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BEFORE
THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
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Since the Somoza government collapsed and the Sandinistas came to power, U.S. policy toward Nicaragua has focussed on attempting to convince Nicaragua to:

- renounce support for insurgency in neighboring countries;
- abandon its pursuit of dominant military power in Central America; and
- come to terms with its own society through the creation of democratic institutions.

1.

In July 1979, the soon-to-be governing Junta of Nicaragua pledged formally to the Organization of American States that its goals were democratic and peaceful. The United States, indeed the entire international community, accepted this pledge and embarked on programs of peaceful reconstruction that typically included substantial appropriations of assistance outside annual budget processes.

As the months passed, however, it became increasingly apparent that the Sandinistas saw themselves as the armed vanguard of an isthmus-wide movement.

Nicaragua's new regular army, the Ejercito Popular Sandinista (EPS), was founded in 1979. By the end of last year, according to its commander, it had grown to be "four times as big and eight times as strong" as Somoza's Guardia Nacional.¹ The EPS reached an estimated strength of 20,000, backed up by militias and reserves 80,000 strong. During that period Nicaragua received an estimated \$125 million of military equipment and supplies from the Soviet Union alone.² It obtained by far the heaviest tanks in Central America, heavy artillery, anti-aircraft weapons, assault helicopters, rocket launchers, and patrol boats. While military pilots and crews trained in Bulgaria and other Eastern European locations, airfields were prepared for advanced jet fighters. More significant, large numbers of foreign military and security

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advisors were introduced. Currently no less than 2,000 Cubans, 50 Soviets, 35 East Germans, and 50 PLO and Libyan personnel are estimated to be stationed in Nicaragua on security missions. That is roughly one foreign military advisor for every 1,000 Nicaraguans.

In 1980 (just as in 1978 Castro had brought the three main Sandinista factions together in Havana), Cuban agents brought five guerrilla factions from El Salvador together in Managua, worked out a unity pact among them, then set up a joint command and control apparatus in the Managua area and organized logistic and training support on Nicaraguan soil. Since that time, the great bulk of the arms and munitions used by the insurgents in El Salvador have flowed through Nicaragua.³

Meanwhile the Sandinistas moved to assert a monopoly of power inside Nicaragua. Elections were ridiculed and postponed. One by one the elements of the broad anti-Somoza coalition were shorn off. The famous newspaper La Prensa was censored, independent radio and TV stations curbed, the labor unions intimidated, the private sector neutralized, the Catholic Church subjected to repeated provocation and attempts at division, the Miskitos and other Nicaraguan Indian minorities persecuted.

2.

Now, Nicaragua's southern border is 300 miles from the Panama Canal, separated only by Costa Rica, a democracy that for almost 35 years has had no army. Its northern border is 300 miles from Mexico. In between are two states, El Salvador and Guatemala, already torn by guerrilla violence, and Honduras, whose fledgling democracy is under daily pressure from Nicaragua.

It does not take very much imagination to understand how the Sandinistas' "revolution without frontiers" might spread. Nor how its spread might affect our security. Half our trade flows through the Caribbean. And we depend on the stability of our neighbors to avoid what in certain circumstances could become an unprecedented flow of refugees northward to this country. Especially now, when a troubled world economy invites unrest, we must safeguard democracy and stability in our immediate neighborhood.

3.

We have all seen predatory dictatorships of the right and the left. Germany under Hitler. The Soviet Union under Stalin and since. Yet, there is a school that attributes the expansionism of left-wing dictatorships to pressures from without. According to this proposition, Soviet aggressiveness

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is but a reaction to the creation of a network of alliances around it, Castro was made a Communist by U.S. confrontation, and Vietnam was radicalized by foreign armies.

Whatever the merits or defects of these arguments, let me point out that the Nicaraguan case provides ample data to test the policy that usually flows from this proposition -- that left-wing radicalization and aggressiveness can be prevented by the political support and economic assistance of the democracies.

Nicaragua is a country of some 2 1/2 million people. Since 1979 it has received from the democracies and multilateral agencies \$1.6 billion in economic assistance, or \$640 for every man, woman and child. The U.S. supplied \$125 million. Politically, such democratic states as Mexico and the parties belonging to the Socialist International have provided consistent support.

Yet this same period marks the big build-up of the EPS, direct support for violence in El Salvador and the consolidation of internal repression.

It is clear that constructive engagement has not worked in Nicaragua.

4.

So far, negotiation has not worked any better. There have been many efforts. Some continue to this day.

I was involved in a first such effort, travelling to Managua in August 1981 to listen to Sandinista concerns. They told me that they remembered the U.S. Marine occupation in the first decades of the century, that they feared a U.S. invasion and thus needed a big army, and that we should understand that the Salvadoran guerrillas were important as a "shield" to protect Nicaragua.

So we said ok, let's address your concerns. Let's enter into a bilateral non-aggression agreement. The U.S. could use its influence to encourage Nicaraguan exiles in this country to moderate their behavior. And the U.S. could renew its economic assistance. In return we asked the Sandinistas to stop training and supplying Salvadoran guerrillas, to give pluralism a chance in their own country -- as they had promised to the OAS in 1979 -- and to limit their military build-up, perhaps through agreement with other Central American countries.

We made these proposals in writing. In October 1981, Managua formally rejected them as "sterile". At the same time, they lied about their ongoing arms supplies to the Salvadoran

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guerrillas and said they would never limit their military build-up.

A second attempt at negotiation occurred in the spring of 1982, this time at the suggestion of Mexican President Lopez Portillo.

Once again we presented concrete proposals in writing, this time elaborated in eight points presented through our Ambassador in Managua. Once again, there was no concrete response, and no receptivity on issues. Nicaragua simply replied that, before it could respond there would have to be a meeting at a higher level in Mexico. This time, it seemed to us, the Sandinistas wanted to appear to negotiate without actually doing so.

We decided to try a third time. Under Costa Rican leadership, a group of democratic states got together in San Jose in October 1982 to work out a comprehensive set of peace proposals for Central America as a whole. Let me speak a moment about these proposals, because they continue to represent the essence of what we, like Nicaragua's democratic neighbors, are trying to do.

First, the San Jose group agreed the area should be freed from East-West competition. The way to do that, the democracies concluded, is to get all foreign military advisors and trainers out of Central America -- Cuba's, the Soviet Union's, Bulgaria's, East Germany's, the PLO's, and ours.

Second, the Central American countries must find a way to live with each other without fear. To this end, the San Jose group proposed mutual and verifiable accords banning the import of heavy offensive weapons, renouncing the support for insurgency on neighbors' territory, and providing for international surveillance of frontiers.

Third, each Central American country must find a way to establish democratic institutions, open to opposition elements. Central American democrats, led by Costa Rica, are particularly clear on the need for democratization. Only in this way could they be confident they will not have to face sometime in the future an aggressive neighbor unconstrained by the limits democracy imposes.

Representing the San Jose group, Costa Rica attempted to contact Nicaragua to ask whether it would enter into a dialogue on these principles. The Sandinistas refused even to receive the proposal, arguing that they had not participated in its formulation, and so were not bound to address it.

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So a fourth attempt at negotiations is now being made. In January 1983, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama met on the island of Contadora to propose an effort at mediation of Central America's conflict. Honduras, Costa Rica and El Salvador responded by proposing that the five Central American countries -- including Nicaragua -- meet in the presence of the Contadora group. This would enable Nicaragua to take part in developing the proposals, as it had not in San Jose. And, to maximize the chances that Nicaragua would participate, they suggested that the U.S. not be present. That would also take care of charges that the conference would be U.S.-dominated.

But still Nicaragua was not receptive. Instead, it went to the UN Security Council, claiming that it wants to meet bilaterally with the U.S. and with Honduras, not regionally. In effect, Nicaragua is saying it wants to discuss Nicaragua's charges against Honduras and the U.S. -- but not its neighbors concerns about Nicaragua's militarization, dictatorship, and intervention in El Salvador.

I have described this history at some length to give you some idea of the extraordinary difficulty of dealing with the Sandinista leadership.

The Sandinistas have made their contempt for genuine dialogue -- for real negotiations -- quite clear. A month ago, we all saw them interrupt the Pope in a calculated attempt at intimidation -- and the Sandinistas followed this up by banning broadcasts of Easter services. Last week, Interior Minister Tomas Borge, in an interview for Cuban television, stressed the subjects his country would not negotiate: Nicaragua, he said, would not discuss the principles of the Sandinista Revolution; it would not enter into a dialogue about the overall Central American situation; and it would not talk about "counter-revolutionaries". He might have added that the Sandinistas are afraid to deal with these issues in any kind of open way -- either with their own people or with Nicaragua's increasingly concerned neighbors. So it is sad, rather than surprising, that Borge tells his Cuban TV audience that the proposed meeting of Central American Foreign Ministers is "diplomatic demagogy".

Despite this record, we are not going to give up. The Sandinistas are obviously not yet persuaded that they have to negotiate on substance with either their neighbors or their internal critics. Perhaps they still think that if they bob and weave enough, something will change -- that the U.S. will end or weaken its support for democratic governments in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras -- and that the way will again be open for the "revolution without frontiers." We must convince them that that is not the case, that the U.S. will not abandon its friends in Central America. At the same time, we

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must go on probing, proposing ways to talk that overcome the old objections -- until the Sandinistas tell us they are ready to move to a fair and equitable dialogue.

5.

Meanwhile, Nicaraguans have taken matters into their own hands. Sandinista intransigence has sparked an insurgency that the Sandinistas themselves claim is a threat.

Several thousand guerrillas are now active in Nicaragua. Disillusioned Miskito Indians operate in much of their homeland in the Atlantic lowlands. In the eastern and northern border departments of Jinotega, Nueva Segovia, Madriz, Esteli and Zelaya, significant insurgent forces are attacking government outposts and ambushing military convoys. Guerrilla activity is reported in the central coffee-growing province of Matagalpa. This month for the first time armed dissidence has been reported in the south. Wherever the opposition groups show up, they seem to attract local support, and their numbers grow.

In light of recent allegations in the media, you will ask me right off whether this insurgency has been created or supported by the United States. No American administration has ever discussed this kind of allegation -- other than in the Senate and House committees created expressly for the purpose -- and this one will not break precedent. But I will describe the Nicaraguan opposition movements; it should be clear to you that it has appeared and expanded in response to deep grievances against the Sandinistas.

Who are the people who have dared challenge Managua's ideologues? What do they want? Based on what we know, several things can be said. Most importantly, they are Nicaraguans to the core. There are two major groups.

One, the larger, is the Frente Democratico Nacional (FDN). Although its main strength is inside Nicaragua, Sandinista repression has driven most of its leaders to Honduras and Costa Rica. The FDN's directorate is made up of Lucia Salazar, the widow of Jorge Salazar, an anti-Somoza businessman murdered by the Sandinistas in 1980; Alfonso Callejas, a former vice-president of Nicaragua who broke cleanly with Somoza in a 1978 attempt to oust Somoza; Edgar Chamorro, an apolitical private sector leader; Indalecio Rodriguez, former vice-rector of the Central American University (UCA); Enrique Bermudez, a former National Guard colonel whom Somoza removed from Nicaragua by sending him as military attache to Washington from 1975 to 1979 (and whom the Sandinistas themselves have acknowledged played no part in Somoza regime repression); Marco Zeledon, a respected private sector leader with no ties to the Somozas; and Adolfo Calero, a life-long opponent of the Somozas

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who was jailed by Somoza in 1978. They have publicly stated that their objective is to bring democracy to Nicaragua, not a return to Somocismo. Indeed, several FDN leaders were jailed for their activities against Somoza. In sociological terms, these leaders represent members of the professions and teachers, plus small businessmen and farmers. Their followers include disaffected peasants, former small farmers, Miskito Indians, and other groups displaced or simply repressed by Managua's ideologues. We estimate that the FDN's ranks include over a thousand guerrillas. Former National Guardsmen -- mostly non-commissioned officers -- lead many of these guerrilla units, but most of the members are peasants and former small farmers.

FDN pronouncements repudiate the Somoza past and affirm the nationalistic and patriotic principles of Sandino. As I am sure the Committee is aware, the FDN proposed a peace plan on January 13, 1983, in which they offered to cease hostilities if among other points the GRN held internationally supervised elections by September 1983, revoked the state of siege in Nicaragua, and separated public administration from partisan political and ideological activities.

The second major group, led by the anti-Somoza hero Eden Pastora, is ARDE -- the Alianza Revolucionaria Democratica. ARDE's leaders include such well-known figures as former post-Somoza junta leader Alfonso Robelo, Miskito Indian leader Brooklyn Rivera, and former anti-Somoza fighter Fernando "Negro" Chamorro. Pastora, who was the original Sandinista Vice-Minister of Defense, has repeatedly denounced the revolution's betrayal, which he argues was motivated by Cuban agents enforcing a sellout to the Soviet Union. Most of ARDE's statements have been issued from Costa Rica. ARDE's February 2 peace proposal calls for elections of a constituent assembly by June 1983 to fulfill the promise of the Sandinista revolution.

Caught off balance by the scope of the opposition it has brought upon itself, the Nicaraguan Government has sought to discredit its opponents as "Somocistas" -- attempting to associate them with the crimes of the former government. The Sandinistas' current propaganda plan -- we have seen the March 24 FSLN memorandum -- instructs its political cadres to blame "U.S. imperialism" for the country's problems, to smear Adolfo Calero -- a Democratic Conservative Party leader with whom they have negotiated, and Alfonso Robelo -- a former member of their own Junta, as "traitors", and to portray opposition as aimed against Nicaragua rather than against its current rulers.

Now the Comandantes have not accepted our proposals before, but I would urge them, before they get too far calling Calero of the FDN and Robelo of ARDE "traitors," to recall that last year they failed to convince their own people that Eden

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Pastora, a man who is still proud to call himself "a true Sandinista", could be a traitor to the Nicaraguan people or to the original ideals of the Sandinista revolution.

The Sandinistas assert that the only alternative to what they've created is "Somocismo". Nothing could be more simplistic or more false. "Somocismo" was a highly personal traditional dictatorship that died with Somoza. It could not be recreated even if one wished to do so. The Sandinistas know that most Nicaraguans want democracy, peace and an end to Cuban influence. Indeed, that is the program promised the Nicaraguan people in 1979. And that is the program the Sandinistas are today always trying to sweep under the rug they call "Somocismo". The Nicaraguan people remember their history. So should we.

6.

It is not clear what the course of the struggle in Nicaragua will be. What is certain is that, as long as Nicaragua forces legitimate dissent at home to follow violent means and persists in threatening and destabilizing its neighbors, it will never be stable, nor will Central America.

It is conceivable that Cuba or the Soviet Union could be tempted to escalate the conflict, introducing modern fighter aircraft or even Cuban combat troops. Clearly a dangerous situation would then develop, unacceptable not only to Central America but to the American nations as a whole. We have communicated to Moscow and Havana how dangerous such a move would be.

It is also conceivable that, in an effort to distract attention from their internal problems, the Sandinistas might lash out at their neighbors, attacking Costa Rica or Honduras. For over a year, Managua has already been running terrorist operations in San Jose and infiltrating guerrillas into northern Costa Rican provinces. And there have been frequent border incidents with Honduras. Although journalists who have visited the area report no activity on the Honduran side, Nicaragua has recently reinforced military units on the border. Again, I believe the Sandinistas understand that they could not gain by attacking their neighbors. It is also important to stress that every resource of inter-American diplomacy, including of course that of this country, would be available to prevent such an outburst.

But there is a better way. It is through dialogue and negotiation.

We ask the Sandinistas to think of the Nicaraguan people. Despite all that foreign aid, Nicaraguans in city and

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countryside are much less well off than before the revolution. They resent the pressures on their churches and their clergy. They distrust and dislike the Sandinista monopoly of power -- they have lived under such a system before.

We ask the Sandinistas to consider the insurgency in their own country. Despite -- or is it because? -- of the presence of all those armed Cubans, popular resistance is spreading. They may conclude that the dialogue they have so many times spurned is preferable to widening civil strife.

We ask the Sandinistas to consider the insurgency they are supporting in El Salvador. If it has legitimate grievances, let them be pursued through democratic institutions. The international community is willing and able to provide security and other guarantees for elections as the answer there as well.

Each element of the Central American problem is related to the other. No amount of land reform, or open elections, or improvement in human rights will end the conflict in El Salvador if Nicaragua continues to fuel it. Democracy will not prosper in Nicaragua's neighbors unless it is practiced in Nicaragua as well. Nicaragua will not be free of the hostility of its own people and of its neighbors, until it begins to address their concerns for democracy and security.

So the answer is democratization and dialogue among neighbors. The purpose of U.S. policy in the area is to create conditions in which the area can be removed from East-West conflict, the import of offensive weapons and mutual support for insurgencies ended, and the democratic transformation of each society achieved. Negotiations among all the Central American countries and negotiations within countries can provide the opportunity for all groups to compete in the voting booth rather than on the battlefield.

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FOOTNOTES

1. EPS Chief of Staff Joaquin Cuadra to U.S. Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Major General William E. Odom in November 1982.

2. By way of comparison, El Salvador received \$121 million from the U.S. during the same period.

3. Nicaragua's Sandinistas aid the guerrillas in El Salvador by supplying arms, training, financial aid, and by allowing the guerrillas' command and control center to operate near Managua.

ARMS SUPPLY

- Arms and ammunition destined for clandestine delivery to El Salvador reach Nicaragua by ship and by direct flights from Havana to Nicaragua. The arms remain stockpiled near Managua until their use by the guerrillas.
- Several "smoking guns" have revealed Nicaraguan arms shipments to El Salvador. Nicaragua's Papalonal airfield was used for direct supply flights to the Salvadoran guerrillas for the January 1981 "final offensive"; two overland shipments from Nicaragua through Honduras discovered in 1981 contained weapons originally shipped to American units in Vietnam (similar caches of arms were discovered in Guatemala City in mid-1981, apparently destined for the Gutemalan insurgents); a captured Salvadoran guerrilla leader, Lopez-Arriola, confirmed that the Sandinistas control weapons delivered from Vietnam to Nicaragua for the Salvadoran insurgents.
- The Sandinistas use a variety of routes (overland, air drop and sea) to furnish arms and, increasingly, vitally needed ammunition. In 1982, these supply operations have included increased quantities of heavier weapons, including M-60 machine guns, M-79 grenade launchers, and M-72 antitank weapons.
- A Salvadoran guerrilla, Alejandro Montenegro, captured during a raid on a guerrilla safehouse in Honduras in August 1982, confirmed that Nicaragua remains the primary source of insurgent weapons and ammunition, although the guerrillas capture some weapons and

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ammunition from the Salvadoran military. One of the guerrillas captured with Montenegro had made five trips to Managua in 1982 to pick up arms.

TRAINING

- Since mid-1980 Salvadoran guerrillas have trained in Nicaragua and Cuba in military tactics, weapons, and explosives. Cubans and other foreign advisors are involved in the training.
- One Salvadoran guerrilla who defected to Honduras in September 1981 reported that he and 12 others went from Nicaragua to Cuba for extensive military training in Cuba where over 900 Salvadorans were receiving training.
- Several terrorists captured in a safehouse raid in Tegucigalpa in November 1981 told authorities that the Nicaraguan government had provided them with funds for travel and explosives.
- Two weeks ago, responding to a local citizen's tip, Honduran security officials surprised a group of Salvadoran guerrillas in transit through Honduras to El Salvador from training camps in Nicaragua. The anti-socials escaped after a firefight, but left behind documents identifying infiltration routes.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

- After two years of combat, the FMLN headquarters near Managua has evolved into a sophisticated command and control center which guides operations. Cuban and Nicaraguan officers are present at this headquarters. The headquarters coordinates logistical support, including clothes, money, and ammunition.

Intelligence agencies have provided a mass of classified information on arms supply, training and command and control to the relevant Congressional committees. In a report dated September 22, 1982 the House Intelligence Oversight Committee noted that "intelligence has been able to establish beyond doubt the involvement of communist countries in the insurgency." The Chairman of the Committee issued a statement on March 4, 1982 stating in part that:

The insurgents are well-trained, well-equipped with modern weapons and supplies, and rely on the use of sites in Nicaragua for command and control and for logistical support. The intelligence supporting these judgements is convincing.

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There is further persuasive evidence that the Sandinista government of Nicaragua is helping train insurgents and is transferring arms and support from and through Nicaragua to the insurgents. They are further providing the insurgents with bases of operation in Nicaragua. Cuban involvement in providing arms -- is also evident.