



Dear Mr. Slattery:

I am prompted by our conversation of April 10 to restate for the record the Administration's position with respect to a Contadora agreement and U.S. support for the Nicaraguan resistance.

Part I, Chapter III, Section 6, Paragraph 32 of the Contadora draft agreement of September, 1985 prohibits any "political, military, financial or other support to individuals, groups, irregular forces or armed bands advocating the overthrow or destabilization of other Governments..." Paragraph 34 of Section 6 requires signatories to "deny the use of and dismantle installations, equipment and facilities providing logistical support or serving operational functions in their territory, if the latter is used for acts against neighboring Governments." Paragraph 35 of this Section would permit governments interested in bringing peace to Central America to provide financial and logistical support for the purpose of relocating disarmed irregular forces or returning them to their respective countries, in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Governments concerned.

Part III, Paragraph 4 of the draft treaty states that "The parties, as from the date of signature, shall refrain from any acts which would serve to frustrate the object and purpose of this Act..."

We interpret these provisions as requiring a cessation of support to irregular forces and/or insurrectional movements from the date of signature. We do not believe these provisions would prohibit financial or other humanitarian aid for the purpose of relocating or repatriating such forces.

The Honorable
Jim Slattery,
House of Representatives.

Although the United States is not a party to the Contadora negotiations and would not be legally bound by signature of a Contadora treaty, we will as a matter of policy support and abide by a comprehensive, verifiable and simultaneous implementation of the Contadora Document of Objectives of September 1983, as long as such an agreement is being fully respected by all the parties. We would not feel politically bound to respect an agreement that Nicaragua was violating.

This has been U.S. policy from the outset of the Contadora process. On April 27, 1983 President Reagan stated to a joint session of Congress that "We will support any verifiable, reciprocal agreement among Central American countries on the renunciation of support for insurgencies on neighbors territory."

On June 25, 1984, the first day of bilateral talks with the Government of Nicaragua, the United States proposed a comprehensive agreement that would include a mutual cessation of support to irregular forces.

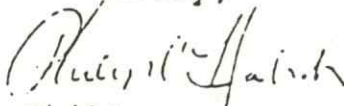
On July 26, 1985 in Mexico City, Secretary of State Shultz stated:

The United States fully supports efforts to achieve a political solution to the Central American crisis....In our view, there exists in the Contadora Document of Objectives a fair, comprehensive and balanced framework for such an outcome. We expressed our support for a comprehensive and verifiable implementation of the Document of Objectives when it was agreed in September 1983. We reaffirm that support today.

This continues to be the Administration's position, and is written into the legislation that was approved by the Senate March 27.

Please feel free to share this letter with interested colleagues.

Sincerely,


Philip C. Habib