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Revolutions Without Guerrillas

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PREFACE

Political instability has become a major form of "low-intensity conflict" throughout the world. This report, which was written with the support of The RAND Corporation from its own research funds, describes the emergence of this trend and discusses its implications for U.S. interests. It should be of interest to policymakers and to the general public as well.

SUMMARY

For many years, U.S. thinking about Third World conflicts has focused on guerrilla warfare. But another type of "low-intensity conflict" is emerging as a critical issue for the United States to address. Revolutions *without* guerrillas have created a global environment that will demand increasing U.S. attention in the years ahead. This report describes this phenomenon and discusses its effects on U.S. global interests.

Within the past decade, revolutionary change in Iran and the Philippines and continuing unrest in countries from South Korea to Panama have affected U.S. foreign policy and defense interests. One of the lessons of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the "people's power" rebellion in the Philippines, and the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is that the model of revolution and instability in the coming years will not necessarily center around rural insurgencies, but rather will be a combination of political, social, economic, and ethnic-religious forces in urban centers.

What makes these situations of concern to the United States is their sudden and explosive nature—and the impact they can have upon regional and international affairs. Whereas it may take an insurgency years, or even decades, to reach a point of "crisis," thereby allowing sufficient time to design policy, supply weapons, or create strategies, this is not true for political and social instability. Governments can be toppled in a matter of weeks, countries can become paralyzed overnight. And threats to vital U.S. interests—ranging from the loss of strategic assets to the creation of openings for adversaries in geopolitically important regions of the world—can arise just as suddenly.

Among the developments contributing to the emergence of a global environment of revolutions without guerrillas are growing popular challenges to the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes, rising ethnic-religious and nationalistic aspirations, and economic grievances, some of which are aggravated by a deteriorating external debt crisis. Many of these problems are also plaguing the Communist world, thereby increasing the extent of political and social unrest.

The diversity in the countries that are experiencing revolutions without guerrillas and the consequences that U.S. action or inaction can have ensure that no single "doctrine" or policy stance will be consistently appropriate for addressing these contingencies. And in an era

of reduced U.S. global influence, it will not always be possible to promote democratic change when that is deemed desirable.

But there is a growing realization that long-term U.S. interests are best served by supporting a process of democratization before a crisis breaks out. The limitations of U.S. resources and influence in a changing international environment will necessitate multilateral approaches to many of the problems associated with foreign political unrest. Although insurgencies and counterinsurgencies will continue to be a part of the Third World landscape, it is the revolutions without guerrillas that will constitute a major form of instability for some time to come.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the Kennedy Administration gave prominence to the term "counterinsurgency," U.S. thinking about Third World conflicts has focused on guerrilla warfare. The Reagan Doctrine and the growing interest in low-intensity conflicts are the most recent manifestations of this trend. But after more than a quarter-century of helping foreign governments fight guerrillas—or helping the guerrillas fight governments—the United States is being increasingly confronted with a different type of conflict.

Revolutions *without* guerrillas are demanding U.S. attention and posing new challenges to U.S. interests worldwide. During 1988, the United States was embroiled in a crisis over the future political stability of Panama and concerned over uprisings in the Israeli occupied territories; it monitored developments in Poland, Haiti, and South Africa and was cautiously optimistic regarding the prospects for democratic change in South Korea. The crises of tomorrow—wherever they may erupt—are also likely to be dominated by political and social upheavals.

These conflicts can affect U.S. strategic and geopolitical interests as much as, if not more than, traditional insurgencies. One of the lessons of the crises in Iran, the Philippines, Haiti, Panama, Burma, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip is that the model of revolution and instability in the coming years will not necessarily center around rural insurgencies, but rather is likely to be a combination of political, social, economic, and ethnic-religious forces in urban centers.

Revolutions without guerrillas do not have to be actual "revolutions" to create turmoil within a country or to have an impact upon U.S. interests. Even if a popular uprising or an ethnic-religious conflict does not lead to a change in the government or result in the attainment of the goals of the participants, it can create a crisis that not only affects the internal operations of the country's government, but its external relations as well. And the nature of political unrest is such that a single "spark"—e.g., the assassination of an opposition leader or an unpopular policy decision—can ignite the underlying tensions and discontent that may be present in the society.

The proliferation of such conflicts is redefining the U.S. role in the Third World, giving new meaning to such old terms as "intervention." U.S. involvement in the affairs of other countries may be necessary at times to help promote democratic change and avert instability that could be detrimental to U.S. interests. Moreover, the internal develop-

ments of some countries can have serious international repercussions. "Intervention" is no longer necessarily associated primarily with military action. Diplomatic, economic, and political measures will become an ever more important part of U.S. responses to Third World crises.

Revolutions without guerrillas and situations of political instability have occurred throughout history, but today such conflicts are emerging in areas that are of vital concern to the United States. Whereas in the past, the United States was confronted periodically with a single crisis caused by foreign unrest, today these crises are occurring on multiple fronts. The United States will find itself increasingly affected by conflicts ranging from instability in the Philippines and the risks it poses to U.S. defense and security interests in Asia to uprisings in the Israeli occupied territories and their impact on the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Several trends have contributed to the global political and social environment of the late 1980s, making it unlike that of any previous period. Growing popular challenges to authoritarian regimes in many countries—whether they be orderly transitions to democracy or prolonged periods of instability—have led to uncertainty concerning the future course of events. In other countries, rising nationalistic aspirations and ethnic-religious conflicts have led to uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as the potential spread of Islamic fundamentalism. A variety of economic factors in other countries, ranging from unfilled expectations for a better life to hardships imposed by economic austerity measures as the result of deteriorating external debt conditions, have created situations that could explode into widespread unrest at any time.

Revolutions without guerrillas are also occurring in the Communist world, as evidenced by the political and social unrest plaguing the Soviet Union in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Baltic republics, the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe, and China in Tibet.

Since such crises can occur simultaneously and with little warning in different parts of the world, they present the United States with difficult policy choices, including the determination of where our national interests may be affected and the selection of options for responding to various contingencies. What may seem at first to be a relatively easy task, e.g., ousting from power a drug-dealing dictator in Panama, can prove much more difficult than was originally assumed. And a task that may be expected to be difficult, such as persuading an Israeli prime minister to trade land for peace, will indeed be just that.

The United States will not have the same resources available for responding to these situations as it has had for guerrilla wars. "Concrete" assets, such as Stinger missiles that can help turn around the

fortunes of guerrillas, or military advisers to help governments, will no longer be adequate to the task. We will also have to know where the United States may have little impact—or, worse, negative impact—on the course of developments.

Thus, several questions will need to be addressed as revolutions without guerrillas unfold in the coming years. These include the following:

- What is the nature of these revolutionary and prerevolutionary situations?
- What are the implications of these situations for U.S. interests?
- What policy options are available to the United States for responding to these various contingencies?

II. THE NATURE OF REVOLUTIONS WITHOUT GUERRILLAS

There have probably been as many, if not more, definitions and theories proposed concerning the nature of revolution as there have been revolutions themselves. Although there is no consensus about what constitutes a "revolution," a common theme in the literature is the notion of social change.[1] Revolutions are often viewed as major upheavals that cause fundamental change in a country's existing social order. The association of revolutions with social change has led at least one observer to dismiss "rebellions," "insurrections," "revolts," and "coups" as less than revolutions if they do not result in a transformation of society. Under this perspective, only a few events, such as the French and Russian revolutions, are considered true revolutions.[2]

While efforts to attain precise definitions of revolution are important for theory-building and conceptualization, they are less relevant for policy purposes. Since governments, the public, and the media tend to view a wide variety of developments as revolutions—regardless of their prospects for social change—the distinctions in terminology are not particularly significant. Guerrilla warfare, whatever its form and content, has been viewed as a type of revolution throughout most of the post-World War II period. Terms such as "revolutionary warfare" have been used to describe the activity of even small bands of guerrillas that may have little prospect of victory, and still less chance or intention of radically changing the social system.

Political and social unrest blur the definition of what constitutes a revolution even further. While a single instance of rioting or a mass demonstration would not by itself qualify as a "revolution," when such

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[1]See Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1966; Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968; Kay Ellen Trimberger, *Revolution from Above: Military Bureaucrats and Developments in Japan, Turkey, Egypt, and Peru*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1978; Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. For a good review of the literature on revolutions, see Jack A. Goldstone, "Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation," *World Politics*, April 1980, pp. 425-453; Theda Skocpol, "Social Revolutions and Mass Military Mobilization," *World Politics*, January 1988, pp. 147-168; Robert H. Dix, "The Varieties of Revolution," *Comparative Politics*, April 1983, pp. 281-294; and Sam C. Sarkesian, "American Policy on Revolution and Counterrevolution: A Review of the Themes in the Literature," *Conflict: All Warfare Short of War*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1984, pp. 137-184.

[2]Huntington, op. cit., p. 264.

activity is sustained, it becomes a fundamental challenge to the existing order, even if the authorities are ultimately able to quell it. Thus, strikes and demonstrations by workers in Poland, nationalistic and ethnic-religious uprisings in the Israeli occupied territories, and rioting in South Korea and Chile can all properly be labeled "revolutions," along with those events that do significantly change the social order of a country.

Revolutions without guerrillas differ in several ways from traditional insurgencies. Whereas it may take a guerrilla army years, or even decades, to overthrow a government or create a sense of crisis throughout a country, political unrest can evolve much more quickly. Governments can be toppled in a matter of weeks, and countries can become paralyzed overnight. The "people's revolution" in the Philippines—aided by the defection of key military leaders—brought about the collapse of the regime of President Ferdinand Marcos within a couple of weeks in the winter of 1986. That same winter, rioting in Haiti forced President-for-Life Jean Claude Duvalier to flee the country. And in the few months between the end of 1987 and the beginning of 1988, the West Bank and Gaza Strip were transformed from a sporadically tense area into the site of what Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir described as a "new kind of warfare."[3]

Sudden and explosive political instability can catch by surprise not only the affected governments, but also whatever guerrillas may be operating in the country. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was as surprised as the rest of the world by the eruption of unrest in the Israeli occupied territories. Only after several weeks of the rioting did the PLO try to organize and keep going what had begun as a spontaneous uprising. In the Philippines, the Communist New Peoples' Army (NPA) denounced the holding of a presidential election, then watched from the sidelines as an unexpected ground swell of popular discontent was able to accomplish in a very short time what the NPA had been unable to do in many years of fighting, i.e., topple the Marcos government. Even in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas were caught off guard by the widespread strikes and rioting that followed the murder of opposition leader Pedro Joaquin Chamorro in January 1978. The Sandinistas "rushed [in] to try and infiltrate [the] upcoming insurrections."[4]

Revolutions without guerrillas may achieve results that guerrillas in the same country cannot achieve—or that they at least have a harder

[3]Karen Elliott House, "Shamir Says Uprisings Must Be Quelled if Mideast Peace Is to Have Any Chance," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 22, 1988, p. 31.

[4]Humberto Belli, *Breaking Faith: The Sandinista Revolution and Its Impact on Freedom and Christian Faith in Nicaragua*, Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1985, p. 38.

time achieving—because political unrest can hit directly at the heart of a government. While guerrillas and government troops are engaged in a gradual war of attrition involving sabotaging of power lines, efforts to win the "hearts and minds" of the people, skirmishes, offensives and counteroffensives, etc., political unrest can have a contagion effect that brings a government to a virtual standstill very quickly. Strikes that shut down major cities, mass demonstrations that challenge the legitimacy of the government, rioting, and other such developments all undermine the ability of a government to stay in power.

Political unrest also puts governments on the defensive. Each government response has an important effect on subsequent events and is watched carefully not only by the participants, but also by other publics and governments via the mass media. Both Israel and South Africa have responded to growing unrest by banning news coverage in certain areas. In some cases, a government response can defuse a growing crisis, as happened in South Korea when the government of President Chun Doo Hwan announced that it would hold direct presidential elections. In other cases, however, government responses—or perceptions of government responses—can lead to still further strife.

Violence is not a necessary ingredient in a revolution without guerrillas. The Philippine revolution, for example, unfolded with a minimum of violence. And while the death toll mounted during the weeks preceding the collapse of the Duvalier regime in Haiti, and daily casualties occurred during the unrest in the Israeli occupied terrorities, the body counts in revolutions without guerrillas are minuscule compared with those in guerrilla wars. It is this lower death toll, however, that makes any casualties among the "noncombatants" or "unarmed" demonstrators highly symbolic and potentially inflammatory.

Although revolutions without guerrillas tend to be much less violent than insurgencies, they are much more volatile. They can change directions and intensity more rapidly than guerrilla wars, making it difficult to measure "progress" by either side. A day of rioting can be followed by a day of calm. But lulls in the unrest may sometimes be misleading. A point of no return can be reached at which no matter what measures a government takes, the situation and the political landscape have been irrevocably changed. This may very well be the case in the Israeli occupied areas, where the unrest that began among Palestinian youth quickly galvanized the entire Palestinian community, as well as Arabs living in Israel proper. The rioting also elicited reactions from several other governments in the region, as well as from the United States. Under these circumstances, promises to "reduce [the

unrest] to a manageable size" may not be addressing the realities of a changing situation in the Middle East.[5]

Revolutions without guerrillas also differ from traditional insurgencies in the types of resources that can be used to affect the outcome. An insurgency can be greatly influenced by the supply of weapons and training of either side. Thus, U.S. military assistance to El Salvador in the early 1980s helped the government of President Jose Napoleon Duarte contain a growing threat from the Marxist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Similarly, U.S. assistance to the Afghan resistance fighters—particularly the supplying of Stinger missiles—helped that effort immensely.

A revolution without guerrillas, though, is not easily influenced by such assistance. Since it is a different form of conflict outside parties that are interested in aiding one side or the other have rely on other measures. These can include diplomatic and economic pressure on a government to force changes in policy or personnel, or the encouraging and sustaining of popular discontent. But whether the focus of an outside party is on aiding the government or aiding the "revolutionaries," the types of assets used are quite different from those used for insurgencies.

External assistance to indigenous political and social movements is likely to be viewed by the targeted government as a form of "subversion," as would support directed to a guerrilla army intent on overthrowing the regime. Although the term "subversion" tends to evoke images of clandestine activity, it can also include a wide range of "overt" measures to "undermine the military, economic, psychological, political strength or morale of a regime."[6] Revolutions without guerrillas are making such terms increasingly ambiguous. While inciting riots or encouraging groups to rebel would fall within the definition of subversion, so too—from the perspective of a government intent on keeping a political system closed—would external support for the formation of political parties, free elections, and other democratic processes. Thus, terms such as *subversion* and *interference* are likely to be heard more frequently as revolutions without guerrillas unfold and numerous outside parties become involved.

Revolutions without guerrillas also tend to be less ideological than traditional insurgencies. Whereas a guerrilla organization is likely to promulgate some type of ideology that represents the group's vision for how the country would be run if it gained power, revolutions without

[5]John Kifner, "Rabin Vows to Reduce Unrest to 'Manageable Level'," *New York Times*, January 19, 1988, p. 3.

[6]Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D.C., JCS Publication 1, January 1986, p. 349.

guerrillas are rarely characterized by such programs. The focus of the struggle tends to be on immediate issues such as free elections, removal of a head of state, or protests against a specific policy. There is thus little inclination or need for an ideology to define the revolution. The lack of ideological content in revolutions without guerrillas may be one reason why such movements can appeal to a broad spectrum of society more easily than a guerrilla movement. A significant part of the population may be opposed to a government, but not supportive of the guerrilla ideology.[7] Thus, coalitions of businessmen, middle class, students, workers, and peasants may find it easier to join a revolution without guerrillas than to embrace a guerrilla movement with a particular ideology.

The spontaneity of revolutions without guerrillas and their contagion effect throughout a country allow such movements to proceed at times without a strong organizational base. This is not the case for insurgencies, which tend to have fairly elaborate military and political structures to guide the revolution.[8] The presence of a type of "government in exile" allows victorious guerrilla forces to establish a functioning government fairly quickly once the existing regime is toppled, as occurred in Vietnam and Cambodia in 1975. Many guerrilla forces today, from the anti-Marxist Total Union for the Independence of Angola (UNITA) to the FMLN in El Salvador, have elaborate political organizations and structures that could be transformed into viable governments if the guerrillas gained power. While a new regime may face continued guerrilla opposition from rival factions or remnants of defeated forces, the government itself becomes fairly entrenched without serious threats to its short-term stability. The issue does not become whether the government can survive, but rather how it can mobilize the population to carry out its policies. In some cases, this can involve extremely brutal actions, such as the killing of millions of Cambodians by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge government in the 1970s.

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[7]The issue of societal support for a guerrilla insurgency has been the focus of many works. Henry Bienen points out that Clausewitz argued that some groups in society might have the same enemy as the guerrillas in wars of liberation, yet be opposed to the insurgency. since guerrilla warfare can threaten the existing social order which the groups might not want to change. Other writers have argued that there can exist an "apathetic" mass during a guerrilla insurgency, since only a small minority of the population is either pro-government or anti-government. For a discussion of the various perspectives on societal support for guerrilla insurgency, see Henry Bienen, *Violence and Social Change*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 41, 60–65.

[8]For a discussion of the organizational characteristics of insurgent groups, see Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970, pp. 48–70.

The period following a revolution without guerrillas that succeeds in overthrowing a government, however, is often characterized by continued unrest and challenges to the very survival of the new regime. The departure of the Shah from Iran in January 1979 did not end the turmoil in that country, which eventually led to the collapse of the short-lived civilian government of Shahpur Bakhtiar. In Haiti, the legitimacy of the government of Lieutenant General Henri Namphy was the source of continual unrest in the post-Duvalier period. And in the Philippines, the Aquino government weathered many crises that threatened to topple the regime during its first year in office.

Although there are many different variations of revolutions without guerrillas, the unrest we are witnessing today is unfolding in three basic types of political and social environments. The first type—in which the United States has played an important role in bringing about change—involves challenges to the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes. Popular discontent with current and former military rulers such as the late General Zia in Pakistan, Pinochet in Chile, Chun in South Korea, Namphy in Haiti, Noriega in Panama, and Ne Win in Burma have characterized unrest in those countries. Other leaders such as the Shah in Iran, Marcos in the Philippines, and Duvalier in Haiti have also fallen victim to popular uprisings against their rule. And given the charges of electoral fraud in the 1988 election in Mexico, President-elect Carlos Salinas de Gortari is likely to face continual challenges to the legitimacy of his regime in the years ahead.

While unified opposition movements with broad-based appeal can be important for initiating and sustaining challenges to authoritarian regimes, the military often plays the most crucial role in determining the final outcome. The military can be divided during such crises, with different factions favoring different courses of action, but the decision by key military officials not to back a head of state—whether he or she is a civilian or a military officer—can hasten that government's collapse. The Iranian military remained basically neutral as the anti-Shah demonstrations turned into an Islamic revolt. In some cases, key military figures have defected to the anti-government movement, as occurred in the Philippines when General Fidel Ramos and Defense Minister Juan Enrile joined the Aquino camp. And in still other cases, the military can continue to support a country's ruler, at least for a time, as has been happening in Panama and in Chile.

The unrest that has been associated with authoritarian regimes in the 1980s is in many respects a variation of Huntington's long-standing theory on instability, which proposes that societies experiencing rapid modernization without a corresponding development of political institutions and political participation are likely candidates for civil

disorder and civil wars.[9] The popular uprisings against Marcos, Duvalier, the Shah, Chun, and other authoritarian rulers were not characterized by large-scale violence. And with the exception of the Iranian revolution, the uprisings were not necessarily directly related to the dislocations caused by rapid modernization. Nevertheless, they do represent a modified version of the Huntington thesis, since the uprisings occurred in countries where the existing political institutions were perceived by a broad spectrum of the society as failing to meet their needs. The potential for unrest has led authoritarian military regimes in Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, and Argentina to oversee a transition to democratic rule in the 1980s.[10]

The second major type of revolution without guerrillas is based on deep-seated ethnic, religious, and nationalist objectives. While some of these conflicts evolve within the context of an authoritarian regime, the prime motivating factor is not the removal of an authoritarian ruler, but rather territorial or ethnic-religious and nationalistic demands. This broad category includes the West Bank and Gaza Strip uprisings, the separatist conflicts in the Punjab in India, the Islamic fundamentalist movements, and the turmoil in South Africa.[11]

Unrest associated with these types of conflicts tends to be much more violent than rebellions against authoritarian regimes, partly because the religious or nationalist dimension fuels greater passions. Massacres of whole communities, such as those that have occurred among the Sikhs and Hindus in India, are illustrative of this type of conflict.

The third type of revolution without guerrillas is based on economic grievances. These would fit the pattern of the "relative deprivation" theory, in which revolutions arise when there is a large gap between what people in a country aspire to and what they think they actually will be able to achieve.[12] Wide discrepancies among socioeconomic classes, overpopulation, and poverty are some of the factors that

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[9]Huntington, op. cit., p. 4.

[10]Many of these new democracies, however, have struggled in recent years, leading to widespread speculation about another cycle of military takeovers in Latin America.

[11]The Iranian revolution began as an anti-authoritarian uprising, but ultimately became transformed into an Islamic revolution, posing new threats in an already volatile region. In South Africa, while the African National Congress (ANC) military wing is a growing guerrilla force, it does not appear to have the capability, either now or for the foreseeable future, to wage effective guerrilla warfare campaigns inside South Africa. The more likely role for the ANC in a future revolution in South Africa would be to organize and sustain uprisings against the apartheid regime. Instead of guerrilla warfare, the likely scenario for a future South Africa in turmoil would be widespread civil disorders, tribal conflicts, etc.—a revolution without guerrillas.

[12]Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

contribute to these types of popular uprisings. In Egypt during the 1970s, political liberalization and the growing prominence of President Anwar Sadat in international affairs were not matched by an improvement in the economic well-being of the majority of the population, and this led to widespread unrest over price increases for food and other basic consumer items in 1977.[13]

The Egyptian riots were a forerunner of some of the political and social problems plaguing several developing nations that are suffering through deteriorating external debt situations. The Sadat government imposed price increases at the urging of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has made economic austerity measures a condition for new loans to economically troubled countries. Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina are among the many potential victims of societal unrest based on harsh economic conditions that stem from the billions of dollars in foreign debt that may never be paid off. Countries where austerity measures have led to political and social unrest in recent years include the Dominican Republic, where rioting over food price increases in 1984 claimed several lives, and Algeria and Venezuela in the late 1980s. And at a 1988 Communist Party meeting in Yugoslavia, party officials expressed concern over the potential for major political unrest generated by recently imposed economic austerity measures.[14]

That the Communist world is also experiencing revolutions without guerrillas is further evidenced by uprisings in the Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Baltic states, and Tibet. In addition, Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika* carries with it the possibility of unleashing societal aspirations for even greater political freedoms—both in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe—which could be characterized by periods of domestic unrest. In China, economic liberalization has spilled over into demands for political liberalization, which resulted in student unrest during the winter of 1986–87. Chinese officials have already warned of "social upheavals" as the process of economic reform continues.[15]

While the specific causes of revolutions without guerrillas vary among countries, a common root lies in the failure of the existing political, social, or economic system to accommodate the demands of increasingly powerful groups. Those demands may range from a call for free elections to the establishment of a separate state; the "groups"

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[13]Henry Tanner, "Egyptian Riots Have Seriously Hampered Sadat's Freedom of Action at Home and Abroad," *New York Times*, January 25, 1977, p. 3.

[14]*Wall Street Journal*, May 31, 1988, p. 18.

[15]Edward A. Gargan, "Chinese Leaders Cite Unrest and Link It to Restructuring," *New York Times*, July 7, 1988, p. 2.

can include both clearly identifiable entities such as students, businessmen, the church, and ethnic-religious organizations, and more amorphous groupings of the general population; and the "power" can stem from the effects that mass demonstrations, strikes, rioting, or other actions can have upon the stability of a country.

Not all of the potential cases of political and social instability can be averted, nor can all the actual instances of unrest be resolved. When the demands involve the very collapse of a government, there is not likely to be any compromise on the part of the regime. Some conflicts may involve zero-sum situations, where efforts by the government to satisfy one group will alienate another group. And in other cases, the means with which to address some of the causes of internal strife—such as poverty—will be beyond the ability of governments to attain without outside assistance.

The instability associated with challenges to authoritarian regimes, the rise and growth of ethnic-religious and nationalistic conflicts, and the economic and demographic time bombs that may await several countries all point to an international environment that will experience numerous crises that may have a serious impact on U.S. interests. What that impact might be is a critical issue to explore.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS

When President Kennedy took office in 1961, he foresaw a threat environment in the Third World for which he believed the United States was not prepared. U.S.-Soviet confrontations on numerous issues appeared to be extending into the world of guerrilla warfare. The struggle for independence and the emergence of new states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America were viewed by Kennedy as fertile ground for Communist exploitation. It was thus decided that a "new kind of strategy" was needed to meet this threat, and along with issuing various directives, Kennedy began reading the works of Mao Zedong and Che Guevara and urging his military decisionmakers to do likewise. Although Kennedy did not expect American troops to win foreign guerrilla wars, he did believe that the United States "could effectively supply arms and leadership for this new yet ancient kind of warfare."[1]

The insurgency/counterinsurgency dimension of U.S. policy toward the Third World was thus inaugurated, a policy that was to last more than twenty-five years. Today, though, we may be witnessing a transition from a focus on the impact of guerrilla wars upon U.S. interests to a new awareness of the ways in which revolutions without guerrillas can affect those interests. Many of the guerrilla wars with which the United States has been concerned in recent years appear to be entering a new phase, while at the same time revolutions without guerrillas are proliferating. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the prior negotiations between the Contras and the Sandinistas, talks between Prince Sihanouk and the Vietnamese-imposed regime in Cambodia, and a negotiated settlement of the Angolan civil war may not necessarily end those conflicts, but they may portend a somewhat reduced U.S. role in them in the years ahead.

The potential for U.S. adversaries to be involved in Third World guerrilla wars, though, will always require that the United States be prepared to deal with "low-intensity conflicts." Furthermore, new guerrilla wars may arise in geostrategically important regions, and old ones may not be resolved as expected. However, the insurgency dimension of Third World conflicts is likely to be overshadowed by the growth and proliferation of revolutions without guerrillas.

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[1]Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, New York: Harper & Row, 1965, p. 632.

Although foreign political and social instability is not a new phenomenon, its impact upon U.S. interests has changed substantially from earlier periods. During the 1960s, for example, a student revolt in South Korea toppled the government of President Syngman Rhee, and turmoil in the Dominican Republic led to intervention by the U.S. Army and Marines. These incidents created international crises and became important matters for the United States to address. However, they did not threaten the dominant U.S. global position, either militarily or economically, and for the most part they were absorbed by the United States with minimal "damage" to overall U.S. security interests.

The relative decline of U.S. global influence in the 1970s, however, along with the transformation from a bipolar to a multipolar international arena, has made the United States more vulnerable to the effects of foreign political instability. The Iranian revolution at the end of the decade proved to be the turning point in the impact of revolutions without guerrillas. The loss of a staunchly pro-Western government in a geostrategically important region of the world and the rise of an expansionist, hostile, and militant Islamic regime posed new threats for American interests in the Middle East. Indeed, a significant part of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy throughout the 1980s had to be devoted to dealing with the repercussions of the Iranian revolution.

That revolution also raised the specter of nonguerrilla revolutions spreading from one geostrategically important country to another. Both Western governments and moderate and conservative Arab states have been concerned over the prospects of the Islamic revolution extending beyond the borders of Iran. The large Shi'ite communities in several countries in the region constitute a base in which such revolutionary fervor could be fueled. The 1986 rioting at Mecca by Iranian pilgrims at the urging of the Ayatollah Khomeini was a reminder of this ever-present danger.

And the Middle East is not the only area in which the United States has been concerned with the potential for revolutions without guerrillas to erupt. The spread of Central American instability—which includes political and social unrest as well as guerrilla warfare—northward to Mexico would pose numerous problems for the United States, ranging from a flood of refugees seeking political asylum to the possibility that an anti-U.S. government could come to power.

In addition to their impact on U.S. foreign policy objectives and geopolitical concerns, revolutions without guerrillas can also directly affect U.S. defense and security interests. The U.S. reliance on an intricate network of overseas military bases and facilities places these assets at risk whenever political and social unrest erupts in a host country. In

the Philippines, the two largest American bases (Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station) provide vital defense and security functions to meet contingencies in Asia and the Pacific. While the insurgency being waged by the Communist NPA poses a long-term threat to the stability of the country, a more immediate concern is the prospect for political and social unrest. Since taking power in 1986, Aquino has weathered numerous coup attempts and uprisings from both the right and the left, and she will probably face more challenges in the process of building a democratic base after years of dictatorial rule. Negotiations between the United States and the Philippines over the future status of Clark and Subic Bay may fuel nationalistic demands that could force the United States to leave the Philippines in the 1990s.

Potential political and social upheavals in other host countries, such as South Korea and Panama, increase the threat to U.S. defense and security interests. The threat in Panama concerns not only the Canal, but also the headquarters for the Southern Command, which is responsible for U.S. defense interests throughout Latin America. Likewise, one of the key setbacks for the United States in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution was the loss of vital intelligence posts near the Soviet border that were used to monitor Soviet military activity.

Foreign political and social instability can also have a negative effect on U.S. economic interests. The disruption in the flow of oil from the Middle East that would result from unrest in any number of countries in the region, and the cessation of exports of strategic metals to the United States from South Africa that could emerge in the event of full-scale uprisings in that country are among the more obvious examples of the possible economic impact of foreign instability.

Revolutions without guerrillas also affect U.S. relations with key allies and can also cause internal divisions within the governments of those allies. The unrest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip led to renewed efforts by the United States to convene an international conference for a Middle East peace plan, an initiative that was rejected by Israeli Prime Minister Shamir but supported by Israeli Foreign Minister Peres. This eventually led former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz to appeal directly to the Israeli people to accept the trading of land for peace.

Finally, political and social instability can pose a threat to the United States through the tendency for adversaries to take advantage of another country's turmoil to further their own objectives. On the other hand, however, potential U.S. adversaries can be consumed by their own revolutions without guerrillas, thereby making expansionist foreign policy adventures somewhat less likely.

There are numerous areas in which foreign unrest could pose either problems or opportunities for the United States. Many developments will be beyond U.S. control, but others may be more amenable to U.S. influence. In an era in which U.S. global capabilities and resources will not be the same as they once were, the question becomes that of what should be expected of the United States as situations of foreign instability unfold.

IV. U.S. POLICY OPTIONS

Designing responses to revolutions without guerrillas will be among the more difficult tasks facing American foreign policymakers in the years ahead. Because these situations tend to unfold rapidly, the time available for formulating policy will be sharply reduced. And since the resources for dealing with these contingencies may be such "intangible" assets as diplomatic and political pressure, there will be no clear guidelines on how to proceed.

The diversity in the countries that experience political instability and the variety of consequences that U.S. action or inaction can have ensure that no single "doctrine" or policy stance will be consistently applicable. Doctrines tend to reduce flexibility, and flexibility will be needed to meet these contingencies. Attempts to formulate rigid standards for U.S. policy toward Third World countries have not been particularly successful. The major shortcoming of the Carter Administration's campaign for human rights, for example, was that no matter how noble an effort it was, it could never be applied consistently without jeopardizing bilateral relations with some governments that were important for U.S. security interests.[1] As former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski pointed out, the human rights policy was effective only in relations with "weak or small non-Communist states that were unable to resist our leverage."[2]

The issue of U.S. leverage and U.S. influence lies at the heart of the challenges of responding to future situations of actual and potential foreign instability. The fact that the United States will not always be able to influence events was clearly demonstrated in the case of Panama. After successfully forcing the departures of Marcos from the Philippines and Duvalier from Haiti, and after persuading the Chun government in South Korea to hold direct presidential elections, the United States came up against a stone wall in the case of Noriega. The need to get rid of Noriega was quite apparent; his presence in Panama was a source of continued unrest that threatened the stability of a country that is vitally important to the United States. Accusations by a high-ranking Panamanian military officer in June 1987 that Noriega ordered the murder of an opposition leader in 1985 and rigged

[1]Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983, p. 33.

[2]Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser 1977-1981*, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983, p. 144.

national elections in 1984 led to widespread rioting and demonstrations calling for his ouster.[3] Yet the Panamanian dictator was able to resist U.S. economic sanctions, diplomatic and legal pressure, and veiled threats of military action to remain in power. Why, then, were U.S. efforts stymied in Panama when they were successful in the other cases?

The answer can be found, in part, in the problems inherent in pursuing a high-profile, high-visibility campaign to bring about the downfall of a foreign leader. The U.S. efforts to bring about change in the leadership of the Philippines, Haiti, and South Korea succeeded because they were characterized by "quiet diplomacy" which did not evolve into a U.S.-Marcos, U.S.-Duvalier, or U.S.-Chun confrontation. In all three cases, the United States made it apparent to the authoritarian rulers that change was necessary to ensure the stability of the country. But the point was made by persuasion, not ultimatums. And the dramas were not played out in public.

In the case of Noriega, the United States deviated from its earlier course of action; U.S. prestige was put on the line in order to bring about change in a foreign government. Beginning with Noriega's grand jury indictment on drug-smuggling and racketeering charges and continuing with repeated threats, economic sanctions, and military maneuvers, the United States engaged the Panamanian dictator in a test of wills. The economic sanctions hurt the majority of the Panamanian people more than they hurt Noriega, leading to an appeal by the Catholic Church in Panama for the United States to lift the sanctions. Noriega was also able to play upon Panamanian nationalism and prevailing Latin American attitudes against U.S. intervention to resist the U.S. pressure.

The Panama case also illustrates the problems that can arise when U.S. foreign policy objectives become merged with high-priority American domestic programs. The "war on drugs" was one of the cornerstones of the Reagan Administration's social and legal agenda. Yet after having raised the public's consciousness about the dangers of drugs—to the point of equating drug trafficking with threats to our national security—and indicting a foreign leader on drug-smuggling charges, the United States painted itself into a corner. There was little flexibility left for pursuing a foreign policy whose main goal, preventing instability in a key Latin American country, should have always been kept separate from the highly politicized and emotional issue of drugs. It was not surprising that public and Congressional pressure, along

[3]Robert Pear, with Neil A. Lewis, "The Noriega Fiasco: What Went Wrong," *New York Times*, May 30, 1988, p. 1.

with Noriega's intransigence, prevented any face-saving deal from being concluded after all efforts to remove the Panamanian dictator had failed.

The Panama experience also reveals the difficulty of attaining a consensus on U.S. policy when a foreign crisis erupts. Just as Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger differed in the mid-1980s on the use of military responses to terrorism (Shultz favored military preemptive and retaliatory raids, Weinberger favored a more cautious approach), so too did the State and Defense Departments take different approaches to the use of military action to oust Noriega. The State Department recommended the deployment of additional troops to Panama, while the Defense Department advocated military restraint.[4]

This apparent reversal of roles is not as surprising at it seems. The military is often expected to apply "quick fixes" to problems that are not that easy to fix. And if things go wrong, it is the military that gets blamed. In addition to the risks a military solution to the Noriega problem would have posed to American military and civilian lives in Panama, the likely backlash in the region could have harmed U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Thus, U.S. responses to political instability will have to be preceded by a careful assessment of the consequences of different policies. This may not always be possible, though, in cases where policymakers are under enormous pressure to design responses quickly. This will be among the most difficult problems facing the United States in future cases of foreign political unrest.

The sudden nature of political unrest also makes it crucial for U.S. decisionmakers to have timely and accurate information, and to be able to interpret that information correctly, before a crisis erupts. The U.S. record in reading the political climate of troubled countries, however, has not been particularly good. A U.S. intelligence estimate in 1978 held that Iran was *not* in a prerevolutionary condition. And although most U.S. observers agreed that Marcos was in trouble, few foresaw his government collapsing as early as the winter of 1986.

Even when it can be determined that political and social instability is likely to develop in a particular country unless changes are made, there will be limits to what the United States can do—or should be expected to do.

Thus, U.S. policy options will vary according to the environment in which a particular revolution without guerrillas is unfolding.

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[4]Robert Pear, "Split Is Reported in Administration on Panama Policy," *New York Times*, April 3, 1988, p. 1; Bernard E. Trainor, "War of Nerves in Panama: A Risk of Overreaction," *New York Times*, April 7, 1988, p. 6.

Responses to political and social instability within the Soviet Union or China, for example, will be tempered by the desire to avoid creating an international crisis or jeopardizing bilateral relations with those governments. Nevertheless, there will be public and congressional pressure to either express support for popular uprisings or to condemn foreign governments' repressive measures, as occurred when the United States initially refused to criticize China for its suppression of protests in Tibet during 1987. It will be possible to apply more substantive U.S. measures in the case of developments in Eastern Europe, but even there, the U.S. options will be limited by consideration of the possible repercussions of U.S. involvement in the internal developments of Communist bloc countries.

The United States will have more options to pursue in dealing with potential political and social instability surrounding challenges to authoritarian regimes. But as the case of Panama illustrates, there is no guarantee that U.S. initiatives will succeed or that the United States will not suffer embarrassing setbacks in trying to influence foreign political situations. The major concern for the United States will be to prevent popular uprisings against pro-Western authoritarian governments from being transformed into militant anti-U.S. revolutionary regimes. What occurred in Iran and Nicaragua in the late 1970s could very well take place in a number of countries in the 1990s.

Thus, the encouragement of gradual political reforms in pro-Western authoritarian systems is an essential policy for the United States to pursue. While political reform is no panacea for the problems—including severe economic problems—that may plague societies living under authoritarian rule, it is nevertheless in the long-term interests of the United States to become aligned with a process of democratization rather than support for the status quo. Iran and Nicaragua clearly demonstrated that "change" in authoritarian regimes can result in equally, if not more, repressive regimes coming to power; they also demonstrated what can happen when political and social reforms are delayed too long.

Revolutions without guerrillas that involve ethnic-religious and nationalist issues and those that are primarily economic in nature will provide still different challenges for U.S. policy. Providing economic assistance to troubled countries will probably be easier than trying to convince governments to trade land for peace. But even in cases of potential instability related to economic grievances, the United States may be able to do little by itself, given the extent of some countries' economic problems.

The limitations of U.S. resources and influence in a changing international environment will thus necessitate multilateral approaches to

many of the problems associated with revolutions without guerrillas. Unilateral military, economic, or political measures will not only become increasingly difficult to implement, they may also involve unacceptable risks to U.S. foreign policy. In addition to the embarrassment the United States suffered from its failure to remove Noriega from office in Panama, there was a constant risk of alienating other Latin American governments that resented the U.S. "intrusion" into the affairs of the region.

Thus, the most viable approach for the United States to take when its national interests are deemed to be at stake will be to include other regional actors in its policies. Multilateral leverage enables the presentation of a coordinated and united front in situations where regional stability may be threatened and where U.S. influence by itself is not likely to be effective. In cases where authoritarian rulers are resisting change and pursuing policies likely to lead to unrest, multilateral "persuasion" not only isolates those governments in a region—thus potentially spurring the process of reform—but also prevents dictators from manipulating U.S. initiatives into anti-U.S. public campaigns.

In situations where economic and financial assistance may be critical for maintaining stability, multilateral assistance not only takes the economic burden off the United States, but also allows for other actors to have a stake in the long process of improving a nation's economic condition. And where ethnic-religious and nationalistic conflicts are the basis of turmoil, the participation of regional and international parties may be necessary for effective mediation and negotiations.

Political and social instability will undoubtedly continue to present the United States with difficult foreign policy challenges. The longstanding U.S. reliance on military measures for dealing with the internal conflicts of other countries is not likely to be effective in responding to revolutions without guerrillas. New tools of policy will need to be designed that are sensitive to the nuances of other countries' internal political and social relationships, yet at the same time recognize the potential impact that internal strife in certain areas can have on U.S. interests.

V. CONCLUSION

Revolutions without guerrillas have become a critical issue in international affairs. Beginning with the political and social upheavals in Iran in the late 1970s and continuing with the uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, U.S. interests have been affected by a form of "low-intensity conflict" that is likely to grow in the coming years. Responding to these revolutionary and pre-revolutionary situations that are not tied to guerrilla insurgencies will be among the most critical—and difficult—tasks of U.S. foreign policy.

The sudden and explosive nature of these situations and their potential impact on vital U.S. interests makes makes them of urgent concern to the United States. American military bases and assets overseas, U.S. geostrategic interests, and U.S. foreign policy objectives in many regions can be placed at risk when turmoil erupts. Potential adversaries of the United States can also use the problems of other nations to establish footholds in areas of vital concern to this country.

For a nation that has traditionally thought of Third World and other foreign domestic conflicts in terms of guerrilla warfare, revolutions without guerrillas will pose new problems and challenges and understanding their nature and potential impacts will inevitably become a high-priority issue. These crises are likely to consume the attention of U.S. decisionmakers for some time to come.