

ADVISER: Central American countries need a great deal more economic aid, military advisers and military training.

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How Reagan Might Change Latin Policies

The prospect of a November victory by Republican presidential nominee Ronald Reagan has aroused considerable speculation and, in some sectors, trepidation about a Reagan administration's policies toward Latin America and the Caribbean.

Roger Fontaine, 39, a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, a respected conservative think tank in Washington, is one of the former California governor's principal advisers on the hemisphere.

Others are Pedro San Juan, the AEI's director of Western Hemisphere affairs, and Jeanne Kirkpatrick, a political scientist at Washington's Georgetown University who also is associated with the AEI.

Fontaine holds both a master's and a doc-

tor's degree in international relations from Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies in Baltimore. Before joining the AEI he was director of the Latin American division of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies. He is considered a likely candidate for a top hemisphere affairs position in a Reagan administration.

He spoke recently in Washington with Herald Latin America Editor Don Bohning. Although he emphasized that his views do not constitute formal policy that would be pursued by a Reagan administration, his comments do offer a general idea of what might be expected.

An edited version of the conversation, in question-and-answer form, follows.

By DON BOHNING

Q. What do you think would be the most significant differences between a Carter administration and a Reagan administration regarding policy toward Latin America?

A. I think there is going to be a rather striking difference in approach to Central America and the Caribbean, number one. Number two, a different approach to Mexico and I'd also say a striking difference, in relations with Mexico and, third, dealing with the key countries of South America.

Q. You say some major differences, some major changes in policy toward Central

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Fidel Should Worry About Reagan Win

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America. Let's pursue that a little bit more.

A. Well, I think in one of the broadest aspects a Reagan administration is going to act a good deal more aggressively in preserving what's left of, and preserving what opportunities are left for, democracy, particularly in Central America. This is a personal feeling because it hasn't been spelled out officially, but I would like to see something shape up in the Reagan administration that would be nothing less than a Truman Doctrine for the region. You remember the Truman Doctrine was designed for Greece back in the late 1940s to help regimes in serious trouble who were friendly to the U.S. but under attack from armed minorities that were aided and abetted by outside, hostile forces, mainly the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

A somewhat similar situation is occurring in a number of cases in Central America. Armed minorities supported by principally the Cubans are attempting to destabilize regimes to the point where I think the chances for democracy as we know it are going to be closed out, foreclosed.

I think you have to do something like a Truman Doctrine. A Truman Doctrine means that you are going to have to give these countries — El Salvador being one, Guatemala another — a good deal more economic aid than they are getting, at least short-term, particularly in the case of El Salvador. It means that they need military advisers. It means that they need military training. Kind of a combination of the

agrarian reform, for example, although among people whose views I respect it's very controversial. I'm also very much afraid of the nature of what the economy is going to be like in the next six months. If it is going in as many pieces as I suspect it is, that's going to make it even harder, much harder, to preserve any kind of support for the junta. I think another thing the junta has got to do is to extend its support or extend its embrace to the private sector or much of the private sector in El Salvador. I think the two fighting each other will end up destroying or helping to destroy the country and paving the way for a far left takeover. It's very late in the game.

Q. How about Guatemala?

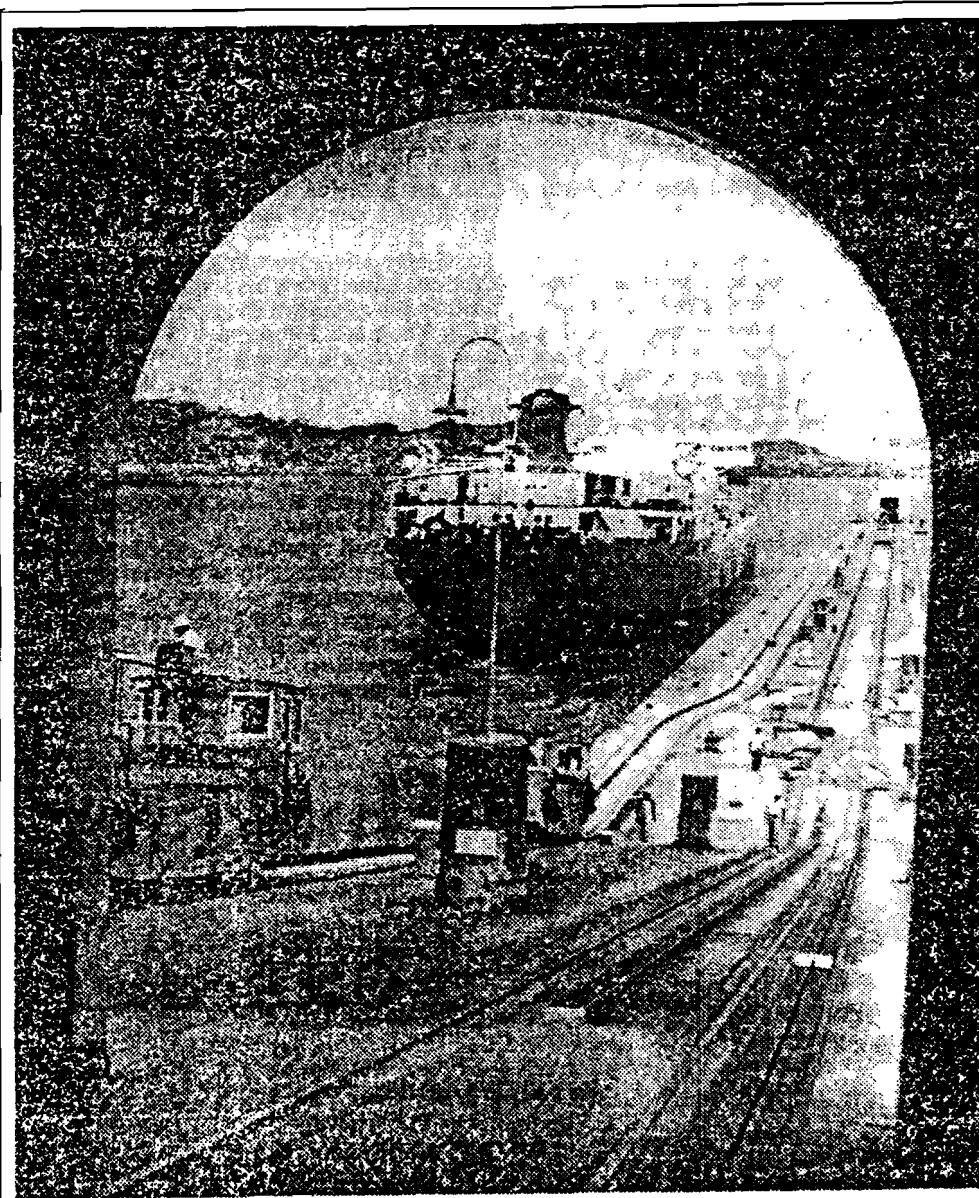
A. Guatemala is a little further down the road but Guatemala is going to need some help, again both military and principally economic. But mostly what they need, quite aside from military advisers and military training, is some political support, the sense that they are not alone. I think it's probably the most important thing the United States can do, to demonstrate that the United States is still in business, that it is still concerned about the region.

Q. There is a terrible human rights problem there as I am sure you know.

A. Yes. I am fully aware of it and I am also arguing that the United States, by staying out of Guatemala, letting it go its own way, is in fact making things worse, not better. That's why I disagree with that policy.

Q. How would you deal with Nicaragua at this point? You were quoted recently as saying you would not have approved that \$75-million loan to Nicaragua.

A. That's right. That is the Republican Party platform. That is not a position I agreed to six months ago. Six months ago or so, whenever I testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I said, albeit with five pages of caveats, that I believed that the aid should be approved for Nicaragua because there seemed to be no other option. It was necessary to preserve



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A. With some difficulty. Part of the definition is who their friends are and it's very clear from that element of the PNP [Manley's Peoples National Party] that their friends are not in the United States, not in Western Europe, but in Cuba and the Soviet Union.

Q. Do you include Manley in that element of the PNP?

A. Manley is very hard to pin down. But I think increasingly so the answer is yes. It's been a dynamic. Four years ago I think the answer would have been no. Even two years ago. But I think the direction is obvious and plain.

Q. What about Mexico?

A. Mexico is very clearly going to be a priority for a Reagan administration. If I had to pick a priority, it probably would be Mexico, from what I can tell.

Q. Why?

A. Because it's next door, 65 million people. Concern about Mexican political stability has got to be paramount to the United States. And there are a number of very serious, inter-related problems that both Mexico and the United States face. We have made very little or no progress on them over the last four years or longer and we all know what they are. Trade, immigration and energy and, to a lesser extent, fishing rights and pollution. I think this is going to be pretty much on the top of the calendar.

Q. How would a Reagan administration differ from a Carter administration in dealing with Mexico?

A. Well, first of all, I doubt that relations could get any worse. And this is in part due to personality. Carter simply threw away his chances for serious talk, particularly in February 1979 when he visited Mexico. I think it's a question of priority, meeting your commitments and indicating you are serious about negotiations. I would like to see the next U.S. ambassador



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kinds of things we did in the early '60s under the Alliance for Progress and what the Truman Doctrine did for Greece and Turkey in the 1940s.

Q. You would think military advisers are essential, are required?

A. Yes. And military assistance. Again, a personal opinion, but I think this controversy between lethal and non-lethal aid is absurd. You don't fight terrorists and guerrillas with non-lethal aid.

Q. But after Vietnam, when you talk about military advisers, don't you raise a red flag?

A. Well, I understand that but the fact is that we're going to have to confront Vietnam for what it was and then go on from there. If we continue, again in my view, to focus on Vietnam as a failure and then say every time we use legitimate instruments of diplomacy and international relations that this somehow leads us into a

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Q. You think Nicaragua is lost?

A. I think Nicaragua is lost, for the moment. I don't think the money is in fact going to go to the private sector. I don't think the private sector is going to be supported or would be supported. I don't think the private sector has any real influence in Nicaragua today.

Q. Then how would you deal with Nicaragua?

A. I don't have a plan. I've asked everybody in town who knows and they don't have a plan, either, although most people privately now say that Nicaragua is lost. I can't tell you what we do about Nicaragua. My guess is, and this for Americans is very hard to understand, I think it's a matter of being patient and letting the Nicaraguan people make their own decisions. I think the money [to Nicaragua] only supports the dictatorship in Nicaragua now. There may be, in time, enough ferment within the country to either limit or overthrow the really hard Sandinistas who intend to establish, are in fact establishing, a tight, tough dictatorship. But that is only speculation and that's not much of an option but we don't have much left.

Q. How about Panama? There seems to be a great deal of concern in Panama about a Reagan victory, more so than anywhere else in the hemisphere perhaps, because of the 1976 campaign and the [new Panama Canal] treaties and what not.



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job any easier for the Cubans. I think it's extraordinarily interesting, I can't recall, before a U.S. election, when Fidel was so strident about one presidential candidate. He's said twice now that he was reminded of Hitler. He's obviously concerned [about a Reagan victory]. He's worried and I think he should be worried.

The other thing, though, is that if you read his [July 26] speech, and Fidel is a very clever fellow, he is trying his best to divide or pare off or shear off the rest of Latin America from the United States; to say Cuba and Latin America have a great deal in common versus a troglodyte Reagan administration, Gunboat Diplomacy and all of that. I don't think it's going to work because we're not going to let it work. We're not going to let his position of influence dictate the kinds of policies we follow in Latin America. I think Castro's intention, besides announcing his preoccupation with a Reagan administration, is to attempt to break off Latin America from the U.S. and I don't think we're going to play into his hands in that regard.

Q. But doesn't Gov. Reagan, by making a comment like he did after the Afghanistan invasion suggesting a naval blockade of Cuba, doesn't that play into Castro's hands?

A. I don't think so. As a matter of fact, and I'm glad you raised the Afghanistan thing because people usually isolate it

A. Well, for example, and again a very personal opinion, I don't think you are going to see an ending of aerial surveillance over Cuba which was done for two years or longer. I, for one, would like to reexamine the fishing agreement. That is not saying it should be abrogated, but I'd like to look at it. I'd also like to review the 1962 understanding between Kennedy and Khrushchev [after the missile crisis]. I'd like to look at that.

Q. Would you review the exchange of interest sections and steps we've taken toward diplomatic relations?

A. Yeah, I would review the interest section question and I would also review tourist dollars going into Cuba.

Q. You are not saying that you would withdraw the interest section? You are saying that you would review it?

A. No. I'd spend a long time, careful time, reviewing the total aspect of U.S.-Cuban relations including all those things.

Q. But you would go no further than has been gone as far as rapprochement?

A. That's right. At the same time, no further steps towards rapprochement. Unless, of course, the Cubans were willing to change their activities and their attitudes.

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Q. How would you see a Reagan administration dealing with military dictatorships in Latin America?

A. That also raises the question of human rights as well as relating it to political stability and democracy. Let's go to human rights for a moment because that's a cause of endless confusion. I have said, and will say again, that human rights as a concern of American foreign policy did not begin with, nor will it end with, Mr. Carter. I think in terms of what Reagan will do is to continue to espouse his concern for human rights but change the method, tone and tactics, particularly in Latin America where we have been the most heavy-handed.

My guess, in fact my conviction, is that changing the method, the tone, the tactic will include going private rather than public, being less threatening but being firm and persistent and being patient. You can't do this over a two-year period or a four-year period or even a six-year period. But if it's done with persistence and patience over a period of time, then I think it begins to pay off.

In terms of dictators, I think Reagan has a tendency to deal with the situation as it is, not particularly espousing it or being in favor of it, but knowing that turbulent

Vietnam, then we might as well just build a Fortress America about the rest of the world. That's the choice.

Q. This leads to another question. Do you see any circumstances under which the United States might intervene militarily in Latin America?

A. That's a very tough one. Frankly, I wouldn't even speculate on it, but I would say this. The use of military force is an option any nation, in terms of its vital national interests, has to maintain as a possibility. I don't think it's a probability or even a likelihood but beyond that would be in extreme form of speculation. No administration can rule it out. That leads to another question about the revival of "Big Stick" diplomacy. That's an important question but again, I don't think that if you're talking about changes in administration and changes in policy, I don't think we're going back to "Gunboat" or "Big Stick" diplomacy as it is perceived or caricatured.

Q. Don't you think a Reagan administration might have a problem of perception in some parts of Latin America?

A. I think it might have a, quote, problem of perception. But my concern is that the perception of the Carter Administration is one that it doesn't exercise very forcefully anything in terms of defending America's vital interests. One example comes to mind readily and that's the little stance we did last fall regarding the celebrated Soviet combat brigade in Cuba. I'm a good deal more worried about the perception the United States got after that... inability to either control events or bring about a situation or change a situation that is deemed unacceptable. That's a serious matter.

Q. How do you deal with El Salvador?

A. I think it's very late in Salvador and I hope to God there is something left to save in El Salvador after January of 1981. I'm not going to speculate one way or the other because I don't know. I've been pessimistic and sometimes I've been optimistic that things somehow will be pulled together. But I would not only continue support of the middle sectors in that country, what's left of the middle sectors, but show more support than has been shown. I don't think the kinds of support we've given so far have been adequate.

Q. How about the junta? Is there any alternative to the junta at this point?

A. There are some things I personally disagree with. I'm very leery of the

A. I think the governor [Reagan] is on record as saying that now that the treaties have been approved by the Senate and ratified that they are a solemn obligation of the United States, which they are, and that the United States will live up to its obligations and that it will assume that the Panamanians will do the same thing.

Q. Are we talking about a strict interpretation of the treaties, the reservations and the amendments? If so, that could be a problem because the Panamanians don't necessarily recognize all the reservations attached by the Senate.

A. I know. And you also know that the governor pointed out on a number of occasions that one of the problems we're going to have with these treaties is that, in fact, we don't have two treaties, we have four treaties. They have their interpretations and we have ours, aside from the reservations. That does raise problems, and they're going to have to be sorted out between the United States and Panama.

Q. But as far as the basic treaties themselves, there is no reversing them?

A. I don't see abrogation or reversing or unilateral action. I don't see any of that and I think the governor has been very clear on that point.

Q. You think that it is possible that we are going to have to sit down and straighten out some points?

A. I think that's inevitable. The problems will grow. I've said, and it's a personal opinion, that these treaties really aren't very workable; that in a couple of years both Panamanians and Americans are going to agree on that point and at some point we're probably going to have to sit down and try to sort this thing out. It would be a hell of a lot easier if we try and do it together, try to be as mutually benefiting to each other as possible rather than be antagonistic. And I would guess a Reagan administration would take it in that spirit.

Q. Moving to the Caribbean, how do you deal with Cuba?

A. Ah, Cuba. Big question. This, by the way, is a difference, a clear difference, between Reagan and a Carter administration. Gov. Reagan has never once thought that the Cubans were anything less than hostile toward the United States and its interests, around the world or in the Caribbean, so I think there is going to be a change in policy. Now, the next question. What are you going to do about it? To paraphrase Fidel when he was asked that question once, I don't want to make that



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from that, what Reagan was saying was that this was a legitimate response to an event that we couldn't do much about, that is the invasion of Afghanistan, because we don't have any forces there. But we do have forces in the Caribbean and if the Soviets want to take that sort of action somewhere else which may harm our interests, then they must expect something in return, a counteraction where, in fact, we can back it up. Now, the next question is, is there going to be a naval blockade of Cuba? I don't know because you know it may be just too late. If the Soviets move somewhere else and do something else as they did in the case of Afghanistan, well, I wouldn't rule it out.

In the meantime, however, I think there are a number of things that are going to happen with Cuba vis-a-vis us [a Reagan administration]. One of them, of course, is that there is not going to be any question about continued benefits which the Carter Administration dangled in front of them the first two years.

Q. Continued benefits like what?

Q. What does that mean? Angola? the Caribbean? Central America?

A. That's right. When they stop acting as Soviet allies and surrogates, then I think we have a chance to do some serious talking. I've suggested, and it's only a personal suggestion, that the Cubans ought to be given a choice and the choice is, if they want to continue doing what they are doing or even increasing their activities, then they must expect to pay increased costs. The price goes up for their alliance with the Soviet Union. And I think it should be a heavy cost, a heavy price. If, however, they decide that price isn't worth it, and they are willing to change, then I think we should be willing to change and that means the trade embargo, the whole business.

Q. How do you make them pay that price?

A. There are ways of doing it, without getting into specifics. The Cubans know it and we know it.

Q. How about the rest of the Caribbean, Jamaica, the small islands? How do you deal with them?

A. Specifically, in the case of Jamaica, its economy is in ruins, largely self-destroyed by the [Prime Minister Michael] Manley regime. We are talking now, strictly personal opinion, Jamaican elections are to be held in September or October, and I think the U.S. has got to, at least short-term, help rebuild that country. I think it is self-sustaining once it gets over this bad patch, the next year or two. That's assuming there isn't a Manley victory and I'm assuming there isn't a Manley victory because of the polls.

I think if Manley does win or if Manley maintains himself in power through one means or another and continues on his present course, there's not much we can do. I, for one, don't want to continue what I think has been a Carter policy of saying that this [the Manley government's] is good economic policy, this democratic socialism, and it's something that should be welcomed. I think it's been a disaster in Jamaica.

Q. Do you consider the Manley government to be Marxist?

A. I consider the Manley government heading in that direction, yeah. And some of the people around him Marxists, yes.

Q. How do you define a Marxist?

countries or countries going through a period of turbulence are going to have that sort of thing, at least for a period of time. That's not saying you support it, it's just saying you are accepting it if that's the way it is and hoping, by the way, you don't make things worse.

Q. What about a country like Chile? Some of your comments on Chile have been bit more harsh than those about other countries.

A. I'm worried about Chile. I have also said, in the full context of what was said and not just the part that was quoted, that while I see progress under difficult circumstances in Brazil and Argentina in terms of reforming or reconstructing their political institutions in the right direction, I don't see similar progress in the case of Chile. Chileans don't like me to say that, but that's my personal view and I would hope they would take some steps.

And the other thing I would hope, and expect, too, is that while we want this to happen we are not, as the present administration has done, going to engage in open, high-profile attempts at leverage and pressure. I don't think that's worked at all. It's probably harmed more than it's helped. I would like to see us again, behind the scenes, extend our influence, whatever influence we have, and persistently suggest that maybe they [the Chileans] should be on a similar road as the Brazilians and the Argentines. This is a very delicate question. But the bottom line is that I'm a little worried about the route that Chile is now going.

Q. Do you think the perception of Gov. Reagan by some Latin Americans, who view him almost as they view one of the military dictators, has been erroneous. Their view of how he would deal with Latin America?

A. Yes. One, it isn't surprising because I think there has been, until very recently, a misperception of Reagan in this country. Let's not blame poor, old Latin Americans for not being able to understand Reagan because if they read some of the American press why in the world wouldn't they get an idea like that.

I think his image, as opposed to his reality, has been undergoing some changes in this country over the last six months or so and I think that, in turn, it will follow in the region as well. One of the turning points will be when the governor does make a major speech on the hemisphere, which I think will occur sometime in September. That's going to be a fairly full-blown explanation and exposition of his policies.