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NLJ/LIS 2-10

~~Confidential~~

July 16, 1977

To: Terry Todman
Frank Devine

I vote against sending the attached letter to Bennet and Long, for the following reasons.

1. The Nicaraguan issue is very hot at the moment on the Hill, and unfortunately we are in the middle of it. Sending the attached, as is, will infuriate our liberal critics more, and keep us at the center of the controversy.

2. Some of Magagua Embassy's comments need revision. For example, I disagree with the P-555 statement that until last year "there was little indication of a potentially serious problem of human rights violations". It would be suicide to send that statement up to the Hill. Compare that with John King's Confidential remarks (attached).

3. Whether intentionally or otherwise, just about every one of our points is a refutation of Somoza's critics, although of course we limit ourselves to their criticism of us. Thus, the impact of our statement is misleading. It would help to include a reaffirmation of where we have come out on Nicaraguan military aid (none without significant human rights improvement) in the covering letter.

4. I vote for redraft and holding up transmittal until after next week's Senate Nicaraguan debate. D/HA should also clear. I've marked this for Terry because I think it is very important in our relations with Congress, H and D/HA

G. Lister

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cc: Wade Matthews

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By cbm, NARA, Date 12-19-06