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# **“The 72-Hour Document”**

## **The Sandinista Blueprint for Constructing Communism in Nicaragua**

*A Translation*



Department of State Publication  
Coordinator of Public Diplomacy  
for Latin America and the Caribbean

*Released February 1986*

## INTRODUCTION

Barely 2 months after the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution in July 1979, the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) met in secret for 3 days to assess the current situation and lay plans to consolidate their power. Although their detailed report on the meeting, *Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista People's Revolution*, was intended to be an internal FSLN document circulated only among party members, within a few weeks the report became well known outside Sandinista circles.

This report, commonly referred to as "The 72-Hour Document," was the Sandinistas' basic blueprint for constructing communism in Nicaragua and spreading subversion throughout the region. "The 72-Hour Document" discussed the attitudes and motives of the FSLN in detail so as to provide orientation and guidance to party members. The document was not a comprehensive account of the meeting, however, for, as indicated in its introduction, "in a report which we want to circulate widely to all our militants, both within the country and abroad, we cannot divulge the fundamental aspects of what was discussed." Even though the most sensitive subjects discussed at the meeting were thus deliberately omitted, the document provided a rare glimpse into the Sandinistas' true intentions and revealed that their actual policies were far different from those they espoused publicly. The report underscored the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the Sandinistas: its underlying premise was that the FSLN was the "vanguard party" in Nicaragua leading the "class struggle" against the domestic bourgeoisie and "American imperialism, the rabid enemy of all peoples who are struggling to achieve their definitive liberation."

During the revolution, the FSLN had led a broad and popular coalition in the fight against the Somoza dictatorship. Central to the formation of this alliance was the Sandinistas' pledge to promote pluralism, a mixed economy, and a nonaligned foreign policy. However, "The 72-Hour Document" revealed that the Sandinistas' true objectives were far different—that they regarded this alliance with other anti-Somoza forces simply as a tactical maneuver to help them gain power. The Sandinistas actually believed that "the true enemy we would have to confront was the imperialist power of the United States"; thus "the alliance that took the form of the Government of National Reconstruction . . . was dictated by the need to neutralize Yankee interventionist policies in light of the imminent Sandinista military victory." The Sandinistas were pleased that it was unexpectedly easy to organize the new government; they did not have to negotiate its composition with "the opposition parties of the bourgeoisie" but had only to appoint certain "patriotic figures who were somewhat representative." In the eyes of the FSLN, this revolutionary alliance

of convenience disappeared in a few days, "and the Sandinista Front emerged as the hegemonic force of the Nicaraguan Revolution."

The Sandinistas perceived that their principal domestic enemy was the "traitorous bourgeoisie." They believed that "by defeating the National Guard and toppling the dictatorship, we also dealt a decisive blow to the power of the bourgeoisie." Nevertheless, the FSLN saw a potential threat because much of the economy remained in the private sector and the "bourgeoisie" would try to rebuild a model of economic development based on free enterprise and tied to the West. The Sandinistas' foremost tasks, therefore, were to break the economic power of the "bourgeoisie" and increase State control of the economy. They declared "we must isolate the traitorous bourgeoisie . . . . We should hit it not by attacking it as a class, but by attacking its most representative elements as soon as they give us the first opportunity." The Sandinistas envisioned employing both political and economic means "to annihilate the counterrevolutionary enclaves of the traitorous bourgeoisie."

The Sandinistas sought to divide and neutralize other political forces in the country. Their strategy was to absorb the "most rational elements" of non-Sandinista organizations into the revolution, attracting the "petty bourgeois masses by giving them their own organizations and integrating them into the affairs of State" while separating these groups from the "traitorous bourgeoisie." They judged that because of the "international situation," it was necessary to allow the existence of democratic parties; e.g., Liberals, Conservatives, and Social Christians, which they denigrated as "groups of organized petty bourgeoisie."

The Sandinistas would base their new "revolutionary democracy" on the Marxist concept of democratic centralism, where numerous "mass organizations" would be used to implement party policies and allow the participation of the populace. The Sandinistas made clear that power rested with the FSLN national leadership, not the masses, and that "the Secretariat of the masses will transmit, through the national bodies, the policy the mass organizations should be required to follow." The Sandinista leaders even noted their concern that a few local leaders were displaying some independence "instead of playing their proper role, which is that of control, vigilance, and demanding that the State policy drawn up by the FSLN is followed to the letter." The Sandinistas assigned a high priority to developing their "mass organizations" such as the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS)—"block committees" modeled after the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution—and FSLN-controlled labor confederations. The Sandinistas concluded that "[we] should aim all our political efforts . . . to involve the organized masses in the central tasks of the

revolution and set them against the main enemy [the bourgeoisie].”

With regard to the Church, a powerful institution in Nicaragua and a key factor in the struggle against Somoza, the Sandinistas concluded that they should maintain “a careful policy which seeks to neutralize as much as possible conservative positions and to strengthen our ties with the priests sympathetic to the revolution, while at the same time we are stimulating the revolutionary sectors of the Church. With the Protestant Church, which is generally formed by North American religious sects, we should adopt a restrictive policy, conduct an intelligence operation on them, and, if they are caught, arrange for their immediate expulsion.”

The Sandinistas recognized that they faced no military threat; all that was left of Somoza’s National Guard was “shame, smoke, and ashes.” In their view, there was at the time no sign of any “armed counterrevolution by *Somocista* forces from abroad which actually threatens our stability.” Despite the absence of any threat, the Sandinistas laid plans for a large, highly politicized army loyal “to the revolution and to the leadership of the historic vanguard: the FSLN.” These plans called for continual “political education” efforts within the Armed Forces using “militants of the vanguard with recognized revolutionary qualities,” a purge of the army at all levels to eliminate “elements who are incompatible with revolutionary measures,” and “mandatory military service.”

The Sandinistas planned a foreign policy based on “national sovereignty and independence” and on “the principle of revolutionary internationalism.” Their goal was the consolidation of the Nicaraguan revolution which in turn would help to strengthen “the Central American, Latin American, and world revolution.” They determined to assist “national liberation” movements in Latin America.

“The 72-Hour Document” is a statement of FSLN policy and objectives in September 1979, a time when many people both inside Nicaragua and abroad still looked to the Sandinistas to fulfill their promises of pluralism, a mixed economy, and nonalignment. The document shows that while Nicaragua’s democratic parties were directing their efforts toward building a genuine democracy, the Sandinistas were scheming to neutralize all rival political

groups. While the private sector was seeking ways to revive Nicaragua’s war-torn economy, the Sandinistas were planning their campaign to crush the bourgeoisie and secure control of the nation’s economy. While the United States was seeking to develop a positive relationship with the new revolutionary government in Nicaragua and was initiating a major aid program which totaled \$118 million by early 1981, the Sandinistas viewed themselves as an integral part of a Communist world revolution and regarded the United States as their “rabid enemy.”

The situation facing Nicaragua today is a legacy of Sandinista efforts to implement the policies prescribed in “The 72-Hour Document.” The Sandinistas’ mismanagement coupled with their efforts to weaken the private sector and assume control of an ever larger share of the economy have led to unprecedented economic hardships for the Nicaraguan people, including unemployment, inflation, shortages, and rationing. The political situation is highly polarized; those parties willing to play along with the Sandinistas are permitted token representation, while those who are committed to true democracy have been frozen out of the political process. The independent trade union movement has been stifled, with democratic labor leaders harassed and jailed, and many driven into exile. The Sandinistas’ efforts to undermine the Catholic Church have led to verbal and sometimes physical attacks on church leaders, expulsion of many priests, and even heckling of the Pope as he celebrated Mass in Managua. The Sandinista Army has grown from about 5,000 in 1979 to an active duty force of more than 62,000—the largest in Central America—and the Soviets and their allies have provided it with an arsenal of tanks, artillery, and gunships without precedent in the region. Sandinista assistance to Marxist subversives throughout Central America has contributed to an increase in violence and turmoil.

The Sandinistas’ betrayal of the original promises of the revolution and their efforts to construct a Marxist-Leninist state in Nicaragua—as outlined in “The 72-Hour Document” in the fall of 1979—have alienated many abroad who had initially supported the revolution and have led thousands of Nicaraguans who had opposed the Somoza dictatorship into open rebellion against this new Communist dictatorship.

# Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista People's Revolution<sup>1</sup>

*Political and Military Theses Presented by the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front at the Assembly of Cadres:*

**“RIGOBERTO LOPEZ PEREZ”**

*held September 21, 22 and 23, 1979.*

## **FREE FATHERLAND OR DEATH**

*“From the Fatherland of Sandino.”*

*October 1979*

\* \* \* \* \*

*October 5, 1979*

## **I. Introduction**

### **BROTHERS:**

The First National Assembly of Cadres of the Sandinista National Liberation Front took place in Nicaragua on September 21, 22 and 23, 1979. Although not all leaders and rank-and-file cadres were in attendance, there was sufficient representation among the comrades present to give us a fairly good idea of the situation in our country.

The National Directorate called this assembly, which bore the name of the national hero, Rigoberto Lopez Perez,<sup>2</sup> in order to have a direct exchange of ideas with responsible, intermediate cadres on the national problems and on the internal activity of the organization.

As a result of these 3 days of work, and after analyzing the national situation, guidelines were drawn for the purpose of formulating concrete proposals for the different areas of work and for the different sectors involved in our revolutionary process.

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<sup>1</sup>The following translation conforms as closely as possible to the original Spanish text. Material in brackets rather than parentheses, e.g., interpretations of initials or abbreviations, has been inserted to assist the reader. Similarly, minor revisions have been made in the format; e.g., capitalization, paragraph spacing and indentation, in order to make the translation more readable. Footnotes have been added to clarify certain references in the text.

<sup>2</sup>Rigoberto Lopez Perez assassinated President Anastasio Somoza Garcia in September 1956.

We need to underscore the transcendental nature of this assembly in the history of our organization, as, by unanimous consensus of the Sandinista delegates, it was agreed to call in the future our top body [the] National Directorate of the FSLN. In fact, this was the first time that the leaders, cadres, and militants of our organization were gathered together. This assembly confirmed in a definitive manner

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*. . . we realized more clearly that the true enemy we would have to confront was the imperialist power of the United States and, to a lesser degree, the treachery and demagoguery of the local reactionary bourgeoisie.*

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the indestructible unity of our vanguard organization, which, led by the National Directorate and unanimously supported by all our militant and revolutionary membership and our people, once more confirms that our people, led by the FSLN, are victoriously marching toward the sun of our historical and total liberation.

For obvious reasons, in a report which we want to circulate widely to all our militants, both within the country and abroad, we cannot divulge as we would like to the fundamental aspects of what was discussed. We are certain that within the party structure, the political guidelines and analyses can be expanded upon and dealt with at greater depth.

All our militants should devote time to study these guidelines and look for creative ways to apply them in their respective areas of work, while, at the same time, through proper party channels, they should convey their opinions, ideas, and contributions which could better define and enrich the guidelines in this circular.

## **II. The Present Situation**

### **1. The Sandinista Revolution and the Question of Power**

Over the past 2 years, the struggle for power in Nicaragua essentially centered on seeking the overthrow of

the Somoza dictatorship through a military defeat of its principal means of support: the *Somocista* [National] Guard. The strategy of our organization for the armed struggle can be said to be based on three vital objectives: a) the national and international isolation of the dictatorship; b) a bold policy of national alliances of a combative character; and c) the development of all forms of insurrectional participation of the masses. Through a decisive combination of political and armed struggles, our organization, particularly since the second half of 1977, by promoting and utilizing the growing participation of the masses in the political and military struggle, turned the structural crisis of the *Somocista* system of oppression of our people into an ever deepening and uninterrupted crisis.

From the moment of the unleashing of the political crisis for the regime, the Sandinista National Liberation Front brought back to the surface the power system that imperialism and the local reactionary forces had created during the 1930s for the purpose of resolving through the creation of a puppet military regime the failure of the military intervention which had been humiliated politically and militarily by the patriotic forces led by our national hero, Augusto C. Sandino. From the very beginning of the crisis

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of the bourgeoisie.***

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of *Somocismo*, we realized more clearly that the true enemy we would have to confront was the imperialist power of the United States and, to a lesser degree, the treachery and demagoguery of the local reactionary bourgeoisie.

We should make special mention, in order to clarify the issue of the nature of the power which emerged with the triumph of the revolution, of the spectacular rise of the struggle of the masses. The last 2 years, from the middle of 1977 on, were decisive in the overthrow of the dictatorship, because during that period our people began to involve themselves more and more in the strategy for the conquest of power as implemented by our organization.

The class struggle was taking a massive, all-encompassing, revolutionary character. Actually, our people understood and comprehended with absolute clarity that, in order to satisfy their enormous needs, the dictatorship had to be overthrown by a popular revolutionary movement.

The masses were increasing their heroic participation in the struggle, not retreating a single step in the face of the regime's genocidal repression, toughening their spirit and forms of struggle, seeking a confrontation with the dictatorship, and overcoming all obstacles. These included the efforts to overcome the subjective conditions which served to limit the power of our vanguard, that is to say, the

problem of the different factions and that of deviations from the strategic line.<sup>3</sup> Our organization was faced with two crucial problems in securing the military defeat of the dictatorship: on the one hand, solving the material problems of a type of war which was extraordinarily complex because of its diverse forms of combat, its intensity, its scale, and its extensiveness; and, on the other hand, neutralizing through an adroit combination of internal and external alliances and a spectacular diplomatic struggle of worldwide extent the interventionist policies of imperialism intended to make our Sandinista revolution fail.

In the final months especially, it was over one point that all those who for different circumstances found themselves involved in the Nicaraguan conflict became enmeshed in an obsessive struggle: the retention or dissolution of the National Guard, although clearly between these two extremes there was a variety of intermediate positions. Actually, the Sandinista Front had all the advantages. We can say that the historic trap that imperialism and the local reactionaries had set for the Sandinistas in 1933 and 1934 by the substitution of a native interventionist force allowed the Sandinista movement, under today's conditions, to draw imperialism and the reactionary bourgeoisie into a colossal ambush which proved extremely effective. With the combination *Sacasa-Nicaraguan Guard*,<sup>4</sup> they succeeded in cutting short for Sandino the continuity of the struggle using the banners of national liberation, especially since the Yankee troops, with the greatest of cynicism, had withdrawn early in 1933, without the political and economic domination having been resolved in favor of our people. The military dictatorship, which was founded as a consequence, created, with the passing of the years, sharp contradictions and was rejected by all the "democratic" segments of the population. The Sandinista movement of today, facing the Somoza-Genocidal Guard combination, was able to wage a true struggle of national liberation by raising the highly unifying anti-Somoza banner while at the same time routing the military underpinnings of the bourgeois system of domination, with the help of the bourgeoisie itself. In order to clarify further the question of power, it is necessary to assess more carefully the significance of the defeat of the National Guard. Imperialism in Nicaragua—with the model that it imposed on us, just as on the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Venezuela, El Salvador, etc.—saw its domination assured through the National Guard. *Somocismo* in Nicaragua, rather than an accident, was a historic necessity that resulted from the meshing of a militarist model of imperial domination with the characteristics of a traditional society, strongly paternalistic, where the influence of the land-owning aristocracy heightened the power of family clans. But the guard was really the essence of power. With the defeat of the guard,

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<sup>3</sup>In the mid-1970s, the FSLN split into three feuding factions: the Prolonged Popular War faction led by Tomas Borge; the Proletarian faction led by Jaime Wheelock; and the Third Force or Insurreccionalist faction led by Daniel and Humberto Ortega.

<sup>4</sup>Juan Bautista Sacasa was president of Nicaragua in the early 1930s.

the substance was attacked, and, of course, the form, *Somocismo*, fell to pieces.

On the other hand, the military dictatorship model was applied in Nicaragua under socioeconomic conditions that could not allow imperialism to establish its domination by using the national bourgeoisie as a direct intermediary—as it was able to do in other societies such as Argentina and Chile. The bourgeoisie in Nicaragua was just beginning to come to life when it was uprooted by the intervention of 1909. And at the time of the crisis of imperialist power in 1927 and 1933, this same bourgeois class was nearly wiped out economically by the impact of the great world depression. There was no alternative other than that of installing a direct military dictatorship without class intermediaries. For this reason and the natural weakness of the native bourgeoisie, the political and economic power of the Somoza dictatorship attained a markedly monopolistic character. The bourgeoisie in Nicaragua did not really pursue its own policy but was limited to developing its role of accumulating material possessions, while in reality it was represented by the dictatorship in the political field. This explains why, when the dictatorship was collapsing as an instrument of domination, the bourgeoisie, lacking parties and political know-how, resorted to trade unions and economic organizations to strengthen its political participation.

In reality, we helped bring about the fusion of the crisis of the capitalist model with that of the dictatorship, so that the crisis of the latter became, of necessity, the crisis of the economic order, the exhaustion of a dependent capitalist system, based on the super-exploitation of labor, which had made of the military dictatorship a historical necessity.

For this reason, the overthrow of the dictatorship by the revolutionary action of the masses and their vanguard historically opened the doors not only to a new political regime but also, and most importantly, to a new and different socioeconomic plan of transition, the base necessary to build the new revolutionary power, the expression of the interests of the workers, peasants and all the other oppressed sectors of our people.

It is important to emphasize this here, because by defeating the National Guard and overthrowing the dictatorship, we also dealt a decisive blow to the power of the bourgeoisie.

## 2. On the Correlation of Forces

The Sandinista victory of July 19 erased all the question marks. The pressure of the imperialist circles and international reactionaries was of no avail in saving what for some was mainly the support of their geopolitical interests and for others the preservation of the bourgeois democratic system. The National Guard was not even disbanded by decree as some had hoped; after having suffered successive humiliating defeats, the National Guard collapsed like a house of cards and fled in disgrace with its tyrants, its commanders, and its false heroes. Few victories in the annals of revolutionary war have been as complete as the

Sandinista victory. All the events that usually accompany such a defeat occurred at a dizzying pace one after another: military defeat in the war fronts, the takeover of urban centers, the rout of the commanders, the flight of the high command, the capture *en masse* of prisoners of war, the general disarming, and, as the culmination of the wickedness, the total rout. Nothing was left of that army but shame, smoke, and ashes. It was totally routed.

The Government of Reconstruction—the result of a special class alliance but principally the political alternative

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organized by the Sandinista Front to neutralize Yankee intervention—entered triumphantly into Managua under conditions totally different from those which had existed at the time of its creation. The war had been won by *Sandinismo*, and the people recognized above all the total victory of *Sandinismo*. It is true that in the situation prevailing in 1977, the alliance with the democratic elements of the bourgeoisie was skillfully aimed at the main objective of isolating *Somocismo* and widening the forces of the Sandinista Front. It was an alliance for internal neutralization; nevertheless, the alliance that took the form of the Government of National Reconstruction, the Cabinet, and, to a large degree, the same basic program of the FSLN, under the circumstances of the new insurrectional offensive, was dictated by the need to neutralize Yankee interventionist policies in light of the imminent Sandinista victory. Actually, the selection and organization of the government was a relatively easy task, as it did not have to be negotiated with the opposition parties of the bourgeoisie, but merely involved appointing patriotic figures who were somewhat representative. Thus, in practice the Government of Reconstruction began its administration in a situation different from that which had given rise to it. The presence of known Sandinista figures in the government compensates for the lack of consistency between the political system which the government put in place and the hard facts of the Sandinista revolution and the crushing military victory.

The alliance that the MPU<sup>5</sup> represented also was somewhat affected by our revolutionary triumph. In a few days

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<sup>5</sup>The United People's Movement (MPU), an alliance of 22 political, labor and mass organizations of the left, was formed in July 1978 and was pledged to bring down the Somoza regime.



the MPU disappeared and the Sandinista Front emerged as the hegemonic force of the Nicaraguan revolution, lending momentum to the growth of mass organizations. A partisan army without precedent began to be organized within a State which nevertheless still had vestiges of old institutions; a Sandinista people; and, finally, the red and black flag<sup>6</sup> covers the national territory. We can assert, without fear, that internally there is no force other than that represented by *Sandinismo*.

We can nevertheless state that since July 19, the FSLN exercises the control of power in the name of the workers and other oppressed sectors or, to put it another way, that the workers control power through the FSLN. However, despite its sweeping victory, *Sandinismo* has not made radical moves to transform all this power once and for all into the power of the workers and peasants, because political expediency dictates that more favorable conditions be developed for the revolution and requires that first the more urgent task of its political, economic, and military consolidation be obtained in order to move on to greater revolutionary transformations.

Thus, 2 months of government have netted the revolution few results that we could consider sweeping. We Sandinistas are engaged in military and political organization, consolidating our revolutionary bases, but we have not yet advanced with the same energy in the area of in-depth economic and social transformations which this time would change, in historical terms, the relations of power between workers and capital.

With regard to the economic project in itself, of course, our economy is still in a state of deterioration and overall production levels are down because of the war, among other things, but mainly because of the economic disaster into which Somoza plunged the country, leaving it a foreign debt of around 1.6 billion dollars.

In spite of this, certain economic measures have been taken in order to place the economy on a course which could give the people the independence which they really need. These fundamental measures for the economy of the country are:

- a. The expropriation of the property of Somoza and the *Somocistas*.
- b. The nationalization of banks.
- c. The creation of the Agrarian Reform Institute.
- d. The expropriation of unoccupied houses and lands.
- e. The creation of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce.

Of course, we will not see the results of these steps in the short term but rather in the medium and long term. The Somoza dictatorship caused economic damage of unbelievable consequences.

With regard to the expropriation of the property of Somoza and *Somocismo*, we can say that the Agrarian Re-

form Institute has in its possession 6 million manzanas<sup>7</sup> of the finest farmland of the country, farmland which once belonged to *Somocismo*.

There are no less than 140 enterprises clamoring for qualified personnel and financial resources to be able to keep this process moving forward and to prevent industrial production from grinding to a halt.

But, with the factories and lands of the *Somocistas*, we have a starting point for the economic transformation of the country. To those we should add the immense wealth of the State which was previously in the hands of individuals and corporations who took for themselves whatever they could and exploited it for their personal gain. This has stopped. Our projects are ambitious and the results of the initial investigations indicate that, despite disproportionate and uncontrolled exploitation of our natural resources, we have prospects for obtaining substantial amounts of foreign exchange by making optimum use of the resources of the State for production.

The nationalization of banks will enable us to begin monitoring funds entering the country and to manage them

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properly. Government financing will be determined by the real needs of those who request it in accordance with the interests of the people.

Another important economic measure which will benefit the masses is the rent freeze, which will tend to eliminate landlords in such a manner that negotiations can begin for the State to take over all rental housing and implement a policy of readjustment of rents whereby the tenant will pay the State a given percentage of income.

However, it is not only through the Agrarian Reform Institute that the first tasks of the revolution will begin to be implemented in the countryside. At present, there are two kinds of production units: the large farm administered directly by the State, and the cooperative sector which also is managed by INRA [the Agrarian Reform Institute] and consists of the various agricultural cooperatives that are being organized.

<sup>6</sup>Red and black are the colors of the FSLN flag.

<sup>7</sup>1 manzana = 1.75 acres.

Six million manzanas of land have been taken from *Somocismo* and placed under the direct responsibility of INRA. In Leon alone, there are 45,000 farm workers in 84 production units run either by cooperatives or by the State.

INRA itself has under its control 23% of the coffee production, placing the State in a position of direct influence in this important sector of production. As of now, INRA expects to receive 23 million dollars in aid from other governments and a loan of 800,000 dollars from the IDB [Inter-American Development Bank].

Finally, the creation of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce marks the beginning of an open trade policy with all the peoples of the world, without any considerations other than those arising from our own people. This will allow the centralization and control of imports and exports pursuing a suitable policy of giving priority to imports which are strictly necessary and of exporting products which will earn

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***. . . the dominant factor which dictates the rules in matters of politics is the alignment of forces at the international level, and, more specifically, the influence exerted at the continental level by imperialism and its allies.***

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us the foreign currency to meet the needs of our own development as a revolution.

With regard to the agricultural sector, despite the widespread smuggling and thefts that have occurred in some parts of the country, it is estimated that for 1979, that is to say during the last months of the year, it will be possible to export some 30 million pounds of meat more than *Somocismo* had, reaching a total of 90 million pounds, which will bring in approximately 100 million dollars.

Concerning grain production, it is estimated that there is a 44% shortfall, including rice, beans, corn, and sorghum. The biggest problems are with corn. Some 125,000 manzanas were planted, whereas about 190,000 were planted previously, and the crop is not expected to satisfy the needs of the country. Only 10,000 manzanas of beans have been planted, when usually 25,000 were sown before, but with a late harvest, the needs of the country will be met.

There are no great problems with rice, but the supply of sorghum will not satisfy national demand, as only 30,000 [manzanas] were planted compared to 90,000 sown under *Somocismo*.

We should clarify that during the Somoza era, both the government and private enterprise inflated and exaggerated the figures in order to make production costs appear higher and thus make bigger profits.

With regard to cotton, between 40,000 and 45,000 manzanas were planted compared to approximately 250,000 planted previously. This would mean a decrease of foreign exchange earnings to only 100 million dollars, the same as

from beef, with the difference that with beef 80 cents of every dollar remains in the country, while with cotton 80 cents of every dollar is spent on imported inputs. When we speak of an estimated 100 million dollars, we also include cotton byproducts (seed, twine, etc.). The decreased cotton production will have grave consequences for the revolution because of the unemployment it will cause among the peasant masses.

We already have lopped off a strategic portion of the economic power of the bourgeoisie, reinforcing the material bases which strengthen the position of the exploited classes. Nevertheless, we can assert without ambiguity that only a change in the relations of production which begins in this area of the social economy of the State administration will really tilt, this time in depth, the balance of power between classes in favor of the oppressed, who already count on—this should not be discounted—the power of the arms of the Sandinista People's Army which assures from now on the irreversible character of the conquests and goals achieved so far.

It is important to note, and it is a matter on which for different reasons the FSLN and the bourgeoisie appear to agree, that the dominant factor which dictates the rules in matters of politics is the alignment of forces at the international level, and, more specifically, the influence exerted at the continental level by imperialism and its allies. In other words, under the present circumstances, although it would be wise to maintain a skillful posture of neutralization with respect to imperialism, the FSLN appears instead to have adopted an instinctively defensive posture which has placed us in a conservative position without the benefit of a definite policy for this phase. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie, contrary to the conservative role it played in the past, finds itself in an excellent position to take advantage better than we can of the machinery of the State, its own economic base, and its channels to enhance the contingency policies of imperialism in order to affect our revolutionary process.

Imperialism lost its armed instrument in Nicaragua and lacks secure means to set up in the immediate future any reactionary movement. The kind of military victory achieved over the dictatorship makes it impossible for now, from a practical point of view, to organize aggression by the defeated GN [National Guard], mainly because it would require the solid support of a border or at least nearby state. But Honduras, forced to maintain a neutral position while it is going through a complex internal situation, and El Salvador and Guatemala, which are facing problems of social upheaval, could not embark on such a chancy venture. Probably some GN detachments who maintain contacts with hardcore leaders and could eventually obtain the support of unofficial right-wing military groups or gangs like the '*MANO BLANCA*'<sup>8</sup> can engage in very limited terrorist or banditry activities. In addition, subversive acts organized by saboteurs of the ultra left or lumpen [proletariat] elements infiltrated in our ranks could contrib-

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<sup>8</sup>The *MANO BLANCA* is a right-wing terrorist organization.

ute in some way to a spontaneous counterrevolutionary uprising.

Without downplaying the need for a strong army capable of assuring the National Defense, it should be noted that at present there are no clear indications of an armed counterrevolution by *Somocista* forces from abroad which actually threatens our stability. Actually, what merits our attention, from this point of view, are domestic matters. From another point of view, it appears far more likely that for some time to come counterrevolutionary action from abroad will be in the form of financial pressure organized by imperialism to destabilize the social and economic foundation of the Sandinista revolution.

Up to now, the rousing momentum of our resounding, historic victory plus the confidence of the masses in their vanguard, the FSLN, have enabled us to maintain a con-

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***. . . it should be noted that at present there are no clear indications of an armed counterrevolution by Somocista forces from abroad which actually threatens our stability.***

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siderable degree of leadership over our people. Moreover, a determined political pragmatism practiced by the FSLN has won us the overwhelming support of the middle classes of the population. It can be said that the substance of the FSLN's policy since July 10 translates to a large degree into a policy attractive to the patriotic elements of the nation, as reflected by the influence of various factors which have affected our decisions, such as:

- a) The need to gain ground to consolidate our army.
- b) Keeping a high degree of social cohesiveness, particularly with the bourgeoisie.
- c) Expectation of financial aid from the Western bloc.
- d) The need to eliminate any legitimacy from the imperialism's tactics of undermining our position.
- e) Common sense (pragmatism) in matters of political direction on the part of our organization's leadership. After all, it is a positive development that this "intermediate" situation is helping to stimulate desires to merge with the FSLN which have been expressed by "middle-of-the-road" political groups such as the PLI [Independent Liberal Party], the PS [Nicaraguan Socialist Party] of Ramirez, the Progressive wing of the MDN [Nicaraguan Democratic Movement], PC [Communist Party of Nicaragua], and the PSC [Social Christian Party], while, at the same time, the bourgeois reaction remains politically bankrupt. On the other hand, however, this type of institutionalization will give rise to contradictions, the signs of which are already beginning to surface.

Moreover, Sandinista energies have been devoted to bringing together all those social sectors which in the past had been oppressed in its mass organizations, the only means through which they can guarantee the realization of their most heartfelt aspirations. The impact of the revolution has penetrated deeply into the revolutionary masses, because they were the principal actors in the struggle, the force behind the triumph. Nevertheless, our people are still going through a truly trying situation, at a stage during which we are working to create the indispensable foundation for the new regime to function and to bring about the necessary conditions for solving the acute economic and social problems that afflict the population. But it is evident that 60 days after the triumph the masses have advanced qualitatively in political consciousness, in organizational experience, in education, and in combative spirit further than other revolutions. In this time alone, the social base of the Revolution, the workers and the peasants, have organized themselves in great numbers in the Sandinista Workers Central and the Rural Workers Association, acquiring a strength never before seen in our country. The people's organization—CDS [Sandinista Defense Committees]<sup>9</sup>—operates nationwide; the youth and the women, like other social sectors, are rapidly organizing themselves for the purpose of consolidating and defending the revolution. Nevertheless, greater efforts are required to show the organizations their true role now that the contradiction between people and dictatorship has been resolved. Now the issue is to defeat the new enemies, those who are against the revolution and the reconstruction of the country in accordance with the aspirations of the oppressed and exploited masses. And it is in the area where our people, despite all vicissitudes, are demonstrating with great fervor their unbreakable will to defend its revolution and to follow the leadership of the FSLN.

Another danger facing the masses and specifically the workers movement is posed by the efforts to divide, confuse, sabotage, and boycott undertaken by the right and the ultra left. In the case of the latter, its efforts are expressed not only in the political and organizational field but also take the form of armed action. Although they are not sufficiently strong to take power, they aim to create an image of instability about our country in the international community and to confuse some backward sector of our people such as the peasants by taking advantage of the freedoms instituted by the revolution through the government.

Instead of going into a detailed explanation, we will cite some examples. The labor relations between employers and workers have remained practically intact, and with minimal changes the Ministry of Labor maintains the same structure that it had under the dictatorship. Unemployment is high both in the cities and the country. Wages have not been adjusted and the rate of inflation is really hurting the grassroots segments of the population, while the most im-

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<sup>9</sup>The CDS are "block committees" modeled after the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

portant measures of the revolution are of a structural character whose effects can only be felt in the long run. In the meantime, there is fertile ground for the anti-Sandinista agitation conducted by groups such as the Workers Front and the PS [Nicaraguan Socialist Party] of Chaguite [Domingo Sanchez]. Paradoxically, the reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie can find a magnificent opportunity to confuse the masses and even to organize them in blocs of resistance against the measures taken by the government. This is the case with the Large Coffee Growers Cooperative where reactionary sectors were able to bring together thousands of small producers who today are effectively manipulated by reactionary pressure. This type of situation demands that rather than a policy which up to now has been characterized by a series of realistic actions which are not always coherent, we adopt policies which fall within a strategic concept of the revolutionary phase which has been opened with the Sandinista victory.

### 3. The Problem of the Character of Our Revolution

We should avoid unnecessary theoretical arguments and attend directly to the matter which in effect is endangering the success and deepening of our Sandinista People's Revolution.

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***The reactionary bourgeoisie is defenseless, knowing by class intuition that its fate can depend upon a telephone call.***

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lution. It is evident that the military base of imperialism in Nicaragua has been destroyed; for today, there is no interventionist aggression knocking at our door. The reactionary bourgeoisie is defenseless, knowing by class intuition that its fate can depend upon a telephone call. There is broad consensus about the need for sweeping changes. However, we Sandinistas are not exercising all the power that the victory on July 19 gave us. This failure of ours to exercise our power has been more pro forma and quantitative rather than real and qualitative, but, in any event, it is evident that we have to strive to lay the foundation of a system of power that will not endanger the stability of our revolution.

The conduct of the bourgeoisie in these last weeks, in addition to certain moves of imperialism in the financial field, gives us an important clue about how to determine, if not the character of our revolution in a global sense, at least the frame of reference for formulating a political strategy for the current phase.

Through the dictatorship and its hub, the GN [National Guard], something defended imperialism in Nicaragua. This something is an economic system which, since its establishment, represents one cog in the movement of the overall machinery of imperialism. It is the continuity of this sys-

tem that constitutes the primary objective of imperialist policy, and, today in our country, despite the revolution which has had a principally political and democratic effect, the bases exist for an imperialist alliance with groups of traitors for the purpose of undertaking a counter-revolutionary plan. The worst of all is the fact that both imperialism and the bourgeois traitors can avail themselves

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***In short, in our country the enemies of the revolution are . . . [t]he traitorous bourgeoisie, the principal instrument of the counterrevolution.***

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of the Nicaraguan State itself to carry out their plans.

The fact is that the economic and financial sector of the State, with the exception of the agrarian reform—and with certain limitations even in this case—are in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This situation could afford the opportunity for the most reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie and for imperialism first to rebuild and then to consolidate a model of economic development with the following elements:

- a) Maintaining dependency with respect to imperialism.
- b) Strengthening the “free enterprise” system.
- c) Isolating and undermining revolutionary social and economic programs.
- d) Strengthening as an economic and political class one sector of the bourgeoisie: the “traitorous bourgeoisie.”

As basic aspects of this model to be promoted with every external resource and internal support, we should mention:

- a) Promoting in the government the thought of the indispensable need for the “take-off” of the reconstruction to be based on heavy foreign indebtedness, which would bring the Nicaraguan debt to a level of 4 billion dollars. This would lock our country to the international capitalist system with a permanent deficit economy. In other words, we sell cheap what we produce and they sell to us at high prices that which we need in order to produce and to subsist; and, because the balance of trade is not in our favor, they will make us loans to keep on going.
- b) Attracting, through financial resources and promises of “renegotiations,” the IMF [International Monetary Fund] into Nicaragua. This means shackling our economy to all the extortionist policies of imperialism in matters of control of investments, employment, wages, exchange rate, taxation, etc., which, of course, are at odds with revolutionary policy.
- c) Increasing dependency on technology and supplies originating in the USA and its allies.

- d) Renegotiating the foreign debt, but under political pressures and conditions which are detrimental to the sovereign measures which we can take in economic matters.
- e) Through agents infiltrated in the government, injecting substantial financial aid to rebuild and ensure the expansion of "local" capitalism. Also, using "American" banks as bridgeheads in the country to strengthen the "free enterprise" system. Some organization could take over the management of the financial assistance while at the same time playing the role of political leadership.
- f) Tying whenever possible the financing to private banks or financial mechanisms protected by the Government of the United States, and the Congress, so that, in the event of any nationalization, they could invoke the just compensation clause, which, if not resolved, could lead to the application of an automatic [economic] blockade.
- g) Contaminating industry, commerce, and private agriculture with North American capital or joint investments in order to protect the Nicaraguan enterprises by [linking them with] this same blockade mechanism.
- h) Curtailing the eventual assistance that could be channeled to the public sector.
- i) Supporting the political strengthening of the trade unions, associations, and parties of the bourgeoisie.

In short, in our country the enemies of the revolution are:

- a) The traitorous bourgeoisie, the principal instrument of the counterrevolution. **This enemy is personified in the class of the financial oligarchy**, which is trying to entrench itself in industry, commerce, and agriculture (the Fernandez Hollmans, the Montealegre Callejas, etc.),<sup>10</sup> the commercial and industrial sector which had not yet become a financial oligarchy but had played a leading role in private initiative, and the class of local agricultural bourgeoisie which is attempting to create alliances with the peasantry for the purpose of creating a counterrevolutionary social base, particularly with the most backward of the peasantry.
- b) The vestiges of *Somocismo*, represented by the *Somocista* government officials, members of *Somocista* organizations, paramilitary personnel, *Somocistas* who have infiltrated mass organizations and the army, as well as the corrupt practices which characterized the Somoza regime.
- c) The ultra-left sectors who are trying to confuse the people by the use of provocative attitudes against the revolution.

The above does not, of course, exhaust the subject [but] attempts to show that it is through financial means

that, for now, the beginning of a tactic of distorting our revolution is being put into effect. For today there are no other reactionary forces to promote, and it is evident that imperialism, after having failed time after time to prevent our victory, is now counting on elements who are at its disposal to continue its persistent action to undermine [the revolution]. In our opinion, this is the main danger that we are facing. That is precisely where we are the weakest and least experienced.

For this reason, we believe that our revolution, if it has a clear democratic content, should at the same time endeavor to achieve our National Liberation in the economic field. And this is the essence of one of the tasks most clearly bequeathed to us by Sandino. We should remember that in 1933 he pointed out that while the Yankee intervention appeared to have ended, political and economic intervention remained intact. Politically we have dealt a tremendous blow to imperialism; however, it is in the economic field, where the bonds of domination are maintained and now threaten to become the basis of the rebirth of an axis of counterrevolutionary forces, that in the medium term a serious danger can exist to our revolution.

Consequently our revolution should make qualitative progress in the economic field as well, seeking how to

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### *Politically we have dealt a tremendous blow to imperialism. . .*

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transform the social relations of production in all that area in which we have brought the bourgeoisie to bay, incorporating urban and rural workers *en masse* into the struggle for fundamental changes in Nicaraguan society.

In this way, the nature and character of our revolution will be advancing during this transitional phase, opening all the avenues of power in its dimension which must belong solely to the true creators of social wealth: The workers.

## III. Our Tactic

Recognizing fully the harsh domestic and international situation and knowing that the Sandinista People's Revolution is marching toward its definitive emancipation, after completing the democratic transition stage, we need to indicate the political and military course of action that the forces of the revolution ought to pursue under the present circumstances. For a long time, American imperialism, the rabid enemy of all peoples who are struggling to achieve their definitive liberation or who are in the process of achieving it, established by force bonds of political and economic domination in our country through various means. By eliminating forever the political-military tool created to exercise this domination, our people have suc-

<sup>10</sup>These are prominent families in Nicaragua's private sector.

ceeded in breaking the bonds that tied them to the imperial dominion. They did not, however, do away with the economic dependence fostered for years by the dictatorship and the bourgeoisie. Therefore, our revolution must have a strong national, anti-imperialist emphasis, stressing efforts to achieve national liberation in an economic sense without neglecting its political and military consolidation at the domestic and international levels.

The specific circumstances which resulted from the events in Nicaragua leading up to the fierce battle in which the dictatorship was toppled have given the Sandinista Front and its people an extraordinary degree of power, capable of imparting a markedly democratic, popular, and anti-imperialist quality to the process. They also are an important factor in shifting the correlation of forces in our favor and moving the revolutionary process forward in its transitional phase. An undertaking such as this requires a correct tactic in the different fields and a skillful channeling of all revolutionary forces and their allies against their enemies, that is to say, the traitorous bourgeoisie, the vestiges of *Somocismo*, and the ultra left at the domestic level and American imperialism at the international level.

Attracting our friends and forming with them a solid bloc to neutralize the moves of the reactionaries and to isolate and crush our enemies implies performing the following tasks during this stage:

1. Isolate the traitorous bourgeoisie, the ultra left, and the vestiges of *Somocismo* from the democratic sectors; and organize the driving forces of the Revolution and place all forces under the leadership of the FSLN.

It is extremely important for our vanguard to unite all sectors of the nation around the defense and the consolidation of the revolution. Its main strength lies with the work-

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***... groups opposed to the revolutionary process must be crushed!***

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ers and peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the democratic sectors of the bourgeoisie that identify with its political blueprint, and it is from these groups that it must extract all of the energies that it needs to achieve its objectives. The organized revolutionary masses are the inexhaustible source of power, the sole force that can preserve the revolution and spur it on to greater revolutionary transformations. Only they can go the distance precisely because they carry inside themselves the power to transform capitalist society. Although it is true that our main concern is to unite all democratic, progressive, and revolutionary sectors to consolidate the revolution, it is much more important to ensure the influence, education, organization, and guidance of the most revolutionary classes, turning them into the driving force of the revolutionary process.

Preventing the dispersion of the worker-peasant movement and of the masses in general in a country in which certain organizations for their own interests have traditionally striven to keep them dispersed is a complex and difficult task. Nevertheless, we should aim all of our political efforts in that direction in order to involve the organized masses in the central tasks of the revolution and set them against the main enemy whom we will inevitably have to confront. The position in which the Nicaraguan revolutionary movement finds itself as a result of its victory enables it to take a more advanced stand in this regard, particularly because *Sandinismo* is capable of influencing and establishing its political and military leadership over all segments of the masses. The policy we will have to follow in the future must be for *Sandinismo* to lend greater strength and vigor to activities of the masses and, at the same time, to place leftwing political groups under our leadership with an eye toward gradually absorbing them [into *Sandinismo*] and its mass organizations.

It is in the way that *Sandinismo* is able to show its ability to unite, lead, and rebuild the country that it will be able to keep intact its victory and that the revolutionary process will be able to bring about sweeping revolutionary transformations. The position of the FSLN with respect to the political parties of the left is dependent on the attitude of these parties with respect to the revolutionary process. If their attitude entails an actual danger, these parties will be treated as enemies of the revolution. Such is the case of the groups who, from ultra-left positions, have adopted sabotage and counterrevolutionary positions, such as the

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***On the other hand, we must isolate the traitorous bourgeoisie, which blindly persists in trying to keep our country subject to the economic dependence of imperialism, from the democratic sectors . . . . We should hit it not by attacking it as a class, but by attacking its most representative elements as soon as they give us the first opportunity.***

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MAP [Popular Action Movement] and its organizations and the Trotskyite groups; these groups opposed to the [revolutionary] process must be crushed! On the other hand, with [regard to] the leftist organizations which show a predisposition to work toward the interests of the revolution, whether through becoming an integral part of the FSLN by dissolving their mass organizations or, in the end, through working closely together under the leadership of the FSLN, we should encourage them to work without rest to maintain the revolution.



But there are other sectors which also need to be brought over to the side of the revolution. The petty bourgeoisie now is coalescing and recognizes the FSLN as the vanguard of the revolutionary process. The same thing is happening with small organizations of this sort and with the democratic sectors of the bourgeoisie who prefer to work within an established framework rather than waste away. We should attract the petty bourgeois masses by giving them their own organizations and by integrating them into the affairs of State, and, keeping in mind the international

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***With the Catholic Church and Protestant Church, we should strengthen relations on a diplomatic level, maintaining, generally, a careful policy which seeks to neutralize as much as possible conservative positions and to strengthen our ties with the priests sympathetic to the revolution, while at the same time we are stimulating the revolutionary sectors of the Church. With the Protestant Church, which is generally formed by North American religious sects, we should adopt a restrictive policy, conduct an intelligence operation on them, and, if they are caught, arrange for their immediate expulsion.***

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situation, we should also preserve the micro parties, doing work inside them for the purpose of assimilating into the revolution the most important elements that compose them. Our policy should seek that those micro parties—which instead of representing the petty bourgeoisie are rather groups of organized petty bourgeoisie—remain, especially in order to carry out a policy of changing their opinion of the Council of State, which should have a real base in the political activity of the organized working masses. With some of these groups we can be frank and explain the situation, with others we should be cautious in order to achieve the desired objectives.

On the other hand, we must isolate from the democratic sectors the traitorous bourgeoisie, which blindly persists in trying to keep our country subject to the economic dependence of imperialism. Our policy is to achieve this isolation through an appropriate political tactic that responds to the situation presented by the revolutionary process. We should hit it not by attacking it as a class, but by attacking its most representative elements as soon as

they give us the first opportunity. By striking political and economic blows, we will greatly reduce its power and its capacity for counterrevolutionary maneuvering. The same kind of isolation should be used with the ultra-left groups which persist in organizing activities of sabotage and confusing the masses. Pursuing this policy facilitates the identification of the enemies of the revolution, making it possible for the masses to direct the heaviest blows, to annihilate the counterrevolutionary enclaves of the traitorous bourgeoisie, the remnants of *Somocismo*, and the ultra left.

With the Catholic Church and Protestant Church, we should strengthen relations on a diplomatic level, maintaining, generally, a careful policy which seeks to neutralize as much as possible conservative positions and to strengthen our ties with the priests sympathetic to the revolution, while at the same time we are stimulating the revolutionary sectors of the Church. With the Protestant Church, which is generally formed by North American religious sects, we should adopt a restrictive policy, conduct an intelligence operation on them, and, if they are caught, arrange for their immediate expulsion.

Finally, with the former National Guardsmen who did participate in some measure with the FSLN or who surrendered before they were called upon to do so, we should follow a policy of rapprochement, while keeping files on them and preventing them from obtaining positions of responsibility in the Sandinista People's Army or in the government. Obviously, exceptions should be made for those who, by possessing certain technical skills and an acceptable record, are indispensable.

2. **Make the State Sector the focus of the national economy and guarantee the effective participation of the mass organizations.**

In order to achieve our objectives we should make use of the political forces of *Sandinismo*, of the mass movement, and of the governmental structure, placing its economic policy at the service of the working masses and the allied sectors who, on a national level, show a willingness to support the cause of the revolution. The hub of the economy in our country should be the State Sector, because it is through it that we can let the organized masses participate. At the same time we should implement a production system which takes into consideration, first and foremost, the interests of the nation as a whole, which establishes a new kind of social relations of production and which stimulates the democratic sectors of the bourgeoisie to produce within the framework established by the economic policy. In this respect, the mass organizations, particularly those involved in the organization of the workers and peasants, should understand perfectly that their political action is to be channeled toward the reinforcing of the different policies formulated on the governmental level by the Sandinista National Liberation Front through its National Directorate, to educate the masses on how to use the power they have conquered, to consolidate the revolution, to rebuild the country, and to defend the conquests [already] achieved from

the actions of the reactionary forces which are attempting to reverse the revolutionary process.

Our organizations must clearly distinguish the forces that are on their side from those that are against them. The relations of production cannot be viewed in the same way they were before the overthrow of the dictatorship. First of all, we must distinguish between the State Sector and the economy promoted by the sectors of private enterprise. The first consists of all the property seized from the *Somocistas* both in the countryside and in the cities which now has come under State administration. Consequently, instead of considering the State as the owner, the class organizations should participate directly in production, in reconstruction, in vigilance so that the plans of the government for the economy are carried out effectively, and in purging the remnants of *Somocismo* from State institutions. They should also provide skilled workers to make the State enterprises function and solve the unemployment problems of the workers by finding employment for them in the production centers of the State as new places of work open, etc. In other words, [they should] be convinced that the State Sector is at the service of the popular interests and, in addition, it gives birth to a production system which allows it to rely on its own resources in order to break the ties of economic dependence on imperialism. Secondly, we should pressure the progressive sectors of the bourgeoisie in order to bring their level of production in line with the standards of the new regime, producing mainly what is in the national interest. Conversely, we must not allow the traitorous bourgeoisie any opportunity to take advantage of its ties with imperialism because we know that instead of following an economic policy in accordance with the most urgent needs of the masses and all the country, they prefer to export products to increase their wealth, even if the people starve to death and remain permanently unemployed. All this means that in the economic as well as governmental field, we must address ourselves to the following tasks:

#### ***On the Economic Level***

- a) Our economy must adhere to comprehensive national planning whose hub must be the State Sector, through which we can establish in the field of production a strong base of social relations of production and organization as a function of our historic and total liberation.
- b) The national economy must try to become independent of the system of extortion and subordination imposed by imperialism worldwide which limits us to a role of suppliers of raw materials and buyers of manufactured products and forces us to depend on cyclical imperialist financing.
- c) Establish economic policy measures in the fields of production and export, international trade, and the use of techniques and financing in order to break imperialism's hegemony in the national economy.
- d) Break away from the concept of production for profit which uses a high degree of imported components and try to attend to our own economic realities which de-

mand that we utilize our work force (much of which remains unemployed because of labor-saving trends whose justification is to maintain "competitiveness").

- e) Base our industrial and economic development on the use of our raw materials.
- f) Reject the notion of reconstruction based on massive infusions of foreign capital, [and instead] help ourselves through a national effort, complemented by financial aid, by applying an austerity policy, especially with regard to products that require foreign exchange.
- g) Avoid the spread of labeling and canning industries while stimulating industries with a high domestic value added.
- h) Establish fiscal, taxation, custom, and credit policies based on nationalist and popular orientation.
- i) The organization of state exploitation of our natural resources (minerals, forests, and fishing).
- j) Promote industrial development under state control in areas of production that are of strategic importance to the country's economic development.

#### ***On the Government Policy Level***

- a) Develop bolder social plans in the fields of education, health, and housing in order to bring the revolution to the masses. Give priority to the peasant population, particularly on the northern border and the ATLANTIC COAST.
  - b) Effectively control the banking and financial sectors, both by government decrees and through politically trustworthy cadres. Forbid foreign banks from making loans to the private sector.
  - c) Create State enterprises to organize fishing, industry, and mining. At the same time, the Trusts should disappear, giving way to corporate enterprises that will administer and direct them.
  - d) Support the Agrarian Reform's plans for expansion.
3. **Our International Policy Seeks To Secure the Support of Friendly Countries, Governments, and Organizations and To Neutralize the Reactionary Sectors.**

The foreign policy of the Sandinista People's Revolution is based on the full exercise of national sovereignty and independence and the principle of revolutionary internationalism. The objective of the FSLN's foreign policy is to achieve the consolidation of the Nicaraguan revolution as this will help to strengthen the Central American, Latin American, and world revolution. The consolidation must be achieved through the solution of the military and economic problems, principally because with the solution of the first we are strategically preparing to repel any aggression and with the second we can make headway in severing the ties of economic dependence on North American imperialism. This concept will govern our foreign policy as expressed in the following guidelines:



- a) Develop political and diplomatic relations which will strengthen our process of military consolidation and economic independence.
- b) Stimulate and strengthen the formulation of a national anti-imperialist and democratic policy, both internationally as well as on the continental level, and in the Caribbean area in particular.
- c) Contribute to and promote the struggle of the peoples of Latin America against fascist dictatorships [and] for democracy and national liberation.

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- d) In the Central American region, because of its immediate strategic value, the same principles will apply, emphasizing the need to neutralize, through the proper handling of their internal contradictions, the aggressive policies of the military dictatorships of Guatemala and El Salvador and the differentiation with the special situation in Honduras and the friendly conduct of Costa Rica and Panama.

#### **4. On the Organizational Situation of the Masses.**

Beginning with the cadres conference, "RIGOBERTO LOPEZ PEREZ," the role of the Secretariat of the Masses and all its affiliates was clearly defined. This allows us to better undertake the tasks of organizing the masses and to carry out the work correctly, and to grasp the full scope of the role of the Party's Departmental Directive Committees and the nationwide tasks of the Secretariat of the Masses. To begin with, we should say that the Departmental Directive Committees of the FSLN are the political instruments of the FSLN through which proper guidance of the work is assured. In the specific field of mass organization, they are charged with watching and assuring that the organizational line is adhered to in every way as well as [providing] the proper guidance to all the militant forces involved in these matters in the Departments. The policy of the FSLN toward the masses should pursue the following objectives:

- a) Make every effort to unite the revolutionary masses around the vanguard.

- b) Strengthen and promote the mass organizations which are the real expression of the people's will.
- c) Create legal instruments through which the mass organizations can participate in the decisionmaking of sectors of the government when necessary.
- d) Within the organizational lines, the FSLN gives priority to the revolutionary mass organizations: workers and peasants of the CST [Sandinista Workers Central], ATC [Rural Workers Association], and any other peasant organization, so that these organizations may be the defenders of the revolution. Secondly, we should promote the organization of the democratic sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.
- e) Give priority to work within the CST and the ATC in the state enterprises, guaranteeing them, in accordance with their development, participation in the decision-making of the enterprise and offering the organized masses the possibility of improving their technical knowledge.
- f) Devise [two] different lines of political work, one for the State workers' unions and another for the unions in the private sector. In the latter, the unions should do surveillance and exert pressure.

We should also broach the tasks which should be taken up immediately by the Departmental Directive Committees related to mass organization. We must work hard to educate our people and its most advanced sectors on the practical significance of the tasks of national reconstruction, spurring production and promoting of the various organizations that they have to build to consolidate the revolution. Failure to do so could create serious and perfectly foreseeable political problems. We state this because we already know of excesses committed by heads of mass organizations which practically nullify the authority of the representatives of the government. They demand measures which have nothing to do with the guidelines issued, rather, they make the mass organizations the sole judges of how things should be run without taking into consideration the character of the revolution and the policy of alliances which we should follow. Actually, in some cases Sandinista leaders have attempted to become managers of enterprises and to establish administrative policy, thus creating political problems for us, instead of playing their proper role, which is that of control, vigilance, and demanding that the State policy drawn up by the FSLN is followed to the letter. The policy of the mass organizations must take into account the objective reality of the revolution; from the economic point of view we have State enterprises and firms which belong to the private sector. Therefore, our policy must take into consideration these situations, these conflicts and these relations, because otherwise, contrary to our doctrine, we will be promoting anarchy. We will find ourselves bogged down in problems of our own making and unable to attend to the fundamental problems which truly we ought to solve. In view of the above, our activities among the masses should be governed by the following guidelines:

- a) Form national organizations with the participation of delegates from those mass organizations which already have developed a structure in the Departments. Where no structures have yet been formed, it is up to the party organs in charge of such work, as it is up to this national organization, to counsel and guide those affiliated with these organizations. The CST, the ATC, and the CDS have priority in the structuring of these national bodies of the organization.
- b) Draw up a draft charter for the mass organizations, emphasizing their bylaws and their declaration of principles. The former will include the organizational concept of the mass organizations, and the latter the political aims of the organization. For this purpose, the Secretariat of the Masses is in the process of forming the teams who will take charge of accomplishing this task.
- c) The Secretariat of the Masses will transmit, through the national bodies, the policy the mass organizations should be required to follow. These same bodies will go through the channels of the Departmental Directive Committees through the Executive Commission. The purpose of this is to begin to differentiate the role of the National Secretariat of the Masses from that of the party leadership organizations in the departments. It also has the same aim of strengthening internal order.
- d) Once the necessary documents have been drafted, a procedure would be established through which the departmental organizations would be consulted, and a Constitutional Congress of the Mass Organizations would be convoked at a national level.
- e) In the departments where the [organizational] work is just beginning, it is necessary to build the departmental mass organizations, keeping in mind the democratic participation of the masses so that they themselves can put in their most advanced representatives. Once this is done, we must select the delegate who will be part of the national body and send him to the National Secretariat of the Masses.
- f) Mobilize the masses to bolster the production process, especially in those areas of the economy where our government and FSLN are most deeply involved.
- g) Establish connection between delegates of the mass organizations and the state bodies in order to give a stronger impetus to the economic policy and to the relations that should be maintained.
- h) See to it that the majority of workers are drawn, by means of their class organizations, into State enterprises. In other words, the CST and the ATC, under the new conditions, should resolve the unemployment problem through the ties they have with the State and thus assure the resumption of industrial and agricultural production. The case of the firms in the private sector is different because there it involves the worker-owner relationship. Nevertheless, we must know how to advise our organizations as to what kind of relationship they should adopt and to turn to State bodies in order to clear up

their problems of vigilance and control so that these businesses produce that which is in the interest of the Nation, and not to take radical measures unless they are necessary because any measure that tends to paralyze overall production is a serious blow to the efforts to overcome the economic crisis.

- i) Hold assemblies with delegates of the national and departmental organizations and with the organized workers in order to show the latter their tasks.

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***The Sandinista People's Army is the armed organization par excellence of the revolutionary masses of Nicaragua. The triumph of our revolution makes it possible for the Sandinista People's Army to be recognized as the Constitutional Army of the Republic. For the same reason, it is the mission of the FSLN to assure the loyalty of its members to the revolution and to the leadership of the historic vanguard: the FSLN.***

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- j) Make full use of mass cadres to extend the organization to all departments (including municipalities).
  - k) Support the efforts of our organization in the struggle to suppress counterrevolutionary pockets.
- 5. Build, Strengthen and Educate the Sandinista People's Army, While Cultivating Its Loyalty to Its People and Its Revolution, Whose Vanguard is the FSLN.**

The Sandinista People's Army is the armed organization *par excellence* of the revolutionary masses of Nicaragua. The triumph of our revolution makes it possible for the Sandinista People's Army to be recognized as the Constitutional Army of the Republic. For the same reason, it is the mission of the FSLN to assure the loyalty of its members to the revolution and to the leadership of the historic vanguard: the FSLN. This revolutionary loyalty should be assured through the following mechanisms and tasks:

- a) A permanent effort of political education within the armed forces.
- b) The organization of the FSLN's vanguard structure which would guarantee the transmission and application of our organization's policies and would assure the political activity of our militants in the army.
- c) The FSLN exerts its influence and its political leadership through the directive committees and internal groups of militants within the Armed Forces. The DN

[National Directorate], through the military committee assures the political education policy through the military chain of command and will be the organization in charge of the FSLN party structure within the Sandinista People's Army.

- d) The party structure should carry out its mission by seeking to strengthen and respect always the military structure and chain of command.
- e) It is the task of the FSLN to strengthen the political education section of the Sandinista People's Army, which must be composed of militants of the vanguard with recognized revolutionary qualities.

#### ***Other Tasks Within the Armed Forces Are:***

- a) Strengthen the military leadership in zones of strategic importance and see to it that highly sensitive regions be under the command of a member of our DN [National Directorate]. Specifically the North, South and Atlantic zones.
- b) Purge the army at all levels, eliminating those elements who are incompatible with revolutionary measures.
- c) Institute mandatory military service.
- d) Draw up an emergency plan to take care of the vital needs of the comrades in the Army.
- e) Issue military laws and regulations.
- f) Establish military regions in accordance with a strategic approach to national defense, eliminating the urban militia type of army. Maintain law and order in the cities with the police and place the forces [of the army] in the countryside or the periphery. Prohibit the carrying of large weapons of war in the cities as well as the display of grenades, with exceptions.

#### **6. The Task Is: Reorganize the FSLN and Transform It into the Party of the Sandinista People's Revolution.**

We could not face the tasks related to the burning issues of the revolution if our organization did not recognize that an important objective is the building of the revolutionary party. This party, which has a definite class position, a unique political principle, a scientific ideology, and a correct strategy and tactic, places itself at the forefront of all society and embodies the political and military leadership of all revolutionary forces which struggle and work to carry the revolution toward incomparably greater achievements.

For nearly 4 years, the FSLN was shaken by the problems created by the political crisis of October 1975. During this time, the styles, the practices, and the strategic-tactical concepts that prevailed in each of the factions served to foster a climate of political mistrust among the factions, resulting from the serious divisions within the Sandinista Front. More than once we were in danger of not being able to carry forward the strategic plan for the insurrection and to bring about the necessary conditions in order to unify the different tendencies under one single, mono-

lithic leadership. The imperatives of the political situation at the end of May, the urgency to enter combat as united as possible, the necessities of the war, the vital need to oppose the enemy with the maximum of forces and weapons, and the historic duty to lead our people to victory allowed the uniting, in many places, of a great number of forces under a single leadership. Generally, they followed the political and military instructions of the constituted leadership and fought tremendous battles against the *Somocista* guard until they ground it to dust.

Nevertheless, the realities of today are different. We are an organization which, at the head of its people, has seized power and that allows us to implement the political plan proclaimed for so many months. This is a necessary condition for advancing toward a higher stage of the struggle where power will definitely be in the hands of the people. In order to assure a correct revolutionary leadership, the leadership of all the forces, to promote the most varied range of organizations, to raise the level of political consciousness of our people, to efficiently fight the traitorous bourgeoisie who have begun mobilizing to oust us from the state apparatus and take over the economy of the country while they are trying to organize themselves politically, that is to say, in order to discharge such responsibilities, we need to count on a vanguard detachment which, first of all, can eradicate from within the Sandinista Front all remnants of sectarianism and place the organization under a single recognized politico-military leadership and, secondly, rapidly begin building the revolutionary party.

It is impossible to successfully accomplish the task of consolidating the Sandinista People's Revolution without being able to count on that instrument of the vanguard, without this political apparatus which constitutes the best known collective leadership of the society. It has an organizational aspect, it works out the contradictions that arise as the process evolves and solves the problems that systematically appear; it leads the class struggle and guides the whole nation down the road strewn with victories. Without this vanguard, without this revolutionary party which is the highest form of organization of the workers and their most characteristic leader, it would be much more difficult to face the crucial tasks, to maintain power and to place [that power] at the service of the revolution. The most serious internal danger facing the FSLN is the maintenance of divisionist, sectarian, or factional positions which in actuality serve to boycott and sabotage the internal cohesion of the organization, weakening any position of unity the FSLN could adopt with respect to other revolutionary organizations. To speak of internal unity within the organization means to remove forever the original causes of the political crisis and to make efforts to build within the organization the party mechanisms for resolving the contradictions so as to strengthen the vanguard. An organization that does not stimulate collective discussion, the education of its militants, the participation of its members in the burning issues of the movement, is an organization that ages quickly, loses its vigor and force, and is liqui-

dated politically. It should be understood that it is not a matter of implementing within the organization a noncritical approach, the ultra-democratic way, and excessive centralism, but to function scientifically in accordance with the revolutionary principles that govern an organization.

Everyone realizes that we are going through a period when our biggest efforts are devoted to the most efficient redeployment of the militant forces. Some of these forces still show their own tendencies, styles and practices, political immaturity, and ideological weaknesses. These traits are destined to permanently disappear, but this will not be achieved without the participation of and the conscious will of the militants to overcome the present limitations once and for all. To speak of monolithic unity from now on will mean to change all the militant forces, which now are divided and without direction, into a powerful and organized force which is the political guarantor of the revolutionary process. This unification, that can in no way resemble the unity in action that characterized the activity of the political factions of the FSLN in the past, should take into account the specific situation in which we find ourselves at present. That is to say, we are in an organization which

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***Begin building the Revolutionary Party  
whose ideology is none other than the  
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World Revolution.***

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through insurrection has overthrown the *Somocista* dictatorship, taken power, and installed a type of democracy particularly representative of the popular interests whose main duty is to prepare itself for the new struggles that are approaching.

We must fulfill with maturity our people's historical imperative of having a strong, capable, and monolithic vanguard. We must deal critically, and not with mistrust, with all those manifestations of sectarianism, competitiveness, supremacism, and organizational disintegration and consistently struggle to crystallize and create the organic political and ideological unity of Sandinista militants. We must constantly and systematically spread [our message] and educate our brothers in the revolutionary principles that govern a vanguard, which, at the same time, are the strongest guarantee of unity of the organization. We must fight to the death against amateurish organizational practices and theoretical, dogmatic, and liberal approaches in Sandinista militants. We must claim as ours all lessons learned as a result of the political crisis of the FSLN, analyzing them with a positive spirit and, above all, learning to be conscious of the fact that is necessary to struggle every day and with all our forces in order to keep our vanguard united. These are extremely important, unavoidable tasks and the formidable

challenge facing Sandinista militants in order to erase the memories generated by the political crisis of the FSLN. This is the only way to keep the organization intact and to infuse it with the powerful energy displayed by its militants. Nobody can, at this time, divert their efforts in order to implant sectarianism or to live conspiring against the unity of the organization. This would mean lowering our guard and preparing fertile ground for divisions while the enemy is preparing, joining forces, and working feverishly to develop his political apparatus in order to struggle to gain control of the political process. It must be understood that, generally, in every organization there are currents that run against the tide. They create contradictions, but this is

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***We are an organization whose  
greatest aspiration is  
to maintain revolutionary power. . . .***

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something quite logical, quite natural, part of every political organization when within the organization a correct ideological struggle takes place against currents alien to the revolutionary ideology. It is thus that greater strength and political consolidation are obtained. And, if this struggle is fought within the organic framework of political participation within the organization, nothing can destroy the organization; it is invincible. But this is one thing, and it is something quite different to believe that it is possible to carry on political activities outside the organization, that any militant, on the basis of his own beliefs, can continue to promote factional positions without regard to the political guidance of the central bodies of the FSLN. Many of our brothers have a tendency to attempt to put into practice their particular experiences based on a purely mechanical approach, imposing unrealistic methods by using altogether theoretical arguments. They attempt to undermine the political authority of comrades who belonged to a different faction in the past. This is nothing less than an attempt to ignore the development of the FSLN, its historic foundation, the objective reality that faces us, and the political and organizational objectives we are pursuing at the present stage.

We can affirm that the organizational objectives for which we currently are striving are the following:

- A. Reorganize the militant forces of the FSLN and unite all the scattered forces under a single, sound political and military leadership, creating leadership bodies at every level of the organization whose overall leading body is the National Directorate.
- B. Eliminate factions within the FSLN and educate the militants on a basis of a single set of political principles under one strategy and one tactic, and starting from a single internal organizational policy.

- C. Make the best use of the cadres and the militants, attending to the most urgent needs at the national level.
- D. Begin building the revolutionary party whose ideology is none other than the one that embodies the Sandinista heritage and the contributions of the world revolution.

On the other hand, before determining the tasks concerning organizational matters, we should make clear their political content. We must say that under the new conditions, all organizational criteria have greater flexibility. We are an organization whose greatest aspiration is to maintain revolutionary power, not to conquer it. Consequently, our goal is to work to educate our people to recognize their vanguard and the tasks it has proposed, beginning from the fundamental premise that the FSLN is the legitimate organization to lead the revolutionary process. On the basis of this premise, it is of paramount importance to point out this reality to each of the organizations that are politically and organically independent by clearly explaining the FSLN policy of integrating people into the vanguard and the need for counting on a single set of organizations with a clear revolutionary content in order to accomplish the appointed objectives.

After the years of struggle during which our organization suffered brutal repression, new perspectives are opening in our country for giving the masses a true vanguard, which, taking into account our own organizational experience and the lessons taught and learned through revolutionary theory, can form a solid organization. In it, on one hand, the political structure of revolutionary leadership is guaranteed, and, on the other hand, the participation of the most advanced elements of the people. At the same time, this will strengthen the FSLN's organization politically and ensure the class approval of the exploited and oppressed sectors of the nation.

Toward this end, the organizational policy of the FSLN seeks primarily to continue organizing the militants into select organizations that can guarantee effective guidance for the revolutionary tasks, subject to strict standards of militancy that seal the revolutionary content of *Sandinismo*. It also enlightens all the militants as a whole. On the other hand, it should allow access to the vanguard by the numerous advanced elements of the people who, following a policy of tightly regulating individual membership, will remain in their mass organizations and extend more widely the influence of the Sandinista Front within all the organized and nonorganized sectors of the country.

The lines of organization of the FSLN serve to achieve the following objectives:

- A. Strengthen the leadership of the National Directorate as the highest body of the FSLN and of the revolution as well as analyze the tasks adequately so as to get down to the orientation of the work in every field. Toward this end, our leadership has been organized into three commissions: Governmental, Military, and Executive. The latter sees to it that the strategic conduct, the guidelines, and the policies in the different

fields and the agreements arrived at by the National Directorate are put into practice in such a way as to advance the process and the vanguard to new, qualitatively better situations. This in no way means that the Executive Commission is hierarchically higher than the rest of the members of the DN [National Directorate],

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***The battle has not yet ended, and while  
our enemies by their actions are  
digging their own graves, we Sandinista  
Revolutionaries continue advancing  
tirelessly, winning new victories. . . .***

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but that it had been constituted to facilitate the smooth execution of the tasks.

- B. Maintain the secretariat as an auxiliary consultative and advisory instrument formed by cadres of proven revolutionary caliber, loyal to the revolution and with long histories within the organization. It is they who will promote the various policies nationwide. This group of cadres heads the secretariats created by the DN [National Directorate], and one of their major responsibilities is to see that the purity of the party line is maintained in their specialized fields, to advise the Directive Committees in the departments, and to prevent the rise of deviations of any kind.
- C. The State Commission will be in charge of promoting the governmental policy of the FSLN and the organization of Sandinista forces in matters regarding the central government. The Military Commission will have among its functions taking charge of the political work and the organization of Sandinista militants in the Armed Forces on a national level.
- D. Put together as soon as possible the Departmental Directive Committees using the most distinguished cadres, regardless of the area in which they currently work. It is a matter of giving to these leadership bodies the greatest authority possible and converting them into the supervisors of tasks in the Departments. In this way, the militant cadres of the FSLN who are engaged in the areas of internal organization, of the masses, the army, etc., will be perfectly capable of becoming part of the Departmental Directives, devoting the bulk of their energies to the work of leading Sandinista forces. The Directive Committees will maintain ties with the Executive Commission and will receive their instructions from it.
- E. Reproduce in the departments the organic framework that will be under the direction of the Directive Committees of the FSLN, which basically entails the creation of Sandinista organizations in the areas of masses, propaganda, education, and the State.

We will thus be able to count on a complete political and organizational apparatus through which we can pursue, in an organized way, the extraordinary tasks that have fallen on our shoulders.

- F. Organize the membership, resolving first the situation of many comrades, especially those who joined the struggle in the heat of battle and developed great qualities, and who today consider themselves Sandinista militants. A condition for membership is participation in any of the mass organizations and acceptance with revolutionary discipline of the requirements which will be imposed in this category.
- G. Immediately select the rank-and-file militants who should be sent to strengthen the organizational work among rural and urban workers and the peasants. We all should be guided by the need to strengthen as soon as possible the Sandinista Workers Central CST and the Rural Workers Association ATC with militants and cadres. At the same time, we point out to these Sandinista groups the tasks to be achieved and the direction the workers' movement should take with regard to production and the real participation, not subjective or abusive of power, of the class organizations in the revolution.
- H. Create organization bases in the municipal administrations in the Departments, sending to accomplish this

comrades with recognized authority and broad organizing experience.

- I. Place those Sandinistas who are State employees under the direction of the Departmental Directive Committees, at the same time guaranteeing greater political involvement in the tasks of organizing the masses during their free time.
- J. Have orderly control over Sandinista militants as well as over those whose organic situation within the organization is being clarified.

Finally, in order to bring to its conclusion this Circular #1, we need say that the different National Secretariats are involved in drafting specific plans to implement our practical policies in each of the fields.

Again, we would like to convey our greetings to you. We have already taken the first step by overthrowing the dictatorship. From now on, we expect our tasks to be more arduous, much more difficult, with stumbling blocks that we will surely overcome. The battle has not yet ended, and while our enemies by their actions are digging their own graves, we Sandinista Revolutionaries continue advancing tirelessly, winning new victories, loyal to the revolution, faithful to our people, developing greater unity, struggling, building the new Fatherland and our definitive liberation.

FREE FATHERLAND OR DEATH  
NATIONAL DIRECTORATE  
Sandinista National Liberation Front  
"From the Fatherland of Sandino" October 1979



**United States Department of State**

# **Negotiations in Central America**

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**A Chronology 1981–1987**





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the Caribbean

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# **Negotiations in Central America**

## **A Chronology 1981–1987**

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## Summary

The United States has continuously supported the search for peace in Central America. Since 1981, the U.S. has sought to resolve the regional conflict through bilateral negotiations with the Sandinista regime as well as through its encouragement of the Contadora process and other regional efforts.

U.S. efforts to reach agreement with the ruling comandantes predate those of the other countries of Latin America, including Contadora. Our initial diplomatic overtures offered U.S. nonaggression toward Nicaragua and renewed economic assistance in exchange for an end to Sandinista support to the Communist guerrillas of El Salvador and a slow-down in Nicaragua's military buildup. These are the very same goals the Sandinistas now profess to have no objection to were they to be included in a regional peace accord.

Even though the Sandinistas were not receptive to U.S. initiatives in 1981, we unilaterally continued our efforts to resolve the regional impasse through diplomatic means. The highlights of those initiatives are:

- On October 4, 1982, the U.S. joined six Latin American and Caribbean countries in the "Declaration of San Jose" setting out principles for a regional peace settlement.
- On June 1, 1984, Secretary of State Shultz visited Managua to consult with Sandinista President Ortega and Foreign Minister d'Escoto, setting the stage for nine rounds of bilateral discussions between the U.S. and Nicaragua.
- On June 25–26, 1984, the first of the bilateral talks were held in the Mexican city of Manzanillo. They were ended in December 1984 due to Sandinista intransigence.
- On October 29–31, 1985, Special Envoy Harry Shlaudeman met with Nicaraguan Ambassador Carlos Tunnermann in Washington and proposed that the U.S. would renew bilateral talks with Nicaragua if the Sandinistas would accept the Nicaraguan democratic resistance's call for a Church-mediated dialogue. The Sandinista Government refused to accept this proposal.
- On February 10, 1986, Secretary Shultz met with the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora countries and offered to renew bilateral talks with the Sandinistas if they began a dialogue with the democratic resistance.
- Between June 1985 and April 1987, Special Envoys Shlaudeman and Habib traveled to the region on at least 15 occasions to consult with Central American and South American officials in an effort to support the peace process.

Here follows a chronology of the history of Central American negotiations and the texts of the Contadora Document of Objectives (Appendix A), the peace proposal of Costa Rican President Oscar Arias (Appendix B), and the Declaration of Principles issued by the Presidents of the Central American democracies at the conclusion of their San Jose meeting (Appendix C).



## Chronology of Key Events 1981-1987

### 1981

**August–October:** United States initiates diplomatic exchanges with Nicaragua. U.S. offers bilateral nonaggression agreement and renewed economic assistance if Nicaragua stops aid to Salvadoran guerrillas and limits its military buildup. Nicaragua labels U.S. offer “sterile.”

### 1982

**March 15:** Honduras proposes Central American peace plan at the Organization of American States to reduce arms and foreign military advisers, to respect nonintervention, and to provide for international verification of commitments.

**April 9:** U.S. offers eight-point proposal to Nicaragua. Nicaragua demands high-level meeting in Mexico.

**October 4:** At San Jose conference the U.S., Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Belize, and Jamaica issue Declaration of San Jose outlining principles for a regional peace settlement that calls for democracy, pluralism, arms reduction, respect for human rights, and national reconciliation. Nicaragua subsequently refuses to receive Costa Rican Foreign Minister Volio as emissary of group.

### 1983

**January 8–9:** Foreign Ministers of Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, and Panama meet on Contadora Island and issue Declaration commending dialogue and negotiation as instruments for peaceful settlement.

**January–April:** Nicaragua resists meeting in multilateral setting and opposes idea of comprehensive agreement dealing with all interrelated issues.

**April 20–21:** Nine Foreign Ministers of Central America and Contadora Group meet for first time in Panama.

**July 17:** Declaration of Cancun by the Presidents of the Contadora Group calls for renewed efforts to continue peace process. Declaration sent to President Reagan, Central American Chiefs of State, and Fidel Castro.

**July 19:** Sandinistas issue six-point plan, calling for end of all outside assistance to “the two sides” in El Salvador, end of all external support to paramilitary forces in region, prohibition of foreign military bases and exercises, Nicaraguan/Honduran nonaggression pact, noninterference in internal affairs, and end to economic discrimination.

*Comment:* Proposal accepted multilateral talks but did not address such key issues as foreign advisers, arms limitations and reductions, or democratization and national reconciliation. Plan equated Salvadoran Government with guerrillas and, if implemented, would have cut off all U.S. military assistance to El Salvador.

**July 21:** Foreign Ministers of Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador propose eight-point peace plan drawing on Honduras plan of March 1982 and emphasizing contribution that democratization could make to restoration of peace and stability to region.

**July 23:** President Reagan expresses support for Contadora objectives in letter to Contadora Group Presidents.

**September 9:** Document of Objectives adopted by Foreign Ministers of the nine Contadora participating governments. Document includes strong formulation of objectives relating to democratization and national reconciliation.

**October 20:** Nicaragua proposes series of bilateral and multilateral treaties, addressing some but not all goals of Document of Objectives.

**October–December:** Attempts to translate Document of Objectives directly into treaty falter.

## 1984

**January 8:** “Norms of Implementation” declaration that was adopted in Panama by nine Contadora Foreign Ministers establishes three working commissions in security, political, and socioeconomic matters to recommend by April 30 specific measures to implement Document of Objectives.

**April 30:** Five Central American Foreign Ministers request Contadora Group to integrate recommendations into single negotiating text.

**June 1:** Secretary of State Shultz visits Managua to launch bilateral talks in support of reaching a comprehensive Contadora agreement.

**June 8–9:** Contadora Group presents “Contadora Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America” to Central American governments and requests comments by mid-July.

**June 25–26:** First of nine rounds of bilateral talks between U.S. and Nicaragua held at Manzanillo, Mexico. U.S. throughout seeks informal understandings to facilitate Contadora agreement. Nicaragua seeks formal bilateral accords in lieu of Contadora; excludes discussion of democratization and national reconciliation.

**August 25–27:** Technical Group (vice-ministerial level) of Contadora process meets in Panama to consider oral and written comments on the June 8th draft Act. Nicaragua refuses to accept any feature of the Contadora June draft to which it had not previously agreed.

**September 7:** Contadora Group submits revised draft Contadora agreement for Central American leaders comment by mid-October.

*Comment:* The draft agreement achieved Nicaragua’s two principal objectives (end of support to democratic resistance and prohibition of maneuvers) upon signature while leaving arms reductions and withdrawal of advisers for later negotiation. Verification provisions were weak.

**September 21:** Nicaragua states it is willing to sign the September 7th draft provided that it is not changed; calls on U.S. to sign and ratify its Additional Protocol.

*Comment:* Portrayed as a step toward peace, Nicaragua’s acceptance was in U.S. view an attempt to freeze the negotiating process at a moment of advantage.

**September 25–26:** At sixth round of Manzanillo talks, Nicaragua adopts Contadora draft agreement as its negotiating position. U.S. suggests the two sides focus on text of draft agreement, but Nicaragua rejects any discussion of possibly modifying the draft.

**September 29:** European Community and Central American Foreign Ministers, meeting in Costa Rica, call draft agreement “fundamental stage in negotiating process” but refrain from endorsing any text not agreed upon by all participating governments.

**October 15:** Comments submitted to the Contadora Group by Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras identify verification and need for simultaneous implementation of commitments as areas for modification.

**October 19–20:** Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Costa Rica (Nicaragua is invited but does not attend) meet in Tegucigalpa to consider the September 7th draft agreement and drafted proposed modifications. Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica endorse and forward modifications to the Contadora Group and Nicaragua.

**November 12–16:** Extensive private consultations among the Contadora participants are held on the margins of the OAS General Assembly in Brasilia.

**December 10–11:** Ninth round of Manzanillo talks. Nicaragua definitively rejects U.S. approach to reach agreement on basis of September draft; reverts to initial position of bilateral accords in lieu of Contadora.

## 1985

**January 18:** U.S. informs Nicaragua that it is not scheduling further meetings at Manzanillo, pending further evolution of the Contadora process.

**February 14:** Contadora meeting canceled over asylum dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

**April 11–12:** Contadora meeting of plenipotentiaries agrees in principle on revised verification procedures.

**May 14–16:** Second meeting of Contadora plenipotentiaries, with inconclusive discussion of security issues.

**May 31:** Sandinista border incursions into Costa Rica kill two Costa Rican Civil Guardsmen.

**June 7:** OAS Permanent Council appoints investigative commission consisting of Contadora Group and OAS Secretary General to report on the May 31st and other related border incidents.

**June 17–19:** Nicaragua's refusal to discuss agreed agenda results in abrupt ending of Contadora meeting of plenipotentiaries and 4-month hiatus in Contadora negotiations.

**June 24–28:** Ambassador Shlaudeman visits Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Venezuela for consultations on Contadora; reviews conditions under which the U.S. might resume bilateral talks with Nicaragua.

**June 30–July 2:** Ambassador Shlaudeman continues consultations during visits to Mexico and Panama.

**July 17:** Ambassador Shlaudeman concludes consultations with visit to Honduras.

**July 22:** Contadora Group governments publicly call on U.S. to resume bilateral talks with Nicaragua. Communique also announces intentions to hold bilateral meetings with individual Central American governments in lieu of resuming talks.

**July 26:** In Mexico City, Secretary Shultz states willingness of U.S. to resume bilateral talks if that would promote a Church-mediated dialogue in Nicaragua and reaffirms strong U.S. support for the Contadora process.

**July 28:** Following consultations with the Contadora Group, the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay form the "Contadora Support Group."

**August 1:** Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador in joint statement welcome the visit of Contadora ministers but propose resumption of Contadora negotiations.

**August 3–8:** Contadora Group Vice Ministers visit the five Central American states to consult on outstanding Contadora issues.

**August 23–25:** The Contadora Group and Support Group, meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, issue communique stating intent to consult regularly on Contadora matters.

**August 26:** U.S. welcomes formation of Support Group.

**September 4:** Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador formally reiterate proposal to resume Contadora negotiations.

**September 9–13:** Ambassador Shlaudeman consults with Support Group governments in visits to Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Peru. He explains U.S. view that Support Group could help by working toward a Sandinista dialogue with armed resistance (United Nicaraguan Opposition) and urges Support Group to consult with all the Central American states.

**September 8:** Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador jointly request a meeting with the Support Group governments on the margins of the September 12–13 meeting of Contadora Foreign Ministers in Panama. The request is denied on the ground that it might interfere with the scheduled meetings.

**September 12–13:** The Contadora Group tables a third draft of a Contadora agreement. The Central American Foreign Ministers agree to convene multilateral negotiations on October 7, with the aim of reaching final agreement within 45 days. The agenda for these negotiations is defined narrowly. It is also agreed that events and developments within the region will not interfere with Contadora talks.

**October 7–11:** The first round of talks is held on Contadora Island, Panama. Costa Rica states it is willing to sign the September 12th draft. El Salvador and Honduras express general support while identifying issues that require further negotiation. Guatemala maintains neutrality on content of draft while



pointing to constitutional difficulty of current government to commit Guatemala in view of upcoming elections. Nicaragua states it is not ready to declare its view.

**October 17-19:** Second round of plenipotentiary negotiations held on Contadora Island. Nicaragua presents extensive objections to September 12th draft.

**October 24:** President Reagan addresses the U.N. General Assembly, presenting an initiative on regional conflicts. President states that U.S. support of struggling democratic forces "must and shall continue" until there is progress in negotiations between the parties to internal conflicts.

**October 29-31:** Ambassador Shlaudeman and Nicaraguan Ambassador Tunnermann meet in Washington. Shlaudeman says U.S. will resume bilateral talks if Sandinistas accept March 1985 proposal of the Nicaraguan resistance for Church-mediated dialogue, cease-fire, and suspension of the State of Emergency. Tunnermann reports Nicaraguan Government rejection of this offer.

**November 11-12:** Foreign Ministers of the nine Central American and Contadora Group governments meet in Luxembourg with the Foreign Ministers of the EC-10, Spain, and Portugal. European Community/Central American economic agreement is signed; political communique supports Contadora and stresses democratic pluralism and civil liberties.

**November 11:** Nicaragua publishes letter to Contadora Group and Support Group Presidents detailing objections to the Contadora Group's September 12, 1985, draft of a final agreement. Nicaragua's position, in essence, is to insist on an accommodation with the U.S. prior to a Contadora agreement.

**November 19-21:** Third round of negotiations among Contadora plenipotentiaries held in Panama. Some progress is achieved on verification and related issues. All delegations recommend extending 45-day deadline for final agreement.

**November 22:** U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vernon Walters addresses the General Assembly on continued U.S. support of the Contadora process.

**December 1:** Nicaragua announces that it will not take part in the Contadora meetings to be held on the margins of the OAS General Assembly meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, December 2-5.

**December 2:** Secretary of State Shultz meets with Contadora Group Foreign Ministers at the OAS General Assembly in Cartagena.

**December 3:** Nicaragua submits formal request for suspension of Contadora peace negotiations until May 1986.

**December 6:** Contadora Group submits report to OAS Secretary General expressing hope that negotiations will continue.

**December 7:** Nicaragua reiterates its request for suspension of Contadora talks at a SELA (Latin American Economic System) meeting in Caracas, Venezuela.

**December 11:** OAS General Assembly Resolution, opposed by Nicaragua only, urges continuation of Contadora talks.

**December 10:** Venezuelan officials publicly oppose suspension of talks.

**December 17-18:** Contadora Group governments consult informally in Montevideo.

## 1986

**January 8:** Nicaragua publishes letter from President Ortega to the Presidents of the Contadora Group and the Support Group proposing a scaled-down treaty of general principles (in lieu of a comprehensive Contadora treaty) and a series of bilateral talks, including U.S.-Nicaraguan talks.

**January 11-12:** The eight Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group and Support Group governments, meeting in Caraballeda, Venezuela, issue the "Message of Caraballeda." It reiterates basic Contadora principles; urges actions to create climate for negotiations, including resumption of Contadora talks; and offers Contadora's help to "promote new steps of national reconciliation" and renewal of U.S.-Nicaraguan bilateral talks.

**January 14:** Vice President George Bush leads U.S. delegation to inauguration of Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo.

**January 15:** Foreign Ministers of the five Central American states sign the "Declaration of Guatemala," endorsing the "Message of Caraballeda."

**January 15:** Central American Presidents agree to hold summit in Esquipulas, Guatemala, in May.

**January 16:** Central American Presidents issue statement expressing satisfaction that their Foreign Ministers have endorsed the "Message of Caraballeda."

**January 16:** Nicaragua publicly reaffirms its position on Contadora, as set forth in its November 11th statement, and describes actions called for in the "Message of Caraballeda" as prerequisites to Contadora talks.

**January 16:** Secretary Shultz receives the "Message of Caraballeda" from Washington Ambassadors of the Contadora Group and Support Group governments and promises to give it careful study.

**January 17:** U.S. statement on "Message of Caraballeda" announces visit of Ambassador Shlaudeman to Central American and Contadora Group countries to explore possibilities in the Message.

**January 17:** President-elect Jose Azcona of Honduras visits Washington for consultations. At National Press Club, Azcona opposes resumption of U.S.-Nicaraguan bilateral talks as detracting from Contadora.

**January 19-23:** Ambassador Shlaudeman visits Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Colombia, and Venezuela to consult with regional leaders.

**January 25:** Secretary of State Shultz invites Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group and Support Group governments to Washington for February 10th consultations.

**January 26-27:** Vice President Bush leads U.S. delegation to inauguration of Honduran President Azcona; meets with several Contadora and Central American Presidents and Foreign Ministers.

**January 30:** Six Nicaraguan opposition parties propose cease-fire, effective amnesty, agreement on a new national electoral process, and lifting of the State of Emergency. UNO leaders endorse proposal.

**February 4:** Nicaraguan President Ortega leads FSLN delegation to Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in Havana; gives speech to the Congress.

**February 6:** Nicaraguan Foreign Minister d'Escoto writes open letter to Contadora Group and Support Group Foreign Ministers calling on ministers to press for renewal of U.S.-Nicaraguan talks but cautioning that the U.S. would have to abandon the idea that such talks could be used as an "instrument to force Nicaragua into an immoral dialogue with terrorist forces."

**February 10:** Secretary Shultz meets with eight Contadora Foreign Ministers in Washington. He proposes simultaneous U.S.-Nicaraguan/Nicaraguan-UNO talks and policy adjustments in response to Nicaraguan movement on U.S. areas of concern.

**February 14-15:** Meeting of Contadora and Central American negotiators in Panama. Nicaragua refuses to negotiate on a Contadora treaty.

**February 18-26:** Ambassador Shlaudeman meets with Presidents of Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina, Peru, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

**February 24:** Costa Rica and Nicaragua reach preliminary agreement on border supervision commission.

**February 27-28:** Contadora Group and Support Group ministers meet at Punta del Este, Uruguay.

**March 4:** Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte proposes simultaneous dialogues to end the internal wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

**March 7:** President Reagan appoints Philip C. Habib to replace Harry W. Shlaudeman as Special Envoy for Central America.

**March 12-14:** Ambassador Habib visits El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Habib endorses Duarte initiative; reiterates U.S. willingness to renew bilateral talks with Nicaragua if Sandinistas open talks with armed democratic opposition.

**March 14–15:** Meeting of plenipotentiaries in Panama, but no discussion of Contadora treaty; inconclusive discussion of how to implement the "Message of Caraballeda."

**March 17:** Presidents of Guatemala and Honduras join President-elect Oscar Arias of Costa Rica in endorsing Duarte initiative.

**March 20:** U.S. House of Representatives defeats administration's proposal for assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance.

**March 31:** Legislative authorization for humanitarian assistance to Nicaraguan resistance expires.

**April 5–7:** Nicaragua's d'Escoto refuses to sign joint communique outlining negotiating goals at meeting of 13 Contadora, Support Group, and Central American Foreign Ministers in Panama. Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador propose schedule of intensive negotiations to reach agreement by end of May 1986. Eight Contadora and Support Group ministers issue invitation to renew talks; reach agreement by June 6.

**April 11:** Ambassador Habib reiterates U.S. position that we will abide by a Contadora agreement that implements September 1983 Document of Objectives in a comprehensive, verifiable, and simultaneous manner.

**April 11:** Nicaragua agrees to renew talks and conditions final agreement on resolving outstanding issues and on ending all "U.S. aggression" by date of signature. Central American democracies all accept renewal of talks and urge they begin immediately.

**April 18–28:** Ambassador Habib consults with Presidents and Foreign Ministers of the Central American democracies, Contadora and Support Group countries.

**April 19:** President Ortega, in public statement, calls Ambassador Habib a "demagogic liar," raising the issue of Sandinista interest in constructive negotiations.

**May 8:** Vice President Bush heads U.S. delegation to inauguration of President Oscar

Arias of Costa Rica. Bush reiterates U.S. willingness to respect comprehensive, verifiable, and simultaneous treaty.

**May 16–18:** Contadora talks held in Panama to consider Contadora Group proposals on arms and military maneuvers. Nicaragua rejects Honduran proposal. Four democracies reject Nicaraguan proposal. Costa Rica and Guatemala jointly present compromise proposal. El Salvador and Honduras support compromise proposal.

- Proposal prohibits maneuvers within 5 kilometers of border, prohibits use of artillery capable of reaching neighboring countries, and regulates maneuvers within 30 kilometers.

- Proposal fixes overall ceiling on arms and troops prior to signature; ceiling expressed in "units of value," with each security component (e.g., a tank) assigned an agreed value.

**May 24–25:** Five Central American Presidents meet at Esquipulas, Guatemala. Communique notes "frankness" of exchanges and profound differences between Nicaragua and its neighbors over meaning of democracy. Presidents reiterate commitment to reach Contadora agreement, omitting June 6 as target date; agree to create Central American Parliament.

**May 26:** President Ortega presents a list of "14 Points" calling for a reduction of armament levels and other military-related matters.

**May 27–28:** Contadora meeting in Panama. Nicaragua tables its "14 Points," which, if adopted, would have virtually no effect on strength and size of Sandinista arsenal but would have serious impact on the security capabilities of the other Central American countries. Nicaragua also refuses to negotiate limits on "defensive" weapons. Meeting inconclusive.

**May 26–29:** President Azcona of Honduras makes working visit to Washington; supports aid for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance.

**May 31–June 3:** Ambassador Habib visits Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador for consultations.

**June 6-7:** Contadora and Support Group Foreign Ministers meet in Panama, present Central Americans with amended draft agreement.

**June-August:** Central American countries respond to June 7th draft. All countries express support for the Contadora process but make various points about the draft.

**Costa Rica:**

- Peace is not valid unless based on democracy; Costa Rica cannot accept half-measures that do not fully address the complete democratization of all of Central America.
- Calendar of continuous verification must be presented with the agreement.
- All negotiations must be concluded before signing, including those concerning arms limits and troop levels.
- Criteria used in establishing maximum limits of military development are susceptible to subjective interpretation and must be clarified prior to signature.

**El Salvador:**

- Draft does not contain the conditions or requirements agreed on for its adoption and formalization in accordance with the 1983 Document of Objectives—especially in areas of arms limits and troop levels; simultaneous and integrated treatment of all aspects of the Document of Objectives is essential.
- Verification of all obligations is essential.
- Draft must contain sufficient guarantees that Nicaragua will accept serious negotiations in arms issues (including verification and control) and must demonstrate a willingness to observe the Document of Objectives in its entirety.
- There is a need to continue and complete negotiations.

**Guatemala:**

- Commitments in armament, military forces, evaluation, verification, and control should be clearly stated to constitute a guarantee that agreed results and objectives are achieved.

**Honduras:**

- Draft does not establish reasonable and sufficient obligations to guarantee its security.

- Obligations regarding disarmament must be established rigorously and clearly in the treaty and not deferred to a later date.
- Draft raises subjective criteria of dubious multilateral significance that would make eventual agreement on limitation, reduction, and control of arms and troops impossible.

**Nicaragua:**

- Indicates that it could accept draft, but only on the condition that future arms talks be conducted on the basis of its May "14 Points" proposal (which the four democracies had rejected).

**June 26:** Contadora Group Foreign Ministers meet with U.N. Secretary General Perez de Cuellar and OAS Secretary General Baena Soares to present the June 7th draft.

**July 2:** U.N. Secretary General de Cuellar issues report on the situation in Central America commending Contadora's effort but citing fundamental preconditions for peace, which focus on pluralistic democracy and nonintervention by outside forces.

**July 10-12:** Ambassador Habib travels to the Central American democracies.

**August 7:** Secretary Shultz heads the U.S. delegation to inauguration of President Barco in Colombia. Meets with Presidents and Foreign Ministers of the Central American democracies.

**September 7-11:** Ambassador Habib travels to Central America.

**September 22-October 1:** Contadora and Support Group Foreign Ministers meet in New York on margins of the U.N. General Assembly. On October 1, they issue a declaration warning of the dangerous situation in Central America and reiterating their willingness to continue their efforts to find a negotiated settlement.

**October 30-31:** Contadora and Support Group deputy foreign ministers meet in Mexico City. Discussion focuses on possibility of institutionalizing Contadora and expanding its scope to include other regional issues such as debt.

**November 10–15:** OAS General Assembly meets in Guatemala. At the initiative of Nicaragua and Mexico, Foreign Ministers from Contadora and Support Groups introduce a controversial draft resolution that, among other things, calls for preventing an alleged imminent U.S. aggression as the key issue in Central America. Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras oppose resolution. Other Latin countries announce their opposition to the draft resolution and OASGA ultimately adopts new consensus resolution that supports Contadora effort. Secretary Shultz meets with Foreign Ministers of Central American democracies while attending OASGA.

**November 18:** U.N. General Assembly adopts consensus resolution on Central America.

**November 18:** U.N. Secretary General de Cuellar and OAS Secretary General Soares issue "menu of services" available from their organizations to complement Contadora: establishing border patrols; monitoring reduction of armed forces or dissolution of irregular forces; verifying international maneuvers or withdrawal of military advisers; verifying human rights complaints; and coordinating economic assistance.

**November 19–21:** Ambassador Habib travels to Central America, Mexico, and Colombia for consultations with regional leaders.

**December 3:** Government of Costa Rica responds to U.N.–OAS joint initiative. Commends efforts but reiterates Costa Rica's belief that an effective regional accord must be multilateral, comprehensive, binding, and verifiable.

**December 4:** Government of Nicaragua responds to U.N.–OAS joint initiative. Expresses deep satisfaction with the document.

**December 17–18:** Contadora and Support Group Foreign Ministers meet in Rio de Janeiro. Announce they would visit Central America in January accompanied by U.N. and OAS Secretaries General. Also announce intentions to strengthen and systematize the political agreement of their governments through a process of regular consultations, beginning the following April in Argentina.

## 1987

**January 7:** Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams and Ambassador Habib meet in Miami with Costa Rican Foreign Minister Madrigal to discuss President Arias' plan for regional peace, a plan predicated on national reconciliation and democratization within Nicaragua.

**January 9:** President Ortega signs into law Nicaragua's new "democratic" constitution. Within hours of its promulgation, Ortega issues new emergency decree suspending the rights and liberties of the Nicaraguan people provided for in the new charter, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, right to organize, right to privacy, and others.

**January 12–16:** Ambassador Habib travels to Panama, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Venezuela to consult with Latin American leaders.

**January 18–25:** Ambassador Habib travels to Belgium, West Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, and France to consult on the negotiating process.

**January 18–21:** Contadora and Support Group Foreign Ministers, accompanied by the U.N. and OAS Secretaries General, travel to Central America seeking to revive the negotiating process. They issue communique in Mexico City on January 21st expressing Contadora's continued hope for peace in Central America but offering no new proposals.

**February 6:** Seven civic opposition parties in Nicaragua issue a "9 Point" peace proposal calling for, among other things, a national dialogue, a National Commission for Peace, a cease-fire, and a general amnesty. The Sandinista Government does not respond to this latest call for peace by opposition parties who are committed to a civic struggle for democracy in Nicaragua.

**February 9–10:** Central American, Contadora Group, and European Community Foreign Ministers meet in Guatemala (San Jose III) and endorse negotiating efforts.

**February 15:** At San Jose, the Presidents of the four Central American democracies launch a new peace initiative and endorse draft proposal by President Arias of Costa Rica as the basis for discussion at a subsequent summit of all five Central American Presidents, including Nicaragua's Ortega, at Esquipulas, Guatemala.

**February 22-24:** Ambassador Habib visits Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico.

**March 6:** Ambassador Habib visits Guatemala for talks with President Cerezo and other officials.

**March 22-31:** Ambassador Habib travels to the Central American democracies and the Contadora Group countries for ongoing consultations.

**March 29:** Guatemalan President Cerezo visits Nicaragua and meets with President Ortega and members of the civic opposition.

**April 6:** Salvadoran President Duarte visits Guatemala for a private meeting with President Cerezo.

**April 7:** Three-member Costa Rican delegation visits Nicaragua to discuss peace initiative with Sandinista Government and civic opposition.

**April 13-16:** Contadora and Support Group Foreign Ministers meet in Argentina to discuss Central America situation; issue a communique expressing support for the peace initiative of the Central American democracies. They then discuss other issues (debt, etc.) as "Group of Eight."

**April 27-28:** Ambassador Habib visits Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador.

**June 25-26:** Scheduled summit of Central American Presidents at Esquipulas, Guatemala.

## Appendix A

### Contadora Document of Objectives

[Adopted on September 9, 1983, by the Contadora countries of Mexico, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela and the Central American nations of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.]

#### **Considering:**

The situation prevailing in Central America, which is characterized by an atmosphere of tension that threatens security and peaceful coexistence in the region, and which requires, for its solution, observance of the principles of international law governing the actions of States, especially:

- The self-determination of peoples;
- Non-intervention;
- The sovereign equality of States;
- The peaceful settlement of disputes;
- Refraining from the threat or use of force;
- Respect of the territorial integrity of States;
- Pluralism in its various manifestations;
- Full support for democratic institutions;
- The promotion of social justice;
- International cooperation for development;
- Respect for and promotion of human rights;
- The prohibition of terrorism and subversion;

The desire to reconstruct the Central American homeland through progressive integration of its economic, legal and social institutions;

The need for economic cooperation among the States of Central America so as to make a fundamental contribution to the development of their peoples and the strengthening of their independence;

The undertaking to establish, promote or revitalize representative, democratic systems in all the countries of the region;

The unjust economic, social and political structures, which exacerbate the conflicts in Central America;

The urgent need to put an end to the tensions and lay the foundations for understanding and solidarity among the countries of the area;

The arms race and the growing arms traffic in Central America, which aggravate political relations in the region and divert economic resources that could be used for development;

The presence of foreign advisers and other forms of foreign military interference in the zone;

The risks that the territory of Central American States may be used for the purpose of conducting military operations and pursuing policies of destabilization against others;

The need for concerted political efforts in order to encourage dialogue and understanding in Central America, avert the danger of a general spreading of the conflicts, and set in motion the machinery needed to ensure the peaceful coexistence and security of their peoples;

#### **Declare their intention of achieving the following objectives:**

To promote detente and put an end to situations of conflict in the area, restraining from taking any action that might jeopardize political confidence or obstruct the achievement of peace, security and stability in the region;

To ensure strict compliance with the aforementioned principles of international law, whose violators will be held accountable;

To respect and ensure the exercise of human, political, civil, economic, social, religious and cultural rights;

To adopt measures conducive to the establishment and, where appropriate, improvement of democratic, representative

and pluralistic systems that will guarantee effective popular participation in the decision-making process and ensure that the various currents of opinion have free access to fair and regular elections based on the full observance of citizens' rights;

To promote national reconciliation efforts wherever deep divisions have taken place within society, with a view to fostering participation in democratic political processes in accordance with the law;

To create political conditions intended to ensure the international security, integrity and sovereignty of the States of the region;

To stop the arms race in all its forms and begin negotiations for the control and reduction of current stocks of weapons and on the number of armed troops;

To prevent the installation on their territory of foreign military bases or any other type of foreign military interference;

To conclude agreements to reduce the presence of foreign military advisers and other foreign elements involved in military and security activities, with a view to their elimination;

To establish internal control machinery to prevent the traffic in arms from the territory of any country in the region to the territory of another;

To eliminate the traffic in arms, whether within the region or from outside it, intended for persons, organizations or groups seeking to destabilize the Governments of Central American countries;

To prevent the use on their own territory by persons, organizations or groups seeking to destabilize the Governments of Central American countries and to refuse to provide them with or permit them to receive military or logistical support;

To refrain from inciting or supporting acts of terrorism, subversion or sabotage in the countries in the area;

To establish and co-ordinate direct communication systems with a view to preventing or, where appropriate, settling incidents between States of the region;

To continue humanitarian aid aimed at helping Central American refugees who have been displaced from their countries of origin and to create suitable conditions for the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, in consultation with or with the cooperation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international agencies deemed appropriate;

To undertake economic and social development programs with the aim of promoting well being and an equitable distribution of wealth;

To revitalize and restore economic integration machinery in order to attain sustained development on the basis of solidarity and mutual advance;

To negotiate the provision of external monetary resources, which will provide additional means of financing the resumption of intra-regional trade, meet the serious balance-of-payments problems, attract funds for working capital, support programs to extend and restructure production and promote medium- and long-term investment projects;

To negotiate better and broader access to international markets in order to increase the volume of trade between the countries of Central America and the rest of the world, particularly the industrialized countries; by means of a revision of trade practices, the elimination of tariff and other barriers, and the achievement of the price stability at a profitable and fair level for the products exported by the countries of the region;

To establish technical co-operation machinery for the planning, programming and implementation of multi-sectoral investment and trade promotion projects.

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Central American countries, with the participation of the countries in the Contadora Group, have begun negotiations with the aim of preparing for the conclusion of the agreements and the establishment of machinery necessary to formalize and develop the objectives contained in this document, and to bring about the establishment of appropriate verification or monitoring systems. To that end, account will be taken of the initiatives put forward at the meetings convened by the Contadora Group.

Panama City, 9 September 1983



## **Appendix B**

### **Text of Arias Peace Proposal of February 15, 1987**

#### **Process toward Establishing a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America**

The Governments of the five states in Central America commit themselves to continue the procedure herein established in order to reach the objectives and to develop principles as set forth in the United Nations Charter, the Charter of the Organization of American States, the Declaration of Guatemala, the Declaration of Punta Del Este, the Panama communique, the Document of Objectives of the Contadora Group, the "Declaration of Caraballeda for peace, security and democracy in Central America," the draft of the "Treaty of Contadora for Peace and Cooperation in Central America," and the "Declaration of Esquipulas." For purposes therein established, they will proceed as set forth below.

#### **1. National Reconciliation**

##### **A) Amnesty**

Over a period of 60 days following the date in which the present document is signed by all Central American Governments, wherever there may exist armed conflicts in such countries, a general amnesty should be decreed for political and related offenses. Such amnesty decrees should establish all arrangements that may guarantee the inviolability of life, freedom in all its forms and security of property and person.

Also, these decrees will create in each of said nations a national commission for reconciliation and dialogue, made up of representatives of the government, the internal political opposition, the Catholic Church, and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission; such a commission will have the responsibility of certifying the effective enforcement of the national reconciliation process.

Over a period not to exceed six months after this document is signed, the amnesty decree should have been fully implemented in all its particulars, in a meaningful and effective manner, as determined by the above commission.

#### **B) Dialogue**

The Governments of the Central American states that are suffering armed conflicts shall, as of the signing of this document, initiate or strengthen, as the case may be, an extensive dialogue with all unarmed internal opposition groups as a means of "promoting actions of national reconciliation that permit participation in processes of a democratic character, in accordance with the law, in cases where deep divisions have been produced within a society" (Document of Objectives).

#### **2. Cease Fire**

Simultaneous with the initiation of this dialogue, parties in conflict in each country will end all military actions.

#### **3. Democratization**

In a maximum period of six months, beginning from the date this document is signed, a "genuine pluralist, democratic process should be initiated; such a process should involve promotion of social justice, respect for Human Rights, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nations and the right of all nations to freely and without external influences of any kind, determine their economic, political and social model" (Declaration of Esquipulas) and will begin to adopt, in a verifiable manner, "measures leading toward the establishment and improvement, where applicable, of democratic, representative and pluralistic systems that will guarantee the effective participation of the people in making decisions and that will ensure free access of differing bodies of opinion to honest and periodic elections; such processes to be based on full observance of civil rights." (Document of Objectives)

As a means of verifying the good faith in the developing of this process of democratization, it is understood that:

A) In 60 days starting from the signing of this document there shall be in effect complete liberty of television, radio, and press. Such complete liberty will include the opening and continued functioning of communications

media for all ideological groups, without any exceptions, and the operation of such media without prior censorship.

B) During the same time period there shall be implemented full political pluralism. In this respect, political groups will have full access to the media, total enjoyment of the right to association and the ability to hold public demonstrations as well as the unrestricted right to communicate orally, in writing, and via television in order to promulgate their ideas.

#### **4. Free Elections**

Once the intrinsic conditions for democracy have been established, there must be free, pluralistic and honest elections.

The first joint expression of the Central American states in finding reconciliation and lasting peace for their people will be an election process for the formation of the Central American parliament whose creation was proposed in the "Declaration of Esquipulas," dated May 25, 1986.

Such elections should take place simultaneously in all countries in Central America during the first six months of 1988, on a date to be agreed upon by the Presidents of the Central American States. The elections will be subject to the close monitoring of the Organization of American States to provide the whole world assurance of the integrity of the process. Such a process will be governed by the strictest standards of equality of access by all political parties, to the mass communication media, as well as to extensive opportunities for public demonstrations and any other type of political communication.

After the elections for the Central American parliament have taken place, there shall occur in each one of the countries, according to the schedule established in the respective constitutions, equally free and democratic elections for selection of representatives in all municipalities, for the parliament and for President of the country. Such elections should have the same guarantees and monitoring by international entities.

#### **5. Suspension of Military Aid**

Simultaneous with the signing of this document the governments of the five Central American States will request that extra-regional governments which are overtly or covertly supplying military aid to insurgent or

irregular forces suspend such aid. The five also will request at the same time that the insurgent or irregular forces operating in Central America abstain from accepting such aid in an authentic Latin American spirit. These requests will be made in compliance with what was established in the "Document of Objectives" regarding the "elimination of arms trafficking both intraregional or coming from outside the region, destined for persons, organizations, or groups that are trying to destabilize Central American governments."

#### **6. Non-use of Territory to Attack Other States**

The five countries signing this document reaffirm their commitment "to prevent the use of their own territory and not to give or permit military and logistical support to individuals, organizations or groups that attempt to destabilize the Governments of the Central American countries." (Document of Objectives)

#### **7. Reduction of Armaments**

Over a period of 60 days, beginning on the date this document is signed, the Governments of the five Central American States will initiate "negotiations on the control and reduction of the present inventory of weapons and on the number of military forces" (Document of Objectives). In order to do that, the five governments accept the procedure included in the "joint proposal of Costa Rica and Guatemala," submitted during the deliberations of the Contadora Group.

These negotiations will also involve arrangements concerning the disarming of the irregular forces presently operating in the region.

#### **8. National and International Supervision**

##### **A) Follow-up Committee**

Within a 30-day period, beginning from the date this document is signed, a follow-up committee must be established composed of the United Nations Secretary General, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, the Ministers of Foreign Relations of the Contadora Group, and the Ministers of Foreign Relations of the Support Group. This committee will have the functions of supervising and verifying execution of obligations as included in this document. Its

follow-up functions will also apply in those cases as may be established in other instruments for supervision and execution.

**B) Support and Facilities for Supervisory Organizations**

In order to strengthen the efforts of the follow-up committee, the Governments of the five Central American States will make declarations in support of its work. All other countries interested in promoting freedom, democracy, and peace in Central America may subscribe to such declarations.

The five governments will provide all the necessary facilities for the complete fulfillment of the duties and investigations falling under the responsibility of the national commission for reconciliation and dialogue in every country and of the follow-up committee.

**9. Evaluation of Progress toward Peace**

On a date to be mutually established, but in any case within the six-month period following the signature of this document, the

Presidents of the five Central American States will meet at Esquipulas, Guatemala, for the purpose of evaluating progress in the obligations herein accepted.

**10. Democracy and Freedom for Peace and Development**

In the atmosphere of freedom that democracy assures, the Central American countries will undertake economic and cultural agreements, which will permit accelerated development in order to bring about societies that are more equitable and free from misery.

The points included in this document comprise an integral and indivisible unit. Its signing involves the obligation, accepted in good faith, to execute, within the terms as set forth, all points in this "process to bring a stable and lasting peace in Central America."

This document will enter into force on the date of its signature by the Presidents of the five Central American States.

## **Appendix C**

### **San Jose Summit of Presidents of Central American Democracies**

**A Declaration of Principles signed  
February 15, 1987, by the Presidents of  
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and  
Honduras.**

#### **A Time for Peace**

Peace in the Americas can only be maintained through the independence of each one of its nations; through political and economic cooperation among its peoples; through the enjoyment of the broadest liberties; through the rule of stable democratic regimes; in the fulfillment of its citizens' basic needs, and through progress toward disarmament.

Peace is demanding its time. The dictatorships, which for so many years have ruled the fates of many peoples of this continent, have systematically violated Human Rights, and have submitted populations to misery, exploitation, servitude, inequality, and injustice.

Peace is demanding its time. In only a few countries of the Americas, dictatorships persist, and with them survive the practices of disregard for the highest human values.

The peace that is demanding its time also demands an end to the dictatorships that continue to exist. It is imperative that all of us, together, promote the substitution of such tyrannies where the people are victims of a lack of freedom in whatever form. Such a substitution should occur, preferably, as a peaceful transition, without bloodshed, toward democracy.

The peace that is demanding its time also demands an end to extreme poverty, and that genuine equality of opportunity be established for all. Without this commitment to justice, conflicts will persist.

The peace that is demanding its time also demands the strengthening of democracy in all the nations of the Americas. Where the doors of freedom and democracy have been opened, where all men may freely and periodically elect their rulers, where political pluralism prevails, as well as dialogue and the free expression of ideas, armed conflicts can only be

interpreted as the desire to establish a new dictatorship. They cannot be regarded as struggles for freedom, but rather as conflicts by fanatics who try to impose by force the ideas of a minority of whatever ideological stripe. Clear examples of such fanatical struggles, whose motivation is to impede the development of liberty in the democracies, are the guerrillas' movements that persist in El Salvador, Peru, and Colombia.

For Central America, the governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras demand peace. They want a stable and lasting peace: The peace that can only come about in a democratic regime, committed to the neediest. These governments are searching for the reconciliation of peoples so that brothers no longer kill brothers. They reaffirm their faith in a political solution to their problems and proclaim that in liberty and democracy dialogue replaces rifles, security replaces fear, and cooperation is substituted for selfishness.

Central America is not alone in this effort toward peace. Over the past four years the Contadora Group, via its mediation, has been expressing the desire of Latin America to seek peaceful solutions among its people. The Contadora Support Group is the expression of Sister States that, having again found the way to democracy, are proclaiming that freedom and democracy are irreplaceable in order to arrive at reconciliation in Central America. The Organization of American States has been witness to solemn promises to establish democracy and has promoted serious efforts to achieve peace and the observance of commitments made by its members. The United Nations has been closely interested in the problem of Central America pursuant to its responsibilities for promoting peace throughout the world.

The Central American Governments have actively participated in the process toward reaching security and peaceful coexistence in the area. This process brought about agreement among the five States on the "Document of Objectives" of the Contadora Group and on the "Declaration of Esquipulas."

The democratic Governments of Central America, aware of their political responsibility to solve their own problems, believe that it is urgent to establish the definite and verifiable actions required to promote a solution to the regional crisis within a clearly defined time period.

It is necessary to transform thought into action and agreement into realities. Now is the time to act. The fulfillment of accords strengthens dialogue, revives confidence among peoples, and prevents violence and war.

The Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, inspired by the Charter of the Organization of American States (Charter of Bogota) and by the United Nations Charter, in their efforts to promote a peaceful solution to conflicts and to urge States to prevent and to eliminate threats to peace and to regional security, state they consider the document presented by the President of Costa Rica that follows below is a viable, opportune, and constructive instrument for finding peace in Central America through diplomatic negotiations. They affirm their decision to deepen their analysis (of the document) so that they can, with suggestions and modifications that they consider appropriate, bring (it) up for

discussion and approval in a meeting of the five Presidents of the Central American countries that shall take place in Esquipulas within 90 days from the present date.

The chiefs of state meeting here request the Government of Costa Rica to transmit this document to the Government of Nicaragua and to invite President Daniel Ortega Saavedra to attend the meeting in Esquipulas.

The objective of the meeting in Esquipulas will be to consider the modifications that the governments regard necessary in order to strengthen democracy and thereby establish a firm and lasting peace in Central America.

The document will be sent, for their information, to the nations that form the Contadora Group and the Support Group in recognition of their interest and the important role that they play in the search for solutions to the problems of the region.

The Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras acknowledge the valuable effort on behalf of peace by President Oscar Arias, and offer him in that context their total moral support and extend their thanks through him to the people and Government of Costa Rica for the warm reception and hospitality that they have enjoyed.

**If you would like to receive additional information,  
contact the Office of Public Diplomacy  
for Latin America and the Caribbean:**

**ARA/LPD  
Room 5917  
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# The Sandinista Military Build-up

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# **The Sandinista Military Build-up**

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## Introduction

In July 1984 the Departments of State and Defense released a study entitled *Background Paper: Nicaragua's Military Build-up and Support for Central American Subversion*. That study described the growth of the Sandinista military and documented the extent and sophistication of Sandinista export of subversion and support for Marxist-Leninist guerrillas elsewhere in Central America, especially in El Salvador.

Since the publication of that study, the Sandinista arms build-up has accelerated. Between mid-1984 and early 1985, the active-duty force grew nearly 30 percent, from 48,000 to more than 62,000, and the tank and armored personnel carrier inventory increased from 240 to more than 340. Moreover, the addition of a radar air defense system and the Mi-24/HIND D, one of the world's most sophisticated attack helicopters, has further increased the military capability of the Sandinistas. This study describes this build-up and supplements the information on Nicaragua published in *The Soviet-Cuban Connection in Central America and the Caribbean*, released in March 1985.



## The Sandinista Military: 1979–1985

### Guerrilla Origins

In July 1979, a broad and popular coalition led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*—FSLN) overthrew the government of Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza. Opposition to the Somoza dictatorship had become widespread during the mid-1970s, and the assassination in January 1978 of Somoza's leading critic, *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, triggered demonstrations of popular outrage, including a lengthy general strike. The Sandinistas capitalized on this mounting resentment of Somoza, and Eden Pastora's (*Comandante Cero*) seizure of the National Palace that August captured the imagination of the Nicaraguan people. The ranks of the FSLN swelled; by late 1978, it had nearly 1,000 combatants,<sup>1</sup> and by the following summer, this figure had risen to about 5,000.<sup>2</sup> While numerically smaller than Somoza's 14,000-strong National Guard, at that time the Sandinistas had the support of the Nicaraguan people and received large amounts of materiel from abroad. In contrast, the National Guard was isolated from the people and faced increasing difficulties in obtaining supplies. In June 1979, the Organization of American States took the unprecedented step of calling for the "definitive replacement" of the Somoza regime.<sup>3</sup> With no hope of external support and having lost control of much of the nation's territory, Somoza fled Nicaragua on July 17. The National Guard disintegrated literally overnight; many Guardsmen, including most of the higher ranking officers, fled into exile, while thousands of others, mostly enlisted men, were imprisoned by the new government.<sup>4</sup>

When the Sandinistas marched triumphantly into Managua on July 19, 1979, there was great hope for Nicaragua's future. The leaders of the FSLN had publicly pledged themselves to the principles of political pluralism, a mixed economy, and a nonaligned foreign policy. Although dominated by the Sandinistas, the new Government of National Reconstruction (GRN) included many others who had participated in the anti-Somoza

revolution.<sup>5</sup> The GRN also enjoyed broad international support, and the United States took the lead in the assistance effort, authorizing \$118 million of economic aid and humanitarian assistance during the following 18 months.

### The Build-up Begins

Once in power, the Sandinistas quickly set about building their armed forces and transforming their rag-tag guerrilla army into a well-equipped professional military. The *comandantes* realized from the outset that they would need a large, politicized military to pursue their revolutionary objectives and to maintain themselves in power once the bloom of the revolution had worn off and their true political orientation was exposed.<sup>6</sup> In the fall of 1979, they initiated a military build-up without precedent in Central America. In less than 6 years, the Sandinistas have developed a military establishment with firepower and mobility unmatched in the region. This expansion has been made possible only with massive assistance from Cuba and the Soviet Union. Indeed, only the militarization of Cuba itself in the 1960s is comparable to what has occurred in Nicaragua since 1979.

The Sandinistas' plans called for a steady increase in the number of men under arms, first through "voluntary" enlistment and later through mandatory conscription. By early 1985, they had amassed an active duty force of more than 62,000. The Sandinistas' total strength, including all regular, reserve, and militia units and security forces, now exceeds 119,000.

### Ground Forces

The Sandinista Popular Army (*Ejército Popular Sandinista*—EPS), the full-time, regular army of the FSLN, has grown to 30,000. The EPS has systematically moved

<sup>1</sup>"Rebels Train to Overthrow Somoza," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1978, p. A1.

<sup>2</sup>"Nicaragua Junta Assumes Rule in Jubilant Managua," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1979, p. A1.

<sup>3</sup>The United States suspended military assistance to the Somoza regime in 1977. It participated in the OAS mediation effort in the fall of 1978 to resolve the growing crisis in Nicaragua, and in early 1979 the United States announced the suspension of other assistance programs to demonstrate its displeasure with Somoza's intransigence. The United States fully supported the June 1979 OAS resolution calling for Somoza's replacement.

<sup>4</sup>The Sandinistas held more than 7,000 political prisoners in 1979, most of them former National Guardsmen. See *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1979*, Department of State, February 1980.

<sup>5</sup>The original junta included Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the widow of slain *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, and Alfonso Robelo. Both resigned in April 1980. Mrs. Chamorro has become a vocal critic of Sandinista policies, particularly censorship of *La Prensa*. Robelo has become a leader of the opposition Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE). The first Defense Minister of the new government, Bernardino Larios, was a National Guard colonel who had defected during the revolution. At the end of 1979, he was replaced by Humberto Ortega, a member of the FSLN National Directorate. Larios was subsequently imprisoned for alleged subversive activities. Even after his release from jail in March 1984, he was kept under virtual house arrest. In March 1985, he escaped to Costa Rica.

<sup>6</sup>The top leadership of the FSLN held a secret meeting September 21–23, 1979 (barely 2 months after coming to power), to set forth plans for consolidating the revolution. The report from this meeting, formally titled "Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista Peoples' Revolution" but commonly referred to as the "72-Hour Document," candidly revealed the Sandinistas' intentions to build a large politicized armed force despite their acknowledgement that "at present there is no clear indication than an armed counter-revolution by Somocista forces beyond our borders is going to take place and jeopardize our stability."





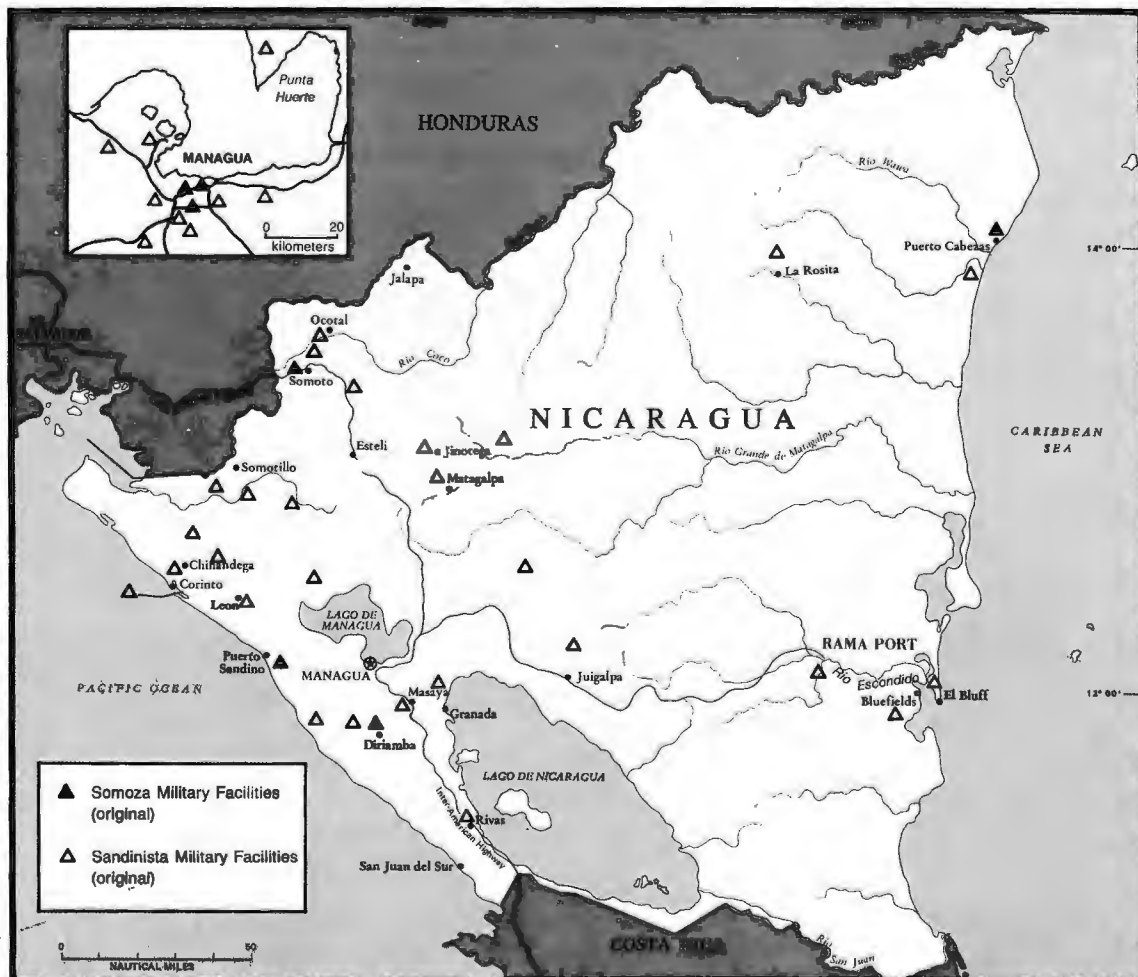
Sandinista troops passing in review. The militarization of Nicaraguan society has led to the building of armed forces nearly half the size of those of Mexico, a country with more than 25 times the population of Nicaragua. The Sandinistas now have an active duty force of 62,000 and total military/security forces of 119,000.

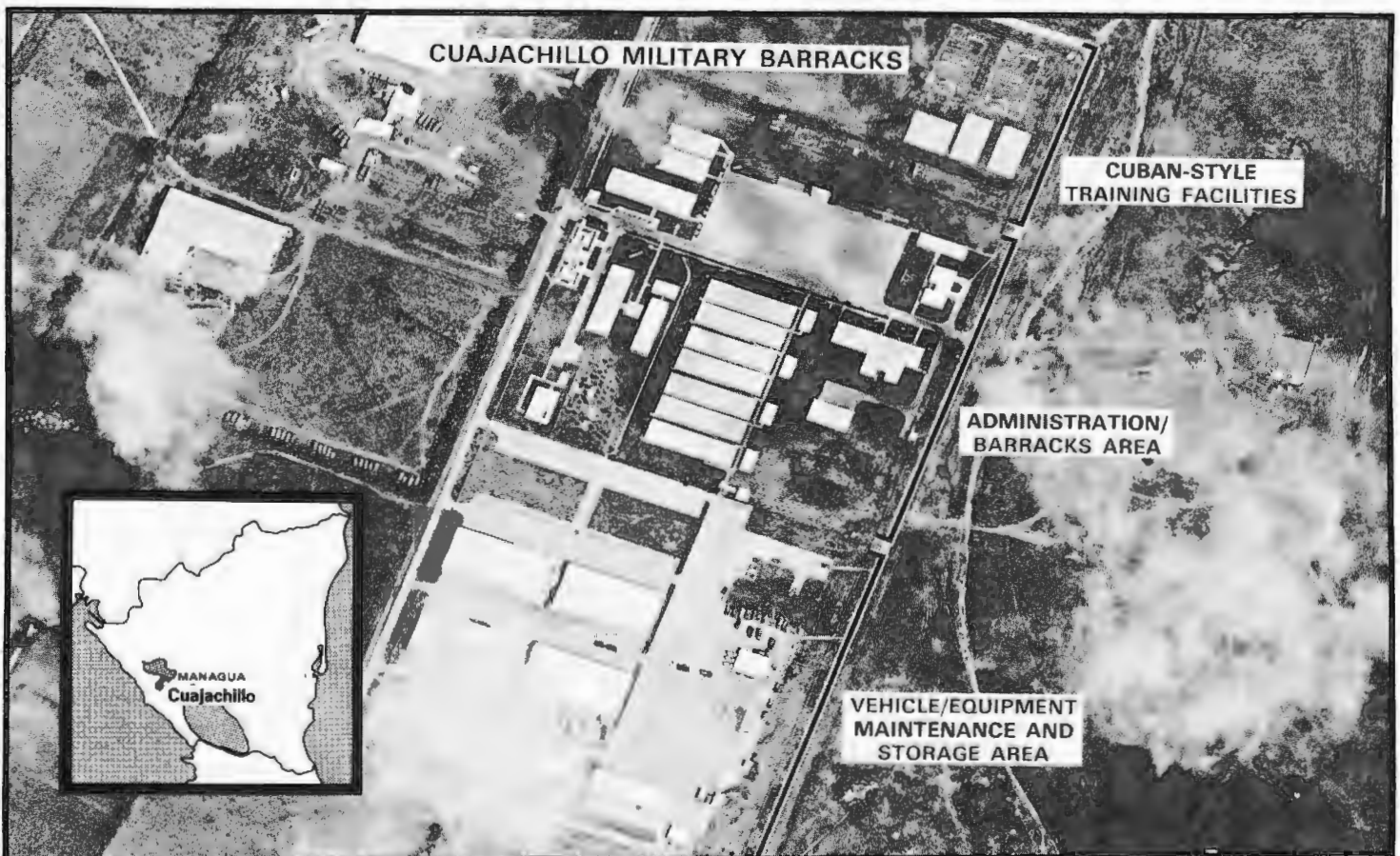
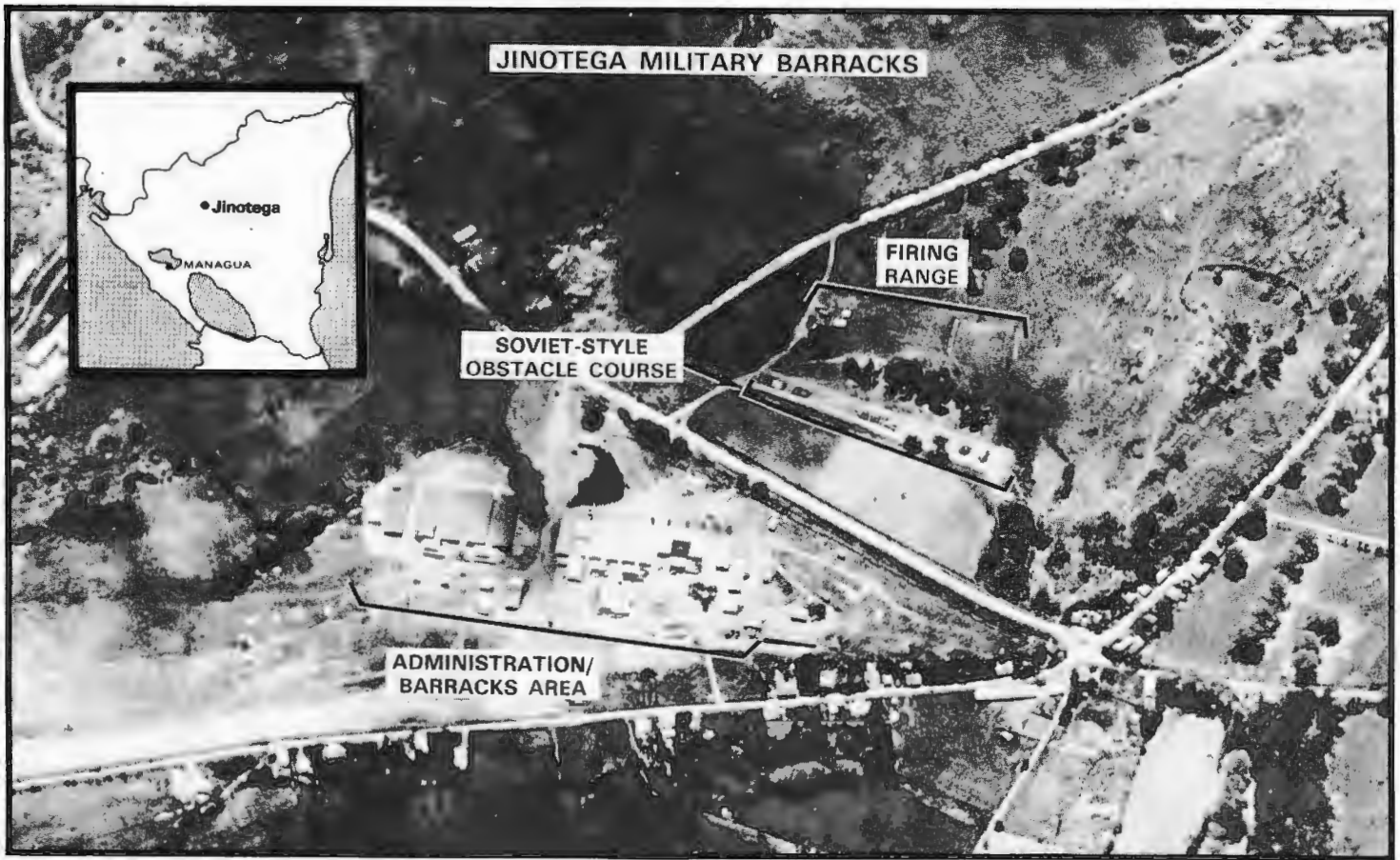
toward developing a combined arms capability, augmenting its conventional infantry forces with mechanized infantry, armored, and artillery brigades. The Sandinistas

also have emphasized the formation of reserve and militia forces; currently, these units total some 79,000 men, of which over 27,000 are on active duty at any one time. Dozens of new military bases have been constructed throughout Nicaragua, and the Sandinistas now have some 40 major garrisons and numerous smaller posts throughout the nation.

**Infantry.** The EPS has formed 10 regular infantry battalions. A special airborne battalion was inaugurated in 1982. The following year, special counterinsurgency battalions (*Batallon de Lucha Irregular—BLI*) were trained and equipped to engage anti-Sandinista forces. Units along Nicaragua's frontiers were organized as a special border guard force (*Tropas Guarda Fronteras—TGF*). The bulk of the Sandinistas' infantry forces consists of the roughly 160 reserve and militia battalions. These infantry units are equipped primarily with Soviet-bloc arms, such as the AK-47 assault rifle.

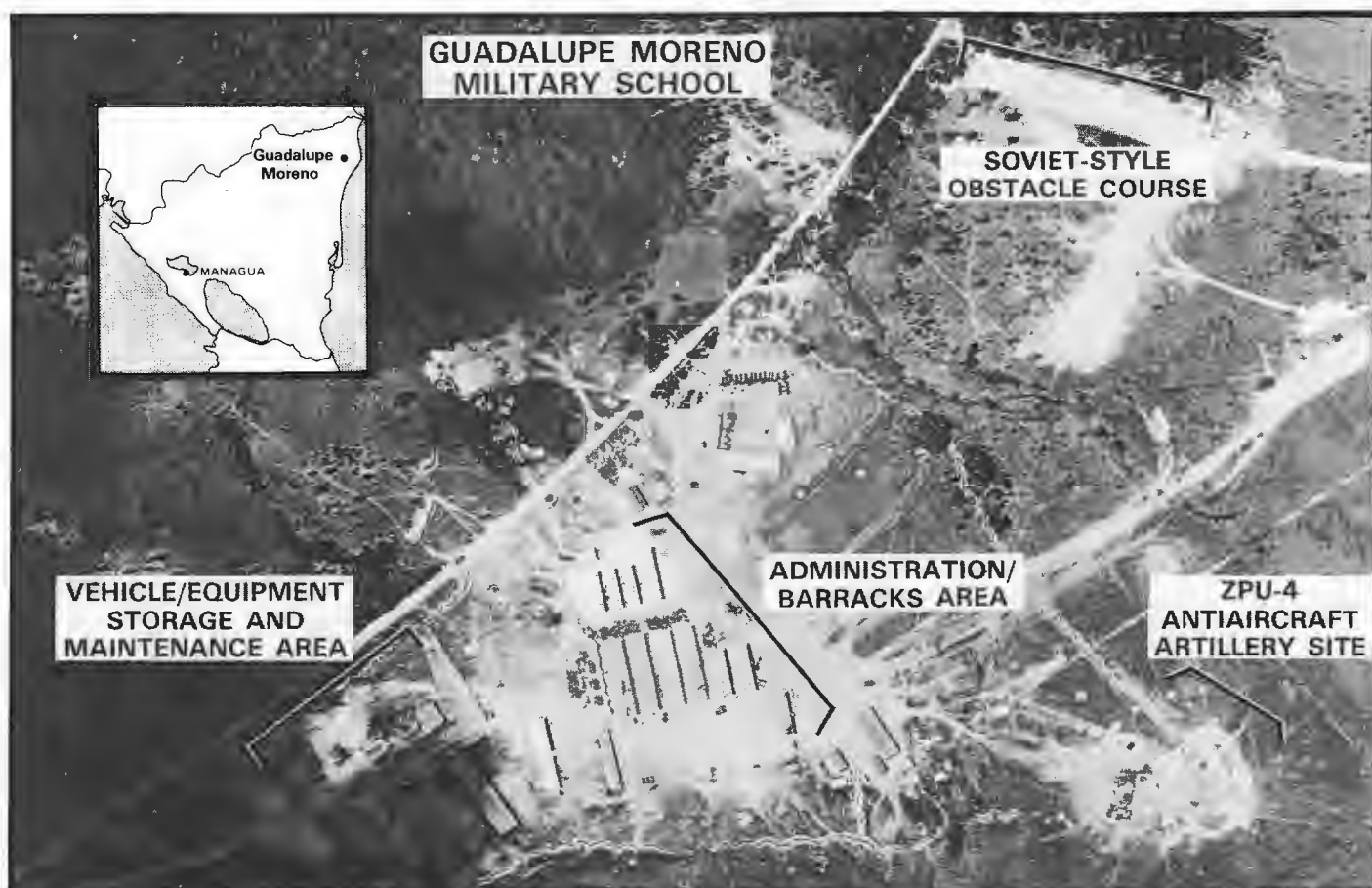
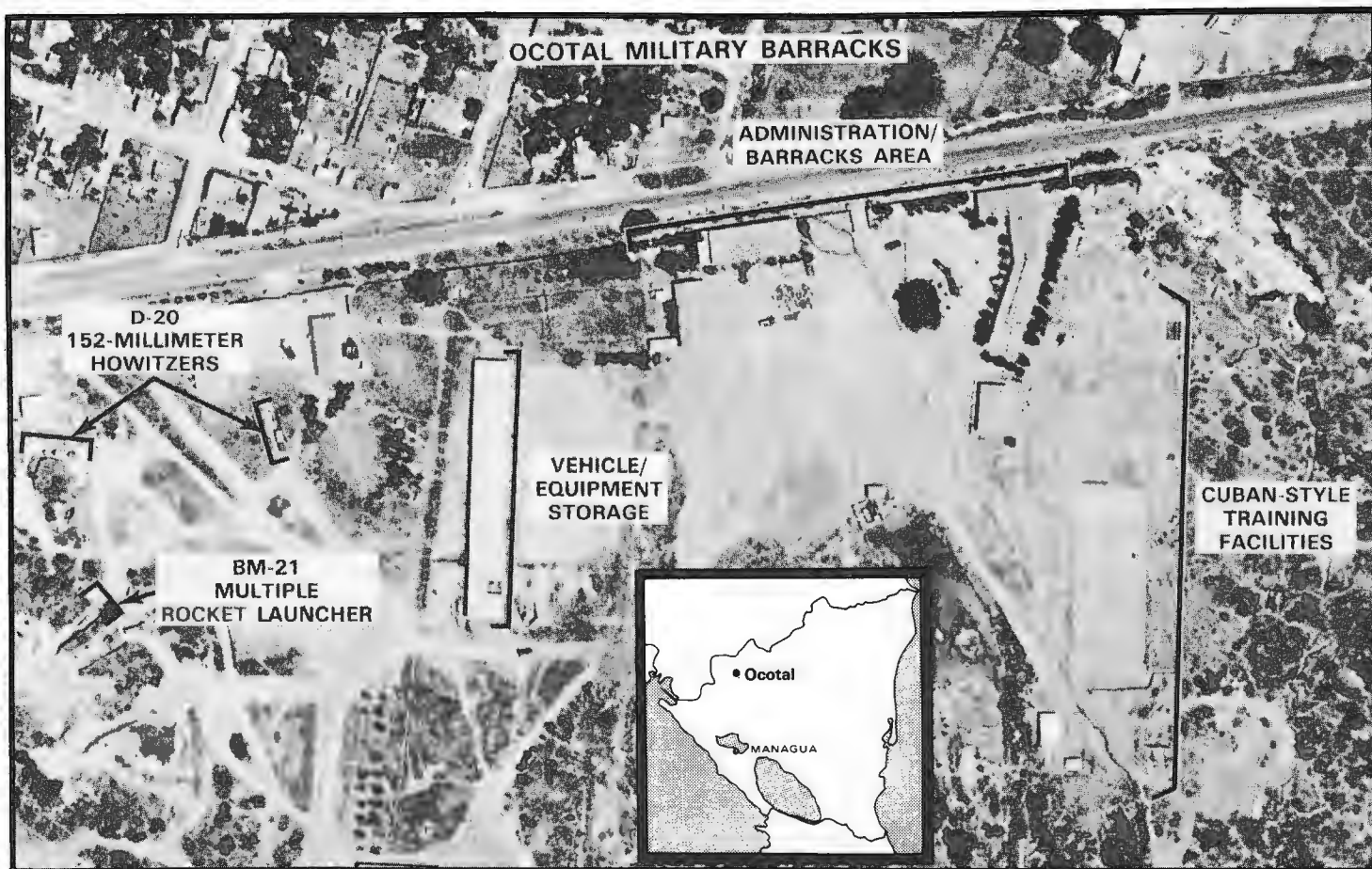
The Interior Ministry, which controls the Sandinista Police (*Policia Sandinista—PS*) and the General Directorate of State Security (*Direccion General de Seguridad del Estado—DGSE*), the Sandinista secret police, has direct command of its own brigade of 2,000 highly trained infantry troops (*Tropas Pablo Ubeda*).





The bases pictured here and on the following page are examples of the military garrisons the Sandinistas have built. Several have facilities of Soviet and Cuban design.





**Armor.** The Sandinista army has adhered closely to Soviet-Cuban military doctrine in the development of its armed forces.<sup>7</sup> When the Sandinistas seized power in July 1979, they inherited the hodgepodge collection of armor that had belonged to Somoza's National Guard, including some obsolete World War II vintage tanks, only three of which were operational. The remainder of Somoza's armor consisted of 25 antiquated Staghound armored cars.

The Sandinistas set about building an armored force of a size and firepower without precedent in Central America. Crews and mechanics for tanks and other vehicles were sent to Cuba for training. Facilities to support the forthcoming arsenal were built. The first Soviet-built T-55 tanks arrived in mid-1981. The T-55, weighing 36 metric tons and armed with a 100-millimeter gun, can outgun any tank previously seen in Central America. Formerly the Soviets' main battle tank, it is still being used by Warsaw Pact armies. The Sandinistas used the T-55s to form a new armored battalion stationed near Managua.

Over the next 3 years, ships from the Soviet bloc continued to transport tanks to Nicaragua. By 1982, the Sandinistas had obtained a sufficient number of T-55s to organize another armored battalion. By the end of 1984, they had acquired a total of more than 110 T-55 tanks, enough to form five armored battalions of 22 tanks each.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Soviet military doctrine emphasizes the use of massed armor. In terms of size and organization, Sandinista armored units are modeled after their Cuban counterparts.

<sup>8</sup>In a February 1985 interview with CBS News, Sandinista Army Chief of Staff Joaquin Cuadra tacitly acknowledged that the EPS had 110 tanks and added that it planned to acquire up to a total of 150.

In 1984, the Soviets provided the Nicaraguans with about 30 PT-76 light tanks. This amphibious tank, armed with a 76-millimeter gun, fords rivers easily and can maneuver in some of the difficult terrain found in parts of Nicaragua.

The Soviets, through their allies, have also equipped the Sandinista army with more than 200 armored vehicles, mostly BTR-60 and BTR-152 armored personnel carriers. These vehicles are armed with a machinegun and can carry a squad of infantry. The first BTR-60s began arriving in mid-1981. The EPS has also received Soviet-made command vehicles and BRDM-2 amphibious armored reconnaissance vehicles. The Sandinistas have now formed at least one mechanized infantry brigade.

The terrain in certain parts of Nicaragua is well suited to armored operations, while in other parts of the country, the terrain imposes some constraints. Tanks can operate easily in the flat plains of the west, which encompass the principal population and economic centers of the nation. On the other hand, the mountains and rugged terrain of the northern departments limit off-road maneuverability. Nevertheless, the EPS has deployed armored units in the north, particularly in such missions as escorting convoys and guarding fixed installations. The lowlands of the Atlantic Coast region inhibit off-road use of the heavy T-55s, but the Sandinistas could deploy the amphibious PT-76s in this region. While some observers have argued that the terrain in Central America renders tanks of only marginal military value, the Sandinistas—and their Soviet suppliers—do not share this view; indeed, they have continued the rapid increase in the size of their tank force, doubling it in 1984 alone.

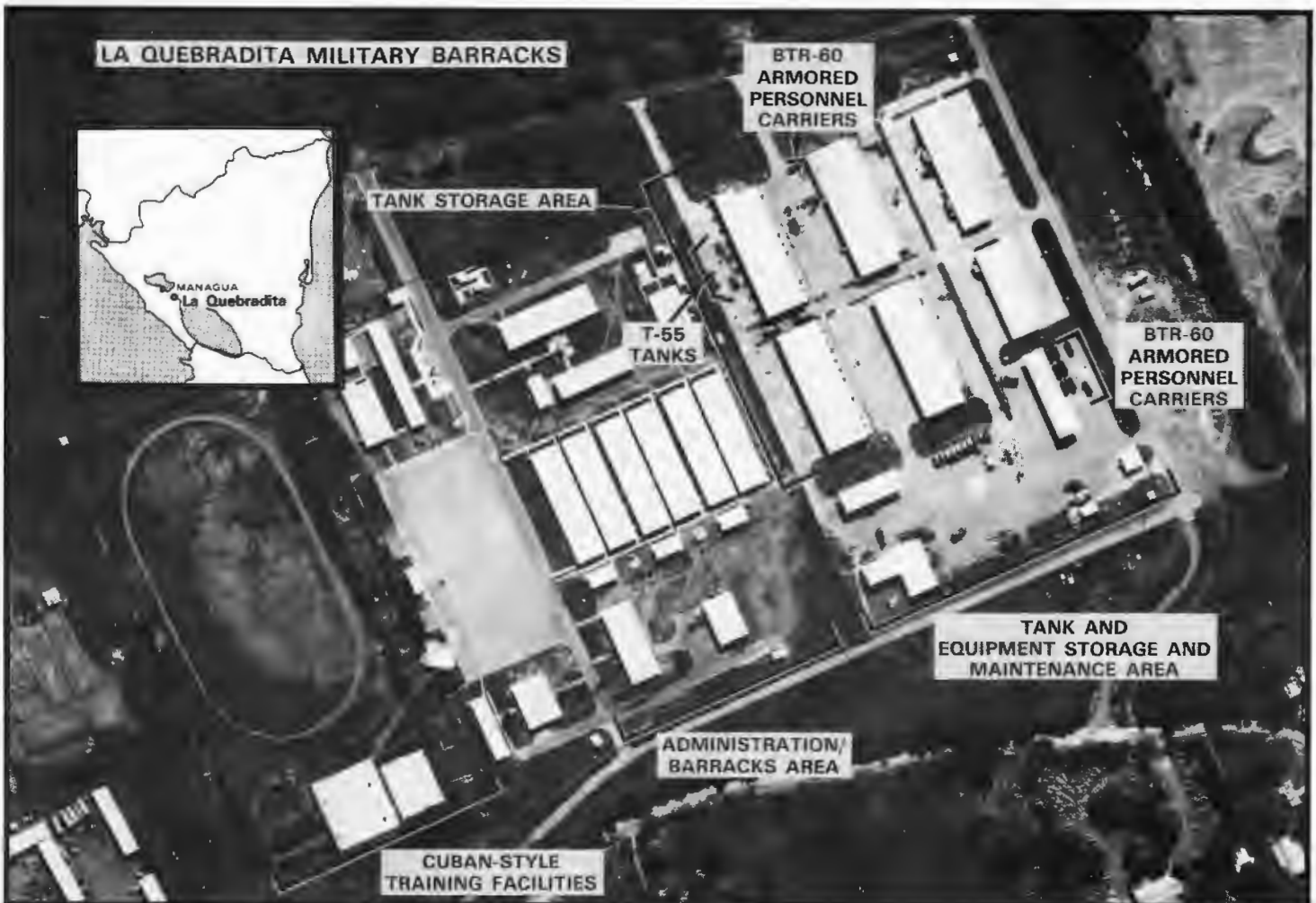


The Soviet-made T-55 tank weighs 36 metric tons and has a 100-millimeter gun. Formerly the Soviet Union's main battle tank, it is far superior to any other tank in Central America. The Sandinistas have more than 110 T-55s. In comparison, Somoza had three operational World War II vintage U.S. tanks.





El Tempisque near Managua is the Sandinistas' principal transit storage base. The first T-55 tanks arrived there in mid-1981, long before the Sandinistas faced any serious armed opposition.



La Quebradita, in southern Managua, is another Sandinista base for T-55 tanks.



The PT-76 weighs 14 metric tons and has a 76-millimeter gun. This fully amphibious tank uses water jets for propulsion when in water. The Soviets provided the Sandinistas about 30 of these light tanks in 1984.



The Sandinistas can use some of their armor in the mountainous region of northern Nicaragua. These PT-76s are deployed in the town of Ocotal.



The BTR-60, an armored personnel carrier, can transport a squad of infantry. It is armed with a machinegun and is fully amphibious.



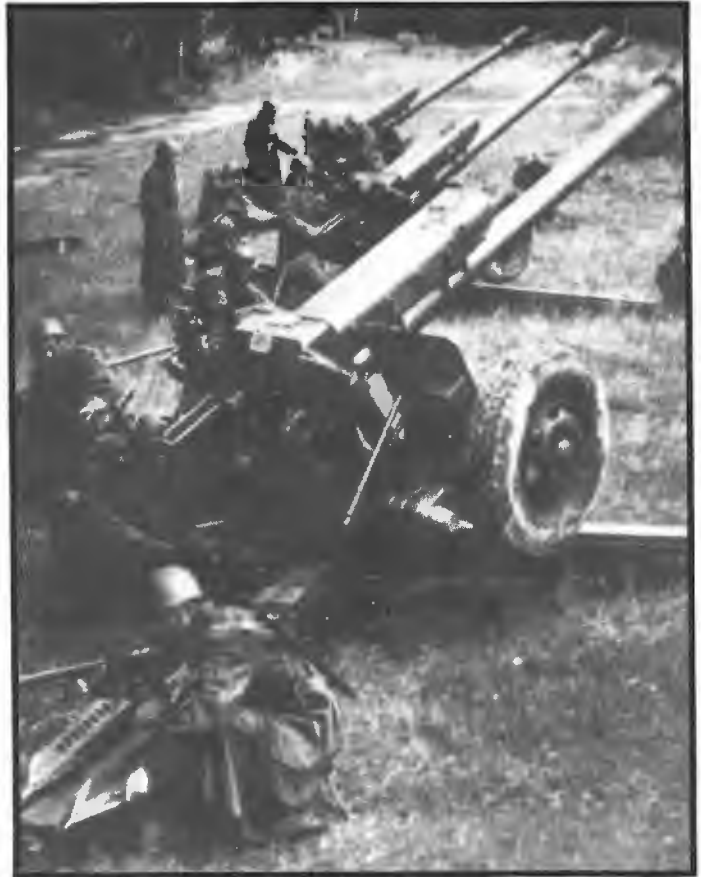
The BRDM-2 armored reconnaissance vehicle is fully amphibious and armed with a machinegun. The Sandinistas have dozens of these vehicles which, like the PT-76 light amphibious tanks and the BTR-60 armored personnel carriers, are well suited to the rough terrain in parts of Nicaragua.



The BTR-152, an armored personnel carrier capable of transporting up to 17 infantry troops, is armed with a machinegun. Somoza had 25 antiquated armored cars; the Sandinistas now have about 200 armored vehicles, most of which are BTR-60s and BTR-152s.

**Artillery.** The growth of EPS's artillery force has been equally dramatic. During the revolution, the Sandinistas' fire-support weapons consisted of nothing larger than mortars. When they defeated Somoza's National Guard, they inherited three 105-millimeter howitzers.

During their first year in power, the Sandinistas began receiving ZIS-2s, Soviet-made 57-millimeter antitank guns. By 1981, they were obtaining D-30s, Soviet-made 122-millimeter howitzers far surpassing in range and firepower all other artillery in Central America. That same year, they began acquiring D-20s, Soviet-made 152-millimeter howitzers, which represented a further qualitative increase in their artillery capability. In 1982, Soviet-made BM-21s, capable of launching a barrage of 40 122-millimeter rockets, arrived, greatly increasing the Sandinistas' area bombardment capability. In 1983, the Sandinistas formally inaugurated a special artillery brigade, based in Managua. Currently, the EPS's inventory includes 24 D-30s, 24 D-20s, 24 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers, and scores of antitank guns, as well as hundreds of mortars.



Somoza's artillery consisted of three 105-millimeter howitzers. As early as 1981, the Sandinistas began to acquire D-30 122-millimeter howitzers. The Soviet-made D-30 can fire a 48-pound shell nearly 10 miles. The Sandinistas have 24 D-30s.



The D-20 152-millimeter howitzer is the largest artillery piece in Central America. It can fire a 96-pound shell nearly 11 miles. The Sandinistas have 24 D-20s. These D-20s are being towed by Soviet-made KRAZ-255 trucks.





The Sandinistas have six GSP amphibious ferries which can carry heavy vehicles, including T-55 tanks, across rivers.



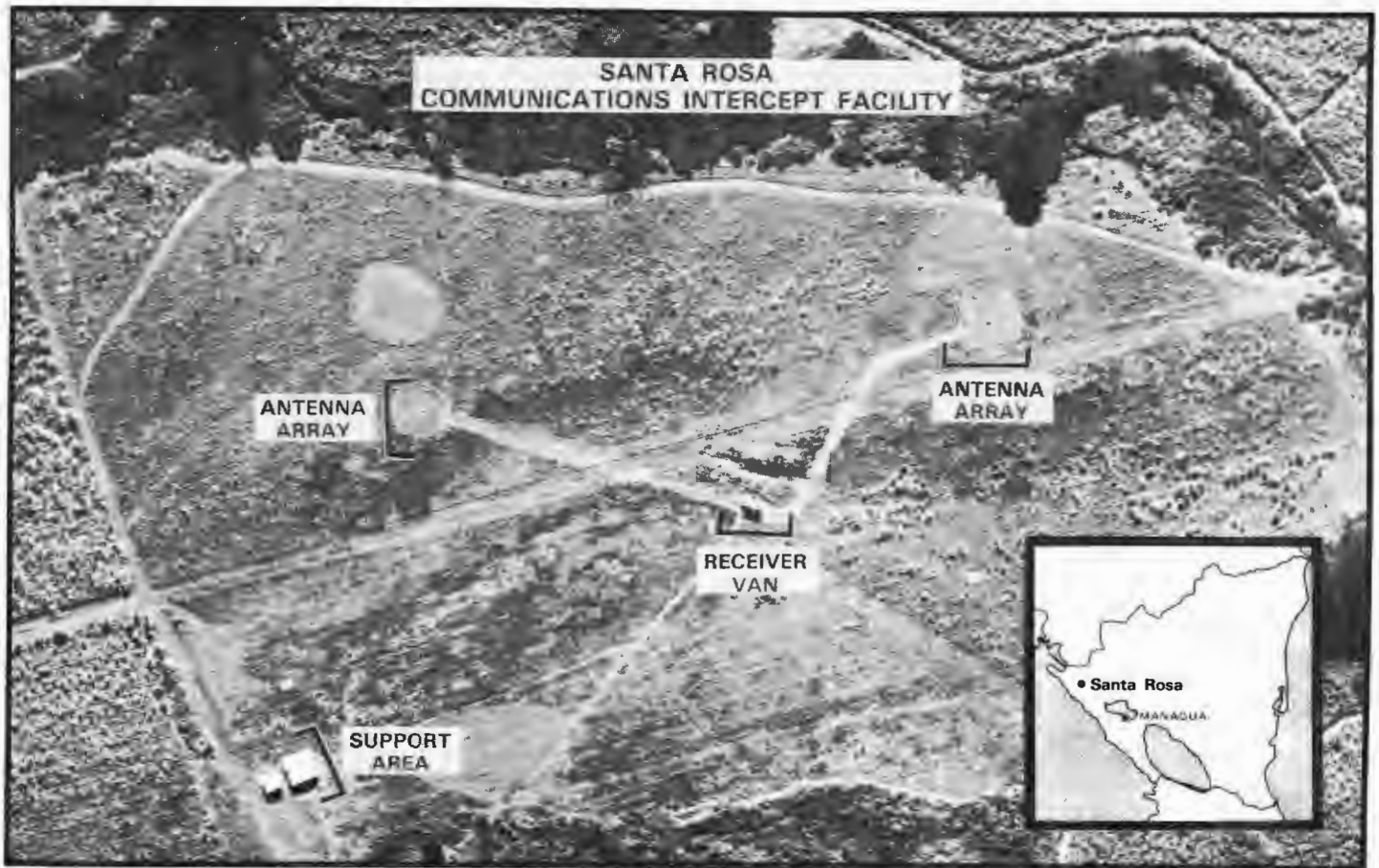
The Sandinistas have acquired about 75 fuel tanker trucks to provide logistical support for their growing army.



The Soviets provided the Sandinistas this communication intercept facility in 1982.



Three additional communications intercept facilities (above and on following page) have been built in the last 2 years.





The Sandinista air force began with the remnants of Somoza's air force, which included a few of these AT-33A jets. The Sandinistas placed a high priority on developing a more powerful air arm. They made plans to expand existing airfields and to build new ones, and, by 1980, were sending personnel to Soviet-bloc countries to be trained as pilots and mechanics.



This photo shows Cuban commandos deploying from a Soviet-built Cuban air force AN-26 transport plane during training exercises. In 1983, the Sandinistas acquired two of this type of aircraft, significantly increasing their air transport capabilities.



The Mi-8/HIP is one of the Soviets' principal combat helicopters. It can be armed with a machinegun, rocket pods, and antitank missiles. The Mi-8 also serves as a transport helicopter for Sandinista troops and their equipment. The Sandinistas have received more than a dozen Mi-8s.

## Air Force and Air Defense

The 2,000-troop Sandinista Air Force and Air Defense Force (*Fuerza Aerea Sandinista/Defensa Anti-Aerea*—FAS/DAA) has been undergoing substantial improvements since 1979. The Sandinistas began with the remnants of the National Guard's small air force, which included a handful of AT-33A jets, Cessna 337 push-pull aircraft, transport aircraft, trainers, and helicopters. The Sandinistas placed a high priority on developing a more powerful air arm. Early on, they sent personnel to Cuba and Soviet-bloc countries to be trained as pilots and mechanics, and they made plans to expand existing airfields and to build new ones.

Because of the long lead time associated with the acquisition of aircraft—i.e., the need for lengthy pilot training and the construction of airfields—the FAS grew slowly in its early years. The first fixed-wing aircraft added to the inventory were older and unsophisticated models such as Soviet-made AN-2s. In 1982, they acquired four Italian-made SF-260 trainer/tactical support aircraft from Libya. Two Soviet-made AN-26 medium transports added in 1983 significantly improved the Sandinistas' logistics support capabilities.

The Sandinistas' helicopter inventory has grown more rapidly. Some of these helicopters have been obtained from Western nations, such as two Alouettes received from France in 1982. The great majority of these craft have been obtained from the Soviets and their allies, however. In 1981, the first two Soviet Mi-8/HIP medium-lift helicopters arrived. The following April, the Soviets formally donated the Mi-8s to the Sandinistas, alleging that they were to be used to help develop the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua. In fact, the Mi-8 is one of the Soviet Union's front-line combat helicopters and can be armed with a machinegun and rocket pods. The Sandinistas have received more than a dozen Mi-8s and have used them extensively in military operations. In 1982, the Sandinistas also acquired Polish-built Mi-2/HOPLITE cargo helicopters.

In late 1984, the Sandinistas received the first of a new generation of helicopter gunships, the Mi-24/HIND D. This is the Soviets' principal attack helicopter, and it has been used extensively by the Soviets in Afghanistan. One of the most highly sophisticated attack helicopters in the world, it holds the helicopter speed record and can be armed with a multiple-barrel machinegun, guided missiles, rocket pods, and bombs. The HIND's heavy armor, coupled with its high speed, greatly reduces its vulnerability to small arms fire.<sup>9</sup> Acquisition of the HIND D adds a new dimension to warfare in Central America. Key targets in Honduras, Costa Rica, and El Salvador are all within the reach of this flying "tank." Some five to eight Mi-24s had been delivered to Nicaragua by early 1985.

<sup>9</sup>For further information on the Mi-24, see John F. Guilmartin, Jr.'s, "Nicaragua is Armed for Trouble," *Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 1985, p. 28.





**The Mi-24/HIND D (above and below) is one of the world's most advanced attack helicopters. It has a nose-mounted Gatling-type machinegun and can carry up to 4 pods containing nearly 130 57-millimeter rockets as well as antitank missiles or bombs. This is the same helicopter being used by the Soviet Union against Afghan rebels. The Sandinista air force now has five to eight of these flying "tanks."**

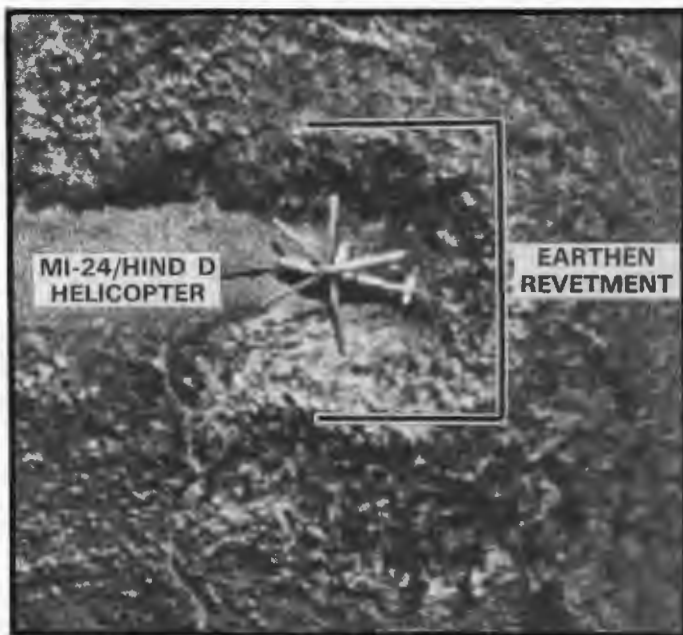




Augusto Cesar Sandino International Airport in Managua is the principal base for the Sandinista air force. The western portion of the airfield (left in photo) is the military area.

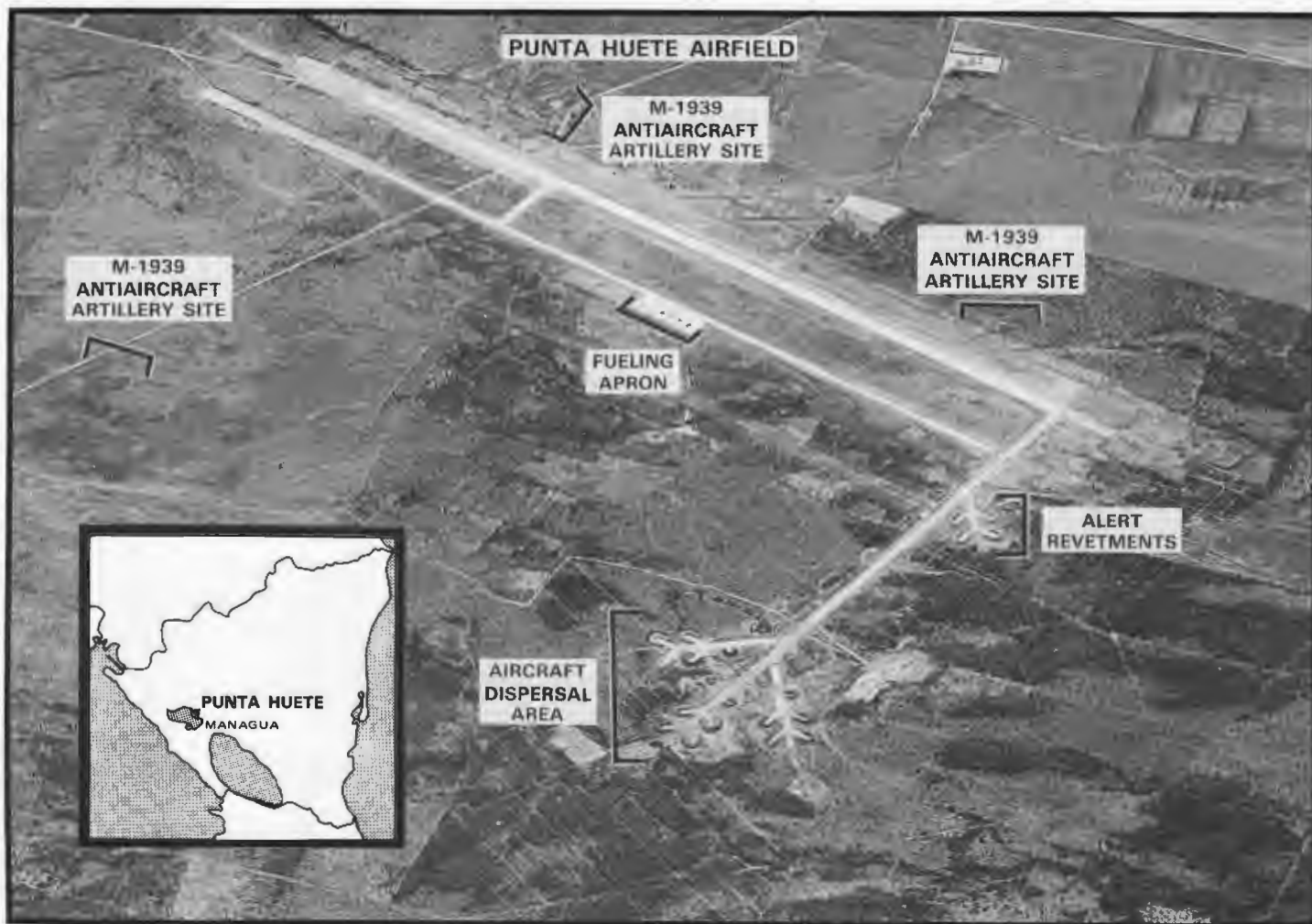


Examples of the many types of Soviet-bloc aircraft provided to the Sandinistas.

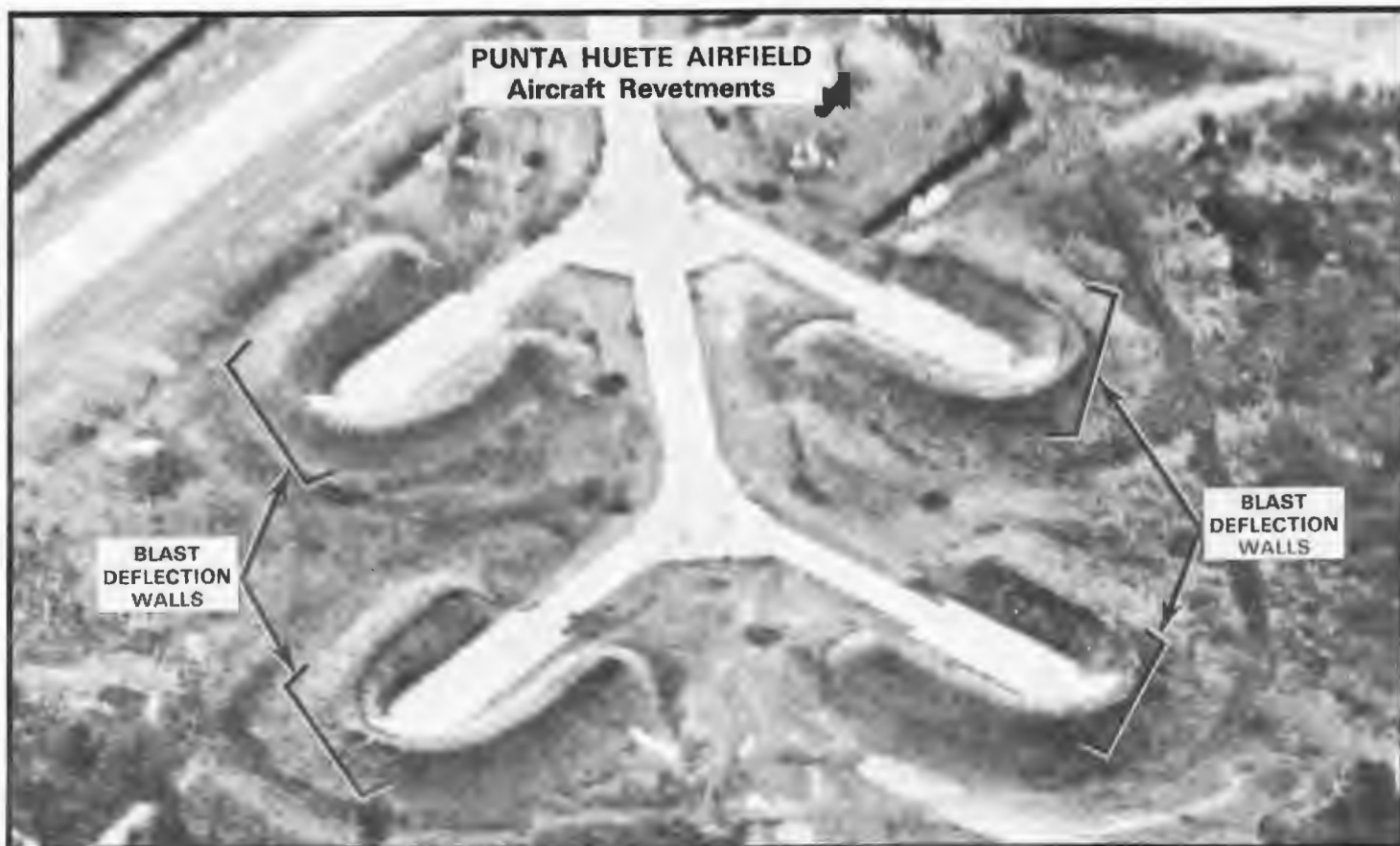


The initial shipments of Mi-24s arrived at Sandino Airport in November 1984. The helicopters are shipped in crates and assembled at the airport, probably with the assistance of Soviet or Cuban technicians.

The Sandinistas have three AT-33A jets, and in 1984 top FSLN leaders repeatedly proclaimed their desire to acquire additional jet fighters. Nicaraguan pilots and mechanics reportedly have been undergoing training in Cuba and the Soviet bloc since the early 1980s. In 1982, with Cuban and Soviet assistance, the Sandinistas began constructing the Punta Huete airfield in an isolated area northeast of Managua. The principal runway at Punta Huete is 10,000 feet in length, making it the longest military runway in Central America. When completed, it will be able to accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet-bloc inventory. Sixteen revetments of the size and design appropriate for jet fighters already have been constructed. In addition to Punta Huete, the Sandinistas have been upgrading their principal airbase at Sandino Airport in Managua as well as other airfields at Montelimar, Puerto Cabezas, Esteli, La Rosita, and Bluefields.



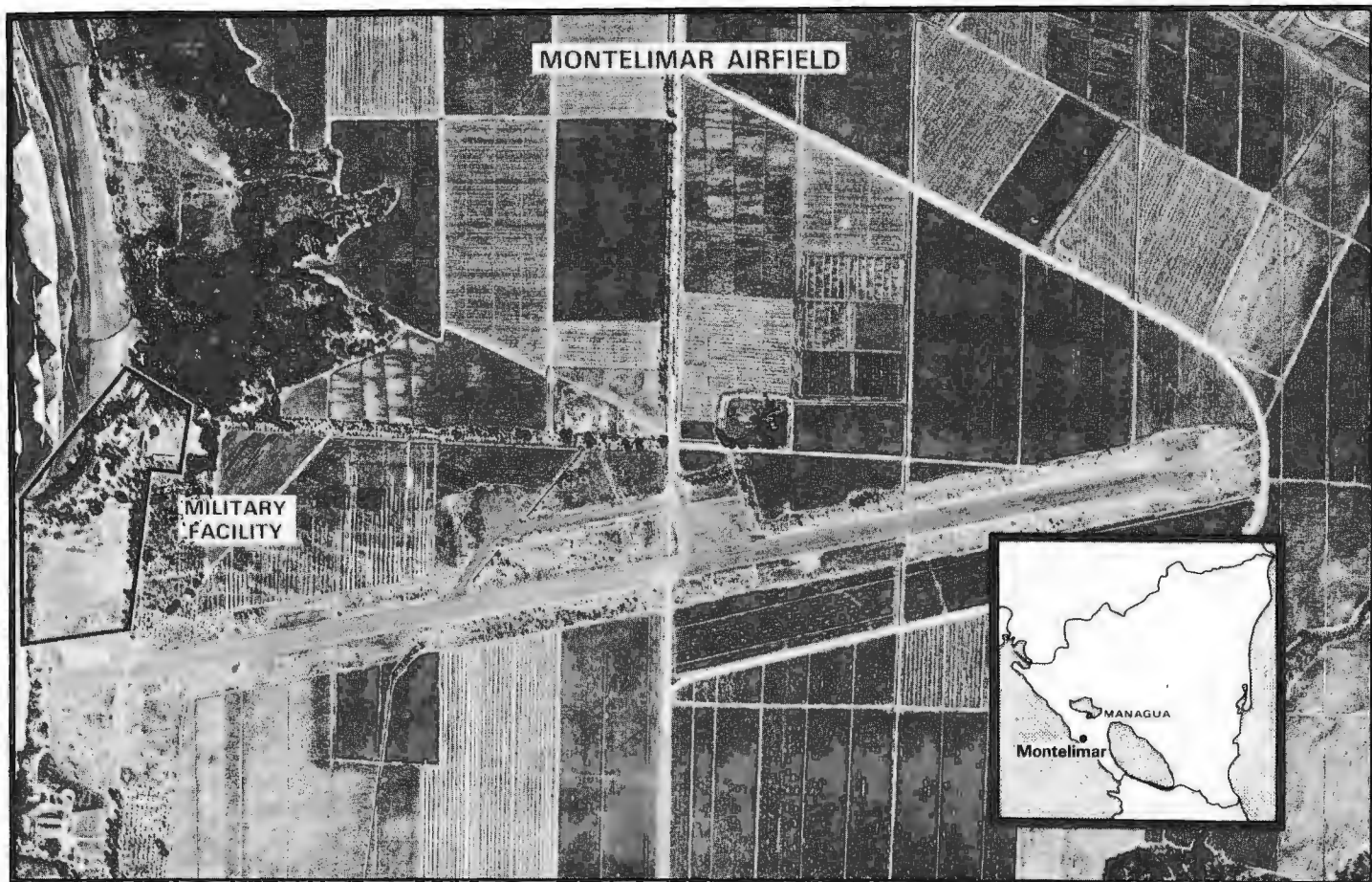
The Sandinistas could soon have the Punta Huete runway operational. It is in an isolated region ideal for military use. Its planned 10,000-foot runway, the longest military runway in Central America, could accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet inventory.



Punta Huete (above) is designed for jet aircraft. In the revetments are clearly visible the blast deflection walls used for jets. These revetments are similar to those at the Kawama airfield in Cuba (below), which accommodates MiG fighters.



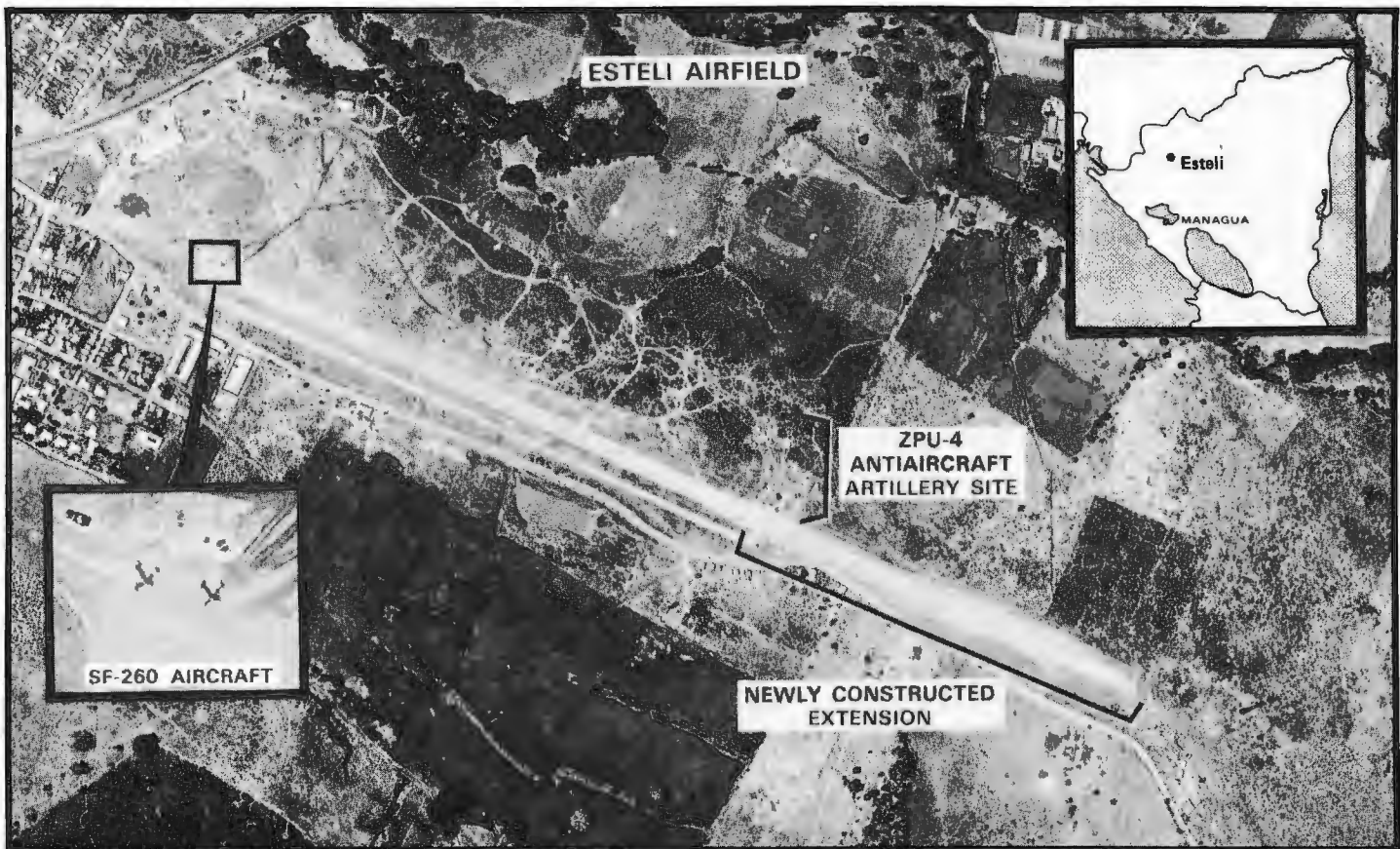




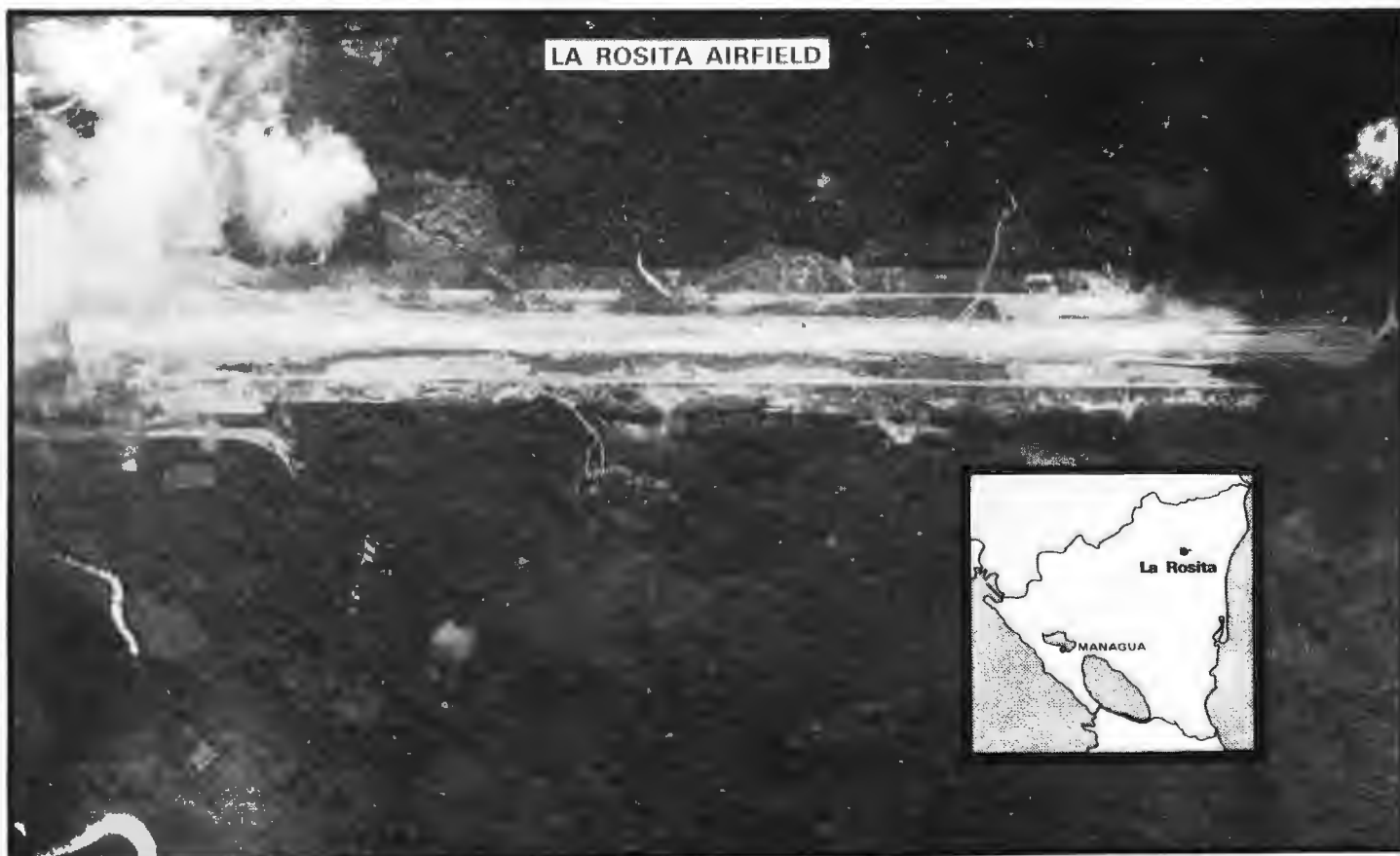
New facilities have been added to the Montelimar airfield.



The Sandinistas are upgrading the airfield at Puerto Cabezas and lengthening the runway by more than 1,500 feet.

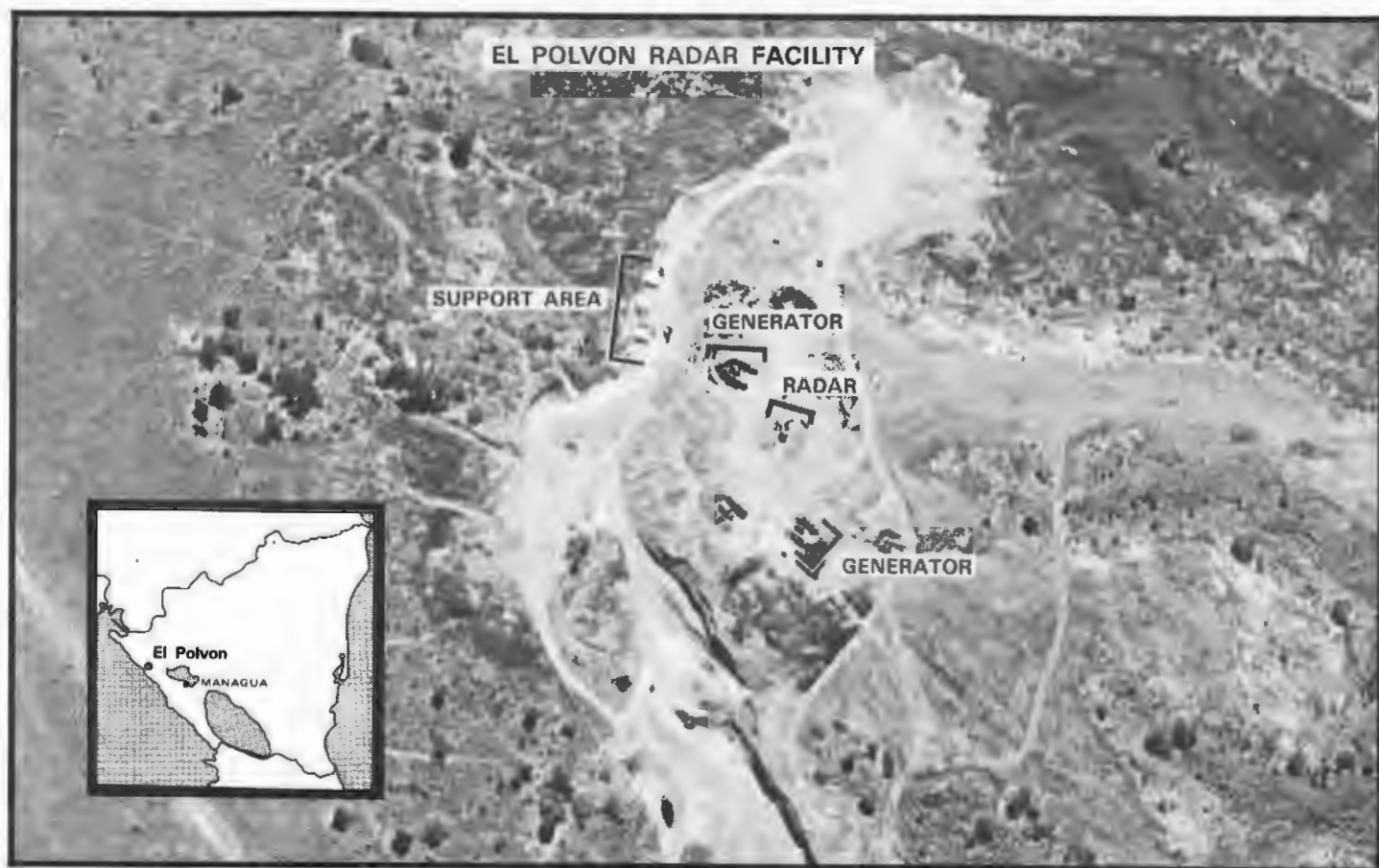


The runway at Esteli has been lengthened considerably. On the runway are two SF-260 aircraft believed to have been given to the Sandinistas by Libya's Colonel Muammar Qadhafi.



The Sandinistas are constructing an airfield at La Rosita to increase their ability to operate in the Atlantic Coast region.





A coastal surveillance radar facility recently constructed at El Polvon.



The SA-7 is a surface-to-air missile with an infrared guidance system. The Soviets have provided the Sandinistas more than 300 SA-7 launchers, such as this one held by a Soviet soldier.



The ZU-23 is a 23-millimeter anti-aircraft gun. Each of its two barrels can fire at the rate of 800-1,000 rounds per minute. It has an effective range of more than 8,000 feet.



The M-1939, a 37-millimeter anti-aircraft gun, can fire at the rate of 160-180 rounds per minute. It has an effective range of more than 8,000 feet. There are nine M-1939 sites in the Managua area alone. Notice that in the bed of each truck, a soldier holds an SA-7 missile launcher.

This is one of several S-60 anti-aircraft gun sites in the Managua area.



The S-60 is a 57-millimeter automatic anti-aircraft gun which can operate with a fire control radar system or through optical sighting. It can fire 105-120 rounds per minute, and has an effective range of nearly 20,000 feet. It was added to the Sandinistas' arsenal in 1984, further enhancing their anti-aircraft capabilities.



## Navy

The 1,000-troop Sandinista Navy (*Marina de Guerra Sandinista*—MGS) has similarly undergone both a qualitative and quantitative transformation since 1979. Somoza's "navy" consisted of a handful of old patrol boats. The Sandinistas set out to acquire a fleet of more modern vessels. In 1983, they acquired two French Vedette patrol boats and two Soviet ZHUK patrol boats. In 1983–84, North Korea supplied two KIMJIN and two SINHUNG patrol boats. In 1984, Cuba delivered a third ZHUK and two YEVGENYA inshore minesweepers. In November 1984, the Soviet merchant ship *Bakuriani* delivered four Polish-built K-8 minesweeping boats.

## Cuban and Soviet Assistance

The Sandinista military build-up would have been impossible without massive assistance from Cuba and the Soviet Union. Castro provided the Sandinistas shelter and training during their struggle against Somoza, and he supplied them with weapons for their final offensive in 1979. The Cuban official who commanded the support network based in Costa Rica, Julian Lopez Diaz, was appointed Cuba's ambassador to Nicaragua as soon as the Sandinistas were in power.

Within a week of the fall of Somoza, Cuba had placed about 100 military and security personnel in Nicaragua. By early 1985, the number of Cuban military/security advisers in Nicaragua had grown to some 3,000.<sup>10</sup> These Cubans permeate the Ministries of Defense and Interior, operating at all levels of the armed forces from the General Staff in Managua down to the battalion and, in some cases, even company levels. They are prominent in military training facilities and in areas where technical expertise is required, such as aviation and telecommunications. An additional 30 to 40 Soviet and more than 60 East German military/security advisers also operate in Nicaragua.

These Cuban and Soviet-bloc advisers have strongly affected the organization and tactics of the Sandinista military. The units of the Sandinista army and militia are modeled after their Cuban counterparts; in 1980, the Nicaraguans even copied the Cubans' four-digit unit identification system. Some Nicaraguan military bases are modeled after similar facilities in Cuba.



This Soviet-made ZHUK patrol boat is one of more than a dozen vessels provided to the Sandinista navy by the Soviet Union, Cuba, and North Korea.

Until recently, the Soviets used surrogates to mask the extent of their own involvement in the military build-up. Cuba was the first to make substantial deliveries of Soviet-made arms, and later Algeria and Bulgaria took on this role. Direct Soviet shipment of military-associated goods occurred by 1981, but not until late 1984 did a Soviet ship deliver major weapons systems—Mi-24s and K-8s—directly to the Sandinistas.

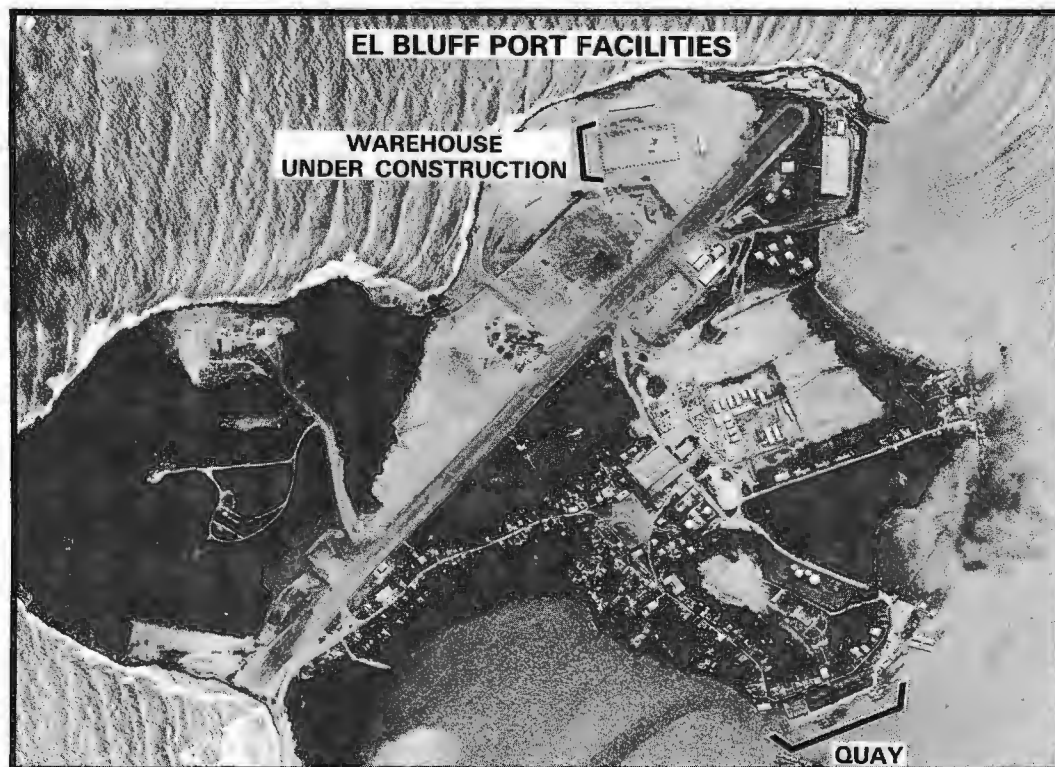
The details of the agreements that led up to these assistance programs remain secret. Nevertheless, documents captured in Grenada in 1983 (and available for review at the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C.) reveal the method employed by the Soviet bloc to arm a surrogate.<sup>11</sup> In the case of Grenada, Maurice Bishop's regime signed five secret military agreements—three with the U.S.S.R., one with Cuba, and one with North Korea. Military equipment began arriving in Grenada within a few months of the signing of these documents. Since Soviet military hardware began arriving in Nicaragua in early 1980, it is likely that the initial secret arms agreements between Nicaragua and Cuba and the Soviet Union were concluded shortly after the Sandinistas seized power in 1979. (At that time, the Sandinistas were receiving hundreds of millions of dollars of economic aid from the United States and other Western sources.) The influx of military aid from the Soviet Union and its allies has risen steadily. In the past 3 years, the number of Soviet-bloc ship deliveries of military equipment has risen from 6 in 1982 to 25 in 1983 to 37 in 1984. The total value of the tanks, helicopters, and other war materiel shipped to Nicaragua was approaching \$500 million by early 1985.

<sup>10</sup>The Sandinistas' decision to turn to the Cubans was one of choice, not necessity. For example, immediately after its July 1979 victory, Panama sent military advisers and trainers to Nicaragua to help in converting the Sandinista guerrillas into a regular army. By the end of 1979, however, the preeminent position of the Cubans was firmly established, and the Panamanians returned home.

<sup>11</sup>See Department of State/Department of Defense publications, *Grenada: A Preliminary Report*, December 16, 1983, and *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection*, September 1984.



The two main ports used for arms deliveries are El Bluff/Rama on the Caribbean and Corinto on the Pacific.



Most of the Sandinistas' heavy arms have been delivered to the Caribbean port of El Bluff.



Smaller ships such as the *Nicarao* transport the military equipment from El Bluff up the Rio Escondido to Rama.



## Assistance from—and to—Terrorists

The FSLN has long maintained close ties with numerous terrorist organizations and radical states. During the 1970s, a number of Sandinistas trained and fought with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). After the Sandinistas took power, the PLO opened an "embassy" in Managua and assigned pilots and mechanics to assist the Sandinista air force. Libya has provided the Sandinistas with both equipment, such as SF-260 aircraft and helicopters, and personnel, including pilots and mechanics.

The Sandinistas not only receive assistance from terrorists, they also provide assistance to terrorists. They have collaborated closely with Marxist subversives throughout Central America, particularly the Salvadoran guerrillas. Working with the Cubans, the FSLN provides these groups with training camps, command and control bases, and safe houses. The Sandinistas support a logistical system for the transport of arms through Nicaragua to guerrillas in neighboring countries.

The Sandinistas' ties are not limited to groups in Central America, however, for they also have links with groups such as the Montoneros of Argentina, the 19th of April Movement (M-19) of Colombia, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) of Chile, the Tupamaros of Uruguay, the Basque Homeland and Liberty (ETA) separatist movement of Spain, the Baader-Meinhoff gang of Germany, and the Red Brigades of Italy.<sup>12</sup> (In February 1985, Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi complained in a public statement before the Italian Parliament that Nicaragua had become a safehaven for fugitive Italian terrorists.) Some of these groups have been implicated in terrorist attacks against the Sandinistas' opponents carried out in third countries.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>For additional information on the FSLN's connections with international terrorist organizations, see Juan O. Tamayo's "Sandinistas Attract a Who's Who of Terrorists" and "World's Leftists Find a Haven in Nicaragua," *Miami Herald*, March 3, 1985, p. A1.

<sup>13</sup>See Department of State/Department of Defense publication, *Background Paper: Nicaragua's Military Build-up and Support for Central American Subversion*, July 1984.



In May 1984, Eden Pastora (*Comandante Cero*) was wounded in an assassination attempt in which four people—including an American reporter—were killed and 27 people injured. Pastora had been a Sandinista hero during the revolution but broke with the FSLN because of its efforts to implant Marxism in Nicaragua and its close ties with Cuba and the Soviet Union. In June 1983, Pastora and former Nicaraguan Junta member Alfonso Robelo, the principal leaders of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE), were targeted for assassination by the Nicaraguan General Directorate of State Security (DGSE). The attempt failed when the bomb detonated prematurely and killed the two would-be assassins. In November 1984, Robelo was injured and his fiancée crippled in yet another assassination attempt.



Libyan aircraft (above and right) transporting large quantities of weapons to Nicaragua (falsely manifested as medical supplies) were detained in Brazil in April 1983.

## Recruitment and Conscription

The Sandinistas initially had no difficulty in finding recruits for their military. The Nicaraguan people had supported the revolution against Somoza, and many youths eagerly joined the ranks of the EPS. Gradually, however, voluntary enlistment declined as disillusionment with the FSLN became widespread. To meet the goals for their military build-up, the Sandinistas began using a variety of coercive measures at schools and workplaces, as well as the Sandinista Defense Committees (*Comites de Defensa Sandinista*—CDS), the infamous “block committees” modeled after the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, to compel men and women to enlist in the army, the reserves, or militia units.

When these tactics failed to provide sufficient manpower, the Sandinistas resorted to the draft. In July 1983, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega proclaimed that the government would adopt mandatory conscription. Despite widespread opposition, the Sandinistas enacted the draft law in September, calling it Patriotic Military Service (*Servicio Militar Patriotico*—SMP). Technically, the law made males aged 18 to 40 eligible for the draft, with those in the 18 to 21 age bracket subject to being called up effective January 1, 1984, and those over 21 subject to subsequent callups. It also provided deferments for those in special categories, such as government workers with key jobs. In practice, the Sandinistas began inducting youths by late 1983, and six rounds of callups had taken place by early 1985. The Sandinistas have claimed that 30,000 Nicaraguans have been drafted, but many Nicaraguans believe that the real number is far higher. Thousands of youths were simply

summoned by their local Sandinista draft boards, while many others were captured in house-to-house sweeps, roadblocks, and roundups at public places such as movie theaters, dance halls, and ball parks.

The Sandinistas have been indiscriminate about the age of those they impress, often seizing youths in their mid-teens—below the official draft age. While most of those drafted do enter the army rather than go to jail, thousands of youths have gone into hiding, and many others have slipped across the borders into exile.<sup>14</sup>

Many Nicaraguans have protested forced induction into the Sandinista military, which they perceive as the political army of the FSLN party and not the national army of Nicaragua. Also, there is broad resentment over the inadequate training given SMP recruits. Often draftees without adequate military skills are sent to the front to face the forces of the armed opposition. Increasingly, many Nicaraguan parents believe that the Sandinistas are using their children as cannon fodder. As a result of this resentment, spontaneous anti-draft demonstrations have sprung up throughout Nicaragua. For example, for 3 days in September 1984, hundreds of students in Chinandega marched in protest. In December, the residents of Nagarote clashed with Sandinista troops who had come to sweep the town for draft-age youths. Similar acts of protest have occurred in other locations.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup>See June Carolyn Erlick's "Draft Dodgers Flee Nicaragua for Honduras," *Miami Herald*, January 4, 1985, p. 12; Steven Kinzer's "Nicaraguan Men Fleeing Draft Fill Honduran Refugee Camp," *New York Times*, April 11, 1985, p. 1; and Edward Cody's "Nicaraguans Choosing Exile to Avoid Draft, Uncertainty," *Washington Post*, April 12, 1985, p. A1.

<sup>15</sup>See "Nicaraguan town fights recruiters," *Chicago Tribune*, December 29, 1984, p. 5, and Steven Kinzer's "Town Battles Military Draft in Nicaragua," *New York Times*, January 2, 1985, p. 9.

## Implications

The steady pattern of the Sandinista military build-up demonstrates that the FSLN has been intent on forming the largest armed forces in Central America ever since it seized power in 1979. Contrary to Sandinista assertions that their military build-up has been the result of "counterrevolutionary activities" and "foreign aggression," the blueprint for the creation of a powerful combined arms force—infantry, armor, and artillery supported by airpower and naval units—was drawn at least 2 years before significant armed opposition arose.<sup>16</sup> The Sandinistas planned the build-up at a time when the National Guard had been routed, the revolution had broad popular support, and the international community was highly supportive—with the United States leading the efforts to provide economic assistance. While the rise of armed opposition forces has led the Sandinistas to make some adjustments in their plans, such as the formation of special counterinsurgency battalions, it has not significantly affected the basic outline of an oversized military force laid out in 1979–80.

Why did the Sandinistas choose to develop such a huge military establishment? In Nicaragua, as in Cuba and other countries which have fallen to Marxist-Leninists guerrillas, the new regime placed as its top priority the formation of a large armed force which could ensure the consolidation of its power. The Sandinistas recognized that the "honeymoon" period they initially enjoyed would not last. As FSLN National Directorate member Bayardo Arce said in 1984, the Sandinistas never had had any intention of honoring their commitments to pluralism, a mixed economy, and nonalignment; they had merely espoused these policies in 1979 as a tactical ploy.<sup>17</sup> The Sandinistas realized that, as they proceeded with their secret agenda of fostering a Marxist-Leninist regime and exporting revolution throughout the region, they would encounter growing resistance from the nations of the region and from the Nicaraguan people themselves. The Sandinistas sought to develop a powerful military force which could intimidate their neighbors and suppress domestic opposition, thereby providing them with a secure base for their subversive activities.

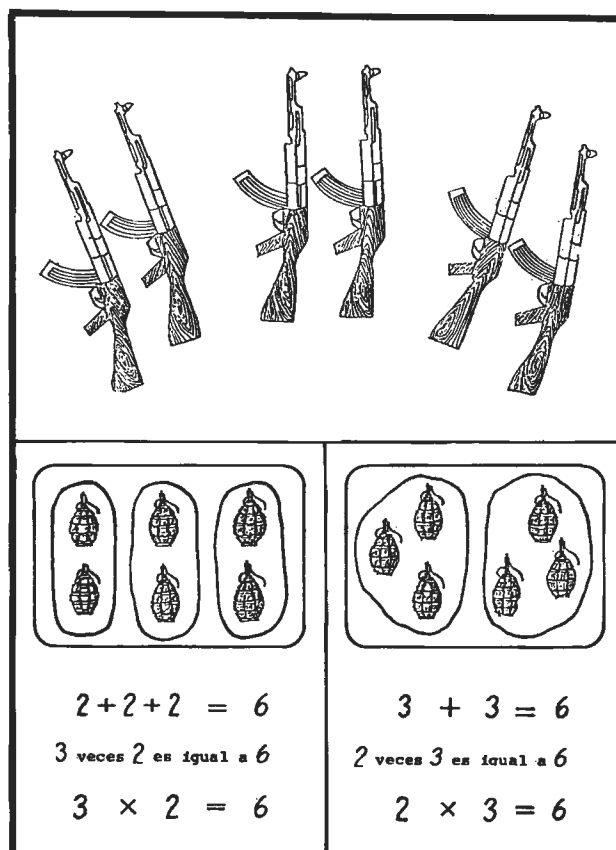
<sup>16</sup>Nicaraguan Ambassador Carlos Tunnermann wrote in a letter to the *Washington Post* that prior to November 1981, "there were only a few hundred ex-GN [Somoza's National Guard] soldiers staging sporadic raids on farms along the border. Their principal occupations were cattle-rustling and extortion." See "We Will Never Negotiate With the *Contras*," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1985, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup>Joaquim Ibarz, "El Comandante Bayardo Arce afirma que se va a implantar el marxismo-leninismo y el partido unico" ("Comandante Bayardo Arce affirms that they are going to establish Marxism-Leninism and a single party"), *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona, Spain), July 31, 1984. For English translation, see *Comandante Bayardo Arce's Secret Speech before the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN)*, Department of State, March 1985.

## Domestic

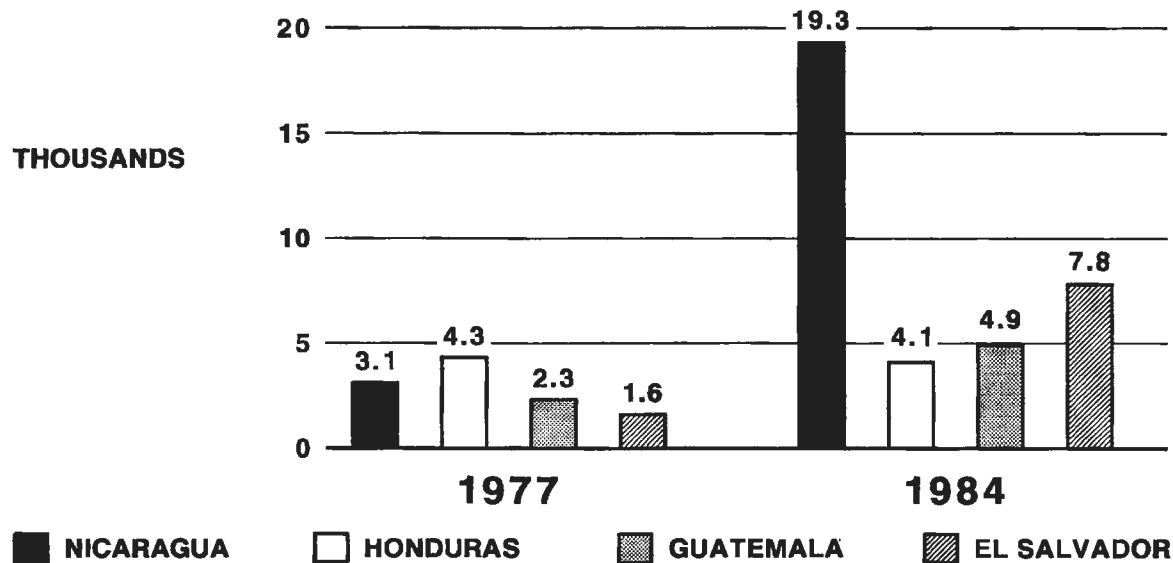
The Sandinistas have militarized Nicaraguan society. Up until 1978, Somoza's National Guard normally had some 7,000 men. It never exceeded 14,000, even at the height of the fighting. The Sandinistas now have a total armed force—regular army, air force, navy, reserves, militia, and security forces—of some 119,000. Nicaragua has a higher percentage of its population on active duty than any other nation in the region. Under the guise of national mobilization, the Sandinistas have drawn nearly 1 out of every 14 Nicaraguans aged 16 and above, including women, into their military/security structure. As noted above, many of the members were recruited through coercion, first by FSLN pressure tactics and since late 1983 by forced conscription.

The Sandinistas have used this militarization to tighten their control over the Nicaraguan people. The military itself is highly politicized; key positions are held by members of the FSLN, and recruits are indoctrinated with Marxist ideology. The concept of state security has become a cloak to protect the dominance of the FSLN. Civil and human rights have been subordinated to the security of the state (read: party), and all those who legitimately challenge Sandinista actions and policies—including politicians, business and labor leaders, church officials, and journalists—are vilified as traitors and counterrevolutionaries. The government, the



Grade-school arithmetic books use pictures of Soviet-made AK-47 rifles and hand grenades to teach children to count.

## ARMED FORCES PER 1000 PEOPLE



Nicaragua has a higher percentage of its population on active military duty than any other country in Central America.

armed forces, and the FSLN (including its multitude of associated organizations such as the CDS "block committees") have become parts of the same repressive entity. The Sandinistas' possession of an extensive security network and a large military force equipped with tanks intimidates those who have become disillusioned with the regime and inhibits popular dissent. As this militarization of the society has progressed, the vestiges of political, economic, and social pluralism in Nicaragua have been eroding.

The military build-up has greatly exacerbated Nicaragua's economic crisis. Resources needed for social programs and economic development have been diverted to military purposes. The construction of the Punta Huete airfield, for example, has consumed a large percentage of Nicaragua's total production of cement over the last 2 years. President Daniel Ortega has acknowledged that 40 percent of the 1985 budget is being allocated to the military. Even this figure conceals the true extent of the build-up, however, since much of the arms and ammunition is obtained from the Soviets under long-term credits and therefore do not show up in the budget. Moreover, the mobilization has cut deeply into Nicaragua's work force, taking tens of thousands of people out of the productive sector. The latest harvests of coffee and cotton were reduced significantly because of the shortage of labor, and this will result in a sharp drop in Nicaragua's already reduced foreign exchange earnings.

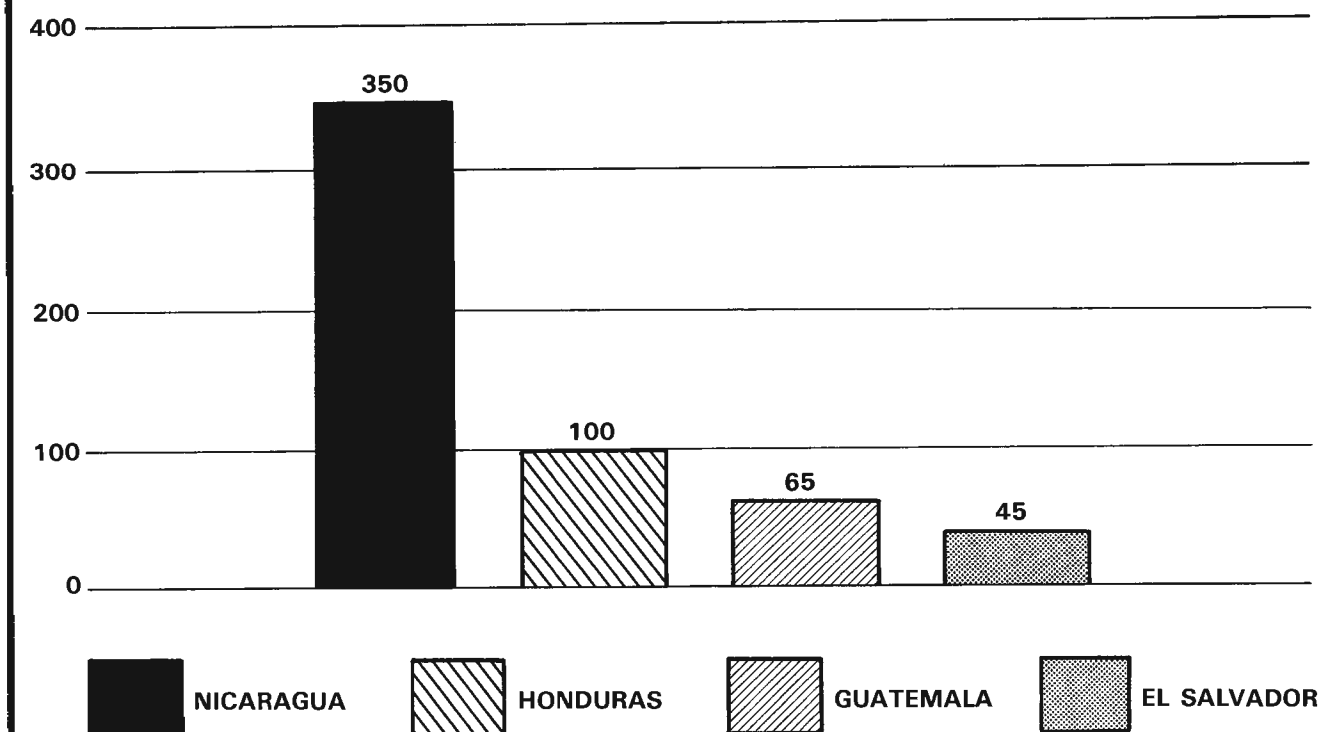
### Regional

The flow of arms into Nicaragua since 1979 has provided the Sandinistas with the largest military force in the region. This unilateral build-up has been totally out of proportion to the capabilities of Nicaragua's neighbors. In tanks and armored vehicles, Nicaragua now surpasses all the other countries of Central America combined. This build-up has had a seriously destabilizing effect on the region, and it is creating pressures for a costly arms race.

Costa Rica, Nicaragua's southern neighbor with a population of 2.4 million, has no army. Its 8,000-troop Civil Guard and Rural Guard are essentially constabulary organizations. They do not have heavy equipment such as tanks and artillery, and they could not provide an effective defense against a Sandinista attack.

Honduras, Nicaragua's northern neighbor with a population of 4 million, has a military of about 18,000, less than one-third the size of the Sandinistas' active duty forces. The Honduran army has about 20 regular battalions, of which fewer than 15 are actual maneuver units, compared to the Sandinistas' 34. Honduras has no tanks comparable to the T-55s. It does have a small force of British-made Scorpion armored reconnaissance vehicles, but they are outnumbered more than 2 to 1 by the Sandinistas' PT-76 amphibious tanks alone. Faced with this growing imbalance, in 1984 the Hondurans acquired 72 reconditioned armored cars. They are keenly

## TANKS AND ARMORED VEHICLES



Nicaragua has more tanks and armored vehicles than the other four countries of Central America combined.

aware that the Choluteca Gap, which stretches from western Nicaragua into southern Honduras, could provide an avenue of attack for a Sandinista armored thrust into their nation.

Honduras' primary deterrent to a Sandinista attack is its air force. The Honduran air force is considered one of the best in Central America. The Hondurans' defensive plans have rested in large part on the ability of their aircraft to destroy an attacking force and launch retaliatory strikes. Over the past few years, the credibility of this deterrence has steadily eroded as the Sandinistas have developed a nationwide radar system and deployed hundreds of anti-aircraft guns and surface-to-air missiles. The Sandinistas' procurement of jet fighter aircraft would effectively neutralize the Honduran air force, as its aging Super Mysteres would be no match for such jets. Thus, the creation of a Sandinista force of jet fighter aircraft would further skew the balance of military power in Central America and would be dangerously destabilizing for the whole region.<sup>18</sup>

The people of Central America perceive that the leftist dictatorship that has developed in Nicaragua now

poses a real as well as a psychological threat. A 1983 Gallup International Poll showed that Nicaragua's growing military strength and support of subversive movements in other countries was a source of concern throughout the region. In Honduras, for example, about 80 percent of the respondents saw Nicaragua as the principal cause of instability and as the primary military threat faced by their country.<sup>19</sup> In early 1985, an affiliate of Gallup released the results of a poll conducted in Costa Rica in which 87 percent of those polled believed that the Sandinistas represented a threat to Costa Rica. In October 1984, the commander of Panama's Defense Force, General Manuel Noriega, said that the Sandinista arms build-up was a danger to the entire region. In reporting Noriega's views, the principal newspaper of San Jose, Costa Rica, *La Nacion*, noted that "Sandinista militarism has to be halted before it produces a holocaust in the entire region."<sup>20</sup>

Nicaragua's military build-up has complicated the search for peaceful resolution of the crisis in Central America. Because of their military power, the Sandinistas have felt no need to enter into a meaningful

<sup>18</sup>The U.S. Government has made clear that the introduction of jet fighter aircraft into Nicaragua would be a serious development which it would view with the utmost concern.

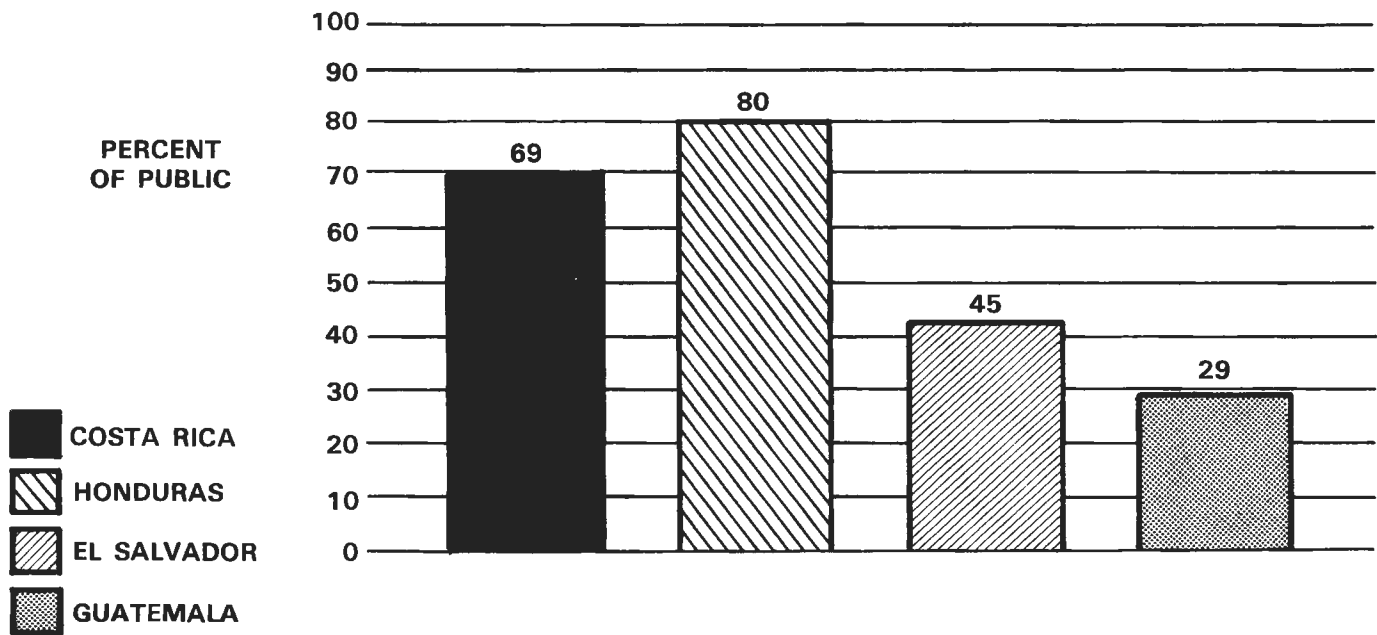
<sup>19</sup>For a more complete analysis of this poll, see *La Nacion Internacional* (San Jose, Costa Rica), November 20-24, 1983.

<sup>20</sup>"Noriega's Statement," *La Nacion* (San Jose, Costa Rica), October 16, 1984, editorial.



## IMAGE OF NICARAGUA

### PERCENT OF EACH COUNTRY DESCRIBING NICARAGUA AS A MILITARY THREAT



A Gallup International public opinion poll shows that the people in the four other countries of Central America see Nicaragua as a military threat. (The Sandinistas have outlawed public opinion polls in Nicaragua.)

dialogue with their domestic opponents or to negotiate seriously with their neighbors in the Contadora process. Nicaragua's military strength, coupled with its willingness to use subversion and terror, makes it an extremely formidable adversary in Central America and serves to intimidate the other nations in the region.<sup>21</sup> The National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, chaired by Dr. Henry Kissinger, noted:

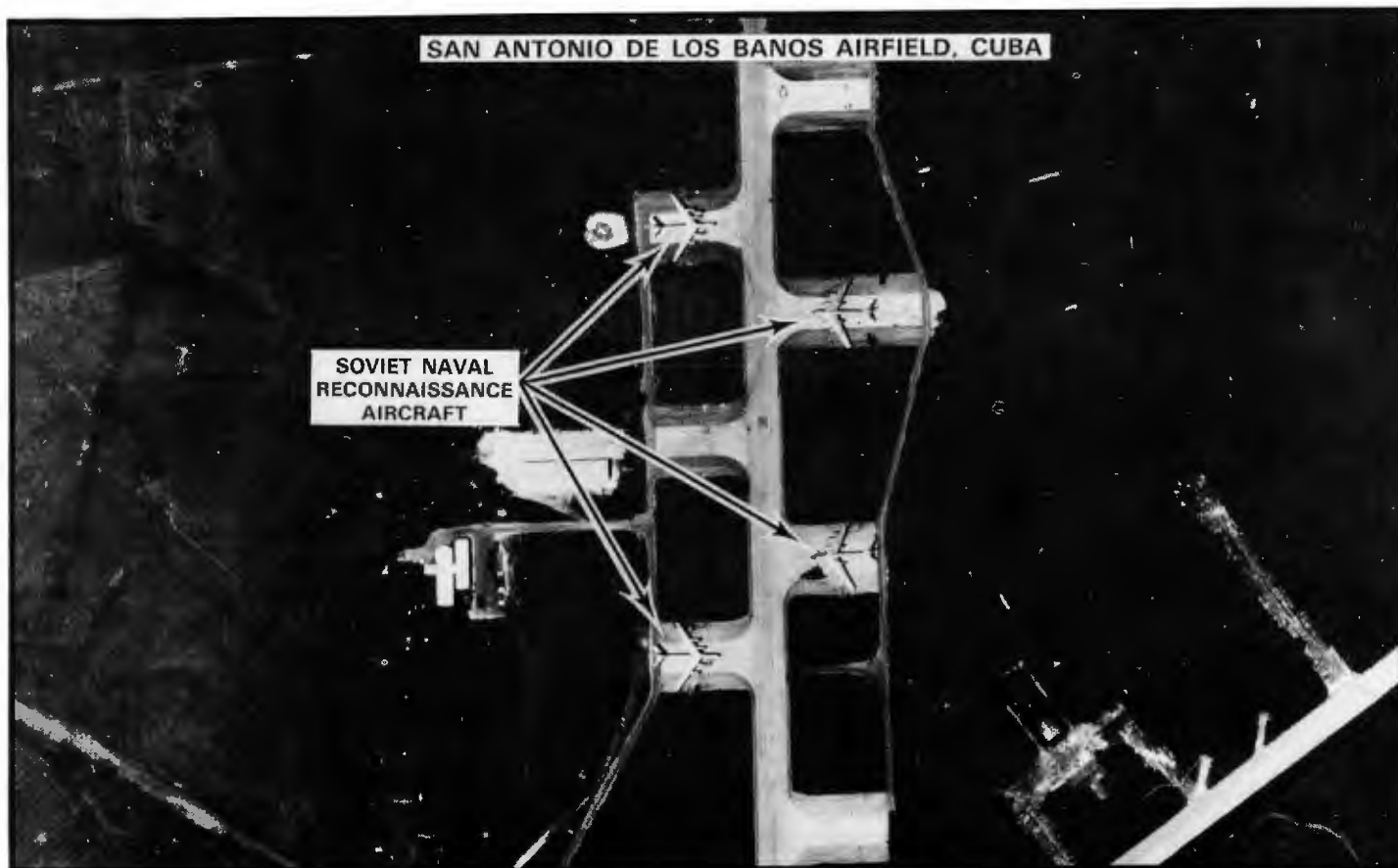
... the existence of a political order on the Cuban model in Nicaragua would pose major difficulties in negotiating, implementing, and verifying any Sandinista commitment to refrain from supporting insurgency and subversion in other countries.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Eduardo Ulibari, director and editor of Costa Rica's largest daily newspaper, *La Nación*, referred to the impact of Nicaragua's military buildup on the other nations of Central America in his article "Costa Rica and Honduras Find Washington an Unreliable Ally," *Wall Street Journal*, January 25, 1985, p. 21. Ulibari concluded that, absent strong support from the United States, a likely consequence of the growing power of the Sandinistas would be the "Finlandization" of Costa Rica and the militarization of Honduras. He added that "faced with an enemy as formidable as Soviet-backed Nicaragua, Honduras has no choice but to follow a pragmatic course of appeasement with a totalitarian government it profoundly mistrusts."

<sup>22</sup>Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, January 1984, p. 114.

### Strategic

Consolidation of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua is a serious concern to the United States, for the Soviet Union can and does use Nicaragua to carry out Soviet policies in Central America. In return for their investment of about a half-billion dollars in military aid—and hundreds of millions of dollars more of economic aid—the Soviets have obtained an additional center of influence in a region which, because of its proximity to both the U.S. mainland and the Panama Canal, is vital to the United States. Moreover, they could gain for the first time a beachhead on the American Continent. Cuba has served as Moscow's surrogate in Nicaragua; the approximately 7,500 Cubans there, including some 3,000 military/security advisers, are helping the Sandinistas consolidate a regime closely aligned to the Soviet bloc without arousing the alarm that the presence of a similar number of Soviet personnel would create. As the Soviets seek to foment further instability and revolution in Central America, they now have a willing accomplice in Sandinista-controlled Nicaragua. The growing crisis in Central America compels the United States to shift attention and assets from other critical areas of the world. To the extent that the Soviets succeed in tying down the



Soviet reconnaissance aircraft operate out of Cuba to fly missions along the Atlantic Coast of the United States. Nicaragua's Punta Huete runway is long enough to accommodate this type of aircraft, giving the Soviets a potential facility for reconnaissance flights along the Pacific Coast of the United States.

United States in Central America, they hope to gain greater freedom of action elsewhere.

The presence in Central America of a nation tied closely to the Soviet Union poses concrete military problems for the United States. Nicaragua has the potential for becoming a center for Soviet military and intelligence activities, as has Cuba. As noted above, the Soviets have already supplied the Sandinistas with four communications intercept facilities. When completed, the runway at Punta Huete will be able to accommodate any Soviet military aircraft. Soviet reconnaissance planes flying out of Punta Huete would be able to fly missions along the U.S. Pacific Coast, just as they now reconnoiter the U.S. Atlantic Coast from Cuba. Soviet ships, including surface warships, submarines, and spy ships, could use Nicaragua's Pacific ports, such as Corinto, just as they now use Cuban ports when operating in the Caribbean. The very potential for the Soviet military use of Nicaragua complicates U.S. defense planning, for in a crisis situation the United States would be compelled to divert resources to counter such possibilities.

## Postscript

To promote lasting peace, economic development, and democracy in Central America, the United States policy toward Nicaragua has four objectives:

- (1) Severance of Nicaraguan military and security ties to Cuba and the Soviet bloc;
- (2) Reduction of Nicaragua's military strength to levels that would restore military equilibrium in the area;
- (3) An end to Nicaraguan support for guerrilla groups in neighboring countries; and,
- (4) Fulfillment of original Sandinista promises to support democratic pluralism and to respect human and civil rights.

Only when Nicaragua frees itself of its military ties to Communist states, reduces the size of its military to levels commensurate with its legitimate defense needs, ceases to subvert its neighbors, and allows genuine democracy and national reconciliation for its people can peace prosper in the region. These same objectives are reflected in the 21 principles adopted in September 1983 by the participants in the Contadora process, including Nicaragua. The United States has consistently made its position clear in frequent meetings with the Nicaraguan Government, and it has worked for the achievement of these objectives both directly in its bilateral discussions with Nicaragua and by supporting the regional peace process.





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