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March 29, 1986

The Editor
Union Leader
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Dear Sir:

It may be that this week will prove to have been a watershed in American history. How would America respond to those in a desperate fight for freedom in Nicaragua?

When history laid before us a clear choice, the time had come to choose the path we would follow, to select the values that would guide our future, to stand before the world, at last, and be what we had long claimed to be - the champions of freedom.

And America chose. She chose to equivocate.

It was a time for a ringing response to tyranny - "Thus Far and No Farther!" It was a time for the casting off of accretions of trivial concerns, of self-doubt and guilt. It was a time for a great national affirmation of the values for which those who went before us gave their lives; the values that have called people from degradation in all corners of the earth, to the individual dignity that freedom alone can give.

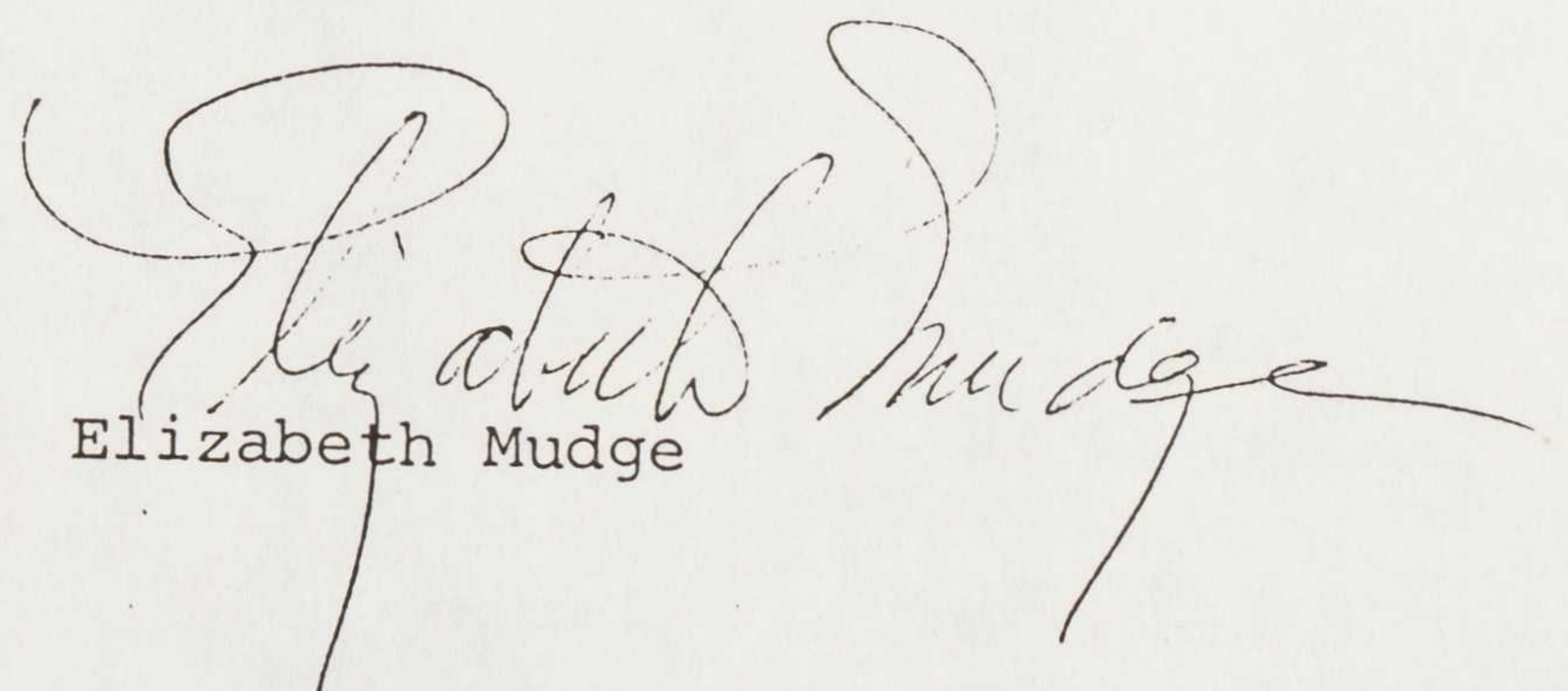
It was a time to lift America to the pinnacle she used to occupy - an inspiration to her sons and daughters, and a symbol of hope and courage everywhere.

It was also a time for quibbling, for political maneuvering, for bargaining. It was a time for chipping away at greatness, until only niggardliness and irresolution were left.

We heard no clarion statements in our Congress that in our hands and in ours alone, rests the responsibility for preserving for the world the living reality of free people, humane in their relationships, prosperous in their undertakings, and generous in their concerns.

The great moment, the great gesture, the great commitment, was lost. Once again, we, who could have moved magnificently in defense of a beleaguered humanity, are doing too little, and quite possibly doing it too late.

Do we know what we have lost? Will history give us such a chance again? Will we, in our uncertainty, turn away with finality from the unsought privilege of setting the course of history toward freedom once again?


Elizabeth Mudge