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Every President since FDR has authorized assistance to people resisting oppressive foreign governments where deemed to be threatened.

Today, there exists a justification for this kind of activity over and above our convictions and concerns about human rights and individual freedom. Our national security is threatened by aggressive tactics being employed by the Soviet Union, its allies and proxies, to overthrow the governments of small friendly countries and convert them into actual or potential hostile bases. Some combination of Soviet, Cuban, Vietnamese and Libyan aggression against small countries has, over recent years, placed Soviet power on China's southern flank and created actual or potential bases 500 miles closer to the oil of the Middle East and created bases within striking distance of major choke points in the sea lanes of the world and on our doorstep in Central America and the Caribbean.

The Soviets or their proxies gain these positions by the use of propaganda, subversion and terrorism to destabilize governments, the training and organization of insurgents, the rapid supply of weapons and the provision of direction in the use of sophisticated tactics, command, control and communications capabilities.

When radical governments came to power the Soviets directly or through their surrogates help establish an internal-security structure to ensure that any challenge from within can be stamped out. Sometimes this worked, as in Ethiopia and Angola, and sometimes there was not enough time, as in Jamaica.

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This strategy has worked to consolidate power in all of Indo-China, establish new radical regimes in Ethiopia, Angola and Nicaragua, gain possession of Afghanistan, a Russian goal for over a century, establish Cuban control of Grenada, a strategic island in the Caribbean. It is presently establishing and supporting an active insurgency in El Salvador against an elected government, supporting revolutionary violence in Honduras and Guatemala, putting pro-Western regimes under siege in Chad and the Sudan, and, in a variety of ways, threatening them elsewhere.

In Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Angola, Ethiopia and Nicaragua radical governments imposed or supported by some combination of Soviet, Vietnamese, Libyan, Cuban or Nicaraguan power find themselves facing the organized resistance of people unwilling to accept permanent loss of their rights and heritage. This resistance is usually assisted by the people and governments of neighboring countries which consider themselves threatened by the same kind of aggressive force which they witnessed take over a once friendly neighbor.

What is a nation to do if a country finds its national security first threatened and then diminished as it witnesses hostile nations forcibly establish and aggressively advance its power and influence in nearby countries? It can try to reduce and abate the danger by diplomacy, economic assistance and similar means. If that fails, it becomes necessary to take more ultimately forcible measures to protect the national interest. At that point, a national leader will look for alternatives between sending a diplomatic note and sending in the Marines.

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The United States has traditionally been ready to provide friendly governments with arms to defend themselves against external aggression or externally supported aggression with intelligence, communications, training and mobility to keep up with the hit-and-run tactics used by externally supported insurgent forces. We can introduce an element of stability into the Third World by helping small countries develop those skills and capabilities, and we can do this for a fraction of our foreign aid budget. After all, governments cannot achieve the economic and social objectives of our foreign aid until they're able to control and combat internal disruption. Social progress does not come in the middle of civil war.

Today, our national security interests and the tranquility of countries in our immediate neighborhood is being threatened from Cuba and Nicaragua. Those countries have for some years been covertly sending weapons and trained men into El Salvador and Honduras to overthrow elected governments, as well as into Guatemala and Costa Rica.

It is not in our interest to help offset this by working to help those who seek to push aggressor and hostile governments to a more peaceful course. It will certainly send an ominous signal if the Congress should act to cut off support for this kind of activity which it has authorized and funded and thereby gives a free hand to Cuba and Nicaragua to pour into El Salvador whatever is needed to overthrow an elected government while protecting the immediate aggressor from the opposition of its own people to that course. The result may be that the only way to avoid or counter a Communist base in Central America will be to involve our own troops.

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