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Los Angeles Times

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# Letters to The Times

# 'Nicaragua: Words, Words'

Thanks to The Times for "Nicaragua: Words, Words" (Opinion, June 22), scoring the Administration's use of the "word Wurlitzer" instead of the facts in its campaign for congressional and popular support for its *contra* war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. The editorial's concurrent appearance with the "brief" for *contra* aid, written by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, makes it especially appropriate.

In his brief, Abrams uses the propagandist's favorite tool: Assert that one's own actions stem from only pure motives and that one's chosen enemy acts from purely evil motives; repeat these assertions until they assume the mantle of truth. Thus is every fault of the Sandinistas seen as proof of this evil and every "positive" action dismissed as a "patient, flexible tactic" of Leninists. Thus is the Administration represented as wanting to "help Nicaraguans to achieve democracy."

This technique implies that all who do not see the Sandinistas as the Administration portrays them are well-meaning but naive, as well as requiring us to ignore the history of U.S. involvement in Latin America. This is why Contadora has been ignored, and even subverted by the Administration, for how could any group that would trust the Sandinistas, *even for an instant*, develop a workable peace plan. Never mind that Contadora and its support group represent 80% of the population of Latin America, and that a regional war in Central America is a far greater threat to us than Nicaragua will ever be.

As regards the Administration's commitment to democracy in Nicaragua, we should remember that the U.S. destroyed democratically elected governments in Guatemala and Chile, and replaced them with brutal, and long-lasting dictatorships. The Administration's use of the remnants of Somoza's National Guard (some of the most vicious men on earth) to "pressure" the Sandinistas (using purely terrorist methods) has not been lost on the people of Nicaragua, who have denied President Reagan's "freedom fighters" any Nicaraguan territory at all.

For five years now, the Administration has used violent methods to achieve its stated goals in Nicaragua, without success, and it shows no sign of abandoning this policy. When violent means to an end continually fail, perhaps we should ask whether violence itself might not be the end.

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