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The Sandinista Military Build-Up:

An Update



Released by the Department of State and the Department of Defense

October 1987

Cover: Sandinista troops board sophisticated Soviet-built helicopters during operations near San Andres de Bocay in May 1987.

Reuters/Bettmann Newsphotos

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The Sandinista Military Build-Up: An Update

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Overview

Since taking power in Nicaragua, the Sandinista government has built a military machine without rival in Central America. The United States, Nicaragua's neighbors, and others view this continuing build-up and its impact on instability in the region with grave concern. Contributing to that concern is the recognition that the Nicaraguan military build-up:

- Is unprecedented in the history of Central America;
- Complicates the search for a peaceful resolution to the Central American crisis;
- Poses serious threats to neighboring nations;
- Enables the Sandinistas to tighten their control over the Nicaraguan people; and,
- Has exacerbated Nicaragua's economic crisis.

This study describes the build-up and supplements the information on Nicaragua published in two other State Department/Defense Department publications, *The Soviet-Cuban Connection in Central America and the Caribbean* and *The Challenge to Democracy in Central America*. It also outlines some implications of the Sandinista build-up and discusses U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

The Sandinista Military: 1979–1987

Guerrilla Origins

In July 1979, a broad, popular coalition of Nicaraguan citizens calling for democracy overthrew the government of Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza. Opposition to the Somoza dictatorship had become widespread during the mid-1970s, and the assassination in January 1978 of Somoza's leading critic, *La Prensa* editor Pedro

Joaquin Chamorro, triggered demonstrations and a lengthy general strike.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*—FSLN), which had been fighting a guerrilla war against the Somoza regime since the 1960s, capitalized on this mounting resentment and captured the imagination of the Nicaraguan people through spectacular actions such as Eden Pastora's (*Comandante Cero*) seizure of the National Palace in August 1978.

The ranks of the FSLN swelled; by late 1978, it had nearly 1,000 combatants,¹ and by the following summer the force had grown to about 5,000.² Although numerically smaller than

Somoza's 7,100-man National Guard (expanded to about 10,000 men), the Sandinistas were winning wider support from disgruntled Nicaraguans and received large amounts of materiel from abroad. In contrast, the National Guard was isolated from the people and faced increasing difficulties in obtaining supplies.

In June 1979, the Organization of American States, at the request of the United States, took the unprecedented step of calling for the "definitive replacement" of the Somoza regime.³ With no hope of external support and having lost control of much of the nation's territory, Somoza fled Nicaragua on July 17. The National Guard disin-

Rally in Managua marking first anniversary of the Sandinista revolution.

Owen Franken/Sygma



tegrated literally overnight; many guardsmen, including most of the higher ranking officers, fled into exile, while thousands of others, mostly enlisted men, were imprisoned by the new government.⁴

When the Sandinistas marched triumphantly into Managua on July 19, 1979, there was great hope for Nicaragua's future. The leaders of the FSLN, a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist "vanguard," had nonetheless publicly pledged themselves to the principles of political pluralism, a mixed economy, and a nonaligned foreign policy. Although dominated by the Sandinistas, the new Government of National Reconstruction (GRN) included many others who also had participated in the anti-Somoza revolution.⁵ The GRN enjoyed broad international support, and the United States took the lead in the assistance effort, authorizing \$118 million of economic aid and humanitarian assistance during the following 18 months.

The Build-Up Begins

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

"We reaffirm that we are arming ourselves without spending one cent and we reaffirm that we do not have to render accounts to anyone whether there are tanks, cannons, or planes here."

—Defense Minister Humberto Ortega
June 4, 1981



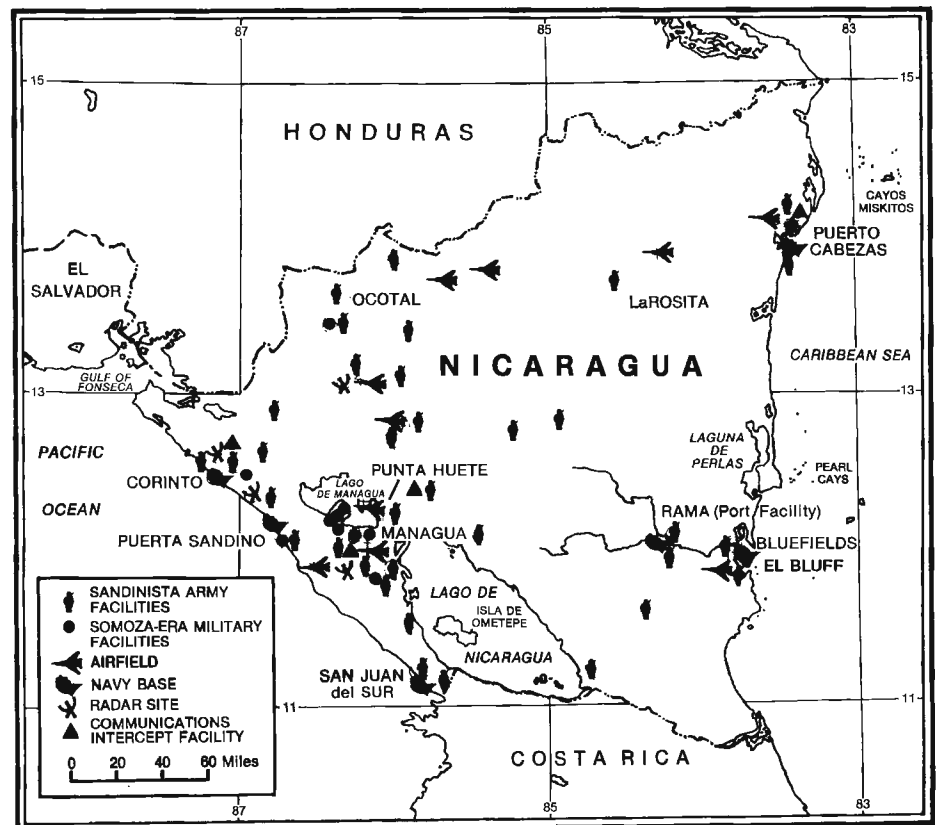
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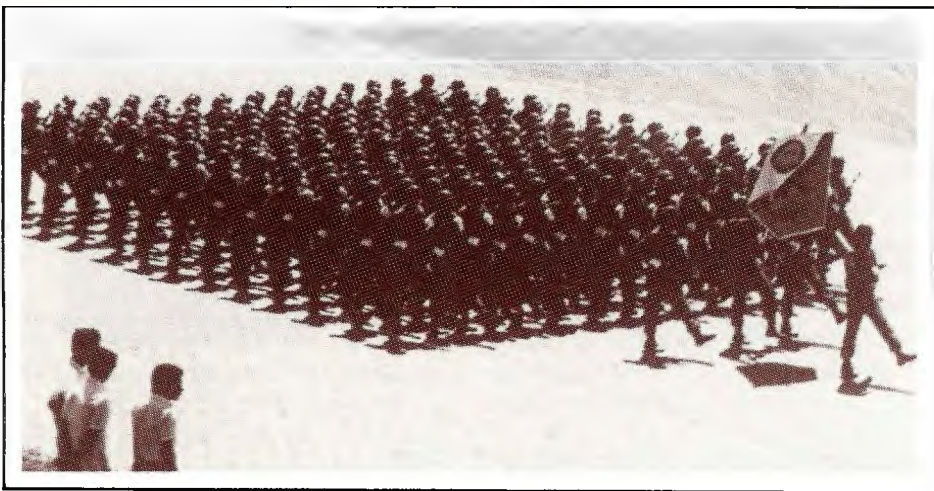
1960s is comparable to what has been occurring in Nicaragua since 1979.

The Sandinista plan called for a steady increase in the number of men and women under arms, first through voluntary enlistment and later through conscription. By mid-1987, they had

amassed an active-duty force of more than 74,000. The Sandinistas' total strength, including all regular, reserve, and militia units and security forces, now is about 120,000 out of the 1.5 million adult Nicaraguan population.

The Sandinistas now have 40 major garrisons and smaller posts throughout the nation.





Sandinista troops passing in review. The militarization of Nicaraguan society has led to the building of armed forces nearly half the size of those of Mexico, a nation more than 20 times as populous.

Ground Forces

The Sandinista Popular Army (*Ejercito Popular Sandinista*—EPS), the full-time, regular army of the FSLN, has grown to 37,000. The EPS has systematically moved toward developing a combined arms capability, augmenting its conventional infantry forces with mechanized infantry, armored, and artillery brigades. The Sandinistas also have emphasized the formation of reserve and militia forces; currently, these units total some 74,000 men, of which about one-third are on active duty at any one time. Sandinista reserves include combat-experienced veterans who are required to continue training after discharge from active duty. Dozens of new military bases have been constructed throughout Nicaragua, and the Sandinistas now have some 40 major garrisons and numerous smaller posts throughout the nation.

Infantry. The EPS has formed 10 regular infantry battalions. A special airborne battalion was inaugurated in 1982. The following year, special counterinsurgency battalions (*Bat-*

talion de Lucha Irregular—BLI) were trained and equipped to engage anti-Sandinista forces. There are now 14 such BLIs. Each Sandinista combat brigade has a counterinsurgency unit called a Light Hunter Battalion (BLC). These BLCs are smaller than the BLIs, but they have essentially the same capabilities.

The Soviet-made T-55 tank has a 100-millimeter gun. Once the Soviet Union's main battle tank, the T-55 now is produced for export. It is far superior to any other tank in Central America. The Sandinistas have more than 110 T-55s. In comparison, Somoza had three operational World War II-vintage U.S. tanks.



Units along Nicaragua's frontiers are organized as a special border guard force (*Tropas Guarda Fronteras*—TGF). The bulk of the Sandinistas' infantry forces now consists of roughly 110 reserve and militia battalions. These infantry units are equipped primarily with Soviet-bloc arms, such as the AK-47 assault rifle.

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

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

The remainder of Somoza's armor consisted of 25 antiquated Staghound armored cars.

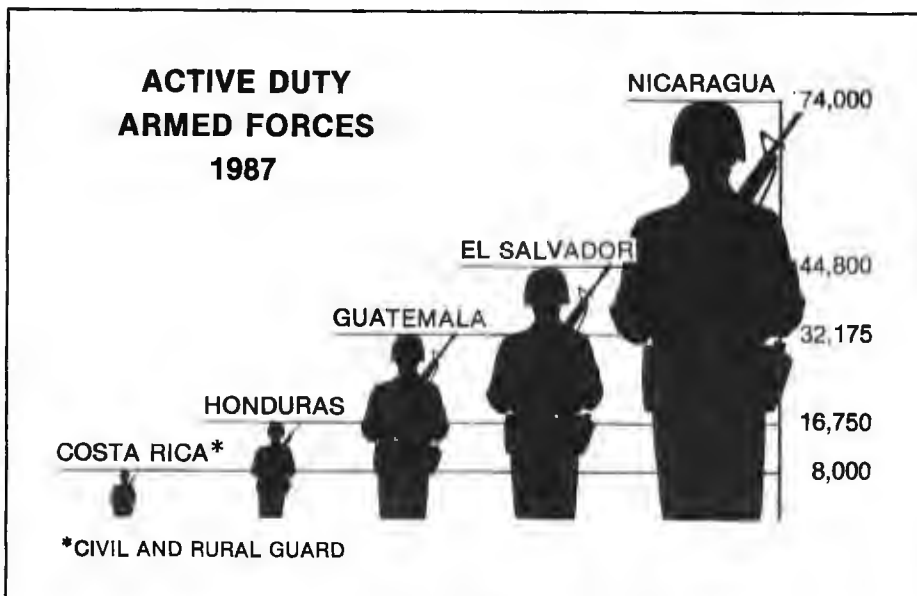
The Sandinistas began building an armored force of unrivaled size and firepower in Central America. Crews and mechanics for tanks and other vehicles were sent to Cuba for training. Facilities to support the forthcoming arsenal were built.

The first Soviet-built T-55 tanks arrived in mid-1981. The T-55, weighing 36 metric tons and armed with a 100-millimeter gun, can outgun any tank in the region. Formerly the Soviets' main battle tank, it still is being used by Warsaw Pact armies. The Sandinistas used the T-55s to form their first armored battalion, based just outside Managua. By 1982, the Sandinistas had obtained a sufficient number of T-55s to organize a second armored battalion. By the end of 1984, they had acquired more than 110 T-55 tanks, enough to form 5 armored battalions.⁸

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

The Soviets, through their allies, also have equipped the Sandinista army with more than 250 armored vehicles, mostly BTR-60 and BTR-152 armored personnel carriers. These vehicles are armed with a machinegun and can carry a squad of infantry. The first BTR-60s began arriving in mid-1981. The EPS also has received Soviet-made command vehicles and BRDM-2 amphibious armored reconnaissance vehicles. The Sandinistas now have formed two mechanized infantry brigades.

The terrain in certain parts of Nicaragua is well suited to armored operations, although in other parts of the country the terrain imposes con-



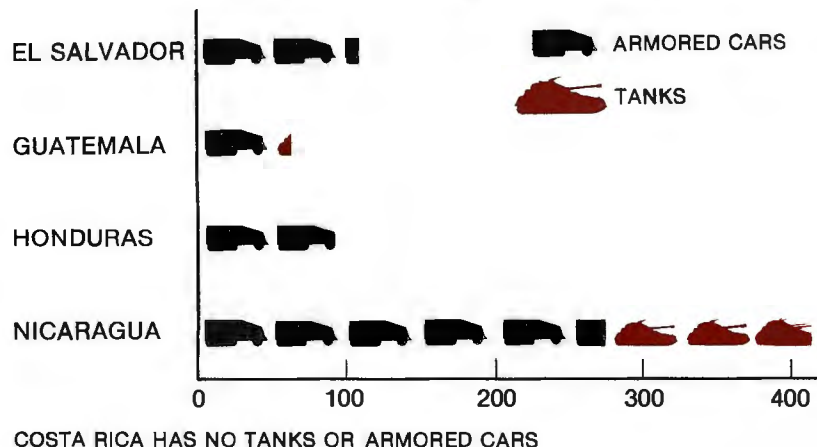
Nicaragua has a higher percentage of its population on active military duty than any other country in Latin America, except Cuba.



Somoza had 25 antiquated armored cars; the Sandinistas now have over 250. The BRDM-2 (left) is fully amphibious and armed with a machinegun. The BTR-152 (right) carries up to 17 infantry troops, and the BTR-60 (below) can transport a squad of infantry.



TANKS AND ARMORED VEHICLES



straints. Tanks can operate in the flat plains of the west, which encompass the principal population and economic centers of the nation. On the other hand, the mountains and rugged terrain of the northern departments limit off-road maneuverability. The lowlands of the Atlantic Coast region inhibit off-road use of the heavy T-55s, but the Sandinistas can deploy the amphibious PT-76s in this region. While some observers have argued that

the terrain in Central America renders tanks of only marginal military value, the Sandinistas and their Soviet suppliers do not share this view; indeed, they have continued the rapid increase in the size of their tank force, doubling it in 1984 alone. Tanks have been useful in rural warfare situations; they can also be used for urban crowd control.

Artillery. The growth of the EPS's artillery force has been equally

dramatic. During the revolution, the Sandinistas' fire-support weapons consisted of nothing larger than mortars. When they defeated Somoza's National Guard, they inherited three 105-millimeter howitzers.

During their first year in power, the Sandinistas began receiving ZIS-2s, Soviet-made 57-millimeter antitank guns. By 1981, they were obtaining D-30s, Soviet-made 122-millimeter howitzers that far surpass in range and firepower all other artillery in Central America. That same year, they began receiving D-20s, Soviet-made 152-millimeter howitzers, which represented a further qualitative increase in their artillery capability.

In 1982, the Sandinistas took delivery of the first of their Soviet-made BM-21s, capable of launching a rapid-fire barrage of 40 122-millimeter rockets, greatly increasing their area bombardment capability. In 1983, the Sandinistas formally inaugurated a special artillery brigade, based in Managua. Currently, the EPS's inventory includes about 60 heavy artillery pieces, about 30 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers, more than 120 anti-tank guns, and hundreds of mortars.

Support Units. The Sandinistas have begun to build an elaborate infrastructure to support their combat forces. They have created a special engineering battalion and communications units. The East Germans alone have provided the Sandinistas with more than 3,500 IFA W-50 military transport trucks since 1980. Large numbers of other vehicles have been delivered by the Soviet Union and its allies. These include more than 800 jeeps, 40 flatbed trucks capable of transporting T-55 tanks, 6 tank ferries to shuttle the T-55s across rivers, numerous communications vans, and about 75 tanker trucks for fuel.

The Soviets and Soviet-bloc states also have provided a multitude of

The PT-76 has a 76-millimeter gun and is fully amphibious. The Soviets provided the Sandinistas with about 30 of these light tanks in 1984.





The Soviets have provided the Sandinistas with more than 800 jeeps.



These Sandinista PMR-3 minelayers are towed by ZIL-131 trucks.



The BM-21 multiple rocket launcher (left) can fire a barrage of 40 122-millimeter rockets more than 12 miles. Shown at right are ZIS-2 57-millimeter antitank guns on parade in Managua. The D-20 152-millimeter howitzer (below) is the largest artillery piece in Central America. It can hurl a 96-pound shell nearly 11 miles.



other material ranging from mobile maintenance workshops and field kitchens to minelaying and communications equipment. In 1982, they furnished the Sandinistas with the equipment to build a communications intercept facility at Santa Maria near Managua. Subsequently, additional intercept facilities have been built at Puerto Cabezas, San Francisco, and Santa Rosa.

Air Force and Air Defense

The 3,500-man Sandinista Air Force and Air Defense Force (*Fuerza Aerea Sandinista/Defensa Anti-Aerea*—FAS/DAA) has been undergoing substantial improvements since 1979. The Sandinistas began with the remnants of the National Guard's small air force, which included a handful of AT-33 jets, Cessna 337 "push-pull"

aircraft, transport aircraft, trainers, and helicopters. The Sandinistas placed a high priority on developing a more powerful air arm. Early on, they sent personnel to Cuba and Soviet-bloc countries to be trained as pilots and mechanics, and they made plans to expand existing airfields and to build new ones.

Because of the long lead time associated with the acquisition of air-



At right is one of four SIAI-Marchetti SF-260 military trainers acquired from Libya in 1982. Shown below is one of the world's most advanced attack helicopters, the Mi-24/25 HIND D. It has a nose-mounted machine gun and can carry up to 4 pods containing nearly 130 57-millimeter rockets as well as antitank missiles or bombs. This is the same helicopter used by the Soviets in Afghanistan. The Sandinistas now have 12 of these "flying tanks."

UPI photo



craft, that is, the need for lengthy pilot training and the construction of airfields, the FAS grew slowly in its early years. The first fixed-wing aircraft added to the inventory were older and unsophisticated models, such as Soviet-made AN-2s. In 1982, they acquired four Italian-made SF-260 trainer/tactical support aircraft from Libya. Six Soviet-made AN-26 medium transports have significantly improved the Sandinistas' logistics support capabilities.

The Sandinistas' helicopter inventory has grown more rapidly. The great majority of these craft have been obtained from the Soviets and their allies. In 1981, the first two Soviet Mi-8/17 HIP medium-lift helicopters arrived. The following April, the Soviets formally donated the HIPs to the Sandinistas, explaining that they were to be used to help develop the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua. In fact, the HIP is one of the Soviet Union's front-line combat helicopters and can be armed with machinegun and rocket pods. The Sandinistas have received more than 40 HIPs and have used them extensively in military operations. The Sandinistas also have acquired Polish-built Mi-2/HOPLITE utility/cargo helicopters.

In late 1984, the Sandinistas received the first of a new generation of helicopter gunships, the Mi-24/HIND D. This is the Soviets' principal attack helicopter, and it has been used extensively by the Soviets against resistance forces in Afghanistan. One of the most highly sophisticated attack helicopters in the world, it holds the world military helicopter speed record and can be armed with a multiple-barrel machinegun, guided missiles, rocket pods, and bombs.

The HIND's heavy armor, coupled with its high speed, greatly reduces its vulnerability to small arms fire.⁹ Acquisition of the HIND D adds a new



In 1983, the Sandinistas acquired their first two Soviet-built AN-26 transports. They now have six.

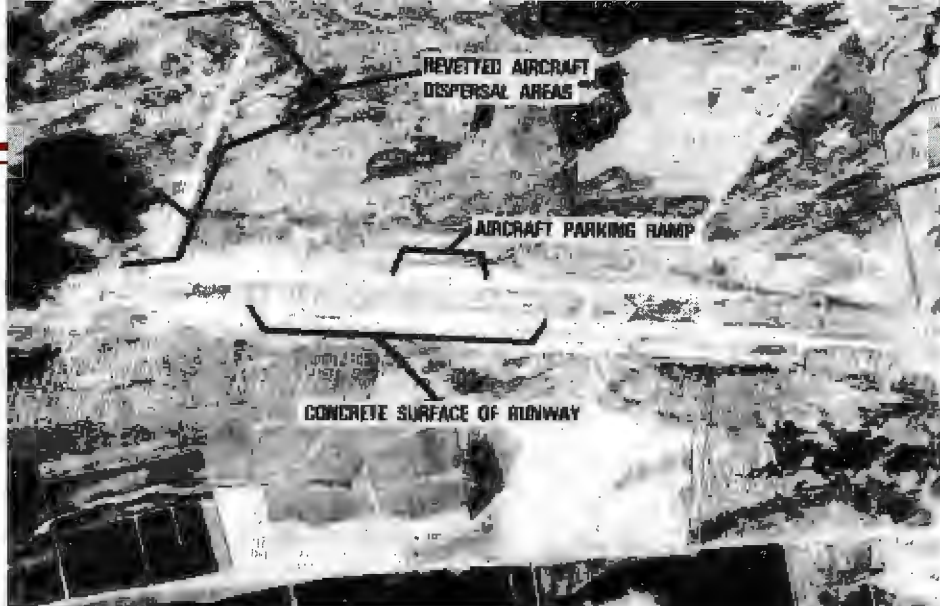
dimension to warfare in Central America. Key targets in Honduras, Costa Rica, and El Salvador are all within the reach of this flying "tank." Some 12 Mi-24s have been delivered to Nicaragua and have been used against internal resistance forces.

Top FSLN leaders have repeatedly proclaimed their desire to acquire high-performance jet fighters. Nicaraguan pilots and mechanics reportedly have

been undergoing training in Cuba and eastern Europe since the early 1980s. In 1982, with Cuban assistance, the Sandinistas began constructing the Punta Huete airfield in an isolated area northeast of Managua. The principal runway at Punta Huete is 10,000 feet in length, making it the longest military runway in Central America. It can accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet-bloc inventory. Sixteen revet-

The Mi-8/17 HIP is one of the Soviets' principal combat helicopters. It can be armed with a machinegun, rocket pods, and antitank missiles. Some HIPs also serve as transports for Sandinista troops and their equipment. The Sandinistas have received more than 40 HIPs.





The runway at Punta Huete now is operational. The 10,000-foot strip is the longest military runway in Central America, and can accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet inventory. Designed for jet aircraft, revetments are clearly visible in the alert and aircraft dispersal areas.

ments of the size and design appropriate for jet fighters have been constructed.

Helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft have been flying out of Punta Huete since 1986. In addition to Punta Huete, the Sandinistas have been upgrading their principal airbase at Sandino Airport in Managua as well as other airfields at Montelimar, Puerto

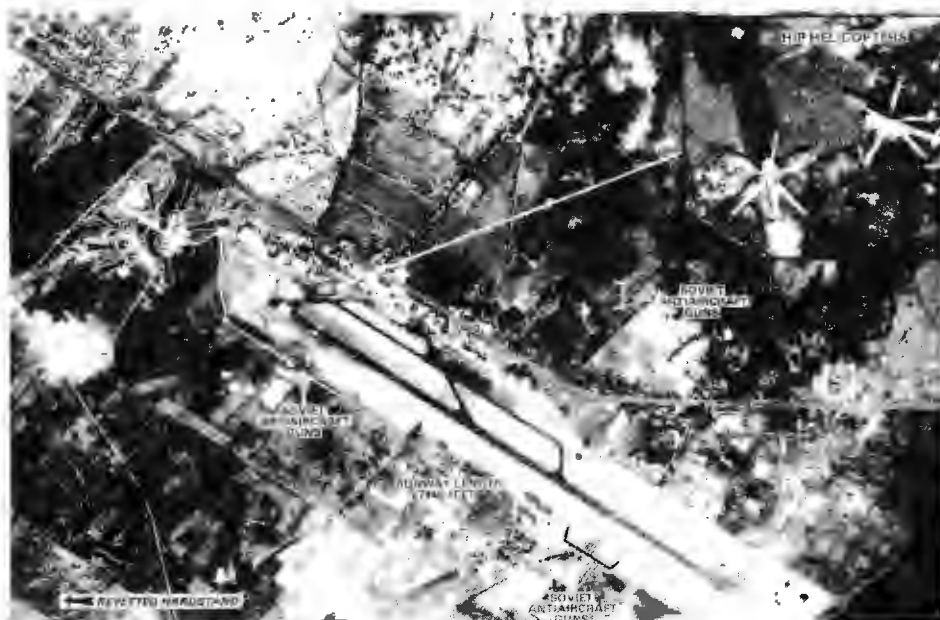
Cabezas, Esteli, La Rosita, and Bluefields.

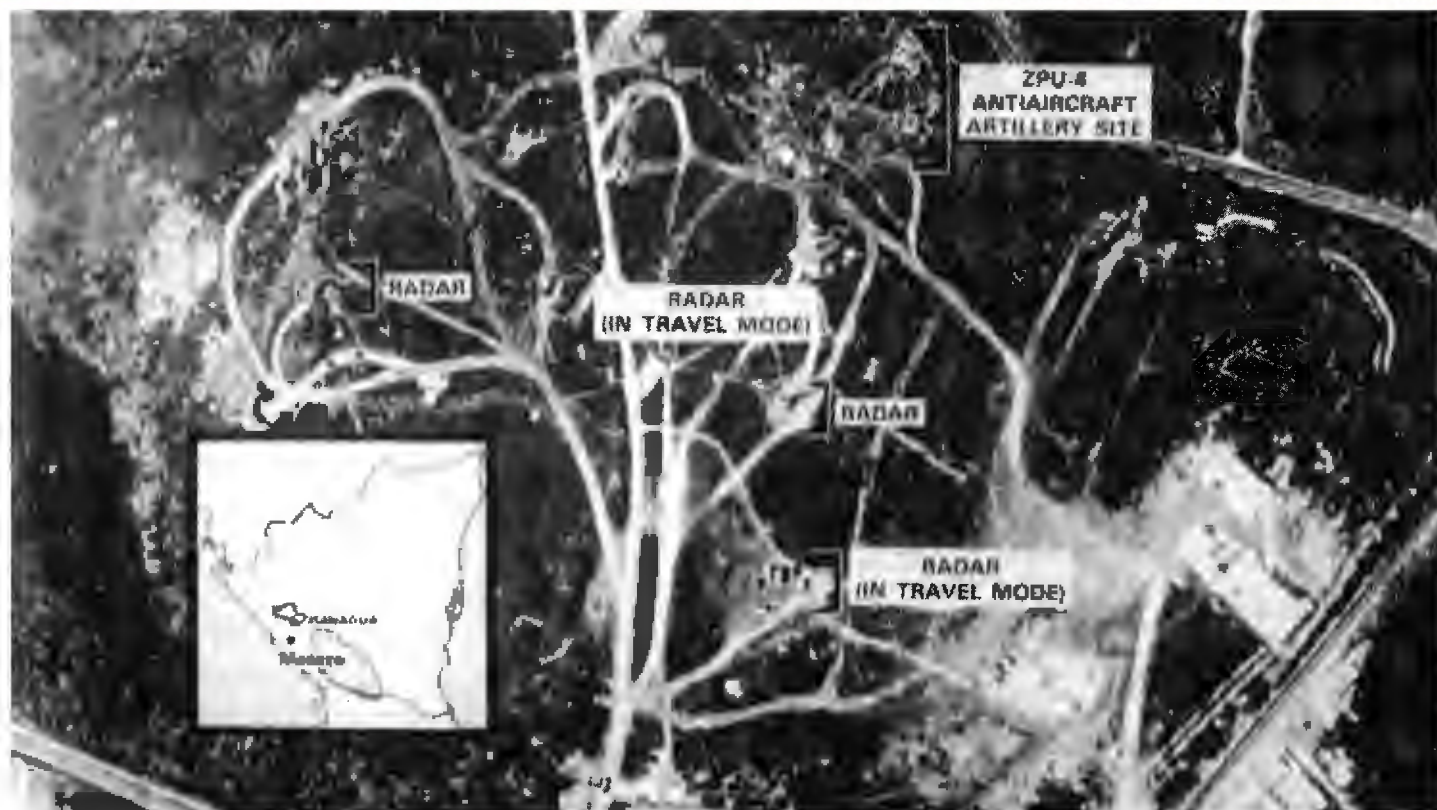
Soviet air warfare doctrine calls for aircraft to operate in a "controlled air environment," that is, the aircraft are controlled by command elements on the ground that monitor their actions via radar. In 1983, the first Soviet-made Early Warning/Ground Control-Intercept (EW/GCI) facility in

Nicaragua was assembled near Masaya. During 1984, additional radar sites were established at Toro Blanco and Esteli. Early in 1985, a fourth radar system was installed at San Juan del Sur. A temporary site at El Bluff has provided coverage of the Atlantic Coast as well. A coastal surveillance radar was installed at El Polvon in late 1984. The Sandinistas now have radar coverage over most of Nicaragua and can monitor and control their own aircraft movements deep into Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. There is no comparable radar system anywhere in the region.

The early warning capability of the radar net also is associated with the Sandinista air defense forces. As early as 1980, the Sandinistas began acquiring ZPU-4, ZU-23, and M-1939 anti-aircraft guns and SA-7 surface-to-air missiles. The KS-19 100-millimeter cannon with fire-control radar was added in 1984. Some 400 pieces of anti-aircraft artillery and over 350 SA-7/SA-14 surface-to-air missile launchers are deployed to protect major Sandinista military facilities and units, along with political and economic targets.

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

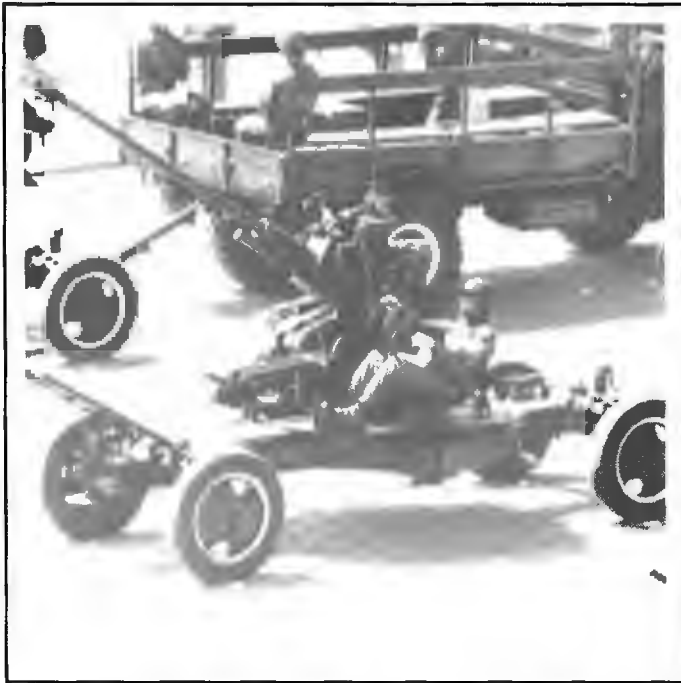




The Masaya Early Warning/Ground Control-Intercept radar facility was assembled in 1983.

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





The M-1939, a 37-millimeter anti-aircraft gun, can fire at the rate of 160 to 180 rounds per minute. There are nine M-1939 sites in the Managua area alone.

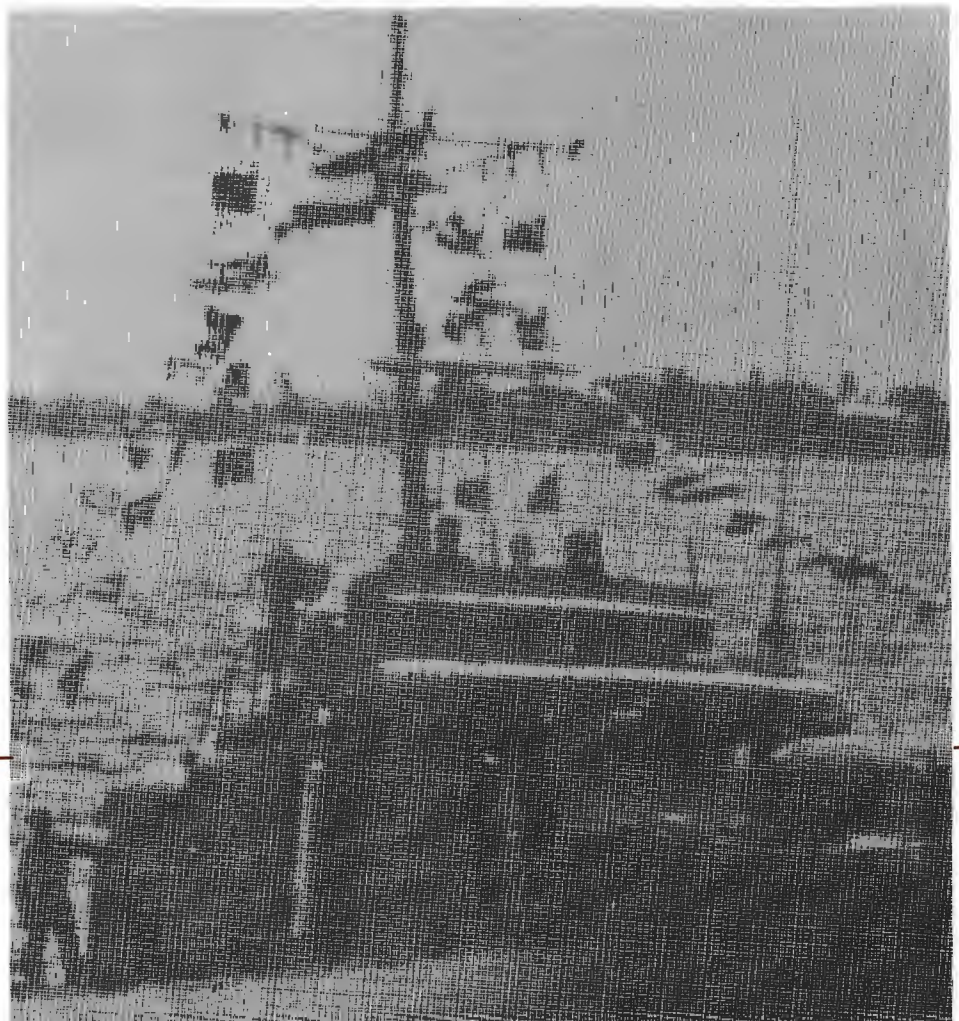


The ZU-23 is a 23-millimeter anti-aircraft gun. Each of its two barrels can fire at the rate of 800 to 1,000 rounds per minute at a range of 8,000 feet. The soldier in the bed of the truck is holding a SA-14 surface-to-air missile with an infra-red guidance system. The Soviets have provided hundreds of these types of sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons to the Sandinistas.

Navy

The 1,000-man Sandinista navy (*Marina de Guerra Sandinista*—MGS) has similarly undergone both a qualitative and quantitative transformation since 1979. Somoza's "navy" consisted of a handful of old patrol boats, a landing craft, and about 200 men. The Sandinistas are acquiring a fleet of more modern vessels. In 1983, they obtained two French Vedette patrol boats and two Soviet ZHUK patrol boats. Since then, the Sandinistas have received six more ZHUKs. North Korea has supplied two KIMJIN and two SINHUNG patrol boats. Two Soviet-built YEVGENYA-class inshore minesweepers have been delivered by Cuba, while four Polish-built K-8 minesweeping boats were delivered by the Soviet ship *Bakuriani*.

This Soviet-made ZHUK patrol boat is one of more than 12 vessels provided by the Soviet Union, Cuba, and North Korea.



Recruitment and Conscription

The Sandinistas initially had no difficulty in finding recruits for their military. Many youths eagerly joined the ranks of the EPS in the days immediately after Somoza's fall. Gradually, however, voluntary enlistment declined as disillusionment with the FSLN grew, according to former Sandinista soldiers. To meet the goals for their mili-

tary build-up, the Sandinistas began using a variety of coercive measures at schools and workplaces. They also used the neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committees (*Comites de Defensa Sandinista—CDS*), "block committees" modeled after the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, to coerce men and women to enlist in the army, the reserves, or militia units.

When these tactics failed to provide sufficient manpower, the Sandinistas turned to the draft.¹⁰ In July 1983, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega proclaimed that the government would adopt mandatory enrollment. Despite widespread opposition, the Sandinistas enacted the draft law in September of that year, calling it Patriotic Military Service (*Servicio Militar Patriótico—SMP*). Technically, the law made males aged 18 to 40 eligible for the draft, with those in the 18- to 21-year-age bracket subject to conscription effective January 1, 1984, and those over 21 subject to subsequent service. It also provided deferments for those in special categories, such as government workers with key jobs.

In practice, the Sandinistas began inducting youths by late 1983, and six rounds of call-ups had taken place by early 1985. The Sandinistas claim that 30,000 men have been drafted, but many Nicaraguans believe that the real number is far higher. Thousands of youths were simply summoned by their local Sandinista draft boards, while many others were captured in house-to-house sweeps, roadblocks, and roundups at public places, such as movie theaters, dance halls, and ball parks.

The Sandinistas have been indiscriminate about the age of those they impress, often seizing youths in their mid-teens, below the official draft age. While most of those drafted do



enter the army rather than go to jail, thousands of youths have gone into hiding, and many others have joined the armed resistance or slipped across the borders into exile.

Many Nicaraguans have protested forced induction into the Sandinista military, which defectors have referred to as the political army of the FSLN. Also, there is broad resentment over the inadequate training given militia recruits. Frequently, draftees without adequate military training—but with heavy political indoctrination—are sent to face the resistance forces.

As a result of this resentment, spontaneous anti-draft demonstrations have erupted throughout Nicaragua, especially in 1984–85.¹¹ For example, for three days in September 1984, hundreds of students in Chinandega marched in protest. In December, the residents of Nagarote clashed with Sandinista troops who had come to sweep the town for draft-age youths. Similar acts of protest have occurred in other locations.¹²



Cuban-style barracks area near Villa Nueva. Below, Sandinista soldiers board Mi 8/17 helicopter.

Wide World Photos



Cuban and Soviet Assistance

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

Within a week of the fall of

Somoza, Cuba had placed about 100 military and security personnel in Nicaragua. By early 1985, the number of Cuban military/security advisers in Nicaragua had grown to some 2,500.¹³ These Cubans permeate the Ministries of Defense and Interior, operating at all levels of the armed forces and security forces from the General Staff in Managua down to the battalion and, in some cases, even at company levels. They are prominent in military training facilities and in areas where technical expertise is required, such as aviation and telecommunications. There is evidence that they fill active roles, such as helicopter pilots and counterinsurgency combat command-

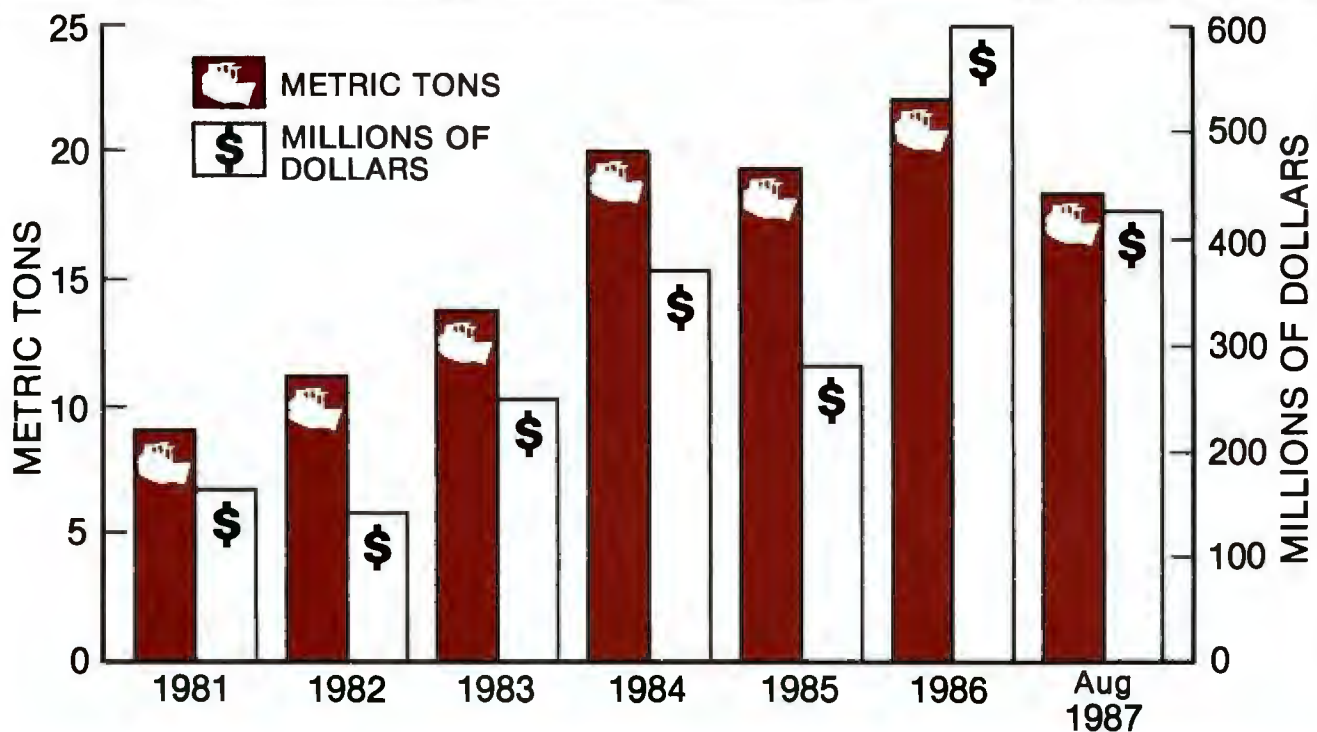
ers. An additional 100 Soviet and bloc military/security advisers also operate in Nicaragua.

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

Until recently, the Soviets used surrogates to mask the extent of their own involvement in the Sandinista military build-up. Cuba was the first

Since 1979, the total value of tanks, helicopters, and other war materiel shipped to Nicaragua has exceeded \$2 billion.

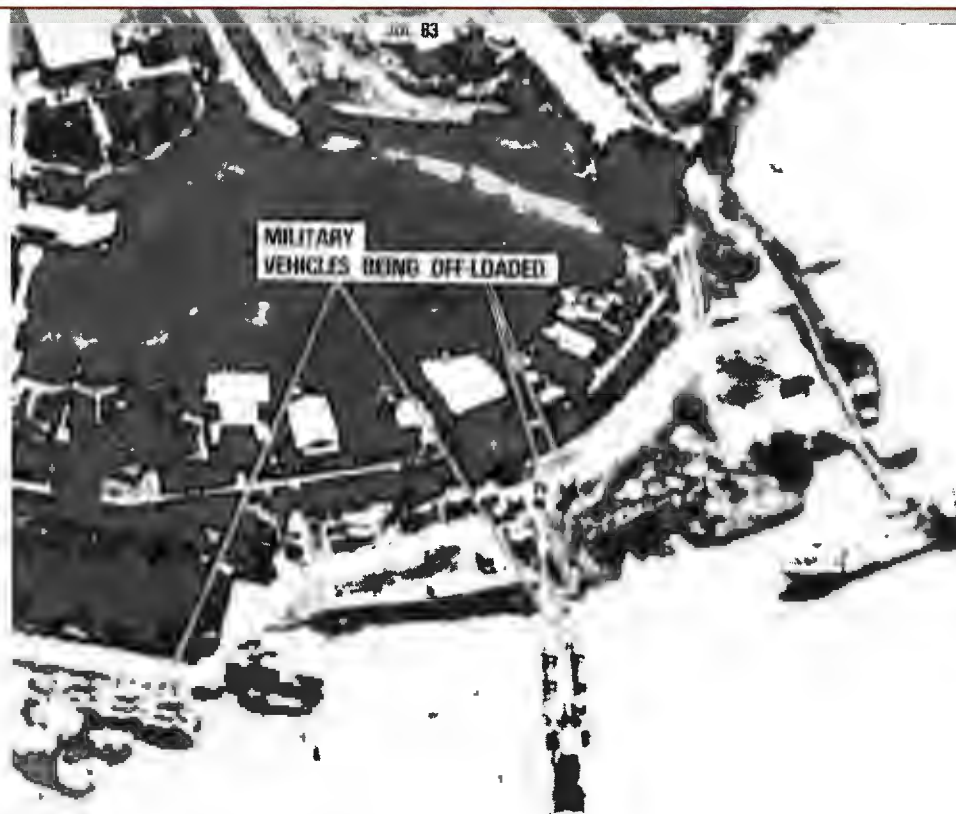
SOVIET-BLOC MILITARY DELIVERIES TO NICARAGUA



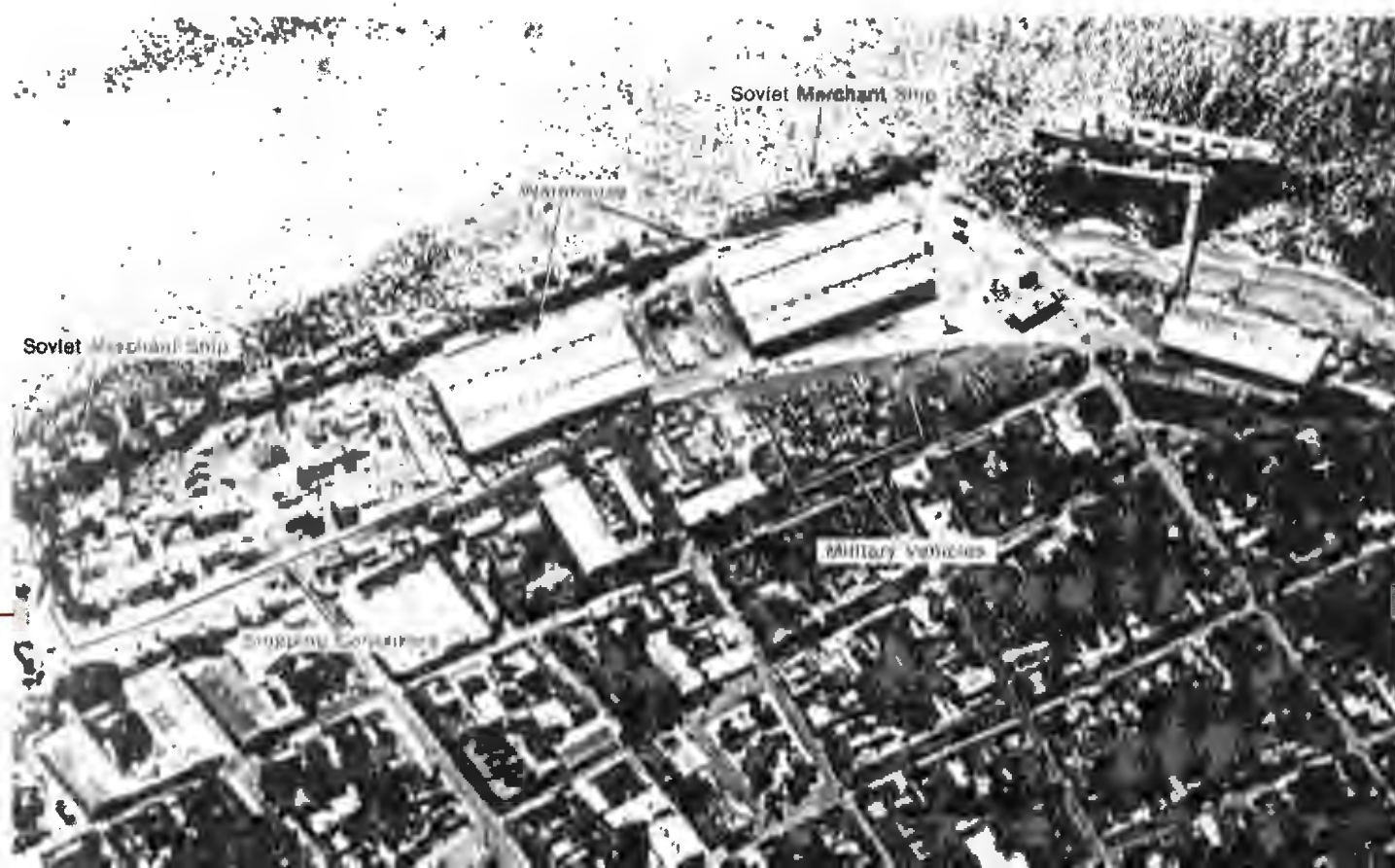
to make substantial deliveries of Soviet-made arms, and later Algeria and Bulgaria took on this role. Direct Soviet shipment of military-related goods occurred by 1981, but not until late 1984 did a Soviet ship directly deliver major weapons systems—Mi-24/25 helicopters and K-8 patrol boats—directly to Nicaragua.

Because Soviet military hardware began arriving in Nicaragua in early 1980, it is likely that the Sandinistas' initial secret arms agreements with Cuba and the Soviet Union were concluded shortly after the Sandinistas seized power in 1979. In 1979, the FSLN signed a secret military cooperation agreement with the Cuban Army.¹⁴ At that time, the Sandinistas were receiving hundreds of millions of dollars of economic aid from the United States and other Western sources.

The influx of military aid from the Soviet Union and its allies has risen steadily. The number of Soviet-bloc ship deliveries of military equipment rose from 6 in 1982 to 37 in 1984 to 50 in 1986. By mid-1987, the



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



total value of tanks, helicopters, and other war materiel shipped to Nicaragua had exceeded \$2 billion.

Implications

Contrary to assertions that this military build-up came in response to "counterrevolutionary activities" and "foreign aggression," the blueprint for the creation of the largest army in Central America was drawn at least two years before significant armed resistance had developed.¹⁵ The Sandinistas planned and began to implement their build-up at a time when the revolution still enjoyed strong support at home and abroad.

The Sandinista build-up is unprecedented. Even at the height of the civil war that eventually deposed the regime of Anastasio Somoza, the country's National Guard never exceeded 10,000 men. The Sandinistas

now have a total armed force—regular army, air force, navy, reserves, militia, and security forces—of 120,000. That represents a higher proportion of the population on active duty than any other nation in Central America. In tanks and armored vehicles, Nicaragua now surpasses all the other countries of Central America combined.

The militarization of Nicaragua has enabled the Sandinistas to tighten their control over the people. The military itself has a political mission; key positions are held by members of the Sandinista Front, and recruits are indoctrinated with Marxist ideology.

The military build-up has exacerbated Nicaragua's economic crisis. Comandante Daniel Ortega has acknowledged that 50 percent of the 1986 budget was allocated to the military.¹⁶ Resources needed for social programs and economic development have been diverted to military purposes. Moreover, the mobilization has

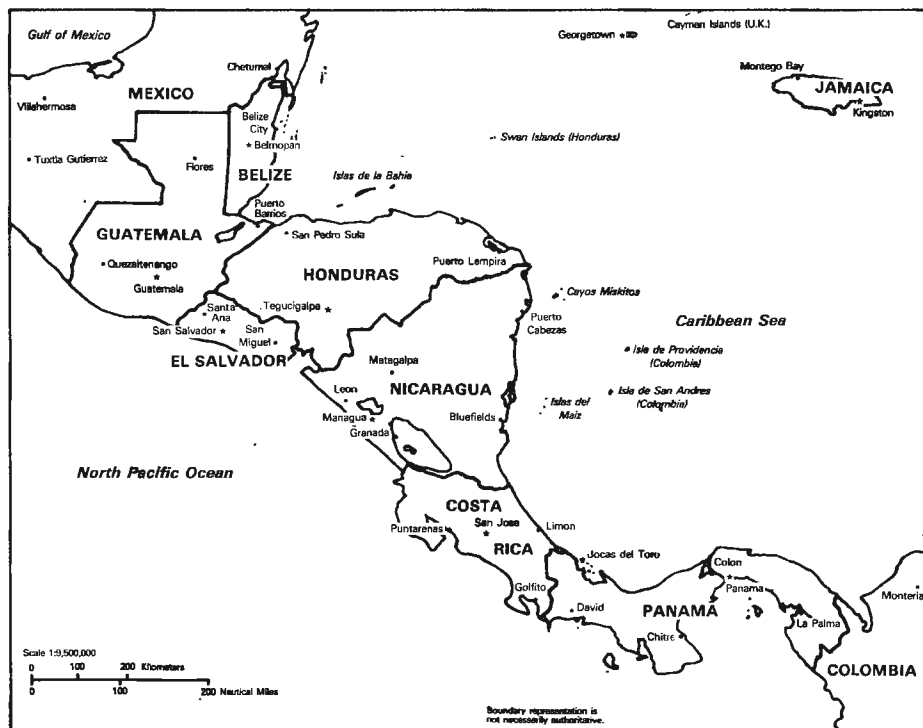
cut deeply into Nicaragua's work force, taking tens of thousands of people out of the productive sector. The latest harvests of coffee and cotton were reduced significantly because of the shortage of labor, resulting in sharp drops in Nicaragua's already reduced foreign exchange earnings.

*Nicaragua's disproportionate build-up has alarmed its neighbors.*¹⁷ Costa Rica, Nicaragua's southern neighbor, with a population of 2.4 million, has no army; its 8,000-troop Civil Guard and Rural Guard are essentially constabulary organizations. They do not have heavy equipment such as tanks and artillery.

Honduras, Nicaragua's northern neighbor, with a population of 4 million, has a military of about 17,000. The Honduran army has about 20 regular battalions, of which fewer than 15 are actual maneuver units, compared to the Sandinistas' 34. The Hondurans have no tanks and are keenly aware that the Choluteca Gap, which stretches from western Nicaragua into southern Honduras, could provide an avenue of attack for a Sandinista armored thrust into their nation. Honduras' primary deterrent to a Sandinista attack is its air force.¹⁸ Over the past few years, however, the credibility of this deterrent has eroded as the Sandinistas have developed a nationwide radar system and deployed hundreds of antiaircraft guns and surface-to-air missiles.

Although El Salvador does not share a common border with Nicaragua, the government of President Jose Napoleon Duarte has repeatedly noted that the Sandinistas have supported leftist Salvadoran rebels.¹⁹

Nicaragua's military build-up complicates the search for a peaceful resolution of the regional crisis. In the past eight years, the Sandinistas have had unchallenged military superiority in Central America and have been



willing to use subversion to intimidate their neighbors.²⁰ The National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, chaired by Dr. Henry Kissinger, noted:

[T]he existence of a political order on the Cuban model in Nicaragua would pose major difficulties in negotiating, implementing, and verifying any Sandinista commitment to refrain from supporting insurgency and subversion in other countries.²¹

The United States and its allies view the continued Sandinista build-up and resulting instability in the region with grave concern. Moreover, the role of Cuba and the Soviet Union in supporting this militarization on the American mainland cannot be overlooked and has implications for U.S. military commitments elsewhere.

The U.S. Response

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

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

These objectives were reflected in the 21 principles adopted in September 1983 by the participants in the Contadora process and were reemphasized in a bipartisan peace proposal suggested by the U.S. Government in August 1987. The United States has consistently made this position clear in fre-

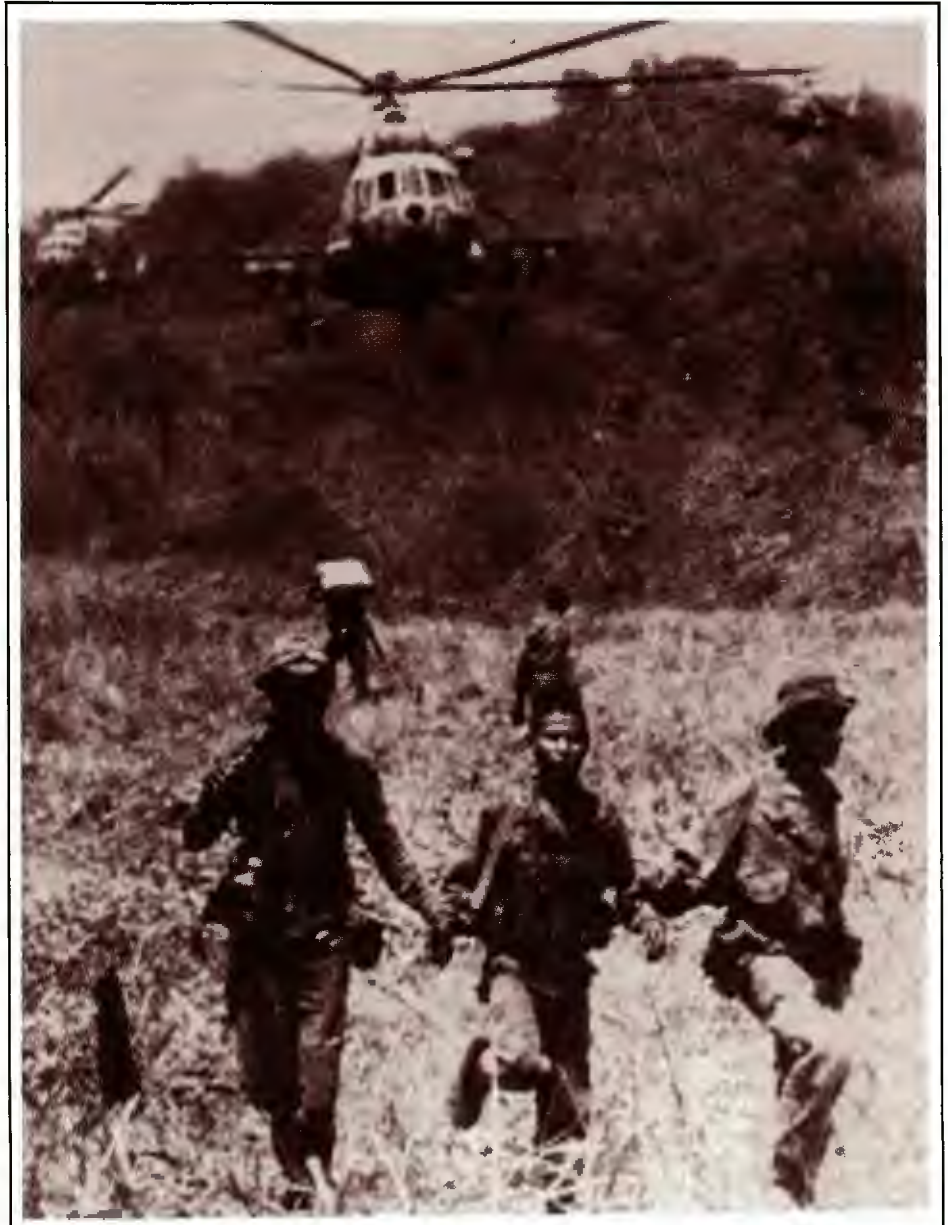
quent meetings with the Nicaraguan Government and by supporting the regional peace process.

Only when Nicaragua frees itself of its military ties to Communist states, reduces the size of its military to levels commensurate with legitimate

defense needs, ceases to support Marxist-Leninist subversive groups in neighboring countries, allows genuine democracy and national reconciliation, and separates its armed forces from the Sandinista party can peace prosper in the region.

Backed by Soviet-made Mi-24 helicopters, Sandinista soldiers patrol the northern province of Jinotega during a May 1987 offensive.

Wide World Photos



Notes

1. "Rebels Train to Overthrow Somoza," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1978, p. A-1.

2. "Nicaragua Junta Assumes Rule in Jubilant Managua," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1979, p. A-1.

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

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

5. The original junta included Alfonso Robelo and Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the widow of slain *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquín Chamorro. Both resigned in April 1980. Robelo now serves on the directorate of the Nicaraguan Resistance with other disaffected Nicaraguans, including Chamorro's son. Mrs. Chamorro now is a vocal critic of Sandinista policies, notably the censorship of *La Prensa*, the country's only independent newspaper, which the Sandinistas eventually closed in July 1986. (*La Prensa* was allowed to reopen in September 1987.)

The first defense minister of the new government, Bernardino Larios, was a National Guard colonel who had defected during the revolution. At the end of 1979, he was replaced by Humberto Ortega, a member of the FSLN National Directorate. Larios was subsequently imprisoned for alleged subversive activities. Even after his release from jail in March 1984, he was kept under virtual house arrest. In March 1985, he escaped to Costa Rica.

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

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

8. In a February 1985 interview with CBS News, Sandinista Army Chief of Staff Joaquín Cuadra tacitly acknowledged that the EPS has

110 tanks and added that it planned to acquire up to a total of 150.

9. For further information on the Mi-24, see John F. Guilmartin, Jr.'s "Nicaragua is Armed for Trouble," *Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 1985, p. 28; and *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*.

10. In addition to prescribing the "purge [of] the army at all levels, eliminating those elements who are incompatible with revolutionary measures," the Sandinistas from the outset called for instituting "mandatory military service," which eventually became necessary as voluntary recruitment was not keeping pace with their militarization. (See *The 72-Hour Document*, reprinted in Department of State Publication No. 9464.) The desire for national military service under party control has been a priority for the Sandinistas dating back to the "1969 Historic Program of the FSLN."

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

12. See "Nicaraguan Town Fights Recruiters," *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1984, p. 5, and Steven Kinzer's "Town Battles Military Draft in Nicaragua," *New York Times*, Jan. 2, 1985, p. 9.

13. The Sandinistas' decision to turn to the Cubans was one of choice, not necessity. For example, immediately after its July 1979 victory, Panama sent military advisers and trainers to Nicaragua to help in converting the Sandinista guerrillas into a regular army. By the end of 1979, however, the preeminent position of the Cubans was firmly established, and the Panamanians returned home. See Shirley Christian's *Nicaragua, Revolution in the Family*, pp. 161-166.

14. In a May 25, 1980, speech, Interior Minister Tomas Borge identified governing junta member Alfonso Robelo as "the traitor" who made public the existence of a Sandinista agreement with the Cubans. The speech, given in Bluefields, is reprinted as "*La Cultura es el Pueblo*" [The Culture is the People] in *Habla la Dirección de la Vanguardia* [The Directorate of the Vanguard Speaks], Managua: Colección Juan de Dios Muñoz, July 1987, p. 118.

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

16. Even this figure conceals the true ex-

tent of the build-up, however, since much of the arms and ammunition is obtained from the Soviets under long-term credits and, therefore, does not show up in the budget.

17. A 1983 Gallup International Poll showed that Nicaragua's growing military strength and support of subversive movements in other countries were a source of concern throughout the region. For an analysis of this poll, see *La Nación Internacional* (San Jose, Costa Rica), November 20-24, 1983.

18. In 1987, the United States agreed to sell 12 F-5E jet fighters to Honduras. However, these aircraft will replace a badly deteriorating fleet of Super Mystere jets and will represent little change in performance or combat capability. The Sandinistas' procurement of jet fighter aircraft would effectively neutralize the Honduran balance of forces by matching Honduran airpower, while maintaining their advantage in ground forces. Thus, a Sandinista jet fighter fleet could further skew the balance of military power in Central America and would be destabilizing for the whole region. Saying the Sandinistas reserved the right to procure MiG fighter jets, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega stated, "We have the airfield; we have the men." (See Julia Preston's "Nicaragua Says It Will Proceed With Plans To Get MiGs," *Washington Post*, Aug. 3, 1987, p. 17.) The U.S. Government has made its opposition to MiG fighters clear to both the Government of Nicaragua and the Soviet Union.

19. Only days after assuming power, Sandinista officials met with Salvadoran guerrilla leaders in Managua to plan how to continue the struggle. The first arms to be shipped to the Salvadoran guerrillas came from Sandinista stockpiles in Costa Rica. On March 4, 1982, Congressman Edward P. Boland (D-MA), then Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, cited convincing evidence that the Salvadoran insurgents "rely on the use of sites in Nicaragua for command and control and for logistical support.... Contrary to repeated denials of Nicaraguan officials, that country is thoroughly involved in supporting the Salvadoran insurgency." See Department of State/Department of Defense publication, *The Challenge to Democracy in Central America*, October 1986, pp. 47-54.

20. Eduardo Ulibari, director and editor of *La Nación*, Costa Rica's largest daily newspaper, referred to the impact of Nicaragua's military build-up on the other nations of Central America in his article "Costa Rica and Honduras Find Washington an Unreliable Ally," *Wall Street Journal*, January 25, 1985, p. 21. Ulibari concluded that, absent strong support from the United States, a likely consequence of the growing power of the Sandinistas would be the "Finlandization" of Costa Rica and the militarization of Honduras.

21. *Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America*, January 1984, p. 114.

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SANDINISTA PERSECUTION OF JEWS

Sandinista persecution of Nicaragua's small Jewish community has resulted in the virtual disappearance of Jewish life in Nicaragua. An exiled Nicaraguan Jew has said: "Even before the Sandinistas came to power, they began threatening the Jews. . . . Graffiti by Sandinistas was widespread, with attacks on Jews and their religion. One was 'Death to Jewish pigs.' The initials FSLN in red and black left no doubt as to who was responsible."

- Oscar Kellermann, a former vice president of the Nicaraguan Jewish community suffered repeated harassment and three attempts on his life before finally being forced into exile just before the Sandinista takeover..
- Sarita Kellermann, Oscar's wife, returned to Nicaragua after the revolution, and received threatening phone calls ("What Hitler started, we'll finish.") repeated house searches without cause or warrant, vandalism and looting.
- Abraham Gorn, the 70-year-old former president of the Jewish community was imprisoned and forced to sweep the streets. Later his textile factory was confiscated and he was threatened with death unless he left the country.
- Official Sandinista publications contain anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist views, calling Jewish houses of worship "Synagogues of Satan," blaming the Jews for the death of Christ, and accusing the Jews of having a "bourgeois mentality."

Sandinista anti-Semitism dates to the 1960s when the FSLN made ties to the Palestine Liberation Organization, a terrorist group dedicated to the destruction of Israel and responsible for hundreds of attacks against Jews all over the world.

- Sandinista militants trained in guerrilla warfare at PLO camps in Libya in the 1960s and 1970s.
- Announcing their friendship with the PLO, Sandinista militants firebombed Managua's synagogue during a Friday night service in 1978. They later confiscated the synagogue, and covered it with pro-PLO, and anti-Zionist slogans.
- Sandinista officials and PLO leader Yasir Arafat have voiced their sympathy for each other, and their common cause, as commandante Tomas Borge did in 1980 saying, "We say to our brother Arafat that Nicaragua is his land and the PLO cause is the cause of the Sandinistas."

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Kyle M Creary, Young Conservative Alliance, 547-200

Photographs of Nicaraguans (12)





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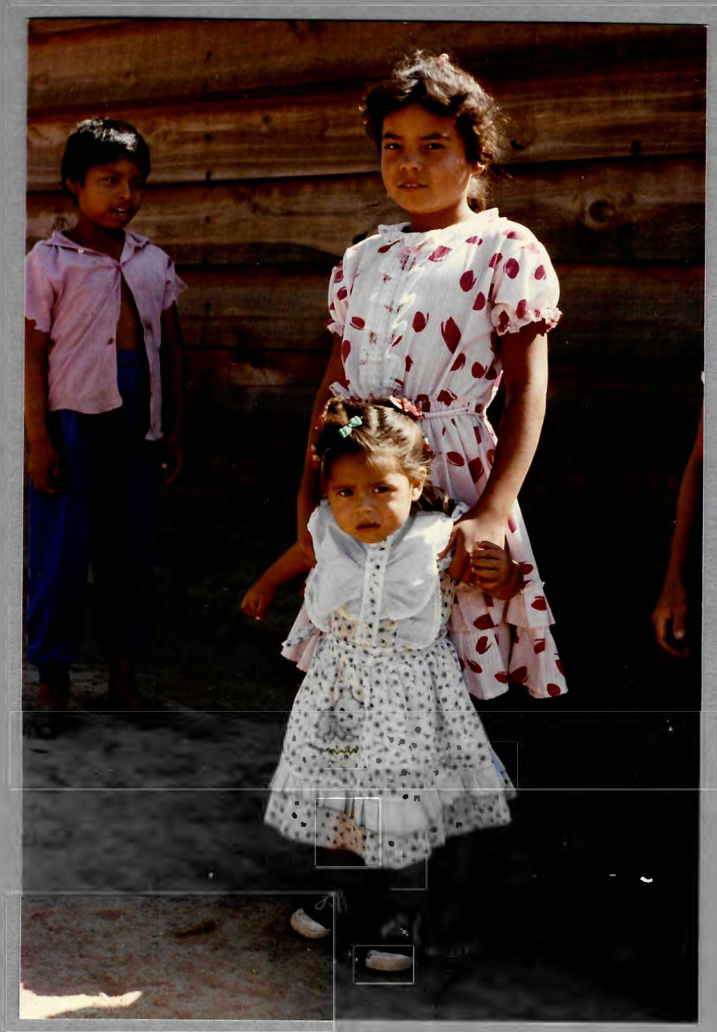


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547-2414

March 11, 1986

Ronald Reagan
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Reagan,

On the dates of March 3 and 4, 1986, Suzanne Miller, Albert Braunschweig, and I visited the Nicaraguan Refugee camp in Jacaleapa, Honduras. What we saw has changed our lives. Never before have we felt so certain that the United States must help the Freedom Fighters in Nicaragua. Please, allow me to share with you some of our experiences.

When we arrived at the camp, our first impression was "Not bad, relatively speaking". However, it got worse as we talked to the Refugees, or Political Prisoners as they should more appropriately be called. They live in shacks the size and quality of chicken coops with ten to twelve people in each dwelling. They have no running water, no latrines, no electricity, an eight day ration of food that would last the typical American four meals, no soap, no clothes other than those brought by missionaries,... . In fact, Albert and I gave them the shoes off our feet. The conditions are so demoralizing that refugees are leaving the camps and returning to Nicaragua; Not because the Government is getting better, but, as one of the refugees told us:

"many people are going back, not because they like the Sandinista Government, but because of the condition of life here. We are suffering now for liberty, but if liberty won't come, it is better to suffer in your own country."

The hypocrisy lies with the United Nations. While we were there we spoke with the United Nations High Council for Refugees. They told us "we do not want to baby sit the Nicaraguans". Yet the El Salvadoran Refugees are given land to grow crops, shops to make clothes,.... In fact the UNHCR is hoping that the Nicaraguans will

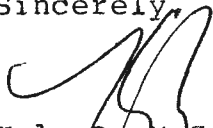
return. When they return it gives credibility to the Sandinistas.

I could go on and on, but I won't. Instead, I have enclosed a transcript of a tape recorded interview we did with an English speaking refugee. In addition, I am having two letters that were given to us to present to you translated. In one, a mother tells us that she prays every night for you and Nancy on her rosary so that your lives may be blessed. How do you answer something like that?

Mr. President, my basic point is this: In the past, we as Conservatives have talked about nothing but guns. We need guns, yes. But the reason we need guns is so that we can protect our way of life from the cancer of Communism. We need guns so that we can fight for a better life for those who live and dream as Americans. This point has been missed. We need to start arguing from a humanitarian high ground.

Let's win this one, together. Let's not just win one for the Gipper, let's win one for the children.

Sincerely,



Kyle D. McCreary
National Chairman

KDM:dc
Enclosures

P.S. I will deliver the letters as soon as they are translated. In addition, I will share with you some of the photographs of the children.

The following is a transcript of a tape recorded interview lead by Suzanne Miller and Albert Braunfisch of the Young Conservative Alliance of America. The interview is with Freddie, a Nicaraguan Refugee currently residing in the United Nations Refugee Camp in El Paraiso province in Honduras. The session was recorded on March 4, 1986 in the shack where Freddie and eight of his freinds live.

Suzanne- This is Suzanne Miller. Albert Braunfisch and I are in Honduras at the United Nations Refugee camp for Nicaraguans. We are sitting in a house with "muchas personas" and we are going to interview them about why they are here. Freddie, would you like to tell us your name, where you are from, and why you fled Nicaragua?

Freddie- Well, my name is Freddie Medrano, I come from a small city about 45 kilometres from Managua. I fled Nicaragua because of the military service. They [Sandinistas] force young people into the military. They send young people to the mountains with military details to fire on our countrymen.

Suzanne- What were you doing in Nicaragua before you came here?

Freddie- I was, I was taking my last year of High School I was going to begin my professional career.

Suzanne- And how old are you?

Freddie- I am 19.

Suzanne- 19 years old? What do you do here in the camp?

Freddie- Well, the only thing we do here is, is we cook our food. We don't have anything to read, no books, no magazines, nothing for to do.

Albert- What does the United Nations provide for each person?

Freddie- We get a ration of food per a person per a week. 1 pound of rice, 1 pound of beans, 7 ounce of sugar, half pound of powdered milk, half pound of flour, 3 pounds of corn, 2 ounces of coffee, 1 ounce of salt, and, that's it.

Albert- No fruit?

Freddie- No fruit.

Albert- No vegetables? Can you grow anything here?

Freddie- (he laughs)

Albert- No?

Freddie- We eat our rice and beans all the week, every day.

Albert- So, um, what do the little children do? Do they go to school, can they go to school?

Freddie- Just a few of them, because the school is in the town [Jacaleapa]. It is very dangerous for to go into town. It is 3 Kilometres away, it is dangerous to walk on the Highway. Many have decided that it is better to stay in the camp because they are afraid that the children will not return.

Albert- How many people are in the camp?

Freddie- 2800.

Albert- 2800, and they are all Nicaraguans?

Freddie- Yes.

Albert- Are all these men here for the same reason?

Freddie- Yes.

Albert- So, have you all gone to High School [Albert is referring to Freddie's room mates which are sitting with us]

Freddie- Some of them are ex-students in Nicaragua. The majority of the population here are campesinos who lived on the frontier between Nicaragua and Honduras. About 700 of them are students from Managua.

Albert- What do you think is the future for Nicaragua? What is your future, with the FDN, can they win?

Freddie- I think that the FDN will never beat the Sandinista Government until the Administration of President Reagan give more support to the FDN to overthrow the government. Because the FDN cannot make it without U.S. help.

Albert- You need American Help?

Freddie- In every way.

Albert- Every way?

Freddie- Aid. Money. Military. I think it must be very soon because the U.S. Army can overthrow the Sandinista government. We need U.S. power.

Suzanne- If you could have your ultimate dream about Nicaragua, what would it be?

Freddie- I know that the Nicaraguans would support the Marines.

Suzanne- Explain yourself.

Fredie- Well, you know, in Nicaragua we live an American life, everything was available. Now everything is rationed, food, clothes, everything. Nicaraguans want liberty, we want democracy. That is why Nicaraguans want the U.S. to liberate our country.

Albert- Will you ever go back to Nicaragua? If the Sandinistas stay in power?

Freddie- I think so.

Albert- Why?

Freddie- Well, some people is going back to Nicaragua because right now they are offering amnesty. I don't believe in the Sandinista government...

Albert- But it is better than life here.

Freddie- Yes, because here many people are going back, not because they like the Sandinista Government, but because of the condition of life here. We are suffering now for liberty, but if liberty won't come, it is better to suffer in your own country.

Suzanne- How many houses are here?

Freddie- 245.

Suzanne- What is the average number of people per house?

Freddie- Ten, twelve.

Suzanne- Is there water here, are there bathrooms, what do you do about bathing.

Freddie- We got only water from a well that--that water is only used to drink. We do not have a bathroom here. The workers for the U.N. and Red Cross have latrines, but they are off limits to us. We have a stream. And we also must wash our

clothes and bathe there also.

Albert- A stream, what about soap?

Freddie- We receive a little soap but that is only for clothes. We use the same soap to take a bath.

Suzanne- Who runs this camp, who is here everyday?

(Kyle McCreary walks into the house after playing with some of the children)

Freddie- The Red Cross runs the camp but they are only here not very much. The U.N. comes only twice a week.

Kyle- How much help do you receive from the United Nations?

Freddie- They send just the food.

Albert- What about medical attention. Do any Doctors come and look at the little kids?

Freddie- There is a French Missionary Doctor who visits, But he has to go to this camp and Tepusanti. [that is one doctor for over 5,000 people]

Albert- I see.

Freddie- Because of the water many of the children are suffering from diarrhea, dysentery,... and colds.

Albert- So the water, even if you all drink it, it makes you sick?

Freddie- Yes, and we can not boil the water because we do not have enough pots.

Albert- You don't have enough pots to boil the water? Unbelievable.

Suzanne- What happens when someone is sick? Does the doctor prescribe anything? What do you do?

Freddie- They only prescribe aspirin and, and a drug for to make you sleep. [Freddie hands Albert a bottle of pills]

Albert- No shots, no immunization?

Freddie- I have never seen that kind of action from a doctor here. They prescribe drugs that are

expired. You can read it here.

Albert- This bottle says Dristan Ultra Cold Formula
expiration date December 1984. And this is
March '86.

Kyle- Who did you get that from?

Freddie- From the clinic.

Kyle- From the Crux Roja, the Red Cross?

Fredie- Yes.

Albert- And you say that this is the best that you can
get?

Fredie- I, I don't like to take this medicine because
it is so old that it makes me sicker.

Albert- So it is not safe to take the Medicine?

Kyle- It makes you sicker?

Freddie- All the medicine is expired.

Albert- All the medicine. Good.

Kyle- What about clothing?

Freddie- We do not receive any clothes from the United
Nations or the Red Cross. Only from Missionaries
and Christian organizations from the United
States.

Albert- So everything.....

Freddie- Everything is from the churches and people like
you.

Albert- And the stuff that you brought with you,..?

Freddie- (He laughs) No.

Suzanne- How often do you have visitors from the U.S.?

Freddie- Every month. Every week. Who knows.
They come here so often.

Albert- Really.

Freddie- From the Congress and Senators,...journalists.

Kyle- People like us?

Freddie- Yes, people here call you Gringos.

(Everyone Laughs.....)

Suzanne- Do you think that they are helping you?

Kyle- Like us, the Congressman.....?

Freddie- I would like to say something. Many Americans Have come here to offer some help but, no one has ever come back. Only one Christian organization has promised clothes and come back.

Kyle- You said that many Congressmen have come down. What were they like? Did they ask questions, did they offer Help?

Freddie- They don't offer anything. Only to go fight with the Contras. But we have families here.

Albert- So, they don't care about the refugees?

Freddie- That is why many people don't like it when Congressmen visit. They do not understand our life.

Suzanne- What have they said to you about AID to the Contras?

Freddie- Well no, last September a Congressman came down and we asked him about help and he said they are thinking about it. That is it. We asked him about help for the people in the camp and he said, "We are thinking about it.". Because here we have no electricity, no clothes, no water,...

Albert- Nothing.

Freddie- No toilet paper! We use newspaper or leaves.

Suzanne- So what do you do all day?

Freddie- At seven o' clock in morning I get water to cook. I cook. I then stay in the bed. I then cook, um, how do you say?, Lunch. I lay down. That's it. Here we have nothing to do. Even the children get tired of playing. They have no toys.

Albert- Nothing to Read?

Kyle- Nothing for the Kids to play with?

Freddie- No.

Kyle- You need toys for the children?

Freddie- Yes, the children do not eat because they play all day. But they get bored.

Suzanne- Up until what age can kids go to school if their paernts will let them risk going into Jacaleapa?

Freddie- From seven years old until 15 years old.

Suzanne- So after 15 there is no more school.

Freddie- There is a Kindergarten.

Suzanne- If they were in Nicaragua, what school?

Freddie- Just like in the U.S. Secondary School and then University.

Suzanne- Do you think there should be a school in the camp?

Freddie- Yes, and if possible, a University. (He laughs)

Kyle- Are there any churches in the camp?

Freddie- Yes. We have two. An Evangelist and a Catholic churches. But the Evangelists are richer than the Catholics and no one wants to help. Here we Nicaraguans and we are mostly Catholic and we are very poor.

Albert- If you were still in Nicaragua and in school what would you be studying? What would like to become?

Freddie- Computers.

Albert- Oh really, what about your friends?

Freddie- (he asks his friends, the responses are Economics, Vetrainary Science, Computers, Aviation,...)

Kyle- So you all have dreams too...?

Claudio- (in broken english) Here we are all ex- students and we must keep studying so that we can make liberty in Nicaragua a better place.

Suzanne- Where is your family?

Freddie- My Father died five years ago. All my family is

in Nicaragua. I am the youngest so they urged me to go so that one of us might live.

Suzanne- Do they [your family] have jobs?

Freddie- I think so.

Albert- Who has most of the jobs in Nicaragua?

Freddie- I think that Russians, Cubans, East Germans, they are all over the country. You can not get a job without their permission. They are all over the country.

Suzanne- You mean they are taking jobs that other people could have?

Freddie- Yes. They have big houses, like a mansion, and they have very expensive cars.

Suzanne- What do they do? Do you think they are helping the country? Are they in an advisory role or,... What do you think they are doin there?

Freddie- They are exploiting the country. They are giving away all the riches of the country.

Kyle- Exploiting the natural rescources?

Freddie- Yes.

Kyle- Suppose you wanted to go back to Nicaragua, and you wanted to go to school. What would the process be? What would you have to do in order to get back into school?

Freddie- I feel as though if I want to go back to Nicaragua I must take a gun.

Albert- So you would have to fight...?

Freddie- Yes.

Albert- So you would have fight against the people you beilieve in to live.

Freddie- I would have to deny freedom to survive.

Suzanne- Do you write your family.

Freddie- Yes, I write, but is very dangerous. It would be like if Cubans were living in camps in the United States and were never heard from

again.

Kyle- So rather than this being a camp, it's almost like a prison.

Freddie- Oh yes, we have a jail in Jacaleapa that is very comfortable. I would rather live there.

Suzanne- How did you get out of the country?

Freddie- Well, we must get in contact with a campesino who lives near the frontier. Then you must pay him much money to lead you to the border. About 50,000 Cordovas.

Suzanne- 50,000?

Freddie- Yes, some pay as much as 100,000.

Suzanne- And they help you get to Honduras?

Freddie- Yes, because between the Honduran border and the frontier there are many fields where they are Sandinista land mines and bombing. That is why it is better to pay them to guide you to the border.

Albert- So the campesinos know where the bombs are?

Suzanne- So how did you come up with that money?

Freddie- We don't have money.

Suzanne- So did you risk it yourself? Did you pay someone?

Freddie- Well, we payed to someone, to the campesino on the frontier. When we come here we bring some quantity of money so we can cross the frontier. When the money run out, we are left alone.

Suzanne- So the people who are guiding people here are actually making money?

Freddie- Yes. They are making richer.

Suzanne- On your way, did you see any attacks?

Freddie- No, in Nicaragua I belonged to the Red Cross. In 1945 they, they got some respect. Now the Red Cross is used to fight against Contras in battlefields. That is why I decided to come here.

Albert- So, they made the Red Cross go and fight the Contras as well?

Freddie- I think that the Red Cross is also under the Government.

Albert- The Red Cross?

Freddie- The leadership of the Red Cross are Sandinistas also.

Albert- Outside of the Sandinistas, is life in Nicaragua the same? Are the stores stocked with goods?

Freddie- Life in Nicaragua is getting worse every day.

Kyle- The Economy is bad or good?

Fredie- Bad, very bad. We must get rationed food.

Albert- You can only get so much.

Freddie- Yes, rationed like here in the camp.

Albert- What about the foreigners, like the Cubans,...

Freddie- They got plenty. The Cubans, East Germans, the Russians, they live better than the Nicaraguans.

Suzanne- Do you think that most of the Nicaraguans still in Nicaragua are in favor of the Sandinistas?

Freddie- Not most of the people. Because most of the people is pressuring the government about the food. But if you support the government you can get food. That is why some people follow the Sandinistas.

Suzanne- So some people say that they support the Governemnt, when they really don't just so they can get food? So they don't get killed.

Freddie- Yes that's it.

Suzanne- We read sometimes in the paper that people get killed if they are against the government. Is that true?

Freddie- I think that that kind of attrocity happened in the towns outside of Managua. That does not in Managua happen at all. Because there are many Journalists from all around the world.

Albert- So, in Managua, it is real...peaceful.

Freddie- Yes they make believe that the country is peaceful so,... no one will know.

Albert- So when they bring journalists, and Congressmen in they see Managua.

Freddie- Yes.

Albert- And it looks peaceful. But not the rest of the country?

Freddie- To the congressmen, they show the nice places of Nicaragua. They do not take them to the market where people is complaining about the country.

Suzanne- How did you learn to speak English?

Freddie- Well, I take courses for one year in Managua.

Albert- Only one year.

Freddie- And six months.

Albert- You speak very well for only one year and a half.

Kyle- You speak better English than I do.

(laughter)

Albert- I wonder if you could ask some of the others here how they feel about the Government.

Freddie- He asks each of them. They all vow not to return until the government is overthrown.

Claudio- We can not live in Nicaragua because if we do we can not study what we want, only what the Government wants.

Suzanne- Would you have to serve in the Military?

Freddie- Yes. And if the United Nations and the Sandinistas came to an agreement we could only return for,...how do you say,... temporary because they would make us leave again if we do not support Sandinistas.

Suzanne- So even if,...presto magic,...it worked, you would still have to come back to this camp?

Freddie- It would be dangerous for us because some people who go back to Nicaragua and then

try to come back here,... the Honduran army
will kill them.

Albert- Why?

Freddie- Because they would think we were Sandinistas, that
we were spys.

Albert- That is an interesting twist.

Suzanne- What do you think the Hondurans think of you?

Freddie- I gonna only tell you two words; Hondurans
Hate Us.

Albert- That's three words.

Suzanne- Why do they hate you.

Freddie- Because they think we are Sandinistas, we are spy,
and we are taking away their jobs. This is not
true because here can not leave.

Suzanne- Do the Hondurans like the Sandinistas?

Freddie- I think that the students that are studying
in the University do. Before I came here I
went to the university and I see many
propoganda in favor of the Sandinista Government.

Albert- So you think the young people,...

Freddie- The young people.

Albert- What about the rest of Central America?

Freddie- I think that the rest of the countries that are
around Nicaragua don't like because the
Sandinista Government is expansive, they
want to get bigger.

Albert- They want to expand?

Freddie- Yes. And the U.S. Army must stop that.

Suzanne- What do you mean by that, the U.S. army must
stop what?

Freddie- Because the U.S. will, everyday, are going to
lose power in the area.

Kyle- Are you saying that you would like the U.S. Army
to come down to Nicaragua?

Freddie- Well, I will say yes, I will say no. Because it will be dangerous for my country. They say if the U.S. Army were to invade Nicaragua I will advise them only to attack the right targets. Not the cities and the buildings because my Nicaragua has suffered too much. After the Sandinista war our country was completely destroyed.

Kyle- If the United States doesn't help, do you think there is any hope? Who else could you turn to?

Freddie- I see much hope if the U.S. gives aid to the FDN. But without it,.....

Kyle- Who else?

Freddie- We want the U.S. to help!

Kyle- If not the U.S., then Who?

Freddie- Maybe, Israel.

Albert- Israel?

Freddie- They are in favor of the FDN.

Albert- What do you think about the Soviets? The Russians?

Freddie- Well, I think the Soviets are smart.

Kyle- They're smart?

Freddie- Because they are controlling all the information around the world. They are better in information than the Americans. Because Americans always think of the money. The Soviets are very scientific. They are better liars.

Kyle- Is there anything else you would like to say? To the people in the United States?

Freddie- We want Nicaragua Free Again!!!

Kyle- You want your country back.

Freddie- And also we say to Reagan that we need some help to keep on studying so that when our country is free again, we will be the professionals in our country, not the Cubans.

Suzanne- Anything else?

. Freddie- I think that what the United States did for Grenada it was great for the Grenadan People. And that would be a very good way to get the freedom for the Nicaraguan People.

President. Ronald Reagan
White House
Washington D.C.

VIA AIR MAIL

Nicaraguan Refugees.
Refugees "Los Guineos".
Guatemala, El Paraíso.
Honduras - C. América
March 4, 1986.

Fighting the F.D.R.
1986
Washington D.C.

We are not in any possibility that the F.D.R.,
federal system, will ever overthrow the Sandinista
Government in N.H., unless your Administration gives
more support to the F.D.R. We also know that
the population of the United States is for about
255,000,000 people and if each person presents only
U.S. \$2 dollar for the freedom of our country. Our
country would have been liberated no too long ago.

We are an ex-student of Prof. Schuch and
Chernin, so that we must keep on studying to be
ready when our country be free again and we are
with ex-national guard either, as some american
to say.

So we encourage you to fight hardy at the Congress
in favor of the U.S. 500 millions of dollar that is
nothing to liberate a land country. We belong to
America as to East Europe.

Sincerely yours.

Charles J. Delgado. Freddy Medrano. Álvaro Bello

Alberto Corco. Ramón Moreno. Vidal Sánchez

Leandro Montano. Juan Alvarado



1. "The more I look at it, the more I like it"
 2. "I don't know"
 3. "I don't know"

Der ... ist ...
...
...

[illegible]

También a los que viven en la ciudad no pueden ayudar o tomar
 la decisión de no ayudar, por lo mismo se pide por favor nos busque
 en Nueva York. En un video de Youtube con el nombre Don Rigo Cuadros
 con tres hijos, Vilma, Leticia y Yulio e indica que Vilma de Montoya se
 encuentra en Rutgers. Se menciona en la línea #6 como #32 y que cuando
 ayuda de ellos no le da dirección pues no la tiene pero así me parece
 que está a no mucho de ir, no le hará difícil encontrarlos y por favor
 contactarlos. Los cuatro demandados vamos a ayudar o no para me
 estar con ellos los cuatro hermanos doctores de Dios y siempre hemos crey-
 tado en un Dios, lo que nos manda el Señor.

Quemos espiritualizados y perteneciendo a Dios eternamente
En la más respetuosa y cariñosa despedida, sigue ya todo
los mejores regamos. El mundo ruemue pidiendo protección para ud. y m. Am.
Esperamos en pronta contestación,

Un más que de mí se despide de usted una madre desolada.

Valencia de Montoya

[illegible]

mejoraron en Tiptapa, los 500 personas con estos estubamos
los 500 personas con estos estubamos logran con-
fianza en sus representantes, entonces me van para el resto del
trato que había por las tutelas psicológicas, los golpes, los
maltratos, las relaciones físicas de los militares para con los
pobres y por la tiranía como me llamaba la Gran-
da. En el año 1949 cuando vine a Tiptapa por asuntos y
como me llamaban al pueblo debido a mala alimentación y
los golpes recibidos de parte de los verdugos, en La Granja habí-
a un taller para el pueblo donde había un grupo que se aprendía a
trabajar con las manos de hacer e incluso de los golpes de
los verdugos en el pueblo de los res. Dios, ustedes y la cultura
Aunque en ese momento había de 10 personas y vehículos y 34 pe-
queños, el taller se fue al por toda Tiptapa llamándose
el taller de la Tiptapa.

Aunque en ese momento había de 10 personas, los al por
los verdugos en el pueblo de los res y de volver
más, pero en la Granja (verdad e ingeniería) me fue que voy a
el taller para el pueblo de representantes para darles la con-
fianza en sus representantes y en el grupo de nombre Fran-
cisco. En ese momento de eso fue este año cuando me fue ten-
er para el taller y los verdugos en la Granja me continúan co-
nando de día y de noche y cuando a Dios me fue por
todo mundo por los verdugos como le vuelvo a repetir
que a los verdugos y los verdugos no le probamos nada. En
ese momento de eso me fue de la Granja, mis hermanos y yo nos fue
para el taller y ellos me fue de la Granja de la Granja de mi madre
por eso me fue de eso de tenerlo todo fue tal.

En el año 1952 en febrero el 15 de febrero mis hermanos, se me fue
presente y me fue al taller a ellos fueron constantes llam-
amientos para animarlos a ellos, pero contaban con el apoyo de
mi mamá y de la comadre Ana María López de Mejía ellos no
iban miedo pero también contaban con la protección de
mi mamá y de la comadre y de la madre.

Después de eso de los verdugos bajo amenaza, logran li-
brarse con que no determinan cuenta pero mi hermano lo ayu-
daron todo en el colegio fue para 1953 exactamente el 15

