

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

April 22, 1985

SUPPORT THE BIPARTISAN ALTERNATIVE ON NICARAGUA

Dear Colleague:

You will find printed in today's Congressional Record our resolution setting forth a bipartisan alternative Nicaragua policy. If H. J. Res. 239, to approve the obligation of funds for military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua, is rejected, a vote on our alternative, in the form of a Hamilton substitute to the Barnes resolution, will follow. There will then be a vote on another substitute by Rep. Michel or his designee. We urge you to vote AGAINST H.J. Res. 239, FOR the Hamilton substitute, and AGAINST the substitute of Rep. Michel or his designee.

We believe the policy set forth in our resolution would best serve the U.S. policy objective of enhancing the security and stability of Central America by achieving reciprocal and verifiable security arrangements with Nicaragua and by promoting political pluralism and human rights in Nicaragua. Our alternative is designed to support regional peace efforts and give diplomacy a chance to work, while at the same time maintaining pressure on the Sandinistas.

Our alternative:

(1) continues in effect the existing prohibition on funding for military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua until such time as Congress enacts a joint resolution repealing that prohibition.

(2) provides \$10 million for humanitarian assistance for refugees who are outside of Nicaragua, regardless of whether they are associated with the contras. This aid would be provided only through the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees or the International Committee of the Red Cross, and could not be used for provisioning combat units.

(3) provides \$4 million for implementing a Contadora agreement if one is achieved.

(4) provides that the President may request further action by the Congress after October 1, and that Congress must consider any such Presidential request under expedited procedures.

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(5) identifies disturbing trends in Nicaragua's foreign and domestic policies, as well as human rights violations by both the Nicaraguan government and the contras, and states that progress or lack thereof in these areas should heavily influence future congressional action. If the Sandinista government takes actions to destabilize the region, or if repressive trends continue within Nicaragua, our resolution endorses intensified pressure on Nicaragua through the use of diplomatic, political, and economic instruments available to the United States. On the other hand, if progress is made in reversing these trends, we call for consideration to be given to improving ties with Nicaragua.


(6) endorses the concept of a cease fire and peace negotiations, within the context of a regional settlement, to resolve the internal Nicaraguan conflict, and endorses the role of the Contadora Group and the OAS in achieving such a settlement.

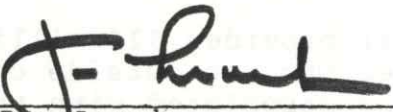
Our alternative puts pressure on both sides. Both sides will know that their behavior will weigh heavily in the next congressional debate, which can be forced by the President any time after October 1. Our alternative provides both carrots and sticks: we endorse sanctions if the Sandinistas do not take positive steps, and improvements in relations if they do. Our approach would get the U.S. off the slippery slope toward direct intervention to "remove" the Sandinistas. It is an approach on which we can all unite in furtherance of U.S. interests. We hope for your support.

Sincerely,


Michael D. Barnes


Lee H. Hamilton


James R. Jones


Jim Leach


Ed Zschau


Hamilton Fish, Jr.