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# A Painful Decision for Carter

## President's Belief That Disaster May Be Imminent In Nicaragua Overturms Nonintervention Resolve

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WASHINGTON, June 21 — The decision to seek the ouster of the Somoza regime and the dispatch of an inter-American "peacekeeping force" to Nicaragua marks an anguished turning point for the Carter Administration.

President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance brought to office a strong determination to avoid actions similar to those of the Kennedy and

Johnson Administrations in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. The United States encouraged the coup that overthrew the Vietnamese Government of Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963 and dispatched forces to the Dominican Republic in 1965 to prevent "another Cuba."

But as the situation in Nicaragua continued to deteriorate and intelligence reports about Cuban involvement on the side of the rebels grew, the Carter Administration decided in the last few days to move decisively to try to head off what it viewed as an imminent human and political disaster.

President Lyndon B. Johnson was convinced that unless he sent armed forces into the Dominican Republic a Cuban-backed regime would emerge; similarly, the Carter Administration was concerned that the Sandinist guerrillas would win

power and swing Nicaragua toward Havana.

But officials said there were limits to parallels.

The realities of 1979 preclude the kind of unilateral action that was followed in 1965. President Johnson could send the Army's 82d Airborne Division into the Dominican Republic and only later win the backing of the Organization of American States and the token participation of Brazil, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras and Paraguay.

The Carter Administration, however, does not intend to be too far out in front of the Latin Americans. It did not act until eight other countries, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama, had either broken relations or signaled their unhappiness with the Somoza Government.

### Other Governments Informed

Other governments were informed in general terms in the past two days of the American plan, which was revised up until an hour before Mr. Vance unveiled it today. The six-point program was left deliberately ambiguous, in part because it was drafted in such haste, but also because the Administration wanted to encourage the Organization of American States to take part in forging a consensus.

The most controversial part of the plan, the sending of a peacekeeping force, does not say whether the United States would involve its own forces in Nicaragua, limit itself to logistics, or play no role at all.

It is not specific about when the force should go into Nicaragua, if, in fact, the organization approves the idea. Should the force be sent to bring about a truce or simply to protect one that the combatants must work out between themselves? The State Department said this had to be decided in the course of the debate.

The other controversial part of the plan is the formation of a new "interim government." Who should have a role in deciding the new leaders? Again, the Ad-

ministration chose to be guided by the debate.

The decision to go ahead with this plan was formulated on Tuesday afternoon at a White House session of the Standing Consultative Commission, the crisis-management group headed by Zbigniew Brzezinski, the President's adviser on national security affairs.

With Mr. Vance, Defense Secretary Harold Brown, and Adm. Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence, taking part, three important proposals were adopted. They were approved by Mr. Carter yesterday.

The first, according to officials close to the panel, was for the United States to play a more active role in seeking a collective inter-American decision to change the government in Nicaragua.

The second was to draw international attention to the Cuban role in the conflict. And the third was to stress the need for a peacekeeping force to insure a stable transition.

The decision to intervene was a difficult one and there was little certainty that the United States would be able to bring about a solution to its liking.

Recent history, officials acknowledge, is replete with examples of dictatorial anti-Communist regimes being replaced eventually by governments that violate human rights as badly.

But officials tonight were also saying that the intervention in the Dominican Republic did prevent "another Cuba," and as a result of American pressure, there is a democratic regime in that country where once the Trujillo family maintained power with the same authority as the Somozas.