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United States Department of State
June 1987

Central America
Latin America **DISPATCH**

SANDINISTAS BOOST WAGES, THEN PRICES

The general public has been dealt another blow in the ongoing conflict in Nicaragua. On April 3, 1987, the Government of Nicaragua announced dramatic price increases for beef, milk, and dairy products. The price hikes are as high as 150% for a bag of pasteurized milk. The Government announced the price increase just 2 days after boosting salaries by an average of 56% for workers covered by the national salary scale, according to an April 5 report in the pro-Sandinista newspaper *El Nuevo Diario*. Nicaraguans who are not Sandinista party members, government employees, or members of Sandinista unions, do not benefit under the wage scale reforms and will be hit hardest by the price hikes.

The wage increases, announced by Minister of Labor Benedicto Meneses on April 1, are intended to address a number of labor problems including decreased productivity, high employee turnover, and the flight of workers from the formal



A CASE OF SANDINISTA GIVE AND TAKE

Food is scarce in a Sandinista-controlled supermarket in Managua.

economy to informal commerce that have resulted partly because of a dramatic decline in purchasing power.

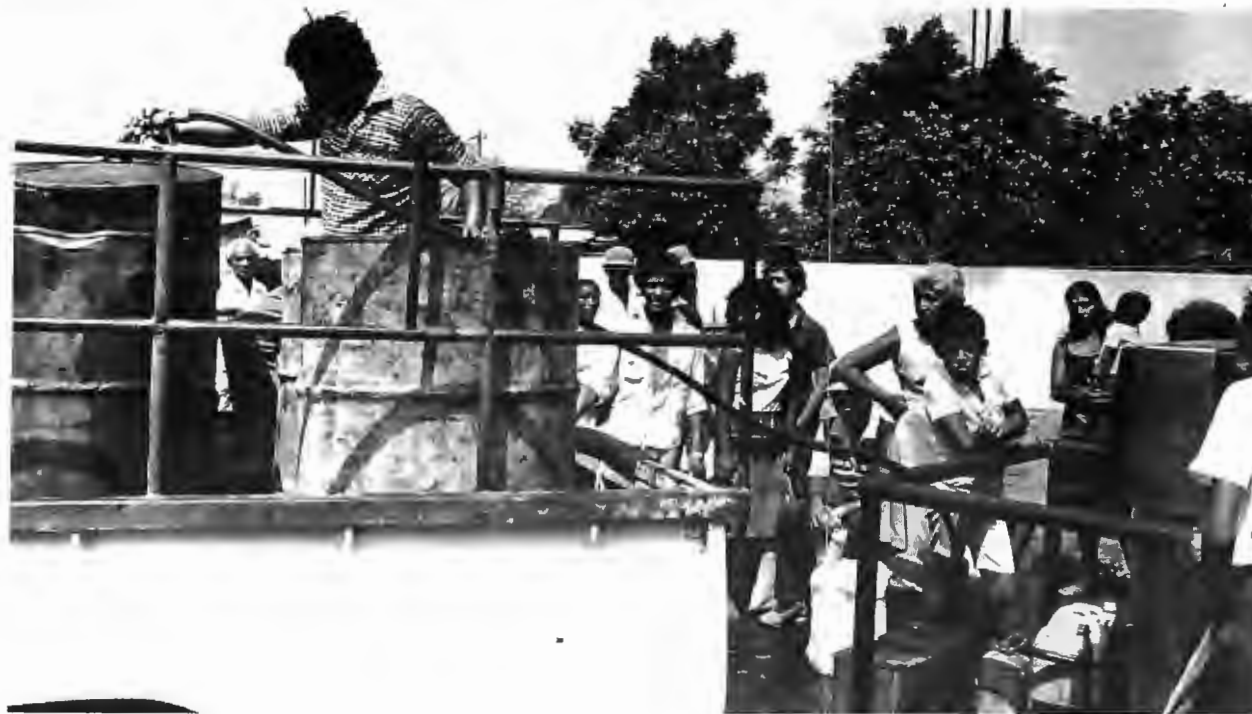
Meneses said that in the last year, the Government of Nicaragua has followed a policy of "salary restraint" despite the accelerating inflation, according to a separate report in the official Sandinista party newspaper *Barricada*. He emphasized that future wage increases will be tied to "productive results of business and individual effort of the workers."

Despite two wage increases early in the year which raised nominal salaries 200%, a skyrocketing inflation rate of 657% has left in its wake a significant drop in real wages for salaried workers of more than 70% for the past year.

The labor force in industry experienced 60% turnover in 1986, according to an April 2 article in *Barricada*. The turnover rates for some were over 100%. The article placed the blame for labor instability "fundamentally on low salaries."

Under the wage increases, the lowest paid workers will receive the largest pay hikes in percentage terms. However, the national salary scale (Sistema Nacional de Ordenamiento de Trabajadores y Salarios) will be expanded from 28 to 39 groups in order to improve compensation for skilled workers, technicians, and professionals. New regulations permit managers to provide "incentive" bonuses of up to 100% of official salaries to employees with valuable experience or technical skills. The awarding of bonuses has been a common, if unofficial, practice in recent years.

In a related move to stem the tide of labor toward informal commerce, the Ministry of



A state company truck displaces people who have waited hours for petrol, which they are substituting for unobtainable kerosene.

Internal Commerce (MICOIN) is expanding the range of goods available to salaried employees in the workers' supply center (CAT) supermarkets. According to *Barricada*, powdered milk will now be sold exclusively through these supermarkets rather than at neighborhood "popular" stores. MICOIN also hopes to improve the distribution of beef, milk, eggs, and other goods through the CAT stores by reducing the supplies made available to the "popular" stores, the open markets, and other establishments. Some 300,000 salaried workers, including 113,000 government employees, receive priority in the distribution of food and basic consumer goods.

These measures could have serious consequences for Nicaraguans working in the private sector because only government workers, employees of state

companies and members of Sandinista unions qualify for the special ration cards used in the CAT supermarkets. Some 505,500 people are employed in the formal economy compared to 531,000 in the informal economy, according to a recently released report by the Nicaraguan Institute for Statistics and Census. □

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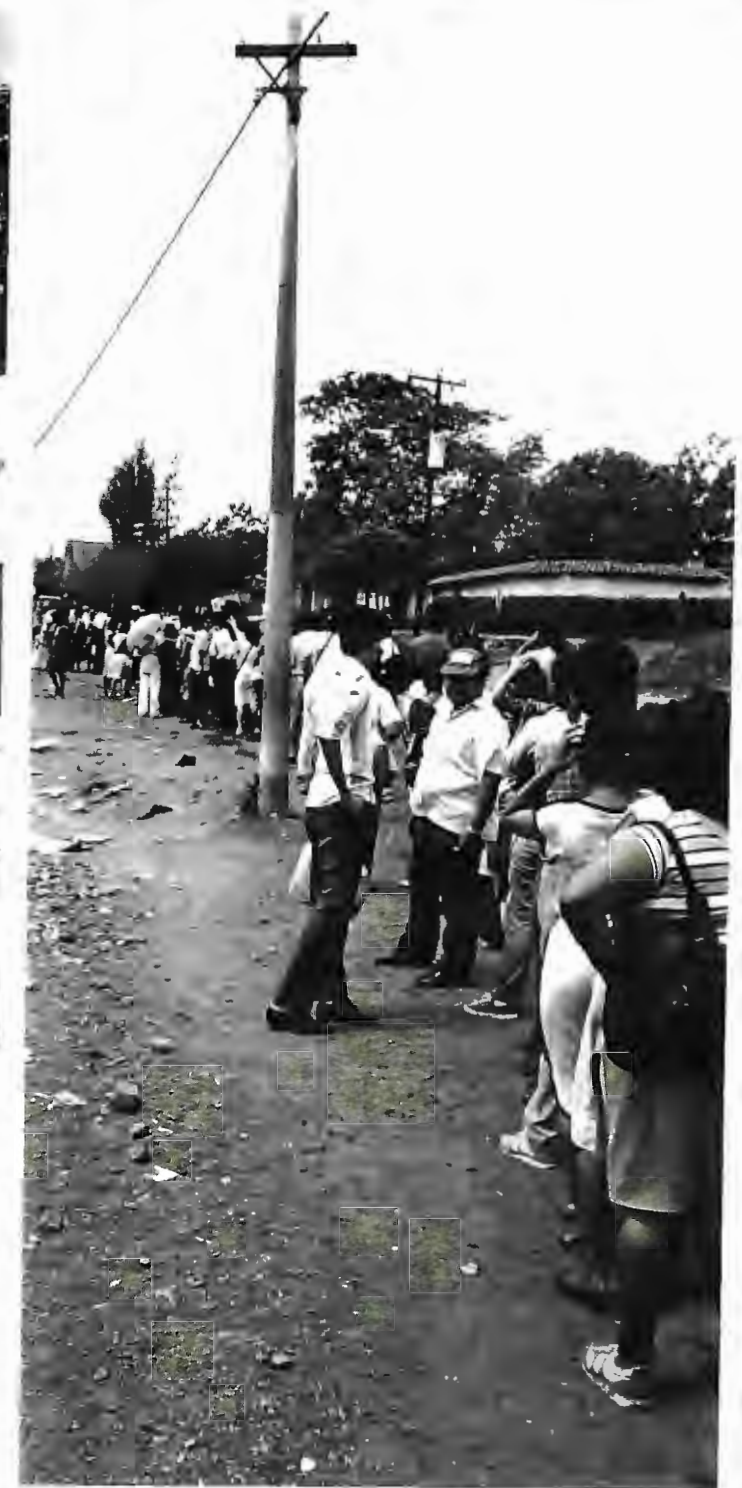
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The prices of dairy products sold at Managua's workers' supermarket were increased 150% just 2 days after a wage hike for Sandinista party members, government employees, and members of Sandinista unions.

Ration card holders wait in line for hours at the workers' supply center (CAT) supermarkets to buy their monthly food staples. Essential items often are understocked.



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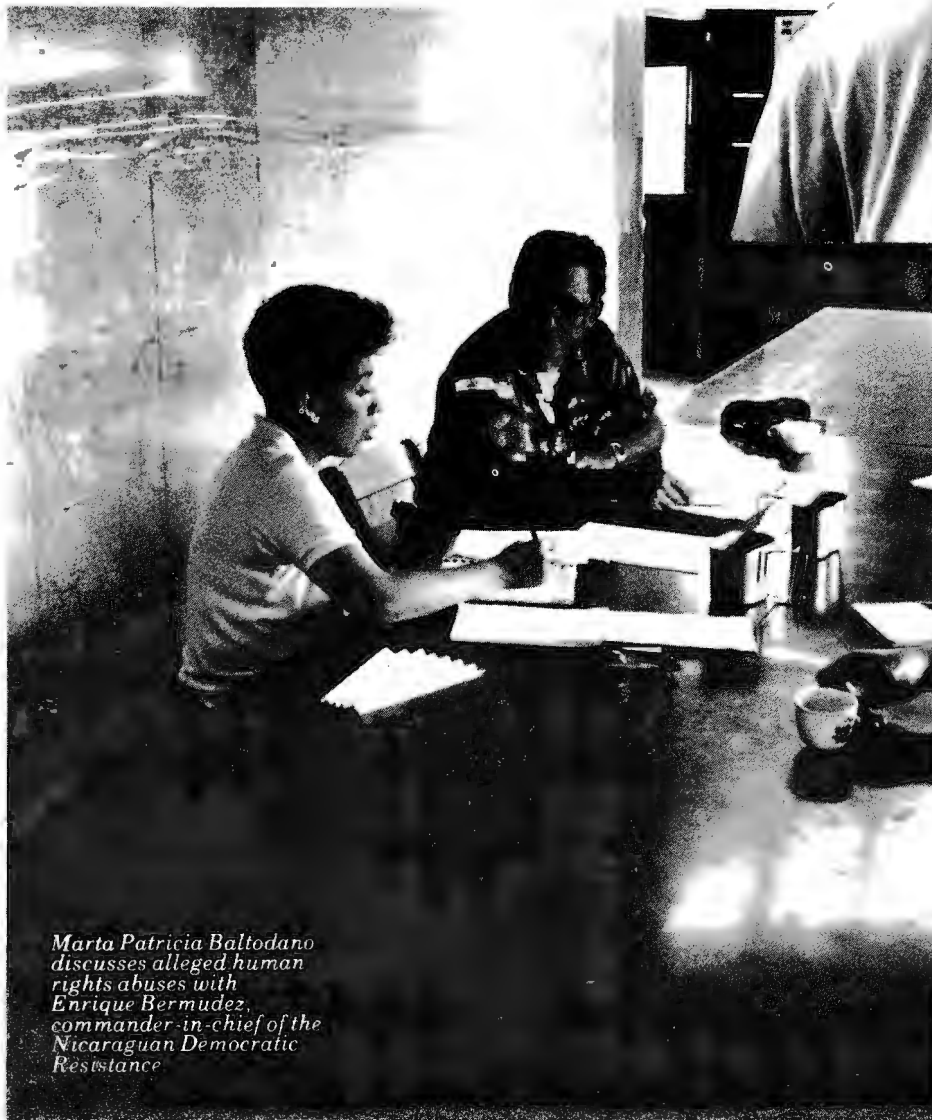
Latin
America **DISPATCH**

HUMAN RIGHTS

AND THE

NICARAGUAN

RESISTANCE



Marta Patricia Baltodano discusses alleged human rights abuses with Enrique Bermudez, commander-in-chief of the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance

A cadre of combatants from Nicaragua's internal resistance is being selected and trained to accompany resistance fighting forces into the war zone to report and investigate human rights abuses, particularly any committed by the resistance. The Nicaraguan Human Rights Association (ANPDH), headed by Nicaraguan human rights activist Marta Patricia Baltodano, is responsible for investigating alleged abuses and instructing members of the resistance in proper human rights conduct.

From 1979 to 1985, Baltodano served on the staff and, later, as director of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH) in Nicaragua, which brought international attention to Anastasio Somoza's human rights record and which today register more than 80 alleged Sandinista cases of violations each month.

On March 19 at a Nicaraguan Democratic Forces (FDN) base camp

along the Nicaraguan/Honduran border, Baltodano counseled some 20 men in human rights reporting. Each delegate was to accompany a task force of 150 men into the war zone. "The primary role you will play is to make sure that human rights are not abused and that those 150 men will behave in a proper fashion," she said. "When there is an abuse, you will inform your commander and us."

"Our role is not simply to report violations, it is to establish mechanisms so that violations will not occur."



Some 61 of the 80 resistance task forces now have human rights activists permanently assigned to them, according to ANPDH Washington representative Jose Antonio Tijerino.

ANPDH was created in October 1986 with funds appropriated by the U.S. Congress and made available by the Department of State through periodic grants. Congress appropriated \$3 million for human rights activities in response to allegations of human rights violations committed by soldiers of the Nicaraguan resistance, known as the "contras," fighting for democracy.

In December 1986, the association began human rights training for military commanders and unit human rights representatives, or activists. Seven southern front commanders, eight platoon leaders, and 36 activists attended a 2-day seminar. In early 1987, the association held a seminar for 32 Miskito Indian military commanders in the Honduran Mosquitia; instructed 76 northern front activist candidates in international humanitarian law, the laws of war, human rights, and procedures for taking accusations; and gave similar classes, including a 4-day seminar, for some 170 Miskito Indian combatants.

"Our role is not simply to report violations, it is to establish mechanisms so that violations will not occur," says Baltodano. "In addition,

our job is very difficult because we are trying to provoke a change in human rights behavior within a guerrilla force, not a regular army."

Sailing has not always been smooth between the ANPDH and the resistance. In May, the ANPDH was temporarily asked to leave the FDN base camps on the Honduran/Nicaraguan border after commanders complained that ANPDH observers were interfering with combat operations.

Since then, relations between the association and the FDN have been reinforced with a clearer understanding of the association's need to continue investigations.

A practicing attorney with more than 10 years' experience in human rights, Baltodano is also a Nicaraguan refugee forced into exile in December 1985 by the Sandinistas.

She is the first to admit that the resistance does not have a perfect record in human rights, but also is quick to expose the skill with which alleged violations are exploited by both the Sandinistas and their sympathizers. "I think there have been some abuses of human rights by the FDN," she admits, "but up to this point, I don't have any indication that this was a pattern of instruction or political policy of the FDN."

She claims, however, that a number of the alleged incidents of human rights violations by the



Marta Patricia Baltodano

Baltodano answers questions from human rights delegates.

resistance were actually set up by the Sandinista Front of National Liberation (FSLN), which rules Nicaragua as a totalitarian state. "Refugees have repeatedly told us how the Sandinistas will militarize a civilian target. They will establish a military command center within an agricultural cooperative, but will also locate a clinic or school within the cooperative. They give arms and uniforms to the *campesinos* (peasants). It becomes difficult for the guerrilla forces to determine at what point this is a military target or civilian target. This is an important point used by the Sandinistas to show that the contras attack civilian targets."

Baltodano notes that although public international opinion concedes that the Sandinistas commit human rights abuses, the Sandinistas have been able to sell the idea to the public that the resistance commits violations more brutally and as a matter of deliberate policy. "The Sandinistas have learned how to manipulate the human rights concept to get to power and how to manipulate it to remain in power," she says.

The Sandinistas claim, however, that were it not for U.S.-backed resistance, political repression would be unnecessary.

"So why are there contras?" Baltodano responds. "The contras

were not created by the United States. Even without U.S. assistance, there would be contras. The fathers of all contras are Marxists. Everywhere there is a Marxist regime, there are contras."

The ANPDH's close ties with the Nicaraguan resistance has drawn considerable criticism from groups opposed to U.S. policy toward Nicaragua. The association also has been accused of being in the pocket of U.S. policymakers because it is financed by the U.S. Government. Baltodano herself has been the target of bitter criticism.

She counters, "The United Nations and other organizations also receive funds from the United States but are able to maintain their status as independent entities.

"Because we are receiving part of the assistance voted for the contras, that identifies us a lot with them, even though we don't want to be. Another thing that makes us look close to the contras is precisely that our work is with them," she notes.

"However, we are not an organization like Amnesty International. Rather, we are an organization that, within a movement that has political and armed characteristics, is trying to institutionalize mechanisms that will eventually mean reducing human rights violations and promoting human rights within the organization."

The association does this by monitoring military action, instructing the troops in the Protocols of the Geneva Convention, and investigating human rights abuses.

"If the violation was committed, then we make sure there is a hearing, sanction, and condemnation of those who have violated human rights. Also we are trying to update and put into use a code of conduct and fortify the judicial mechanisms that each troop has for the trial and



Baltodano and a U.S. official (standing) talk to human rights delegates about to accompany members of the resistance to the war zone.



Resistance fighters, including Miskito Indians, receive human rights instruction.

the foundation of military courts," she explains.

The ANPDH has recently completed investigations on three out of six major cases of alleged resistance violations. The cases involved forced conscription of Sumo Indians, the execution of Sandinista soldiers in the Nicaraguan village of Cuapa, and the kidnapping of Nicaraguan Mennonite youths.

In the Sumo case, some 18 Nicaraguan Indian refugees were psychologically pressured into joining an independent guerrilla band, although some of them say they joined voluntarily. The band was organized by a former FDN Indian combatant. The ANPDH report was given to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Honduras and the FDN military prosecutor.

In the Cuapa case, patrols from the FDN Jorge Salazar Command were charged with entering Cuapa in August 1985, allegedly executing 11 Sandinista soldiers and one civilian night watchman. The ANPDH investigation established that FDN patrols captured 12 Sandinista soldiers on August 2, 1985. Of those, four joined the FDN. The ANPDH heard testimony that the rest were taken to a nearby hill and shot. The results of the recently completed investigation have been turned over to an FDN military prosecutor.

In March 1986, the Mennonite Central Committee claimed that the

FDN kidnapped four Nicaraguan Mennonite youths. The ANPDH found no evidence that any of them were kidnapped by the resistance. Two voluntarily joined the FDN, and the other two are reportedly in refugee status in Honduras.

The association is concluding investigations into other allegations such as the El Nispero case involving civilian casualties by resistance forces. In addition, the ANPDH has received more than 30 denunciations from refugees and citizens still inside Nicaragua against Sandinista human rights abuses. These have been turned over to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Amnesty International, and Americas Watch.

Inquiries into Sandinista abuses require coordination with outside human rights monitors since the Sandinista government has denied the ANPDH access inside Nicaragua. This denial has made investigations of resistance violations difficult as well.

Baltodano worked on an informal basis with the Permanent Commission on Human Rights while attending the Universidad Centroamericana. "When the Sandinistas took power, it was very strange to me that the office still had so many human rights cases before it. They [CPDH] asked me to join it in a formal fashion. I thought a couple months would be sufficient to com-

plete the work," she says. "I became aware that human rights violations were not the result of an abrupt change in government. It appeared it was a pattern of conduct or a policy of the new authorities."

In October 1985, Baltodano left CPDH to attempt to create a human rights office within the Catholic Church.

"The [Sandinista] government impeded the creation of this organization within the Church. They confiscated the office, documents, funds, and started to persecute the people involved in that." Baltodano declined to make public some of the events that transpired because, she says, doing so would demoralize the victims and cause serious repercussions.

In December 1985, Baltodano went into exile. □

Sharon Isralow is the editor for the Office of Public Diplomacy in the State Department's Bureau of Inter-American Affairs. This report is based on a recent fact-finding trip to Central America.

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Cont? American

MICHAEL NOVAK

Will the capitulation continue?

Many in Congress these days show half a profile of courage. They abhor right-wing dictators. If they had their way, they would remove every last right-wing dictator at sunup. Facing right, they show magnificent profiles of courage.

To the left, they bat their eyelashes unbecomingly.

Show them a left-wing Marxist-Leninist dictatorship, and they have an overpowering urge to flirt. With Marxist-Leninists, they always want to "negotiate."

This asymmetry reflects true costs. These days, to oppose dictatorships on the right costs no American blood. Such vaunted potentates as Anastasio Somoza, the shah of Iran, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, and Ferdinand Marcos have fallen like overripe rose petals. To oppose Marxist-Leninists, by contrast, means a commitment of blood and treasure. It means "a long twilight struggle" (JFK). Today's left chooses halfway surrender in advance, through negotiations. The asymmetry is clear: the right must be banished from this Earth; the left must be negotiated with.

Consider what we have recently heard from the left concerning Marxist-Leninist Nicaragua.

James Reston says the president and his men are lying about Nicaragua. He does not specify any particular lie.

Anthony Lewis says it is "Orwellian" to call the Nicaraguan "contras" freedom fighters. He thinks a "contra" regime might be "worse" than the Sandinistas.

The "contras" make House Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. "want to vomit."

Democratic Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts "bears no brief" for the Sandinistas. He recognizes that they are "Marxist-Leninists" and that they are "oppressing" the church and the labor unions. But he doesn't believe in a military solution, at least not now, preferring "first" to "negotiate."

Democratic Rep. Michael Barnes of Maryland admits that the Sandinistas are Marxist-Leninists and that they are not likely to negotiate "power-sharing." He wants to negotiate anyway.

Let's see if we have this straight. These seem to be the points made recently by the left of our day:

1. The Sandinistas are a party with an army and an ideology. This single party has outlawed pluralism. It has thus betrayed the original revolution against right-wing dictator Somoza. It has put a left-wing dictatorship in its place.

2. The Sandinistas are Marxist-Leninists. From the first they have practiced Marxist-Leninist duplicity. Now they openly oppress the church, labor unions, and the press.

3. The Sandinistas have established "neighborhood committees" to spy on citizens in every nook and cranny of the nation. As Anthony Lewis puts it, they are not "our ideal of democracy."

4. Last year, after Congress at first refused even humanitarian aid to the "contras," Daniel Ortega contumaciously flew to Moscow. More recently, in New York, he bought \$3,500 worth of "designer eyeglasses."

5. About 23,000 Nicaraguans, more than twice as many as in Mr. Somoza's National Guard, have openly joined the armed resistance, endangering their families, and risking their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor — fighting anew for the revolution begun in 1979.

6. Massive Soviet military assistance to Nicaragua has heavily armed the Nicaraguan army and militia, larger and more potent than those of Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador combined. This army possesses helicopter gunships, tanks, artillery, communications gear, and aircraft in a class of their own.

7. CONCLUSION: Our new left in Congress says we should "negotiate" with the Marxist-Leninist government of Nicaragua.

There is only one way that this conclusion follows from the facts that precede it. The new left sees the truth but is intimidated by it. The left has taken the measure of Soviet power in Nicaragua, and has decided to back away. It has diagnosed the regime of Daniel Ortega (with his \$3,500 worth of designer eyeglasses) as Marxist-Leninist. But it doesn't want U.S. troops to fight Marxist-Leninists in Nicaragua. And it doesn't want the United States to help the Nicaraguan resistance to fight, either.

Here is how they reason:

1. While they are sure the Sandinistas are Marxist-Leninists, they are

not sure the resistance forces opposing them are completely democratic. (They do not raise this objection against the Afghan resistance.)

2. They point out that several (but not all) of the field leaders of the Nicaraguan resistance are former officers under Mr. Somoza. (They do not raise this objection against Gen. Fidel Ramos or Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile in the Philippines.)

3. They treat Marxism-Leninism as another branch of "progressive" movements international, a little extremist, but able to be reasoned with. They want to "woo" progressive movements from Moscow.

The problem is, you cannot strengthen resistance against totalitarian power with half a profile, and with uncertain trumpet. Six months from now, without help, the resistance will have become more anemic. Rifles cannot prevail against helicopter gunships. Suicide is not an enduring motivator of troops.

Everything depends on what the U.S. Congress believes about Marxism-Leninism. If the Congress believes one can "negotiate" with Marxist-Leninists from a position of proven weakness, it will vote "no" on military aid. If it believes that negotiations with a Marxist-Leninist power can succeed only through a favorable correlation of forces, it will vote "yes."

The argument is not about negotiations. Philip Habib is superb at that. It is about negotiations from weakness or negotiations from strength. All the charms of Sen. Christopher Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, and Rep. Michael Barnes turn pale when confronted by Marxist-Leninists with guns.

Nonetheless, the left-wing romance with Sandinismo continues. The long, slow capitulation of the West to Marxist-Leninist fantasies seems to continue.

The Soap Opera of Progressivism will no doubt return again next year with yet another installment. Pity those who yearn for liberty and justice in the meantime.

Democrats like FDR, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, and Henry M. Jackson would have been disgusted.

Michael Novak is a nationally syndicated columnist and a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

INTERVIEW...CONTINUED

Q: Well, could we be sure of the safety and reliability of our weapons if we abandon all testing — if there were a comprehensive ban?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think the greatest — here's where again that their proposal is unfair to us. It's in the time that they set. They are ahead of us in modernizing and expanding their weapon systems, developing new ones. We're still playing catch up. They have tested and are now deploying their modernized and their newer weapons. For us to stop where we're still playing catch up leaves us in a position of increased inferiority to them. And it wouldn't be fair for us until we've made the same tests comparatively with our — that they have made with their new and improved modernized weapons. Then we could talk, but with better verification than we now have — we could talk such a test ban.

Q: Mr. President, on the space shuttle disaster, our paper had a story last week that the White House had issued a national security decision directive in 1984 which targeted 24 shuttle missions a year and operating in the black for the shuttle program. Do you believe that the kind of pressure that that put on the space — on the shuttle program could have been, in any way, responsible for what happened down there?

THE PRESIDENT: No, and we have never done anything except to approve their schedule. They have told us what they were capable of doing, and I have put out a thing like — that we want it by a certain time down the years here. If possible to have a manned space station. And this is a program that I've announced and they were to go after it, but we have never, ever — and I — some of those rumors that came out that we had insisted on this particular launching. We have never from here suggested or pushed them for a launch of the shuttle. I would — good Lord, I would feel that I was way out of my depth in trying to do that. I am not a scientist and they are. They're the judge of that.

Q: Immediately after this happened, you responded to your conversations with the families of some of the victims and said that you were determined that the program would go forward. In view of things that have been discovered by your commission since then, and in view of some of the statements by the astronauts themselves that they had serious reservations about the safety of the program based on what they learned — two things: do you think that the public relations aspect of it in which teachers, journalists and others would go along should be continued or curtailed under those circumstances.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we want the program. When I responded to the — I responded to the families. Every family — those people that I talked to in their conversation — they made it plain to me that they felt this program had to continue, that this was what their loved ones, now departed, would have wanted. And they wanted me to tell them, and I told them, yes, it will, yes, we have no intention of canceling the program because of this tragedy.

You know, when you look at it, you have 24 times right and one accident — one wrong — you can't cancel out the program. But I have also said since, and we have all agreed here, that now that these things are coming out, that the program must rectify all these shortcomings that had never before been mentioned so that we know that the safety factor that should be there is there.

Q: Well, do you think that those civilians should still

be allowed to —

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes, you asked about that. Yes. You know, from the very beginning — almost the very beginning, once we established that it was practical — there have been people up there conducting experiments — scientists, for example — who are not astronauts, but who are there to carry on the great advances that have come to us by way of those shuttle experiments — in medicine and other things — are so great that I don't see any reason why this policy should not continue.

Q: And so you think that teachers and journalists and those should go, too?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that all of them — you have to look at each one to see, does it have some value or is it just publicity. Everything that has been done so far, there seemed to be a logical value in this. You know, here we have a privately supported junior astronaut program in our country that has become quite a feature of our educational system and all. And so I think that you — I think that every case should be looked at as to what was the possible value of having a civilian along, but I don't think we should just blanket it that only astronauts are going up there to loose satellites and do things of that kind. The experiments that can be conducted and the things that we've learned from that program — things that have to do with heart ailments, the possibility that we now have of a medicine for the first time to cure diabetes that can only be produced in outer space.

Q: Well, do you think we should build a new shuttle to replace Challenger or lay off some of those assignments on unmanned missions?

THE PRESIDENT: I would — I haven't had a chance to talk with the people involved there about three [shuttles in operation] and what the difference would be between three and four myself. And I would be more or less inclined to go by the information that they might have as to what would be the setback in having 25 percent of the flying force eliminated.

LARRY M. SPEAKES: Mr. President, we're cutting into your next appointment here.

Q: Could I just — you could use the word "shortcomings," Mr. President, with the shortcomings that have come out in the course of this investigation. Is it your feeling at this point now, after having seen what has evolved in the course of the presidential commission's study, that in fact there were shortcomings in the way that NASA has handled this particular —

THE PRESIDENT: I think I'm going to — all I know are the things that we keep hearing about. I'm going to have to wait until I actually hear from the commission and their evaluation of what they've learned, and the fact that astronauts have said there were other potential liabilities that they had become aware of. Let's read out on all of those.

We do know now that the — while we're still waiting to have it actually declared what was the cause of this tragedy — we still know that the rings on those two particular rockets are affected by cold. Experiments have revealed that. So, whether that turns out to be the ultimate cause or not, it ought to be something that we find an answer to.

Q: Thanks a lot.

Central America Democracy, Peace, and Development Initiative

February 21, 1984



United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Following is an address by Langhorne A. Motley, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, February 21, 1984.

I am pleased to appear before you to testify on the vitally important Central America Democracy, Peace, and Development Initiative Act of 1984.

The exhaustive study made by the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America has enabled us to prepare a comprehensive response to the many-sided crisis in Central America. The Administration and the Congress are now in a position to forge a complete program of action that meets both immediate operational needs and the requirements of a long-term strategy.

The bill the President has just transmitted to the Congress embodies those recommendations made by the bipartisan commission which cannot be implemented without legislation. As you know, the President will implement by executive action those commission recommendations that do not require new legislation. He urges prompt congressional action and support for this bill.

This legislative package will help to stabilize economies and societies plagued by injustice and violence. At the same time, it will enable us to take the offensive against poverty and to foster democratic development, to increase respect for human rights, and to help bring lasting peace to this troubled region so close to the United States.

This prepared statement addresses:

- The report of the bipartisan commission;
- The major elements of the legislation; and
- Some questions of policy and implementation.

The Report of the Bipartisan Commission

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the commission's report is its honesty—its candor in facing up to the complexities of Central America. The commission could have focused superficially on one or two "critical issues" which, if addressed in isolation, might have created the illusion of a broader solution.

To its credit, the commission refused to oversimplify. It acknowledged that Central America's problems are complex, severe, and deeply rooted, concluding flatly that they add up to a "seamless web" from which no quick fixes or shortcuts will free us. The U.S. interests involved, it pointed out, are both moral and strategic. And they are threatened by human rights abuse and by economic misery as well as by Cuban and Soviet intervention.

The commission's recommendations are as comprehensive and direct as its analysis. It could have insisted on its mandate to deal with long-term issues and avoided the difficult questions we face now. It could have summarized the policies already being pursued by the Administration and given us credit for being on the right track. And it could

have simply praised the peace efforts of the Central American countries and the central importance of negotiations like those underway in the Contadora process.

But the commission was both unanimous and unambiguous in concluding that the long term will be far less manageable if we fail to deal with existing challenges. It called for U.S. support for regional efforts like Contadora but said that the United States also has a special responsibility to contribute actively to the creation of economic, security, and political conditions required for peace. It concluded that we are not doing enough and recommended that the Administration and the Congress cooperate to ensure that we provide the resources we and our Central American friends need to work successfully together to attain a lasting peace built solidly on democracy and development.

The commission refused to accept precooked judgments and conventional platitudes. Bipartisan in composition and nonpartisan in mandate, the commission approached its task with total independence. Mr. Chairman [Michael D. Barnes], you and I can both testify to the commission's thoroughness and independence. We were both asked many questions. We were asked to identify the problems and to explain what we thought was needed to deal with them. But we were never asked whether this or that recommendation would "sell." We were never asked to compromise our views for reasons of political or administrative expediency.

The commission's discussions with Central and Latin American leaders eliminated the screens created by distance, paperwork, and partisan preconceptions and exposed its members to the region's realities. They saw for themselves what is happening in El Salvador and in Nicaragua and throughout the isthmus.

From these experiences the commission developed a perspective on Central America that combines:

- An enlightened understanding of the capacity of social and economic frustration to undermine stability and feed on itself to create yet more unhappiness and more instability;
- A technical knowledge of how world economic developments can influence, and at times devastate, struggling economies and an equally informed insight into how those economies can renew their growth;
- A sophisticated understanding of the tactics and tools of the Soviet Union and Cuba, who would exploit these

vulnerabilities and ultimately threaten us; and lastly,

- A truly American insight for responding to the economic and political realities of Central America in a way that conforms to our neighbors' aspirations for peace, democracy, and prosperity.

As a result, what emerges from the commission's report is the Central American dynamic itself. It is a dynamic in which communism, violence, and dictatorship feed on misery, injustice, and an unfortunate past. It is a destructive dynamic that oppresses the people of Central America and will, unless altered, increasingly endanger the rest of the hemisphere.

The Central America Democracy, Peace, and Development Initiative Act of 1984

To break this destructive dynamic will require action in support of democratic self-determination, economic and social development that fairly benefits all, and cooperation in meeting threats to the security of the region. That is the consensus of the bipartisan commission. It is the basis of the legislative package now before you.

Specifically, this is what the President proposes to implement the recommendations of the bipartisan commission.

Economic Assistance. Recognizing that economic deterioration aggravates social and political unrest, the commission recommended an additional \$400 million *this year* for emergency stabilization to set the stage for long-term development.

Our supplemental request for FY 1984 is for \$400 million in emergency funds to halt sharp declines in gross domestic product (GDP), per capita income, and employment. During the last several years, per capita GDP has fallen by 35% in El Salvador, 23% in Costa Rica, 14% in Guatemala, and 12% in Honduras. In 4 years, El Salvador has lost 15 years of economic development.

The commission recommended almost doubling our projected economic aid to roughly \$8 billion *over the next 5 years*. This amount, which looks large until compared to the region's needs, would support a comprehensive strategy to promote democratization, economic growth, human development, and security.

Our implementation plan for fiscal year (FY) 1985-89 calls for a total of \$5.9 billion in appropriated funds and off-budget guarantee authorities to allow for \$2 billion in insurance and guar-

antees, the latter including housing investment guarantees and a Trade Credit Insurance Program to be administered by the Export-Import Bank.

For FY 1985, we propose a program involving \$1.1 billion in appropriated funds and \$600 million in insurance and guarantees. Depending on country performance, we estimate that the major beneficiaries of direct, bilateral aid in FY 1985 would be El Salvador (\$341 million), Costa Rica (\$208 million), Honduras (\$139 million), and Guatemala (\$96 million). El Salvador, which has suffered over \$800 million in guerrilla destruction, would be the largest single recipient. Two other countries, however, would receive more on a per capita basis.

From a functional standpoint, this FY 1985 proposal includes:

- About \$550 million in balance-of-payments support to finance the import of critical goods by the private sector;
- \$120 million in Public Law 480 food assistance, with local currency proceeds used to reinforce programs in, for example, education and health;
- Major labor-intensive construction of infrastructure and housing;
- Significantly increased support for education, including literacy and teacher corps training and scholarships;
- Major funding to develop commercial agriculture, the backbone of the Central American economies, including assistance to broaden ownership patterns and to increase the availability of credit;
- Increase funding for activities in Central America by the private National Endowment for Democracy;
- Funds to strengthen the administration of justice in the region as the surest way to safeguard individual liberties and human rights; and
- Support for the Central American Common Market and its companion Central American Bank for Economic Integration to revitalize intraregional trade and restore economic production and employment.

Military Assistance. Peace is essential to economic and humanitarian progress in Central America. Without security, the best economic programs and the wisest diplomacy will be unable to stop the opponents of democracy.

The commission recommended significantly increased levels of military aid to El Salvador, warning specifically against providing "too little to wage the war successfully."

The President's proposal is as follows:

- *For El Salvador:* \$178.7 million in FY 1984 supplemental assistance and \$132.5 million for 1985. Added to the \$64.8 million available under this year's Continuing Resolution, the FY 1984-85 program for El Salvador would total \$376 million. This program would be concentrated in FY 1984 in order to break the military stalemate and provide as soon as possible a firmer basis for economic recovery and democratic national reconciliation in El Salvador.

- *For the rest of Central America:* \$80.35 million in FY 1984 supplemental military assistance and \$123.4 million for FY 1985. The lion's share would be allocated to Honduras, a democracy that still faces frequent violations of its national territory by Salvadoran guerrillas seeking refuge and using Honduras as a supply route, as well as by Honduran guerrillas infiltrated from Nicaragua. Honduras also faces a direct military threat from Nicaragua, which has built up armed forces at least five times larger than Somoza's National Guard and has received some \$250 million in military assistance from the Soviet bloc since 1979.

The commission recommends that military aid to El Salvador should, through legislation requiring periodic reports, be made contingent upon demonstrated progress toward human rights objectives, including free elections and reduction in death-squad activities.

There is agreement among the executive, the Congress, and the commission that human rights progress is essential in El Salvador to ensure a successful outcome of war and to protect U.S. security and moral interests. There is also a consensus that U.S. assistance should actively be used to achieve these objectives.

As this committee knows, the executive branch and the Congress have not always seen eye to eye on how best to achieve this shared goal. My executive branch colleagues and I are firmly convinced that a statutory formula requiring determinations at arbitrary preset intervals on an "all-or-nothing" basis is not an effective approach. Experience shows that such a formula may actually trigger hostile action by guerrilla forces and focus attention on the certification process rather than on the underlying problems and their remedies.

We must find a means to condition our assistance in ways that work. This requires the flexibility to respond to specific circumstances as they exist at a given moment. Recent advances, which

have taken place in the absence of a legislated certification requirement, demonstrate that alternatives do exist.

We are ready to work closely with the Congress to ensure continuing human rights progress while preserving the President's ability to pursue an effective foreign policy.

Central American Development Organization (CADO). The commission recommended creation of a Central American Development Organization to give multilateral form and substance to economic development efforts.

In line with the commission's recommendation, the proposed legislation sets forth principles to guide the negotiations for establishing this new institution in conjunction with the Central American countries and other donors.

The President has indicated that he intends to respect the principles set forth in the legislation, both in his negotiations and in subsequent U.S. participation in CADO. In line with these principles:

- CADO would provide an effective forum for an open dialogue on Central American political, economic, and social development, and a continuous review of local policies and of the uses to which foreign assistance is put.

- Participation would be open to the United States, other donors, and those Central American countries that commit themselves to, among other things, peace and mutual security, maintaining or making progress toward human rights development, building democracy, and encouraging economic growth through policy reforms. CADO would include representatives from both the public and private sectors, from labor and business, and be supported by a small professional staff.

- CADO would make recommendations on political, economic, and social development objectives; mobilization of resources and external resource needs; and economic policies and structures. CADO would evaluate country performance and progress in meeting objectives.

- In this regard, disbursement of 25% of economic assistance funds authorized under this act and allocated for each Central American country would be deferred until both the United States and CADO have approved. Consistent with the Constitution, ultimate control of U.S. aid funds would remain with Congress and the President.

Multiyear Funding. To ensure effective planning and predictability, the proposed economic assistance departs from the conventional practice of seeking authorizations for 1 or 2 years. We

are seeking an authorization that will extend beyond FY 1985 and extend through 1989. In addition, we are requesting that appropriations under this authorization be made available beyond a single fiscal year.

The reason for this innovation is that the bill represents a 5-year program. This is what was developed by the commission, and it is supported by our own analysis. This approach has the fundamental virtue of enabling everyone concerned—both in the United States and in Central America—to know what could become available if performance standards are met.

Policy and Implementation

Many questions have arisen about this program.

- Are we asking for too much?
- Will our assistance be used effectively?
- Are we seeking a military solution in El Salvador?
- Shouldn't increased assistance follow a regional settlement?
- Will these additional resources solve the problem?

Let me take each in turn.

Are we asking for too much? No. In fact, the sums are modest in relation to need. As the bipartisan commission underlined, the need for external assistance is enormous. Physical infrastructure has been damaged, health and education systems need expansion, and investment in productive capacity is essential to employ the region's growing labor force.

There are those who counsel that should provide less economic assistance. But is less than 15% of our proposed global economic aid budget for FY 1985 too large a price to pay to alleviate suffering and serve our interests in Central America?

Others advocate a reduction in military assistance. Yet there is no reduction in the arms, training, and other support flowing to the other side that has rejected democracy and pluralism and utilizes violence as its chosen means to power.

Still others recommend that we withdraw altogether, because the situation is supposedly too tough for us, because regional forces of moderation and democracy are allegedly too weak or because they discount the manifestations of the antidemocratic force work. The United States cannot, however, afford to withdraw and abandon Central America to poverty and communism.

Lastly, there are those who are willing to do something to help, but not enough. They don't want to shoulder the political consequences if those we support lose, but they are not willing to concede the assistance needed for them to win. They refused to make a genuine commitment and continue to seek "quick fixes" that fail to address the fundamental issues of peace, democracy, security, and honest reform. The commission rightly singles out this approach as the most pernicious.

Assistance of \$8 billion over 5 years would be equivalent to about 5% of the gross domestic product of the region. This is less than the aid previously made available to some other parts of the world.

Another useful measure of the ability of Central America to absorb these proposed levels of assistance is the shortfall in export earnings from coffee and sugar due to lower prices, plus higher costs for imported oil. This net hard currency loss amounts to about \$1.5 billion per year—the same general magnitude as the proposed assistance.

Moreover, considerable excess capacity could quickly and easily be brought back into play, generating increased employment and output. Private firms need only working capital and imported inputs; in the public sector, high-priority investment programs that have been suspended or cut back because of austerity programs lack only financial support to be reactivated.

Will the assistance be used effectively? In the near term, the bulk of our resources will go to private-sector activities, not expansion of government bureaucracies. In the longer term, we will also be providing the institution-building help, training, and technical assistance that will allow our neighbors to carry out larger scale programs more efficiently.

Local policy reform will be required to receive and ensure effective use of our funds. We will not subsidize inefficiency and will strive to create opportunities and incentives for private-sector investment. We hope that CADO will be an effective mechanism to this end. A key objective of CADO will be to consult the private sector to identify activities that will most increase productivity: neither government bureaucracy nor handouts but the cutting edge of local production.

Capital flight was a serious problem for 3–4 years beginning about 1979. More recently, however, the central banks of the region have recognized the seriousness of the problem and are suc-

cessfully working to prevent capital flight.

Our AID [Agency for International Development] missions also are providing useful advice and technical assistance to help Central American monetary authorities meet the challenge. As a result, outflows have been greatly reduced.

Are we seeking a military solution in El Salvador? No. As President Reagan said last March, "the real solution can only be a political one," with the Salvadoran people deciding their own destiny through free and fair elections. That is not a "military solution." The military assistance we are requesting would provide the wherewithal for the Salvadoran Armed Forces to break the current stalemate and take and sustain the initiative to provide a stronger shield for protecting political and economic development. This would increase the incentives for the FDR/FMLN [Revolutionary Democratic Front/Farabundo Marti Liberation Front] to enter into serious discussions with the Salvadoran Peace Commission about participation in elections. We doubt this will happen until the FDR/FMLN becomes convinced it cannot prevail militarily. Passage of our proposed assistance package, however, could be a deciding factor in ensuring participation of important elements of the far left in the 1985 municipal and legislative elections.

Though the amount of proposed military assistance is larger than that provided previously, we should bear in mind that the current military stalemate may be partly due to the inadequacy and uncertainty of past assistance. To continue an inadequate level of assistance may be tantamount to prolonging the war.

The amount of military assistance for El Salvador should also be kept in perspective: total FY 1984 military assistance for El Salvador (that provided in the Continuing Resolution plus the supplemental request) is 3.6% of our worldwide military assistance, and the FY 1985 request for El Salvador is 2.1% of the global figure. The bipartisan commission stated that "there is . . . no logical argument for giving some [military] aid but not enough." We can afford the amount we are requesting, whether in terms of our important interests in Central America or of our worldwide responsibilities.

Shouldn't increased economic aid accompany or follow an overall regional settlement? The economic assistance which we are requesting is essential support for any negotiated settlement. If we want to give peace a

chance, we must begin now to rebuild the economies of Central America to create the climate for peace.

At some point in the future, if all the parties are ready for settlement, the peace process could proceed very rapidly. With our full support, Contadora has already prepared the groundwork for an agreement in its excellent 21-point Document of Objectives. But successful negotiations must reflect operational realities. The economies of Central America, fragile from the beginning, have been subjected to the stress of economic crisis and violence. If a regional peace agreement is signed, even with the best intentions of all the parties, it will not succeed if the nations of the region are suffering from economic collapse.

Will these additional resources solve the problem? Resources alone will not solve the Central American crisis. But resource predictability can enable our diplomacy to take more effective advantage of the interplay between different policy instruments to channel events toward peaceful solutions, including negotiated solutions wherever possible.

What is needed, in addition to the provision of adequate levels of economic and military assistance, is demonstration by the U.S. of a long-term commitment; the adoption by Central American governments of appropriate economic, political, and social policies/reforms; and an active and long-term diplomacy for peace.

Conclusion

This comprehensive policy will require considerable effort and sacrifice. There are those who are inclined to support only economic assistance. There are others who are inclined to support only military assistance. There is, however, no realistic alternative to the balanced approach in the proposals before you.

The crisis is acute. Our neighbors in Central America urgently need the help of the only country capable of making the difference. We have a responsibility. U.S. moral and strategic interests are both engaged in an area in which we have historically been involved. Doing nothing or doing too little are not responsible alternatives.

Our initiative is based on sound analysis. It is rooted in the consensus judgment that the area's problems have both indigenous and extraregional causes.

Our goals are realistic. The region's most progressive, democratic forces strongly believe that we can work together successfully to strengthen the moderate center in Central America. These same people are convinced that our active participation will serve both to defeat communism and to bolster respect for human freedom in this critical part of our hemisphere.

The approach is right. There is broad agreement that effective action must include a mix of developmental, political, diplomatic, and security elements and that these elements must be pursued simultaneously, equitably, and humanely. There is no such thing as a wholly "economic," a wholly "political," or a wholly "military" solution to Central America's problems. Economies must be protected as well as developed. Governments must be worth defending. Home-

grown poverty and Cuban-directed guerilla warfare are allies of each other; our policies must take aim at both.

The approach proposed by the bipartisan commission and adopted by the President does call for greater U.S. involvement in the region, but it is a constructive involvement that will eventually enable Central Americans to stand on their own and live at peace with one another. This kind of involvement now will eliminate the need for greater involvement later.

What the bipartisan commission and the President propose is not impossible. It is a realistic and humane response to a real crisis in a particularly troubled setting. We have the resources to do it. The people in Central America want us to do it. Our enemies—extremists of the left and the right—will be delighted if we hesitate.

I hope that your consideration of the bill will be infused by the bipartisan commission's unanimous conclusion, a

conclusion that guided its preparation and which is worth quoting in full:

The Commission has concluded that the security interests of the United States are importantly engaged in Central America; that these interests require a significantly larger program of military assistance, as well as greatly expanded support for economic growth and social reform; that there must be an end to the massive violation of human rights if security is to be achieved in Central America; and that external support of the insurgency must be neutralized for the same purpose. ■

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United States Department of State

Nicaragua's Interior Ministry

Instrument of Political Consolidation

August 1987

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Nicaragua's Interior Ministry

Instrument of Political Consolidation

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This report reviews the expanding role of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Interior (MINT) in the Sandinista government. It is based on first-hand accounts from Sandinista defectors whose identities remain classified and is supplemented by information obtained from public sources (including the Sandinista press) and declassified reports of U.S. Government agencies.

Over the past year and a half, defectors from the MINT have provided intimate insights into the inner workings of this key Sandinista ministry. Their testimonies—based on experience in several different sections of the MINT—reveal the impact of the Nicaraguan State Security Directorate, the Sandinista regime's most important institution in suppressing internal opposition and combating the democratic resistance.

These defectors also detailed the MINT's importance in maintaining the power of its founder and chief, Tomas Borge, as a central figure in the Sandinista hierarchy.



Since 1981, the Mass Organizations Department of the Nicaraguan Directorate General for State Security has organized, trained in mob tactics, and used "divine mobs" (turbas divinas) to break up or neutralize anti-government demonstrations and to demonstrate in favor of the Sandinista government when appropriate. Left, turbas attack the offices of the Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS) in 1984. (See January 1985 report by William C. Doherty, Jr., on Sandinista repression of organized labor, "The Sandinistas and the Workers—The Betrayal Continued," prepared by the American Institute for Free Labor Development, an arm of the American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organization.)

INTRODUCTION

A Nicaraguan farmer and his son were murdered at their hacienda September 24, 1986, by a group of armed men. The wife and mother of the victims who survived the massacre said the men identified themselves as "counterrevolutionary elements." But she knew better—she recognized one of the perpetrators as a member of State Security of the Ministry of Interior (MINT).¹

The Ministry of Interior is widely recognized as the government arm responsible for institutionalizing Sandinista control over Nicaraguan citizens. It operates State Security jails—many equipped with torture cells—where even the International Committee of the Red Cross is not permitted.² It also conducts surveillance and disinformation campaigns, and supports street gangs, assassination teams, and international terrorists.

The MINT has been central to the regime's political control since the Sandi-



Tomas Borge

Borge is a key member of the nine-man FSLN National Directorate, is Assistant Commander in Chief of the Sandinista Popular Army, sits on the Directorate's Executive Coordinating Committee created in 1985 to streamline policy planning and implementation, and is the Directorate member responsible for the Atlantic coast region, which gives him considerable influence over policies toward the Miskito Indians.

nista National Liberation Front (FSLN) gained power in 1979. It has grown from a relatively small agency charged mainly with quelling dissent to a conglomerate with more than 15,000 employees nationwide. Under the command of Minister of Interior Tomas Borge, the only surviving founder of the FSLN, the MINT has become a significant presence in daily life in Nicaragua.

In addition to increasing his political influence over Nicaraguan citizens, Borge also has established a financial base to maintain his strength over lesser Sandinista leaders. Since the early 1980s, his ministry has managed a commercial holding company, the Heroes and Martyrs Corporation, that yields substantial profits exclusively for members of the Sandinista National Directorate, the nine *comandantes* who rule Nicaragua.

EXPANDING MISSION AND STRUCTURE

Since its performance in the weeks following the July 1979 revolt—which reportedly included murdering, kidnapp-

ing, and arresting suspected Somoza sympathizers and suppressing non-FSLN leftist groups³—the MINT has harnessed control over fire protection, the national telephone and postal systems, communications, security, and the penal system. The ministry produces propaganda and disinformation, censors the media, and publishes *Barricada*, the Sandinista party newspaper. It controls the flow of information to senior officials through its daily, weekly, and monthly intelligence summaries. Ministry representatives assigned to rural areas work closely with military intelligence officers and other government officials to monitor local conditions and suppress the rising tide of opposition.

The MINT's bureaucratic structure has grown with its increasing responsibilities, forming new directorates and departments as needed. The Department of State Security had grown into 15 departments by early 1980 and was upgraded to Directorate General for State Security (DGSE) the following year. The role of State Security has grown steadily since 1979 to control the rising dissatisfaction with the Sandinista regime.

During 1981, the Directorate of Special Operations was created to handle



The Department of Agitation and Propaganda controls the "divine" mobs—government-controlled gangs—and manages propaganda and censorship activities. The official Sandinista newspaper, Barricada, is one of two pro-government newspapers allowed to operate in Nicaragua. The independent daily La Prensa was closed indefinitely on June 26, 1986.

the ministry's special troops and assassination teams. Other commissions and special groups have sprung up to deal with sensitive issues such as human rights abuses, the Catholic Church, and public opinion.

As of July 1985, the MINT consisted of three Directorates General and 13 Directorates—subdivided into a total of 43 departments, according to a MINT defector.

DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR STATE SECURITY

A major task of the DGSE is to undercut organized political opposition. Pressure on the internal civic opposition has been especially intense since the 1984 election campaign. Several months before the balloting, the DGSE created the Department of Political Opposition to sabotage efforts of independent political parties and groups. Officers were ordered to manipulate weaker parties into participating in the elections to create a semblance of political pluralism.

According to Alvaro Jose Baldizon, a former Ministry of Interior official who defected from the Sandinista government on July 1, 1985, the MINT was assigned the task of disrupting opposition party demonstrations. Shortly before the November 1984 national elections in Nicaragua, *turbas divinas* ("divine mobs"), headquartered at the MINT People's Office for Complaints, were organized to infiltrate and disrupt a demonstration planned by the opposition Social Democratic Party (PSD). Carrying steel-reinforced flagpoles and flags of the PSD and Vatican, Baldizon reported, the mobs' mission was to infiltrate and assault the real demonstrators. On this occasion, the mobs were not used because the Sandinistas were successful in pressuring the

Social Democrats to abandon their plans for a demonstration, he noted.

Leaders of the planned PSD demonstration were rounded up and incarcerated. Some are just now being released from prison. One member of an opposition party said he witnessed victims being tortured, heard executions, and was himself drugged and tortured during his 14-month ordeal. He still suffers from the trauma he endured and is afraid to leave his home even to buy groceries.

Following the elections, the DGSE continued to track and disrupt the activities of opposition political groups. By late 1985, the directorate had agents inside the independent political parties, labor unions, and major business coalition. These agents kept security officials informed of opposition plans and carried out operations to foment dissent.

The Ideological Diversionism Department, which targets a variety of groups, including the Catholic Church, labor unions, and the press, also has units to attack each party.

The Roman Catholic Church, led by Cardinal Obando y Bravo, has been the focus of steadily increasing DGSE activity. To undercut the traditional Catholic hierarchy, the DGSE bolsters the so-called "popular" church, a small Catholic sect led by priests who adhere to the doctrine of liberation theology. Supporting this effort, the Department of Ideological Diversionism seeks to manipulate religious sentiment through close contacts with leftist clergy. Although popular church figures occupy prominent positions in the Sandinista government and have access to Sandinista media denied to Obando, they have been unable to attract a large following among the Nicaraguan people.

As early as 1981, the DGSE began to carry out operations against both Catholic and Protestant clergy, including surveillance, telephone taps, slander and denigra-



Luis Carrion Cruz
First Vice Minister of
Interior

37 years old... active in FSLN politics since the late 1960s... member of FSLN National Directorate since inception in March 1979 and Vice Minister of Interior since 1980... only member of MINT inner circle from outside Borge's faction... has assisted Borge in ordering executions of dissidents.



Lenin Cerna Juarez
Chief, Directorate General
of State Security (DGSE)

39 years old... active in FSLN for over 20 years... served with Borge and belongs to his Guerra Popular Prolongada (GPP) faction. Before becoming head of the DGSE in 1980, served in the Nicaraguan Embassy in Honduras.

tion campaigns, disinformation, and physical attacks. Former FSLN activist and *La Prensa* editor Humberto Belli described a series of violent incidents carried out by Sandinista-controlled gangs: "On Sunday, October 30, 1983, in a wave of coordinated simultaneous attacks, Sandinista mobs, some of them armed with shotguns, stormed 26 Catholic Churches in various towns in Nicaragua—eight in Managua—interrupting mass, smashing doors and windows, and savagely beating several parishioners."⁴

In April 1985, Borge created a special unit within the DGSE to disrupt what he expected to be heightened anti-government activities by the church in the wake of the Pope's 1983 visit and the Vatican's elevation of Obando to Cardinal in April 1985. The 60-man force, created and trained by Cuban advisers, was ordered to infiltrate and disrupt the Cardinal's outdoor masses. A DGSE defector reported that the Directorate routinely records sermons and monitors attendance at parishes headed by priests sympathetic to Obando.

EXPANSION OF PRISON CAPACITY

Thousands of *campesinos* have been rounded up, imprisoned, tried, and convicted on evidence consisting of forced "signed confessions," many of which the victims had not read, according to human rights organizations and testimonies of Nicaraguan citizens. State Security agents held a .45 calibre pistol to a man's head, to force him to sign a confession—a blank piece of paper—four months following his arrest. During that time, he was beaten, made to remain on his feet with a noose around his neck for 24 hours, imprisoned in a dark cell, and fed only boiled beans every five days. The man was a fisherman accused of taking a trip to El Salvador, and he was still awaiting trial by the "Anti-Somocist People's Tribunal" as of December 1986, according to a complaint filed at the Permanent Commission on Human Rights in Nicaragua (CPDH).

MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR STATE SECURITY (AS OF SEPT. 1986)

The Directorate General for State Security (DGSE) has five administrative units, accounting for 70 percent of the employees at DGSE headquarters.

- The Operations Department handles a variety of investigations, searches houses, and detains and interrogates suspects.
- The Anti-Counterrevolutionary Department monitors the activities of the internal opposition supporters of the democratic resistance, makes arrests, and maintains its own jails for political prisoners.
- The Technical Operations Department investigates DGSE employees and collects information through telephone taps and mail openings aimed at foreign embassies, political parties, and the Catholic Church.
- The Territorial Department, working with the Sandinista Defense Committees, investigates counterrevolutionary activities countrywide.
- The Agitation and Propaganda Department controls the government-paid *turbas divinas* ("divine mobs") and manages propaganda, disinformation, and censorship activities.

The prisons are administered by either the Penal Directorate or State Security, depending on the size of the facility. The MINT, however, centrally controls the entire penal system. During the Somoza era, only one prison was run by the national government.

In addition to the holding cells within the 48 local police stations throughout the country, Nicaragua has 23 "Sandinista" prisons, according to defectors and other sources. They include nine State Security detention facilities and many other small jails or clandestine houses, which hold five or ten prisoners in complete secrecy.⁵ There is no set time for a prisoner to be tried nor legal mechanisms to protect prisoners. Prisoners held by the DGSE frequently do not know why they are being held or how they can secure their release. This indeterminate imprisonment is designed to intimidate the victim and to serve as an example to others.

Prison capacity is being increased to keep pace with the MINT's expanding internal security role. Defectors report that about 35,000 people have passed through the prison system since 1979, including regular inmates and the "floating prison population"—people detained for a period of a few days to six weeks for the purpose of intimidation.

In addition to State Security jails, there are nine penitentiary system or public jails where political prisoners are transferred after having been "tried" in State Security jails or sentenced in the Tribunals of Exception, according to the CPDH.

Nicaraguans who have been confined to Sandinista jails and released attest to the primitive conditions and brutal treatment by officials. Ex-Sandinista officials report widespread corruption within the Penal Directorate, including "renting" prisoners out to labor for profit of the prison staff, profitting from the sale of



Zona Franca prison in Managua is a general prison operated by the National Penitentiary System. The Nicaraguan penal system falls under the auspices of the MINT, which has dramatically expanded prison capacity to keep pace with its growing internal security role. In early May 1986, the pro-Sandinista press reported that more than 7,200 prisoners were incarcerated in the MINT's prison system in addition to some 300 jailed in military facilities. This total, if true, could represent an increase of nearly 50 percent over 1983.

products produced by prisoners, coercing sexual favors from wives of inmates, and appropriating packages sent by the Red Cross and religious organizations.

The most feared of the facilities is the MINT-operated, high-security prison known as El Chipote. Established by Somoza, the prison has been remodeled, and the classic bar-type cell doors have been replaced with solid metal doors with a tiny window. The cells are underground, ventilated only by a narrow tube or one slot in the door. Cells are either brightly lighted or completely dark. Days are suffocatingly hot, nights frigid. Some of the cells (called *La Chiquita* or "the Little One"), where victims wait between interrogation sessions, are about 40 inches high and 20 inches wide, and the victims are unable to stand or sit.

A former prisoner at El Chipote said, "During the nights I could hear the screams and cries of women coming from other cells." This is not the prison visitors see. The regime maintains "model" prison farms called *granjas* to show foreign delegations.

The practice of torturing and murdering prisoners is not confined to El Chipote.

The secret police interrogate prisoners with the assistance of Cuban advisers, who reportedly participate in physical abuse. DGSE interrogators also use psychological torture against prisoners.⁶ The main victims of psychological torture—which leaves no scars that could be shown to international visitors—are prisoners from the middle class, the group most often politically active in opposition to the Sandinista regime. DGSE interrogators often physically torture peasant prisoners because they are unlikely to be protected by family connections or international publicity.

Physical methods of torture include confinement in barrels of cold water for long periods, hanging by the wrists or ankles, placement in hot boxes or neck-deep sewage pits, rape, forced standing for long periods, denial of food, attacks by trained dogs, beatings with wooden clubs, and electrical shock to genitalia.

Psychological tortures include subjecting victims to fake executions, playing recordings attributed to prisoners' family members screaming under torture, uninterrupted darkness, extended solitary confinement, disruption of physiological rhythms by randomly varying periods of light and darkness and feeding intervals, firing unloaded pistols into the open mouth of the victim, and detaining family members. Some mothers of political prisoners who are organizing to protest the cruel and unusual punishment received by their loved ones, for example, are being detained, threatened, and interrogated to dissuade them from participating in the organization.

The Sandinistas also murder prisoners. Bodies of prisoners killed by security forces are often photographed with weapons so the Sandinistas can claim they were members of the resistance killed in combat. The number slain is added to government claims of rebel casualties.

Abuse of prisoners throughout the MINT system is alleged to be widespread and serious. Prisoners are reportedly tortured physically and psychologically. Many constitutional guarantees (including the right to habeas corpus, the right to a speedy trial by a competent court, the right of the accused to be informed of the charges leveled against them, and protections against arrest without charges, trial, or sentencing) were suspended hours after the Sandinistas' new constitution was signed into law January 1987.



**NICARAGUAN
MINISTRY OF
INTERIOR
INTERNAL
STRUCTURE
(AS OF SEPT. 1986)**



NOTE: DGSE is divided into functional units such as F-1 and F-2.



Omar Cabezas Lacayo
Vice Minister of the Interior,
Chief of the MINT's Directorate of Internal Order

35 years old ... long-time FSLN activist ... fought under Borge against Somoza ... joined MINT in 1981 ... named to current position as head of internal security in 1985.



Doris Tijerino Haslam
Chief, Directorate General of the Sandinista Police

43 years old ... strong Borge supporter ... FSLN party activist ... headed Sandinista Women's Movement and Nicaraguan Peace Council before joining MINT in early 1983.

In May 1986, the Sandinista press admitted that more than 7,200 prisoners were being held in the MINT's prison system in addition to some 300 jailed in military facilities—a 50 percent increase over 1983. The CPDH and several international human rights organizations estimate that as many as 10,000 people are incarcerated, 70 percent of whom are political dissidents. This does not include some 2,300 former members of Somoza's National Guard, housed primarily in the prison facility in Tipitapa.

MINT MAKES MASS ARRESTS

Interior Minister Borge and the other *comandantes*, reportedly concerned about the existence of "internal fronts" (the Sandinista label for internal supporters of the resistance),⁷ detained more than 3,000 people during the first nine months of 1986 on suspicion of involvement in "counter-revolution," according to the Sandinista government. Mass arrests have been reported in the departments of Esteli, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, Jinotega, Matagalpa, Boaco, Chontales, Rio San Juan, and Zelaya.

In the largest single operation announced by the government, 1,500 persons were reported arrested during a two-week period in March 1986 in the Rio Coco de Matagalpa area. Other arrests include 400 suspected sympathizers in southern and eastern Zelaya department, including over 200 Catholic lay workers in the Nueva Guinea area; almost 100 members of the Confederation of Workers of Nicaragua (CTN), an independent labor union; at least 90 members of a CTN union faction, the CTN-A; and more than 200 alleged resistance couriers and sympathizers in the north.

Few of those detained are officially charged. For example, 49 CTN-A labor activists remain imprisoned, but only one has been formally charged. A member of the CTN briefly detained in July 1986, stated that the DGSE warned him to cease his labor and political activities if he wanted to avoid problems with State Security.

Opposition civic and political leaders are special targets of MINT scrutiny and harassment. Social Christian Party youth leader Fanor Avendano, a former Sandinista youth official who served as an escort for Fidel Castro on his first visit to Nicaragua in 1980, was detained for two weeks in May 1986, and again in August, for being disrespectful to a Sandinista policeman and for possessing "subversive literature" (*New York Times* reporter Shirley Christian's book *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*).

Alvin Guthrie, president of the independent Confederation for Trade Union Unity, was detained and had private documents confiscated. Bayardo Guzman, vice president of the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), was arrested in September 1986 and held incommunicado for 14 days, the first 11 of which were spent without food and sleep.

INFILTRATING OPPOSITION RANKS

As early as 1981, Sandinista youth reportedly infiltrated refugee camps in Honduras and Costa Rica to promote ill will among those fleeing Sandinista oppression.

The infiltration effort has continued. In the early 1980s, the DGSE, with Cuban assistance, created special units called Multiple Action Groups to infiltrate resistance ranks, assassinate its supporters, and cause confusion during Sandinista offen-

sives, according to Alvaro Baldizon. Later the special units were shifted from the DGSE to the new Directorate of Special Operations, which also included the Interior Ministry's military combat units. The DGSE appears to maintain its own assassination squad and is responsible for approving the selective assassination of Sandinista political opponents.

Baldizon, who had served as chief investigator of the MINT's Special Investigations Commission that had been established to cover up Sandinista human rights violations, reported that in late 1981 the first of three platoons of Sandinista commandos in the Special Operations Forces returned from training in East Germany. Their mission was to disguise themselves as fighters from the democratic resistance and commit atrocities in order to influence international opinion against the Nicaraguan resistance.

"They went into the bush and began operations as if they were part of the resistance," said Baldizon. "They killed about a dozen *campesinos* who were known Sandinista collaborators. They burned their houses and even set fire to a government cooperative.

"At the same time," he continued, "small bands of resistance fighters were beginning to make contact with each other and unite. This platoon joined up with these groups. At night, in their camps, they slit the throats of the real contra combatants. In this way, they moved from band to band, wiping them out. At the end of the operation, Captain Arevalo [the leader of one unit] was promoted to *sub-comandante*, and all of his soldiers were rewarded with commissions as second lieutenants." Baldizon said that by the end of 1982, two more platoons had returned from East Germany and were sent to the field in March 1983.

In October 1984, a new unit was inaugurated. Selected officers from Special Operations were placed in a squad under the command of a Captain Morales. Alfredo Lazo Valdivia, an ex-member of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, was assigned as a guide. The squad began operations near the Honduran border in Chinandega, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, and Jinotega, but also made selective incursions into Honduras. At the time of Baldizon's defection, they still operated in that area, posing as FDN combatants to ambush civilian vehicles, threatening and beating up local peasants, especially those known to have collaborated with the government.

Fielding these specially trained platoons of Sandinista commandos to perpetrate atrocities against innocent people while disguised as fighters from the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance is one of many tactics the Sandinista government appears to have used to undermine popular support for the resistance.

"They are one of Interior Minister Borge's greatest treasures," Baldizon declared.

The Soviet Union and its allies helped build and support the Ministry of Interior. Cuba's assistance has been especially important, and East Germany, Bulgaria, and several other communist countries have given assistance.

The first Cuban intelligence officers appeared in Managua days after Somoza's fall and assisted in establishing the Directorate General for State Security (DGSE). The Cubans attached to the MINT numbered nearly 200 in October 1981 and doubled by 1983, most of them in the DGSE. The Cubans continue to help shape the ministry's internal structures and train Nicaraguans both internally and in Cuba.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF FOREIGN ADVISERS

THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR: HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

The Ministry of Interior (MINT) has been the source of widespread and systematic abuses of human rights in Nicaragua. According to former MINT official Alvaro Baldizon, Interior Minister Tomas Borge has authorized the executions of hundreds of dissidents and then assisted in covering up the violations. In 1981, Borge promulgated a secret order that standardized the application of "special measures," or summary executions, to end what he called the "anarchical fashion" in which the acts had been carried out since 1979. The directive stipulated that only Borge or his deputy, Luis Carrion Cruz, could authorize executions and that the requests to apply "special measures" had to be received at least 72 hours in advance. Select personnel—highly motivated, carefully screened and monitored FSLN loyalists—carried out the orders. Such extrajudicial executions—where the accused had been stripped of all rights including the right to a trial—stand in stark contrast to Sandinista claims of having instituted a humane legal system with no capital punishment.

Under these guidelines, according to defector reports and other sources, hundreds of Nicaraguans—including Indians on the Atlantic Coast and farmers in the north who resisted relocation—were killed by MINT troops over the past several years. In 1984, Borge instituted the practice of disguising select units of the ministry's special troops in opposition uniforms to carry out attacks on the populace and then blame the rebels for the atrocities. These special MINT soldiers have been accused of perpetrating particularly gruesome acts of violence against civilians—in some cases mutilating dead bodies—in order to falsely implicate resistance forces in gross human rights abuses.

THE MINT WAGES UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

The MINT has assumed a direct combat role in operations against the armed opposition. In 1981, Borge created an elite force trained in unconventional warfare, called the Pablo Ubeda Troops, according to a Sandinista military defector. The contingent has grown steadily. Initially, two special units of about 100 men received intensive training from Cuban advisers in infantry tactics, use of small arms and explosives, hand-to-hand combat, and field survival techniques. The force grew to about 450 combatants in 1983–84 and now numbers some 1,200. For several years, the Special Troops, along with the MINT's assassination teams, have operated under

Borge's direct control in the Directorate of Special Operations. In October 1986, according to Sandinista spokesmen, the Special Troops adopted conventional military titles—abandoning revolutionary titles—to accommodate future growth. The Special Troops often work with their army counterparts in counterinsurgency operations. In addition to their conventional combat role, these troops undertake commando missions for the DGSE. MINT troops also help train foreign insurgents, such as members of El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, Colombia's M-19 guerrilla movement, and guerrilla groups from Honduras and Guatemala.

The ministry's Special Troops are headquartered at Jiloe on the Chiltepe Peninsula north of Managua, where they are trained by Cuban and East German

advisers. The training facilities at Jiloe are similar to special forces camps in Cuba. Other Cuban advisers are said to be deployed with the Pablo Ubeda Troops throughout Nicaragua.

INSTITUTIONALIZING CONTROL AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Beginning in 1985, Borge moved to strengthen the Interior Ministry's grip on the countryside by gaining control over the already existing block committees, which had been supervised by local civilian political officials. Under a directive issued in early 1986, Borge began establishing new block organizations in the most remote villages and staffed them with Sandinista loyalists. New Sandinista police stations also were established in the small towns, which reinforced the power of the new committees. In this way, the Sandinistas use the police force, a part of the MINT structure, as political emissaries. As Borge confidant and police chief Doris Tijerino explained to a State Security training program graduation in Managua, December 19, 1986, "the [Sandinista] policeman must be a political, ideological agent capable of enlightening the people about the problems of the revolution; that is his integral mission. The behavior of the policeman must be fundamentally political . . ."

Both the police and the local committees were subordinated to two DGSE agents assigned to each precinct. Working through this complex structure, the MINT has been able to solidify control over a potentially valuable source of local intelligence and strengthen the security forces' presence in remote areas where the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance has enjoyed popular support.

EXTENDING THE MINT'S REACH BEYOND SECURITY

Since the early 1980s, it appears that Interior Minister Borge has used his power base in the MINT to assume control over areas only tangentially related to internal security. He has acted to insulate the MINT from external inquiries into its activities, provide his ministry with an independent source of income, and make others on the National Directorate dependent on him for their financial security.

The DGSE began monitoring the public mood as early as 1984, making the intelligence service and Borge key in developing the Sandinistas' social and political policies, according to a June 1986 defector. In mid-1984, concerned about their electoral strength, the Sandinistas ordered the DGSE to conduct ad hoc opinion polls to measure the opposition's popularity and then used the results to develop a strategy.

Mounting dissatisfaction with Sandinista policies prompted the DGSE to intensify its polling efforts, and Managua apparently used the results to make key policy changes. To run the survey and analysis operation, the DGSE formed the Department for Control of the Social Foundation. Working with two other DGSE departments, the Anti-Counter-revolutionary and Territorial Departments, it assessed the polling results and other information about potential trouble areas. Additional data were collected by security operatives eavesdropping on street conversations, the defector reported. Borge admitted publicly in mid-July 1985 to both the existence and the negative results of these polls. Growing concern about the popular mood also may have been an important factor in the regime's decision to broaden the state of emergency

in October 1985, a move that severely restricted opposition activities.

In 1985, Borge assumed responsibility for policy toward the Atlantic Coast, formerly entrusted to National Directorate member Luis Carrion. The Sandinistas had been troubled by the vulnerability of the Atlantic Coast region, populated mostly by Miskito, Rama, and Sumo Indians and English-speaking blacks who traditionally resisted control by Managua. Recently, Borge has been responsible for autonomy negotiations with Indian groups, demonstrating his desire to extend his reach into new areas.

Mothers of political prisoners in Nicaragua, who joined forces in January 1987 to bring the plight of incarcerated relatives to the attention of the public, have also become the targets of reprisal by agents of the Directorate General for State Security.



MANAGING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

One of Tomas Borge's goals appears to be to control inquiries into human rights violations, many of which have been committed by the DGSE. In December 1982, he created the Special Investigations Commission to supplant the Foreign Ministry as the focal point for investigating allegations of human rights abuses and to counter the activities of the independent Nicaraguan Permanent Human Rights Commission, which had reported the Sandinistas' lack of cooperation to the Organization of American States. The CPDH had previously been active in bringing attention to Somoza's human rights abuses. When his own investigators told Borge that most of the CPDH allegations were true, he ordered his assistants to prepare "plausible" false reports to protect the government. The committee was subsequently renamed the Special Investigations Section, then upgraded to the Directorate of Internal Affairs in late 1984.

Responsibility for limiting the international impact of human rights charges also was transferred from the Foreign Ministry to the MINT. In 1984, Borge formed the Technical Commission to coordinate the two ministries' responses to inquiries from foreign human rights groups. The commission, which also prepared itineraries for human rights delegations visiting Nicaragua, was staffed with Borge loyalists, and the Foreign Ministry merely issued the responses. Borge's operatives were placed in the government's own human rights organization, which frequently worked with local officials to remove potential troublemakers before foreign visitors arrived.

According to MINT defector Baldizon, when the Sandinista government learned that a foreign delegation wanted to visit certain areas of the country, MINT officials were sent out to prepare the way. People who appeared on MINT's list of "potential enemies" received visits by officials and were told to stay away from the visiting delegation. Some "potential enemies" were locked up during the visit as a warning to others of what could happen to them if they did not cooperate.

MINT security agents pretending to be photographers, journalists, or relatives of people in the region to be visited frequently accompanied the visiting delegations. In this way the MINT could monitor the delegations' attitudes as well as be in a position to steer them to particular places or people.

Security agents still report visitors' itinerary to the ministry. The advance notice allows Borge ample time to arrange for MINT personnel, pretending to be local residents, to be present for chance encounters with delegation members. The "casual encounter" teams, as they are called, describe to visiting delegations alleged atrocities by the resistance and the benefits of the Sandinista revolution to Nicaragua's peasants and workers.

SANDINISTA BUSINESS VENTURES

Through its role of manager of various illicit but officially condoned businesses, the MINT is able to generate funds for both the Sandinista leadership and MINT activities. The primary vehicle is the Heroes and Martyrs Corporation (H&M).³

National Directorate member Henry Ruiz is its figurehead, but the corporation is actually controlled by Borge and managed by his long-time associate, Paul Atha. H&M, a holding company created as a department within the MINT in 1984 (replacing the Department of Business), was formed to run confiscated companies and project the image that private enterprise thrives under Sandinista rule. Under Atha, H&M moved into import and export activities, facilitating the acquisition of scarce luxury commodities from abroad available only to high-ranking Sandinista officials.

At present, H&M controls some 25 "private" trading companies and domestic businesses, including factories, restaurants, bakeries, laundries, motels, and hotels. The corporation's operating capital comes from outside the official budget, and the corporation does not report its profits to tax authorities. Subsidiaries are provided hard currency at favorable exchange rates and can obtain goods in short supply elsewhere in Nicaragua.

CONCLUSION

The growth of the MINT over the last seven years attests to the Sandinista regime's determination to maintain its power in the face of mounting popular dissatisfaction. In August 1987, U.S. and Central American diplomatic initiatives raised the possibility of peaceful change within Nicaragua. But for that change to occur, dismantling the Interior Ministry's control over the political, social, and economic well-being of the Nicaraguan people will have to be a top priority.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹For specific cases of Sandinista human rights abuses, see Permanent Commission for Human Rights (CPDH) monthly reports of principal cases received. Also see Sept. 18, 1986, statement by CPDH and May 1984 CPDH letter to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Note: The CPDH does not report cases based on hearsay or newspaper reports, but requires sworn statements before it will investigate and report on cases. Many complainants fear reprisal and, therefore, do not sign formal affidavits.

²See Statement by Jimmy Hassan, National Religious Broadcasters Conference, Washington, D.C., Feb. 3, 1986 (reprinted in *Human Rights in Nicaragua under the Sandinistas: From Revolution to Repression*, U.S. Department of State, December 1986, pp. 153-157); "Sandinistas Interrogate Opponents" by Edward Cody, *The Washington Post*, Dec. 15, 1985; and "Nicaraguan in Washington Says He Was Tortured by Sandinistas," *The New York Times*, April 24, 1984.

Accounts of Sandinista torture also were confirmed in March 1987 interviews with ex-prisoners and victims' family members, whose identities remain protected, conducted by U.S. officials. Also see the April 1985 report of the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights, an American organization critical of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua, entitled *Nicaragua: Revolutionary Justice, A Report on Human Rights and the Judicial System*, pp. 103-107.

³See *Inside the Sandinista Regime: A Special Investigator's Perspective*, U.S. Department of State, Feb. 1986, p. 5. Also see the Sept. 17, 1983, Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua report, *Unexplained Deaths*.

⁴Humberto Belli, *Breaking Faith: The Sandinista Revolution and Its Impact on Freedom and Christian Faith in Nicaragua* [Crossway Books, Westchester, IL, 1985].

⁵The Permanent Commission on Human Rights *Report on the Prison Situation, Nicaragua 1985*.

⁶There are many documented incidents of arrest, interrogation, and torture by DGSE agents, including a statement by Jimmy Hassan, National Religious Broadcasters Conference, Washington, D.C., Feb. 3, 1986 (See *Human Rights in Nicaragua under the Sandinistas: From Revolution to Repression*, U.S. Department of State, Dec. 1986, pp. 153-157), the Permanent Commission on Human Rights' letter to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, May 1984, and its *Report on the Prison Situation, Nicaragua 1985*. Also confirmed in interviews with refugees and former prisoners, including one former prisoner interviewed March 1987, who asked to remain anonymous.

⁷Edward Cody, "Sandinistas Interrogate Opponents," *The Washington Post*, Dec. 15, 1985.

⁸See *Inside the Sandinista Regime: A Special Investigator's Perspective*, U.S. Department of State, Feb. 1986, p. 13.

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