

Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs.

(Mr. LAGOMARSINO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. Mr. Chairman, Hamilton-Barnes says that the United States should provide only humanitarian aid and that this should be channeled through the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees or the International Red Cross, and then only if they should decide to do it to meet humanitarian needs. These are respectable organizations, but there are respectable U.S. Government organizations capable of doing that, too. In addition, there are reasons why the proposed recipients might not be receptive to the two organizations named in the amendment.

People familiar with the plight of those who have fled Sandinista rule and familiar with the activities of the UNHCR say this would be a sure way to weaken and dishearten the regime's opponents.

Personal testimony comes from Dr. Othniel J. Seiden, a Denver physician who spent 3 weeks in Honduras close to the Nicaraguan border caring for Miskito Indian victims of the Sandinista regime. Dr. Seiden was a volunteer sponsored by the Victoria and Albert Gildred Foundation for Latin American Health and Education.

At first he thought he'd work in the UNHCR refugee camps. But Miskito leaders in Honduras persuaded him to come to their own villages where there were thousands of Nicaraguan Miskito refugees who desperately needed medical care. The Miskito leaders explained that the UNHCR medical teams refused to go to the villages but insisted the refugees come to the UNHCR camps. This most of the Indians refused to do.

According to Dr. Seiden, the Miskito refugees claimed they were much better off in the villages of their own people than in the UNHCR camps.

Working in the villages and in visits to UNHCR camps, Dr. Seiden found that all the Miskito leaders said was true. In the villages he talked to whole families who had left the camps and in the camps he talked to families who planned to leave. Not only was the food skimpy and poor and the medical care often inadequate, but the refugees said they were subject to "political extortion."

As Dr. Seiden puts it, "The Indians were very anti-Sandinista. After all, that was why they had fled Nicaragua. They found the U.N. personnel pro-Sandinista and always exerting pressure on them to stop supporting the Contras and go home and back the Sandinistas."

The Miskitos' most serious charge, according to Dr. Seiden, was that U.N. personnel would regularly question refugees to ascertain whether any relatives were serving with the Contras.

"If they were, the whole family was denied food rations," Dr. Seiden said.

"Based on my experiences," Dr. Seiden said, "Our channeling any kind of aid through the UNHCR would be like giving it to the Sandinistas."

Contrary to the belief of many, the ICRC has not been neutral in Nicaragua. The proof comes from none other than the former president of the Nicaraguan Red Cross, Mr. Ismael Reyes, who fled Nicaragua in 1982 and now lives in exile in Guatemala.

Mr. Reyes, who was a prominent Nicaraguan businessman, told in an article in the newspaper *Diario de Las Americas* on November 11, 1983, how the ICRC let the Sandinistas renege on an agreement and send thousands of their opponents to their deaths or to long prison terms.

Under a bargain struck between the Sandinistas and the Carter administration, if the United States exerted pressure on President Somoza to leave the country in 1979, then the new Nicaraguan Government would form a new army made up of former members of the National Guard and former Sandinista guerrillas. The Carter administration kept its part of the bargain—Somoza went into exile. But the Sandinistas, as has since become a pattern, did not keep their part.

Instead, most National Guardsmen, barred from the Sandinista army, were left adrift, feeling demoralized and threatened. Many wanted to leave the country or to go to rural areas and resume pre-military lives as farmers. According to Mr. Reyes, then the president of the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the ICRC reached an agreement with Tomas Borge, the Sandinista Interior Minister. Under the agreement, National Guardsmen who surrendered and took refuge in ICRC-protected buildings, the military hospital, or the churches, would be guaranteed proper treatment and, if they wished, safe conduct out of the country.

That agreement was broadcast nationwide and persuaded more than 4,000 National Guardsmen to surrender.

Reyes says he suspected the Sandinistas might violate their pledge and therefore suggested to the ICRC's chief delegate that the prisoners be moved to foreign embassies or given some other kind of protection. The ICRC delegate refused. Shortly afterward, the army, by then almost entirely Sandinista forces, raided the sanctuaries and rounded up all those who had surrendered.

Reyes says he pleaded with the ICRC chief delegate to denounce the roundup. He says the delegate replied that he had explicit instructions from ICRC headquarters in Geneva not to protest.

According to Reyes, many of the prisoners were summarily executed by the security police. Almost all the rest were tried by illegal special tribunals which condemned most to penalties of more than 15 years. They had committed no crime under either Nicaragua

or international law; their only crime was to be members of the national guard and, therefore, potential opponents of Sandinista absolute rule.

The treatment of the prisoners was so scandalous that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the International Commission of Jurists condemned the tribunals. But the ICRC kept silent.

Reyes continued as president of the Nicaraguan Red Cross until August 1982 when a Sandinista mob seized the Red Cross headquarters and Reyes was forced to flee the country. Again, the ICRC did not even protest.

Today, of course, all Red Cross activities in Nicaragua are wholly controlled by the Sandinista regime. It would be either folly or deliberate betrayal to channel U.S. humanitarian aid through the Red Cross.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, April 24, 1985.

DEAR BOB: I announced on April 4 a proposal to promote peace in Central America by fostering a dialogue between the Government of Nicaragua and the democratic resistance, accompanied by a ceasefire in the conflict between them. My proposal was intended, in the words of the Contadora Document of Objectives agreed to by Nicaragua and its neighbors, "to promote national reconciliation efforts... with a view to fostering participation in democratic political processes in accordance with the law."

Since April 4, I have had the benefit of many fruitful exchanges with Latin American leaders and with members of the Congress. I have been encouraged by these discussions, which have shown that a broad consensus exists on the need for reconciliation in Nicaragua, based on democratic principles, as an essential aspect of achieving peace in Central America.

Today the House will vote on competing proposals on how to proceed with our policy in Central America. The choice to be made is a fundamental one that will have a lasting effect on the prospects for democracy, economic opportunity, and peace in this vital region.

The proposal to be offered by Mr. Barnes and Mr. Hamilton would divert funds from existing economic assistance and refugee accounts for humanitarian assistance to refugees outside Nicaragua and for the expenses of implementing an eventual Contadora agreement. Members of Congress should be under no illusion about this proposal. Its adoption would damage our national security and foreign policy interests. By providing a financial inducement for members of the resistance to leave Nicaragua and become refugees in other countries, it relieves pressure on the Sandinistas while, at the same time, it increases the burdens imposed on the neighboring democracies. As a result, fragile democracies would be weakened, their economic recovery would be stalled, their security would be diminished—and the civil war in Nicaragua would go on.

The other proposal before the House, to be offered by Mr. Michel, would appropriate \$14 million in new funds to enable the Agency for International Development to provide humanitarian aid for the Nicaraguan democratic opposition. This alternative meets most of the objectives in my effort to promote a dialogue within Nicaragua which regional leaders have recognized is essential for peace in Central America. Rather than abandon the opposition, the

Michel proposal would help to sustain it, giving peace a chance.

If Congress approves \$14 million for assistance during the current fiscal year, no other U.S. Government funds would be spent for such material assistance to the armed democratic resistance. I will personally establish thorough procedures for the detailed management and accountability of the program in order to assure that these limitations on both the nature and amount of U.S. assistance are scrupulously observed.

I recognize the importance some members have attached to bilateral talks with the Government of Nicaragua. I am instructing my representatives to meet with representatives of the Government of Nicaragua. In their talks, the U.S. representative will press for a ceasefire as well as a church-mediated dialog between the Sandinistas and the united democratic opposition. I must emphasize, however, that such bilateral talks must be in support of the Contadora process and cannot become a substitute for these efforts to achieve a comprehensive, verifiable agreement among all the nations of Central America. Also, as I said on April 4, peace negotiations must not become a cover for deception and delay. If the Sandinista government shows bad faith by seeking to gain unilateral advantage, for example, through a further arms buildup during a ceasefire or intransigence in negotiations, I would feel constrained to respond accordingly in our diplomatic efforts and would not expect the democratic resistance to continue to observe a ceasefire which was unfairly working to their disadvantage.

While economic sanctions are unlikely by themselves to create sufficient pressure to change Nicaragua's behavior, the Sandinistas should not benefit from their present access to the U.S. market while continuing their intransigence on issues effecting our national security. The Administration will favorably consider economic sanctions against the Government of Nicaragua and will undertake multilateral consultations with other Central American states in this regard.

The U.S. condemns atrocities by either side in the strongest possible terms. We will use our assistance to help ensure against wrongful acts by those who seek our help and we will urge them to take steps to investigate allegations of such acts and take appropriate actions against those found to be guilty.

The United States now stands at a moment of judgment. Experience has shown that a policy of support for democracy, economic opportunity, and security will best serve the people of Central America and the national interests of the United States. If we show consistency of purpose, if we are firm in our conviction that the promising developments over the past year in El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala also show the way for a better future for Nicaragua, then over time we can help see the democratic center prevail over tyrants of the left or the right. But if we abandon democracy in Nicaragua, if we tolerate the consolidation of a surrogate state in Central America responsive to Cuba and the Soviet Union, we will see the progress that has been achieved begin to unravel under the strain of continuing conflict, attempts at subversion, and loss of confidence in our support.

There can be a more democratic, more prosperous, and more peaceful Central America. I am prepared to devote my energies toward that end. But I also need the support of the Congress. Yesterday, the Senate in a bipartisan vote for peace and democracy confirmed the commitment of the United States to those who struggle for lib-

erty. I urge that the House of Representatives support such a measure today.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN.

VIRGINIA, April 22, 1985.

To the U.S. Congress

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: I am writing you on behalf of Mr. Wycliffe Diego, a Miskito Indian who has been a leader of the ethnic organization of Nicaragua, Alpromisu, later named Misurasata, and now called Misura.

Mr. Diego has learned of the debate going on the Aid to the Nicaraguan rebels and is concerned about the outcome of your decision. The points he has asked me to convey to you are—among others—the followings:

The Miskito Indians believe that would be a moral responsibility of the US Congress to create thousands of refugees by not supporting the will of Nicaraguans who are looking to regain their country and their rights. They ask you to continue supporting their struggle.

To grant the status of "refugees" to those who are fighting would be to replicate the tragedy that more than 40,000 Indians and Creoles suffer both in Costa Rica and Honduras, as well as to augment the number of those "relocated" under the iron fist of the Sandinista regime.

Mr. Diego asks you, *where are the refugees who are today in Honduras and in Costa Rica going to go? Where will go those who are inside Nicaragua expecting the liberation from the rebel forces and from their "allies"? What nationality will have the children born in a refugee camp? What rights do they have?*

According to Mr. Diego the Miskito Indians have a long and sad experience with the condition of being a refugee, of being repressed and harassed in their own country and of being forgotten and negotiated by those who are in a position of power, away from the day-to-day poverty and suffering. He asks that you review the complaints presented before the Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights by the Miskito Indians—through their Council of Elders—in November 1982; they reported about the mistreatment given to the Miskito Indians by some staff of the UNHCR as well as the bias approach they had in favor of the Sandinista regime. He states that even today they feel an attitude that favors the return of the refugees to Nicaragua despite the fact that conditions that caused the Indians exodus continue to exist in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. (ACNUR works through World Relief in Honduras and Mr. Diego acknowledges some improvement on the implementation of the programs but he says that the sympathy towards the Sandinista regime continues to pressure the refugees.

Mr. Diego will be in town next Wednesday and Thursday; he will try to visit you at that time. Thank you for the attention you give to this letter.

Very sincerely,

WYCLIFFE DIEGO.

ADRIANA GUILLEN.

□ 1540

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts Mr. BOLAND the former chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence.

(Mr. BOLAND asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOLAND. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of this amendment.

I do so with the firm conviction that the House should move beyond the failings of the Sandinistas—real as they are—and consider a workable program for the resolution of our differences with Nicaragua.

I believe it is time for this country to move beyond simply lashing out at the Sandinistas.

It is time to develop a coordinated policy toward Nicaragua that has a chance for peace:

That has the support of the Congress and the American people;

That can be endorsed—publicly and privately—by the nations of the region;

That makes use of regional bodies such as the OAS and the Contadora group; and

That encourages negotiation with Nicaragua.

And yet it is also clear that we must not abandon those who legitimately oppose the repression of the Sandinista regime;

Those who seek to halt its support for insurgencies, in the region;

Those who wish to revitalize its economy; and

Those who simply wish to live in Nicaragua in peace.

Mr. Chairman, we would not be here today debating this resolution if military pressure on the Sandinista regime had worked. Because it has not, we must seek other, more productive, ways to address the problem Nicaragua represents to us, to its neighbors and to its people.

The Hamilton-Barnes amendment does this by emphasizing collective action with our Latin and Central American neighbors:

By supporting strongly the Contadora process,

By encouraging in every way a ceasefire in Nicaragua and a dialog between the Sandinistas and their opposition—both armed and unarmed.

The incentive to the Contras for a cease fire is U.S. aid in the form of humanitarian assistance.

For the Sandinistas, the incentives are both positive—improved relations and trade—and negative—economic sanctions and congressional reconsideration of the military option. The boost to Contadora is a U.S. policy of full support, material assistance, and a cessation of U.S. efforts to overthrow the regime in Managua.

Yet, Mr. Chairman, the amendment is not blind to the failings of the Sandinistas. Indeed, it sets them forth in some detail. It acknowledges Sandinista repression, the Sandinista military buildup, and Sandinista threats against their Central American neighbors. It acknowledges human rights abuses on both sides.

But instead of a military response, the amendment offers the prospect of better relations with Nicaragua: