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NEW YORK TIMES
3 June 1984

NICARAGUA POLICY IS AFFIRMED BY U.S. AFTER SHULTZ TRIP

Reagan Will Continue to Seek \$21 Million in Covert Help for the Guerrilla Groups

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 2 — President Reagan will pursue his request for more military aid for Nicaraguan rebels even as he plans additional talks with the Nicaraguan Government, according to Secretary of State George P. Shultz.

Mr. Shultz, flying home from his visit to Nicaragua on Friday, said the Administration would continue to seek the \$21 million in aid that the House of Representatives has rejected.

In Managua, the Government called the talks with Mr. Shultz a good beginning, but called for concrete United States actions to resolve the conflicts in Central America. [Page 23.]

In Mexico City, officials said Mexico was modifying its policy toward the Salvadoran Government, apparently as a quid pro quo for the United States overture toward Nicaragua.

U.S. Policy Is Affirmed

The affirmation of United States policy toward Nicaragua was echoed by the White House as Mr. Shultz headed on to report to the President in Ireland. Mr. Reagan's spokesman, Larry Speakes, said there that the visit to Nicaragua was not a "new initiative" or a change of policy, but rather a recommitment to the search for peace.

The request for aid for the Nicaraguan insurgents is expected to be taken up again next week in Congress. Administration officials hope Mr. Shultz's visit will reduce criticism that the United States has ignored diplomacy in favor of covert war in its dealings with Nicaragua.

That criticism was made in particular by President Miguel de la Madrid of Mexico on his visit here last month and was credited by American officials with encouraging Mr. Reagan to try talking with the Nicaraguan leaders.

The mood aboard Mr. Shultz's plane on the flight home bordered on the ebullient at this new turn in the two years of oblique hostilities between the United States and Nicaragua. Mr. Shultz, sitting calmly in his cabin, reflected some of that mood but also stressed the continuing demand for a "verifiable" guarantee that Nicaragua stop "exporting revolution" and start observing human rights at home.

Asked whether his visit had eased mutual distrust, Mr. Shultz said:

"Oh, probably a little bit. But trust is something you build over a period of time."

The Administration was promptly complimented by one critic, Senator Paul E. Tsongas, Democrat of Massachusetts, who was aboard the plane as a member of the delegation to the inauguration of President José Napoleón Duarte in El Salvador. It was on the way back from El Salvador that the plane made the unexpected detour for the meeting in Nicaragua.

Senator Tsongas said that even allowing for Mr. Reagan's obvious election-year need to improve his standing as a peacemaker, the Shultz mission was "a very healthy" development.

"The Administration and the Sandinistas are such stereotypes of each other," he said at the Managua airport while Mr. Shultz was meeting with Daniel Ortega Saavedra, the Nicaraguan leader. "The meeting can be a disaster and it is still better than what exists."

Senator Tsongas was referring to what he described as mutual intransigence and militarism in which Nicaragua feared a United States invasion, and the White House feared subversion directed from the Soviet Union and Cuba through Nicaragua.

American officials conceded that the visit offered propaganda value to both governments. Although it produced no changes in policies, State Department officials said it marked a promising new level of opportunities.

"The Contadora process needed a shot in the arm," one official said, referring to the effort, initiated on the island of Contadora, by Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia to see outside forces withdrawn from Central America.

The meeting was arranged secretly at the instigation of President Miguel de la Madrid, according to Government officials. In a visit to Washington last month, Mr. de la Madrid urged Mr. Reagan to demonstrate commitment to the Contadora process, officials said. The effort to schedule talks with Nicaragua went forward, the officials said, even as Mr. Reagan continued to denounce the Nicaraguans.

Various favorable signs for the visit fell into place in the last three days.

On the one hand, critics of the Administration said the House's rejection of aid to the Nicaraguan rebels amounted to a prodding of the White House toward diplomacy. On the other hand, State Department officials contend, the Salvadoran election was such a success that pressure grew on Nicaragua to also agree to the talks.