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CHIEF OF STAFF

Congress of the United States  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

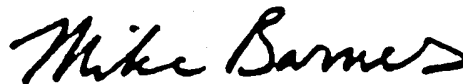
January 22, 1986

Dear Colleague:

I wanted you to have a copy of a letter I am sending to President Reagan urging him not to seek lethal military aid for the contra forces fighting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, and asking him instead to back eight major Latin American friends and allies that are seeking a diplomatic solution to this conflict.

So that you will have the opportunity to study the eight-nation "Caraballeda statement" for yourself, I attach a copy for your reference.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Barnes  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Western  
Hemisphere Affairs

attachments

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JOHN J. BRADY, JR.  
Chief of Staff

**Congress of the United States**  
**Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 22, 1986

The President  
 The White House  
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

Recent reports indicate that the Administration is planning to ask Congress to renew lethal military aid to the contra forces fighting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, and to increase the level of support to as much as \$100 million.

This would be a particularly bad time for the United States to increase the level of conflict in Central America. Earlier this month, eight major Latin American democracies, comprising the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group, met in Caraballeda, Venezuela, and issued a statement calling for a Latin American solution to the Central American conflict. In order to enable them to achieve a solution, these eight major U.S. allies specifically called for the "termination of external support to the irregular forces operating in the region"--a clear reference to the need for the United States to drop its support for the contras. On January 14, under the leadership of Guatemala's newly-elected President, Vinicio Cerezo, the five Central American Foreign Ministers met in Guatemala and endorsed the Caraballeda document.

These actions have breathed fresh life into the Contadora process. For the United States to renew lethal military aid to the contras at this time would be a direct slap in the face to the Latin American leaders who are trying to resolve this conflict.

The record is clear. After four years of trying, the Administration has achieved none of the objectives it has sought to accomplish through its support for the contras. The contras show no sign of being able to pose a serious military threat to the Sandinistas. They show no sign of being able to force the Sandinistas to make political concessions or to negotiate a power-sharing arrangement with them. They show no sign of purging their leadership of Somocistas, or of ending their practices of murder, kidnapping, torture, forced recruitment, or attacks on nonmilitary targets.

The President  
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January 22, 1986

I respectfully suggest, Mr. President, that this policy can lead to no positive outcome for our country. Either we will eventually have to abandon the contras and suffer a major foreign policy setback, or we will have to move to direct U.S. military involvement. Providing lethal military aid for the contras would lead us one step further toward that dead-end choice.

It would be particularly inappropriate for the Administration to propose to increase funding for this futile, destructive war when we are cutting economic aid for all the constructive things that we should be doing in this hemisphere--not to mention important domestic programs. With the \$100 million that the Administration proposes to spend on this effort, we could continue to fund development programs that are necessary to the survival of our democratic friends and allies in the region.

I urge you to reject the military approach, and to back the democracies of Latin America in trying to achieve a diplomatic solution to this conflict.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Barnes  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Western  
Hemisphere Affairs

**AND DEMOCRACY**

The Ministers of Foreign Relations of the Contadora Group and the Group of Support to Contadora, who met in Caraballeda on January 11 and 12, 1986, express hereby that owing to the growing threats to peace in Central America and because of the possible risk of cessation of diplomatic action which would exacerbate tensions in the region, it has become urgent and necessary to encourage with renewed vigor the negotiation process fostered by the Contadora Group. This negotiation process must result in the prompt signing of Contadora's Act for Peace and Cooperation, considered as the only means of having an instrument of general political understanding which would allow the respectful, peaceful, and productive coexistence of all countries in the region. The Ministers have confirmed that, after 36 months of negotiations, there are still attitudes and situations making difficult a general and comprehensive agreement necessary to overcome the climate of hostility, and put a stop to the arms race, foreign intervention, and policies of violence. Consequently, and in order to recover the necessary climate of trust to ensure the respect of the political will of the parties in the signing of Contadora's Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America, the Ministers are planning to

- a) define the permanent bases for peace in Central America
- b) specify the necessary actions to ensure the observance of these bases
- c) to immediately carry out the diplomatic actions required to obtain the explicit acceptance of the bases and actions by all parties,

whether involved directly or indirectly,

d) to offer its mediation in any other actions to be undertaken.

e) to carry out relevant tasks in expediting the signing and putting into effect of Contadora's Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America.

### 1.- Permanent Bases for Peace in Central America

Any permanent solution to the Central American conflict must have fair and balanced bases, which will express traditional values and the desire of the Latin American peoples for civilized coexistence. It is for this reason that the Ministers of the Contadora Group and of the Group of Support have determined the following permanent bases for Peace in Central America:

1.- A Latin American Solution: meaning that the solution to the Latin American problems must come from, and receive the support of, the region itself, so that it will not be included in the East-West world strategic conflict.

2.- Self Determination: meaning the independence of each of the Latin American countries to determine its own form of social and political organization, establishing at a domestic level the type of government which is freely chosen by the entire population.

3.- Non-intervention in the Internal Affairs of other States: which means that no country will be able to influence, directly

situation of the Latin American states, or in any way affect their sovereignty.

4.- Territorial Integrity: meaning the recognition of ranges of action for each of the countries, within which each country can exercise its sovereignty and outside which the country must observe a strict compliance with the norms of international law.

5.- Pluralistic Democracy: meaning the right to universal suffrage by free and periodical elections, supervised by independent national organizations: a multiparty system that will allow the legal and organized representation of all kinds of political action and thought. A government of the majority, ensuring the basic liberties and rights of all citizens and the respect of all political minorities according to the society's constitutional order.

6.- Non-presence of weapons or military bases which present a threat to peace and security.

7.- No-undertaking of military actions by the countries in the region or with ties in the region, which may present a threat for the region and its peace.

8.- Non-presence of foreign troops or advisers

9.- No political, logistic, or military support to any group intending to subvert or destabilize the constitutional order

of any Latin American state through force or terrorist acts of any kind.

10.- Observance of human rights: meaning the unrestricted defense of civil, political and religious liberties, thus ensuring the complete material and spiritual fulfillment of all citizens.

2.- Actions to Ensure the Observance of the Permanent Bases for Peace.  
In order to effectively obtain the permanent bases for peace, it is necessary to create a climate of mutual trust, which will rebuild the spirit of negotiation and translate political will into the actual support of the bases established in order to reach the final objective of the signing and making effective Contadora's Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America.

For this purpose, it will be necessary to make the following actions a priority:

1.- To renew and conclude the negotiations leading to the signing of Contadora's Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America.

2.- Termination of external support to the irregular forces operating in the region.

3.- Termination of support to insurrectionist movements in all countries of the region.

4.- Freezing of the purchase of weapons and their organized



5.- Suspension of international military maneuvers.

6.- Progressive reduction, towards total elimination, of the ~~presence of foreign military advisors and foreign military installations~~ in the area.

7.- Commitment by the five Central American countries, through unilateral statements, to avoid aggression.

8.- Effective steps towards obtaining national reconciliation, and the total observance of human rights and individual liberties

9.- To promote regional and international cooperation, so as to ameliorate the pressing economic and social problems which afflict the Central American region.

The Ministers are agreed in the opinion that, in order to attain the proposed objective, and to create mutual trust, it is indispensable that these initiatives be taken simultaneously.

3.- Support to the Permanent Bases for Peace and Specific Actions.

The Contadora Group countries agree to initiate, with the necessary collaboration from the Group of Support, immediate diplomatic actions directed to obtain explicit support for these bases and actions from the five Central American countries and other members of the international community (particularly the rest of the American continent) interested in achieving peace in the region.

4.- Mediation. The member countries of the Contadora Group, with the assistance of the Group of Support, offer their mediation for the purpose of facilitating the development of the following actions.

1.- To promote new actions of national reconciliation, according to the current legal framework of each of the countries, since regional stability also implies the need for internal peace in those countries who have experienced deep social divisions.

2.- To accept the proposal of the President Elect of Guatemala to initiate a process of consultations among the Central American legislative bodies regarding conditions in the Region, so as to create a regional parliament. This could contribute to a better understanding of problems in the area and to strengthen efforts towards negotiation.

3.- To encourage the re-establishment of conversations between the Governments of the United States and Nicaragua, in order to settle their differences and to identify possible forms of agreement. A respectful negotiation, which will take into account the need for mutual and equitable concessions, is the condition necessary to reduce regional tension.

The dialogue of Manzanillo served to identify the requirements for a feasible negotiation which should not be further delayed to avoid presenting a grave risk to Latin America's peace and stability. The obstacles which have stood in the way of this dialogue can be lifted