

News from Senator

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 1986

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STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE

VOTE ON CONTRA AID CRUCIAL

THE MIDDLE OF THIS WEEK, THE SENATE WILL VOTE ON WHETHER TO PROVIDE AID TO THE DEMOCRATIC RESISTANCE FORCES IN NICARAGUA, THE SO-CALLED CONTRAS. THAT VOTE MAY WELL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY ACTION WE TAKE THIS SESSION. LET'S BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT'S AT STAKE.

SANDINISTAS ARE REAL THREAT TO US INTERESTS

THE SANDINISTA REGIME DOES REPRESENT A REAL THREAT TO THE PEACE AND THE STABILITY OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

IT DOES ATTACK AND SUPPORT SUBVERSION AGAINST ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS -- EL SALVADOR, COSTA RICA, HONDURAS -- COUNTRIES WHICH ARE AMONG OUR CLOSEST ALLIES AND FRIENDS IN THE REGION.

IT HAS OPENED ITS DOORS TO A LARGE INFLUX OF SOVIET AND CUBAN ADVISERS, ACCUMULATED A MASSIVE STORE OF SOVIET ARMS AND IMPORTED FOREIGN TERRORISTS AND TERRORIST METHODOLOGY, TO THREATEN AND INTIMIDATE OTHER FREE NATIONS IN THE REGION.

IT HAS SUPPRESSED ITS OWN PEOPLE: IT HAS EXECUTED HUNDREDS, IMPRISONED THOUSANDS AND FORCIBLY RELOCATED TENS OF THOUSANDS; IT HAS MADE A MOCKERY OF THE CONCEPT OF FREE ELECTIONS, NEARLY ELIMINATED THE FREE MEDIA, DRIVEN OUT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND CRACKED DOWN ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THIS: THE SANDINISTAS RUN A RADICAL MARXIST REGIME, AIMED AT POLITICAL AND MILITARY DOMINANCE OF CENTRAL AMERICA; BASED ON A ONE-PARTY DICTATORSHIP; AND ALLIED WITH THE SOVIET AND CUBAN COMMUNISTS.

THAT IS THE RECORD. AFTER ALL WE'VE SEEN AND WITH ALL THE EVIDENCE WE HAVE, IT'S A CRYSTAL PICTURE OF A HUMAN RIGHTS NIGHTMARE.

VOTE THIS WEEK WILL SEND IMPORTANT MESSAGE

AND WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THIS? THAT'S THE QUESTION WE WILL CONFRONT ON WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY OF THIS WEEK.

SHOULD WE MAKE CLEAR TO THE SANDINISTAS, AND TO THEIR MENTORS IN HAVANA AND MOSCOW, THAT THE FREE RIDE IS OVER? THAT WE ARE NOT GOING TO STAND BY AND WATCH THEM CONSOLIDATE THEIR TOTALITARIAN CONTROL OVER YET ANOTHER COUNTRY ON OUR OWN DOORSTEP, WHILE REACHING OUT TO NEW CONQUESTS?

OR SHOULD WE SEND A DIFFERENT MESSAGE -- A MESSAGE OF SURRENDER TO INTIMIDATION, ABANDONMENT OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR ALLIES AND FRIENDS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, OF ACQUIESCENCE TO DICTATORSHIP WITHIN NICARAGUA.

SEARCH FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION

A "YES" VOTE ON THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST IS THE BEST CHANCE -- MAYBE THE ONLY CHANCE -- TO ACHIEVE WHAT WE WANT IN NICARAGUA. AND LET'S BE EQUALLY CLEAR ABOUT THAT.

WHAT WE WANT IS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS IN NICARAGUA: A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT THAT WILL LEAD TO AN END TO NICARAGUAN THREATS AGAINST ITS NEIGHBORS; AN END TO THE SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA; AND A CHANCE FOR DEMOCRACY WITHIN NICARAGUA.

I DON'T CLAIM, AND THE PRESIDENT DOESN'T CLAIM, THAT WE'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO FORCE THAT KIND OF SOLUTION SOLELY THROUGH AID TO THE CONTRAS. BUT IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT WE'VE GOT NO CHANCE AT ALL TO ACHIEVE SUCH A SOLUTION UNLESS WE HAVE SOME WAY TO INDUCE THE SANDINISTAS TO ACCEPT IT.

(MORE)

SANDINISTAS DON'T WANT REAL NEGOTIATED SOLUTION

BECAUSE THAT'S NOT THE RESULT THE SANDINISTAS WANT. THEY'RE GOING TO ACCEPT THAT RESULT ONLY IF THEY HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE; ONLY IF WE MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE, OR TOO COSTLY, TO ACHIEVE THE END THEY REALLY WANT -- THE ONE I DESCRIBED EARLIER: A STRONG ALLIANCE WITH RUSSIA AND CUBA; A DOMINANT MILITARY AND POLITICAL POSITION IN THE REGION; A ONE-PARTY MARXIST STATE.

THIS BOTTOM LINE IS CLEAR, TOO. IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME FORM OF PRESSURE -- REAL PRESSURE -- THERE IS NOT A REASON IN THE WORLD FOR THE SANDINISTAS TO GIVE UP THESE GOALS.

"NEGOTIATIONS, SANDINISTA STYLE"

AND WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT WE COULD GET NEGOTIATIONS IF WE REALLY TRIED? WELL, I'M SURE WE COULD GET SOME KIND OF NEGOTIATIONS. THE SANDINISTAS WOULD PROBABLY BE HAPPY TO ENGAGE US IN NEW, ENDLESS ROUNDS OF TALK, WHERE THEY COULD MISLEAD, PROPAGANDIZE, STALL -- WHILE THEY CONTINUED THE FULL-SCALE PURSUIT OF THEIR GOALS AT HOME AND THROUGHOUT CENTRAL AMERICA.

BUT COULD WE GET REAL NEGOTIATIONS? WHERE THE SANDINISTAS SIT DOWN WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM WITHIN NICARAGUA, TO TRY TO WORK OUT A SYSTEM OF FREE ELECTIONS AND JUST GOVERNMENT; WHERE WE SAT DOWN WITH THE SANDINISTAS, TO DISCUSS DIRECTLY OUR GRIEVANCES -- AND THEIRS -- WITH AN AIM TO FINDING A SOLUTION WITH WHICH BOTH COUNTRIES COULD LIVE.

WE'VE TRIED TO GET THOSE KINDS OF REAL NEGOTIATIONS GOING BEFORE, NOT ONCE BUT MANY TIMES. WE'VE TALKED DIRECTLY WITH THE SANDINISTAS, WITHOUT PRECONDITION, NOT ONCE BUT MANY TIMES. WE'VE URGED THEM TO TALK TO THEIR OWN OPPOSITION, WITH THE ONLY PRECONDITION BEING A CEASEFIRE, NOT ONCE BUT MANY TIMES. AND THEY'VE EITHER REFUSED TO TALK AT ALL, OR STONEWALLED ONCE THEY DID, NOT ONCE BUT MANY TIMES.

PRESIDENT WILL GO EXTRA MILE, TAKE EXTRA STEPS

BUT DESPITE THAT RECORD, WE REMAIN WILLING TO TRY ONCE AGAIN. THE PRESIDENT IS READY. HE HAS INSTRUCTED OUR MOST EXPERIENCED AND CREDIBLE DIPLOMAT, AMBASSADOR PHIL HABIB, TO EXPLORE THE CHANCES FOR REAL NEGOTIATIONS. HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO AMBASSADOR HABIB ARE CLEAR -- CONSIDER ANYTHING, TALK ABOUT ANYTHING, WITH ANYBODY -- AS LONG AS IT OFFERS SOME REAL PROSPECT FOR REAL PROGRESS TOWARD A REAL SOLUTION.

AND THE PRESIDENT HAS ALREADY AGREED, IN A LETTER TO THE CONGRESS LAST WEEK, TO GIVE THIS PEACE PROCESS ONE MORE REAL CHANCE, EVEN AT THE RISK OF SOME TACTICAL DISADVANTAGE THROUGH DELAYING SOME OF OUR AID TO THE CONTRAS. THE PRESIDENT LONG SINCE TOOK US THE EXTRA MILE IN PURSUIT OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. NOW HE'S ADDING SOME EXTRA STEPS TO THAT EXTRA MILE, TO MAKE CLEAR HE WANTS PEACE -- AND TO MAKE EQUALLY CLEAR WHO DOESN'T.

NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUE, NOT PARTISAN ISSUE

THIS IS NOT A PARTISAN ISSUE. WHEN THE HOUSE VOTED LAST WEEK, MANY DEMOCRATS STOOD WITH THE PRESIDENT. WHEN WE VOTE IN THE SENATE THIS WEEK, I'M CONFIDENT WE WILL HAVE DEMOCRATIC VOTES WITH US, TOO.

AND IT'S NOT AN ISSUE OF ANYONE'S PATRIOTISM. WE ALL LOVE OUR COUNTRY, WANT TO SEE IT STRONG AND WANT TO SEE IT DO THE RIGHT THING. AND I AM CONFIDENT THIS BODY WILL. THIS ISSUE DEMANDS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT AND COOPERATION.

BUT IT IS AN ISSUE WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTS OUR NATIONAL SECURITY. IT IS AN ISSUE WHICH WILL HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION, WHICH IS SO CRITICAL TO OUR OWN SECURITY. AND IT IS AN ISSUE WHERE THE CHOICE WE MAKE NOW WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE OPTIONS.

PERHAPS, AS SOME ON THE OTHER SIDE ARE SAYING, WE DO HAVE THE SAME ENDS. PERHAPS THIS IS JUST A DEBATE OVER METHODS. BUT IT IS A CRUCIAL DEBATE.

SOMEBODY'S "METHODS" ARE GOING TO GET US TO THE RIGHT ENDS; SOMEBODY'S ARE NOT. SOMEBODY'S "METHODS" RELY ON THE GOOD FAITH OF OUR PRESIDENT; OTHER'S "METHODS" SEEM TO PUT A GREAT DEAL OF FAITH ON THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF SANDINISTA PRESIDENT ORTEGA.

I KNOW IN WHOM I PUT MY CONFIDENCE. I HOPE ALL MY COLLEAGUES WILL AGREE WITH ME, AND WILL VOTE IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST.