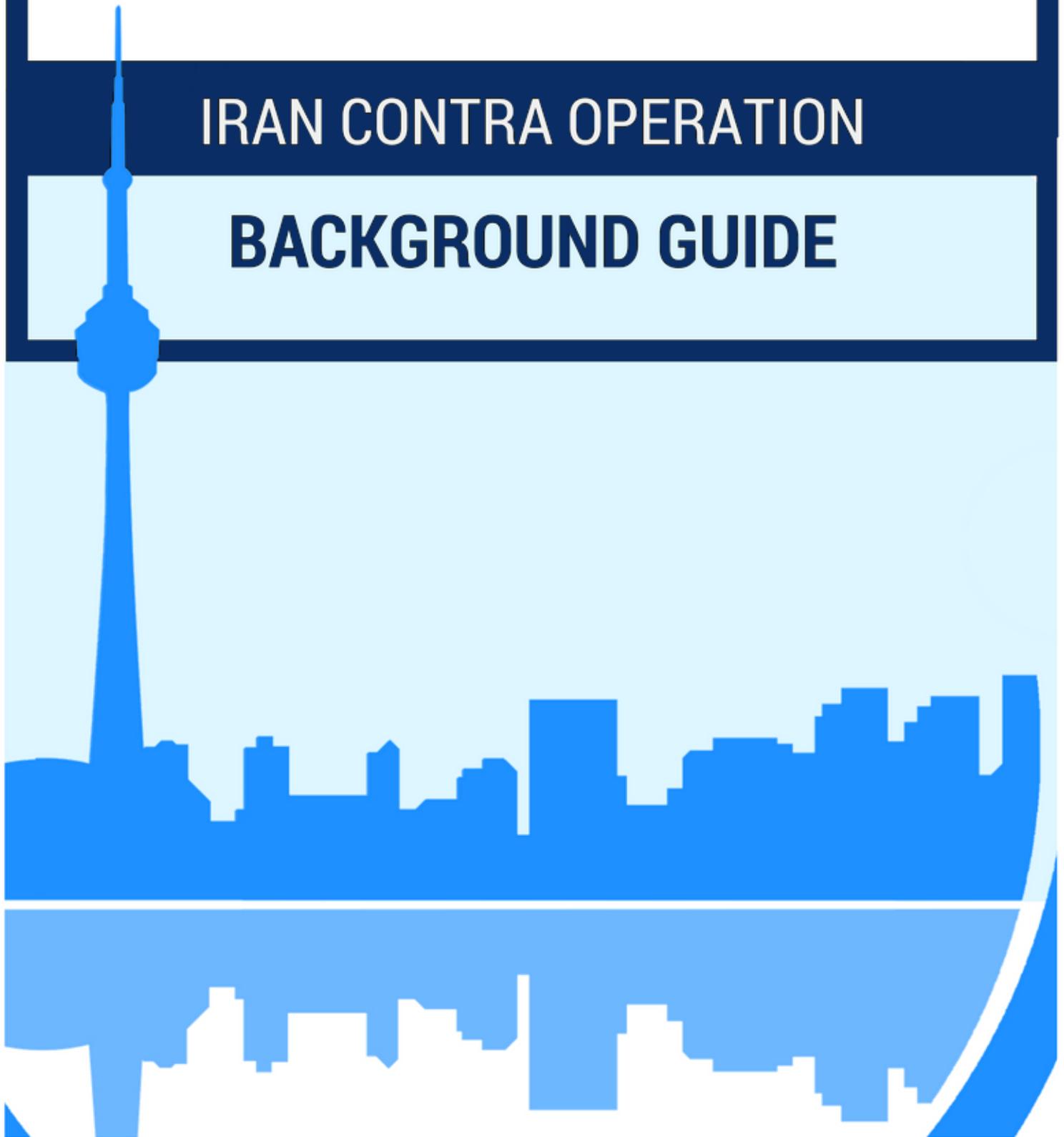


Table of Contents

Welcome from the Dais	3
Introduction	4
Background Information	6
Topics	13
Delegate Roles	16
Committee Mechanics	20
Bibliography	21



Welcome from the Dais

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the dais, and the crisis team, I am pleased to welcome you to the Iran-Contra Operation and SSICsim 2017. The staff, along with myself, are thrilled to have you partake as a delegate among Ronald Reagan's Senior Administration and its closest associates in carrying this challenging clandestine operation.

As you may have guessed, this committee will simulate the closed-door meetings and dealings among a group of select American officials and advisors that was the Iran-Contra Affair. Though official policy dictates Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism, the Reagan Administration found itself in an awkward position when an opportunity arose to sell American arms to Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages in Lebanon. The committee, beginning in late 1985 will dig itself deeper into secrecy by merging its covert operations in the Central American country of Nicaragua with its secret arms deals to Iran. Through the illegal funding of Nicaraguan revolutionaries, known as the Contras, to overthrow the ruling government, the committee's participants will need to take cautious steps to ensure that the operation is not exposed.

Maintaining the secrecy of the Iran-Contra Operation will be key to its success, and necessary in protecting the legitimacy of the President and his Administration. When reading this Background Guide and researching, one must understand what led to the exposing of Iran-Contra and learn what mistakes were made that led up to numerous Congressional hearings, indictments of high ranking officials, and the damage to Reagan's widespread popularity.

Each delegate in this committee is guilty of conspiring in illegal and covert activity, and will need to cover their tracks, handle their contacts, and carry out their part of the operation. Some may have ulterior motives, others will be conspiring in what they believe is the best path for the United States' success in foreign policy.

Whatever your part will be in all of this, I do wish you the best of luck and I look forward to seeing you all at SSICsim 2017.

Best Regards,

Nickolas Shyshkin
The Iran-Contra Operation
Committee Director, SSICsim 2017

Introduction

Following the fallout of United States-Iran relations, the former has continued its dedication to fight against Communism in the Cold War while spreading and maintaining its democratic sphere of influence. Meanwhile, Iran has found itself entangled in a war with Iraq. By the time Ronald Reagan's second term as President of the United States began in 1984, the nation had already made its mark in two regions of the world. The first being the Middle East, where the U.S. works with Israel to keep an eye on the area and contribute to the fight against Hezbollah. The second region is Latin America, where the toppling of Communist governments is key in the race against the Soviet Union to avoid another Cuba at the United States' doorstep. Meanwhile, with an arms embargo put in place by the United States and its allies, Iran has found it difficult to maintain and purchase new arsenal in its fledgling war against Iraq.

Hezbollah is a Shi'a Islamist militant group that has emerged as a result of the continuing Lebanese Civil War in early 1985, and is regarded as a proxy for Iran in the region. Thus, the group is loyal to Iran and its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. A supporter of the Lebanese National Resistance Front and Palestinian Liberation Organization, Hezbollah's activities have been focused on weakening and undermining Lebanon's Western supporters through the kidnapping of American, British, French, Swiss, and West German citizens in Lebanon.

It was visible that the United States and Iran had an opportunity to advance their own interests and cooperate within the Middle East. However, the United States had severed diplomatic ties, imposed an arms embargo, and the Reagan Administration had publicly denounced Iran as a sponsor of terrorism. Unknown to the rest of the American population and Congress, the United States had already jumped on this opportunity through private channels. Robert McFarlane, the National Security Advisor to Ronald Reagan, had introduced the idea of selling arms to Iran by way of Israel, and in exchange, Iran would use its leverage to release American hostages held by Hezbollah. To date, this deal has been complete thrice, a first load of missiles was sent in August of 1985, a second was sent one month later, and a third smaller batch of missiles was sent in November but returned back to Israel.¹

It is January 18th, 1986. In The White House, Ronald Reagan is sitting in a private meeting with his senior administration and key players in the arms negotiations. Robert McFarlane has resigned, and John Poindexter has taken over as National Security Advisor. Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, an aide to the National Security Council has successfully implemented two adjustments to the operation. The first adjustment ensures that arms are shipped directly to Iran instead of via Israel. The second adjustment ensures that profit made from the arms be funnelled to the Contras in Nicaragua to support them in overthrowing the leftist Sandinista National

¹ Robert Busby, *Reagan and the Iran-Contra Affair: the politics of presidential recovery* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1999), 60.

Liberation Front government. This diversion of funds would be done through Richard Secord and Albert Hakim's third party organization known as The Enterprise.

The Nicaraguan Contras are a U.S. supported right-wing rebel group that are fighting against the Communist Sandinista government led by Daniel Ortega, and since his first term, Reagan has promised to overthrow Ortega's government by supporting the Contras.² On its own soil, the United States Congress has voted to pass two parts of a legislative amendment referred to as the Boland Amendment. The amendment serves the specific purpose of blocking direct American government funding the Contras.³ Through a series of bank accounts and corporations set up by Albert Hakim and Richard Secord, Iranian payments would be funnelled through corporations set up in order for the Contras to safely receive funding, bypassing the American public, Congress, and the Boland Amendment.

As delegates, your goals are straightforward: send arms to Iran, have American hostages released by Hezbollah, and send any profit through third parties to Nicaragua to use against the Sandinistas. You will have to carefully orchestrate the operation until it is found to be fruitless, and carry out three broad steps for its success.

² Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagan's scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 8.

³ "U.S. Support for the Contras," *Understanding the Iran-Contra Affairs - The Iran-Contra Affairs*, , accessed August 29, 2017, https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/n-contrasus.php.

Background Information

American Democracy

By the time Reagan's presidency began, the two out of the three branches of government had never been so much at odds with each other. The executive branch consists of the President and his Administration at The White House, while the legislative branch, consists of Congresspersons at Capitol Hill. The two branches have drifted over the years of scandal, secrecy, and lies, and the legislature has been increasingly critical and wary over the executive branch's activities relating to covert operations and abuses of power.

This has not always been the situation, as Congress had elected to give the President additional tools and more independence through the National Security Act of 1947.⁴ This was done as the threat of communism began to shape the minds of the American public. At this point in time, Congress would generally allow the President to exercise further powers without receiving much backlash.⁵

Overtime, this independence began to fray as Presidents abused their power to extents that left the American population and Congress feeling uneasy. Such incidents include John F. Kennedy's 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion, heavy troop commitment to the Vietnam War, Lyndon B. Johnson's manipulation of Congress to pass the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, the bombing of Cambodia by Richard Nixon, and finally the Watergate scandal. Along with a downgraded level of the Marxist threat, the Sino-Soviet split, and pursuit of better relations with the two Communist giants. These events had proved that the executive branch was at times unable to effectively execute authority over matters of national security.⁶

With these developments, Congress has taken steps to reverse the decades of passivity by launching investigations into intelligence agencies and executive abuses of power and reforming the legislature itself.

Many pieces of legislature have been passed in Congress to have a more equal level of checks and balances regarding the relationship between the legislature and executive branch. War Powers Resolution of 1973 reasserted the legislature's role in setting limits to the country's involvement in foreign conflicts. The Hughes-Ryan Amendment (1974) to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 required that Congress be notified in a timely matter of any CIA covert operation. The Arms Export Control Act of 1976 required approval from Congress regarding the shipment of

⁴ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), vx.

⁵ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), xvii.

⁶ *Ibid.*

weapons abroad, and specifically barred sales to supporters of terrorism.⁷ Such changes allowed Congress to impose greater oversight of the executive and limit certain powers of the executive relating to foreign, military, and intelligence policies. Such changes brought greater public attention and wariness towards the executive branch.

Reagan's administration made it clear that they had wanted to involve themselves against Ortega's leftist government in Nicaragua. However Democratic members of congress considered such actions to be immoral and illegal, to a point where it was discussed that a piece of legislature should be passed banning all financial aid towards the Contras. Congressman Boland (D-MA) offered to put a different legislation onto the floor which prohibited "the use of funds 'for the purpose of' overthrowing the government of Nicaragua or provoking war between Nicaragua and Honduras"⁸, which was eventually backed by the White House and signed into law in December of 1982.⁹ This was called the Boland Amendment. However, the loophole in this amendment was that the U.S. government itself could not intentionally overthrow the Nicaraguan government, but could support the Contras who did have this intention.¹⁰

In October of 1984, the second Boland Amendment was passed due to growing concern from members of Congress who were worried that Reagan's administration violated the first Boland Amendment. The second Boland Amendment read:

No appropriations or funds made available pursuant to this [authorization bill] to the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, or any other agency or entity of the United States involved in intelligence activities may be obligated or expended for the purpose or which would have the effect of supporting, directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua by any nation, group, organization, movement, or individual.

The new amendment still had some loopholes. In theory, a third party or private party could donate money to the contras since these parties are not explicitly mentioned in the clause.¹¹ A second loophole would be that support for the Contras could come from the National Security Council, which is also not explicitly mentioned within the amendment since the NSC mostly deals with policy making rather than intelligence services.¹²

⁷ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), xviii.

⁸ "U.S. Support for the Contras," *Understanding the Iran-Contra Affairs - The Iran-Contra Affairs*, , accessed August 29, 2017, https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/n-contrasus.php.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

Iran

Prior to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the American-Iranian relations were warm, and the United States often considered Iran as America's closest and most stable ally in the region. In 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency and their British counterparts staged a coup orchestrated by the Americans to overthrow the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh. The reasoning for the coup was Mossadegh's growing relationship with the Soviet Union, along with concerns over the potential nationalization of petroleum.¹³ Following the coup, Mohammed Reza Shah becomes the authoritarian leader of Iran.

Leading up to the 1979 Revolution, the Shah was often seen as a corrupt dictator who would always fall in line with demands from the West. Even with the oil boom in the late 1970s, the government failed to improve the everyday lives of ordinary Iranians, who became increasingly agitated over the government's single party system and general authoritarianism. Over a period of two years, peaceful protests led by secular and religious opponents gained traction among the public and called for the return of influential clerical leader, Ruhollah Khomeini, and for the Shah to step down. In January 1979, the Shah steps down and flees Iran, while Khomeini returns and declares himself the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹⁴

In November of 1979, a large group of Iranian students stormed the American Embassy and vowed to hold its tenants hostage and the building occupied until the Shah was returned back to Iran for trial. The Iran hostage crisis ended with the signing of the Algiers Accords, in which the 52 hostages were released 444 days after their kidnapping on the day of President Reagan's inauguration in January of 1981.¹⁵ The incident caused the United States to sever diplomatic ties with Iran.

In September of 1980, Iraq, a longtime enemy of Iran, invaded Iran in a decision of opportunity as the country was weak and in no shape to fight following the recent Islamic Revolution. The war created the conditions for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to be formed under Khomeini, a revolutionary branch of the military that seeks to protect the country's image of being an "Islamic concept". The IRGC built a parallel organization in Lebanon, later becoming known as Hezbollah, at the time of Israel invasion in 1982 and used the organization to spread the concept of revolutionary Islam, bring Shi'a muslims under one roof, and to fight against Israel's invasion. Lebanon became the middle ground for war between Lebanon, Syria, the United States, Israel, and Hezbollah, a proxy for Iran.¹⁶

¹³ "US-Iran relations: A brief guide," BBC News, November 24, 2014, , accessed September 17, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24316661>.

¹⁴ "Timeline on the Relationship Between the United States and Iran," The New York Times, April 13, 2012, , accessed September 18, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html?mcubz=0#/#time5_81.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 32.

As the Lebanese Civil War drew on, the United States became more invested and its facilities in Beirut became the targets to many attacks. The 1983 United States embassy bombing in Beirut and the Beirut barracks bombing devastated and undermined American influence and status in the region, killing 371 people altogether. These two attacks were determined to be carried out by Hezbollah, and indirectly, Iran. Despite Secretary Schultz warning against pulling out of Lebanon, Reagan announced the removing of American troops. In light of the pull out of troops, Hezbollah had discovered that despite the United States' huge military capacity, it would back down if it deemed the cost of human life was too high for their operations. As a result, Hezbollah continued to attack the United States, however through smaller scale kidnappings of its citizens.¹⁷

In from March to May of 1984, CNN correspondent Jeremy Levin, CIA's Beirut Station Chief William Buckley, and Reverend Benjamin Weir were abducted and held hostage. Buckley's kidnapping struck a chord with the Administration as he was a high ranking intelligence officer, and was a friend of many. The Administration was desperate to rescue the hostages, and was facing an onslaught of negative media coverage regarding the efficiency with which the government handled the hostage situations.¹⁸

Israel itself had begun to secretly sell arms and parts to Iran in exchange for hard currency as early as 1980. At the time, it was worried of Iraq, an Arab country, winning its war against Iran and was more willing to back a nation where its dominance would balance the threat of Arab states by developing ties with non-Arab countries in the region, such as Iran. Israel lobbied for the United States to sell more arms to Israel so that it could direct them to Iran, and argued that the U.S. would gain contacts with moderate military and government officials, and thus strengthening their standing with the Iranians. Initially, the U.S. rejected Israel's appeals considering the recent events of the Embassy hostage crisis.

When 1985 rolled around, Robert McFarlane decided to bring the same offer up to the table. McFarlane knew that Khomeini would die soon and followings death, regime change would be inevitable. In order to avoid Iran taking the Soviet Union as an ally, Reagan eventually accepted and authorized its allies, such as France, Turkey, and even Israel, to send parts to Iran so that in the worst case scenario, Iran would at least turn towards an American ally. Though Casey was enthused by the idea, Shultz and Weinberger more critical of it and did not think that it was a viable option, however due to Reagan's lack of oversight and the encouragement of dialogue between Israel, McFarlane was able to go further with his plans.¹⁹

¹⁷ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagan's scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 60.

¹⁸ "Terrorist Attacks on Americans, 1979-1988," PBS, , accessed September 22, 2017, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/etc/cron.html>.

¹⁹ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagan's scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 62.

In July of 1985, McFarlane met with Israeli representative David Kimche, and they outlined the structure of a covert arms deal with Iran. Manucher Ghorbanifar, an Iranian arms dealer would ensure that arms shipped to Iran by way of Israel would land in the hands of moderate leaders within the regime. President Shimon Peres encouraged the deal, and Chairman of the Iranian parliament, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, had promised that he would himself reach out to Hezbollah and have the hostages released. The deal was first draft, and one month later McFarlane brought the draft to President Reagan, who supported the deal and encouraged further dialogue between the Israelis and Iranians. In August of 1985, Reagan approves the plan allowing Israel to ship American arms to Iran, and a first batch of missiles are sent on August 20th.

The delivery went awry and the shipment of missiles were confiscated by the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps upon landing in Tehran. Though payment to Israel and the United States went through, hostages were not released and Ghorbanifar was slammed for not coming through with his end of the deal. Following two heated meetings in Paris, Ghorbanifar admitted that the Iranians now wanted 400 missiles, and in return would release one hostage. The Israelis and Americans eventually agreed, and Reagan sanctioned a second shipment for September 15 to land in Tabriz, in order to avoid the IRGC in Tehran. In return, Benjamin Weir was released. Weinberger was particularly upset that Hezbollah had only released one American, and kept William Buckley²⁰. However in early October, it had been announced that Hezbollah had executed Buckley. By November, North and Secord are brought in to help with the logistics of the arms delivery, and a third load of missiles are sent out, but returned back to Israel due to not meeting the regime's standards.²¹

As of now, no new hostages have been released and the United States is growing wary of Iran's ability to influence Hezbollah in the release of hostages, despite the United States sending generous amounts of missiles. Additionally, a Presidential Finding has been signed by President Reagan authorizing the transfer of arms to Iran through The Enterprise in order to release the United States from liability.

²⁰ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagan's scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 74-75.

²¹ "Iran: The Expansion," *Understanding the Iran-Contra Affairs - The Iran-Contra Affairs*, , accessed August 30, 2017, https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/i-theexpansion.php.

Nicaragua

Since the mid-19th century, the United States has directly involved itself into the politics of Nicaragua, largely as a result of the established Monroe Doctrine. Between the years of 1912-1934, the country was occupied by U.S. forces due to political and economic purposes and pulled out in light of The Great Depression. In 1937, Anastasio Somoza Garcia, a rightist military who quickly rose in the ranks of the Nicaraguan National Guard was elected as President of Nicaragua. His election began a dynastic dictatorship for over four decades that centralized power into his hands and his successors.²²

The United States went on to support the Somoza regime as it proved to be a reliable ally in Central America, and even aided the United States in overthrowing President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954 and carrying out the Bay of Pigs Invasion of Cuba in 1961. By 1979, social discontent and corruption by then President Somoza Debayle had lead the United States to pull out its support for the regime and allow the country to take on a new shape.²³ In July of 1979, President Somoza Debayle fled the country, and the left wing Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) took rule, taking its name from Augusto Sandino, a revolutionary and national symbol of Nicaragua's resistance to American intervention from the early 20th century. The government is currently led by President Daniel Ortega.

With a socialist government in power, the Reagan Administration saw Nicaragua as a potential springboard for communism in the region. However amongst the population and to Congress, the anti-Communist argument was irrelevant and could not generate enough public support, or support from Congress that mostly contained centre democrats who would prefer a negotiated plan with the Sandinistas, rather than their forceful demise.²⁴ With a brewing communist state that would not heed to U.S. economic demands, the Reagan Administration sought to bring it down through the support of right-wing rebel groups.

The official reason for the Central Intelligence Agency's involvement in its Nicaraguan operations was to discourage Sandinista support for left-wing rebels in El Salvador, and at times seeks to promote democracy in the nation.²⁵ However secretly, forced regime change is the ultimate goal.

²² Tim Merrill, Nicaragua: A Country Study (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1994.)

²³ Edwin Williamson, The Penguin history of Latin America (New York, NY: Penguin, 2009), 357.

²⁴ Malcolm Byrne, Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 13.

²⁵ Hiatt, Fred, Joanne Omang, Washington Post Staff Writers; Staff Writers Michael Getler, and Don Oberdorfer Contributed to This Report. "CIA Helped To Mine Ports In Nicaragua." The Washington Post. April 07, 1984. Accessed September 16, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1984/04/07/cia-helped-to-mine-ports-in-nicaragua/762f775f-6733-4dd4-b692-8f03c8a0aef8/?utm_term=.4fc2fd1ea4e1.

In late 1982, a secretive policy against Nicaragua took course and many events and plans were hidden from Congress. National Security Decision Directive 17, signed by Reagan, allowed the CIA carry out missions against Sandinista support in Nicaragua and would raise popular support for an opposing front.²⁶ In addition, NSDD 17 allowed the formation of a local 500 troop force to revolt against the Sandinistas. The NSDD was never mentioned to Congress, and the Administration made it a point to deceive Congress in order to reach its goals.

Meanwhile, an alliance between Argentina, Honduras, and the United States was created in order to cooperate against the Daniel Ortega's government. Military exercises in Honduras began in 1981 and served the purpose of intimidating Nicaragua, and protecting Honduras in the case of an invasion. The Department of Defense is sucked into the matters of raising the Contras when in July of 1983, Reagan orders the Department to offer maximum amounts of assistance to the Central Intelligence Agency in order to improve support for the opposing forces.²⁷

By the end of 1983, President Reagan authorized for the shipment of 3000 more weapons and had raised Contras numbers to about 18,000.²⁸ In a period of many months at the start of 1984, the CIA planted mines in the harbours of Nicaraguan ports to damage and sink incoming ships, and thus discourage ships to call at Nicaraguan harbours and leave the country cut off from naval shipments.²⁹ The purpose was to disrupt the country's economy and keep the Sandinista government distracted from its main Contra fighting operations. Congress found out about this and blew up over not only the illegality of the mining, but a more importantly the skirting of the actions around the knowledge of Congress. At this point, Congress had become extremely wary of the actions performed by the executive branch of government.

The Contras were originally funded and supported through the Central Intelligence Agency, but as the Second Boland Amendment took effect, funding to the Contras was taken over by the National Security Council, while the Central Intelligence Agency continued to provide its support. North's vision of linking the Iran and Nicaragua operations have come together. Not only will The Enterprise deal with sending arms to Iran through its equipment, but the organization will also be responsible with diverting funds from Iran to Nicaragua.

²⁶ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 18.

²⁷ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 23.

²⁸ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 29.

²⁹ Hiatt, Fred, Joanne Omang, Washington Post Staff Writers; Staff Writers Michael Getler, and Don Oberdorfer Contributed to This Report. "CIA Helped To Mine Ports In Nicaragua." *The Washington Post*. April 07, 1984. Accessed September 16, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1984/04/07/cia-helped-to-mine-ports-in-nicaragua/762f775f-6733-4dd4-b692-8f03c8a0aef8/?utm_term=.4fc2fd1ea4e1.

Topics

Topic 1: Selling Arms to Iran

Amidst his Middle East foreign policy, Reagan has an obsession with the freeing of American hostages held by Hezbollah in Lebanon.³⁰ This led his National Security Advisor at the time, Robert McFarlane, to mastermind the idea of an Arms Deal with Iran in exchange for released hostages via Israel. Israel itself was desperate to restore the close relationship that it had with Iran prior to the Islamic Revolution when the two nations were aligned in a secret friendship.³¹ Even before the initial trade between the United States and Iran, Israel had become a primary arms dealer during the Iran-Iraq War, where Central Intelligence Agency operatives would find themselves turning a blind eye to these dealings.³² As such, Israeli officials had repeatedly persuaded the United States to help arm Iran in the hopes of establishing improved relations and influencing the regime to become more moderate.³³

Through McFarlane, arms were sent to Israel, and passed down to an intermediary within the moderate faction of Iranians, which would eventually fall under the control of Ayatollah Khomeini. Following the delivery of the arms, the same arms would be delivered to Israel as compensation. The Iranians would in turn influence Hezbollah and have them release an indefinite number of hostages in exchange for the arms.

To date, 96 BGM-71 TOW anti-tank missiles have been sent on August 20th 1985, and 408 additional anti-tank missiles were sent on September 14, 1985.³⁴ In response, Hezbollah had released Benjamin Weir on September 15, a Reverend from California who had been kept hostage for 16 months. An additional 18 Hawk anti-aircraft missiles were sent on November 24, but were rejected by Iranian officials for not meeting their needs.

The Reagan Senior Administration is looking to make these deals more effective and resourceful going forward, and will pressure the Iranians to pull their weight on their side and release more hostages at a more consistent rate.

³⁰ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagan's scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), xi.

³¹ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagan's scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), xii.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ "Arms, Hostages and Contras: How a Secret Foreign Policy Unraveled," *The New York Times*, November 18, 1987, accessed August 29, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/19/world/iran-contra-report-arms-hostages-contras-secret-foreign-policy-unraveled.html>.

1. What can each delegate do with their influence and connections to convince Iranian elements to release more hostages?
2. How can Israel help further?
3. What can the United States do in Lebanon to meet its goals?

Topic 2: Funding the Contras

The Reagan Doctrine, adopted during his administration's first term, focuses on providing covert and overt aid to anti-Communist movements in states that have Communist or Socialist governments and had fallen or were prone to fall under the Soviet sphere of influence. This doctrine is focal point for Reagan's Foreign Policy, and Nicaragua was the centre-piece.³⁵

Reagan is set on overthrowing the Communist Sandinista government in Nicaragua and would do so at whatever cost. The doctrine is an overall plan to find a solution to the Cold War and end it with a U.S. victory, and Reagan believes that a successful Communist Nicaragua would lead to a domino effect in the rest of Latin America. The Contras are seen as the solution to defeating Daniel Ortega's leadership, and the United States justified support for the Contras as required self defense against the Communist inspired policies of the Soviet Union.³⁶

With the Boland Amendments in place, the United States is unable to send any monetary or military aid to Nicaragua for the purpose of toppling the government. However with Oliver North's suggestion, the possibility of introducing a third party, lead by Albert Hakim and Richard Secord, has been brought to the table to use as a front to deliver arms directly to Iran, and send money back to Nicaragua without having it go through the hands of the American government.³⁷

The committee will need to focus on the transferring of funds to the appropriate forces in Nicaragua, and gain additional third party sponsors in its fight against the Sandinista government.

1. How can the committee fund the Contras additionally?
2. How can it use its resources in Central America to help deliver on diverting aid to the Contras?
3. How can delegates influence the toppling of the Sandinista government?

Topic 3: Maintenance of a Clandestine Operation

³⁵ Stephen Kinzer, "Contras in Post-Reagan Era: Are They a Thing of the Past?" The New York Times, December 12, 1988, , accessed August 30, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/13/world/contras-in-post-reagan-era-are-they-a-thing-of-the-past.html?mcubz=0>.

³⁶ "Reagan Doctrine, 1985," U.S. Department of State Archive, , accessed August 30, 2017, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/rd/17741.htm>.

³⁷ "Iran: The Expansion," Understanding the Iran-Contra Affairs - The Iran-Contra Affairs, , accessed August 30, 2017, https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/i-theexpansion.php.

With Ronald Reagan and the State Department publicly denouncing Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism, it will be a hypocritical and embarrassing blow to the Reagan Administration if it became public knowledge that covert discussions and trades were being made between American and Iranian parties. The entire operation will need to be kept secret from the public, Congress, and anybody who is not within the committee, save its Iranian, Israeli, and Nicaraguan counterparts, in order to minimize scrutiny and maximize compartmentalization.

Not only would exposure of the deal be embarrassing, but the deal itself is incredibly illegal. With regards to shipping arms to Iran, the Americans would be accused of cooperating with terrorists and one of the biggest enemies of the United States, and such cooperation would not be appreciated while sanctions against Iran are in place. Regarding funding the Contras, the skirting of the Boland Agreement and Congress through the use of third parties to send funds is not technically illegal, but is deceitful and undermines the transparent idea of checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches. Such an exposure would create one of the greatest scandals in American history.

President Reagan had convinced himself that he was not working with the enemy, but was allowing Iran to be distracted in its war with Iraq, benefitting from the lack of attention towards the United States, while securing the release of American hostages and contributing to the demise of Communism.

This committee will need to especially hide the Iran-Contra Operation from the media, both at home and abroad, and be ever more careful in details and authorization. The revelation of the secret operation would severely damage any amity between the executive and legislative branches, while Congress would blow up in anger and proceed with congressional hearings, commissions, and talks of impeachment.

1. How will the committee dodge Congress when it looks into investigating its dealings in Nicaragua?
2. How can the committee go around legislative amendments and roadblocks put in place by Congress?
3. How can the committee contain the spreading and leaking of information regarding the clandestine operation?

Delegate Roles

Ronald Reagan - President of the United States

As President of the United States, Reagan's foreign policy has centred around protecting democracy in areas that are prone to Communism, specifically Latin America. Nicaragua has a particular place in his heart, and after Carter had backed away from supporting the rightist Somoza regime in 1979, the leftist Sandinistas took over and have been a growing sign of concern as a Communist springboard in the region.³⁸

Following the kidnapping of several Americans by Hezbollah in Lebanon, Reagan shifted his focus to releasing these hostages by any means possible, even if it means collaborating with Iran. By McFarlane's suggestion, Reagan gave his former National Security Advisor the go ahead to establish a channel of communication with Iran and negotiate the selling of American arms in exchange for influencing Hezbollah to release hostages.

George H. W. Bush - Vice President of the United States

George H. W. Bush is the current Vice President of the United States under President Reagan. As the Vice President is tasked with presiding over the Senate, Bush keeps close contact with members of the Senate and Congress and keeps his President updated on insider information and developments from the Capitol Hill. Despite running against Reagan for the Republican nomination for the 1980 presidential election, Reagan chose him as his Vice President for his first and second term, and the two have maintained an amicable and trustworthy partnership ever since. Though generally keeping a low public profile, Bush has previously served as Congressman, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Chief of the U.S. Liaison office to China, and the Director to the Central Intelligence Agency. As such, he is well connected in the House of Representatives, the intelligence community, and the foreign service community.

In a closed committee session, Bush himself brought up the idea of planting mines in Nicaragua's harbours to increase insurance rates on shipping rates, and thus forcing insurers to stop covering ships calling in Nicaragua's ports in order to cripple trade and implement economic pressure.³⁹

Caspar Weinberger - United States Secretary of Defense

Though the option to send arms to Iran in exchange for released hostages sounds like an opportunity to most in this committee, however Weinberger is aware of its illegality and the consequences it will have on the country's institutions and executive branch. Though the deal is less than desirable, Weinberger has found himself being widely informed of the dealings, but was able to convince North and Reagan to have the operations be done through the Central

³⁸ Robert A. Pastor, *Condemned to repetition: the United States and Nicaragua* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1988), 250.

³⁹ Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagans scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 27.

Intelligence Agency and National Security Council rather than through the Department.

George P. Schultz - United States Secretary of State

When it comes to foreign policy, Schultz has a very rational mindset. While Schultz wanted to back off of adding military strength to the region, he did not want Reagan to completely pull out of Lebanon in fear of Hezbollah using the opportunity to further weaken the United States. Schultz is against using the State Department for the direct Iran Contra operations and was never a supporter of the secret arms trade deal with Iran, but is now reluctantly in the operation and must protect his and the State Department's reputation.

John Poindexter - National Security Advisor

John Poindexter is Robert McFarlane's successor to the post of National Security Advisor. As the head of the National Security Council, he serves as a senior aide and chief advisor to the President on matters of national security. New to the position, he is keen on continuing North's plan to divert money from the arms profits through The Enterprise to go to the Contras rather than the Israelis.

Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North - Deputy Director of Political Military Affairs, National Security Council

Oliver North is a staffer to the National Security Council and reports directly to John Poindexter. Seeing that the U.S. is wasting money with its deal to have Israel transport weapons to Iran, North has set up Richard Secord and Albert Hakim to have The Enterprise ship arms to Iran, and collect the mark up profit and have it diverted to the cash-strapped Contras. Such an unusual operation not only goes around Congress and the Boland Amendments, but will hit two birds with one stone, hopefully releasing American hostages on one hand, while toppling a Communist government on another.

North will go by any means to have this diversion be successful, and will protect the Administration from the worst and most controversial details of the Iran-Contra Operation.

William J. Casey - Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

As Director of the CIA, Casey is a strong supporter of the sale of arms to Iran in order to free his kidnapped Station Chief in Beirut, William Buckley, from Hezbollah's captivity. Casey works closely with North and has suggested that in order to go around the Boland Amendments, North should take some trusted CIA agents under his wing to work with in regards to Latin America. Casey supports the funnelling of foreign funds through third party accounts towards the Contras, and would do anything to go behind the back of Congress and crush the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Donald Regan - White House Chief of Staff

As Chief of Staff to the President, Regan is responsible for who meets with the President in private and sits in on almost all meetings related to the Iran-Contra Operation. To Regan, his most important duty as Chief of Staff is to protect President Reagan from bad press, those attempting to undermine him, and keep him informed with staff developments around the White House.

In his previous years, he has served as CEO of Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc., a director of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation, and vice chairman of the New York Stock Exchange. As a result, Regan is well connected along Wall Street.

Richard Armitage - Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

As Weinberger's closest advisor and a former naval officer, he maintains close contact with members of the committee who are involved in the Department of Defense, National Security Council, and Central Intelligence Agency. He is prominent in the Department for his strong skills in leading military and political relationships between the United States and China as well as Japan, while managing all security assistance programs within the agency.

Armitage is also a leader in security policy within the Middle East and holds close contacts with Israel, going as far as to meet with Israeli General Menachem Meron, and Richard Secord to discuss the arms sales and payments. Like Weinberger, Armitage is not a strong supporter of the sale of arms to Iran and has a hard time trusting the Iranians in being willing to use their influence to release hostages in Lebanon.

Elliot Abrams - Assistant Secretary of State of Inter-American Affairs

Abrams was included by North in the scheme to find funds for the Contras while circumnavigating the Boland Amendments. Abrams is particularly keen on the idea of lobbying foreign governments to provide aid to the Contras that would go through a third party and indirectly reach the Nicaraguan rebels.

Clair George - Deputy Director of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency

As the third highest ranking official within the Central Intelligence Agency, George is in charge with all covert operations lead by the agency. George is aware of any operation that occurs within the Central Intelligence Agency, and is well connected throughout the CIA and the National Security Council. George highly regards the agency and will often put its success and reputation ahead of his own.

Alan Fiers, Jr. - Central American Task Force, Chief

Fiers works within the Central Intelligence Agency and focuses on the delivery of aid and funding to the Contras within the operation. He works closely with North to find ways to organize and deliver aid around the Boland Amendments, while using his resources within the agency and contacts South America to safely deliver funds and arms to Nicaragua.

Duane Clarridge - Latin American Division, Chief

Previously, Duane Clarridge had held the title of Chief of the European Division within the Central Intelligence Agency, and had impressed Director Casey for his hard and charging approach. Though he did not have much knowledge on Latin America, he had found himself in charge of CIA covert operations in the region near the beginning of Reagan's first term. Clarridge's entrance into the area in 1981 marked the beginning of direct American involvement with the Contras. Clarridge had proven to be popular with his Honduran counterparts and has since collected a long list of Central American and Argentine connections. Clarridge is particularly passionate about the need to stomp out Communism and bring down the Sandinista government.

Albert Hakim - Head of the Stanford Technology Trading Group Intl. (The Enterprise)

With a background international security and advanced technologies, Hakim is one of the two heads of the Stanford Technology Trading Group International, founded in 1983. STTGI, better known as The Enterprise, is a shell company set-up to helping corporations and individuals in tax evasion and the transfer of goods and funds between two points while achieving anonymity. Hakim has numerous connections within the United States, Iran, and Switzerland and is particularly skilled at evading audits and knowledgeable within the realm of modern engineering and military equipment. Hakim, Secord, and The Enterprise have already been involved with selling arms to the Contras covertly in the previous year, and will continue to do so.

Richard Secord - Head of the Stanford Technology Trading Group Intl. (The Enterprise)

Secord, along with Hakim, is the Head of the Stanford Technology Trading Group and retired United States Air Force officer. In the past, he has served in the Vietnam War as an officer and was later posted to the Central Intelligence Agency in order to carry out covert operations in Laos. He later worked at the Department of Defense, and most recently served as deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs from 1981 until 1983. He is now a citizen of the private sector, but has not severed ties with the CIA in terms of covert operations. Secord is a well-rounded figure, regarded as a war hero, and very quick witted in his line of covert work. Secord's goal in the covert scheme is personal enrichment, and hopes to gain this in the Iran-Contra scheme.

Committee Mechanics

Time

In order to maximize delegate experience and minimize constrictions in debate, crisis, and directives, this committee will run on a fluid timeline going over several months and years. Specific dates will be announced regularly during committee session and at the request of delegates at any point. The committee begins on December 7, 1985.

Directives

Private Directives

Private directives are directives sent by individual delegates. Such directives can be related to obtaining information, or requesting a personal action to be enacted for the individual delegate. These directives are sent to the dais and forwarded to the crisis room for validation.

Group Directives

Group directives are directives sent by a number of individual delegates, or a group of delegates. Such directives need to be signed and approved by all parties, as well as agreed upon at the discretion of the dais to be considered valid. These directives are meant to push for collaboration between delegates without dragging the entire committee, and a way for delegates to use each other for their resources and powers within the committee.

Committee Directive

A committee directive is a directive that is drafted by certain delegates and voted upon by the entire committee. Such directives require the cooperation of the committee on large scale decisions and need a simple majority to pass.

Veto

Ronald Reagan has veto power when it pertains to Committee Directives. Private directives and group directives are exempt from the veto power.

Ronald Reagan's veto power may be lost if the committee votes to remove such powers unanimously, or if the Dais deems so appropriate.

Delegate Powers

All delegates have unique skills, contacts, and jobs that exist within their portfolio. The President has given many members of the Iran-Contra Operation extended powers and independence in their dealings and meetings, often so not requiring the immediate knowledge or consent of the President to carry out their assignments and duties.

Debate

Debate will by default remain in a rolling moderated caucus at all times in order to keep pace with the increased speed of a crisis committee. There will be no primary or secondary speaker's list. Delegates are encouraged to set forth motions to introduce moderated caucuses on certain topics, introduce unmoderated caucuses, introduce directives, and etc.

Bibliography

- "Arms, Hostages and Contras: How a Secret Foreign Policy Unraveled." The New York Times. November 18, 1987. Accessed July 19, 2017. <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/19/world/iran-contra-report-arms-hostages-contras-secret-foreign-policy-unraveled.html>.
- Busby, Robert. Reagan and the Iran-Contra affair: the politics of presidential recovery. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.
- Byrne, Malcolm. Iran-Contra: Reagan's scandal and the unchecked abuse of presidential power. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014.
- Merrill, Tim, and Library Of Congress. Federal Research Division. Nicaragua: A Country Study. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress: For sale by the Supt. of Docs. U.S. G.P.O, 1994. Pdf. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/94021664/>. (Accessed September 18, 2017.)
- "Terrorist Attacks on Americans, 1979-1988." PBS. Accessed September 22, 2017. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/etc/cron.html>.
- "Timeline on the Relationship Between the United States and Iran." The New York Times. April 13, 2012. Accessed September 18, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/07/world/middleeast/iran-timeline.html?mcubz=0#/time5_81.
- Understanding the Iran-Contra Affairs. Accessed June 05, 2017. https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/.
- "US-Iran relations: A brief guide." BBC News. November 24, 2014. Accessed September 17, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24316661>.
- Walsh, Lawrence E. "FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS." Walsh Iran / Contra Report. August 4, 1993. Accessed July 19, 2017. <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/walsh/index.html>.
- Williamson, Edwin. The Penguin history of Latin America. New York, NY: Penguin, 2009.