ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIFLD  American Institute for Free Labor Development. *Ostensibly an independent labor organization, has long been an instrument for U.S. foreign policy, with links to the CIA.*


FDR  Democratic Revolutionary Front. *Political wing of the revolution; coalition of dissident Christian Democrats, Marxists, priests, professionals, and the popular organizations; aligned with the FMLN.*

FMLN  Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front. *Coalition of five guerrilla groups.*

ERP  People's Revolutionary Army. *Founded in 1972. In 1984 one of the two strongest guerrilla organizations.*

FPL  Popular Forces of Liberation. *Founded by Carpio in early 1970's. In 1984 one of the two strongest guerrilla groups.*

FARN  Armed Forces of National Resistance. *Third largest of the five guerrilla groups; considered the most moderate.*

ISTA  Salvadoran Institute for Agrarian Transformation.

ORDEN  Rural paramilitary organization set up by the government in the 1960's; officially abolished after the coup in October 1979, but its members continued to operate.

PDC  Christian Democratic party.

PCN  National Conciliation party. *Official government/military party, which ruled the country from 1961 to 1979.*
CHRONOLOGY

1932
The *matanza*. Peasant uprising inspired by Agustín Farabundo Martí crushed by General Maximiliano Hernández Martinez. His soldiers kill up to 30,000 peasants, and he rules the country until 1944.

1972
Military steals election from José Napoleón Duarte and Guillermo Manuel Ungo.

1977
January Jimmy Carter becomes President of the United States, vowing to make human rights "the soul of our foreign policy."
February Another fraudulent presidential election in El Salvador; General Carlos Humberto Romero becomes president.
March U.S. congressional hearings into the Salvadoran election, probably the first ever devoted exclusively to El Salvador. Father Rutilio Grande assassinated in El Salvador.
June Carter sends Frank J. Devine as ambassador to El Salvador, replacing Ignacio E. Lozano, Jr.
July U.S. congressional hearings into religious persecution in El Salvador.

1979
July 19 Sandinistas topple General Anastasio Somoza Debayle in Nicaragua.
October 15 General Romero deposed by a coup in El Salvador. Junta formed with Colonel Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez and Adolfo Arnoldo Majano, Guillermo Manuel Ungo, Ramón Mayorga Quiros, and Mario Antonio Andino. Within the next few weeks Carter administration announces its intention to provide "nonlethal" military aid, the first since 1977, and a team of U.S. military advisers arrives.
1980

January 3-5 Government collapses when Ungo, Mayorga, and Andino resign, along with nearly every minister and deputy minister, because of the army's unwillingness to submit to civilian control and because of the increasing repression. Defense Minister Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia refuses to resign. Christian Democrats join the government. New civilians on the junta are two Christian Democrats, José Antonio Morales Ehrlich and Héctor Dada Hirezi, and José Ramón Avalos Navarrete.

January 22 Unity of the popular organizations. An estimated 100,000 march through the capital streets.

March 3 Dada resigns from junta because “We have not been able to stop the repression.”

March 6-7 Government announces land reform and nationalization of banks and export trade.

March 9 Duarte joins junta.

March 10 Seven leaders of Christian Democrats leave the party, declaring that “a program of reforms with repression runs contrary to the fundamentals of the Christian Democrats.”

March 11 Robert E. White presents his credentials as ambassador.

March 24 Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero assassinated while saying mass.

March 25 House committee holds hearing on Carter administration's request for $5.7 million in “nonlethal” military aid for El Salvador. The aid request is a marked departure in policy for the United States, which provided El Salvador with a total of $16.8 million during the entire period from 1946 through 1979.

March 26 Three more high-level Salvadoran government officials resign.


June 26 Soldiers storm the National University, killing at least fifty. Government closes university, which remains closed today.

October Another team of U.S. military advisers secretly enters El Salvador. Leftist opposition rejects offer of Salvadoran bishops to mediate a settlement.

November 4 Ronald Reagan elected President of the United States.

November 27 Enrique Álvarez, four other FDR leaders, and a sixth person seized from a Catholic high school, tortured, and killed.
November 28 Salvadoran business leaders meet with President-elect Reagan's foreign policy advisers, including Jeane Kirkpatrick, and are assured of receiving more military aid under the new administration.

December 4 Bodies of four American churchwomen—Maura Clarke, Jean Donovan, Ita Ford, and Dorothy Kazel—found.

December 5 Carter administration suspends aid to El Salvador and dispatches a high-level team led by former Assistant Secretary of State William Rogers.

December 7 Junta's most liberal member, Colonel Majano, ousted.

December 13 Duarte named president of the four-man junta.

December 17 Carter administration restores economic aid.

December 26 Guerrilla commander Fermán Cienfuegos declares that situation in El Salvador will be "red hot" by the time Reagan arrives in the White House.

1981

January 4 AIFLD workers Michael Hammer and Mark Pearlman gunned down in the Sheraton Hotel.

January 10 Guerrillas launch "final offensive."

January 13 Purported landing of boats from Nicaragua.

January 14 Military aid, suspended after killing of the churchwomen, resumed.

January 16 Carter administration announces immediate delivery of an additional $5 million in military aid.

January 20 Reagan inaugurated.

February 1 White removed as ambassador.

February 23 Reagan administration releases white paper, charging that the situation in El Salvador is a "textbook case of indirect armed aggression by Communist powers through Cuba."

March 2 Reagan administration dispatches twenty additional military advisers and announces an additional $25 million in military aid. In public statements and testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during following weeks, senior administration officials say aid will not be linked to human rights performance.

April 6 Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas quietly seeks to act as mediator in a negotiated settlement of Salvadoran conflict; rejected by Reagan administration in private meeting in Washington.

June 1 Deane Hinton presents his credentials as ambassador.

August 28 Mexico and France, in a joint communiqué, recognize the FDR-FMLN as a "representative political force."
OCTOBER 7 In address to the UN General Assembly, senior member of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government, Daniel Ortega, proposes internationally supervised negotiations in El Salvador, without preconditions.

1982

JANUARY 10 The first group of young Salvadoran men arrive in the United States for military training, program will eventually train approximately 1,000 troops at Fort Bragg and 500 officer cadets at Fort Benning.

JANUARY 18 Commanders of five guerrilla organizations sign a letter to President Reagan offering to negotiate without preconditions.


JANUARY 28 President Reagan certifies that the Salvadoran government is making progress in adhering to international human rights standards, is investigating the murders of the churchwomen and AIFLD workers, and is continuing the land reform (certification law was passed by Congress in 1981 as a condition for continued military aid).

JANUARY 31 At least twenty persons killed after being dragged out of their homes by soldiers who stormed the poor capital barrio of San Antonio Abad. Widely reported in the press.

MARCH 28 Constituent Assembly elections. Christian Democrats emerge with plurality of vote, but not a majority. D’Aubuisson’s ARENA party and the PCN, the traditional military party, together have enough votes to name D’Aubuisson president. Reagan administration applies intense pressure to block D’Aubuisson from becoming president.

APRIL 29 At the behest of the military high command, newly elected Constituent Assembly names Álvaro Magaña the country’s provisional president.

MAY Constituent Assembly, in one of its first acts, suspends provisions of the land reform.

JULY 27 Reagan administration issues second certification.

OCTOBER Leaders of FMLN and FDR send a letter to President Magaña offering to negotiate without preconditions. Letter delivered by Archbishop Rivera y Damas.

OCTOBER 29 Ambassador Hinton, departing from the Reagan administration’s policy of “quiet diplomacy,” tells the U.S.-Salvadoran
Chamber of Commerce that a "Mafia" which carries out the murder of innocent civilians and American citizens "must be stopped."

**November 8** In a cover story *Newsweek* magazine reveals details about the Reagan administration's so-called secret war against Nicaragua, being fought from Honduras by "counterrevolutionaries" trained and supplied by the United States.

**1983**

**January 21** Reagan administration issues its third certification.

**April 12** Guerrilla leader Salvador Cayetano Carpio commits suicide in Managua, Nicaragua, a few days after one of his top aides, Comandante Ana María, is bludgeoned to death, revealing publicly splits within the Salvadoran guerrilla forces.

**April 27** Reagan takes his Central America policy to a joint session of Congress, one of the few times in history that an American President has addressed the joint body on a foreign policy issue.

**May 25** Lieutenant Commander Albert A. Schaufelberger III assassinated by a guerrilla faction while sitting in his car, waiting for his girl friend, at the Catholic university in San Salvador.

**May 28–29** Reagan shakes up his Central America team, removing Thomas Enders as assistant secretary of state for Inter-American affairs and Hinton as ambassador to El Salvador.

**June** One hundred U.S. military advisers begin training Salvadoran troops in Honduras.

**July 20** Reagan names former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to head a twelve-man National Bipartisan Commission on Central America.

**July 20** Reagan administration certifies for the fourth time that Salvadoran government is making progress on human rights, implementation of land reform, and investigations into the murders of American citizens. To date, no one has been brought to trial for the deaths of the churchwomen or the AIFLD workers.

**November 30** President Reagan vetoes a bill that would have continued the certification requirements.

**December 30** Guerrilla forces, in their largest and most successful action of the war, attack military base at El Paraíso, killing at least 100 government soldiers, who are buried in a mass grave.

**1984**

**January 1** Guerrillas destroy Cuscatlán suspension bridge.
CHRONOLOGY

JANUARY 11  Kissinger commission releases its report.

FEBRUARY  Reagan administration announces that it will seek a supplemental $178.7 million in military aid for El Salvador for fiscal year 1984 and $132.5 million for 1985.

MARCH 25  Scheduled date for Salvadoran presidential elections.
INTRODUCTION

This book is about turmoil and revolution and the United States response. Though the focus is on the caldron in a country called El Salvador, the issues are broad, with parallels from the past and lessons—it is hoped—for the future.

"We are going to have more revolutions, but we still haven’t learned how to deal with them," observed one of President Jimmy Carter’s senior foreign policy advisers during an interview for this book.

Today it is El Salvador. The question is not if but how soon it will be Guatemala, where the poverty and repression that spawned the revolution in El Salvador are replicated—and the U.S. interests far greater. After that it may be the Philippines, Chile, South Korea, Turkey, or any one of dozens of other nations around the world—just about anywhere but Europe and North America.

In the late summer of 1980 I was talking with the person in charge of editorials at one of the country’s major dailies. Peering over the top of his glasses, he asked, “What should the United States policy be in El Salvador?” I had spent several months in Bolivia and Guatemala, in addition to two short visits to El Salvador, and I replied, “Ask me about Bolivia, or Guatemala, or any country, I’ll probably have an opinion. But El Salvador, boy, I just don’t know. I guess we’re doing the right thing.”

During the next two years I returned to El Salvador many times, as a reporter for The New York Times. My experiences there are the foundation for this book. But it was after returning to the United States that I began to probe—a quest to understand what has led to the extensive U.S. involvement in such a tiny country. What I gleaned, what appears in these pages, is the culmination of interviews—principally with senior U.S. Foreign Service officers who were posted in El Salvador—