

MEDIASCAN TRANSCRIPT
ABC THIS WEEK WITH DAVID BRINKLEY
24 July 1983
Sunday

- AB01 PROGRAM INTRODUCTION BRINKLEY: What on earth is going on in Central America? And what is the U.S. doing there with troop trainers, advisers, and a fleet from the U.S. Navy lying off the coast? Is it a threat to the U.S. if the Communists take over one country after another? Or is the threat that the U.S. will again be bogged down in a Vietnam-style guerrilla war? Our guests today: two members of the new bipartisan commission on Central America, Robert Strauss, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee and Dr. John R. Silber, president of Boston University; the U.S. ambassador to Nicaragua, Anthony C. Quainton; and Sen. Christopher Dodd of Connecticut of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The background on this messy, difficult problem from James Wooten, and our discussion here with George Will, Sam Donaldson and Hodding Carter. All here on our Sunday program.
- AB02 ISRAEL/LEBANON BRINKLEY: Today's news since the Sunday morning papers, and there isn't much, the Israeli Cabinet met this morning and announced President Reagan had asked its defense and foreign ministers to come to Washington and to discuss with him the stalemate on moving foreign troops out of Lebanon. They will come to Washington tomorrow.
- AB03 CANADA/ AIRLINE MISHAP BRINKLEY: An Air Canada jet with 61 passengers aboard had to make an emergency landing on an old military airfield in Manitoba. Some passengers were injured, but not seriously. Either the plane ran out of fuel or something prevented the fuel from reaching the engines.
- AB04 EGG FARM FIRE/ INDIANA BRINKLEY: And in Acme, Ind., there was a fire at a huge egg farm. Fourteen fire departments fought the blaze, but 210,000 chickens were lost. We'll be back with all the rest of today's program in a moment.
- AB05 U.S./CENTRAL Nicaragua AMERICA BRINKLEY: President Reagan now has put more pressure on and on the left-wing guerrillas trying to overthrow the government of El Salvador, pressure in the form of maneuvers by the U.S. Army in Honduras and the U.S. Navy carrier force lying offshore. What does all this mean? And where might it lead? Before we question our guests and bring you up to date on what's happening in Central America, here's our background report from James Wooten. Jim?
- WOOTEN: Well, David, it's always difficult to measure these moments, but it just may be that we have seen the stagnant saga of Central America enter a brand new phase this week. First, the president has decided to increase geometrically the military pressure on the leftist government of Nicaragua and the guerrillas in El Salvador, including a massive

demonstration of American force and fire power both on land and sea. That is a very significant turn in White House policy, but it is no more important than Fidel Castro's contrasting decision to encourage those same groups, the Sandinistas and the Salvadoran rebels, to join in regional peace talks down there as soon as they can be arranged. Well, from here at the White House or from any other vantage point, it is impossible to say just how this chapter will ultimately end, but there is very little doubt that a very important page has now been turned. Daniel Ortega speaks for the Nicaraguans and agrees to multi-lateral negotiations that would address the efforts of CIA-backed troops to overthrow his government as well as the murderous civil war still grinding on in neighboring El Salvador. And Guillermo *Ungo speaks for the Salvadoran rebels, suggesting their willingness to take part in such discussions as proposed last week in Cancun by the so-called Contadora group whom the presidents of Mexico, Columbia, Venezuela and Panama, all of whom have long advocated a negotiated settlement to Central America's combat and conflict. The White House response for now at least? A request for more military aid for the Salvadoran government and more money to bankroll the CIA operations against the Sandinistas and a big show of U.S. power in the region, an eight-ship carrier battle group to be anchored just offshore and perhaps as many as 5,000 American GIs on maneuvers in Honduras adjacent to Nicaragua where, in the president's view, the Sandinistas pose the most formidable threat to eventual stability and peace. REAGAN: I think it would be extremely difficult because I think they are being subverted or they are being directed by outside forces.

WOOTEN: He means, of course, Cuba, the first Socialist state in the Americas and, in Mr. Reagan's perspective, the root of all unrest in the hemisphere. That is not a universal view, either in Congress or in academia. Professor William *Rio Grande, a

Latin

American scholar. *RIO GRANDE: I think the Reagan administration needs a Cuban threat to point to. It needs to have a red flag to wave to convince, in fact frighten, Americans into thinking that the Communists are coming, sent from Havana and Moscow, and will take over the region unless we respond in military terms.

think it's a

WOOTEN: Which is precisely how the United States is now responding, much to the chagrin of many on Capitol Hill, including Congressman Kostmayer. PETER KOSTMAYER (D-Penn.): I

of

terribly serious mistake. It's the wrong signal at the wrong time, the wrong kind of rhetoric, and I hope you'll send that message to the administration. LANGHORNE MOTLEY (Asst. Secty.

State): The other countries from Nicaragua, other than Nicaragua, that may be the recipients of some of this exportation might view that U.S. force in a different light than Nicaraguans might.

WOOTEN: Just as President Reagan now views Henry Kissinger in a different light. REAGAN: Henry Kissinger's recent stewardship

of U.S. foreign policy has coincided precisely with the laws of U.S. military supremacy. The commission will be honored by a very distinguished American, outstanding in the field of diplomacy, a legion in that field. It will be headed by Dr. Henry Kissinger.

WOOTEN: That raised hackles all over the ideological lot from the right and the left. KISSINGER: Everybody is entitled to his opinion.

WOOTEN: But in the opinion of some, including Sen. Dodd, the president's commission on Central America, with or without Dr. Kissinger, is merely a smoke screen. SEN. DODD: Basically what we have here, I fear, is the same product being repackaged, looking for a different public relations vehicle to sell if (INAUDIBLE) policy.

WOOTEN: But the president insists his get tough policy is working, especially on Mr. Castro and the Cubans. Otherwise, why would they now be willing to negotiate? Reluctantly, the professor agrees. Why? *RIO GRANDE: Because the Cubans understand that without peaceful solutions to the conflict, the danger of escalation and escalation which would draw them into a conflict with the United States is very serious and they want to avoid that.

WOOTEN: Which is not to suggest that with detente Castro will soon be coming here to the White House for dinner, but rather that as Mr. Reagan saw fit to change his mind about Henry Kissinger, so Mr. Castro has altered his stance on negotiations. Not that it's going to be all downhill from here on out, but rather that those Contadora proposals now seem to be a workable alternative to all that killing. David?

BRINKLEY: Jim, thank you. Coming next, two members of the new commission on Central America, just appointed by President

Reagan:

Robert Strauss, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and Dr. John R. Silber, president of Boston University. And then, shortly, Anthony C. Quainton, the U.S. ambassador to Nicaragua and Sen. Christopher Dodd of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In a moment.

AB06 STRAUSS/SILBER/ BRINKLEY: Ambassador Strauss in San Diego and President Silber of

INTERVIEW

Boston University here in Washington, I'd like to thank both of you for coming in and talking with us today, two members of the new commission on Central America President Reagan appointed this week. Mr. Strauss, first. You don't agree with the Reagan policy on Central America, as I understand it, so why do you think you were appointed? STRAUSS: David, I really have no idea. I received the call from the White House, let's see, a week ago tonight, about 10:30 or 11:00, woke me up, asked me if I would accept appointment on this commission, and I told them I would call them back in a few minutes. Helen and I talked a little while about it, and I called back and said that, 'Well, I

guess I have a responsibility to serve if you want me, under the following conditions. Number one, I rather strongly disagree with the administration's policies. Number two, I'm pretty highly independent, as you know. And number three, I'm engaged in partisan politics, recent chairman of the new House Caucus Committee. So with all those qualifications, if you want me, I'll serve.' The next thing I knew, a couple days later I got appointed.

DONALDSON: And number four, Mr. Strauss, it's being suggested that they put you on the commission precisely for the reasons that you have just designated so they can say this commission is independent and it doesn't necessarily agree with the president. But the other members of the commission or the majority of them do and therefore, the commission is loaded in Ronald Reagan's favor. STRAUSS: I don't know anything about the rest of the commission, but I do know this, Sam. If they picked me thinking I was somebody they could roll easy, well, they've made a bum choice.

DONALDSON: But you're just one man. STRAUSS: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Wait a minute here. If they picked me because they wanted someone who would listen earnestly, who would not bring partisan politics in there, and then say, all right, whatever he thought and felt, then they got the right person. That's what I'm going to do. I don't control the commission. I think it would have been highly irresponsible for anyone critical to refuse to join in a presidential appointment and say what he thinks and try to find out what the facts are, report them to the American public as I see them insofar as I'm able to do. I appreciate....

WILL: Dr. Silber, you're rather less known than Bob Strauss is. The president believes the problem in Central America is one of Communist expansionism. Basically, so does Henry Kissinger, according to his published views. Do you share that view? SILBER: I think the view is that in part, but it's a lot more complicated than that. I think a lot of it has to do with what William Butler Yeats said in that great poem, 'The Great Day,' when he said, 'Hurrah for the revolution and more cannon shot. A beggar on horseback. Lashes. A beggar on foot. Hurrah for the revolution and cannon come again. The beggar's changed places, but the lash goes on.' And I think that's a large part of what's wrong in Central America. There has been revolution followed by revolution, dictatorship followed by dictatorship. The beggars have changed places, and the lash goes on, and it's time for some constructive, long-range thinking on this problem about how to break the cycle of poverty, about how to develop democratic institutions in a part of the world where they're not very strong and how to improve the economic well-being of that region.

BRINKLEY: Dr. Silber, it's a pleasure to have a college president here to quote a little poetry on Sunday for us. I'm

not sure this is necessary, but I forgot to introduce our two questioners here, George Will of ABC News and Sam Donaldson, ABC News White House correspondent. George, go ahead.

WILL: I take your point. There seems to be universal agreement, Dr. Silber and Bob Strauss, that poverty, perhaps untimely reforms or reforms not made have led to a semi-Soviet satellite in Nicaragua and perhaps a civil war in El Salvador, but that the truth may not be relevant. That is, how do you have a Marshall Plan, as we hear talked about, in the midst of a war? Once you have a war going on, how do you end a war with social reforms? Don't you need a military victory? SILBER: Well, I don't think this is the same kind of war we had in Germany at the time of the Marshall Plan. Remember, we're talking about a part of the world in which there are only 20 million people, if you take all of Central America, and I think with the resources of the United States in with the infrastructure that has been put in place there in the last 10 to 15 years, that we could do a great deal to upgrade the economic life of that region and thereby reduce the tendency of people to engage in guerrilla activity and thereby make the war dissipate. You don't have a war of the kind we had before. But I also think that the success of any policy that we have there depends upon having a bipartisan foreign policy. I believe that I'm as independent of cooptation (sic) as Bob

Strauss

is, and I think at the same time that America got into a disastrous foreign policy under Wilson when the Republicans, not being brought into his confidence, repudiated the League of Nations. I think we have the same problem with the isolationism of the Republicans, and I think we did much better under Roosevelt and under Truman when the Republicans and the Democrats got together on a foreign policy, because one nation needs to express its point of view with one voice to the world and we must not be divided internally.

DONALDSON: Well, gentlemen, let's look at the policy as we perceive it to be at the moment. The president is ordering a fleet to go down, not only to the Pacific Coast but to the Caribbean, of course. This is, obviously, meant to be pressure on Nicaragua. We are going to hold maneuvers with Honduras. There's going to be a contingent of U.S. soldiers in Honduras on maneuvers. Again, pressure. Is this the right thing to do, Ambassador Strauss? STRAUSS: Well, in my judgment, it isn't. In my judgment, it's over-reaction in one direction. I think we ought to be doing many things down there that we're not doing, and probably less of what we are doing. Note that we certainly haven't made the right kind of effort, I think, to build our hemisphere support down there. I think, as Dr. Silber said, the social, economic and the political problems down there have not been addressed properly. And I think we need to tie to our friends. I think we need to build the support of our friends in that hemisphere.

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DONALDSON: Dr. Silber, let me just ask you about the use of military force as the administration is now going forward with it. Is that the right thing to do? SILBER: Well, I want to reserve a conclusion on that until I've had time to study the materials that will be available to the commission. I don't want to preempt a conclusion that I'm prepared to make after I've studied it, but not prepared to make it in advance.

BRINKLEY: Well, Dr. Silber, on your point about a Marshall Plan, if that's the term to be used, the distribution of food and medical care and so on, as an answer to the military difficulties, it is, of course, not, as you say, World War II. But it is a war, and there is tremendous confusion, and there is blood, and there is death. Would this kind of private help, Marshall Plan kind of help, really work in a place like that at a time like this? SILBER: Well, the argument is being made that we're driving the Nicaraguans into the Soviet camp by trying to cut off all their economic aid. Now, somebody talks about developing some economic aid. Then they say that can't help. That's just to impose another catch 22. I think we ought to examine the entire region and see how the economic aid can be given and what concessions and what conditions can be gained with the promise of economic aid and the promise of the enhancement of democratic opportunities for the people of that region.

BRINKLEY: Mr. Strauss, what are your thoughts on that?

STRAUSS: Well, David, I'd like to address another subject if I could for a second and say this. I think it's wrong, first, for people like me to begin to prejudge the results of what they might find in a commission action to begin with. I think it's also wrong to prejudge totally this commission. I don't know what the administration's motives were, but I'm going to give it a chance to work. I think it's a responsibility of people like me to participate in this. I think it's our responsibility not to prejudge it, and that's where I'm going into it. Just as I said, independent with the prejudice against what they're doing, but I'm going to do my darndest on a nonpartisan basis to participate in the work of this commission and try to make it worthwhile, maybe help find a few facts.

WILL: Mr. Strauss, do you think it's important that this commission reach unanimous conclusions, or would you be quite content to, in your role, perhaps, if you had to file a

dissenting

minority opinion? STRAUSS: I wouldn't be concerned about filing a minority opinion nor would I be fearful of it. I think it would be better if we would find, of course, a unanimous decision. Now, let me say this. A lot of that depends on what the scope of this commission is going to be. If we keep it narrow enough, if we try not to reinvent the wheel, but just make a little bit of progress, then possibly we can contribute something worthwhile. If we try to solve all

the problems of the world, then this commission is going to fall on its face.

DONALDSON: Let's talk about a narrow issue but a very important one, covert action that the United States is carrying on in Central America, specifically against Nicaragua. STRAUSS: I'm sure it is...

DONALDSON: Go ahead, sir. STRAUSS: I was just going to say it doesn't seem to me to be anything covert now. It looks to me like it's very overt, what's going on.

DONALDSON: All right. Do you think this commission will have the courage and the mandate and the ability to go in, look at the action, either come out at the end by December 1 and say, 'Yes, we should be doing that,' or 'No, we shouldn't be doing that.'? And if it's no, do you think the president will follow through and take your advice? STRAUSS: I have no idea about that. SILBER: I don't think anyone should underestimate the courage or the independence of that commission. I think cynicism should be held in abeyance until the report is in.

DONALDSON: I'm not talking about cynicism. I'm not cynical about your work, but I'm asking you whether you have the mandate, as you understand it, to be able to look at covert action, and if you advise something that now runs contrary to administration policy, do you think the president will take your advice? STRAUSS: Sam, the mandate has not been spelled out at all. It's impossible to answer that question. SILBER: I was not asked to agree to anything in advance, and I don't believe any other member of the commission was.

BRINKLEY: Ambassador Strauss, President Silber, thank you very much. We enjoyed having you with us today. We hope you'll come again. Coming next, Anthony C. Quainton, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua who is there in the thick of it. In a moment.

AB07 QUAINTON/
INTERVIEW

BRINKLEY: Ambassador Quainton, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua, thanks very much for coming in to talk with us this morning. First, I would like to ask you, suppose the U.S. and Central America did nothing, simply left it alone. What, in your judgment, would happen? QUAINTON: Well, on the basis of the 18 months that I have had in Central America, in Nicaragua, it seems to me doing nothing is the worst of all possible options. The Sandinistan revolution is a revolution which is committed to a whole series of revolutionary propositions, concerned to bring about revolution throughout Central America, and for us to sit back and assume that the problems in Central America would resolve themselves would be folly, I think.

WILL: Ambassador, do you believe that the statement by Ortega recently indicating a six-point peace plan is a substantial move on the part of the Nicaraguans, and if so -- I know it's hard to connect cause and effect in the world -- but does that

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effect have something to do with the appearance in the region of an American Naval force? QUANTON: I was sitting there in the stands when Daniel Ortega made his speech, and I've been following his speeches over a number of months, and some of the points he made are indeed extremely significant relating to Salvador and to the problems of the region. The other agendas, which have been spelled out at Cancun by the Contadora countries and by the other Central Americans in their meetings, bring together the full agenda which has to include such issues as democracy and more effective winding down of the arms race in Central America. And so Ortega's speech, while it has some interesting elements, is not the whole answer in my view, but it is an important statement and it's one that's obviously going to receive a lot of study in the future. The reasons that have brought the Sandinistas to make this statement? One can only speculate. Obviously, they feel themselves much more isolated in the world from their European friends and from other countries. They have felt pressures of various kinds and they've obviously begun, I think, to reflect on their situation and on what they might do about it.

DONALDSON: Mr. Ambassador, the president said the other day that he thought it would be extremely difficult to reach any sort of settlement in that area as long as the Sandinistas control Nicaragua. Some people think he was almost saying openly what a lot of people say privately, and that is our policy is to topple the Sandinista government. What is our policy? And do you think it's possible to reach a settlement even if the Sandinistas remain in power? QUANTON: Our basic policy throughout the last year has been to get the Sandinistas to go back to the original goals of their revolution which they publicly proclaimed an offer to the Organization of the American States, goals which were a political pluralism and democracy, early elections, a mixed economy, and a truly non-aligned foreign policy. Now, if the Sandinistas could go back to those objectives, that would be an enormous step and would be of great significance. Whether that is achievable remains to be seen. It's going to be very difficult. We have not given up on the process of dialogue, and the whole Contadora effort is going forward which will look at many of those agenda items.

DONALDSON: Mr. Ambassador, my question really was let's assume the Sandinistas do not meet our objectives and the goals that you have outlined. Will we be able to deal with them on a settlement? That means give and take on both sides. Or was the president saying we simply are not going to deal with them, which means they're going to have to disappear? QUANTON: We, obviously, do deal with them. The fact that I'm accredited in Nicaragua is part of that process of dealing with them. But we and the other Central American countries were so preoccupied by the totalitarian tendencies of the Sandinista government believe very strongly that the only solution over long term to the problems of Central America is a democratic evolution in

each and every one of these countries, and particularly beginning in Nicaragua itself.

DONALDSON: Mr. Ambassador, let me ask my question directly again in other words. Is the United States making an attempt now to topple the Sandinista government either directly or through indirect aid to the contras who are fighting in there? QUANTON: Our policy is not to topple the Sandinista government. Our policy is to modify its behavior in some substantial ways which are consistent with our interest and our vital security concerns throughout Central America.

BRINKLEY: Well, Mr. Ambassador, the Contadora group, which is the presidents of four Central American countries, Mexico and others, Daniel Ortega, the leader of the junta in power in Nicaragua, and now Fidel Castro. They've all taken to talking about peace and negotiations and so on. How seriously do you take this and how are we going to respond and when? QUANTON: Words have to be taken seriously, but much more important will be acts, will be signs that the Sandinistas and their friends outside the region have actually changed their policies. The next steps in this process come within the framework of the Contadora meeting. The nine countries involved, the five Central Americans and the four outside the region, will be meeting again at the end of the month, will be going over this very complicated agenda, and that is for us, I think, the obvious next step as we look to see whether there is more substance behind the words of Commandante Ortega.

WILL: How important, Mr. Ambassador, and how visible are the Cubans and other advisers from outside the region, and what can you tell us, what do you know about the kind of acts they're doing if they would stop doing them would make the progress you're talking about, specifically the transshipment of arms from outside the regions to Nicaragua to El Salvador?

QUANTON: Well, there are at least 6,000 Cubans in Nicaragua today, some of them in developmental activities such as health and education, but a very substantial number, several thousand at least, engaged in direct training for the security service, for the military forces of Nicaraguan government, and that's a very important and direct contribution to the military capabilities of the Sandinistas at home and in their ability to project their power throughout the region. We've expressed on a number of occasions our concerns about the training which the Sandinistas provide to revolutionary groups throughout the region, not only the Salvadorans, to the fact that the command and control center of the Salvadoran guerrilla movement is in Managua, and of course, to the flow of arms by a variety of different channels from Cuba, through Nicaragua and on into Salvador and elsewhere in the region. So those are the areas that have been of greatest concern to us.

DONALDSON: Do you think, Mr. Ambassador, that it would be helpful down the line to attempt a naval quarantine of

Nicaragua? QUAINTON: I wouldn't want to speculate about the circumstances in which such a step might or might not be useful. There are a whole range of other programs going on, contacts, discussions and the Contadora process, and I think it's all together premature to speculate about a naval quarantine.

WILL: Let me follow Sam's question with this one. Knowing what you know, being on the ground down there about what is happening, if we had a quarantine in place today, what would get caught or stuck in it? QUAINTON: Well, that again gets into an area which is highly speculative. You can stop or control whatever categories of items, of goods that you wish to control, and it could be very limited, it could be very extensive. I don't think it would be helpful to speculate on details of what a quarantine might or might not....

WILL: But is it merely... I guess what I'm asking is this. Is it merely speculative to say that if we had a quarantine, we would be stopping small amounts, medium amounts or large amounts of arms going into El Salvador? QUAINTON: Well, it's speculative....

WILL: What do we know? QUAINTON: ...to speak about what a quarantine might achieve, but what is clearly the fact is that the guerrillas in Salvador are receiving substantial amounts of aid, of military equipment, of ammunition and that comes in through a variety of channels and substantially through Nicaragua, and whatever measures we might be able to take to diminish that flow is clearly going to be very significant to the outcome of the war in El Salvador.

BRINKLEY: Ambassador Quainton, thank you very much. Thanks for coming in and talking with us. Good luck to you.
QUAINTON: Thank you.

BRINKLEY: Coming next, Sen. Dodd of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In a moment.

AB08 DODD/INTERVIEW BRINKLEY: Sen. Dodd, you're in New Haven, Conn. Thanks very much for coming in. DODD: Nice to be...

BRINKLEY: Delighted to have you with us today. DODD: Nice to be with you.

BRINKLEY: The U.S. Navy, cruising off the coast of, the coasts, both of them, of Nicaragua. Mr. Reagan was asked this week if there might be a blockade. And he said he hoped not, but he didn't promise there would not be. Suppose there were. What would you think about that? SEN. CHRISTOPHER DODD (D-Md.): Well, I would even question whether or not the action taken already isn't a possible violation of the War Powers Act. There's been no consultation with Congress on this at all. It's clearly a threatening act. There seems to be

little justification for it, other than trying to intimidate in the region. At the very hour we're setting up new commissions and new special ambassadors and all sorts of talk about supporting the Contadora group and new peace initiatives, it seems to me to be quite contradictory to the statements. The rhetoric says one thing. Our actions say something entirely different. So I find it to be counterproductive.

WILL: Senator, the ambassador who was just on was, say no more, very diplomatic, but he did say that he thought that were there a quarantine effectively stopping all the flow of arms, that would make the situation in El Salvador a lot easier. Now, do you disagree with that? Do you dispute the fact from your intelligence sources that Nicaragua is a substantially important source of the military supply for the insurgents in El Salvador? DODD: Well, I'm waiting to hear that, to see that evidence. And Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary Mr. Michaels testified before the foreign relations committee only a few weeks ago in open hearing, and I asked him if he could quantify the amount of weapons coming from Nicaragua to El Salvador. He said he could not. My first reaction was he would not in open session. And I asked him if it was just a matter of intelligence. He said, 'No, we just don't have any idea. We don't know if it's a small amount or a large amount.' Despite the rhetoric, the words, substantial or massive, we have no idea whatsoever. And I can only assume, that if, in fact, the administration were to discover a substantial quantity of arms coming through, that ABC would have good photographs of that by the six o'clock news to demonstrate, in fact, that that umbilical cord between Nicaragua and El Salvador was alive and that the insurgency in El Salvador would not survive were it not for that line of support. Now I don't question that there is a clear connection. But I think it's a rather, but the quantum leap to say there's a connection and then to suggest, as we heard again this morning, that the insurgency in El Salvador is totally dependent upon a line of supplies coming from El Salvador....

DONALDSON: Senator, you said a moment ago that you thought a quarantine would be counterproductive. Spell that out. What's wrong with a little gunboat diplomacy..? DODD: Well, first of all...

giving DONALDSON: ...as the mossbacks might say, what's wrong with

'em a whiff of the grape? DODD: Well, a number of reasons. First of all, you haven't established the justification for it. We have not proved nor have we substantiated in any way that these massive amounts of arms are coming into El Salvador. That's number one. Number two is, of course, all of our allies in the region, principally the Contadora group, only a few days ago suggested a different route to follow if we truly wanted to bring some stability and some peace to the region. By setting up military quarantines, massively increasing the number of arms coming into the region, we run

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directly contrary to that suggested advice, which I think is a far wiser way to go. So rather than deescalate, we have a tendency to escalate the, at least the likelihood of an expanded conflict.

people

DONALDSON: Well, do you think if we don't put some military force down there, some restraint which is visible and which

like Daniel Ortega can understand, that someday as Mr. Reagan suggests, they'll be in El Paso? DODD: Well, that.... First of all, that, that's the domino theory at work, and the domino theory is only as good as each of the dominoes. And clearly, we have good strong allies in the region who are more than capable of taking care of themselves. Secondly, I don't think anyone questions the ability of the United States to respond should our national security interests be threatened. But I don't think that's been established either. What are those security interests and how are they presently being jeopardized? And clearly, I think you have to establish that basis before you can start taking the action such as the administration is taking now.

WILL: Well, let's start establishing it, Senator. Do we have a vital interest in preventing the spread of Sandinista-style regimes in Central America? DODD: Well, I would like to think we could. But the question is once it's established in Nicaragua, a government established there, do we then have the right, contrary to the Rio Treaty, the OAS charter, to go in and overthrow that government? We were told a few weeks ago that the only reason we were supporting the then-covert activity, now overt activity was to interdict arms coming from Nicaragua to El Salvador. We're now told this morning by the ambassador that our purpose or reason is to modify the Sandinista behavior. I begin to question whether or not we have the right to do that, to go around trying to modify governmental behavior. We can have relations with them or not. We can certainly suggest things we'd like to see. But to have a direct plan, using military force, to modify governmental behavior, I think, goes far beyond what the law would allow us to do.

WILL: Dr. Kissinger's response to that seems to be that that makes us also the enforcer of the Brezhnev doctrine, which says that the process of becoming a Soviet satellite is irreversible. Why should it be the case that a Communist regime is somehow immune to overthrow? DODD: Well, I don't think it.... First of all, it's a violation of law to go in and overthrow these, overthrow these governments. That's clearly the law of the land. Clearly the treaties we've signed prohibit that kind of activity. Dr. Kissinger, of course, has a global view of things, which is going to be, I think, one of his difficulties in dealing with this part of the world. That you can modify governments, certainly. We decide we're not going to trade with them. We're going to ask our allies, for instance, to be restrained in their ties with the Nicaraguan

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government. Clearly that might be a signal to them that they ought to modify their behavior. I think that's a far wiser way to go than by putting aircraft carriers off their borders or supplying Contra, counter-revolutionaries with arms to try and destabilize or overthrow their government. That clearly is going to, I think, politicize the situation, make it far more difficult to achieve that degree of modification that Ambassador Quainton talked about.

DONALDSON: Senator, Ambassador Quainton said we are not doing anything to directly try to overthrow the Sandinista government. As you know, it would be a violation of the law of the land if we were. Do you believe that? DODD: Not at all. And I don't think there's any, I (inaudible) was somewhat surprised would say that. We've been, the administration has now come out in the open on this and has made it clear that we are, in fact, supplying training, supporting those counter-insurgents along that border. And really...

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DONALDSON: But they...DODD: And really, their intention, and

intention, as we've heard them say ad nauseum, is to overthrow the Sandinista government. Now, to, it's been rather disingenuous for us to suggest somehow that because their intentions are one thing and ours are something else, that we are not, in fact, supporting that effort.

BRINKLEY: Sen. Dodd, what about the commission the president's just appointed with Henry Kissinger as its chairman, and a number of other members, all of whom you know? DODD: Well...

BRINKLEY: Sen. Byrd, in the Senate, minority leader, has already denounced it as a smoke screen, so on, so on. What is your view? DODD: Well, I think commissions can be worthwhile. But it need, it should be a court of last resort when all else has failed, when you've been unable to develop a consensus in Congress. The Social Security Commission was a good example.

BRINKLEY: Well, by that standard, all else has failed. Hasn't it? DODD: No, it hasn't. Not at all, in fact. And this is a major point. The administration has yet to really try and develop any kind of consensus in dealing with the Congress. A few short months ago, Sen. Kassenbaum and I made a concerted effort to bring together a group of members of Congress who represented a broad spectrum, I might add, of views, to meet with the secretary of state and administration officials. We did it quietly and privately. We asked them if they would meet with us. And we were turned down flatly. Now that's earlier this year. I'm somewhat skeptical, all of sudden, of an administration that has refused to really try and develop the kind of Vandenburg relationship, if you will, using that example of the Truman administration, with the Congress. That

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effort has not occurred. Secondly, no one from the leadership, the Democratic leadership of the House or the Senate was called or asked about this commission at all, asked to make recommendations as to the membership to it. The spectrum is rather narrow. Now I don't know the views of some of the people who've been put on this commission. Many of them, by their own admission, have no background or any expertise at all, in the area. Frankly, what it is is an effort to buy time, and I think that's a mistake. We've got so many levels of activity already, special ambassadors, a new assistant secretary of state, a new ambassador going to El Salvador, the Contadora group, military activity. There is total confusion in Washington as to what this administration's policies are. There's total confusion in Central America as to what our intentions are when we speak with so many different voices.

WILL: Sen. Dodd, in your speech, when you speak in response to the president's speech to Congress, you said we, and I guess you meant the Democratic Party, are fully prepared to defend the security of the Americas, this meaning all the countries, I gather, in the hemisphere, and to use military means if necessary. DODD: Correct.

WILL: Now, can you tell me where, give me an idea of where it might be necessary, where you would draw the line and say here, we too support military means? DODD: Well clearly, let's assume, George, if we had a situation where the Cubans or anyone else, for that matter, tried to cut off the sea lanes to the Panama Canal, clearly jeopardizing the national security interests of the region and the United States, there would be in my mind a clear example of where U.S. military force, if all else had failed, should be used to protect our interests and the interests of the Americas.

WILL: Would it reach that scale of threat, one by one, having attacks on individual countries, however? Can you envision that requiring military means? DODD: Well, you'd have to understand.... What are the attacks? Is there a civil war going on? Is it outside aggression? What is the nature of it before you decide you're going to go in unilaterally and to try to overthrow that government or to prohibit what would be an indigenous civil strife in that nation, a nation seeking its own future. Those are the kinds of questions that ought to be examined. And one way you ought to do it, is, of course, to have a good relationship with your allies. One of the key things that President Kennedy did in 1962 in the Cuban missile crisis, was to make sure he had the support of the membership of the Organization of American States. He didn't go off unilaterally. And that's been one of our major errors in trying to formulate a policy in the region. We've been basically going it alone. If we would work with the Contadora group, work with Felipe Gonzales of Spain, work with Prime Minister Soares of Portugal, all of whom have good

relationships in the region, I think we could formulate a far better policy than acting as the Lone Ranger.

BRINKLEY: Sen. Dodd, thank you. DODD: Thank you.

BRINKLEY: Thanks very much for coming in and talking with us today. DODD: Thank you.

AB09 REPORTERS'
DISCUSSION

BRINKLEY: Coming next, our more or less uninhibited discussion here, and joining us will be commentator Hodding Carter. In a moment.

BRINLEY: During this past week, we've had some very reassuring pleasing, economic news. Even those who were doubtful, skeptical in the beginning, seem now to admit that the recovery is well underway and is substantial. And of course we all hope it will continue. Is it, the recovery, the result of Mr. Reagan's economic policy, Reaganomics, they used to call it? Or what is it? Is it just..? What caused it? CARTER: You'd have to say, as one who criticized the policies all the way through, that if he was going to be criticized for the recession, he can now be said to have no credit for the, credit for the recovery. On the other hand...

BRINKLEY: That's very generous. CARTER: That's the last generosity I'm gonna give him. But on the other hand, if the question is have his policies produced what has occurred now, I'd say no. You have a recovery, as you have in every recession, coming at about the same time, a little weaker than some, about the average for others. The policies called Reaganomics, whatever they were, are not what's producing this. Consumer spending, that old Democratic give them the money and they'll spend it themselves, is what's producing this.

DONALDSON: But Hodding, Mr. Reagan's policy, as you know, was supply-side economics. Cut taxes, that would generate more money, because of the base therefore being able to operate, and the revenues would be there and the deficits would shrink. In fact, Mr. Reagan is running the highest deficits in peace time history of this country. And he has not been able to close that, and there is nothing projected in his budget that would suggest he's going to close that. I agree with you. He should get the political credit because when it goes bad, we're gonna give him the political blame. But it was not his policies so much as Paul Volcker's policies, I think, that helped reduce inflation and helped, then, put us on the road to recovery.

WILL: 'Cause Hoover didn't cause the Depression, but it was known ever after as the Hoover Depression. DONALDSON: That's right. He didn't cause the Depression.

WILL: And, arguably, Reagan didn't cause the recovery, however long it lasts. But it will ever after be, at the polls, the Reagan recovery. Donaldson and Will withdrew their imprimatur

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a long time. We said that cars were wearing out. People were going to buy cars. Pent-up consumer demands. You can't hold this economy down forever. You're gonna have a recovery. But remember when you were in your freshman logic class, there was something called the post hoc, prompter hoc fallacy. The rooster crows and the sun rises; therefore, the crowing of the rooster causes the sun to rise. BRINKLEY: After this, because of this.

WILL: That's right. And that is the principle on which political credit is allocated in this country.

DONALDSON: But, you know, George, what the worry is now, that interest rates are beginning to creep up. This economy is being spurred by consumer spending for housing, for automobiles, and if interest rates creep up, and if you have to get seven, eight, nine points for a mortgage loan, that's going to dry out. And then the smokestack industries, not having recovered, the whole bottom falls out again. CARTER: Mr. Volcker made us all happy this week on that, of course, which is why the market went up so much, of course, when he said, 'I'm not gonna worry too much about that excess money out there right now.' Which means, 'I'm not gonna tighten up on the interest.

BRINKLEY: Why do you have to pay a bank seven, eight, nine points, as you've mentioned, Sam, in order to borrow money at 13.5% interest? Will you explain that to me? DONALDSON: So the banker can go out and buy a big house himself. The bank.... Bankers, as you know, look at the underlying rate of inflation, the underlying rate, and they project in the future what they think it's going to be, and then they're going to have to make a return on their money and they jack it all up. But the excessive points -- and I'm not an expert, so I'm not very well qualified to talk -- the excessive points seems to me to be gouging and nothing more than that.

BRINKLEY: Seems so to me. George? WILL: Spoken like a home owner. But the government is subsidizing all of this anyway by allowing us to deduct half of it.

DONALDSON: Do you think, George, we ought to really start reducing that interest deduction from income taxes? WILL: It seems to me it ought to be capped, and it's certainly arguable to me that you do not need to subsidize through a tax deduction for interest payments on a condominium in Aspen.

DONALDSON: Well, you know, when I buy any goods.... WILL: Now I've got to stay out of Aspen.

DONALDSON: ...the government does pay for it, but if I buy money, the government says it'll pay for half of it.

BRINKLEY: Capped in the sense that...what? Mortgages over a certain amount, you wouldn't allow them a deduction? WILL: Up to X dollars. I'm going to Aspen in three weeks, and I take it all back, everyone who's out there, but....

DONALDSON: Well, the single home, but not the vacation home. Well, I think the law has some provision in it. BRINKLEY: Well, there aren't enough vacation homes in this country to amount to anything for tax collection purposes, are there? I don't think there are. WILL: No, but you could cap it. Indeed, frankly, the Reagan administration, or some people in it, early on, as a political gesture, wanted to have what they called a 'mansion tax,' lovely title, and it would have been simply capping the amount you can deduct in terms of your mortgage interest. It doesn't raise a lot of revenues, but it establishes a principle that there are limits to what the government ought to do in the way of irrational incentives.

BRINKLEY: Well, there's another event that I want to bring up here. There was a vote in the House on the MX missile, and the MX survived, but barely. What was it, a margin of 13 votes? So what does it mean? Are we going to spend X billion building the MX missile? WILL: It means that since the Soviet Union has 636, I believe, of this kind of missile, and we have none, we believe, not for military means -- let's be blunt -- but for diplomatic reasons it is probably a good idea to begin building it in the hope that we can use that as an incentive for them to lower the number of weapons, their weapons being, like ours, destabilizing, vulnerable.

CARTER: But to hear George say that is to know the nonsense of what happened in the House. That's exactly what we're doing. We're going out there and building a weapon, and we're going to build it, because we've now embraced it. We're going to build a weapon which we all know has no military meaning whatsoever probably has no meaning in terms of its own vulnerability when you get right down to it, though they're going to keep trying to find some way to make it supposedly invulnerable, and when we build it, it's going to be, as George has described it. They are building it simply as a diplomatic tool, which is only a diplomatic tool because we've convinced ourselves that it's a diplomatic tool.

DONALDSON: Holding, I don't think.... CARTER: It's militarily not a tool.

DONALDSON: I don't think we are going to build it. If you analyze that vote.... CARTER: Why not, Sam?

DONALDSON: If you analyze that vote, you find the forces against the MX picked up 40 votes. They won by a 13-vote margin, the administration, on the basis what you two have outlined, that we need it for arms control, but time is running out for that argument. There's no movement at Geneva. Our own

negotiators said that just this week, and if there's no movement within several months, I think the next votes in the House, certainly, if not the entire Congress, will be against the MX. CARTER: The profile of gutlessness among enough of the Democrats in the House and the Senate on this issue is such that there will always be just enough votes for the administration to proceed with this. Waiting for that majority to mobilize itself is a little bit like waiting for the tide to quit moving up and back. It's not going to happen.

DONALDSON: That would sort of be madness. I don't think they're all mad up there. CARTER: They are not going to reject it.

BRINKLEY: But they're gutless, you say. CARTER: Yes, they are gutless, because for the most part, those who've supplied the margin of victory for this vote this last week know full well that the missile has no meaning.

BRINKLEY: George, I'll give you the final word. Time is about to run out. WILL: Well, this big missile packing 10 warheads demonstrates why some of us 11 years ago were opposed to the first SALT treaty because it limited launchers, not warheads, and put a premium, then, on the few launchers you have being very big with all kinds of destabilizing effects.

BRINKLEY: Okay. Thank you very much. We'll be back with a report from a very sad day for all of us here at ABC News in a moment.

AB10 COMMENTARY

BRINKLEY: That's ABC's This Week program. Before we go, Frank Reynolds, who for years did ABC's 'World News Tonight,' now lies in Arlington Cemetery. Tonight at 7:00, Eastern Time, ABC will have a special program called 'A Man Who Cared.' Among those at the funeral at St. Matthews Cathedral were all of us from ABC and President and Mrs. Reagan, and there were eulogies by two of his sons, one using the words of Shakespeare, and the other using his own. JOHN REYNOLDS: When he shall die, take him and cut him out in little stars, and he will make the face of heaven so fine that all the world will be in love with night and pay no worship to the garish sun. TOM REYNOLDS: And I am

most afraid o
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my life and your death. I am healed, though, now and always, Dad, because I knew you, and you knew me, and we will always know each other.

Linda Hallett and Betty Turner, Transcribers