

SAVING TELEGRAM

BY BAG

FROM WASHINGTON

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TO FCO TELNO 23 OF 28 AUGUST 1984 AND
INFO SAVING NIO(L) AND (B), CGs in USA, UKDEL NATO, PARIS, BONN,
ROME, UKMIS NEW YORK, UKREP BRUSSELS, MOSCOW, PEKING

MY TELNO 2522: REPUBLICAN PARTY PLATFORM: FOREIGN POLICY

SUMMARY

1. The treatment of foreign and defence policy occupies one quarter of the platform. Little detail other than on the Americas. Problems generally seen through an East/West prism. Few major departures from current Administration policy.

DETAIL

(A) The Americas

2. The Americas are given pride of place in the foreign policy section, with a predictably heavy emphasis on Central America, the Caribbean and the Communist threat. Canada, Mexico and the whole of South America warrant only fleeting attention. The military action in Grenada is given low-key treatment but the platform sees "a profound moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest and territorial expansion", and roundly endorses the Monroe Doctrine.

3. On Cuba, the document maintains that only American firmness will thwart Castro's attempts "to export terrorism and subversion, to destroy democracy and to smuggle narcotics into the US". There is no hint of future negotiations with Cuba, but a clear distinction is drawn between Castro's "brutal dictatorship" and the Cuban people.

4. The passages on Nicaragua pull few punches. The Sandinistas are accused of threatening their neighbours, persecuting their own people, and drug-smuggling. No mention is made of US or Contadora efforts towards a negotiated outcome, but further US assistance for the "democratic freedom fighters" is endorsed. The platform states that "Nicaragua cannot be allowed to remain a Communist sanctuary, exporting terror and arms throughout the region".

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Comment In the months ahead that statement will doubtless be interpreted many ways.

5. El Salvador, in contrast, is hailed as a success story, founded on US assistance in the tradition of Truman's post-war aid to Europe. But the platform notes that there too human rights and political reform are under Communist attack.

(B) Europe

6. The platform contains a welcome re-statement of America's vital interest 'in keeping Europe free of Soviet domination: the East/West and Alliance passages were reported and commented on in my telno 2509. There is a reference to resolving the Cyprus dispute as a matter of "highest priority" (and a clear statement of non-recognition of the TRSC), and an unexceptionable one-sentence reference to Northern Ireland, expressing concern for peace and justice in the Province and condemning violence and terrorism.

(C) Middle East

7. The platform breaks no new ground on the Middle East but generally reaffirms current US policy. No new preconditions are introduced for recognition of the PLO, although reference is made to its "homicidal subsidiaries". The moral and strategic relationship with Israel is endorsed and Israel's strength, backed by US assistance, is identified as the main bastion against Soviet domination of the region. There are pledges to help maintain Israel's military edge over its adversaries, and to support Israel's defence industry, but few hints about future US aid. Jerusalem is treated non-controversially: no mention is made of the US Embassy. Iran is all but ignored, although the President is praised for his crisis management throughout the Iran-Iraq war. Little mention is made of the Lebanon (and none of the marines). Syria is seen as increasingly subject to Soviet influence; but references to Libya are less hostile than might have been expected (and much less hostile than the references to Nicaragua).

(D) Asia and the Pacific

8. This section, except for the references to China and Hong Kong (covered in separate telegrams), follows established policy. East Asia is presented as an economic miracle, under threat from Soviet, North Korean and Vietnamese military aggression and intimidation. There are standard references to the build up of Soviet forces in the area, and use of chemical weapons in South East Asia and Afghanistan,

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pledges to continue support and humanitarian aid. Apart from a brief reference to maintaining security assistance to Pakistan there is no reference to the Subcontinent.

9. The passage on Japan reflects the Reagan/Nakasone rapport. Relations "have never been better ... We are heartened by Japan's increases in defence spending and urge Japan to further expand its contribution to the region's defence".

10. The relationship with Communist China is firmly predicated on shared opposition to Soviet expansionism. The platform language on Taiwan is in a lower key than in 1980. The Chinese not surprisingly reacted to the reference to the Taiwan Relations Act and the absence of references to the three US/PRC communiques, but neither this, nor the similar passage in the Democratic Party Platform, would in practice be likely to affect future US/China policy, which as currently established is broadly bipartisan.

11. There is a pledge to promote economic development and democratic principles in the Philippines, and a commitment to the continued security of Clark and Subic Bay bases.

(E) Africa

12. Africa is treated briefly and blandly, with no mention made of humanitarian issues. No effort is made to justify constructive engagement or to distinguish between Reagan and Carter policies in Southern Africa (apartheid is described as "repugnant"). No credit is taken for the Nkomati accord. /Current

Current US efforts on Namibia are endorsed but Crocker is likely to find the reference to "the expulsion of Cubans from occupied Angola" unhelpful.

(F) Foreign Assistance and International Organisations

13. For the most part, references to Foreign assistance are predictable, with the platform arguing that the central element should be "to share with others the beneficial ideas of democratic capitalism". Little is said about bilateral assistance other than a routine threat to reduce or eliminate it to nations with hostile foreign policies. There is a specific commitment to continue to provide necessary Security and Economic Assistance to Africa, and to encouraging African countries to reject Marxist systems.

14. On multilateral organisations, credit is taken for directing a larger proportion of IDA to Africa, but IDA is criticised for its alleged predilection for nations with state dominated economic systems, and the platform strongly supports the decision not to increase IDA funding. Somewhat surprisingly, the platform argues for the elimination of the US contribution to IFAD due to its "consistent bias towards non-market economies". The decision to leave UNESCO, "the worst of the UN organisations", is strongly supported and the UN is generally warned that the US will take a sharply critical attitude to policies not in the US interest. A commitment to stop multilateral funding of projects detrimental to the US economy sits oddly next to the statement that "the greatest danger today to our international trade is a growing protectionist sentiment".

15. The platform repeats the line recently taken by Congressman Kemp that austerity programmes of international organisations such as the IMF are undesirable: "austerity should be imposed not on people but on governments". The platform refers to the recently passed amendment in FY84 supplemental that US bilateral assistance should not be controlled by the policies of any particular multilateral institutions (US Treasury take the view that this language does not inhibit their normal wish to see US bilateral aid used in ways consistent with policy reforms supported by the IMF and IBRD).

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The reference to UNESCO forms part of a section which bluntly attacks international organisations, in particular the UN, which are accused of cynicism and double standards. There is a warning against UN involvement in Antarctica and outer space, and strong support for the President's "decisive rejection" of UNLOSC.

(G) Terrorism

17. Terrorism is described as a new form of warfare against democracies, and one used by the Soviet Union. "Combatting it requires an integrated effort of our diplomacy, armed forces, intelligence services, and law enforcement organisations".
The platform speaks of the need for consideration of preventive and pre-emptive actions.

HANNAY
(PALACE)
FCO / WH
NAD