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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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May 10, 1984

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Harry:

Thank you for your continuing correspondence on Central America.

I would agree with you that we cannot force the governments of Central America into becoming democracies. Clearly, it is up to the people of these countries to develop their own democratic institutions. However, we in the United States can assist the democratization process through developmental assistance of various kinds. Over the long term, the social and economic stagnation of the region will be the greatest challenge that these nations face. In the short run, nearly all of these countries have serious security problems which must be addressed if our economic assistance is to be effective. That's why I believe that some military aid for several of these countries is necessary at this point.

I remain optimistic that the newly elected government of Napoleon Duarte can be effective if we in the United States do not vacillate in supporting his efforts to reform Salvadoran society. Such reforms will take time and they will be costly, but they are necessary. The U.S. Government, American business, private voluntary organizations, and individual citizens can and should play a role in this process of reform.

In Honduras, President Suazo Cordova has recently reasserted his authority over the Honduran military. This is a positive development as it strengthens the prospects of various democratic institutions in that country. We must continue to encourage the electoral process and to assist the Honduran economy. Unfortunately, Honduras does face a significant threat from Nicaragua as demonstrated by numerous attempts by Honduran dissidents to destabilize their government. Moreover, Nicaragua has been involved in the destabilization of not only Honduras, but Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Panama as well. I've examined the current situation in Nicaragua in some detail in a speech that I gave on May 1. I hope that you'll take the time to read it.

Sincerely,


David Durenberger
United States Senator

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