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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

7 March 1984

NOTE FOR: The Honorable Fred C. Ikle  
Under Secretary of Defense  
for Policy  
Department of Defense

At the request of the Executive  
Secretary, NSC we have reviewed the  
5 March draft of your remarks to be  
presented to the Boston World Affairs  
Council and have no comments.



Executive Secretary

cc: Executive Secretary, NSC

STAT

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04-1916

REMARKS BY DR. FRED C. IKLE  
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY  
TO THE BOSTON WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
FRIDAY, 9 MARCH 1984

### Democracy and Military Power

As a former professor at one of the Charles River institutions, I am pleased to revisit Boston. For your luncheon today, I brought you a heavy dessert: I shall talk about the relationship between democracy and military power, especially in the turbulent region to the south of our country.

Military strength, democracy, and peace are interrelated—they can reinforce each other. Democracy strengthens the conditions for peace. Peace permits democracy to take root. And in today's world, the democracies need military strength for their survival and to protect the peace.

Peace is the normal choice of the peoples of the world. Democracies, because they are being responsive to the wishes of the people, are much less likely than dictatorships to initiate war. The people—in any country—are reluctant to divert human and material resources to build up large military forces, and in democracies the wishes of the people count.

The basically peaceful nature of democracies, however, is no guarantee of peace. Throughout the last half century, the democracies have been confronted by totalitarian dictatorships, ready to use their military power for aggression. Four times in

this period, the democracies, by neglecting their military strength, have invited the expansion of totalitarian powers or outright acts of aggression.

The first time was in the 1930s, when the great Western democracies failed to acquire the strength that could have deterred the aggressions launched by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan. Had the democracies been resolved to maintain their military power, the Second World War could have been prevented. As Winston Churchill said, "the malice of the wicked was reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous."

The second time the democracies failed to prevent aggression was right after the Second World War, when the United States Government, mindful of the wishes of the American people, hastily demobilized what was then the strongest military force in the world and pulled its divisions out of Europe. This created a power vacuum in Europe which Stalin quickly exploited, by pushing the borders of the Soviet Empire westward, in violation of the Yalta agreement. First Stalin violated the Yalta provisions for pluralistic democracies in Poland and Hungary. Then he forced a Communist regime on Czechoslovakia, at that time a Western democratic nation that the Yalta agreement had never allocated to the Soviet sphere.

In Europe, the Soviet expansion finally came to a halt when--in response to the coup in Czechoslovakia--the Atlantic Alliance was created. But in the Far East, we invited open

armed aggression a third time by our continued failure to make clear our commitment to South Korea and our readiness to help defend that nation. It was only after the outbreak of the Korean War that the United States began to build up its military strength. ~~Once~~ that costly war had started, Congress decided on a threefold increase in our defense budget.

Weakness of the leading democracies invited totalitarian expansion and aggression a fourth time in the period of America's retrenchment after the war in Vietnam. That period ended with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and with the 1980 US elections. In that election, the American people endorsed a restoration of our military strength.

In 1981, a bipartisan majority in the Congress subscribed to a program for improving the readiness and staying power of our conventional forces, and for modernizing both our conventional and nuclear arms. Pursuing this program has not been inexpensive. However, US defense spending still absorbs but a small fraction of our nation's resources. Our proposed defense budget for 1985 of \$305 billion will require 6.8 percent of our Gross National Product, still less than the 8 percent average during the 1950s and 1960s.

Thanks to the defense program of the last three years, our forces' backlog of maintenance and repair needs has been cut, the overall quality and retention of men and women in the Services has markedly improved, and far more of our military units are ready for combat.

During the 1970s, the stockpiles of munitions and spare parts had become dangerously low so that in combat the Soviet forces could easily outlast ours. There was irresponsible talk in the 1970s about needing to prepare only for a short conventional war since we would quickly escalate to the use of nuclear weapons. Given the deterioration in the global nuclear balance that took place in the 1970s, this idea about short conventional wars was not a deterrent but a dangerous bluff. Moreover, to accept the use of nuclear weapons as a natural extension of conventional conflict displayed not only a lack of wisdom but also a lack of morality.

The Reagan Administration acted decisively to reduce our reliance on the threat of nuclear war, by improving the readiness and staying power of our conventional forces and by repairing our capacity to mobilize. The very effort of President Reagan to curtail the role of nuclear weapons and to make our deterrent forces safer has been widely misunderstood. As it became apparent that the Reagan Administration addressed nuclear issues with new pragmatism, some people perversely argued that the President was moving toward greater dependence on nuclear weapons. In fact, he was moving in the opposite direction.

Today, new doubts have arisen whether we can afford the sustained effort needed to repair our military strength. Many Americans are understandably worried about the Federal deficit. Not only the defense budget has come under attack in Washington, but also US military assistance that enables our friends

to defend themselves. So we face again a crisis in the perseverance of democracy. Will the American people and their representatives in Congress continue to support the effort necessary to preserve peace with freedom? Or will we--for the fifth time in this century--reenter a period when the forces of totalitarianism are invited to advance?

The contest between democracy and totalitarianism is particularly immediate in Central America. Contrary to the stereotype many people hold about our Southern neighbors, democracy is taking hold in our hemisphere. Two-thirds of the nations in the Caribbean and Latin America are new democracies. When the scheduled elections in Brazil have taken place, the democratically elected governments will represent nearly 90 percent of the region's population contrasted with some 50 percent ten years ago. Please note that none of these countries, not a single one, was ruled by Communist or Marxist regimes before they became democracies. They were all under authoritarian regimes of a military or rightist persuasion. The same transition can be seen in Southern Europe: Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Turkey all turned into genuine democracies, having been governed by conservative military regimes or rightist dictatorships.

Remember, throughout the world not a single Communist regime has ever allowed a succession to democracy. The only place in the world, the only instance in this century, where such a succession is now underway is--Grenada.



You may ask, why should it matter whether the nations to the south of us can remain or can become democratic, or why should it matter whether they are indefinitely locked in the grip of totalitarian Communist regimes.

Although, the economies of Cuba, Poland and the Soviet Union are clearly object lessons of failure, and free enterprise is far more effective in raising standards of living, the main reason is not the materialistic one. The main reasons for the United States to promote, and help protect democracy in Central America are to serve our national interest, and to support our ethical principles. As Secretary Shultz recently put it: "Democracy is a great liberator of the human spirit, giving free rein to the talents and aspirations of individuals." Closely tied to the freedom that only democracy can provide is the protection of human rights.

The close correlation between democratic government and protection of human rights is shown by a Congressionally mandated report that covers human rights practices in every country of the world. Despite this evidence--if evidence was needed on this score--a curious thing is happening in Washington. Those who profess the most concern about human rights abuses in Central America act as if they did not care whether democracy has a future there. They seek to deny sufficient military assistance to permit those who wish to build democracy to overcome their totalitarian enemies.

Democracy cannot take hold, unless a nation is able to shield itself from those who use force to destroy it by burning voter registration lists and ballot boxes to prevent elections, by blowing up buses, bridges and power lines to destroy the economic basis of any elected government.

President Reagan seeks to provide enough military assistance so that this onslaught of violence can be ended. Clearly, the President is not "militarizing" his approach to Central America-- as some have alleged. He recently submitted to Congress the "Jackson Plan," named after the late Senator Henry Jackson and based on the bipartisan Commission headed by Dr. Kissinger. For economic aid, this plan proposes eight billion dollars over the next five years. For military aid, it proposes a total of \$373 million for this Fiscal Year, tapering off to \$256 million next year, and then hopefully declining rapidly as violence subsides. While the requested military aid is small compared with economic aid, it is vital for success.

You must keep in mind that Soviet military shipments to the Caribbean region are ten times larger than US shipments, and the number of Soviet military advisers in Latin America is twenty times larger than the number of US advisers. Perhaps the people who complain that President Reagan is "militarizing" the approach to Central America have read these statistics upside down.

I had NIO/LA  
review for accuracy  
JSC

In a region that has known so much turmoil and violence, it is an arduous task to nurture a fledgling democracy and to strengthen the institutions that promote justice and human rights. This task is difficult enough in peacetime, it is doubly difficult when a determined and well-armed enemy wages war against the very structure of democracy, as is now happening in El Salvador.

This not to say that we should postpone a major effort to ensure that human rights are safeguarded. Even during the current violence of war, we must press for the elimination of all human rights abuses that are properly attributable to the Government we support. To this end, the Reagan Administration has instituted several programs. For example, in our training of Salvadoran soldiers, we provide extensive indoctrination on human rights. The Administration also wants to provide training to police forces, both to instill respect for human rights and to improve the will and capability to apprehend those participating in death squads. Unfortunately, Congress has not yet agreed to remove a prohibition from the Vietnam years against US training of police forces. Prohibiting such training while professing concern about death squads is a bit like prohibiting the training of teachers while complaining about illiteracy.

Even though we must seek to improve human rights in El Salvador while the war continues, to let the violence of war

drag on is not an effective way of ending the violation of human rights. Those who wish to cut back US military assistance to El Salvador must face the facts on this score. They know that curtailing military assistance will guarantee a protracted military stalemate. The continuing violence and bloodshed of this stalemate, like a bludgeon, will batter every democratic institution, every human rights improvement.

Some argue that negotiation should be a substitute for a level of military assistance sufficient to break the stalemate. This is a dangerous illusion. While negotiation can--and must--complement adequate military efforts, it cannot be a substitute for military power.

Whether we like it or not, in Central America--as in any other part of the world--negotiation in and by itself cannot stop those who are determined to use military force to seize power. Negotiation can play a vital role in facilitating an end to violence. Negotiations must invite the participation of all those who are not opposed to the democratic process, address their grievances, and induce them to abandon the use of force. The Reagan Administration continues to pursue the benefits of negotiation vigorously.

But the hard core Communists, those who are resolved to use violence until they secure the monopoly of power, cannot be converted through negotiation. These are dedicated and

determined people--dedicated to destroy democracy, determined to succeed by all means at their disposal. Once these dedicated people are armed and organized, democracy cannot be defended without military power.

If we deny military power to those whom we ask and expect to advance democracy and human rights, their totalitarian enemies--lavishly supported from the outside--are bound to win. And once such a totalitarian regime has taken over, the fate of people in that country is beyond American influence. We will witness helplessly a massive, cruel deterioration in human rights. Recall that in 1975, Congress terminated all military assistance in behalf of South Vietnam and Cambodia. Remember, thereafter, the repression in South Vietnam, the concentration camps, the boat people, the genocide in Cambodia.

One of the Vietnamese boat people was Truong Nhu Tang, a founder of the National Liberation Front, minister of justice for the provisional Viet Cong government, and an ardent adversary of the United States while we were still involved in Vietnam. He is a courageous man, for he can admit having been grievously wrong. A couple of years ago, in exile, he wrote:

With other liberals I shared the romantic notion that those who had fought so persistently against oppression would not themselves become oppressors . . . I have now to acknowledge my responsibility for the disastrous state of my country . . . If anything, my obligations to my countrymen is greater now because the oppression they are suffering is unparalleled in Vietnam's history.\*

For many Americans, to be sure, Indochina seemed far away once our forces had been withdrawn. When the horrible truth emerged about the holocaust in Cambodia, many of the solons in Washington, like Pontius Pilate, found it convenient to wash their hands of it. Not so for Central America! In Central America, the misery would be uncomfortably closer, the refugees streaming into this country far more numerous, the repercussions below our border more harrowing. The people in Washington could not wash their hands of the calamity that they had helped to bring about.

If totalitarian Communist regimes should become ensconced in Central America, it would be a disaster not only for democracy and human rights, but also for our security. We know from long and bitter experience that such regimes, almost always, will try to impose their type of dictatorship on neighboring countries, either by promoting subversion or--where they expect little resistance--through open aggression. The

\*The New York Review of Books, 21 October 1981.

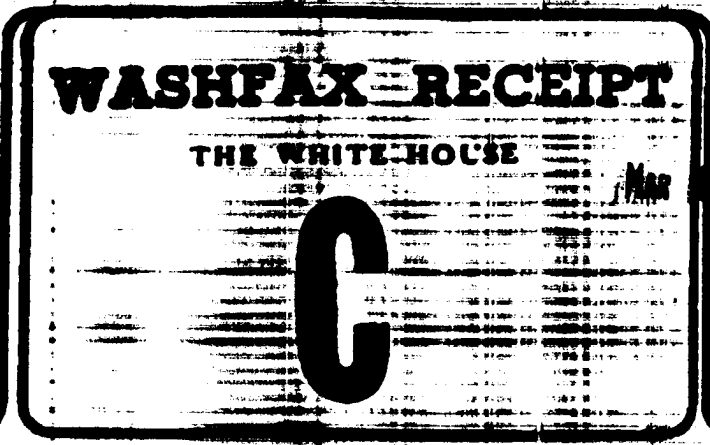
Soviet Union, North Korea, Communist Vietnam, and Cuba all have done this. We know, on the basis of ample evidence, that the Communist regime in Nicaragua, the insurgencies in El Salvador and throughout Central America, Cuba's farflung legions, and Soviet arms and monies all are mutually supporting and interconnected. We do not face an isolated insurgency in El Salvador. A harbinger of things to come is the support and direction Nicaragua currently provides for the insurgents in El Salvador. This at a time when the Sandinista regime has neither fully consolidated its grip on Nicaragua nor completed its military build-up. It takes an extraordinary degree of foolishness to expect that a vastly more powerful Sandinista regime would suddenly turn into a more peaceful neighbor.

Costa Rica, one of Nicaragua's neighbors, is the oldest democracy in Central America. It has no army, only a small militia. What would the United States do if within a few years, Costa Rica were attacked and it asked for our help, say under the Rio Treaty? To refuse effective help to an ally so close to us would devastatingly damage our ability to deter aggression against Israel, Japan, or NATO. But to become involved at that late stage, when Nicaragua would have acquired powerful military forces backed by Cuba, would result in a major military confrontation. Isn't it better to maintain an adequate program of military assistance to avoid such an outcome?

We do not want to deter aggression against democratic nations in Central America by having to station large military forces there--as we now do in Korea and Central Europe. The Reagan Administration, I can tell you, does not seek to increase US military presence in Central America. It would be a tragedy if we ever had to divert major military resources to that region.



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MESSAGE NO. 358 CLASSIFICATION UNCLASS PAGE 13  
FROM Bob Kinnitt 486 2224 White House  
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REMARKS: Please pass comments directly to Fred  
Idle, with a copy to NSC, by COB 3/7/84.

NSC II, 1586