



Is there more hope for movement on Nicaragua's borders if Dukakis wins the US race?

Dukakis Drifts Right

Since Michael Dukakis sewed up the US Democratic Party nomination he has quickly staked out a centrist foreign policy for the presidential showdown in November.

In contrast to the relatively liberal positions he espoused during the tight primary contests with Jesse Jackson, Dukakis' message now is aimed at wooing the confidence of big business and right-wing Democrats.

Dukakis' choice of foreign policy advisers reflect his fear of being branded a liberal. With little personal experience in foreign affairs, the governor has surrounded himself with a nucleus of professors from Harvard University's John F Kennedy school of government, most of whom were

office-holders in previous administrations. The Kennedy school people pose as technocrats above politics (neither hawks nor doves, they call themselves owls) but represent a dangerously-outdated cold war vision.

Since 1980 most of the centre-of-centre brain trust has been in patient waiting, some working in the Reagan administration charting a middle-ground for US defence policy between the 'extremes' of disarmament and unchecked militarisation.

Dukakis' choice of Bentsen to 'balance' his liberal image indicates that the Democrats feel they not only have to cater to corporate interests, but actually have them on the ticket. A multi-million dollar oil tycoon, Bentsen has voted with Reagan on foreign policy issues more than any other Democratic senator save one.

Under Dukakis, the US would certainly place a higher priority on respect for hu-

man rights and international law in its foreign affairs. But the Massachusetts governor is unwilling to re-examine US interests abroad or rule out military intervention to promote those interests.

These days, the candidate emphasises his strong support for current NATO strategy and praises Reagan's approach to US-Soviet relations. He urges further negotiations to reduce nuclear and conventional arsenals in Europe, but recently proposed a concurrent 'Conventional Defence Initiative' (CDI) to bolster NATO forces, designed to 'apply advanced technology to the challenge of fighting - and winning - a conventional war' on European soil.

Dukakis' defence priorities favour a comprehensive test ban and he has consistently taken firm stands against the proposed Midgetman missile and the mobile version of the MX system. But at the same time he backs the highly



America week. Massachusetts was the first state to approve funds for refugees facing deportation. The \$0.25m legal aid effectively halted deportation of thousands of Hondurans and Guatemalans.

The candidate has also been an outspoken opponent of contra aid. He claims he would amend the National Security Act to prohibit covert action to overthrow or destabilise foreign governments.

The Democrats incorporated some tough language on southern Africa into their otherwise cautiously-worded platform. Dukakis has consistently condemned the South Africa regime and its war on the Front Line states. He has backed a comprehensive sanctions bill presently in Congress that requires all US firms to divest within a year and bans almost all trade between the two countries. The only foreign policy concession that Jackson supporters managed to pry from Dukakis calls for 'a certain date by which US corporations must leave South Africa' and for 'special aid' to Mozambique.

At Jackson's prodding, Dukakis also came down hard on US policy toward Angola, sharply criticising military aid to Unita. A recent Dukakis statement asserted US policy 'has made us an ally of apartheid and of South Africa's aggression against its neighbours' and called for a negotiated settlement in Angola, and South Africa's immediate withdrawal from Namibia.

Party tacticians claim this centrist foreign policy strategy will win back voters they lost to Reagan in 1980 and 1984. But Dukakis' failure to mobilise a mass base will make campaign finances (where Republicans excel) a greater factor and ensure a largely conservative, middle-class turnout. And Dukakis' rightward drift has alienated many of the 7.7m progressives who cast their ballots for Jackson, a constituency crucial for Dukakis victories in the Northeast, California and the South. •
Paul Hockenos

accurate Trident D5 submarine-launched missiles, the Stealth bomber and new cruise missiles, as well as modernisation of land-based intercontinental missiles. The Dukakis team rejected the Jackson delegates' proposal for a 'no first use' pledge and for a Pentagon spending freeze.

On the primary trail Dukakis called for an immediate halt to SDI. But now that appears only to mean no premature deployment of technically unfeasible components of a 'shield', allowing research and development of defensive nuclear systems to continue 'at a reasonable pace'.

Dukakis has expressed a genuine sensitivity toward Latin America. A Spanish-speaker who studied in Peru, he has a personal link with the region. As governor he refused to send Massachusetts National Guard troops to Honduras and proclaimed an annual Central



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