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Report Assails U.S. Policy on Central America

Associated Press

A group of prominent U.S. and Latin American citizens said Wednesday that a flawed Reagan administration policy in Central America risks prolonged bloodshed in El Salvador and new turmoil in Nicaragua. It denounced past "overt and covert U.S. intervention" in Latin America and said "sharp external confrontation with revolutionary regimes" is more likely to breed revolutionary sentiment than quell it.

"The United States could do much to foster a climate of security in the region by making unequivocally clear its commitment to respect national sovereignty," the group said in a study known as the Inter-American Dialogue report.

It also urged "a many-sided dialogue" to end disputes among all the governments of Central America and their opposition movements peacefully. It should include talks between the United States, Cuba and the Soviet Union, the study said.

"Continued fighting in El Salvador, continuing counterrevolutionary activities in Nicaragua, escalating violence in Guatemala; all are likely to feed each other and even raise the specter of wider regional conflict," it said. "We believe, therefore, that negotiations should be tried."

Issued after a six-month study, the report was prepared under the joint direction of Sol M. Linowitz, former U.S. representative to the Organization of American States, and Galo Plaza, former president of Ecuador.

Participants included former political leaders as well as business leaders, academics and clerics from the region. The U.S. members included former secretary of state Edmund S. Muskie and former secretary of defense Elliot L. Richardson.