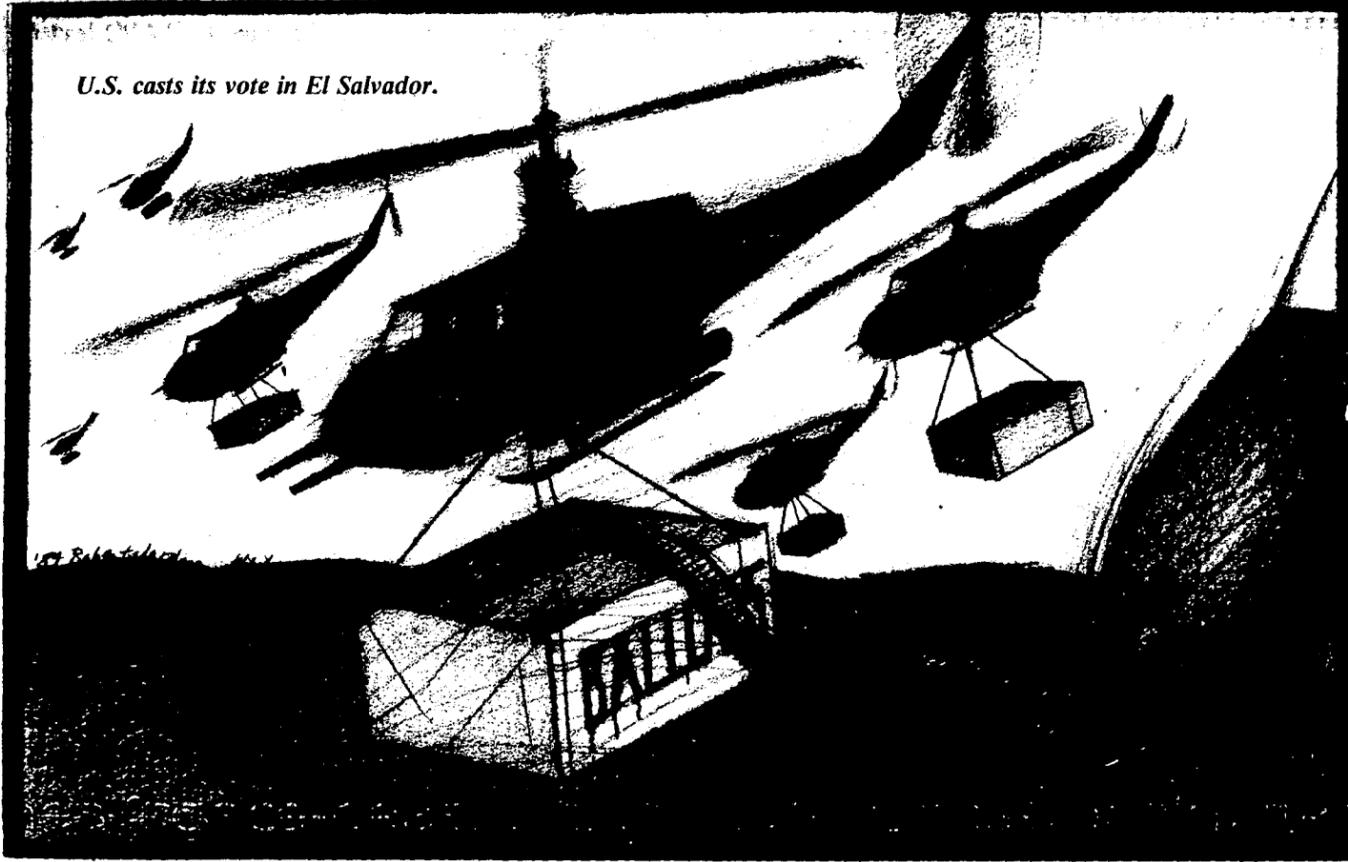


U.S. casts its vote in El Salvador.



CONGRESS

Stepped up military activity in Salvador spurs opposition

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION hopes to use the Salvadoran elections to consolidate support in Congress for its Central American policy. Some cynics even believe the elections' principal purpose was to satisfy or neutralize congressional critics of the administration's policy. But the administration has run into unexpected resistance from Congress.

Part of the reason for congressional opposition has been the administration's own doing. Its defiance of legislation making economic and military aid contingent upon human rights standards has angered some Republicans as well as Democrats. The administration also surprised supporters as well as critics by dramatically increasing its military posture in the region this winter and spring. Most Senate and House members had expected that the administration would moderate the military side of its policy during the American elections.

But congressional Democrats have also become increasingly intransigent toward the administration's policy. Fence-sitters have come out firmly against uncondi-

tional aid to the Salvadoran government and the Nicaraguan *contras*, and those already in opposition have made clear their support for negotiations between the Salvadoran government and the FDR/FMLN.

The Reagan administration has stepped up its military activities in Honduras. This week it began new military exercises, dubbed Granadero I, that will involve as many as 5,000 American troops near the Salvadoran border. On April 20, the U.S. will begin "Ocean Venture '84" in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, which will involve 30,000 American personnel.

One secret American unit stationed at Palmerola in Honduras is reportedly flying military reconnaissance missions over Salvadoran guerrilla positions. From bases in Honduras, the U.S. is also continuing to train and equip the Nicaraguan *contras*. According to *Newsweek*, Gen. Paul Gorman, head of the U.S. Southern Command, favors direct military intervention against the Salvadoran guerrillas. Gorman has proposed using unmarked AC-130 Spectre gunships against their positions.

The administration's new offensive has met resistance in Congress. After visiting Honduras, Sen. James Sasser (D-TN) charged that the U.S. is building permanent rather than temporary military facilities in Honduras, which it cannot do without congressional authorization. The Senate Appropriations subcommittee on military construction adopted a resolution banning the use of funds to build permanent facilities in Honduras.

On March 7 the administration requested \$92.75 million in immediate aid to the Salvadoran government and \$21 million in aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. The Reagan administration claimed the aid was needed immediately because the Salvadoran troops were running out of ammunition. But Pentagon figures that accompanied the request failed to convince either Republicans or Democrats of the urgency of the request. One House staff member speculated that the administration wanted the aid approved before the election out of fear that right-wing candidate Roberto D'Aubuisson, who has been linked to death squads, would win and Congress would move to cut off all future aid.

Last week the administration, in preparation for a vote on the Senate floor, agreed to compromise with moderate Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and settle for

\$61.7 million in aid to the Salvadoran government. But other Democrats, led by Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, were preparing to cut that amount still further and to make it conditional upon elimination of the death squads.

Support for negotiations.

The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives has yet to consider the administration's emergency request, but it can be expected to approve considerably less than the administration's compromise and to oppose any funds for the Nicaraguan *contras*. The bill's final outcome will depend on a House-Senate conference.

In response to the Kissinger Commission report and the administration's request for \$8 billion in long-term economic and military aid to Central America, House Democrats have sharpened their past opposition to administration policy. Previously, the Democratic opposition was defined by Rep. Michael Barnes (D-MD), the centrist and ambitious Demo-

crat who heads the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In the past, he had called for making military and economic aid contingent upon an improvement in the Salvadoran government's human rights record, but not upon the Salvadoran government's willingness to engage in negotiations with the FDR/FMLN.

But this year the Democrats on the House Foreign Affairs Committee decided to take a stronger position. Rather than simply hold out for less aid, Democrats like New Jersey freshman Robert Torricelli insisted that the committee stand for an entirely different approach. "In the past, we've been part of the problem," Torricelli said during the committee's Democratic caucus. "We have to become part of the solution. The Democrats owe more to the American people than offering less of a bad policy."

Under pressure from the Democratic caucus, Barnes' subcommittee rejected the administration and Kissinger Commission blueprint. It reported out a bill for fiscal year 1985 that forbade aid to Guatemala and made any aid to the Salvadoran government contingent not only upon an improvement in the government's human rights record, but also upon "the participation by the government of El Salvador in negotiations with all major parties to the conflict in El Salvador, in good faith and without preconditions."

The subcommittee also rejected the past practice of leaving the certification of a government's human rights record entirely to the State Department. The subcommittee's bill required that both the administration and Congress, through a joint resolution, certify that the Salvadoran government had met all the bill's conditions. This requirement was subsequently modified at the insistence of the chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, moderate Dante Fascell (D-FL). But the final bill still requires that two-thirds of American aid be subject to joint certification. "We've never had such a strong and dramatic proposal as this," Cindy Buhl, a lobbyist for the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, said.

Most American policy opponents expect that when the voting is over, the administration will get most of what it wants for 1984 and 1985. What it does not get explicitly it can still get indirectly. For instance, it can bypass the ban on permanent military facilities in Honduras simply by insisting that the facilities it is building are temporary.

Yet the administration will not get the kind of long-range commitment that it wanted to use the Kissinger Commission to secure, and the Democrats will have clarified and solidified their own opposition to the future escalation of administration policy in Central America. ■

Mondale draws fire

Prior to March 14, former Vice-President Walter Mondale was supported for the presidency by most members of Washington's anti-intervention and arms control community. One supporter of Sen. Gary Hart said he found only five other Hart supporters among the hundreds who work in organizations opposed to the administration's arms and Central American policies.

But Mondale's March 14 speech at the Chicago Council for Foreign Relations has sent shock waves through this community. In that speech, he advocated keeping American troops in Honduras as a "bargaining chip" against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and as a means of offering security to the Hondurans. He also attacked Hart for hedging in a *Washington Post* interview on whether Cuba was "totalitarian" and for suggesting that poverty rather than Communism was the most serious threat to American interests in the Third World. In subsequent statements, Mondale criticized Hart, who opposes any American military involvement in Central America, for wanting to "pull the plug" on the region.

Cindy Buhl of the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy summed up the anti-intervention lobby's reaction with a shudder. "Mondale's position on Honduras was a real shock and a disappointment," she said. "What we are doing in Honduras in no way supports the security of the region or makes the Sandinistas more conciliatory. It only adds tension to the region and completely undermines the Contadora process, which Mondale says he supports."

Disappointment with Mondale's position has also spread to liberal Democrats in House and Senate. One important Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee was leaning toward Mondale, but according to his aide is now wavering because he "is concerned about Mondale's move to the right on Central America." An important House staff member concerned with Central American issues also expressed disappointment. "I think in the last few weeks it has become clear that Hart has been better than Mondale on this issue," he said. "He's more willing to say he's against intervention." ■

Congressional Democrats are beginning to get their backs up in election year.

AFRICA

Regional conflicts prompt new pacts

By Gay W. Seidman

WHEN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE won independence in the mid-'70s, black South Africans were jubilant over what the presence of independent socialist governments on their borders might mean for their struggle. After years of battling those governments, South Africa last month struck deals with both of them—deals that could bring major changes to the region.

Both last month's Mozambique-South Africa non-aggression pact and the Angola-South Africa agreement reached in mid-February have been hailed as Western diplomatic victories, in which Soviet-backed nations are finally responding to Western peace initiatives. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker was involved in setting up both deals, and President Reagan, Britain's Margaret Thatcher and West Germany's Helmut Kohl congratulated Mozambique on reaching agreement with South Africa.

But the agreements—which could lead toward Namibian independence on the one hand and shore up South Africa's apartheid regime on the other—are more the result of regional developments during the past year than of outside diplomatic moves. All three countries have been under great pressure to break what Mozambique's President Samora Machel called "the cycle of violence" that has been escalating in southern Africa since before 1980.

Of the trio, Mozambique is probably most anxious to find peace with its powerful neighbor. Inheriting a weak economy at independence from Portugal, Mozambique has been plagued with problems that range from a low level of technical skills to almost non-existent foreign exchange reserves. But these problems have been enormously exacerbated since 1980, when South Africa took control of a rebel Mozambican group, the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MRM).

Originally created by Rhodesia as a way to harass Mozambique for its support of Zimbabwean liberation, the MRM gave South Africa a tool with which to wage undeclared war on Mozambique. South Africa has also invaded Mozambique directly, to attack what it claimed were bases of the African National Congress (ANC), the main South African liberation group. But it was primarily the South Africa-backed MRM's campaign of economic sabotage—bombed roads, power stations and pipelines—that forced Mozambique to negotiate the security agreement, in which both governments promise to withdraw support for rebels in the other's country.

In the last three years the resistance movement has cost Mozambique more than \$4 billion. The final straw, however, may be the ongoing drought, which has driven thousands of Mozambicans over the border into neighboring Zimbabwe in search of food (see *In These Times*, February 29). Already struggling, the Mozambican economy seems near collapse—which is why South African and U.S. offers of food and other aid look so attractive.

The day before Mozambique signed the treaty of "non-aggression and good neighborliness" with South Africa, the MRM's Pretoria radio station shut down. Although at least one recent South African air drop to the rebels means they may continue fighting for a few months, Mozambique hopes that a withdrawal of South African support will end the MRM attacks and let the Mozambican govern-

ment get on with rebuilding the country. The day after the treaty was signed near the South Africa-Mozambique border, South Africa sent six tons of badly needed medical supplies to Maputo, Mozambique's capital.

In return for peace and promises of aid, Mozambique will try to stop ANC guerrillas from using its territory as a springboard into South Africa. Although Mozambique has never allowed the ANC to establish training camps or major bases there, its government has been willing to turn a relatively blind eye to armed guerrillas passing through on their way south. South Africa's claims that nearly 75 percent of guerrilla attacks inside South Africa are planned in Maputo are undoubtedly exaggerated, but certainly Mozambique has been more supportive of ANC efforts in the past than it will be now—especially since the non-aggression pact allows South Africa to send in its own troops to help Mozambique stop the gun-running.

Mozambique also seems to be giving up its fight to break out of the economic dependence on South Africa it inherited at independence. South Africa is the industrial as well as the military powerhouse of the region, and the independent states of southern Africa have tried to create a regional trade grouping to break South Africa's stranglehold. At the recent signing, South Africa's Prime Minister P.W. Botha spoke glowingly of future trade agreements between Mozambique and South Africa, which could undercut the regional effort to build greater autonomy.

Not surprisingly, the ANC and the Frontline states—independent African countries that have been supportive of the South African liberation struggle—have responded coolly to the new deal. Botswana's President Quett Masire said bluntly that Mozambique was bullied into the non-aggression pact, while Zimbabwe and other neighboring countries did not attend the signing ceremony. Doubtless, both Botswana and Zimbabwe see the treaty as an ominous sign of what lies ahead for them, too. ANC President Oliver Tambo said in London, "I think time will prove that it doesn't help South Africa to force countries to sign agreements which set them against the liberation struggle," but he didn't have many kind words for Mozambique, either.

Like Mozambique, Angola has suffered heavily in the last few years from South African attacks—to the tune of more than \$700 million. Although Angola's rich oil reserves make the economic damage a little easier to bear, the cost in lives and resources has been enormous. Since 1982, South Africa has occupied a 100 square kilometer area in southern Angola, hoping to block Namibian guerrillas from going into their country, which is illegally controlled by South Africa. Angola has provided steady support for SWAPO, the Namibian liberation movement, which most observers agree would win power in Namibia if fair elections were held tomorrow.

South Africa has also backed an anti-government group in Angola, as it has in Mozambique, and provided ground and air support for its drives further into Angola. UNITA, the Angolan rebel group, claimed at Angolan independence to represent a southern ethnic group. But its heavy reliance on South African support in the past few years has severely damaged its credibility.

Yet the combination of South African attacks and attacks by South Africa's proxy forces has undermined Angola's efforts to improve people's lives. Like Mozambique, Angola is plagued by

shortages of consumer goods, interrupted communications and the constant drain of resources for the war effort.

The Angolan army, however, is probably better trained and equipped than the Mozambican army—thanks in part to the presence of some 20,000 Cuban trainers as well as Soviet weapons bought with proceeds from Angola's oil reserves. In December a major South African thrust northward was repulsed, as several earlier invasion attempts have been.

Angola's agreement.

So the Angolans were in a much stronger position in their negotiations with South Africa, and the agreement the two countries reached in February in Lusaka, Zambia, is generally regarded as less ominous than the more recent Mozambican pact. The other Frontline states have commended the agreement, which will set up a joint Angolan-South African commission to supervise South Africa's withdrawal from Angola and the movements of SWAPO within Angola.

In one way at least, the agreement is a

support for the current SWAPO leadership.

Whatever the outcome—which looks bleaker since the recent flurry of diplomatic stances over the question of Cuban withdrawal—there is not likely to be a ceasefire yet in Namibia; SWAPO President Sam Nujoma has pointed out that in Namibia, it is SWAPO that is fighting, not Angola, and SWAPO was not represented at the Lusaka talks. The fighting will continue, he promised, until South Africa lives up to its promise to hold UN-supervised elections in Namibia.

Yet there are signs that South Africa may be trying to extricate itself from what promises to be an increasingly bitter war. Undoubtedly, black Namibians have suffered more than anyone else, not least from atrocities committed by the 100,000 South African soldiers stationed in the territory. But the costs of the war have also begun to worry the South African government. Even with the sale of Namibian diamonds and uranium, \$800 million a year for an apparently never-ending war gets expensive, and with an econ-



victory for Angola: both South Africa and the U.S., which was involved in setting up the talks, have backed down from their intransigent insistence that the Cuban trainers had to leave Angola before negotiations about South African withdrawal or Namibian independence could begin. Angola has always said it would only ask the Cubans—who came at Angola's request—to leave when the threat of South African invasion was removed.

Hopes that the stalemate might have been broken completely were dimmed when South Africa's Botha responded angrily to joint Angolan and Cuban declarations of support for SWAPO and for Namibian independence issued March 19. Earlier, Angola had rejected U.S. offers to patrol the Namibian border, on the grounds that the U.S. is not a neutral force in southern Africa, and had refused an invitation to an "all-party" conference that would have included the South Africa-backed rebel group, UNITA.

At a minimum, however, the Angola-South Africa agreement provides some breathing space for Angola and shows that the Reagan administration has been forced to acknowledge that its insistence on linking Cuban withdrawal with Namibian independence negotiations has been a complete disaster for southern Africa and for U.S. credibility on the continent as a whole.

More optimistic observers believe the pact may also be a first step toward a negotiated settlement in Namibia—although previous attempts at such settlements have invariably broken down when South Africa pulled out. But two weeks after the agreement to set up a joint commission was reached, SWAPO founder Herman Toivo ya Toivo had been released after 16 years in South African prisons and was touring the region declaring his

omy in the midst of a recession, South Africa's rulers are beginning to ask about a bottom line. Moreover, in the last year SWAPO has attacked farther and farther inside Namibia, in the heart of white farm country. The war zone has expanded to include much of the country, and South Africa must be beginning to calculate how much more it will cost in the future to retain control.

Costly war.

The war in Namibia could also grow costly for the Pretoria regime in terms of international and internal support. Since it backed out of holding elections in 1979, South Africa has come under increasing threat of international sanctions; all three front-running Democrats have expressed support for sanctions against South Africa over the Namibia question, and for its occupation of Angola.

Meanwhile at home, the government is beginning to face increasing resistance from young whites, for whom military service is long, arduous and compulsory. In January, the draft laws were tightened to make a six-year sentence for draft resisters mandatory, although hundreds of young white men will probably continue to evade the draft by going underground or into exile. The regime is also beginning to look beyond the white community to increase the pool of draftable men: there are signs that the government will soon begin to conscript men classified "coloured" (mixed race) and "Asian" under South Africa's apartheid system.

The Pretoria regime faces other internal pressures, too, far beyond the costs of the war in Namibia. Massive demonstrations and strikes during the last year have dimmed hopes that the new apartheid constitution—which will give "col-

Continued on page 22