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President Reagan On Rumored Break In Diplomatic Relations With Nicaragua

by Deborah Tyroler

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At White House press conference on the evening of Nov. 19, President Reagan said his Administration had not "thought of" breaking diplomatic relations with Nicaragua to increase pressure on the Sandinista government. He reiterated that his Administration believes "very much in supporting the contras, because we believe in the contras' cause." Next, Reagan claimed the contras have shown that "all they seek is to be able to put enough pressure on the Sandinista government...to negotiate with them and the people of Nicaragua for the kind of government" they were promised when fighting the revolution against the Somoza dictatorship. He said that after the revolution, the Sandinistas "as communist groups usually do" did everything they could to "get rid of their fellow revolutionaries, and they seized power and created a totalitarian, communist state." According to Reagan, the contras have never proposed overthrowing the government, but wish only to negotiate, and to have a government installed as "promised to the Organization of American States." Thus, he said, there is "value in maintaining relations" with Nicaragua, since it "gives us a listening post."

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