The election eye . . .

Hansen takes strange position on Nicaragua

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U.S. Rep. George V. Hansen, R-Idaho, has been unusually successful in promoting emotional issues which are highly popular with the people of Idaho, such as opposing OSHA, Internal Revenue Service, Panama Canal treaties, and Taiwan relations abrogation.

It's thus surprising to see him side with the despot and now deposed Nicaraguan President Somoza, and against the Sandinista guerrillas.

Such a stance is hardly likely to increase his political popularity in Idaho where Somoza is generally looked on as a harsh dictator who ravaged the country and its people for his own personal comfort.

News reports indicate, that contrary to Hansen's assessment, Somoza did not have the support of the downtrodden people and the guerrillas indeed were part of popular uprising against Somoza.

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Hansen, as chairman of the American Security Council, charged recently that President Somoza, rather than the Sandinista revolutionaries, are viewed by the Nicaraguans as friends of the pepple. He issued this statement at a press conference some two weeks ago but it was soon after that that Somoza fled the country and yielded his office.

Hansen pointed out that he and his wife, Connie, and the radical right Democrat of Georgia, Rep. Larry McDonald, visited Nicaragua without any fear of their safety or life.

This didn't square with the facts when Hansen himself issued another news release to the effect that a Nicaragua radio brodacast said he and McDonald, would be prosecuted as mercenariesies if they insisted on staying in Nicaraguan territory until the end of the Somoza government. As it turned out, the Hansen party was in Nicaragua only one day and they were careful to give no advance announcement they would visit that unfortunate country.

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Hansen now has the temerity in the light of events to ask for a congressional investigation of the Department of State on the Nicaraguan and Central American situations.

Hansen signed a letter, along with Idaho's other U.S. representative, Steve Symms, and 112 others asking the president to intercede in behalf of Somoza and again the revolutionaries.

The letter specifically asked stopping influx of weapons and logistical support for the Nicaraguan revolutionaries from Cuba and Panama, stop use of Costa Rican territory as staging area for the revolutionaries; and to support its allies, meaning Somoza, against "Soviet-backed aggression, and restore U.S. military aid programs to Nicaragua.

He charged the state department is misleading the Congress and the public with facts regarding Central America.

Subsequent news reports indicated, however, that while the revolutionaries are hardly a complete representative of the people, they are much more preferred than the dictatorial Somoza. In fact, they aren't much better than the Somoza faction.

U.S. Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, proposed a more sensible approach suggesting getting the support of the bankers and the more intellictual factions to create a government that more truly represents the people.

Since Somoza hurredly left, his handpicked successor, Francisco Urcoyo, was soon ousted, confirming the Somoza administration doesn't have the people's support. Even the state department refused to give backing.

Perhaps Hansen can make a case for his stand but events which have taken place so far indicate he has a tiger by the tail. His position is not only untenable but unpopular among the avid conservatives of Idaho where lies base of his strength.