

Discontinuing support to those fighting for freedom and democracy in Central America while the Soviet Union, Cuba and Nicaragua continue to support forces seeking to overthrow and disrupt elected governments in El Salvador, Costa Rica and Honduras would inflict a lasting wound on our credibility and our ability to conduct an effective foreign policy in today's world.

The elected leaders in countries adjoining Nicaragua have expressed a conviction that everything could be lost in Central America if support were cut off. Events in Lebanon have been misconstrued as a sign of US weakness and unreliability. Cutting off support which has been provided in Central America will confirm the impression of weakness, unreliability and an unwillingness to stay with friends when the going gets rough. They see the communists trying to drive home harder than ever the message that we are an unreliable partner. Terminating the help that we have committed would play into their hands. Our friends in Central America believe that the only way to maintain tranquility in their countries is to keep the Nicaraguan government occupied internally because if they defeat their domestic opponents they will quickly concentrate their attention to undermining neighboring democracies.

The Soviet Union, its satellites and associated countries like Cuba, Libya and Vietnam, are supporting activities seeking to overthrow and disrupt governments in Chad, Sudan, Somalia, Morocco, Nigere, Upper Volta, the Central African Republic and Thailand, as well as El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala. In addition, they are helping communist governments crush opposition in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Angola, Ethiopia and elsewhere.

For the United States to incapacitate herself assisting elements fighting for their freedom would be to withdraw from the international arena and leave the future to the forces of violence and oppression.