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Shultz says US has 'legal right' to back contras

Aid for Nicaragua rebels pushed

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WASHINGTON - In an escalating effort to persuade Congress to provide funds to the guerrillas fighting the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, Secretary of State George P. Shultz yesterday outlined a more activist US strategy for assisting democratic trends in Central America, Africa, Asia and even in the Soviet bloc.

"A revolution is sweeping the world today, a democratic revolution," Shultz declared in a speech before the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. The United States, he said, has both "a legal right and a moral obligation" to encourage such movements by a variety of means shaped to fit differing circumstances.

While insisting the United States prefers peaceful means, Shultz said there are situations where forceful measures may be necessary.

"The Solidarity movement in Poland; resistance forces in Afghanistan, in Cambodia, in Nicaragua, in Ethiopia and Angola; dissidents in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; advocates of peaceful democratic change in

South Africa, Chile, the Republic of Korea and the Philippines - all these brave men and women have something in common: They seek independence, freedom and human rights - ideals which are at the core of democracy and which the United States has always championed," he said. The speech was made available to reporters in Washington.

Administration officials said the speech represents a major policy statement, made at this time even though it is recognized it will not sit well with Moscow on the eve of the resumption of arms control talks in Geneva.

They conceded that an important element in the timing is the Administration's effort to convince Congress to release \$14 million in funds for the so-called contra guerrillas in Nicaragua.

In a news conference Thursday night, President Ronald Reagan said the contra campaign is necessary to force Nicaragua to yield "uncle" and permit the sort of political pluralism it promised when it overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979.

Shultz, too, focused consider-

Continued

able attention on Nicaragua, but offered a much more detailed rationale for a combination of covert action and negotiations.

Charging that the Sandinistas are pressing to consolidate themselves as a "second Cuba" in the Western Hemisphere, Shultz argued that if successful this would not only squelch democracy in Nicaragua but lead to intensified efforts to "undermine neighboring governments in the name of their revolutionary principles."

The Sandinistas, he said, will not "modify or bargain away their position unless there is compelling incentive ... to do so" and contended the only effective incentive is continuation of the covert war

against them. If the pressure is removed, "the Sandinistas will have no reason to compromise; all US diplomatic efforts - and those of the Contadora group - will be undetermined," Shultz declared.

While Reagan would not directly answer the question whether the United States now seeks the overthrow of the Nicaraguan regime, Shultz put it in these terms:

"Whether it is achieved through multilateral Contadora negotiations, through unilateral actions taken by the Sandinistas alone or in concert with their domestic opponents, or through the collapse of the Sandinista regime, is immaterial to us."

If Congress fails to fund the contras, he said, it would consign Nicaragua "to the endless darkness of communist tyranny." He said failure to force political

changes now might result in a situation later on "when we can no longer avoid acting [and when] the stakes will be higher and the costs greater." The hint was of direct US military involvement.

In Afghanistan the insurgency against the Soviet-supported government is growing, he said, without mentioning covert US aid to that effort. By similarly praising the noncommunist guerrillas in Cambodia, he raised a question whether the United States was considering a policy change to permit covert aid.

As for the Soviet bloc, he said the United States "will never accept the artificial division of Europe into free and not free." But the only appropriate activity he cited was continued radio broadcasts to those "closed societies."