

El Salvador the place to halt America's retreat

Washington—The great American retreat began in 1973. Congress, falling upon a mortally-wounded president, stripped him of the authority to punish Hanoi with air power if Hanoi violated the Paris peace accords. Then, in as dishonorable a deed as ever committed by an American Congress, our former allies, still in the field, Saigon and Phnom Penh, were denied the weapons needed to defend themselves.

Hanoi, with a more reliable ally than the U.S. Congress, was resuscitated from Richard Nixon's punishing air strikes, re-armed and re-equipped. Two years after the last American soldier had left South Vietnam, the communists launched their second offensive. This one succeeded. As predicted by President Kennedy, when he enunciated the "domino theory," South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were absor-

of the central government greater than anticipated.

So, now, President Reagan and Secretary of State Gen. Alexander M. Haig have shoved in their chips on the side of the central government. The war for El Salvador has become one the United States cannot lose.

The world knows the junta there is America's creature, that the economic and social reforms undertaken were drafted at the Department of State, that the guerrillas are not democratic reformers, that their M-16s, Uxis and Soviet mortars were not manufactured in the hills. If El Salvador goes, the communists will roll up Central America from the Panama Canal to the oil fields of Mexico. If the Yankees cannot contain Cuban expansion in Central America, our own backyard, how credible our hair-chested commitment to contain Soviet expansion in Russia's back yard, the Persian Gulf?

Whatever the military cost in advisers, air power and economic aid to El Salvador, it ought to be paid. Our objective there should not be simply eradication of the guerrilla movement, but the removal of Soviet influence from the Western Hemisphere.

With an infusion of weapons from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, the Sandinistas can be given a taste of the medicine they have force-fed their neighbors. But, ultimately—and the sooner the better—the United States must cut out the hemispheric cancer of Fidel Castro. We cannot go about Latin America putting out one fire after another—without confronting the arsonist, Castro, the hired man of the Soviet Union.

Given the weakness of Castro's economy, the vulnerability of his overextended adventures in Africa, the hostility and hatred of so many of his own people, the vast distance from his patron, Cuba itself should be vulnerable to precisely the pressures it has applied against other nations.

America's allies in Europe and Latin America, after being shown evidence of Cuban involvement in El Salvador, should be pressured to join an American economic quarantine. Arms should be shipped from America's allies and collaborators: Egypt, Israel, China to the Unita guerrillas in Angola who can make Castro pay a price in blood for continued occupation of that country. The South Africans should be urged, clandestinely, to include Cubans in their attacks on the Soviet-supported in-

urgents of SWAPO, inside Angola. A Radio Free Cuba established in Florida could encourage the anti-Castroites on the island to adopt the tactics of the people of Poland. Among the refugee population here, certainly, there can be recruited young men for guerrilla operations on Castro's island.

To halt the long American retreat, America needs a victory, somewhere, over

a Communist revolution. In that sense, El Salvador, where Cuba is committed, far, far from the source of Soviet strength, represents an opportunity. All talk of compromise, of coalition government, should be set aside and this particular revolution strangled in its crib.

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ed into an Indochinese communist federation. The brutality in the South, which sent millions fleeing into the South China Sea, had been predicted. The barbarity of the conquering communists in Cambodia exceeded the wildest imaginings of the American people.

Listening to a U.S. Congress whining about "no more Vietnams," the Russians ferried 20,000 Cuban troops across the Atlantic to Angola. From there, two invasions were launched into Zaire, and preparations made for a drive southward into Namibia.

In the Western Hemisphere, Castro saw the American paralysis induced by the Vietnam debacle. The tiny island of Grenada fell to a Castroite coup. And Castro personally coordinated the guerrilla forces in Nicaragua. Romanticized by the customary organs of the American press, the Sandinistas overthrew the Somoza government, which had been cut adrift by its old friend, the United States.

"Now there are three of us!" exulted Castro on his triumphal entry into Managua.

By Jan. 20, Castro hoped to add a fourth. With Cuba as privileged sanctuary and principal source of weaponry, and Nicaragua as transshipment point, the guerrillas in the mountains of El Salvador launched their offensive last fall, to present President Reagan with a fait accompli Inauguration Day.

They failed. Their support among the people was less than hoped; the opposition

Battleground . . .

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Under terms of the lease, the decision as to whether the Ratt, himself, will be a bastion of democracy or an emerging democratic people's republic will be left to the flip of a coin.

His loyal royal subjects will then become, respectively, either Soviet-armed, Marxist-Leninist fanatics or American-supplied running dogs of capitalist expan-

sionism. They will then set out to happily cut the Ratt's throat and he will happily retire to his new villa on the French Riviera. So all the Phynkians will be happy.

As for Secretary Haig and Foreign Minister Gromyko, each has vowed never to back down even should this confrontation in Phynkia last 100 years. The other members of the U.N. certainly hope so.

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