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The overpoliticised state and international politics: Nicaragua, Haiti, Cambodia and Togo

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In 1989, deploring the 'wide gulf separating the perspectives of comparativists and international relations scholars,' James Caporaso reminded them that 'this is not the time to go into the respective stereotypes each subcommunity has of the other'.[1] This article is an attempt to bridge the gulf between comparative politics and international politics. It deals with the failure of foreign powers to establish stability and democracy—the two auxiliary means to the pursuit of their national interests—in the Third World. Contrary to conventional explanations, it is argued that the failure results not from what foreign powers do or fail to do, but from the ability of third world states, regardless of their size and strength, to impose their structural will on foreign powers. As a result, foreign powers accommodate the overpoliticised behaviour of internal forces in the Third World, making them equally overpoliticised and, thus, subverting their twin objectives of stability and democracy. The essay postpones theoretical explanation and focuses on empirical evidence by demonstrating, contrary to the now prevailing tendency in comparative and international politics, the remarkable similarities among third world countries.

The problem

One of the dominant international political events between 1992 and early 1994 was the US and UN involvements in Somalia and Haiti to reestablish stability and democracy. In both cases, the missions failed to accomplish their objectives because of stiff resistance from internal forces in both countries. The resistance forced the USA and the UN either to withdraw from the countries (total withdrawal from Somalia took place in February 1995) or to reevaluate their missions by seeking compromise with the very forces that presumably threatened peace and democracy. One recalls, for instance, the US allocation of a plane to transport Somalia's General Aidid to the negotiating table in Ethiopia after failing to punish him for the deaths of Pakistani UN soldiers and after a bloody confrontation with his forces in which 18 US soldiers and other UN forces perished. One recalls also the USA and France contradictorily appeasing stands *vis-à-vis* Haiti's military from 1991 to 1994 after they had promised to reestablish democratic rule there. President Clinton's decisive support for the Aristide regime in September 1994 was opposed by many on the accurate grounds that the regime itself did not—despite Aristide's election—provide an environment conducive to democracy and that his return to power would not end the crisis.

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In each case, policy makers were warned against the loss of US and UN soldiers and were blamed for their ill-conceived policy, lack of resolve and contradictorily appeasing stand *vis-à-vis* antistability and antidemocratic forces.[2]

This pattern is not new. Historically, despite US, Western and UN commitment to stability and democracy in the Third World, more often than not their forces have withdrawn without achieving either one, but aligned themselves instead, and paradoxically, with forces opposed to or, at the very least, unable to deliver, stability and democracy. It may be true that no outside power can guarantee stability and democracy in a third world country and, on this score, the issue of stability and democracy may not be an important one. Nevertheless, the fact that foreign powers accommodate antistability and antidemocratic forces at all is of major significance. It raises a crucial question: how does one explain the failure of foreign powers to achieve their foreign policy objectives of stability and democracy and their contradictorily accommodating stands *vis-à-vis* third world forces opposed to their foreign policy objectives of stability and democracy even in 'weak', small and highly dependent third world countries that can be militarily or economically influenced?

Answers to this question are well known. Generally, explanations derived from realism, imperialism, world system/dependency, hegemony and 'weak states' models impute the contradictory accommodation, not to what the third world states are able to do, but to what foreign powers, including the international system itself, do or fail to do.[3]

This essay proposes an alternative argument. It contends that the contradictorily accommodating stand of foreign powers results not from what they do or fail to do but from the ability of overpoliticised third world states, regardless of their size, strength and level of dependence, to impose an accommodating posture on foreign actors as they pursue their interests. Such an argument requires theoretical and empirical evidence. However, for space reasons, I will postpone the theoretical explanation. Rather this article presents some factual evidence to establish first—in contradiction to the prevailing tendency in comparative and international politics to overemphasise 'differences' among third world countries—the remarkable empirical similarities in their brand of politics ('overpoliticisation') and ability to impose a contradictory accommodation to overpoliticisation on foreign powers. Because of space limitations, even the attempt to gather empirical evidence can only be limited and tentative.

The essay is based on the comparison of four overpoliticised states: Nicaragua,[4] Haiti,[5] Cambodia[6] and Togo.[7] Although they interact with multiple foreign actors, the focus is on their relations with the USA, France and minimally, the UN. The choice of the USA and France, on the one hand, and the four third world countries, on the other, does not imply 'favoured patron–client relations' nor does it assume that the USA and France have more interests in the four countries than elsewhere. The choice is based on the frequency of US and French involvements in the four third world countries. And four major reasons justify the choice of these states. First, they are representative of the major regions of the Third World. Second, they are equally divided into countries that became independent under the competitive international system of the 19th century (Haiti in 1804 and Nicaragua in 1838) and under the normative

international system of the post-World War II era (Cambodia in 1953 and Togo in 1960). This division prevents one from imputing the behaviour of foreign actors towards these countries to the constraints of the contemporary normative international system. Third, all four countries are small, poor and 'weak' states, which helps to better test my proposition that, regardless of their level of dependence and strength, third world overpoliticised states have the ability to impose an accommodating posture on foreign actors. Because the four cases are 'extreme cases' at one end of the spectrum, they eliminate the need for a counter-factual case, that is, a 'controlled experiment' with a bigger and relatively less dependent third world country. Fourth, all four countries have pursued a democratisation agenda in the 1990s, which allows comparisons between earlier patterns and the more contemporaneous ones and thus constitutes a good test for the thesis. For this reason, the treatment of time for each case is diachronic, spreading from their respective independence to 1995.

The overpoliticized state: a definition

The state is a set of relationships and interactions among social classes and groups that is maintained, organised and regulated by political power; as the nodal point of these relationships, political power implies the monopoly of the means of coercion and a set of specifically designed institutions over a given territory. The state is unthinkable without politics, the expression of competitive interests of individuals, groups or classes making up society. As competition, politics aims to distribute the social product (goods and services) by controlling or influencing political power. It structures the state because the state is that relationship formed by competing social actors.[8] Both politics and the state are, in turn, unexplainable outside society and its ways of generating the social product. Elsewhere, I have argued that the state in the Third World is an 'overpoliticised state' because of the way politics as competition over the social product is played.[9] The overpoliticised state, an outcome of pseudocapitalism that exists in the Third World and differs from capitalism in Western societies, is characterised by the following: (1) power holders use overt compulsion to organise political representation, participation and competition over the social product; (2) state power is fluid, and constant insecurity characterises holders of state power in their relations to other social actors; (3) political participation and competition over the social product take place outside established institutions; (4) there is general use of open violence and confrontation in the competition, often expressed in the form of tribal, regional, religious or class conflicts; (5) there is a lack of compromise over the outcome of the competition, which explains the higher intensity and lower resolution of its crises; and (6) depending on the historical context, these five features take the form of either a pure or semi-authoritarian/dictatorial regime or an electoralist regime[10] that maintains a 'democratic' facade through elections, however regular, while sharing these features with authoritarian regimes. For this reason, in this essay third world states generally referred to as 'democracies' are viewed as almost identical twins of authoritarian regimes, both of which are 'genetically' linked to the overpoliticised state.

As a concept, the overpoliticised state has the ambition of being an inclusive one that covers all third world regimes. In this sense, the overpoliticised state is to third world countries what the capitalist democratic state is to Western countries. This claim does not dismiss variations. Indeed, the notion of the 'liberal (capitalist) democratic state' applied to all Western countries does not negate the fact that Italy's democracy is more unstable than most other Western democracies and that the field of political competition has generally been more open in European democracies, where extreme and communist political parties are allowed to compete, than in the USA, where the field is more circumscribed by a two-party system. Central to the notion of the capitalist democratic state are the crucial similarities shared by Italy, the USA, and all other Western countries. The same holds true for third world countries. The concept of the overpoliticised state does not dismiss their variations but underscores their fundamental similarities. All share overpoliticisation, as described by the above six features, and differ, on this score, from liberal democratic states of the West. Despite this important remark, the ambition of the concept is tempered by the requirements of any research; in the previously cited 1992 article, I left open the possibility of a third world state deviating from the model and suggested that empirical research be undertaken to this end. This article extends such an empirical test, which has already begun with a major case study,[11] to international politics. To underscore the traits of overpoliticisation, I shall, throughout the text, use the adjective 'overpoliticised' to refer to events, situations or actions in the four third world countries.

Before showing how the overpoliticised state thus defined imposes an accommodating posture on the USA, France and the UN, its remarkably similar empirical manifestations in the four third world countries need to be analysed.

Patterns of overpoliticisation, 1800s–1990s

As soon as it became independent in 1838, Nicaragua became engulfed in open political confrontations pitting the economic elite against the peasants and the agrarian elite of Granada (the 'conservatives') against the commercial elite of Leon (the 'liberals'). These confrontations flared up at times as civil wars and occupied much of the country's history up to the advent of the Somoza dynasty in the 1930s. The first major confrontation was the overthrow of the conservative government by the liberals, aided by the US journalist-mercenary William Walker in 1855. In the ensuing years, in addition to the war against Walker, who proclaimed himself President of Nicaragua, there was the bloody War of the Communeros in 1881, opposing the peasants to the Pedro Chamorro conservative government, which had expropriated peasant lands in favour of the agribusiness class. In 1893 the liberals overthrew the conservative government and replaced it with the José Santos Zelaya government, whose relatively liberal policies brought the combined reaction of the conservatives and the Americans, who overthrew it in 1909. The conservative rule (1910–1925) ended in a bloody civil war, as the US-sponsored 'elected' government was overthrown in a coup by Emiliano Chamorro's partisans. Internal instability and open confrontations

of this period explain US marines' repeated occupation of Nicaragua for 19 years, from 1912 to 1925 and 1927 to 1933.

From 1927 to 1933 the liberals dominated the government thanks to the support of the US-trained National Guard, a situation deeply resented by Augusto Sandino who chose to fight the United States and its locally-supported governments. The brutal war ended in 1933, when the USA, as one of the conditions imposed by Sandino, agreed to withdraw from Nicaragua after transferring the command of the Guard to Anastasio Somoza Garcia. The stage was thus set for two events that determined the course of history in Nicaragua for the remainder of the century: the advent of the Somoza dictatorship and of Sandinismo, the ideological guideline of the Sandinista revolution.

As Somoza asserted his authority over the Guard, his first task was to order the murder of Sandino in 1934, followed by the brutal repression of his followers in the countryside. The latter organised army uprisings in 1937, 1940, 1948, 1954 and 20 times between 1958 and 1963.[12] Making himself president in 1937, Somoza shaped the institutional setting of Nicaragua's politics. His two sons inherited them; Luis Somoza ruled from 1957 to 1963 and Anastasio Somoza Debayle from 1967 to 1979 (with a hiatus between 1972 and 1974). As in most authoritarian rules, the institutions aimed at preserving total power for the Somozas while closing almost all avenues of democratic participation for the people. The cooptation of the elite (church, parties, business), the reliance on the corrupt, loyal and repressive National Guard and bureaucracy, and the facade and rigged elections constituted the pillars of the Somoza overpoliticised rule. Concerning 'elections', 'Somoza had so frequently called [them] during his rule that "election" for Nicaraguans meant "trickery" '.[13]

In an overpoliticised state, the political participation and response of the opposition to the power holders is through overpoliticised means as well. In addition to the popular armed uprisings already mentioned, opposition to the Somoza rule took the form of armed confrontations against the regime by the upper classes. In almost a replay of the pre-Somoza politics, Pedro Joacquin Chamorro, the editor of *La Prensa*, inherited the mantle of the conservative opposition of the Chamorro lineage (although he denied being conservative) to the 'liberal' Somoza. He was involved in plots or armed uprisings or suspected of such involvement against the Somozas in 1944, 1948, 1954, 1956, 1959 and 1963. His opposition continued until he was murdered in 1978. These rebellions were often bloody. The Somozas used excessive violence against the opposition, especially the masses, as in 1956, when Somoza Garcia was assassinated by a young poet, and in 1963. Another formidable opposition to the Somoza rule was the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) formed in 1961 by Leftist forces influenced by the Sandino struggle and dedicated to the armed overthrow of the Somoza rule. The opposition to the Somoza dynasty reached its apex in the 1970s, fed by the crisis that occurred in the wake of the 1972 Managua earthquake and the Somoza's government inadequate and cynical response to it. Most groups, including those previously coopted by the Somozas, joined forces under the leadership of the Sandinistas, to precipitate the demise of Somoza rule in 1979.

As the Sandinistas assumed power in 1979, their institutional choice was

determined by socioeconomic policies that repudiated the Somoza-type and US-inspired development model, their vision of democracy and their fear of opposition from the business sector allied with the United States, the far left and the remnants of the Somoza rule. At the first signs of violent opposition, the Sandinistas closed political avenues of participation and came to rely on overpoliticised institutions that revolved around a party-state.[14] As the opposition became more violent and the Sandinistas were cornered by a bloody war waged by the US-supported Contras, the Sandinista state became more repressive. Among the overpoliticised opposition groups were the landed and industrial sector, instrumental in raising the Contra army, political parties, the Chamorro family-owned *La Prensa*, the Catholic Church's hierarchy and Miskito Indians, all of whom clashed in one way or another with the Sandinistas. Weakened by sustained attacks by the Contras and by internal opposition, the Sandinistas bowed to pressure for general elections in 1990. They were defeated by a coalition of opposition groups and parties (Union Nacional Opositora–UNO) led by Violeta Chamorro and supported by the United States.

The Chamorro regime, emerging under the auspices of the worldwide democratization movement of the 1990s, should in principle have deviated from the pattern of overpoliticisation of its predecessors. However, it has not. In addition to the bleak socioeconomic picture, the relationship between holders of state power and the populace has been marred by gross human rights violations decried even by the USA.[15] The spectre of a renewed civil war haunts the polity because of a sharp polarisation of forces, which are unable to reach compromise on constitutional issues, private property and military leadership. Among obvious signs of overpoliticisation one notes the use of money to buy votes in the parliament;[16] the legislative coup of September 1992 that led to the occupation of the legislature by the government police after the National Assembly president, Alfredo Cesar's, illegal electoral procedures resulted in confrontation between his allies and Chamorro's; armed rebellions by the former Contras (the 'Recontras') in 1992 and 1993; the 18 May 1993 suspension of constitutional rights caused by mounting armed opposition to the government; the July 1993 Esteli bloody armed rebellion by former Sandinista soldiers; the August 1993 attacks and hostage taking of government and political leaders by both the Recontras and the former Sandinista militants; and strikes accompanied by deaths. These crises were present in 1994 and have persisted in 1995. The Recontras attacked and killed Indian villagers and farmers in December 1994, and the army's response in January 1995 led to an alleged massacre of Recontras. The constitutional impasse intensified in 1995 as the reforms adopted by the legislature were rejected by President Chamorro, who refused to promulgate them. In defiance of the president, the legislature promulgated the reforms, thus creating a constitutional duality; President Chamorro and her cabinet recognise the 1987 constitution enacted by the Sandinistas while the legislature recognises the reformed constitution.[17]

Haiti's political history was marked at the outset by its bloody revolutionary war of independence. From 1804 to 1915, a period dominated by the rules of Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe, 19 rulers occupied the political scene. Only four of them completed their terms. From 1911 to 1915, all six

rulers were murdered or overthrown by mass uprisings. From 1807 to 1821, as a result of centrifugal forces, the country was divided into two separate republics led by two different leaders. Factionalism led to chaos, and political competition could take place only through violent means supplied by regional and private armies maintained by local leaders, the *cacos*. The response to generally autocratic and militaristic leadership, often surrounded by the trappings of representation such as a parliament and elections, took the form of mass uprisings and military coups, especially around elections.

In the years between 1902 and 1915, amid instability, repression and bureaucratic ineptitude, attempts made by political leaders, such as Antenor Firmin, to reform the political system were easily defeated. Many Haitian political figures viewed the reliance on 'Generalissimos' as a *sine qua non* for stability. The result was unending confrontation and civil wars. Occurring against the background of competing foreign, including German, interests in Haiti, the tensions that would become World War I, and Haiti's instability and vulnerability to European penetration, these confrontations triggered a US occupation of the country in 1915.

Because stability and democracy were its objectives, the US occupation helped to write a new constitution, organise elections, and train Haiti's military, the *garde*, as it had in Nicaragua. The record of the occupation was mixed at best. By 1929 there were agitations against US occupation; in 1930 the anti-American coalition elected Stenio Vincent as President. The United States withdrew in 1934.

By 1933 Vincent instituted authoritarian rule and was backed by the US-trained army that had become easily overpoliticised. All his successors, from Elie Lescot to the six successive provisional governments of 1956–57 that preceded Duvalier, did the same. Almost all were overthrown by the military or mass uprisings.

The military and US support was crucial for François Duvalier's success in the presidential elections of 1957. Duvalier understood better than most of his predecessors the requirements of an overpoliticised state. He saw military support as a double-edged sword that could easily overthrow his regime. This acute awareness explained his paranoia about security, his unexpected sharp turn to dictatorship, his reliance on highly fractionalised, parallel and mutually suspicious security apparatuses, including the army, palace guards, secret police (*Tontons Macoutes*), and voodoo priests. And as in all overpoliticised states, the support he received depended on a high level of material resources given to his supporters, the vicious repression of the opposition and the manipulation of political institutions. Manipulation made Duvalier president for life, the parliament pliant to his orders, and his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, the constitutional successor in 1971. Despite early attempts to 'modernise' his authoritarianism, Jean Claude Duvalier fell easily back on his father's legacy and became as repressive. From 1957 to 1986 when the Duvalier dynasty was overthrown, the opposition's response to the regime was through countless assassination, coup and invasion attempts. Most of these failed, leading to a massive exodus of Haitians who sought asylum elsewhere.

The post-Duvalier era and the 1990s inaugurated what was supposed to be the

democratisation process in Haiti. But it was not to be. From 1986 to 1991 four military takeovers alternated with two presidential elections, punctuated by state and mob violence. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, whose election gave some hope, was overthrown by the military in 1991. Attempts by the United States and the UN to return him to power met stiff resistance from the military, in violation of the Governor's Island Accord signed with Aristide in 1993. For the period of June to August 1993 alone, the UN and the Organisation of American States (OAS) documented 1309 cases of state-sponsored violence.[18] These included disappearances, kidnappings, mysterious fires and assassinations in broad daylight in full view of police and the military.

Although displaying some obvious differences, Cambodia's pattern of overpoliticisation resembles Nicaragua's and Haiti's. From 1953, when it gained its independence from France, to 1970, when the first military coup took place, Cambodia was headed by King Norodom Sihanouk. To distinguish his role from that of a king in a parliamentary regime, who is a mere figurehead, Sihanouk abdicated his king's throne in favour of his father; he became a prince, which allowed him to play a more active role in political affairs as a permanent head of state. A multiparty system, in which Sihanouk's party was dominant and (in the late 1950s and the 1960s) a party-state, a parliament and elections formed the pillars of Cambodia's electoralist system. From 1947 to 1955, the Democratic Party, the Liberal party and the Khmer Renovation Party were the three major parties competing for votes. Winner of both pre-independence elections in 1947 and 1950, the Democratic Party's tenure in office was characterised by authoritarianism and instability caused by political assassinations and the Issarak rebels, who battled the government. By 1953 Sihanouk had assumed authoritarian powers, punctuated by the repression of rebelling peasants, arrests of political opponents and censorship. In the post-1955 period, all political parties lost their autonomy and were incorporated into a monolithic structure dominated by Sihanouk's party-state, the Sangkum Reastr Niyum. Because of this monolithism, the 1958 and 1962 elections were rubber-stamp affairs that confirmed the power of the Sangkum. And although the 1966 elections were openly contested, forces allied to the Sangkum formed the majority in the new Assembly despite a good showing by leftist forces.[19] As in all overpoliticised states, monolithism rested on a high level of resource manipulation (eg corruption) to maintain allegiance. The result was economic stagnation and mass rebellion.

The rebellions were multi-faceted. Three major forces emerged: Khmer Rouge, Khmer Serei (an offshoot of the earlier Issarak rebellion), and Khmer Loeu (mountain people). From 1967 to 1970 the revolts spread throughout Cambodia, culminating in 1967 and 1968. In 1968 the Khmer Rouge were influential in 11 provinces. Cambodia's proximity to Vietnam facilitated a linkage between the Khmer Rouge and the North Vietnamese and Vietcong, thus exacerbating the situation. Against this overpoliticised background, General Lon Nol, influential in Cambodia's politics since pre-independence days, overthrew Prince Sihanouk in 1970.

Lon Nol accused Sihanouk of one-man rule, economic mismanagement and softness on communists, despite the fact that he had been Sihanouk's repressive

arm against internal leftist forces and peasants. He promised democracy. With US military and economic assistance, the Lon Nol government engaged in direct military operations against the Vietcong who had penetrated deep into Cambodia's territory, the Khmer Rouge, who had tactfully joined forces with Prince Sihanouk, and other insurgent groups. The war intensified tensions that resulted in massive repression against dissidents and peasants while an electoralist front was being maintained. It also accelerated economic decline, internal fractionalisation and bureaucratic ineptness, factors that, in turn, strengthened peasant revolt and the Khmer Rouge's resolve to overthrow the Lon Nol government. They succeeded in 1975, when the combined economic and military collapse of the regime allowed the Khmer Rouge to assume power.

The Khmer Rouge's tenure in office from 1975 to 1979 under Pol Pot is well known for its dramatic attempts to transform Cambodian society totally. Because of this, its pattern of overpoliticisation displayed a high level of repression in the form of forceful displacement of the populations, forced labour and deaths. Beyond this, it resembled Sihanouk's and Lon Nol's regimes in that the institutional setting was authoritarian and opposition to the regime took place through violent means, namely the Vietnam-backed violent overthrow of the Pol Pot regime in 1979. Despite Vietnam's involvement, it is important to note that the overthrow was initiated by former Khmer Rouge cadres (eg Heng Samrin) who expressed their opposition to the Khmer Rouge by allying themselves with Vietnam.

To be sure, the Vietnam-backed regime of Heng Samrin and Hun Sen (1979–91) represented a change from the harshness of the Pol Pot regime.[20] In most aspects, however, it did not differ from its predecessors. The institutional setting was sharply authoritarian; internal dissent was not allowed; opposition to the regime by Sihanouk's forces, Khmer Rouge and other factions was violent and outside the established institutional limits; and electoralism was practised. That all Cambodian regimes were overpoliticised was summed up by Prince Sihanouk in 1984: 'Now we know what dictatorship really is: the dictatorship of the Khmer Rouge, the dictatorship of Heng Samrin, the dictatorship of Lon Nol, and the dictatorship of Sihanouk.'[21].

Vietnam's presence in Cambodia was widely condemned by the UN. In 1991, under UN–US–French leadership, Cambodian fighting factions factions signed an agreement in Paris to cease military hostilities, organise elections, and form a new government. To this end, the UN organised its largest peace operation, arranged a ceasefire and prepared elections amid persistent violence and bloodshed. The Khmer Rouge opposed the elections and battled governmental and UN forces. Anti-Sihanouk forces attacked the office of the royalist party headed by Sihanouk's son, Prince Ranarridh, and killed about 40 royalist officials and potential voters were intimidated and terrorised.[22] When elections were finally held in May 1993, four parties participated: the royalist party (FUNCIPEC), the party led by the former leaders of the Vietnam-backed regime (CPP), the Republican Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP) and the anti-communist party (MOLINAKA). They obtained, respectively, 58, 51, 10 and one seats in the new Assembly. The Khmer Rouge boycotted the elections and did not obtain any seats. Prince Sihanouk was recrowned king in September 1993 and made head

of state. The formation of a coalition government was marred by threats of secession, partition, renewal of civil war and accusations of electoral fraud. Violence against the winning party became rampant while the Khmer Rouge, kept out of the political negotiations, battled the interim government's forces. The UN presence did not reestablish peace, a situation exacerbated by the absence of the Khmer Rouge in the political negotiations. In 1994, there was an attempted military coup and the Khmer Rouge was unilaterally banned by the government, prompting fiercer fighting by the Khmer Rouge. King Sihanouk's calls to the Khmer Rouge in 1995 to participate in 'democratic' competition have been rejected by both the Khmer Rouge and political parties opposed to it. The chaotic situation has fuelled talks about a takeover of executive powers by King Sihanouk, which would in fact cause a reversion of Cambodia's 'democratic' politics to Sihanouk's previous dictatorial rule.

Togo, like Cambodia, experienced autonomy before formal independence in 1960. From 1956 to 1958 an autonomous government was established under the leadership of pro-French Nicolas Grunitzky. Soon, it displayed signs of overpoliticisation as arbitrariness characterised its policies. By winning the UN-sponsored elections in 1958, Sylvanus Olympio, the leader of the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise (CUT), assumed power from 1958 to 1963. Olympio's tenure in office further revealed deep signs of overpoliticisation. The regime imposed repressive measures against its opponents, established a one-party state in 1962, and disqualified emerging electoral coalitions. Its conservative fiscal policies angered the veterans of the colonial army, who were being forcibly retired. Led by Etienne Eyadema, who personally killed President Olympio,[23] the veterans carried out the first *coup d'etat* in Togo, indeed in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet the army did not officially assume political power. Instead, power was handed back to Grunitzky, who was sympathetic to the military's demands. But the stage was set for instability. The army's *de facto* control over power, the bitterness created by Olympio's murder, internal infighting and economic unrest led to an attempted mass revolt against Grunitzky in 1966. Because the revolt constituted a threat to the leadership of the army, the latter rescued the Grunitzky government only to overthrow it months later in 1967.

The 1967 coup brought General Eyadema to power. From 1967 to 1990 the Eyadema regime remained one of the most autocratic regimes in Africa, closely imitating Zaire's Mobutu. The institutional setting became monolithic as political parties were outlawed and all previous electoralist structures abolished. In 1969 a party-state, the Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais, replaced all parties. The maintainance of monolithism rested on a high level of repression and resource manipulation, which bred corruption and economic mismanagement. As in other authoritarian rule, a more circumscribed form of electoralism replaced that which prevailed under the 1958–66 'democratic' regimes. As a result, the opposition's response to power holders took place outside established institutions. Long-lived as it is, the Eyadema regime is one of the most challenged. Attempts to overthrow the regime were made not only internally but in neighbouring countries (eg Ghana), Europe and North America, especially by Olympio's family. In addition to plots to assassinate General Eyadema, aspects of permanent insurgency include a mercenary infiltration in 1977 and bomb explosions in Lomé, the capital city, in 1985.

The 1990 democratisation process in Togo aimed, as elsewhere, to replace authoritarian monolithism. The main institutional framework through which the process was organised was the Conference Nationale, a representative gathering that debated political, economic, and social issues of the transition to democracy. The Conference Nationale set up, in turn, a transitional legislative body, the Haut Conseil de la République, and a transitional government led by Joseph Kokou Koffigoh. The purpose, as in other African French-speaking countries, was to organise general elections. However, in Togo as in Zaire, the debate about the fate of autocratic rulers threatened their leader more than similar debates in other countries, where authoritarian leaders did not enjoy as long a stay in office and did not fear as much retribution. As a result, Eyadema and his supporters reacted violently to the transitional institutions. Using the army, they sought to overthrow these institutions in October 1991. In December 1991 Eyadema's praetorian guard attacked the office of the transitional prime minister, leaving over 200 dead and injured. Opposition leaders were terrorised and some of them, such as Gilchrist Olympio, escaped assassination attempts. By 1992 Eyadema's forces controlled, through terror, the 'transitional' institutions. Exercising a monopoly on the media and financial resources, Eyadema organised 'general elections' in August 1993, in which he won 96.4% of the votes amid protests from international observers and the opposition.[24] The 'transition' to democracy resulted, ironically, in the return to authoritarianism, although somewhat mitigated by the February 1994 slim victory of the opposition in the legislative elections.

But the opposition's slim victory has not improved the chances of democracy or stability. Although a coalition government was formed under Edem Kodjo, the leader of one of the coalition parties, the opposition boycotted parliamentary sessions for a good portion of 1995. Extra-parliamentary armed opposition remains active and has vowed to overthrow the government by force. Eyadema's reliance on the army and his unwillingness to relinquish many of the policy prerogatives have hampered Prime minister Kodjo's actions, further eroding the chances of democratic accountability.

Thus, rather than stability and democracy as sought by foreign powers, the four case studies show consistent patterns of overpoliticisation from independence to the 1990s. The next section discusses how, contrary to the 'weak state' argument, foreign powers have been drawn by internal forces of the four third world countries into accommodating overpoliticisation, and not vice versa.

Foreign powers and accommodation to overpoliticisation

For space reasons, a lengthy narrative of US and French interests in the four third world countries is not necessary since these interests are well known. They are summarised in Table 1.

Because I have asserted that these interests rest on the auxiliary need expressed by both the United States and France to achieve democracy and stability in the four third world countries, some preliminary comments are in order. Whereas the two foreign powers' need for stability is generally acknowl-

TABLE 1
US French and UN Interests in Nicaragua, Haiti, Cambodia and Togo

USA	*Nicaragua*	*Haiti*	*Cambodia*	*Togo*
Strategic	Atlantic–Pacific Road (1850 Clayton-Bulwer Treaty) Base for 1954 invasion of Guatemala Base for 1961 invasion of Cuba Centre of Regional anti-communist alliance Superpower interests	Mole Harbor 60-mile Windward Passage to Panama Canal Pre-1915 prevention of European encroachment via control of cabinets and strategic posts Superpower interests	Replace European powers (France) Anti-communist military bases (1970–75) Strategic bombing sites (1970–75) Superpower interests	Superpower interest
Economic	Markets Investments Raw Materials (coffee, cotton)	Markets/Trade Some investments Bars on immigrants	–	Investment (phosphate)
Ideological/ cultural	Anti-communism	Against French Education system (1915–1934) Anti-immigration	Anti-communism Some linguistic ties	Propagation of the English language
FRANCE				
Strategic	–	Port Facilities	–	Military base rights
Economic	Some trade	Commercial links Raw materials (coffee)	Commercial links	Supremacy in imports/exports Investments (phosphate)
Ideological/ cultural	–	Education system Linguistic ties	Education system Linguistic ties	Education system Linguistic ties
UN	Peace	Peace	Peace	Peace

edged, there is scepticism in the academic debate about their search for democracy. Unfortunately, the reasons given for the scepticism are not persuasive on three grounds. First, there is ample documentation about the call and search for democracy by the US and France both during the earlier period and during the current 'democratization' era. I will cite only a few examples. John Quincy Adams, as US Secretary of State, refused to recognise Latin American countries because he did not see 'any prospect that they will establish free or liberal institutions of government'.[25] President Woodrow Wilson's involvement in Haiti's internal affairs from 1913 to 1921 was predicated on his 'fundamental distaste for societies in which violent political change and revolution formed the major mode of political expression. He asked for representative democracy, human rights and anti-Europeanism.'[26] Such a call is echoed by more recent ones, eg under the Reagan Administration, when in 1984 and 1986 Secretary of State George Schultz subordinated US assistance to Haiti to the establishment of democracy, and under the Clinton Administration with its muscular policy aimed at restoring democracy. Even under the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua, Luis Somoza (1956–63) confessed that the US government preferred that he be more of a democrat than his father.[27] In Cambodia and Togo, the search for democracy during the earlier period was associated with France's desire to make its former colonies, upon relinquishing political power to them, a carbon copy of its liberal democratic institutions. Indeed, by 1946 France promised to 'develop democratic and representative institutions' in its then soon-to-be free colonies. This promise was followed by calls and policies aimed at achieving this objective even though some nationalist groups, especially in Cambodia, opposed it on several grounds. The most recent calls for democracy in these countries are also known. In the case of France and Togo, France's request for democracy came in the form of pressure put on all African French-speaking countries for their democratization by President François Mitterand at La Baule in 1990.[28]

Second, even if one considers the 1947–1985 period, when 'anti-communism' dictated much foreign policy, such policy was not inconsistent with the search for democracy. In fact, in many cases, the two were interchangeable because, on logical grounds, the ideological interests of Western democratic states are better served in a liberal democratic environment. The Reagan Administration's crusade against the Sandinista government from 1980 to 1990 aimed, by its own admission, at overthrowing 'communist dictatorship' in favour of liberal democracy. In Cambodia in the 1950s, the United States was 'pressing swords into [Cambodians'] hands for a crusade against an unrecognized communism in the name of a democracy they have never known'.[29] Third, it is true that concerns for stability have often prevailed over concerns for democracy. But this has been so not because democracy is not an objective but rather, and precisely as I argue, because attempts to impose both have often failed. Given that, on balance, instability is more detrimental to foreign interests than lack of democracy, and can more easily be eliminated through violent and authoritarian means than democracy can be established, foreign powers choose, in the short run, to impose stability first. That Samuel Huntington, one of the most influential academics in US foreign policy circles, advocated stability ('strong political institutions') at the expense of democracy is consistent with the fact that, in his view, 'instead

of a trend towards competitiveness, and democracy, there has been an erosion of democracy … Instead of stability, there have been repeated coups and revolts'.[30] In other words, earlier calls for democracy and stability having failed, there was a need (by 1965 when Huntington wrote) to seek stability first through strong institutions.

In short, then, stability and democracy remain the two auxiliary means to the pursuit of foreign powers' interests. Yet the USA, France and the UN have been forced to accommodate overpoliticisation, that is antistability and antidemocratic forces in the four countries. This last section of the article attempts to show how.

In Nicaragua, the USA was forced to accommodate overpoliticisation as early as 1855 when William Walker, invited by the liberals, went to their rescue against the conservatives. Again in 1909 the US marines invaded the country at the request of the conservatives, who sought to prevail over the liberals in their internal political struggle. From 1909 to 1933 US policies (eg organising biased elections in favour of the conservatives) aimed to accomplish this objective. From independence to the rise of Somoza, US intervention resulted from the fact that internally overpoliticised forces in Nicaragua 'unhesitatingly sought rescue from foreign powers'.[31] By honouring these requests, the USA was drawn into accommodating overpoliticisation and contradicting its own premises of stability and democracy. In this sense, the advent of the Somoza dynasty and Sandino's rebellion, which may appear to have been 'made' by the USA, were in fact a by-product of the USA being forced to accommodate internal overpoliticisation in Nicaragua.

One of the Somoza dynasty's most striking features was the ability of the Somozas to cultivate friendly personal ties with US officials, allowing them to manipulate Americans into accepting overpoliticisation.[32] At the height of the Somoza repression, not only did the USA train the National Guard but the US ambassador was a close friend of the Somozas. 'He traveled with them, dined with them in their private reunions, and helped them to govern. He undermined any US goodwill by always siding, in his report and attitudes, with the Somozas.'[33] When Anastasio Somoza Garcia was assassinated, the Somoza family sought and obtained the help of the US ambassador against the challenge of the conservatives. Because of their complicity with the Somozas, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro compared US ambassadors in Nicaragua to Pontius Pilate, the Roman proconsul in Judea who allowed Jesus' death, and Somoza to Herod.[34] Moreover, Americans were recruited as torturers in the Somoza security apparatus. That internal forces made the US adopt overpoliticisation, and not the opposite, was confirmed by Nicaraguans themselves who spoke of a 'country for sale with no down payments', a 'country sold out', and a country that 'gave birth to the dictators, but the United States incubated them'.[35]

As forceful as US support was for the Contras and other anti-Sandinista forces, such support occurred because of internal overpoliticised opposition to the Sandinistas. As former members of Somoza's hated National Guard opposed to the Sandinista government, the Contras were in a sense the continuation of the Somocista regime's ability to lure the USA into accepting overpoliticisation. 'If anything is going to change in our country, it will be thanks to the combined effort of the US and the people here with rifles,' one contra military leader

proclaimed.[36] Because many of the prominent anti-Sandinista leaders had exiled themselves to the United States, they were able to 'recruit' the Reagan Administration, making the process a two-way road. The Catholic Church, through Archbishop Obando y Bravo, sought financial support from US businessmen to create anti-Sandinista groups.[37] Beyond these direct requests from the internal opposition and regardless of ideological justifications, any support lent by the US to the opposition against the Sandinista government outside the existing institutional framework meant accommodation to overpoliticisation. It highlighted the inability of the United States to frame its opposition in less violent terms than those of the internal groups or in the absence of their expectations.

This inability is also displayed under the Chamorro electoralist government. Inasmuch as Chamorro's rule is electoralist and overpoliticised, the US support for it indicates, despite claims of 'democratic rule', an accommodation to overpoliticisation in three ways. First, the US role in the advent of the Chamorro regime cannot be understood unless placed within the broad context of the confrontations among different overpoliticised groups under the Sandinista regime. US accommodation to groups opposed to the Sandinistas had resulted in military pressure that forced the Sandinistas to hold and lose elections in 1990. In this sense, US support for the winning coalition led by Violeta Chamorro represented not a 'victory for democracy', but a display of the ability of some of these overpoliticised groups to force the USA to join their side of the overpoliticisation. Pre- and post-elections calls by the Chamorro group and regime for US assistance and the US response only confirmed this situation. It is no surprise then that even as President Chamorro received $50 million in US aid in 1993 and was delighted that the Clinton administration 'has finally decided to throw its considerable weight behind her', the US complained about her government's abuse of human rights.[38] Also telling, both Bush and Clinton administrations freed funds for the Chamorro government despite its failure to satisfy their condition of returning expropriated assets to their former owners. In February 1995 former President Bush was invited to Nicaragua by the Chamorro government to celebrate, not her presidency, but her *victory over* the Sandinistas. To the extent that political developments in Nicaragua show that the Chamorro regime is overpoliticised, its invitation to Bush means in fact an invitation to celebrate and accommodate her side of overpoliticisation.

Second, the overpoliticised split of the Chamorro coalition (UNO) caused US officials to take sides; whereas the administration supported Chamorro, Senator Jesse Helms and others supported the Allianza Politica Opositora (APO). The split has widened in 1995 as UNO has completely deserted Chamorro, and some of its members have more strongly asserted their conservative views. Adding to the constitutional impasse, the internal split has strengthened the split in Washington. As Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Helms has been able to respond to the calls by the APO–UNO anti-Chamorro coalition. The Clinton Administration, on the other hand, via the IMF and the World Bank, supports the Chamorro government.[39] Although it is customary to explain the Washington split as the result of US domestic politics, the reality is that Nicaragua's overpoliticised factions have sought support from both powerful sides of US

politics. Because of this reality, the US response from each side is perforce an accommodation to overpoliticisation in Nicaragua.

Third, the US accommodation to overpoliticisation is further revealed by acceptance, however reluctantly, of Sandinistas in the Chamorro government, especially their control over the army, to prevent bloody confrontation. Fear of the Sandinistas and of bloody conflicts means that the USA is forced to accept the 'realities' of overpoliticised Nicaragua. As one observer put it: 'The structures of power [in Nicaragua] do not precisely conform to the principles of democratic government. Violeta Chamorro was elected president in 1990 on the strength of her promise to establish a Western-style democracy … But everyone knows that Mrs Chamorro has no real authority over General Ortega.'[40] The fact that General Ortega has now resigned from his position as the army chief of staff does not affect the argument.

As in Nicaragua, Haiti's pre-1915 chaotic situation had led internal antagonistic forces to seek foreign support. Reformist forces (eg the Firminists) who battled status quo forces (eg President Alexis Nord) sought foreign support against each other. Despite its commitment to democracy and stability, the USA was aware that 'the butcher sentiment is too strong in Haiti to be overcome by foreign sentiment … and Haiti [is] an autocratic state that follows the policies of Toussaint Louverture and always will'.[41] Such awareness and the call from internal forces caused the USA to embrace the anti-reform side of overpoliticisation, namely the increasingly repressive government of Alexis Nord. From Nord's overthrow in 1908 to 1915, the USA faced the same choice between equally overpoliticised factions, which offered economic and financial incentives (eg US control of Haiti's customs) in return for US military support against their opponents. The 1915 occupation by the marines only reinforced the pattern. Although the US imposed a modicum of political stability, it came at the expense of democratic rule. The occupation forces were invited to share—and accepted—joint dictatorship with the repressive 'mulatto elite', by whom 'the presence of the Americans was welcomed as a means of ensuring the suppression of the popular will … and support for the ascendancy of the light-skinned bureaucratic aristocracy'.[42] The commission of inquiry that investigated the occupation policies in 1930 recognised the inability of the occupation forces to overcome overpoliticisation: 'Until the basis of political structure is broadened by education—a matter of years—the government must necessarily be more or less unstable and in constant danger of political upheavals.'[43]

That instability and authoritarianism returned immediately after the US withdraw from Haiti in 1934 confirmed the sentiment of the commission. In light of this reality, US support for François Duvalier in the 1957 elections cannot be viewed as support for 'democracy'—which the USA itself had failed to establish—but an accommodation with one side of overpoliticised factions. Duvalier's promise of upholding democratic principles had convinced the Americans to support him; however, not only did many US officials, including the US ambassador, Gerald Drew,[44] doubt the sincerity of Duvalier's rhetoric, Duvalier was also acutely aware that such retoric was essential to secure both power and the support of the USA in the face of inescapable confrontations with his political adversaries.

As he was cornered and tested by unyielding overpoliticised factions (eg Fignole, Dejoie and Jumelle and their partisans) after assuming office, Duvalier made an immediate sharp turn to dictatorship. He retained well-placed Americans as public relations advisors to smooth his relations with Washington and to further convince the US government to accommodate his overpoliticised rule. He succeeded. Although it was clear to the USA that the army had manipulated the results of the elections to ensure Duvalier's victory and that the regime was using extremely violent and dictatorial methods, 'US officials underlined that Duvalier still controlled Haiti and it was in the best American interests to maintain relations'.[45] In addition to training Duvalier's army, the USA provided financial and technical assistance, amounting to roughly $18.5 million from 1959 to 1962. Duvalier's 'control', that is his ability to impose overpoliticisation on the USA, remained solid up to his death in 1971. That year, faced with a Navy rebellion, he could still make US ambassador, Clinton Knox, profess that 'President Duvalier's position seems solid to me'.[46] US policies faced the same constraints under Jean-Claude Duvalier, which led to an increase of economic assistance to his regime.

Yet, as an assortment of military officers and civilians plotted against the Duvalier dynasty by 1985, they imposed their own brand of overpoliticisation on the USA by inviting it to be a participant in the plot, which it did through its ambassador, Clinton McManaway, Jr. Moreover, fearing violence and civil war, the US was persuaded by the plotters—against its own established policy at the time—to make important concessions to the *Tonton Macoutes*, the very pillars of the regime being plotted against.[47] In the post-Duvalier era, the USA has maintained a consistent policy of accommodating the overpoliticised faction that 'controls' the situation. The debate about the Aristide regime and the earlier inability of the Clinton Administration to return President Aristide to power in Haiti testified to this situation. Notwithstanding the ideological motives behind US officials' opposition to Aristide, their claims that Haiti has never been a democracy and will never be,[48] and that Aristide should have made more concessions to the military, revealed the ability of internal forces in Haiti to force the USA to accommodate overpoliticisation. Indeed, because of the army's position in Haiti's politics, it was able to persuade the CIA to lead a misinformation campaign against Aristide and to cause US military officials to train the Haitian army despite the embargo against military assistance to Haiti imposed after the overthrow of President Aristide.[49] And although framed as an attempt to rescue democracy, President Clinton's final decisive support for the electoralist Aristide regime in September 1994 represented also an embrace of one side of overpoliticisation. This is consistent with the accurate assessment by the anti-Aristide forces that, although elected, the regime was not democratic during its brief tenure in office. Aristide's exile and lobbying in Washington, conducted under the aegis of the Clinton Administration against the Cedras military regime, resembled US-based Nicaraguans' lobbying against the Sandinista government during the Reagan–Bush era. In both instances, they recruited the US government and forced it to accommodate their side of the overpoliticisation. Massive electoral fraud mostly perpetrated by President Aristide's faction during the

recent June 1995 legislative elections, and US unwillingness to fully accept the Haitian opposition's protests in this regard, confirm this point.[50]

In Cambodia, between 1955 and 1964, the US choice was determined by internal overpoliticisation represented by Sihanouk's authoritarianism and the opposition's insurgency. As Sihanouk advocated neutrality in international politics, the USA attempted to install a more pro-Western government by relying on overpoliticised internal opposition. But as in Haiti, Sihanouk still 'controlled' the situation, which forced the USA to support him even though he was thought of as 'dictatorial'. Despite the prevailing opinion that the US 'made' the Lon Nol coup, the reality is that internal overpoliticisation caused the coup; the USA only used the opportunities provided by it.[51] Indeed, although the realities of the war in Vietnam encouraged US intervention in Cambodia, it was Lon Nol's reversal of Sihanouk's policy of keeping internal problems from becoming international that invited the USA's more aggressive stand in Cambodia by 1969. In other words, the US accommodated the overpoliticised faction of Lon Nol. Even Sihanouk, who accused the USA of imperialism, recognised this fact.

Before and after 1975 the USA and France sought to cultivate links with the very internal forces that they had once attempted to overthrow for not being democratic or pro-Western. For example, in 1975 before the Lon Nol government was militarily defeated, Prince Sihanouk, who was part of the armed resistance against the Lon Nol government, was approached by both the CIA and France to lend his support to a plot to liquidate the entire Khmer Rouge leadership once it entered Phnom Penh, the capital city. Sihanouk declined the offer.[52] After the Khmer Rouge were overthrown by the Vietnam-backed Heng Samrin government, the USA attempted to destabilise it by joining existing insurgent groups: the Sihanouk group, the Khmer Serei and even the Pol Pot/Khmer Rouge group. Indeed, the USA and France voted to leave Cambodia's UN seat to the Pol Pot government, rather than to the Vietnam-backed Samrin government. Although such posturings were part of the manoeuvers of international politics and the US stance towards the Soviet Union, they do not detract from the main point. No other alternative for 'democracy' and 'stability' existed for the USA and France outside the many overpoliticised groups inside Cambodia. They had to join them because they could not beat them.

The 1993 elections did not change this situation. As the USA, France, and the UN sought to establish democracy, they could not help but ally themselves with overpoliticised forces. Because the Khmer Rouge have remained or been kept out of the elections, the advent of a King Sihanouk-centred government, like the Chamorro government in Nicaragua, did not represent democratic compromise but the other side of overpoliticisation. The support for the government by foreign powers and the UN was an embrace of this side of overpoliticisation, which explained Khmer Rouge military attacks on the government after the elections. The overpoliticised split of the internal political forces also explains the split among foreign powers, forced to take sides with internal forces. While the USA energetically opposed the Khmer Rouge's participation in order to save 'democracy', France favoured it in order to establish 'stability'. Either way, neither of the two objectives can be achieved because support for one side of the

internal forces exacerbates antagonism, which helps neither democracy nor stability.

In 1995 the Cambodian situation more closely resembles that of Nicaragua's and Haiti's electoralist regimes. Indeed, although they deplore corruption, censorship, human rights abuses, and other aspects of overpoliticisation described above, the USA, France (and the UK, Canada and Australia) still support the coalition government with economic, financial and military assistance (for example, the Paris Club eased Cambodia's debt burden and a pledge of $1.35 billion in assistance has been made). Even King Sihanouk recognises the lack of democratic accountability when he asserts that 'Cambodia has a very strange democratic system' and would like foreign governments to 'persuade it to become really democratic.'[53] Here again, it is clear that foreign powers embrace a regime which is obviously not democratic; but this embrace is not the result of the 'free will' of foreign powers. Rather, it is because, faced with the equally overpoliticised Khmer Rouge alternative and the fact that there is no other 'more democratic' faction in Cambodia, they are forced to accommodate the overpoliticisation of the electoralist coalition government. The army remains the only other alternative open to foreign powers. (In the wake of the 1994 aborted coup, this option is feared by some Cambodian politicians such as Prince Sirivudh). By definition, however, such a recourse to the army would be a forced accommodation to overpoliticisation.

When in 1963 France backed the Grunitzky government that replaced the deposed Olympio government in Togo, its support was crucial in the overall success of the coup. However, France only joined internal overpoliticised forces, including the veterans who carried out the coup. France's military and economic interventions propped up the Eyadema regime on many occasions as they had regimes in many other African countries. An example is the 1986 intervention against the mercenary attack. Yet, because of the overemphasis on French imperialism, what is easily forgotten is the fact that France's military alliances with African countries are the result of reciprocal interests between African power holders and France. Because African power holders are vulnerable to internal overpoliticisation, they need military alliances with France that protect them while helping French interests as well. In other words, they, like the conservatives and liberals in Nicaragua, invite France to protect their side of overpoliticisation against their adversaries. This explains France's support for the Eyadema regime. Although France became aware, especially by 1982, of the insolvency of the regime, given the choice between an overpoliticised faction that 'controlled' the situation (ie the Eyadema regime) and another equally overpoliticised faction that did not control power, France chose the side that controlled the situation.

Togolese–French relations in the post-1990 'democratisation' period have obeyed the same logic. The 'permanent' invitation by the Eyadema regime to France manifested itself on several occasions during the confrontations between the Eyadema forces and pro-democracy opposition. Although it initiated the process of democratisation at the La Baule Conference in 1990, France did not intervene when Eyadema forces massacred opposition partisans in 1991 and 1993. Instead, it blamed the opposition, which in turn blamed France. France's

inability to dictate change in favour of the opposition, despite its pronouncements for democratic change, the mutual recriminations between it and the opposition, and its reluctant support of Eyadema in the post-election period clearly demonstrated the ability of the Eyadema regime to 'control the situation' and to force France to accommodate overpoliticisation. This situation explains why 'the French government has chosen a realistic policy [towards Togo]. It does no longer dream of immediate and crystal clear democracy, but leans toward progressive democratization based on stability'.[54] By 1995 France has resumed its pre-democratisation relations with Togo by influencing European Union members to increase their assistance to Togo and by strengthening its military assistance.[55] France's policy in Togo thus reflects its Cambodia policy. Unfortunately, as in Cambodia, the choice of stability over democracy cannot guarantee either one in an overpoliticised state.

Conclusion

If the record of stability and democracy in Nicaragua, Haiti, Cambodia, and Togo from 1804 to 1995 is an indicator of how the USA, France and, minimally, the UN have fared in their pursuit of this double objective, the preceding discussion suggests that they have not been successful. Undoubtedly, idiosyncratic factors in each of the four third world countries and in the two foreign powers influence the latter's failure and contradictorily accommodating behaviour towards instability and antidemocratic forces. Also, the specifics of accommodation vary in each case. In some, the accommodation occurs under authoritarian regimes and in others under electoralist regimes; some of the latter type of regimes are more open than others.

Nevertheless, the focus of this article has been the similar patterns of overpoliticisation shared by the four third world countries and their equally similar ability to impose accommodation to overpoliticisation on the foreign powers discussed. I have argued that the international politics of the four third world countries—their interaction with foreign powers—is characterised by these powers' accommodation to antistability and antidemocratic forces. As foreign actors (eg the USA and France) pursue their national interests in a third world country, they become political competitors in an overpoliticised state. Rather than foreign powers imposing their will on the overpoliticised internal actors, it is the latter that impose their will on foreign powers. Locked within the overpoliticised state, however small and weak, which they cannot steer beyond its two ends—authoritarian and electoralist regimes—foreign powers are forced to side with internal overpoliticised forces in these two types of regimes. They become as overpoliticised as their internal counterparts. Because such accommodation to overpoliticisation is antithetical to stability and democracy, it explains the failure of the USA, France, the UN and, by extension, other foreign powers to accomplish the double objective of imposing stability and democracy in the four third world countries.

The subordination of foreign powers to overpoliticisation of third world states suggests two conclusions. First, structural accommodation to overpoliticisation cannot be reduced to an outcome of the anti-communism of the Cold War era,

which allowed foreign powers to embrace 'authoritarians' against 'communist totalitarians', to use the Reagan regime's distinction. Even if one accepts that foreign interventions were often dictated by anti-communist sentiments, most interventions in Haiti, Togo and Nicaragua (except against the Sandinista government) have not been based on anti-communism. And, in any case, such anti-communist interventions did not explain foreign accommodation to overpoliticisation any more than interventions for economic or strategic interests do. Foreign interventions in and by themselves are not the issue, accommodation to overpoliticisation is. The accommodation suggests a trend and even a permanency that goes beyond specific events, a regime in time, or the type of national interests involved. Both authoritarian and electoralist regimes of the third world states impose it on foreign powers. Indeed, the accommodation of the three foreign powers to overpoliticisation in the four third world countries in the 1990s, at a time when anticommunist motives do not dominate foreign policy, tends to support these points. Second, structural accommodation to overpoliticisation differs from simply stating that foreign powers face 'constraints' in the third world. At a minimum, international politics, like domestic politics, involves constraints; explaining the nature and implications of these constraints in the third world is intellectually more rewarding.

Therefore, these two conclusions beg the following question: how does one explain (1) the remarkable similarities in overpoliticisation in the four third world countries and (2) the equally remarkable similarities in foreign powers' accommodation to overpoliticisation in these countries, regardless of whether the latter are authoritarian or electoralist ('democratic') regimes. Differently put, why are the USA, France and the UN forced by internal actors in the four third world countries to accommodate overpoliticisation? The question takes us back to the issue of the theoretical explanation, which, as already indicated, cannot be attempted here. This essay has simply sought to provide some empirical elements of the double similarity.

In addition to potentially shedding light on how social, economic and historical factors intervene in the explanation of this double similarity, a theoretical explanation, if successful, should help in two ways. First, it should help establish the conceptual boundaries between comparative and international politics. Second, it should help address the perennial policy issue of whether the two objectives of stability and democracy can be achieved through foreign policy and its ordinary tools, such as diplomacy, force or economic and 'political' assistance in 'good governance' and 'crafting democracies'.[56]

Notes

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[1] James Caporaso, 'Introduction: the state in comparative and international perspective', in Caporaso (ed), *The Elusive State: International and Comparative Perspectives*, (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1989), pp 7–16.

[2] See 'Special report: what in the world are we doing?', *Time*, 18 October 1993, pp 36–50; one of the many critics of the Clinton Administration was Henry Kissinger, who argued that the USA could not leave Somalia before militarily punishing Aidid and his followers.

[3] Among the factors cited are (1) the limits imposed on foreign actors by the normative international system of the post-World War II era, which, by consecrating the sovereignty of each member state of the UN system, makes interference in its affairs by foreign actors more difficult and grants it the potential to manipulate even the most powerful of these actors. See R. Jackson & C Rosberg, 'Sovereignty and underdevelopment: juridical statehood in the African crisis', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 24, (1) 1986 pp 1–31; Richard Cottam, *Competitive Interference and Twentieth Century Diplomacy*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967, pp 26–27, 44ff; (2) the blind commitment of foreign actors to their national interests, which is often predicated on the 'creation' of authoritarian/dictatorial rulers and precludes any commitment to democracy. See C Y Thomas, *The Rise of Authoritarian States in Peripheral Society*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984; Noam Chomsky & Edward S Herman, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1979; Tony Smith, 'The dependency approach', in Howard Wiarda (ed), *New Directions in Comparative Politics*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985, p 119; (3) the lack of a coherent foreign policy on the part of foreign powers, the result of domestic policy considerations; and (4) their lack of resolve and fear of military defeat.

[4] Among the many sources used for the analysis of Nicaragua are Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, *Estirpe Sangrienta: Los Somoza*, Mexico: Editorial Diogenes, 1957; Mary B Vanderlaan, *Revolution and Foreign Policy in Nicaragua*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986; Patricia Taylor Edmisten, *Nicaragua Divided: La Prensa and the Chamorro Legacy*, Pensacola, FL: University of West Florida Press, 1990; Thomas W Walker, 'Nicaragua: from dynastic dictatorship to social revolution', in Howard J Wiarda & Harvey F Kline (eds), *Latin American Politics and Development*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985; Peter Rosset & John Vandermeer (eds), *The Nicaragua Reader*, New York: Grove Press, 1983; Carlos M Vilas, *State, Class and Ethnicity in Nicaragua: Capitalist Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast*, Boulder, CO; Lynne Rienner, 1989; Arturo J Cruz, *Nicaragua's Continuing Struggle*, Freedom House, 1988; Jiri Valenta & Esperanza Duran (eds), *Conflict in Nicaragua*, Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1987; Philip J Williams, 'Dual transitions from authoritarian rule: popular and electoral democracy in Nicaragua', *Comparative Politics*, January 1994 pp 169–185; and Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United states in Central America*, New York: Norton, 1984.

[5] Among the sources used for the analysis of Haiti are Carolyn E Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990; Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902–1915*, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988; Sidney W Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974; Bernard Diederich & Al Burt, *Papa Doc: The Truth about Haiti Today* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969; Hubert Cole, *Christophe, King of Haiti*, New York: Viking, 1967; Robert I Rotberg, *Haiti: The Politics of Squalor*, Boston, MA: Houghton Miflin, 1971; Elizabeth Abbot, *Haiti: The Duvaliers and their Legacy*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988; Josh DeWind & David H Kinley III, *Aiding Migration: The Impact of International Development Assistance on Haiti*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988; and O Ernest Moore, *Haiti: Its Stagnant Society and Shackled Economy*, New York: Exposition Press, 1972.

[6] Among the many sources used for the analysis of Cambodia are Renè Morizon, *Monographie du Cambodge*, Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extreme Orient; Paul Collard, *Cambodge et Cambodgiens*, (Paris, 1925; Peter Poole, 'The expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia', Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Series No 17, 1970; George Hildebrand & Gareth Porter, *Cambodia: Starvation and Revolution*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976; Ben Kiernan & Chanthou Boua (eds)., *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942–1981*, London: Zed Press, 1982; Khieu Samphan, 'Cambodia's economy and industrial development', Data Paper III, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1979, Sheldon W Simon, *War and Politics in Cambodia: A Communication Analysis*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1974; Peter Schier & Manola Schier-Oum (eds), *Prince Sihanouk on Cambodia*, Hamburg, 1985; Jonathan Grant, L A G Moss & J Unger (eds), *Cambodia: The Widening War in Indochina*, New York: Washington Square Press, 1971; and Roger Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965.

[7] Among the many sources used for the analysis of Togo are Robert Cornevin, *Histoire du Togo*, Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1962; Jean-Claude Froelich, P Alexandre & R Cornevin, *Les Populations du Nord-Togo*, Paris: PUF, 1963; Arthur J Knoll, *Togo Under Imperial Germany, 1884–1914*, Stanford, CT: Hoover Institution Press, 1979; Samuel Decalo, *Historical Dictionary of Togo*, London: The Scarecrow Press, 1987; Abdoulaye Wade, *Economie de L'Ouest Africain*, Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959; Samir Amin, *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973; and François Constantin and Christian Coulon, 'Des Casernes aux chancelleries: la variable militaire dans la politique extérieure de trois Etats Africains, Haute Volta, Togo, Mali, *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 9, 1(1975) 17–49.

[4] S N Sangmpam, 'Neither soft nor dead: the African state is alive and well', *African Studies Review*, 36(2), September 1993, p 84.

[9] For full elaboration, see S N Sangmpam, 'The overpoliticised state and democratisation: a theoretical model', *Comparative Politics*, 24(2) 1992, pp 401–416; Sangmpam, *Pseudocapitalism and the Overpoliticised State: Reconciling Politics and Anthropology in Zaire*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1994; and Sangmpam, 'Neither soft nor dead'.

[10] I have borrowed the term electoralism from Professor Terry Lynn Karl of Stanford University.
[11] See Sangmpam, *Pseudocapitalism and the Overpoliticized State*.
[12] Walker, 'Nicaragua: from dynastic dictatorship to social revolution', p 513.
[13] Edmisten, *Nicaragua divided: La Prensa and the Chamorro Legacy*, p 70.
[14] Vanderlaan, *Revolution and Foreign Policy in Nicaragua*, pp 43–47.
[15] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Nicaragua*, Third Quarter 1993.
[16] *New York Times*, 12 July 1992.
[17] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Nicaragua*, first and second quarters 1995.
[18] *Jeune Afrique*, 15 December 1993.
[19] Michael Vickery, 'Looking back at Cambodia, 1942–76', in Kiernan & Boua, *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea*, pp 106–107.
[20] See Kiernan & Boua, *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea*, Part III.
[21] Schier & Schier-Oum, *Prince Sihanouk on Cambodia*, p 60.
[22] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Cambodia*, 11, 1993.
[23] In some other versions of the incident, the murder was committed by Eyadema's French personal adviser.
[24] *Africa International*, January 1992, pp 20–21; Economist Intelligence Unit, *Togo*, Third Quarter 1993.
[25] Kryzanek, *US–Latin American Relations*, New York: Praeger, 1990, p 24.
[26] Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers*, p 194.
[27] Edmisten, *Nicaragua Divided*, p 43.
[28] For further information about the search for democracy by the USA and France, see Vanderlaan, *Revolution and Foreign Policy in Nicaragua*, p 10; Moore, *Haiti: Its Stagnant Society and Shackled Economy*, pp 36–37; Abbot, *Haiti: The Duvaliers and their Legacy*, pp 283, 320; Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy*, p 90; President Nixon's Address to the Nation, 30 April, 1970; Economist Intelligence Unit, *Togo*.
[29] Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy*, p 90.
[30] Samuel Huntington, 'Political development and political decay', *World Politics*, 17(3), 1965 pp 386–430. See also his *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966.
[31] Rosset & Vandermeer, *The Nicaragua Reader*, p 98.
[32] Walker, 'Nicaragua: from dynastic dictatorship to social revolution', p 514.
[33] Chamorro, *Estirpe Sangrienta: Los Somoza*, p 29.
[34] Edmisten, *Nicaragua Divided: La Prensa and the Chamorro Legacy*, p 42.
[35] Ibid, pp 37, 87, 16.
[36] Interview by commander 'Mack' José Benito Bravo Centeno, Skylight Pictures 1983.
[37] Vanderlaan, *Revolution and Foreign Policy in Nicaragua*, p 111.
[38] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Nicaragua*.
[39] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Nicaragua*.
[40] *New Yorker*, 9 August 1993, p 5.
[41] Assistant Secretary of State, Alvey Adee, quoted by Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902–1915*, p 118.
[42] Rotberg, *Haiti: The Politics of Squalor*, p 128.
[43] Moore, *Haiti: Its Stagnant Society and Shackled Economy*, p 58.
[44] Robert Debs Heinl, 'Bailing out Duvalier', *New Republic*, CLVI, 14 January 1967, p 15.
[45] Diederich & Burt, *Papa Doc: The Truth about Haiti Today*, p 237.
[46] Moore, *Haiti: Its Stagnant Society and Shackled Economy*, p 155.
[47] Abbot, *Haiti: The Duvaliers and their Legacy*, pp 291–304.
[48] Former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Senator Bob Dole, interview, This Week with David Brinkley, 24 October 1993.
[49] Representative Major Owens, C-Span 3 March 1994; see also *Time*, 8 November, 1993, pp 44–46.
[50] The Carter Center in Atlanta, which was one of the agencies that monitored the elections, confirmed that there were major irregularities. The US representative in Haiti acknowledged some problems but reduced them to localised irregularities that can be remedied through new localised elections without questioning the overall fairness of the polls.
[51] Simon, *War and Politics in Cambodia: A Communication Analysis*, p 9.
[52] Schier & Manola Schier-Oum (eds), *Prince Sihanouk on Cambodia*, pp 16–20.
[53] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Cambodia*, Second Quarter 1995, p 8.
[54] *Jeune Afrique*, 1714, November 1993.
[55] Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Togo*, First and Second Quarters 1995.
[56] See G Hyden and M Bratton (eds), *Governance and Politics in Africa*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992; The Carter Center in Atlanta, GA, is an example of such teaching. See also Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990.