

very small 1/1/79

Democratic changes are under way, ~~however precariously~~, in ~~every country in Central American but one~~. ~~That country is~~ <sup>except in</sup> Nicaragua. I am seriously concerned by evidence I have seen that the Sandinista regime is becoming ever more repressive. I believe, as I did two years ago, that the Sandinista government poses a clear threat to the security of its neighbors and to ~~the United States~~. <sup>by its ~~status~~ ~~provision~~ to OAS in '79.</sup> But short of military intervention, it is clear that any proposal originated or dictated by the United States is doomed to failure with that regime. <sup>must stop</sup>

What we desperately need -- what we have needed all along -- is a clear-cut, realistic policy. As the chairman of the Intelligence Committee in the other body, Senator Durenberger, has ~~s~~ated, because we have no policy, we appear to be reacting to events, rather than carrying out a strategy with goals by which to measure progress.

Americans are confused by strong Administration rhetoric and lack of Administration action; by Congressional procrastination and debate. They are looking for coherence and a sense of vision. If we oppose the Sandinistas, why do we buy Nicaraguan beef and bananas when Honduras could use our trade? If the regime is illegitimate, and its overthrow a goal of U.S. policy, why do we continue diplomatic relations? If we are

serious about meeting the Marxist challenge in Central America, it is time to begin shaping a long-term, affirmative policy and stop confusing intentions with accomplishments.

We must ask ourselves what is really happening in Central America, what we would like to see happen, and what we can do about it. In the past we fought change; now we must decide whether to ignore it or support it. Unfortunately, too many Americans have visited this region with open eyes and closed minds -- looking not at what is happening, but only at what is happening that would support their strongly held views.

Both in committee and on this floor, I have voted against covert aid to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. But having recently returned from the region, I believe more strongly than ever that there is a compelling case for continued American involvement in Central America. [The Sandinista regime is an obstacle to the growth of democracy -- but it is also a dictatorship that is doomed to failure unless it is kept alive by outside help.

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In my opinion, to relieve the pressure now would be a great mistake. But the American people must believe that all channels of diplomatic, economic and political pressure have

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been exhausted ~~if there is to~~ be any support for military-  
~~related~~ options.

The \$14 million that has been the focus of so much debate can have little practical effect. No one who has been there or who looks at the record believes that the Contras can overthrow the government ~~in Managua~~ *of Nicaragua*, with or without these funds. But this money can be a symbol of bipartisan determination to stand firm for democracy in Central America.

I will vote for the Hamilton substitute. It provides no funds for military or paramilitary operations, although I do not believe these options should ever be ruled out. It seeks to impose multinational pressures on Nicaragua, including the possibility of trade sanctions, and it supports the regional peace process. I believe the substitute could have gone further. For example, it could have provided a trigger-date and Congressional observers to further encourage a ceasefire and peace negotiations. But the substitute as it stands is better than the alternatives.

Too often in the past we have failed to support social justice when the choice was between dictatorship and reform. We can no longer afford to view the problems of Central America

~~in black and white terms.~~ Foreign policy requires military strength; it also requires skilful use of diplomacy and economic tools. The substitute allows for rapid action on any further requests for Contra aid. If no peace agreement is reached by October, we will be able to judge which side is responsible and act accordingly. I urge its adoption.