

Dear Democratic Colleague:

I'm writing to you as a moderate-to-conservative colleague and as one generally concerned with an effective and strong national defense. As a member of the Intelligence Committee I had serious reservations about the committee vote to terminate funding for covert action in Nicaragua. As my additional views to the committee report reflect, I was quite concerned about the direction, scope and escalation of the action, but was still willing to work with the Administration to develop a compromise position which demonstrated clear goals and prevented unnecessary escalation.

As stated in the secret session, my objective is to develop a clear, workable policy that can succeed, one that encourages negotiations by the Nicaraguans while not undermining support for the friendly governments in the region. I'm not against covert action; on the contrary, I believe it can be an important tool. But it should not be a substitute for policy.

I voted against this particular authorization (since the Intelligence Committee doesn't have a veto, only authorizing authority) because I thought the Director of the CIA and the Administration were disingenuous with the committee and unwilling to work toward a bipartisan policy. I had hoped that the committee vote would send a signal to the Administration that its policy was in trouble and that it wasn't going to receive carte blanche authority from the Congress. Furthermore, the committee felt

that we could no longer assure the House that the Boland amendment was not being violated.

Then, as now, the following factors weighed against continued unlimited funding:

1. Escalation without any assurances of restraint from 500 to some 10,000-plus insurgents.
2. Shifting goals: from arms interdiction, to pressuring the regime to look inward and stop supporting guerrillas in El Salvador, to broadening the regime and instituting elections and ~~a free press~~ ^{reforms} in Nicaragua.
3. With little or no success at arms interdiction, the Administration hopes to shift emphasis to pressuring the government -- again in circumvention of the Boland amendment.
4. I had hoped that the establishment of a bipartisan commission would provide a clear policy formulation, but the appointment of Henry Kissinger leads me to believe that the Administration is more intent on selling its existing policy than on forging a truly bipartisan solution.
5. Support of such a large paramilitary action would undermine support for the CIA and the intelligence community.
6. Escalation of military maneuvers only heightens public concern about direct military involvement in Central America and fosters isolationism.

Israeli Connection:

7. The basic philosophy that even though Central America is not another Vietnam, the policy of gradual escalation is a repeat of our failed policy in Southeast Asia, and that if we truly have a national interest, we ought to be in it to win.
8. Without a blockade of Nicaragua, which calls for greater U.S. involvement, covert action cannot succeed.
9. A military solution is not the answer in Central America, and we must work with other Latin nations to serve peace and stability in the region.

The bottom line is that even though I support much of what President Reagan is trying to do in Central America, I believe this covert action is destined to fail, and will only lead to U.S. intervention in Central America. I still hold out the hope that a majority in the House will continue to push the Administration for the establishment of a truly bipartisan policy in Central America -- one that has clearly defined ends and restraint in means.

Failing to express that, I believe I have no choice but to vote for the Boland-Zablocki bill, which is a compromise bill. I also urge you to support ^{my Amendment to} ~~the~~ double overt aid for arms interdiction by the countries in the region.

Sincerely,