

'send in the Marines'

moderate alternative is going to be difficult. The odds don't favor it, and no one is willing to put money on it. There are a lot of uncertainties in this situation.

Q: *That's the problem. If it works, fine. But what if it doesn't? When push comes to shove, and it's a question of the Sandinistas taking over, what can we do?*

Smith: That's the question. What would this country do? Would the public tolerate getting involved? Jimmy drew the line in Iran. Maybe in this hemisphere the line would be different. Maybe Iran taught us a lesson, I don't know. The question is how far will we go? Obviously the most efficient thing is to send in the Marines. We have to work back from that. Maybe we can't send in the Marines, so we work back from that.

Q: *What about the OAS. Couldn't we get something going there?*

Smith: What about the OAS? What do you mean? Once there is a lull, they could intervene between the two sides in a peace-keeping function, but if you're talking about sending in the OAS now, it won't get approved. You're asking if the OAS would intervene at the point the Sandinistas—let's say for the purposes of our argument—would be on the verge of taking over. That won't work. You can't send them in to defeat the Sandinistas. Other countries [in the OAS] wouldn't agree to it. The politics of the OAS won't permit it. No one

is going to want to send in their troops to get shot at in Nicaragua. It has to be for peace-keeping.

Q: *You mean if Somoza survives the present Sandinista offensive, there will be a lull in the fighting and that's the time to move in the OAS; we'll be able to take advantage of the lull?*

Smith: Exactly. Once there is a lull. We'll see some action soon. In two to three weeks everyone is going to be groggy, battle-fatigued. Somoza will survive but he is going to be groggy, waiting for the next round.

Q: *What about having Condeca help Somoza?*

Smith: That's a very critical question.

Q: *Why? I thought they were solidly behind Somoza.*

Smith: It's not so simple. The question is if they think they can win. Look, Somoza has what? Twenty, twenty-five thousand troops. Would another ten thousand from El Salvador, or another fifteen thousand from Guatemala make a difference? If they go in, how long would they stay? A year? And they have their own contingencies too.

Q: *What if some of Somoza's own officers decide to get rid of him?*

Smith: You mean a coup?

Q: *Right.*

Smith: Sure. They might decide to put him on a plane to Miami or they might just shoot him. If I were in the National Guard, that's what I'd do. It's quite possible.

U.S. seeks Dominican Republic replay

On June 9, articles began appearing in the U.S. press which openly called for a U.S. "show of force" or military intervention in the Nicaragua crisis. The Washington Star led off the campaign with a banner headline on that day proclaiming "U.S. Sees Somoza Finished, Hopes for Exit to End Crisis" by Jeremiah O'Leary. Excerpts follow:

The White House, State Department, and Pentagon are of one mind that Somoza must go before it's too late for the moderate opposition and the National Guard to form a new government in the face of growing strength demonstrated in the latest offensive of the Marxist-oriented Sandinista rebels....

But despite its opposition to Somoza, the United States is even more opposed to a Communist takeover of Nicaragua....

Among the options being considered at high levels here this weekend are the following:

... Sending American naval units to make a show of force off the Pacific coast of Nicaragua to demonstrate to anti-Communist elements in Nicaragua that the U.S. will not tolerate another Cuba in the Western Hemisphere....

Some officials are comparing the situation to the Dominican intervention in 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson sent in U.S. forces to separate the two sides in that civil war but under the aegis of the Organization of American States.

If the Somoza regime falls to the Sandinistas, some officials believe the United States would call an emergency meeting of the OAS in order to obtain approval for a military intervention similar to the Inter-American Peace Force which imposed peace and a democratic government on the Dominican Republic.

While the peace force of 1965 included troops from Brazil, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Panama and Honduras, the majority of the 25,000 troops were U.S. Marines and paratroopers....