

S E C R E T []

25X1

CONTADORA TALKING POINTS

Contadora--because it is a peace initiative and because it was sponsored by respected Latin American democracies--has wide acceptance, but to the Central American countries most threatened by foreign-supported subversion, the Contadora initiative has produced a peace instrument of such imbalance that it augments, not reduces the threat to them. Moreover, the current draft treaty virtually guarantees the survival of Marxist Nicaragua and, thus, the consolidation of Cuban/Soviet influence in the Isthmus. Because Contadora is a peace initiative designed to end the bloodshed in Nicaragua and El Salvador, there is a reluctance to criticize the draft treaty directly. Nonetheless, there is a wide variance between the public and private attitudes of the leaders of the Contadora countries toward the treaty and, with the exception of Mexico, these leaders believe that the treaty provisions are particularly inadequate with regard to verification. This concern persuaded the countries of Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador (Nicaragua was invited but refused to attend) to meet and discuss revisions to the treaty. The result of that meeting was to propose to replace the Additional Protocol with a Protocol of Guarantor States. The meeting also agreed to have only the four original countries (Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela) sign the Protocol. The Guarantor nations would be limited (suggestions are Brazil, Argentina, Spain and West Germany. France would be welcomed as a guarantor as well).

The following represent an update of our perceptions of the [] views of leaders of the Contadora countries toward the process. It is too soon to know the reaction to the latest initiative by the countries of Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras to replace the Additional Protocol.

Mexico:

- Mexican leaders appear more willing to strengthen the verification procedures than their public statements would indicate.
- The Mexican Government is, however, anxious to have a successful conclusion to the Contadora process, even if an imbalanced treaty favorable to Nicaragua emerges. Mexico continues to play the role of a "protector" of Nicaragua.

Venezuela:

- [] Venezuelan Government officials express their misgivings about the Contadora process. One official believes the treaty as written would be "unverifiable" and does not provide sufficient guarantees against Soviet/Cuban/Nicaraguan penetration of the region.

Costa Rica:

- Costa Rican officials have strong concerns about the Contadora Treaty as originally revised. They believe their country will have serious problems with Nicaragua, regardless of what happens to the Sandinista regime. Through the Contadora process, Costa Rica hopes to impose an "international big brother" on the Sandinistas.

S E C R E T []

25X1

S E C R E T

25X1

El Salvador:

- The espousal by officials of the Salvadoran Government of the Contadora process is for international consumption only. The GOES has no intention of signing an agreement unless significant changes are made in the revised acta. The GOES does not trust the Sandinistas to comply with any agreement in any event.
- The GOES further believes that a "regionalization" of the Contadora process would be desirable; its position is that the original Contadora countries made a good beginning with the initial draft agreement, but the process should go further and essentially make Central America responsible for its own destiny.

Honduras:

- There appears to be a difference in Honduras between civilian and military authorities over the Contadora process. The civilians believe that the revised acta represents an improvement and that it would be acceptable to Honduras with certain changes. In the aggregate, these changes would signify a relinquishment by Nicaragua of its current overwhelming military superiority.
- The Honduran military puts no faith whatsoever in the Contadora process as a solution to the problems in Central America. The military believes it will merely buy time for the Sandinistas to consolidate their regime.

Guatemala:

- Despite its public stance of neutrality on regional issues, the Guatemalan Government is privately concerned over the existence of a Marxist, expansionist regime in Nicaragua. Guatemala pays lip service to the Contadora process, primarily because of its dependence upon Mexico and Venezuela for oil.

Panama:

- Panamanian officials view the Contadora Process as an important and irreplaceable initiative but believe that more negotiations are necessary among the Central American countries. Panamanian military leaders favor additional changes to make the treaty more restrictive of Nicaragua.

Colombia:

- President Betancur of Colombia was a primary proponent of the Contadora Process and favors its rapid implementation, in part because of the personal acclaim that he will receive by that action. Recently, he has become concerned that Nicaraguan intransigence vis-a-vis the elections will damage the Contadora process and he is urging the Sandinistas to postpone the elections and become more flexible.

S E C R E T

25X1

SECRET

25X1

Nicaragua: Military Deliveries 1979-83*

