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Principal Criticisms of President's Aid Request to the
Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance

The following are the key criticisms raised by the critics of the President's aid request during the recent Congressional debates. They are listed in order of frequency raised during the debate. Attached herewith are the comment of Lee Hamilton during the floor debates in which he covered the principal arguments of the aid package opponents.

-- The Central American democracies do not support the aid request. Specifically, Costa Rica President elect Oscar Arias was quoted repeatedly for his pointed opposition to the aid request. As a corollary to the Arias statements, the critics also noted that the \$100 million would be better spent to support the democratic countries in the region.

-- The President's plan undercuts the Contadora process and does not give negotiations sponsored by latin American countries an opportunity to succeed.

-- Since the passage of the Humanitarian Assistance package last year, the President has failed to live up to his commitment to seek a negotiated settlement in Central America.

-- \$100 million is not enough money to topple the Sandinistas but is enough to get the U.S. into trouble in the region. Ultimately, the U.S. will become involved directly.

-- An offshoot of the above argument is that the U.S. has already begun this process by planning for the use of U.S. military trainers to train the resistance.

-- The Nicaraguan Democratic resistance does not have the support of the Nicaraguan people. The leaders of the principal resistance group UNO were not democratically elected.

-- \$100 million is better spent in the U.S. At the time of serious budget deficits, it is outrageous to think the U.S. government would propose spending \$100 for the resistance when needy Americans are being asked to make due with less.

-- The most vitriolic and harsh criticism was devoted to the comments of Buchanan that were considered to be an attack on the patriotism of aid opponents.

-- After supporting the resistance for 5 years, it does not control one town, city, or village in Nicaragua.

-- The resistance cannot win. The proposed program of assistance will not lead to a victory by the resistance, but will only lead to increased Cuban and Soviet assistance.

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-- U.S. public opinion is against support for the resistance. Important U.S. church organizations are opposed to the program: U.S. Catholic Conference, Jesuits, the Maryknolls, the Episcopal Church, ect.

-- There are serious human rights problems in resistance organizations. The flip side of the argument is that the resistance military units are terrorists.

-- The members of the resistance are principally former members of the Somoza National Guard. The few non-guard members in the resistance are mere figure heads.

-- The Nicaraguan do not pose a real threat to the U.S. If they are as dangerous as the President says then we ought to use American troops and take care of the problem.

-- The money appropriated for humanitarian assistance is not fully accounted for with the implication that some of it has been diverted for private purposes.

-- Nicaragua is not a totalitarian regime. Seven different political parties participated in the last election. The draft constitution provides for basic freedoms.

-- Some members of the resistance are involved in drug smuggling.

-- The Democratic resistance is not an effective fighting force.

-- Funding the resistance is a new form of imperialism.

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The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. PANETTA). The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 10 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to House Joint Resolution 540 to provide \$100 million in economic and military assistance to the Contras fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

The President's requests seek to address the one aspect of U.S. policy toward Central America on which there is not a consensus.

I. AREAS OF AGREEMENT

Mr. Chairman, it is worth noting at the outset that there are significant and large areas of agreement between the Congress and the President on Central America:

Growing out of the Kissinger Commission and its important work, there is an increasing consensus that the United States has important interests in Central America which need to be both promoted and protected;

There is also a consensus and wide congressional support for economic and security assistance for friendly democratic states throughout the region;

And there is a realization that we have a vital stake in helping our neighbors address serious problems of economic and social deprivation.

There are also many large areas of agreement on the serious and deteriorating situations in Nicaragua.

President Reagan spoke Sunday night for a vast majority of Americans in what he said about Nicaragua:

We all oppose what the President called Nicaragua's efforts to "subvert and topple its democratic neighbors";

We also would oppose giving, as the President said, "The Soviet Union a beachhead in North America";

We all would oppose Nicaragua threatening Mexico;

We all would oppose creating a situation where, as the President said, "desperate Latin peoples by the millions would begin fleeing north into the cities of the southern United States";

We all would oppose the creation of what the President called "a second Cuba, a second Libya on the doorsteps of the United States";

We all would oppose Nicaragua's effort, as the President said, "to sponsor terror in El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras";

We all oppose the Sandinistas' efforts to repress the Nicaraguan people and establish totalitarian rule in Nicaragua; and

We would oppose the role of Nicaragua in international drug trafficking to which the President referred.

In short, the President spoke for most of us when he addressed some of our goals in Nicaragua and what we want to avoid. We are all patriotic Americans and we all share common goals of promoting democracy, human rights and freedom and of opposing totalitarian rule of the right or left and

Soviet and Communist efforts to export revolution.

But the crux of the debate today is not about goals we do share but about means to achieve those goals and it is here that there are differences.

II. AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT

The choice before us is not between aid to the Contras and the triumph of communism. If it were, the choice would be easy, since we cannot allow the triumph of communism in Central America. The choices before us include better alternatives to protect U.S. interests.

In brief, we simply do not see that the means the President has pursued for 5 years, and which he now seeks to expand, have achieved, or have even begun to achieve, the goals that we all share. Indeed, we are impressed that each of the goals is farther from us today than it was 5 years ago:

The Soviet and Cuban military presence in Nicaragua has increased, from 600 to 800 Cubans in mid-1981 to some 3,000 Cuban and 300 Soviet and Eastern bloc military advisers today;

On President Reagan's watch, by his own admission, the Sandinistas have strengthened their control in Nicaragua and the country has become a Communist state, something it wasn't in 1981;

The Sandinistas have increased their military forces to a size disproportionate to those of their neighbors in the region;

The Sandinistas continue, and according to the administration, are expanding the export of revolution throughout the region;

The possibilities for democracy in Nicaragua have worsened considerably and political polarization and repression have increased;

The Contra war until now has made a negotiated settlement more remote and has not forced the Sandinistas to negotiate;

The Contra war in its present form is causing the Sandinistas pain but has little chance of overthrowing them or forcing them to change their policies; and

Increasing the military pressure will only cause more bloodshed, destruction, and the worsening of each of these trends.

A. WE DISAGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S IMPRECISE RHETORIC.

First, the President has not spoken with precision on the goals of U.S. policy.

Sometimes the President speaks of negotiations, and sometimes he speaks of military victory. He said Sunday night: "We have sought—and still seek—a negotiated peace and a democratic future in a free Nicaragua";

He also said last week: "There are over 20,000 freedom fighters who are desperately waiting for everything from shoes to ammunition. And when they get them they'll move. And when they move, they'll win.";

While his diplomats say over and over again that the policy of the ad-

ministration is to seek changes in Nicaragua through pressure and negotiations, the President talks about making the Sandinistas "say uncle" and talks about "winning"; and

This imprecision has characterized this administration's approach to Nicaragua from the first, and it has led to confused objectives and flawed policy.

Second, the President has not spoken with precision on his reasons for funding the Contras:

The rationale has shifted from the need to interdict alleged arms shipments to El Salvador, to pressuring the Sandinistas to hold elections, to giving the Contras a bargaining chip in dealing with the Sandinistas, to forcing the Sandinistas to restructure their government, to forcing the Sandinistas to negotiate with the Contras.

B. WE DISAGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT THREAT POSED BY NICARAGUA TO UNITED STATES VITAL INTERESTS

The President's assessment is exaggerated:

The President has said: "If we don't want to see the map of Central America covered in a sea of red, eventually lapping at our own borders, we must act now.";

He has said: "If we abandon our allies in freedom and allow the Communists to establish a permanent beachhead on the American mainland, we will be living with the consequences for decades to come.";

He has said: "Nicaragua is a foreign policy question of supreme importance which goes to the heart of our country's freedom and future."; and

He has said: "Nothing less than the security of the United States is at stake."

These are not careful statements of policy. If the President means what he says, then he should have sent in the marines to Managua yesterday. Our rhetoric and actions do not mesh. If vital and supreme United States interests are at stake in Nicaragua, then why are we trying to fund a ragtag group of ineffective and untrained peasants to protect them? The \$100 million will not achieve our purposes if the threat is what the President describes.

The fact is that Nicaragua represents a different kind of threat to United States interests than the President states. Central America is not covered in a sea of red. The trend is in the other direction, as Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras have conducted free elections and help peaceful transitions of Government. The President himself is fond of making this point, and he cannot have it both ways; and

Nicaragua is not an issue of supreme national importance; it is a small, dirt poor country with scarce human and material resources. It does not today represent a serious threat to the security of the United States. It possesses

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Evidence suggests only lukewarm United States support for the Contadora process:

Contadora is a backburner policy priority compared to efforts to weaken and oust the Sandinista government;

The President's March 16, 1986 speech to the American people never mentioned the Contadora process, and emphasized instead a diplomatic approach which requires the Sandinistas to relinquish power;

Ambassador Shlaudeman, former United States Special Envoy for Central America, met with the Nicaraguan Ambassador just twice in the past year and in that time did not meet any high Nicaraguan officials;

The United States has yet to make public comments on Contadora's third draft treaty completed 6 months ago;

The United States has not detailed its criticisms of the Contadora treaty draft;

The United States continues to reject the immediate goal of a Contadora treaty: To end armed conflict in Central America and to accept the existence of the Government of Nicaragua if Nicaragua alters its foreign policies and begins to improve its domestic record.

This is the heart of the bargain in a Contadora Treaty.

CONCLUSIONS

Mr. Chairman, one premise of the proponents of this legislation is that if you do not support military assistance, United States policy will fail. In my view, the proponents of funding the Contras overestimate what military assistance will do and underestimate what creative diplomacy can achieve.

A vote for House Joint Resolution 540 today will not resolve the issue. The Congress, and the country, are simply too divided on this aspect of Central America policy to sustain the proposed military policy. A policy which is not sustainable cannot succeed.

A vote against House Joint Resolution 540 is a vote to concentrate United States energies and policy on those many aspects of Central America policy on which there is a consensus, building on that consensus in order to isolate and contain Nicaragua, working together with the democracies of Central and Latin America who oppose Nicaragua's policies but also oppose the Contra war.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot pursue a unilateral policy of promoting the Contra war and thereby trying to make Central America safe for democracy if those same democracies do not support United States policy.

I urge a vote against House Joint Resolution 540.

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Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 11 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Hyde).

(Mr. HYDE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HYDE. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the gentleman from Indiana—

Mr. HYDE. Just tell what you have in your hand.

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. All right, I will do that.

I have in hand here a document which I have shown the gentleman in the well, which shows specifically where a Latin American official says privately that the United States should support the Contras although he cannot say it publicly. If the gentleman would like to see this, I will show it to him.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HYDE. I yield to the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. HAMILTON. I have heard repeatedly from high officials of our Government that leaders in Central and Latin America—

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Chairman, I am going to recapture my time because I am limited. This dialog is useful, but show the gentleman the document. He is chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

I would like to open my remarks with three quotes from these wonderful people in Managua. Let us try Foreign Minister Father Miguel D'Escoto:

I believe that especially for Nicaraguans and also for any knowledgeable person, being in Leningrad is a kind of pilgrimage. One feels that one has come to a holy land . . .

That was December 1981.

How about Interior Minister Tomas Borge:

We say to our brother Arafat that Nicaragua is his land and the PLO cause is the cause of the Sandinistas.

July 22, 1980.

How about Interior Minister Tomas Borge again. He is very quotable:

Our friendship with Libya is eternal . . . Libya is a people which, in accord with our experience, has developed solidarity without frontiers.

That was September 1, 1984.

I do not expect this debate to change a single vote. I feel, as Simon Bolivar once said, "Plowing in the sea."

But this question is so important. Some things must be said for the record, not just for historians to look at, but I suggest our grandchildren some years from now might want to know which side of the barricades their grandfather or their grandmother was on, because, make no mistake, the barricades are in place, and they are a little too high to straddle.

Now, the liberal clergy, the trendy vicars; the networking nuns, the assorted concerned citizens have done their job very well, and there will be rejoicing tonight when the red lights flash on this board, I am sure.

But I want to make very clear where I stand.

Now, if you are looking for an excuse to pacify the trendy left, they are easy to find. I just warn you, though, if you use one of these excuses, most of the people advocating them thought anybody but the Shah would be an improvement in Iran, and they also thought Reaganomics would not work, either. So you be careful with some of these.

Now, No. 1: Why are we so concerned about a little country of 3 million people? That is what my friend from Indiana, for whom my respect is deep and profound and enduring, said. "How can they be a threat to us?"

I do not know how much the gentleman knows about cancer, but there is a little brown mole called a melanoma, and it starts very small but it soon metastasizes, and pretty soon it can bring death. I suggest to you that Costa Rica—you can practically spit in the Panama Canal from Costa Rica—is a very important, strategic place, and if you think the Sandinista Communists, a surrogate of a Soviet surrogate Cuba, are going to be indifferent to spreading revolution to her neighbors, you really haven't been paying attention.

"Now, the Contras can't win." Can the Mujahedeen win? Can the Sonn Sann democratic resistance that has to fight the Khmer Rouge, as well as fight the Vietnamese, win? How much territory do the Mujahedeen control or dominate? What big or little cities? But nobody says we should not help them. That is a liberal cause. You see, if the freedom fighters are eight time zones away from this hemisphere, they deserve support. But the closer you get, the more tepid becomes their enthusiasm for helping freedom fighters.

Let me quote from one of my heroes in foreign policy, STEPHEN SOLARZ. Now, he supported \$5 million to the democratic resistance in Cambodia. Now, let me read what he says on whether or not they can win and whether it is worth it. I quote Mr. SOLARZ:

There is no way the non-Communist resistance is ever going to force Vietnam out. That is clearly impossible. But what is possible is that an increasingly effective resistance by increasing the price Vietnam has to pay for their occupation of Cambodia might induce the Vietnamese to agree to a political settlement.

Not bad logic. And I give it to you for whatever use you choose to make of it in our own hemisphere.

The Contras are one element of a triad—military pressure, economic pressure, and diplomatic pressure. Those are the three elements that got Somoza out, and those three elements combined will get the Sandinistas out, or get them to the negotiating table doing what is necessary for their survival, but we will not have that if we eliminate the military leg of the triad.

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G. WE DISAGREE WITH THE PREOCCUPATION OF U.S. POLICY ON NICARAGUA BECAUSE IT MEANS WE ARE NEGLECTING OTHER SERIOUS FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS

Our preoccupation, indeed obsession, with Nicaragua represents a gross distortion of United States priorities. We are neglecting United States-Soviet relations. We are neglecting arms control. We are neglecting other priorities in the hemisphere.

Today, the debt crisis, problems of poverty and the impact of falling oil prices are matters of extraordinary importance for U.S. policy in Latin America. Yet, these vital issues get little attention of U.S. policymakers who, following the lead of our President, are fixated on the Contra war.

United States support for the new and fragile democracies in the region—Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Guatemala, and several others—is far more important for United States policy than a war against the Sandinistas which these democracies do not support. The Contra war places a strain on what should be close ties in a community of democracies in the western hemisphere.

We would do well to remember the size and significance of Nicaragua in the life of Latin America. Nicaragua represents less than 1 percent of the population and less than one-half of 1 percent of the GNP of Latin America. The cost to Mexico alone of falling oil prices in the past few weeks exceeds Nicaragua's GNP by a factor of more than 2.

Over 150 United States companies have bigger annual sales than Nicaragua's GNP. The United States is obsessed with a small, poor, and vulnerable State that many Americans would be hard-pressed to find on a map.

H. FINALLY, WE BELIEVE THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR \$100 MILLION FAILS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE REACTION OF OUR ADVERSARIES

The record suggests that the large scale Soviet military and economic buildup in Nicaragua did not begin until right after the United States started the Contra war in December 1981. When the United States steps up its aid to the Contras, the Soviet Union and Cuba steps up their aid to the Sandinistas. What will the United States do if the Soviets and Cubans respond to this \$100 million plan? The administration has not addressed that question.

Many members have discussed the possibility of United States military intervention in Nicaragua in the future. A vote for the President's request today will lift restrictions on CIA participation in the Contra war and bring American military advisors onto the scene in Central America where they will train the Contras. We will then have an American military presence with the Contras.

The President has said that he does not plan to send United States troops to Nicaragua, and I take him at his word. But the announced goals of the President, and the President's commit-

ment to those goals inevitably point in that direction if our next round of escalation cannot achieve its goals.

III. A BETTER U.S. STRATEGY

Mr. Chairman, the choice before members today is not the narrow choice we have been told of between funding the Contras and the triumph of communism in Central America. There is a third alternative, developing a more balanced policy toward Nicaragua.

United States policy toward Nicaragua should have three essential components: containment, carrots and sticks, and Contadora and the negotiating process.

First, United States policy should seek to isolate Nicaragua and contain the harmful effects of its present policies.

We should prevent the Soviet Union and its allies from developing or deploying an offensive military capability in Central America that directly threatens the United States, a capability that does not currently exist. The United States should state clearly its intent to remove such a threat, if necessary, by military action.

We should protect the security and territorial integrity of any State in Central America that is threatened by Nicaragua, acting in conformance with the charter of the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance.

We should pursue a strong regional policy of providing economic and military assistance to the democracies of Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala to provide their people with an opportunity for better lives and to enable them to resist any attempt by Nicaragua to threaten or destabilize them.

We should provide consistent diplomatic support on behalf of the observance of human rights, and support for freely-elected political institutions throughout the region, in recognition of the fact that subversion feeds on repression; and

We should offer diplomatic and political support to the domestic, democratic opponents of the Sandinista government.

Second, United States policy toward Nicaragua should be based on a long-term strategy of carrots and sticks to wean that country from the Cubans and Soviets:

A. CARROTS

If Nicaragua takes positive steps, such as agreeing to a ceasefire, removing the foreign military presence in Nicaragua, stopping its material support of insurgencies, agreeing to reduce the size of its armed forces, respecting human rights, or making progress toward national reconciliation and a pluralistic democratic system, the United States should be prepared to take simultaneous steps in response. Appropriate steps might include:

Suspending U.S. military exercises in the region;

Resuming normal trade including the resumption of nondiscriminatory trade treatment (MFN status), the restoration of benefits under the generalized system of preferences and the restoration of Nicaragua's sugar quota;

Supporting multilateral and bilateral economic assistance for Nicaragua; and

Supporting Nicaraguan participation in a regional development organization.

B. STICKS

If Nicaragua does not take positive steps to do these things we and Nicaragua's neighbors want, there are also steps we can take in concert with our friends in the hemisphere, including:

Get our allies in Japan and Western Europe, Nicaragua's largest trading partners now, to cut their trade with Nicaragua;

Get our allies to cooperate with us in stopping all bilateral assistance and blocking multilateral assistance to Nicaragua;

Impose tougher United States economic sanctions, including an assets freeze and a prohibition on financial transactions such as bank lending or those involving travel to Nicaragua;

Break diplomatic relations;

Work with our Latin American allies, especially our Central American neighbors, to isolate Nicaragua in regional affairs.

Such steps, however, can only be effective if taken together with our friends and allies. Unilateral sanctions have not and will not be effective. Allied cooperation will not be forthcoming unless the United States is pursuing negotiations on behalf of goals our allies view as legitimate.

Third, a policy of negotiation with Nicaragua offers a better means of protecting United States interests than current policy. The United States should pursue a policy of strong support for the Contadora negotiations and bilateral talks with Nicaragua in support of Contadora, as the Contadora governments have requested.

There are two caveats concerning a successful negotiating posture:

First, negotiations and the Contra war effort cannot be pursued simultaneously;

The Sandinistas will make no concessions if they are convinced the goal of U.S. policy is to overthrow them through military pressure;

The United States cannot fund the Contras whose purpose it is to overthrow the Sandinistas and claim to support, and persuade others that it does support, a negotiated settlement with the Sandinistas. United States funding of the Contras thus undermines the negotiating process.

Second, negotiations and the Contadora process cannot succeed in the absence of whole-hearted United States support.

Rhetoric alone is no measure of United States support for Contadora diplomacy.

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not a single advanced, sophisticated aircraft.

The President does need to make clear that we will accept no Soviet bases, and no weapons to intimidate the region. The United States will not permit the establishment in Nicaragua of Soviet or other hostile military bases or the introduction of offensive weapons that directly threaten other countries in Latin America or the United States. The Soviets must have no doubt that that kind of conduct will not be tolerated by the United States.

C. WE DISAGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY BECAUSE IT WILL NOT WORK

The President has a diplomatic strategy of seeking to pressure the Sandinistas into a dialog with the Contras. The United States has said it will resume discussions with the Sandinistas when these talks begin.

This flawed strategy has not and will not work because it requires the Sandinistas to relinquish power. They will not share power. They will not negotiate their own survival. They will not do so with a gun pointed at their heads;

The President says his request for \$100 million is "directed toward achieving peace based on the Contadora document of objectives and a democratic reconciliation in Nicaragua." Yet the President's diplomatic efforts emphasize—not the Contadora approach—but a flawed bilateral approach to negotiations;

Every time the administration wants Congress to provide more aid to the Contras, it proclaims its commitment to negotiations—but that commitment disappears after the aid is granted. The President has had 5 years to negotiate—but no progress has been made;

In 1983, the administration promised that it would encourage church-mediated negotiations between the Contras and the Sandinistas, if Congress approved more Contra aid;

In January 1985, the Reagan administration broke off its bilateral talks with the Sandinistas;

In June 1985, as part of the \$27 million Contra aid package, the President again agreed to encourage a church-mediated internal dialog and a regional Contadora settlement; and

This time, the President has appointed Philip Habib as his new special emissary to Central America, and claims that a "new" diplomatic effort will be made—to force the Sandinistas to negotiate with the Contras.

The administration is simply using Mr. Habib's standing as a negotiator in order to win congressional support for its policy. Its commitment to viable negotiations remains suspect, however, so long as it can make no appreciable progress toward even the start of negotiations and so long as it favors an approach to negotiations which has been and remains flawed.

The administration has stated repeatedly that it will settle for nothing less than a wholesale "restructuring"

of the Sandinista government. It is not surprising that its diplomatic initiatives have led nowhere.

D. WE DISAGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S UNILATERAL APPROACH BECAUSE IT HAS NOT WORKED AND WILL NOT WORK

It isolates the United States. No democratic government in Latin America and no democracy in the world supports U.S. policy.

The United States is embarked on a lonely crusade of support for the Contras, and such a policy, no matter what its temporary gains may be, cannot be sustained over time and cannot in the end succeed;

Thirteen Governments representing over 85 percent of the population of Latin America support Contadora and a negotiated settlement of conflict in Central America. No Latin Government publicly supports United States funding of the Contra war effort and the Contadora governments have asked the United States to resume bilateral talks with Nicaragua; and

The European Community and Japan are on record firmly in support of Contadora. Neither the European Community nor Japan support United States funding of the Contras.

Leaders in the region are becoming more outspoken on the U.S. role in the Contra war:

President-elect Arias of Costa Rica has stated: "If I were Mr. Reagan, I would give that money to Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica for economic aid and not military aid to the Contras. . . . You won't get a negotiation with the anti-Sandinistas giving more money to the Contras";

In his inaugural address President Cerezo of Guatemala stated his opposition to "the conflicts of the superpowers which have chosen to play out the proxy war—in our region—that they do not dare play in their own";

President Betancur of Columbia: "I think that an initiative such as the request for \$100 million taken by President Reagan is wrong. . . . I know we can get more through negotiation";

Foreign Minister Caputo of Argentina spoke on behalf of all the Contadora ministers at their recent meeting with Secretary Shultz: "we think the Contadora draft—document reflects the predominant thinking throughout Latin America";

That document, it should be remembered, calls for the cessation of support for irregular forces which operate in the region. That includes the Contras;

Our friends in Central America regard U.S. military intervention as a more destabilizing threat than the existence of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua;

The Contra war frustrates efforts for a regional settlement which is essential to preserving and promoting democracies in the area. European as well as Latin American allies see the necessity of a negotiated settlement as the only possible practical alternative to a lengthy and unwinnable war. Uni-

lateral U.S. policies cannot achieve success.

E. WE DISAGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S TACTIC OF PUTTING MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE SANDINISTAS TO MAKE INTERNAL REFORMS BECAUSE IT HAS NOT WORKED AND WILL NOT WORK

The lesson of the recent past is clear. The more we have unilaterally tried to pressure the Sandinistas—whether from aid to the Contras, U.S. military maneuvers, or an economic boycott—the more repressive they have become and the more remote negotiations have grown.

United States military pressure has not caused relaxation and reform in Nicaragua but repression. The administration's support for a 5-year war against Nicaragua has also driven the Sandinistas further into the Soviet embrace, as the Sandinistas have turned to the only nations that would help them;

Besides, the Contras are simply not capable, whether we fund them or not, or altering Sandinista policies and orientation;

There is growing popular discontent in Nicaragua with the Sandinistas but the Contras have been incapable of capitalizing on that discontent. The Contras have no credible political program and no mass following in Nicaragua to enable them to challenge the Sandinistas;

The problem with the Contras is not that they lack boots and ammunition but that they have no significant support among the people of Nicaragua.

F. WE DISAGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY BECAUSE IT RESTS THE DEFENSE OF THE U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST ON THE CONTRAS

They are a weak reed upon which to lean;

The President accurately states much of his criticism of the Sandinista government. But he is absolutely blind to the faults of the Contras;

We have provided to date some \$100 million to the Contras. They do not control a single town or village. They control less territory than ever before. They stay primarily in safe haven in Honduras;

Some of their leaders have democratic credentials, but they are commanded primarily by former Somoza national guardsmen;

They have waged war largely against civilian targets, attacking buses, agricultural workers, villages, civilian government officials—but not Sandinista military units;

Their tactics of terror and human rights abuses have been repeatedly documented by independent groups;

The record of both sides in Nicaragua leaves much to be desired. Surely the United States has no business supporting the Contras. There are simply too many questions about the Contras relating to their political viability, adherence to democracy, military performance, respect for human rights, and regional support to invest heavily in them.