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## Central America

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# Reagan finally seeks Contadora's cooperation to end strife

by Gretchen Small

Following meetings with Colombian President Belisario Betancur in Washington on April 4, President Reagan announced a new peace proposal for Central America. While important elements of the U.S. proposal have not been accepted by the Contadora group, which has based its peace plan on total non-intervention and self-determination of every nation in Central America, the spirit of Reagan's initiative, which clearly rules out any U.S. military intervention in the area, was supported by Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, and Colombia, the nations which make up Contadora.

Although the Reagan administration has given lip service in the past to support for Contadora's role in the region, the Reagan/Betancur talks set up a collaboration that shows an understanding that the Contadora nations, all of which flank the Central American war zone, must play a crucial role in bringing peace to the area.

President Reagan's "new proposal for peace" in Central America centered on a 60-day ceasefire by U.S.-backed armed opposition forces in Nicaragua, through June 1, if the Sandinista government agreed to hold "Church-mediated talks on internationally supervised elections." Reagan reiterated his interest in cooperating with the peace efforts of the Contadora Group.

White House spokesmen reported later that day that President Reagan had sent a personal letter to Pope John Paul II to inform him of his proposals on Central America, and "seek his advice."

A remarkable density of telephone-diplomacy between Presidents in the Western Hemisphere followed. Within days, Reagan spoke personally to the heads of state of Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela to outline his thinking on the region. Colombian President Betancur had already been informed, and reported upon leaving Washington that he was the bearer of a "private message" from Reagan to the other heads of state in the Contadora countries.

The ceasefire offer was quickly supported by leading figures in the Contadora Group. Colombian President Betancur, speaking at his final Washington, D.C. press conference April 4, called the proposal "constructive," necessary to provide "propitious conditions to carry out reconciliation dialogues" in Central America. A similar appreciation of the

urgency of a cessation of hostilities was conveyed to President Reagan by Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid by telephone on April 8.

The proposal for "internationally supervised elections," and that a specific form of dialogue be a condition for peace, has been received with more caution. Contadora leaders stress that if the principle of the sovereignty of nations over the ordering of their internal affairs is violated in one case, it is violated for all. Betancur's report on his Washington visit, delivered on Colombian television the night of April 7, summarized the principal argument conveyed privately by other Ibero-American leaders. President Reagan "opened a ray of light on the delicate subject of support for the rebel groups in Nicaragua," Belisario stated. "We agreed with the President in seeking a dialogue between the Sandinista government and its opposition . . . all within the spirit of Contadora which promotes national reconciliations. . . . His peace proposal must be carefully analyzed and discussed, since it contains elements which are difficult to implement" since "acceptance belongs autonomously to the Sandinistas."

Thus far, the Nicaraguan government has rejected the Reagan proposal out of hand. "I say there is no peace proposal at all, that it is more like a declaration of war," Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escotto said on Nicaraguan TV. Embassy spokesmen stated that the Sandinista government will never hold a dialogue with the "counterrevolutionaries." To be watched more closely are discussions between the Nicaraguans and the Contadora Group on possible variations of the Reagan proposal. Talks began when Nicaraguan head of state Daniel Ortega met with Colombian Foreign Minister Ramírez Ocampo while both were in Havana, Cuba the weekend of April 8.

Popular support in the region for a strategy of negotiation and dialogue to resolve Central America's problems was demonstrated in El Salvador's presidential elections March 31. José Napoleón Duarte won an upset victory, leading a sweep by his Christian Democratic party of the country's National Assembly, on the basis of his campaign platform of continuing dialogue with rebel guerrilla forces on solutions to over five years of civil war. Defeated was the platform of his opponent, Roberto D'Aubuisson, for libertarian "free

enterprise" and an escalation of the war in the countryside. D'Aubuisson's campaign was also hurt when one of his top lieutenants was arrested in Texas for drug-running earlier this year.

Duarte's victory was a defeat for the U.S. State Department and its local enforcers, Lane Kirkland's American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). AIFLD and the State Department had tried to build up D'Aubuisson's candidacy and weaken Duarte's in the last month of the election campaign, claiming that a strong Duarte victory would upset the "balance" of political forces in El Salvador.

The only success the "balance" of forces policy can claim is the creation of weak governments with less power than the armed military bands of right and left which dominate the country. The combination of a more stable center of power in El Salvador with a potential 60-day pullback of fighting in Nicaragua defines the crucial opening for cooling out the volatile region.

## Development and peace

Now that President Reagan has opened collaboration with two forces in the region indispensable to peace, the Vatican and Contadora, what is necessary to add to the package is a plan for large-scale economic development.

The need to link peace and development was a constant theme of Betancur in Washington. "A peaceful solution through dialogue is more stable than a monologue of armed intervention" which would "unleash a wave of subversion" across the continent, he told an audience at Georgetown University April 3. "Without peace there will be no development; and without development peace cannot be consolidated. The fight in Latin America is not East/West; it is against underdevelopment. To break this vicious circle we have to implant everywhere a social infrastructure of schools, hospitals, aqueducts, and projects that generate employment, and increase exports."

In the same speech, Betancur criticized the Kissinger commission report on Central America for its "emphasis on pushing programs for the nations that show good behavior, and for the long term, a horizon in time by which we may all be dead. . . . Central America needs, in the shortest term, financial and technical resources, mechanisms to facilitate trade, better terms of trade, and lower interest rates."

Finally, Betancur presented a proposal to the U.S. congress to establish an "Alliance for Peace, Development and Democracy between the United States and Latin America," and "In the case of Central America, to support the Act of Contadora and . . . its plans for generation of the physical and social infrastructure required by the region." Subversion, is sometimes an inappropriate name for what our nations suffer, he said, "inappropriate because among us sometimes the subversives are not the masses nor their leaders, but our situations, our neediness."

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## Facts Behind Terrorism

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# Genscher seen again covering for Qaddafi

The affair evolving around the recent brutal murder of the Libyan exile Gebril el Denali in the German capital of Bonn demonstrates once again the abysmal state of German security agencies, which are still penetrated by the corrupted and poisoned political channels personified in the figure of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Genscher, who happens to be at the center of the political forces who want to pull the Kohl government away from the Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, repeated another "Tabatabai Affair," by refusing to take any serious steps against the outlaw Qaddafi regime. Two years ago, he interceded to free Iranian "diplomat" Tabatabai from heroin smuggling charges.

There are two facets of Genscher's scandalous behavior. First is his role as the pivotal figure among anti-Reagan forces in West Germany who would rather make back-channel deals with the Gorbachov regime than mount a defense of the West. Second is the depth of trade relations of Germany with the Soviet satrapy Libya. The Federal Republic is the second largest importer of Libyan oil, and Libya is the second largest importer of German goods into Africa. Of German exports to Libya, 22% are electronics, a fact with definite military implications.

Libyan exile Denali, who was active in anti-Qaddafi opposition groups, was shot to death on Saturday, April 6, by the Qaddafi-hired hitman Fatahi el-Tarhoni. The hit occurred in the crowded center of Bonn; two rounds which missed the victim seriously injured two German citizens. This action was taken immediately after another round of terrorist statements by Qaddafi, who had announced in February that he would take revenge against those who housed adversaries of his regime.

## BKA: Achilles Heel of security

The state secretary of Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann, Carl Dieter Spranger, called this act "another incredible case of state terrorism." State terrorism is a "real danger and a great threat to Western democracies," Spranger stated in the daily *Die Welt*, adding that a "global offensive strategy of Western states against this state terrorism" is needed. But after cabinet debates on the implications of the