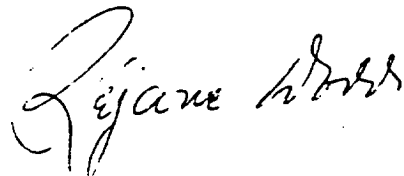


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Nicaragua as we did very successfully with Cuba 25 years ago. This can be done by extending export credits to Canadian businesses and seeking to attract the \$140 million spent by Nicaragua last year in the United States. Sure it's inconvenient to increase the agricultural quotas from Central America at this moment, but the temporary inconvenience will have far greater political and economic pay-offs down the road. CIDA which to date has dealt fairly with Nicaragua should, therefore, increase its aid to the area. Individual Canadians who last year gave more than \$2 million in the Tools for Peace Campaign can also help by earmarking donations to non-governmental organizations, such as OXFAM, CUSO and CANSAVE, with an excellent track record in that country. 25 years ago the Conservative Government of John Diefenbaker refused to knuckle under to pressure from the White House and break relations with Cuba. Since that time, an excellent trading relationship has developed, providing a very favourable trade balance for Canadian businessmen, and allowing tens of thousands of Canadians to visit Cuba's beaches every year. Confrontationist policies by the U.S. Administration were counter-productive then and will be so again.

While we should not over-dramatize the importance of our contribution, nevertheless we should not simply sit back. What is needed at the moment is a mixture of Canadian courage and generosity to defuse this volatile situation. After all, isn't that what honest brokers are all about? For Commentary, this is John Kirk in Halifax.

CBC: John Kirk is the Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies in Halifax.



Réjane Dodd
Media Relations Officer