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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 225

May 20, 1986

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Authority 4/20/05 EAM to W. L. H. to  
BY CU NARA DATE 6/10/11

CENTRAL AMERICA: U.S. POLICY ON THE SEARCH FOR A  
NEGOTIATED SOLUTION (S)

As stated in NSDD-124 of February 7, 1984, it is an objective of the United States in Central America to seek the resolution of regional disputes and conflicts through dialogue and the achievement through negotiations of political settlements with verifiable agreements. The National Security Planning Group meeting of May 16, 1986 reaffirmed that our objectives in Nicaragua are the following:

- (1) Implementation of the democratic commitments made by the Sandinistas to the OAS in 1979;
- (2) Termination of Nicaragua's support to Marxist/Leninist subversion and guerrilla activity in any foreign country;
- (3) Removal of Soviet bloc/Cuban personnel and an end to Nicaraguan military cooperation with communist countries;
- (4) Reduction in the Sandinista military apparatus to parity within the region. (S)

The NSPG reviewed recent developments in the Contadora negotiations and other diplomatic fora. It was agreed that the deadline of June 6, 1986, which the Contadora Group has set for signing of a treaty, has created a volatile situation, with possible negative consequences for U.S. strategic interests and policy objectives. U.S. interests and objectives would be seriously damaged by an outcome in which the five Central American countries sign an agreement which fails to implement the above stated objectives in a comprehensive package with concrete, verifiable provisions that do not allow Nicaragua to circumvent its commitments. A flawed treaty, particularly one which did not provide concrete mechanisms for assuring and verifying compliance with commitments for national reconciliation and democratization, could facilitate the consolidation of a Marxist/Leninist regime in Nicaragua and jeopardize U.S. security interests in the hemisphere. (S)

The NSPG took note that the governments of Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica are now supporting a Contadora treaty draft which provides for stronger measures to deal with our security objectives in Nicaragua, including reduction of the Nicaraguan

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military apparatus. However, the treaty version supported by our Central American friends does not contain a reliable verification system or a specific timetable for ensuring Nicaraguan compliance with the treaty's internal political commitments. The verification system for security issues contained in that treaty is also flawed by its provision for decision by consensus. (S)

Therefore, the Secretary of State should pursue a negotiations strategy designed to achieve our Nicaraguan objectives as previously stated. To this end, he should undertake the following actions:

- (1) Continue efforts to encourage the governments of Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Guatemala to insist that a Contadora treaty must achieve the political and security objectives defined in the Contadora Document of Objectives, with emphasis on the need for a comprehensive package in which all commitments are simultaneously implemented, with concrete verification procedures to ensure compliance. Strongly urge those governments to ensure that verification mechanisms are not subject to veto by Nicaragua or its friends.
- (2) Convey to the presidents of the four Central American democratic countries our serious concern that their governments are now supporting a draft treaty which does not provide for clearly verifiable implementation by the Government of Nicaragua of national reconciliation and democratization, which must include full political participation by the internal and external opposition. Strongly urge the four presidents to insist that a clear timetable for implementation of political commitments be inserted or annexed to the Contadora treaty.
- (3) The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, should take steps to convey to the governments of the Central American democracies (including the military leadership) our military concerns regarding inadequate or unenforceable security provisions of a Contadora agreement.
- (4) With the prior concurrence of the governments of Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Guatemala, state to the governments of the Contadora and Support Group countries our strong support for the security provisions advocated by the Central American democracies. Where appropriate, state to the Contadora and Support governments our concern with the shortcomings in all existing treaty drafts concerning implementation of political commitments.

- (5) In coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury, review and recommend economic policy measures which could be taken to strengthen the Central American policy of the Contadora and Support Group countries. An action plan on these measures should be provided for review by the NSPG by May 28, 1986.
- (6) With full regard for the need to avoid appearing to be directing the activities of the Central American nations, devise a public diplomacy strategy to support the negotiating position adopted by the Central American democracies. This action should be carried out in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence and the Director of USIA.
- (7) In public statements and in briefings to Congress, state that the U.S. can support an agreement which meets our objectives, as stated above, but that a treaty that does not meet our objectives would be harmful for U.S. interests and the future of democracy in Central America. The U.S. would not consider itself bound to support an agreement which fails to achieve in a verifiable manner all the agreed objectives of the Contadora process.
- (8) Educate the Congress and public concerning the provisions of the Contadora treaty draft supported by the Central American democracies, making particular note of the fact that the treaty would not require any actions to be taken on signature by any party, much less the U.S. Only on ratification by all five parties would the treaty enter into effect. Congress should be informed that this implementation schedule would also apply to assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance. We should convey to Congress that any slackening of our support prior to ratification and the establishment of verification mechanisms would undermine the chances for success for such a treaty.
- (9) In coordination with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the CIA, review and recommend alternative means of obtaining our security objectives in Nicaragua should the Contadora process fail to achieve a satisfactory treaty by June 6, 1986. This review should include an examination of the implications for U.S. policy of shifting the negotiations to other fora such as the Organization of American States. (S)

In pursuit of the above objectives and in implementation of the actions indicated, all U.S. government agencies should keep in

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mind the importance, to our overall strategy for gaining military aid for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance, of maintaining a credible diplomatic track. All U.S. government agencies should exercise due regard for the need to ensure that communist intransigence is seen as the chief obstacle to a satisfactory, negotiated solution. (S)

*Ronald Reagan*

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