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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 12, 1986

The Challenge to Democracy in Central America

Over the last five years, two striking developments have taken place in Central America: first, the consolidation of a totalitarian regime backed by Cuba and the Soviet bloc in Nicaragua and, second, the rapid growth of democracy in all the other countries in the region.

Nicaragua stands out as the gross exception to the proliferation of democracy in Central America. El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala have all made the transition to democratically elected civilian governments since 1981. Costa Rica has continued its long tradition of democracy by swearing in another in a long line of democratically elected governments.

The Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, which stole the Nicaraguan revolution from the democratic coalition that overthrew the dictator Anastasio Somoza, has moved steadily to extend totalitarian control over Nicaraguan society. Two full years before the existence of any significant armed resistance, the Sandinistas began a mammoth buildup of military forces designed to suppress domestic opposition and spread Marxism among their Central American neighbors.

The Challenge to Democracy in Central America takes a comprehensive look at the conflict between totalitarianism and democracy. Chapters are devoted to Soviet expansionism, Cuba, the Sandinista regime, the Nicaraguan democratic resistance, the democratic success stories of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, and the outlook for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Kagan".

Robert W. Kagan
Deputy for Policy and Public Affairs
Bureau of Inter-American Affairs

The Challenge to Democracy in Central America



THE CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AMERICA



DEPARTMENT of STATE and DEPARTMENT of DEFENSE
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SOVIET EXPANSIONISM IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The national security of all the Americas is at stake in Central America. If we cannot defend ourselves there, we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere. Our credibility would collapse, our alliances would crumble and the safety of our homeland would be put at jeopardy. We have a vital interest, a moral duty, and solemn responsibility. This is not a partisan issue. It is a question of our meeting our moral responsibility to ourselves, our friends, and our posterity. It is a duty that falls to all of us — the President, the Congress, and the people. We must perform it together. Who among us would wish to bear the responsibility for failing to meet our shared obligation?

*President Ronald Reagan
Before Joint Session of Congress
April 1983*

The Challenge and the Response

The Communist bloc is today mounting a serious challenge to democracy in Central America. The people of the region are facing the loss of their freedom if their governments fall to Communist-backed guerrillas attempting to seize power. The United States is also facing a threat to its security and economic well-being as a result of Soviet expansionism. The strategic goal of the Soviet Union is to force the United States to divert political attention and military resources to its critical Southern Flank, and away from areas of the world vital to the Soviets. To achieve this goal, the Soviets and their proxies, Cuba and Nicaragua, are arming, training, and increasingly controlling Marxist-Leninist guerrillas, most notably in El Salvador, but in the other Central American countries as well. These guerrillas, preaching that change can be achieved only by violence, are attempting to turn resentment into rebellion by exploiting the political, social, and economic vulnerabilities that have so long plagued the region. However, when people have hope, opportunity, and confidence in their future, communism has lit-

tle chance of success. The U.S. response to this Communist challenge, therefore, is based on the premise that if the countries of Central America can be provided the resources to build peaceful, economically healthy, and democratic societies, then the security of the United States will also be strengthened, for communism will be unable to take root and provide the Soviets the strategic advantage they seek.

To help the Central American nations resist Soviet expansionism, the United States is implementing a policy based on four separate, but mutually reinforcing, elements:

Democracy is central to this policy, for the United States believes that governments that evolve from the ballot box are not only respectful of the rights of their citizens, but also of the rights of neighboring countries. Since 1981, there have been more elections in Central (and South) America than in any five-year period in the area's history. This fact clearly demonstrates that the people of the region wish to select their own leaders, rather than have them imposed by extremists of the left



In 1979, military dictatorships prevailed in Central America with only Costa Rica a democracy. In 1986, Nicaragua is the only military dictatorship, as the democratic revolution has taken root.

or the right. Democracy, however, is not an end; it is a fragile process that requires careful nurturing and constant attention. Democracy seeks to give political power to the people and their representatives, not solely to the elites of the political extremes.

Economic development is essential, for poverty and social injustice provide communism the opportunity to provoke violence and subversion. U.S. development policy is aimed at bettering the life of the people of the region and replacing frustration with hope. For this reason, almost 75 cents of every dollar in U.S. aid that has gone to the countries of Central America has been for economic assistance. The goal of the United States is to help these countries achieve self-sustaining economic growth to enable them to provide jobs and opportunity for their citizens.

Diplomacy recognizes that dialogue can be a prelude to peace, and that words are preferable to bullets. But the words must be followed by actions and tied to a genuine, lasting peace, not a transient truce that masks continued aggression. A regional peaceful solution can best be attained through the Contadora process, and internally by dialogue between the governments and the

insurgent movements in their countries. Meaningful dialogue could lead insurgent groups to lay down their weapons and compete safely and fairly within a democratically based political process.

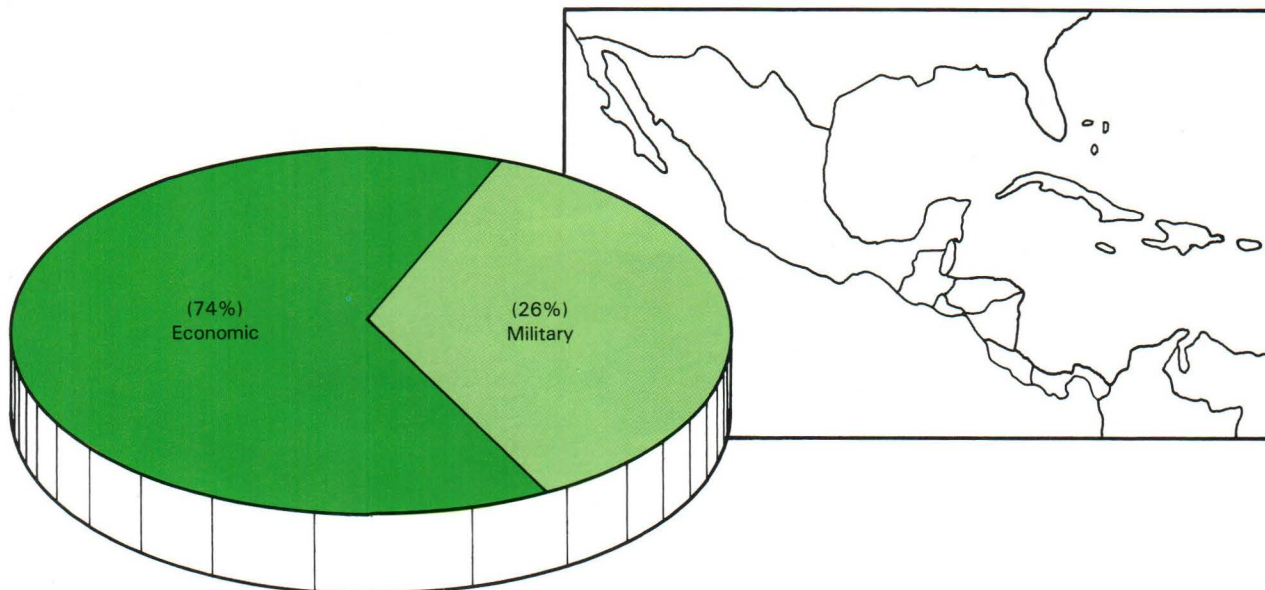
Defense is necessary to provide the countries of the region with the arms and military training to defend themselves. U.S. military assistance is a shield behind which the other elements of the policy are protected. U.S. economic aid alone to these countries will have little impact against guerrillas provided with large quantities of arms and ammunition by Cuba, Nicaragua, and the rest of the Communist bloc.

Soviet Policy

This four-part response to Soviet expansionism is succeeding, but the challenge mounted by Moscow and its regional clients is formidable. The Soviet Union is outspending the United States in the Caribbean Basin region by five to one.

Since 1980, Soviet delivery to Cuba of jet fighters, tanks, warships, surface-to-air missiles, and other tools

U.S. Aid to Central America



FY 83-86

Over the last four years, U.S. economic aid to the countries of Central America has been three times greater than military assistance.

of war have amounted to more than \$4 billion. In addition, about \$600 million worth of war-making materiel has gone to Nicaragua from the Soviet bloc, for a total of almost \$5 billion in military hardware alone to both countries. These figures do not include the cost of training. By comparison, U.S. military assistance to all of Central America during this period, including training, has been about \$1 billion. Militarization of the region can thus be traced to Moscow, not Washington.

Soviet economic aid to Cuba has exceeded \$20 billion since 1980, while U.S. economic aid to the Central American countries has been about \$4 billion. The Soviets are actually providing to Cuba more economic aid than they provide to all their other client states around the world combined.

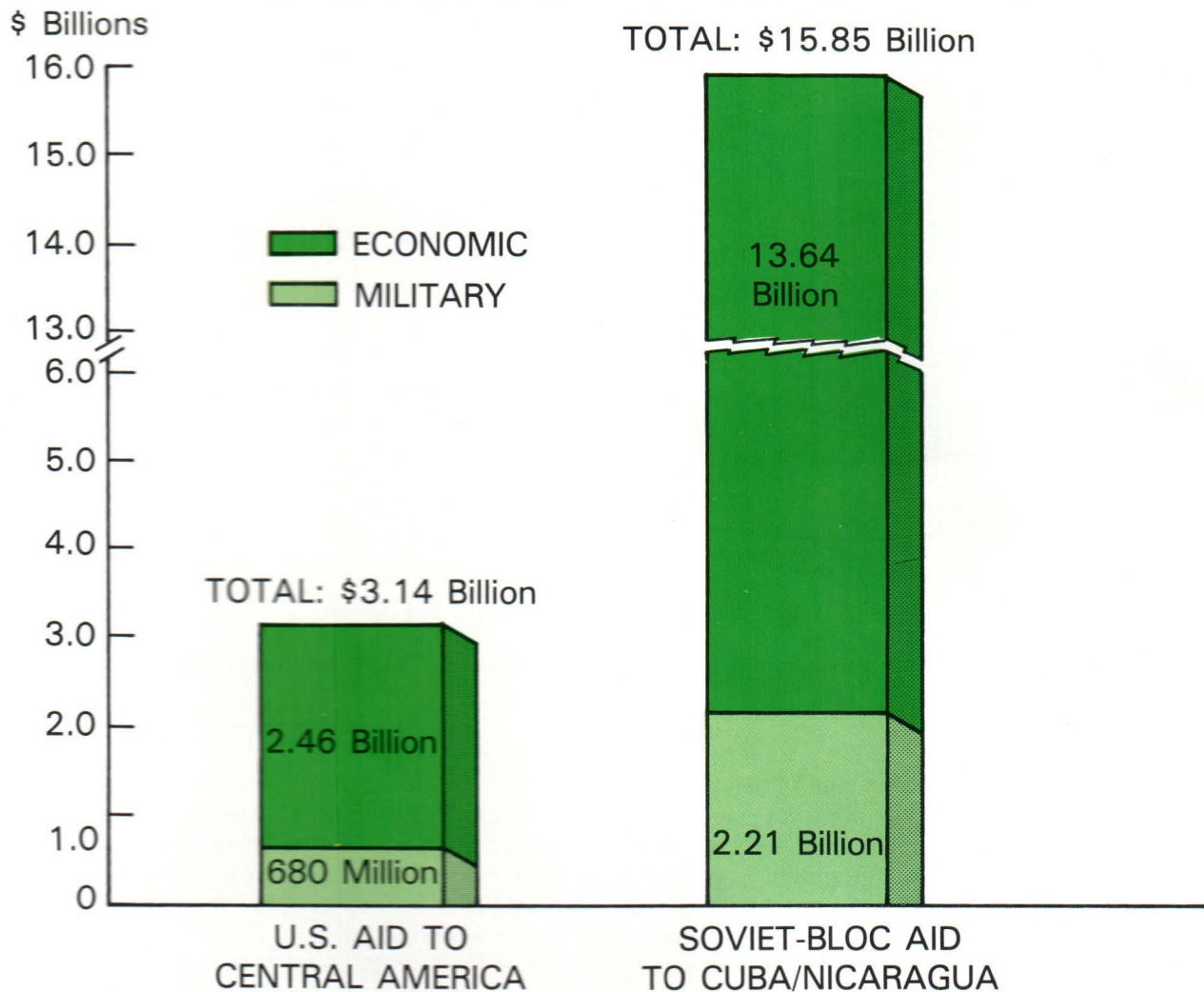
Even though the burden of supporting Cuba is high, the Soviet Union has judged the political, strategic, and potential military benefits of maintaining a beachhead in the Western Hemisphere to be worth the economic costs. Ideology plays an important role in Soviet motivations, as the creation of additional Communist states validates the tenets of Marxism-Leninism and

bolsters the Soviet Union itself. Kremlin leaders hope that ultimately the United States could become so concerned with turmoil in the Central American and Caribbean region that it would be less able militarily and politically to oppose Soviet initiatives in other key areas of the world.

The Soviets have long described Latin America and the Caribbean as the "strategic rear" of the United States but have lamented the "geographic fatalism" they felt rendered them incapable of sustaining pressure on their adversary's potential Achilles heel.¹ Over the last quarter century, however, the Soviets have sought to exploit the vulnerabilities of the region in the name of "anti-imperialist" revolution. Soviet leaders see in Central America an excellent opportunity to preoccupy the United States—the "main adversary" of Soviet strategy—thus gaining for themselves greater global freedom of action.

While Moscow is not likely to mount a direct military challenge to the United States in the Caribbean Basin, it is attempting to foment as much unrest as possible in an area that is the strategic crossroads of the Western Hemisphere: The narrow straits of Florida, which pass

ECONOMIC/MILITARY REGIONAL AID The U.S. and the Soviet-Bloc in 1983-85



Note: U.S. Aid Figures Include Belize & Panama.

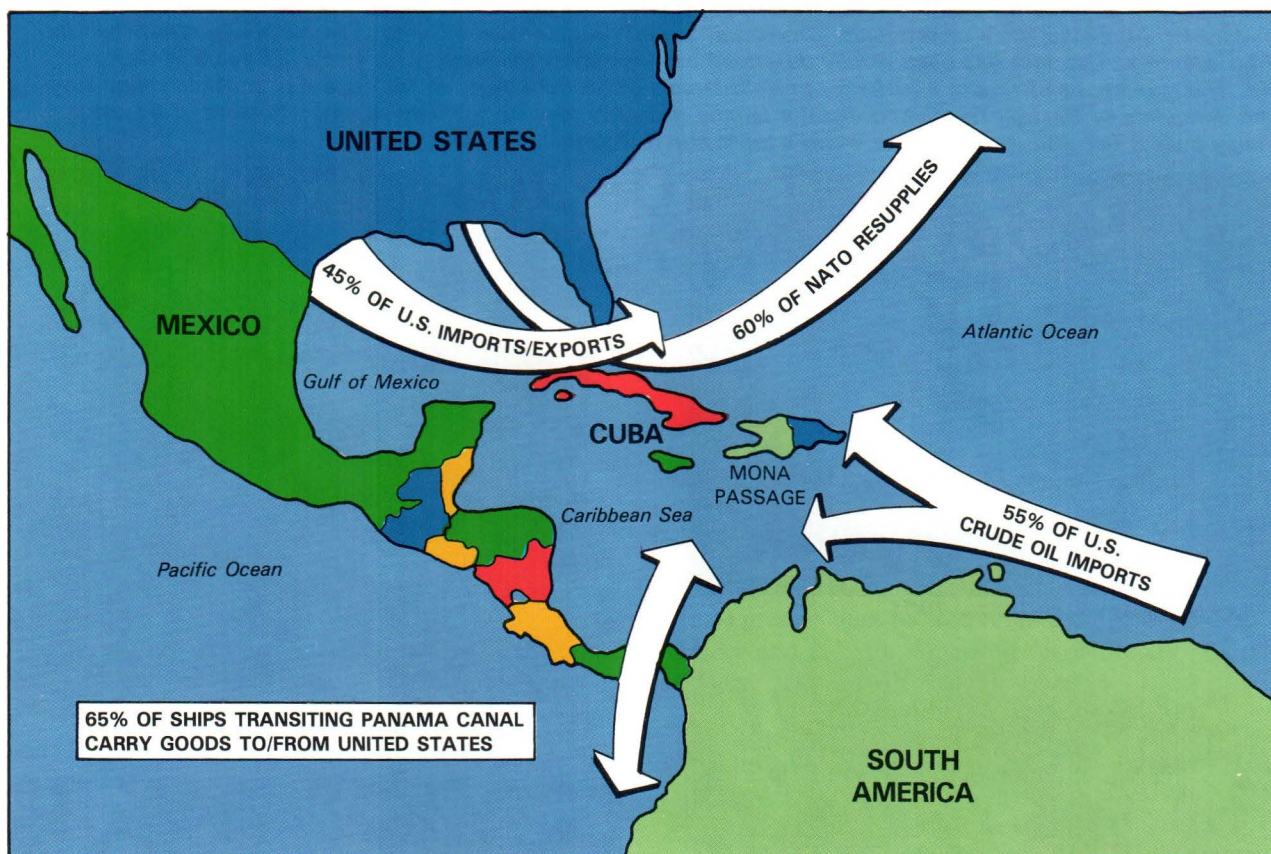
Soviet aid to Cuba and Nicaragua is five times greater than U.S. aid to all of Central America. An investment of this magnitude clearly signals the Soviets' keen interest in this area that is vital to the United States.

by Cuba, would be the principal route to Europe of U.S. troop and supply ships carrying 60% of the reinforcements and resupplies to NATO during a European emergency. Moreover, almost half of U.S. imports and exports are transported through these waters, and two out of every three ships transiting the Panama Canal carry goods to or from the United States. More than half of the imported petroleum required by the United States passes through these waters. Working through Cuba, the Soviet Union hopes to force the United States

to divert attention to an area that in the past has not been a serious security concern.

The Need To Inform

In March 1985, the Departments of State and Defense published *The Soviet-Cuban Connection in Central America and the Caribbean* to inform the public of the extent of Soviet and Cuban intervention in the region.²



The sea lanes of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico are vitally important to the economic well-being and security of the United States. The Soviet Union is attempting to create unrest in this "strategic rear" in order to cause the U.S. to be less able to respond to Soviet challenges elsewhere in the world.

The issues being debated are complex, and are likely to have a profound impact on U.S. foreign policy in both the near and long term. Within a democracy, a fundamental responsibility of the government is to educate and inform the public of the foreign policy challenges facing the nation, and the responses being taken to meet these challenges. Consequently, this

publication, *The Challenge to Democracy in Central America*, has been produced to increase the public understanding of U.S. policy in the region, of Soviet strategic ambitions, and of the potential consequences should the U.S. response be inadequate to this challenge to democracy.

*Fidel Castro is pictured here with the Soviet leaders to whom he has subordinated the Cuban Revolution. Since establishing his Soviet-style dictatorship, Castro has actually established a Gulag even more inhumane than that of his mentors. This fact has been vividly described by Armando Valladares, who spent 22 years in Castro's jails. The revelations of Castro's barbarity in Valladares's 1986 book *Against All Hope* has shocked many long-time defenders of Castro. The Cuban dictator is now generally viewed not only as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy, but also as one of the world's most brutal dictators.*



Nikita Khrushchev and Castro, 1961



Constantin Chernenko and Castro, 1984



Leonid Brezhnev and Castro, 1981



Mikhail Gorbachev (right) and Castro, 1986



Yuri Andropov (at left) and Castro, 1982

CUBA: THE SOVIET PROXY IN THE CARIBBEAN

Origins of the Cuban Revolution

The recent history of Cuba began on 26 July 1953, when Fidel Castro and his followers attacked the Moncada Army Barracks in the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba. The attack failed, most of the force was killed, and Fidel and his brother Raul were imprisoned. Their lives were spared, however, and they were released under an amnesty granted by the government of Fulgencio Batista in 1955. The brothers went to Mexico and continued plotting to overthrow the Batista government. In November 1956, the Castros and their followers sailed from Mexico, intent on creating a revolt in Cuba. Batista's forces intercepted the rebels, and routed the 82-man force within three days of its landing on 2 December 1956 in eastern Cuba. The few survivors fled into the nearby Sierra Maestra mountains, where Castro began to rebuild his guerrilla army.

Castro's flamboyance and genius for attracting attention through guerrilla warfare soon made him a romantic figure in the United States. Since Castro was careful to cloak his objectives, even from some of his comrades-in-arms, he was viewed as a potential liberator. This reputation, and Batista's harsh tactics, eventually caused the Eisenhower administration to suspend military aid to Cuba. Batista's weakened armed forces became demoralized and the dictator fled. Castro marched triumphantly into Havana on 8 January 1959.³

The seizure of power by Fidel Castro ushered in a new era in the Caribbean Basin. While most dictators had been content with internal control, Castro was soon exporting his own revolutionary methods. The anti-U.S. direction of the Castro regime was established at the outset. In the spring of 1959, Castro visited the United States, but forbade his economic advisors to talk of foreign aid with Washington, a subject the United States was ready to discuss.⁴ Castro, however, was soon discussing such aid with Moscow, carefully nurturing the myth that U.S. hostility had forced him to turn to the Soviets for help. In December 1961, Castro delivered a speech declaring that he had hidden his true political colors during the struggle against Batista, that

he was a Marxist-Leninist and would be one until the day he died.⁵ As recently as January 1984, Castro admitted that the U.S. response to his activities played little part in his embrace of communism, adding that "inexorably, we considered ourselves Marxist-Leninists."⁶

Castro's turn toward Moscow gave him an international fame greater than he would have as merely a Cuban leader and a Latin American revolutionary. As one observer of Castro has commented:

It is, after all, the capacity of the Soviets to give Castro a role on the larger stage of world politics that appeals to him and allows him to pervert what otherwise would necessarily be a more inwardlooking, and for that reason more constructive, form of Cuban nationalism.⁷



Castro is a key surrogate for the Soviet Union, but the Cuban people have paid a steep price to satisfy their leader's political ambitions.

The Cuban people have paid dearly for Castro's global role in lost political freedom and permanent economic

distress. Their sons have died in many foreign adventures, especially in Angola since 1975. Castro's international political ambition has been made possible by Soviet economic and military assistance, which Moscow has provided for very practical strategic reasons.

The Soviet-Cuban Connection

The immensity of Soviet military aid over the last two decades has converted Castro's one time rag tag guerrilla army of about 4,000, with no capability beyond Cuba's beaches, into an armed force of 297,000. Without Soviet military aid, Castro's "internationalist" forces could not have satisfied their leader's ambition for a role on the world stage. With Soviet guidance and support, Castro has subjugated the Cuban people to a dictatorship incomparably more brutal than that of Batista, and has transformed Cuba into an integral element of the Soviets' strategic network. Cuba is now a base for the Soviet Union in the Caribbean, a threat to hemispheric stability, and the focal point for training and equipping of guerrillas and terrorists—especially from Latin America.



Some of Cuba's 40,000 troops in Africa participate in a military ceremony in Angola. Since 1975, Castro has kept upwards of 30,000 troops in Angola alone to help the Marxist government of that country stay in power.

The Soviets have helped to create in Cuba a military machine organized along the lines of their own armed forces. Cuba has about 162,000 soldiers on active duty, with an additional 135,000 in the reserves which can be mobilized in two days. These reservists are well trained and many have combat experience, since thousands of the soldiers sent to Africa over the past ten years have been reservists. Castro maintains far more troops in Africa—about 40,000—than Batista had in his entire military. Castro has further militarized Cuban society, and increased his control over the population, by



This photo was not taken in Red Square in Moscow, but in Havana, Cuba. Castro has the most advanced military force in Latin America, which includes tanks, armored personnel carriers, advanced jets, and an increasingly sophisticated navy.

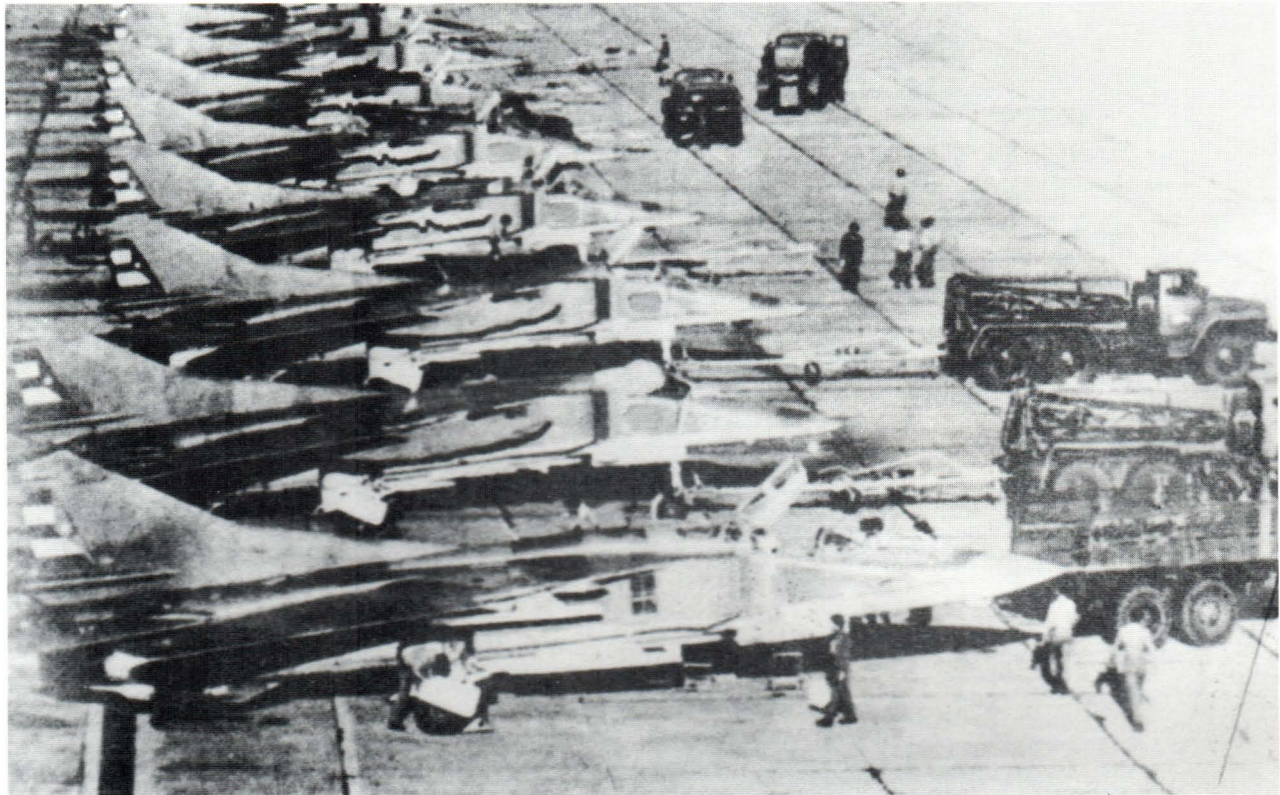
creating a "territorial militia" of more than one million persons (out of a population of 10 million) ostensibly for the purpose of defending Cuba in the event of an invasion.

This island nation now has almost 1,000 tanks, about 200 sophisticated fighter aircraft, and an increasingly capable navy. The Soviet Union has given Castro submarines, frigates and high-speed torpedo-firing hydrofoil patrol boats. The Soviet navy has sent warships into the Caribbean 25 times since 1969, frequently conducting training exercises with Castro's navy. The Soviets see the Caribbean as a potential vulnerability for the United States and have seized the opportunity to transform Cuba into an unsinkable "aircraft carrier."⁸

From Cuba's standpoint, its strategic relationship with the Soviet Union had its genesis in Castro's assessment that his foreign policy would alienate the United States, thereby requiring a powerful ally. He believed that an alliance with Moscow could lessen Cuba's risk. For Cuba, the Soviet Union was to be a guarantor behind whose protection Havana felt secure in pursuing the radical transformation of Cuban society and the foreign policy mission that Castro was determined to carry out. From the outset, Moscow was a vital source of economic aid and subsidies, without which Cuba could not have taken the course it did. For Moscow, Cuba represented an opportunity to introduce Soviet power and influence into the Western Hemisphere and to cause the United States to address itself much more than in the recent past to the security of its own region. This relationship between Moscow and Havana also substantially increased



Four of Cuba's almost 1,000 Soviet-supplied tanks on maneuvers. Castro's one-time guerrilla band of about 4,000 has become a 297,000-man armed force, Latin America's largest.



MiG-23s at an airfield in Cuba. The Soviet-built MiG-23s are the backbone of Cuba's modern air force which has received 45 of these Mach 2 fighters.

the likelihood that future revolutions in the region would take on East-West dimensions—whatever their roots. Each side thus perceived advantages accruing from this Soviet-Cuban connection. Cuba had a big brother to protect it, and the Soviet Union had another opportunity to alter the strategic balance.

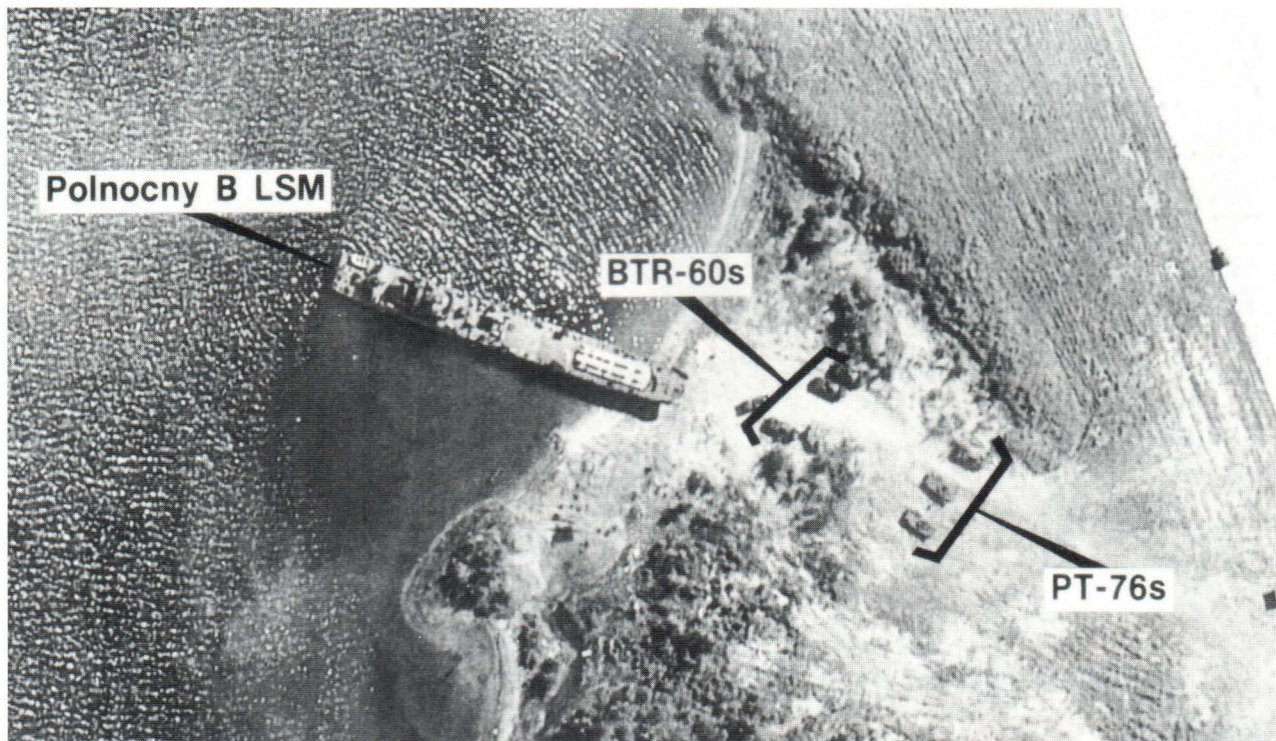
To capitalize on this opportunity, the Soviets have stationed at least 7,700 military and intelligence personnel in Cuba. They have a 2,800-man military advisory group to train and help maintain the huge Cuban military machine. They have also deployed a 2,800-man mechanized infantry brigade to Cuba. The Kremlin's military influence in Cuba, as in Warsaw Pact countries, is pervasive. Soviet military equipment and training are believed to be provided to Cuba free of charge, with the use of Cuban bases the obvious payoff. These bases give the Soviets operational and intelligence advantages. Perhaps the greatest immediate benefit Moscow enjoys in Cuba is the Soviet intelligence facility at Lourdes, near Havana. From this, their most sophisticated electronic listening post outside the Soviet Union itself, some 2,100 Soviet intelligence technicians monitor U.S. military and commercial communications, as well as space communications at nearby Cape

Canaveral. They also listen to telephone conversations of private citizens in the United States.

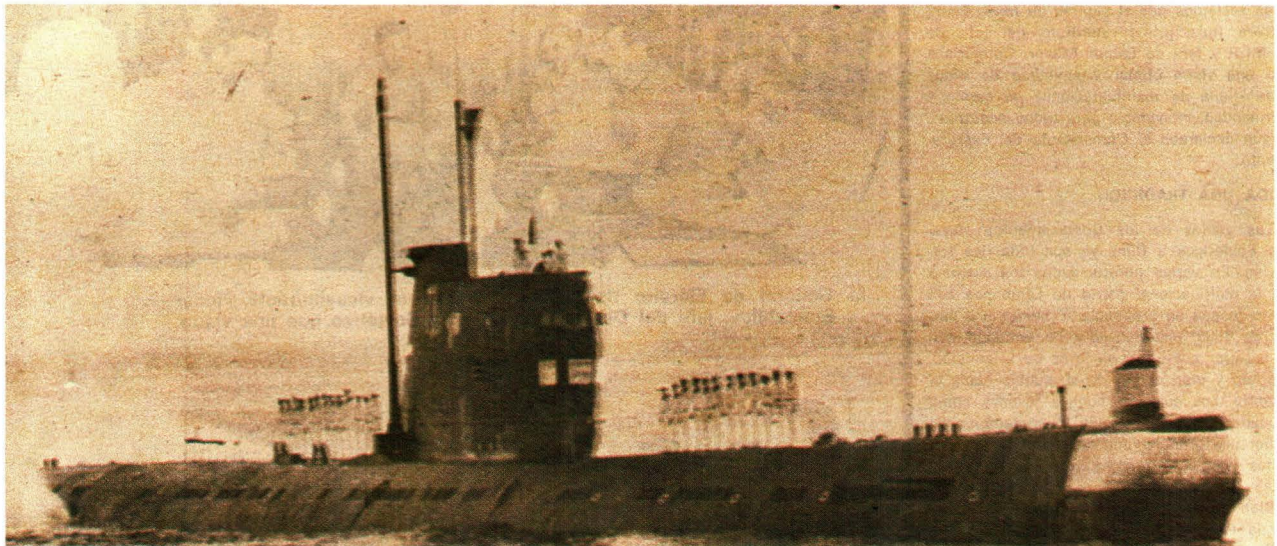
Another military dividend accruing to the Soviets from their investment in Cuba is the ability to fly spy and training missions along the East Coast of the United States with long-range reconnaissance and anti-



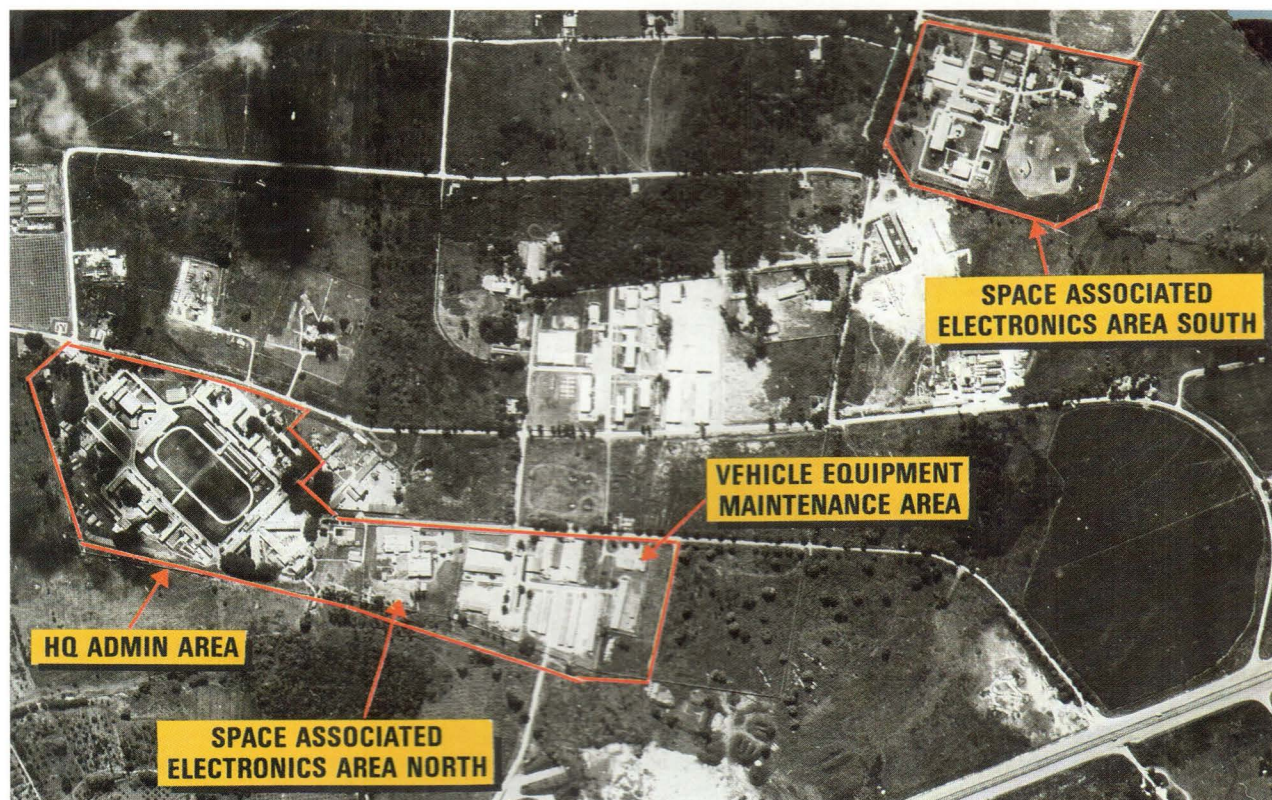
The Soviets have provided Cuba with nine Turya-class torpedo-firing hydrofoil patrol boats. These fast, highly maneuverable craft have significantly increased the interdiction capability of the Cuban navy.



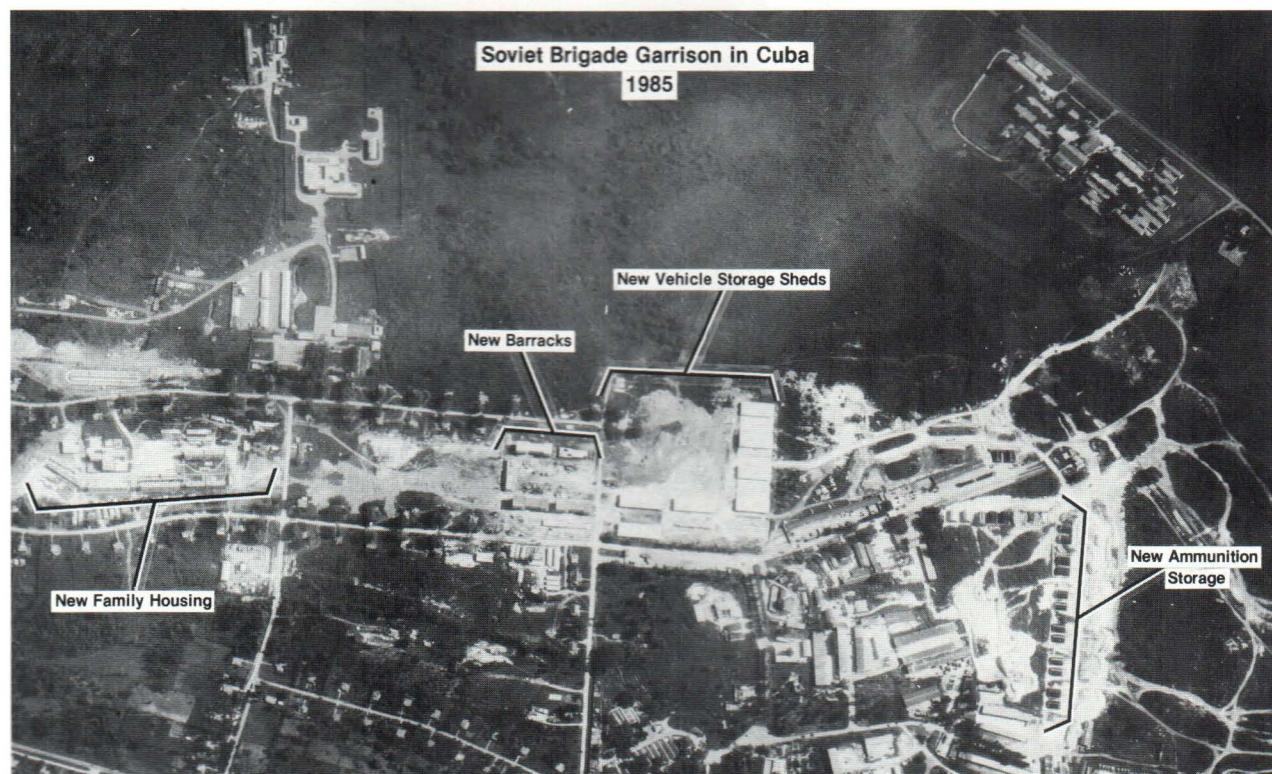
Cuba's navy now has the capability to conduct amphibious operations anywhere in the Caribbean. Shown here is a Soviet-built landing ship putting its load of tanks and armored personnel carriers ashore at Mariel, Cuba during a training exercise.



A Soviet submarine on a visit to Cuba. Over the past 17 years, the Soviets have made 25 naval deployments to the Caribbean.



This Soviet listening post at Lourdes, Cuba, the largest such Soviet facility outside of the Soviet Union, can tap military, commercial, and space communications in the United States. About 2,100 Soviet intelligence specialists staff this valuable asset.



The Soviet 2,800-man combat brigade has expanded its base in Cuba. The Soviets have 2,800 military advisers in Cuba.

submarine warfare aircraft. These aircraft cover vital defense facilities of the United States, the movements of the Atlantic fleet, and U.S. nuclear submarines. Access to Cuba provides invaluable benefits for the Kremlin's global strategy. Should Soviet leaders decide in the future to pursue a more direct and active role in the Western Hemisphere, Cuban ports and air bases (constructed over the years with Soviet funding and technical advice) would serve as excellent platforms for projecting Soviet military power.

Center for Subversion and Terrorism

An important long-range goal of Soviet and Cuban leaders is to estrange the United States from what they hope will be an increasingly radicalized and Communist Latin America. Castro has long sought to be a catalyst for guerrilla warfare that would lead to Marxist-Leninist governments in Latin America. But the Soviets, pursuing different tactics in the 1960s, recommended caution, urging Castro to consolidate his own hold on power before venturing into other countries. Over the last decade, however, the Soviet Union and Cuba have worked in concert to promote actively the destabilization of pro-Western governments. They are doing this by exploiting political, economic, and social inequities in the region. The Soviets are thus using Cuba not only as a strategic base, but also as a training center and showcase for would-be Castros, with Castro's enthusiastic cooperation.

That the opportunistic Soviets see the region as a tempting target to exploit was revealed in a "Memorandum of Conversation" that was among the 35,000 pounds of documents captured in Grenada by U.S. and Caribbean forces in the October 1983 rescue operation. This record of an April 1983 meeting between then Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and then Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop demonstrated that the Soviets saw the Caribbean region to be "boiling like a cauldron."⁹ A month earlier, the Soviets' top soldier, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, told his Grenadian counterpart that "over two decades ago there was only Cuba in Latin America, today there are Nicaragua, Grenada, and a serious battle is going on in El Salvador." Ogarkov went on to assure his Grenadian colleague that the Soviet Union would provide Grenada with the necessary military equipment.¹⁰

Moscow has delegated to a very willing Castro the task of training the majority of guerrillas and saboteurs to carry out the Soviet-Cuban strategy. Training camps

in Cuba provide foreigners intensive military instruction in small unit tactics, demolitions, and other elements of guerrilla warfare, as well as Marxist-Leninist political indoctrination. Graduates of Castro's training schools are not limited to Latin America, but also include terrorists from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and other radical groups from throughout the world. But it is in Central America that Castro has devoted so much of his efforts over the last several years.

A vivid example of Cuba's pivotal role in orchestrating, with Nicaragua, the Communist-led insurgency in El Salvador was provided by Adin Ingles Alvarado, an officer in the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the largest of the guerrilla factions of El Salvador. Ingles was involved in the attack on the Salvadoran Army's Fourth Brigade Headquarters on 30 December 1983. He later became disillusioned with the guerrilla cause and turned himself over to government authorities in April 1985. Ingles discussed the attack during a nationwide television program in El Salvador:

We began to plan the attack on the Fourth Brigade in Cuba, where they took 28 men to train specifically for the operation I was one of the 28 men being trained in Cuba to carry out this operation against the Fourth Brigade. We even had combat exercises using a mock-up of the garrison. I took part in the leadership of the group. Together we discussed the plans with the Cuban instructors and the men going on the operation how the attack would be carried out. Besides the training, they gave us all the material to use against the Fourth Brigade. The explosives, machine guns, and ammunition were sent from Cuba. Nicaragua was only the conduit or staging point. There arrangements were made. The material was then funneled to the guerrillas in El Salvador. This was Nicaragua's role.¹¹ (Emphasis added)

Cuba's ability to create chaos in Central America has been increased dramatically by the coming to power in 1979 in Nicaragua of Castro's long-time proteges, the Sandinistas. For the first time, a government led by Marxists-Leninists became entrenched in Central America. For Castro, twenty years of labor appeared to be paying off when not only the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, but also Maurice Bishop's New JEWEL (Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education, and Liberation) Movement in Grenada, seized power.



In 1979, twenty years after Cuba's revolution, Castro achieved his goal of bringing Latin American allies to power. Castro is pictured here in 1983 sharing the limelight with fellow Communists Maurice Bishop of Grenada and Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua.

Castro's Disciples Come to Power

Maurice Bishop's own dictatorship lasted only four years, ending on 19 October 1983, when he was murdered by fellow members of his New JEWEL Movement party. This action spawned a period of anarchy that caused Grenada's Governor General to request the United States and the countries of the Eastern Caribbean to restore order. The ensuing rescue operation placed Grenada on the path to representative government once again.

Bishop had endeavored to follow the path taken by Castro in the 1960s. He promised to promote democracy and improve the quality of life of the Grenadian people. He had no intention, however, of democracy being any more of a reality in Grenada than it was in Cuba. Although his public rhetoric was that of a social democrat, Bishop's private declarations were more revealing. Among the documents captured in October 1983 was a "confidential" talk Bishop had delivered on 13 September 1982. In this "Line of March" speech, he showed how his intention was the creation of a Marxist-Leninist government. Concerning due process, Grenada style, Bishop said:

Just consider, comrades, how laws are made in this country. Laws are made in this country when Cabinet agrees and when I sign a document on behalf of Cabinet. And then

that is what everybody in the country—like it or don't like it—has to follow. Or consider how people get detained in this country. We don't go and call for no votes. You get detained when I sign an order after discussing it with the National Security Committee of the Party or with a higher Party body. Once I sign it—like it or don't like it—its up the hill for them.¹²

The Soviets and Cubans had moved rapidly to assist Bishop and his party after they took over. By October 1983, tiny Grenada had more men under arms and more weapons and military supplies than all of its Eastern Caribbean neighbors combined—with plans to give Grenada one of the largest military forces in proportion to population of any country in the world.

The captured documents reveal that this military assistance from the Soviet bloc came to Grenada as a result of secret treaties and agreements. The Soviets and Cubans agreed to accept Grenadian delegations for training in military and paramilitary activities, propaganda, subversion of the churches, and general political indoctrination. Grenadians were sent for training in the USSR and Cuba.¹³

An important element in these agreements was the considerable money and manpower devoted to indoc-

trinating the Grenadian people in the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism. When an internal political crisis struck the Bishop government in the summer of 1983, the response was to announce a vast "ideological crash course" for the entire population of the island. The documents reveal that Soviet instructors assisted in the "crash course."¹⁴

The October 1983 rescue operation by the United States and the countries of the Eastern Caribbean was overwhelmingly endorsed by the Grenadian people. A CBS

News poll taken a week after the operation revealed that 91% of those surveyed strongly approved of the rescue operation.¹⁵

For Castro and the Soviet leaders, the defeat was a stunning—albeit temporary—setback. In Nicaragua, however, the Sandinistas were firmly in control of an increasingly totalitarian regime, and the vision of consolidating and expanding Marxism-Leninism in Central America was still on track for Castro, his patrons, and his clients.



The writings on this wall aptly describe the feelings of the majority of Grenadians who overwhelmingly endorsed the October 1983 rescue mission by the United States and countries of the Eastern Caribbean. A CBS News survey on 3 November 1983 showed that 91% of Grenadians queried supported the rescue mission.



This statue of a worker brandishing a Soviet-made AK-47 assault rifle, situated in downtown Managua, symbolizes the militarization of Nicaragua by the Sandinistas. Although the Sandinistas pledged that their revolution would usher in a democratic era, they have instead imposed an increasingly totalitarian regime kept in power by the largest military in Central American history.

NICARAGUA: MARXISM AND MILITARISM

Origins of the Sandinista Regime

When the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and its allies overthrew the 42-year Somoza dynasty and came to power on 19 July 1979, the victors rode in on a wave of national and international good will. The general perception in the world was that a small band of young Davids—"Rock 'n' Roll Rebels...into baseball, beer, and Bruce Springsteen"¹⁶—had vanquished a brutal Goliath. Opposition to the Anastasio Somoza

dictatorship had become widespread during the mid-1970s, and the January 1978 assassination of Somoza's leading critic, *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, triggered demonstrations of popular outrage, including a lengthy general strike. The Sandinistas capitalized on this mounting resentment, and Eden Pastora's (Commander Zero) seizure of the National Palace that August captured the imagination of the Nicaraguan people and the world.

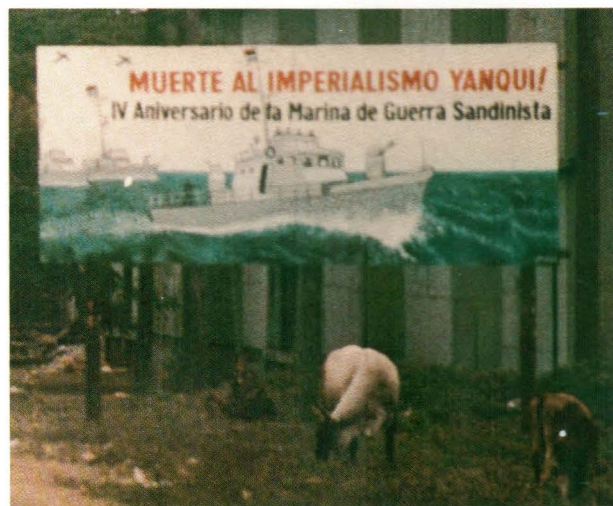


Wide World Photo

Fidel Castro with his long-time colleague Daniel Ortega during Castro's January 1985 visit to Nicaragua. Castro started supplying the Sandinistas with weapons in the early 1960s and intensified the clandestine flow of arms in early 1979. Castro's support has helped the Sandinistas to construct a Communist dictatorship increasingly similar to Cuba's.

By late 1978, the ranks of the FSLN swelled, from just the few hundred hard-core militants that had comprised the Front during most of its existence, to almost 1,000 combatants.¹⁷ By the following summer, the number of combatants had risen to about 5,000.¹⁸ While numerically smaller than Somoza's 14,000-strong National Guard, by early 1979 the Sandinistas, benefiting from increasing opposition to Somoza's repression, were receiving large quantities of materiel from abroad. Much of the arms and ammunition came from Cuba. Venezuela and Panama had also provided the Sandinistas with large amounts of weapons, while Costa Rica allowed the Sandinistas to use its territory as a sanctuary.

In contrast, Somoza's National Guard was isolated from the people and was facing difficulties in obtaining supplies. The United States had cut off military assistance to Somoza. In June 1979, the Organization of American States (OAS) took the unprecedented step of supporting the overthrow of a sitting member government, calling for the "definitive replacement"



This sign in Managua calls for "DEATH TO YANKEE IMPERIALISM!" Virulent anti-Americanism was characteristic of the Sandinistas even when the United States was providing more economic aid than any other country.

of the Somoza regime.¹⁹ With no hope of external support and having lost control of much of the nation's territory, Somoza fled Nicaragua on 17 July. The National Guard disintegrated literally overnight; many guardsmen, including most of the higher ranking officers, fled into exile, while about 3,000 others, mostly enlisted men, were imprisoned by the new government.²⁰ Today, 1,500 to 2,000 of these guardsmen are still imprisoned.

The Sandinista Takeover

The Sandinista leaders were instrumental in the armed struggle, but represented only a small minority of those opposed to the Somoza dictatorship. Businessmen, farmers, workers, students, and Nicaraguans of all stripes worked for and supported the overthrow of the dictator. The near unanimity of the struggle against Somoza, and his indiscriminate use of force resulting in widespread destruction and killing, had captured world headlines. The victory by the Sandinistas and their allies was hoped by many to be the dawn of a new era for the country. The leaders of the FSLN had publicly pledged themselves to the principles of political pluralism, a mixed economy, and a non-aligned foreign policy.²¹ Since these pledges were thought to reflect the official position of the new Government of National Reconstruction (GRN), it enjoyed broad international support, and the United States took the lead in the assistance effort, providing \$118 million of economic aid and humanitarian assistance during the following 18 months. This was more than any other country provided the new regime, and represented more aid than the United States had provided Somoza in the previous four years. European and Latin American countries, notably Venezuela, also rushed aid to impoverished and war-racked Nicaragua.

Although the Sandinistas had a strong inclination toward Marxism-Leninism, and their leaders were closely linked to Fidel Castro, the FSLN still constituted only one element of the broad and popular anti-Somoza coalition, which became the GRN. The United States, and Latin American and European governments, hoped that the Marxist-Leninist zeal of the youthful Sandinista leaders would be tempered by the more moderate members of the coalition.

There was one thing wrong with this analysis. The Sandinistas had the guns and were not about to relinquish them or the power that military success had brought them. They believed Nicaragua's salvation lay in Marxist economics and Leninist politics.

The Sandinistas' patron Fidel Castro cautioned them, however, not to move with the same speed he had in the early 1960s in declaring the political orientation of the new regime. Castro wanted to see the Sandinistas establish a Communist dictatorship similar to his own, but he advised them to do so with a subtlety that would induce the Western countries to provide the financial aid so necessary for the new government. As a leading member of the FSLN, Bayardo Arce, said a few years later in a memorable secret speech:

Our strategic allies tell us not to declare ourselves Marxist-Leninists...[Nicaragua will be] the first experience of building socialism with the dollars of capitalism.²²

Over the past seven years, in addition to following this advice, the Sandinistas have gradually emulated the steps taken by their "strategic allies." Like the leaders of the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Europe, Vietnam, and Cuba, the Sandinistas have invoked press censorship, established a powerful secret police apparatus, mounted systematic attacks on organized religion, and developed a large military force.

Eden Pastora, the famous "Commander Zero" of the fight against Somoza, later the Sandinista Deputy Defense Minister, and now opposed to the Sandinistas, had this to say when asked "What do you most blame the nine *Comandantes* for?"

For having lost the only chance a people had in the history of humanity of practicing true independence, because with all the help the

world gave us at the time we could have had numerous economic partners and have avoided dependence on a single one. No other nation in the world had the same opportunity. Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Venezuela, Costa Rica, even the Arabs helped us. We lost everything when we aligned ourselves with the USSR.²³

The Military Buildup

Nowhere has this alignment with the Soviet Union been more evident than in the military sphere. In their seven years in power, the Sandinistas have followed Cuba's example in developing a massive military establishment. Today, Nicaragua has the largest, most powerful armed forces in the history of Central America. This military machine certainly was not built in reaction to threats from neighbors, or from ex-Somoza National Guardsmen. The chart on page 20 shows that the Sandinistas led the way in militarizing Central America. The Sandinistas had the largest military in Central America more than a year before serious armed opposition to the

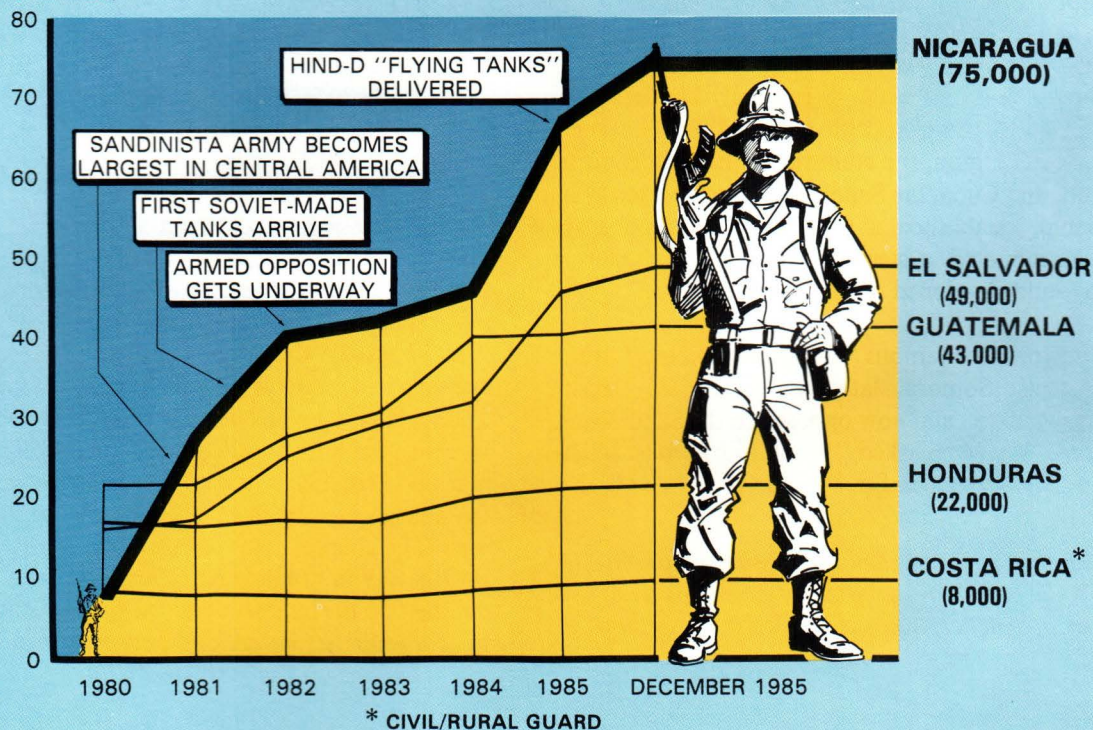


The Sandinistas have developed the largest and best equipped armed forces in Central American history, with 75,000 military and security forces on active duty, and 44,000 in the reserve and militia.

GROWTH OF THE SANDINISTA MILITARY MACHINE

1 JANUARY 1980 TO 31 DECEMBER 1985

ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS
AND SECURITY FORCES
(THOUSANDS)



Militarization of the Central American region has been caused by the Sandinista military buildup. The Sandinistas had created the largest armed forces in Central America only 18 months after coming into power, and more than a year before the armed democratic resistance became a significant factor.

regime commenced. This intense buildup, resulting from Soviet-bloc assistance, started while the United States was giving the Sandinistas millions of dollars in economic aid.

That the Sandinistas did not consider themselves threatened by armed opposition was inadvertently revealed by no less an authority than Carlos Tunnermann, Managua's Ambassador to the United States. Writing in the 30 March 1985 *Washington Post*, Tunnermann attempted to blame the United States for all of Nicaragua's woes. He wrote that prior to November 1981, the date he claims that the United States decided to assist the Nicaraguan armed resistance, "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."²⁴ In short, the Sandinistas perceived no military threat. But by November 1981, the response to these few hundred "cattle rustlers" included a Sandinista army of almost 40,000, and Soviet-made tanks, artillery, and armored personnel carriers.

The Sandinista armed forces are organized along Cuban lines, just as Castro's military follows the organizational

structure of the Soviet Union. Nicaragua has some 6,500 Cuban military and intelligence advisers and civilian technicians. Most of the civilians have had extensive military training. Additionally, there are more than 100 Soviet and East European military and intelligence advisers in Nicaragua. The Sandinista armored force today totals about 350 tanks and armored vehicles (Somoza had 28). The rest of the Central American countries' combined armored force totals about 200, and the few tanks in this total have considerably less firepower than the Soviet-made T-55 tanks, the backbone of the Sandinista arsenal. Soviet-made armored personnel carriers could provide the Sandinista infantry a mobility unmatched in the region. The Sandinistas also can boast of Soviet-made artillery with a range greater than the artillery in some U.S. Army divisions.

Many supporters of the Sandinistas minimize the importance of the tanks the Soviets have provided to their newest clients. They claim the tanks are useless in "the mountains and jungles" of Central America. These



Soviet-made tanks such as these T-55s are the backbone of the Sandinista army. They are an intimidating weapon to Nicaragua's neighbors and to the Nicaraguan people.

critics ignore the facts that the Soviets have provided the Sandinistas with flat-bed tank transporters and bridging equipment, and that portions of Nicaragua and Honduras provide excellent areas for tank operations. The Sandinistas did, in fact, use these tanks in March and April 1986 in the campaign against the Miskito Indians on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast.

Its durability and ease of maintenance makes the T-55 an effective weapon for a country like Nicaragua. In addition to providing powerful fire support in certain

tactical situations, it can be an excellent means to control and intimidate crowds. The Soviet bloc certainly is aware of the T-55's capabilities, for in the late 1970s the T-55 production line was reopened. Hundreds of these new tanks have been delivered to Third World countries. Consequently, the Sandinista tank inventory may not be confined to refurbished 25-year-old T-55s, but new tanks manufactured in the last few years. Even if the tanks are 25 years old, they are an intimidating weapon to the neighboring countries of Costa Rica and Honduras, which have nothing the equal of the Sandinista armored force.

This powerful Sandinista ground force is augmented by a growing fleet of attack helicopters. The Soviet Union has provided Nicaragua with more than 12 Mi-8 HIP troop-carrying helicopters which also can be used effectively as gunships. The most devastating weapons in the Sandinista aerial arsenal are approximately six Mi-24 HIND D attack helicopters, the "flying tank" of the Soviet Union, which has been employed with brutal effectiveness in Afghanistan. In Nicaragua, these deadly Soviet aircraft are taking a serious toll on the outgunned and outmanned democratic resistance, the so-called contras. Moreover, Cuban pilots are known to be flying helicopters in combat.

It is not just war materiel that provides the Sandinistas with such a predominant military advantage in the region. The chart on page 23 shows the imbalance in



A Soviet-made Mi-8 attack helicopter at Sandino Airport in Managua. Cuban pilots are flying some of these deadly aircraft in combat against the democratic resistance.



One of the Mi-24 HIND D attack helicopters at Sandino Airport near Managua, the most powerful attack helicopter in the world. These "flying tanks" have been used with devastating effectiveness by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

personnel strength in Central America that has resulted from this Sandinista military buildup. The Sandinista active duty armed forces and the security forces now number about 75,000, plus almost 44,000 in the inactive reserves and unmobilized militia. While the Sandinistas say they have been forced to build a huge military to defend themselves, the truth is they are merely following the formula of other Marxist-Leninist governments. Of the various governments in the world that describe themselves as Marxist-Leninist, virtually all, like Nicaragua and Cuba, have a far higher percentage of their population under arms than do their non-Communist neighbors.²⁵

While sovereign states certainly have the right to defend themselves, Nicaragua's claim that it has created a purely defensive force is particularly transparent. The Sandinistas started their buildup shortly after coming to power. In September 1979, the Sandinista leaders held a three-day secret meeting to plan the consolidation of the revolution. The report of the meeting, intended for internal FSLN use, surfaced a few weeks later. This "72-Hour Document" was the blueprint for developing a Communist state. In addressing the military situation, this confidential assessment stated 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."²⁶

Lacking a clearly perceived military threat, the probable reason the Sandinistas built such a large military was explained by Moscow-educated Comandante Henry Ruiz in 1982 when he said:

*The revolution's honeymoon is coming to an end. By this I mean the romantic idea among those who believed that the Sandinista people's revolution was an idyllic revolution in which the interests of a group of traitors and the interests of the real working people could be fused; a shortsighted point of view, from which the revolutionary directorate never suffered. (Emphasis added)*²⁷

Not burdened with this "idyllic" view, the Sandinistas realized they needed a means to subjugate the Nicaraguan population once the bloom was off the revolutionary rose. In classic Marxist-Leninist style, they proceeded to build an imposing military to guarantee a monopoly of power.

Shirley Christian, Pulitzer Prize winner and author of *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*, accurately describes Nicaragua only 18 months after the Sandinistas had seized power:

The Sandinistas had by the end of 1980 declared themselves the owner of the truth,

ACTIVE DUTY ARMED FORCES 1985



The Sandinista armed forces and security forces dwarf those of Nicaragua's neighbors. The Sandinistas, with Cuban and Soviet-bloc support, had built the largest military in Central America during the time the United States was providing more economic aid than any other country.

and that truth told them something different. It told them that Nicaragua's correct path was one laid out by the nine Comandantes—the Vanguard. They were the new elite, an elite based not on land and money and guns, but on ideological formation, party discipline and guns.²⁸

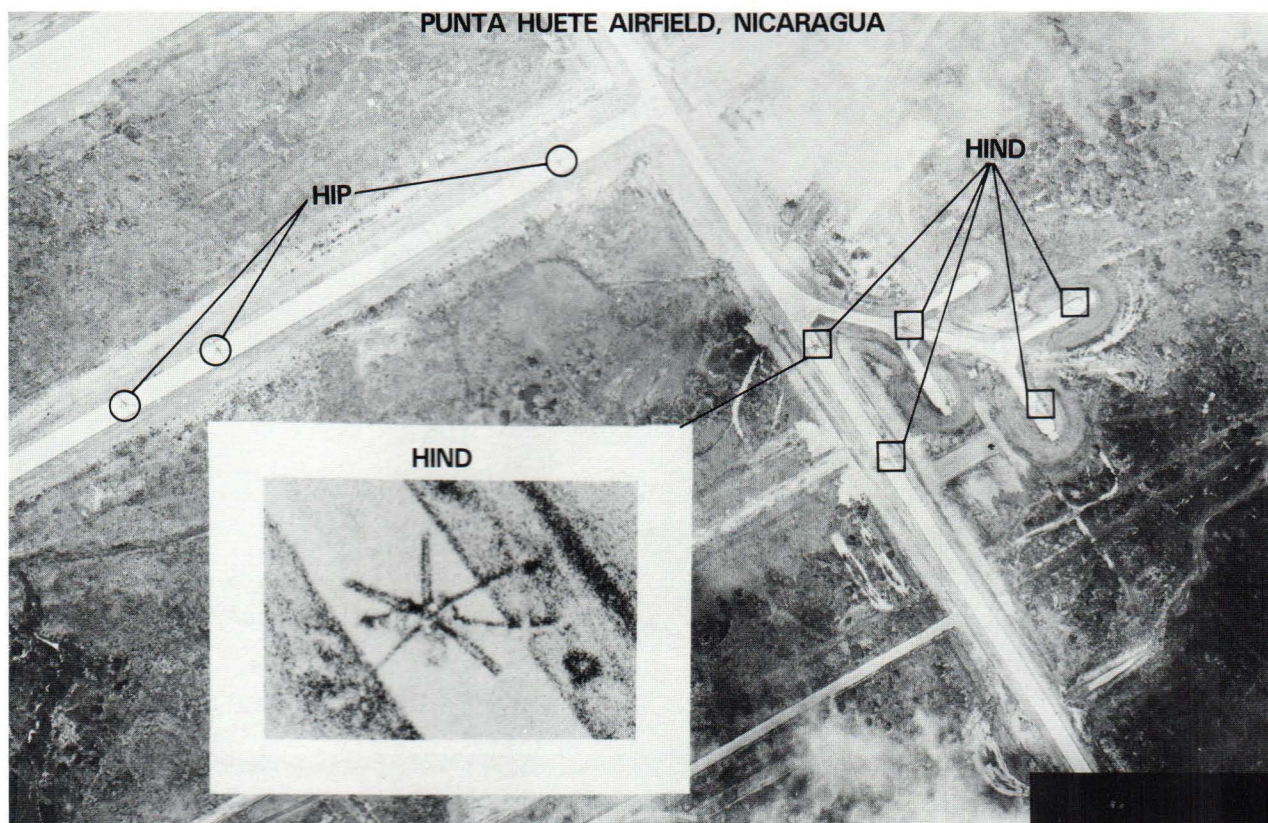
The Sandinistas were indeed forming a police state, rather than a democratic state observing the basic tenets of law. They were controlling information, implementing surveillance measures, and, of course, increasing dramatically the military and police apparatus to limit political competition. They were engaged in a systematic destruction of even the positive aspects of traditional Nicaraguan society and culture. What they offered (and continue to offer) as replacement was a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship. Their ideology of “revolutionary internationalism” impelled them to provide the arms and ammunition to their Communist allies in El Salvador and elsewhere who were fighting to seize power and form Marxist-Leninist governments.

While the United States deplored the worsening human rights situation in Nicaragua, it was the covert aggression by the Sandinistas against sovereign governments

that left the United States no choice but to cut off economic aid in April 1981. Documents captured in El Salvador from the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas, weapons intercepted in Honduras enroute to Salvadoran guerrilla enclaves from Nicaragua, and classified intelligence convinced first the Carter Administration²⁹ and then the Reagan Administration that the Sandinistas were indeed supporting the Salvadoran guerrillas despite the flow of public and private denials from Managua.

Nicaraguan Aggression Against Its Neighbors

Since seizing power, the Sandinistas have supported Marxist-Leninist elements seeking to overthrow the government of El Salvador and, at a minimum, destabilize the governments of Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica. Since 1979, the Sandinistas have provided arms to, and assisted Cuba in the training of, the guerrillas of El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). They have also armed and inserted guerrillas into Honduras and have provided arms to Guatemalan guerrillas. Sandinista efforts to intimidate Costa Rica began in 1981, more than a year before armed resistance to the Sandinista regime com-



The air base at Punta Huete near Managua, when completed, will be able to accommodate the largest aircraft of the Soviet air force. It is already an operational base for Soviet-made attack helicopters such as those shown here.

menced on Nicaragua's southern border. Since 1981, additional Sandinista-supported terrorist incidents have continued to occur in this most democratic country of Central America.

The United States Congress, following a thorough review of all available intelligence, has concluded that Nicaragua has consistently intervened in the internal affairs of El Salvador, and other Central American countries. In August of 1985, the Congress formally declared in Public Law 99-83 that

the...Government of Nicaragua...has flagrantly violated...the security of the nations in the region in that it...has committed and refused to cease aggression in the form of armed subversion against its neighbors.³⁰

In July 1984, in Public Law 98-215, the Congress concluded that

by providing military support (including arms, training, and logistical, command and control, and communications facilities) to groups seeking to overthrow the Govern-

ment of El Salvador and other Central American governments, the Government...of Nicaragua has violated article 18 of the Charter of the [OAS] which declares that no state has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatsoever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state....³¹

In May 1983, The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, after reviewing the classified intelligence on the Sandinista-Salvadoran guerrilla linkage, reported that:

A major portion of the arms and other material sent by Cuba and other Communist countries to the Salvadoran insurgents transits Nicaragua with the permission and assistance of the Sandinistas.

The Salvadoran insurgents rely on the use of sites in Nicaragua, some of which are located in Managua itself, for communications, command-and-control, and for the logistics to conduct their financial, material and propaganda activities.

*Nicaragua provides a range of other support activities, including secure transit of insurgents to and from Cuba, and assistance to the insurgents in planning their activities in El Salvador.*³²

Despite this evidence, Nicaragua continues to deny it has supplied materiel support to El Salvador's guerrillas. The reason for this denial is obvious—the Sandinistas realize that their defenders in the United States and Europe would find it difficult to condone unprovoked aggression against neighboring countries. Thus, the Sandinistas continue to proclaim their innocence at the same time that they facilitate the coordination of the day-to-day military activities of the Salvadoran and other guerrillas, and supply them with arms, ammunition, explosives, and other war materiel.

Sandinista Repression

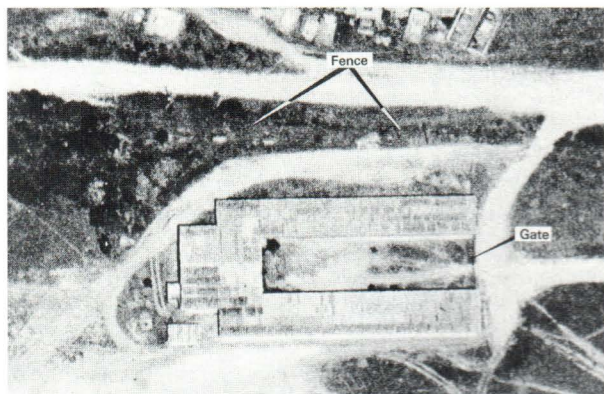
On 15 October 1985, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega announced a new State of Emergency which suspended virtually all civil rights including such fundamental freedoms as speech, press, assembly, association, and movement. These measures were widely criticized both domestically and internationally, and many foreigners sympathetic to the Sandinista regime expressed concern that the 15 October decree marked a shift in Sandinista policy away from the stated democratic goals of the Nicaraguan revolution. In fact, while the State of Emergency and the accompanying crackdown on Nicaragua's political, labor, private sector, religious, press, and human rights leaders did indeed mark a major escalation in the Sandinistas' drive to stifle all internal opposition, they did not signal a change in Sandinista policy. Rather, the decree simply

advanced one step further the pattern of increasing repression that has characterized the Sandinista regime since it seized power in 1979. It is a pattern that Fidel Castro developed in Cuba in the early 1960s, assisted by the Soviet Union. The Sandinistas are now aided in building their repressive society by experts from Cuba. The Ministry of Interior, under the leadership of long-time Castro confidante Tomas Borge, has hundreds of personnel from Cuba's Directorate General of Intelligence (DGI), which was formed and trained by the Soviet KGB.

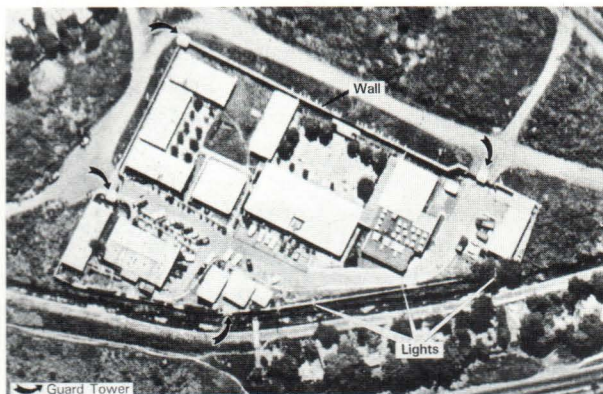
The Sandinistas have constructed several new prisons during their seven years in power, the majority under the control of the Ministry of Interior. Nicaragua has the dubious distinction of having more political prisoners behind bars than any country in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba. In addition to the 1,500-2,000 former National Guardsmen held prisoner, the Sandinistas have at least 6,500 other detainees in prison, an astounding number for a country of just over 3 million. According to the independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH), conditions in Sandinista prisons are deplorable. The Commission's investigations reveal that many prisoners are kept in isolation, some are kept hanging by their hands, and beatings and torture are everyday occurrences.³³ International human rights organizations have been unable to obtain access to the prisons operated by Borge's General Directorate of State Security (the secret police). When human rights organizations or foreign visitors tour prisons, these visits are carefully controlled interviews with inmates in model prisons. This is a technique Josef Stalin used in the 1930s to convince visitors to the Soviet Union of the "humane" nature of the Soviet penal system.³⁴



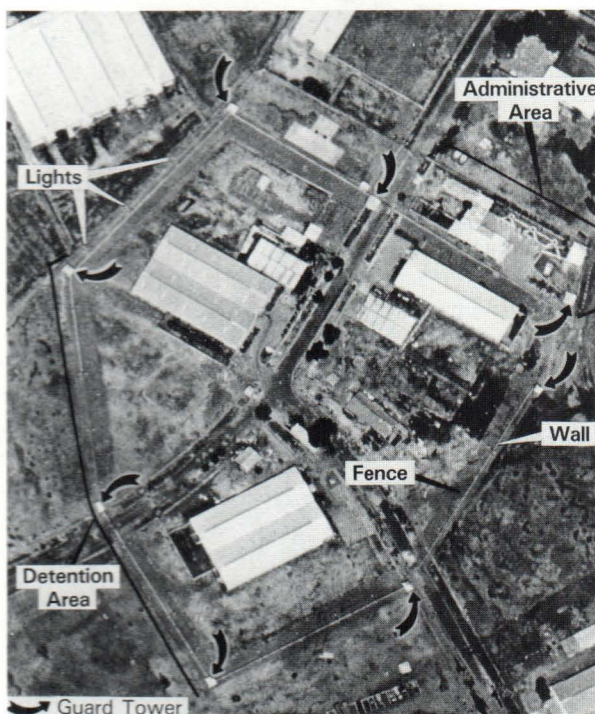
Teofilo Archibold, a Nicaraguan creole who actively opposed Somoza, was later jailed by the Sandinistas for protesting Cuban mistreatment of his fellow blacks. During his ten months in a Sandinista prison, Archibold's fingernails were torn out by his Cuban guards and he was continually beaten. Thousands of political prisoners in Sandinista jails have experienced a similar fate.



Puerto Cabezas Prison
Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua



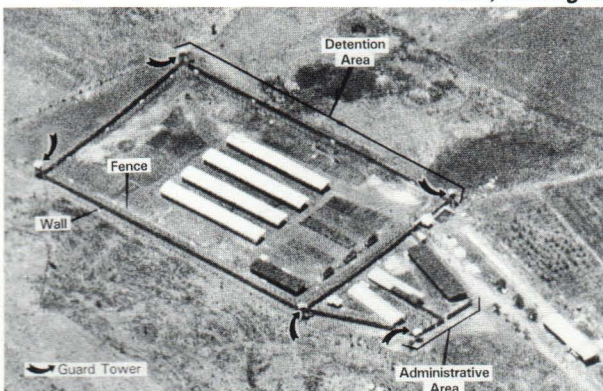
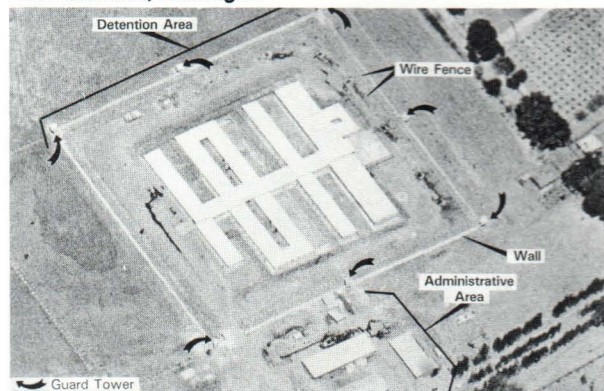
Palo Alto Prison
Managua, Nicaragua



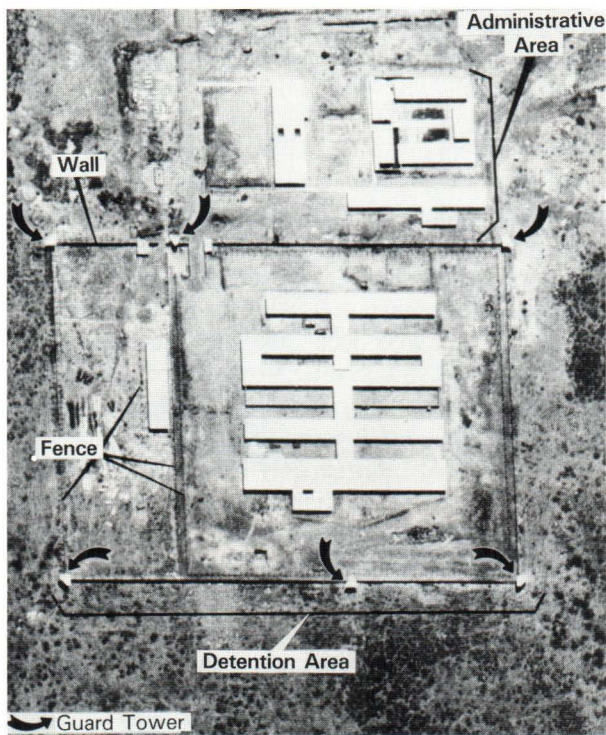
La Palmera Prison
Near Granada, Nicaragua

Zona Franca Prison
Sandino Airfield, Nicaragua

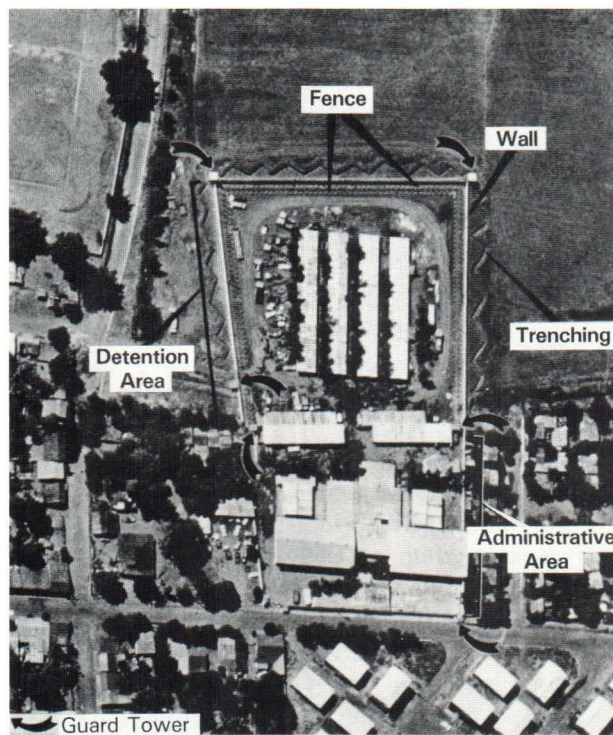
Esteli Prison
Esteli, Nicaragua



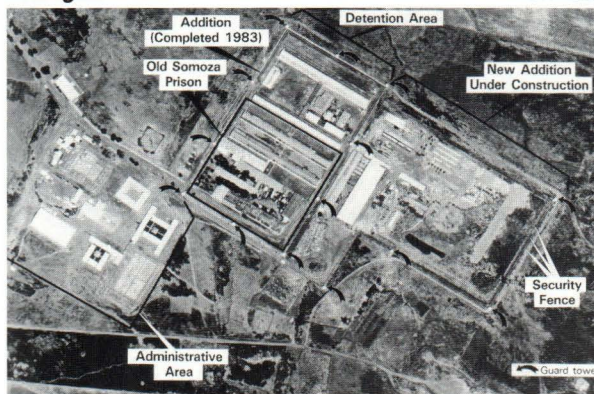
The Sandinistas have built several new prisons in their seven years in power, some of which are shown here. Nicaragua has the dubious distinction of having more political prisoners behind bars than any country in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba.



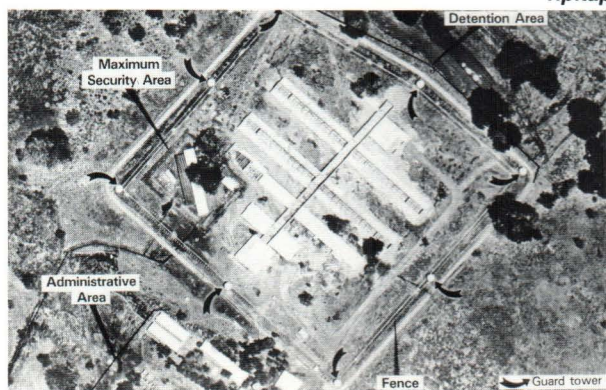
Waswali Prison
Near Matagalpa, Nicaragua



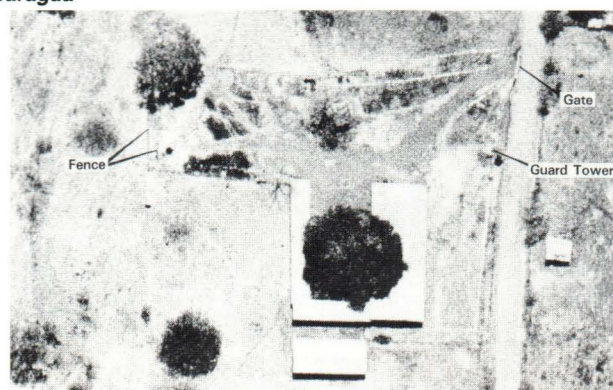
Chinandega Prison
Chinandega, Nicaragua



Carcel Modelo Prison
Tipitapa, Nicaragua



Asuncion Prison
Near Juigalpa, Nicaragua



Club Hipico Prison
Near Matagalpa, Nicaragua

One of the great moral heroes of the revolution against Somoza was the President of the Nicaraguan Red Cross, Ismael Reyes, who regularly and courageously called the world's attention to Somoza's abuses. Today, while still calling Somoza a "monster," Reyes sees the Sandinistas as even worse. In claiming that the Sandinistas have deceived the world and are in fact "enslaving the Nicaraguan people," Reyes said:

*In the American continent, there is no regime more barbaric and bloody, no regime that violates human rights in a manner more constant and permanent, than the Sandinista regime.*³⁵

A particularly cruel example of Sandinista brutality is the story of the Miskito Indians of the Atlantic Coast. A Protestant group in a predominantly Catholic country, the ethnically distinct Miskitos were generally left alone by the Somoza dynasty. Immediately after coming to power, the FSLN moved to neutralize the indigenous leadership and replace it with Sandinista Defense Committees, the citizens spy groups Borge had modeled on Cuban organizations designed to quell popular dissent. Local teachers in Miskito schools were replaced by Cubans. Demonstrations against the anti-religious, Marxist-Leninist instructors from Cuba took place in October 1979. The Sandinistas reacted ruthlessly. Indian leaders were arrested and some killed. Others simply disappeared. Later, the Sandinistas appropriated communally held lands. Destruction of Indian churches, relocation of Miskitos from their settlements along the Rio Coco border with Honduras, and the overt hostility of the Sandinistas led thousands of these peaceful people into open rebellion against the Sandinista government.³⁶

Labor has also been a victim of Sandinista abuse. The Sandinistas have formed their own labor organization, again turning their backs on the democratic labor movements that helped them in the struggle against Somoza. Mobs controlled by the Ministry of Interior have interfered with trade union activities, leaders of the independent labor unions have been denied visas

to travel to international conferences, and the Sandinistas have vocally opposed Poland's *Solidarity* movement.³⁷

Sandinista repression is not limited to the Miskito Indians and independent trade unions. The press and organized religion, especially the Catholic Church, have been singled out for abuse. Like their Soviet and Cuban sponsors, the Sandinistas fear a free press, the flow of ideas, and the moral authority of the Church more than they fear guns. Consequently, the Sandinistas have moved to establish an all-pervasive control of information available to the Nicaraguan people. The last independent newspaper, *La Prensa*, was closed in June 1986. Although it had been severely censored, it had been tolerated as part of Sandinista efforts to portray their government as pluralistic. President Ortega threatened to imprison for 30 years Violeta Chamorro, the paper's owner, a former member of the first Sandinista junta, and the widow of Somoza foe Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, whose death sparked the 1979 revolution which catapulted the *comandantes* to power. In a response to Ortega, Mrs. Chamorro said that the Sandinista party had "created a great concentration camp in Nicaragua." Commenting on the closing of *La Prensa* and other abuses by the Sandinistas, the *New York Times* saw the revolution that toppled the Somoza dictatorship as "hopelessly betrayed" by the Sandinistas. "Only the credulous can fail to see the long roots of the police state now emerging," stated the 10 July 1986 *Times* editorial entitled "The Road to Stalinism."³⁸

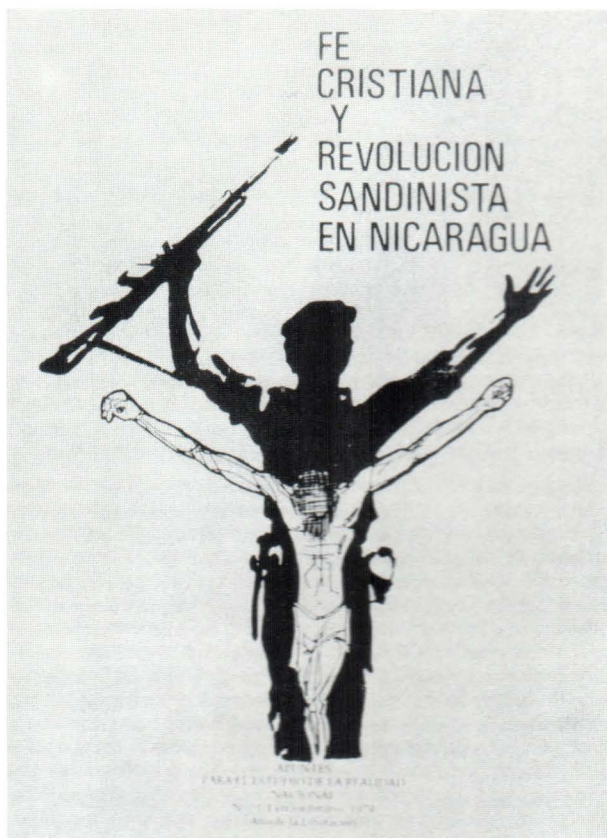
The closing of *La Prensa* was preceded by the closing of the Catholic Church's newspaper *Iglesia* in October 1985 and *Radio Catolica* in January 1986. Tension between the Church and the Sandinistas has intensified in recent months, culminating in the exiling of Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega in June 1986 and Monsignor Bismarck Carballo in July. The Sandinistas, who demand total control over all aspects of Nicaraguan life, have systematically attempted to neutralize the influence of what they see as their principal obstacle to total domination of the country—the churches.



Tapamlaya Refugee Camp, Eastern Honduras



The Sandinistas have carried out a particularly brutal campaign against the Miskito Indians of the Atlantic Coast. This has included arbitrary killings, rapes, forced relocations of entire villages, and the denial of religious freedom so important to the traditional life of the Miskitos. This has caused thousands of them to flee their ancestral homelands to live in refugee camps in Honduras.



Sandinista efforts to subvert traditional Christian values are epitomized by this logo depicting the compatibility between "Christian faith and the Sandinista revolution." The Sandinistas have attempted to implement this concept by forcing Marxist-Leninist theory into the course content of the Catholic school system.

The War Against Organized Religion

The Catholic Church's opposition to the Somoza regime helped the Sandinistas come to power. But as the Sandinistas tightened their control and increasingly militarized their society, tension between the government and the Church increased. The Sandinistas brought some priests into the government who were adherents of "liberation theology," which sees a compatibility between Christianity and Marxism. The Sandinistas encouraged priests of this persuasion to form a "popular church" as an alternative to the traditional hierarchy. In turn, the new government soon undertook a slanderous campaign against Archbishop (now Cardinal) Miguel Obando y Bravo, branding him a leader of the Church of the rich, maintaining that the popular church was the true representative of the poor. They ignored his long-standing struggle for social justice and equality. Priests loyal to the Cardinal have been humiliated in public, and Mass can no longer be broad-

cast on radio or television. Another source of tension is the government's efforts to place courses on Marxist-Leninist theory in the Catholic school curriculum.³⁹

In April 1984, the bishops issued a pastoral letter in which they called for peace and dialogue among all Nicaraguans "regardless of ideology, class, or partisan belief."⁴⁰ The Sandinistas reacted to this plea for peace with a declaration by Tomas Borge:

Those bishops belong to a race of traitors, to the sector that has turned itself over to imperialism....The stand taken by such individuals, enemies to their country and their people and traitors to their own homeland, causes indignation.⁴¹



Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, a strong opponent of Somoza, has become the symbol of non-violent opposition to Sandinista oppression.

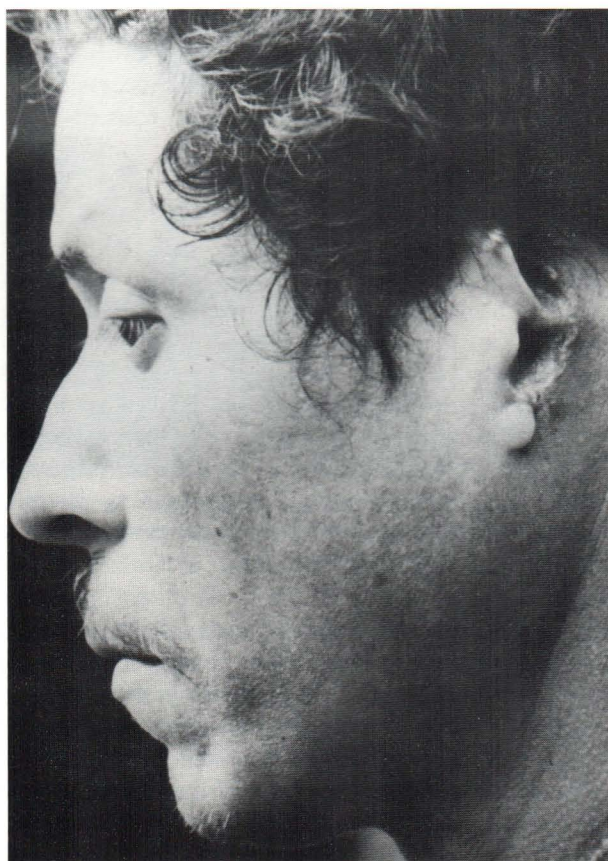
The Sandinistas obviously fear the influence the Church can exert over the deeply religious Nicaraguan people. Consequently, they have attempted to proclaim themselves genuine Christians dedicated to blending Marxism and Christianity. Borge's statement is illustrative of the wedge the *Comandantes* are attempting to drive between the traditional church and the "popular church" of the liberation theologians.

The presence of priests in the Sandinista government is frequently cited as "proof" that the *Comandantes* are not anti-religious. The most notable of these priest-politicians is Maryknoll Miguel D'Escoto, who has served as Foreign Minister since July 1979. He has been violently critical of Cardinal Obando y Bravo, frequently calling him a traitor and a "counterrevolutionary." On 2 March 1986, the semi-official Vatican daily *L'Osservatore Romano* denounced D'Escoto for "instigating the people against their pastors and thereby deepening the wounds already inflicted on the communion of the Church." After criticising D'Escoto's inflammatory remarks about the cardinal, the article concluded by asking:

Is it too late to hope for a genuinely evangelic gesture from D'Escoto, one which comes from the depths of his priestly soul? A moment of interior clarity that makes him recall that before Christ, the Church, the people of Nicaragua, and most of all, before himself, he is first of all a priest and as a priest he will one day find himself before God."⁴²

On 9 March 1986, the same paper carried an article titled "Nicaragua: the Oppression of a Church." In outlining the steps taken by the Sandinista regime to implement its "anti-religious policy," the article observed:

*One might ask why the Sandinistas are such strong opponents of the Church. It is because, though they deny it, the Sandinistas really want to establish a totalitarian regime, and totalitarianism (of any type) cannot tolerate the existence of social and human groups except the one party. The political totalitarian ideology does not allow any extraneous or alternate choice: by dismissing "a priori" a political pluralism, the citizen is left without a private space where he can practice his faith and religion. In such an exclusive perspective, the immediate targets to hit are the political parties, the economic power, and then the churches.*⁴³



Prudencio Baltodano is an Evangelical minister captured by Sandinista soldiers in February 1984. He was beaten, his throat slit, and his ears cut off. He was tied to a tree and left to die, but survived to tell of Sandinista atrocities.

The 15 October restriction of civil liberties was indeed aimed principally at the Catholic Church. But other religious groups, such as Moravians and Evangelicals, have also felt the sting of the Sandinistas. Additionally, virtually the entire Jewish community has fled Nicaragua. Despite all efforts by the *Comandantes* to intimidate the spiritual leaders of Nicaragua, religious faith remains a beacon of hope for the people of that beleaguered nation.

International Terrorism and the Sandinistas

Since coming to power, the Sandinistas have made Managua a haven for terrorists from around the world. Many have taken refuge in Nicaragua simply as a "rest and recreation" site, while others have a more specific role in the construction of the "new Nicaragua." Among the latter are representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Colonel Muammar Qadhafi's Libya.⁴⁴



Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega with Sandinista benefactor Colonel Muammar Qadhafi in September 1981. The Libyan ruler has provided the Sandinistas with hundreds of millions of dollars because the Sandinistas "fight America on its own ground."

A number of radical states—including Cuba, Iran, Libya, and North Korea—share the common objective of attacking U.S. presence, prestige, and strategic interests throughout the world. Nicaragua could become a member of this group. The presence of citizens of several of these states has been verified in Nicaragua, some since 1979.⁴⁵

Sandinista ties to Middle Eastern radicals date back to 1966, when the Sandinista movement was only five years old. As always, Fidel Castro played a pivotal role in assisting the Sandinistas as they forged alliances with the terrorist network then emerging. In 1966, he held the "first conference of the organization of solidarity of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America."⁴⁶ At this Tri-Continental Conference, as it is popularly known, the politically ambitious Castro brought together 500 delegates from radical leftist groups throughout the world to devise a plan for what was described as a global revolutionary movement.

As a result of this meeting, members of the PLO were trained in camps in Cuba and the Soviet Union. The PLO cadre next set up their own camps in the Middle East. By the late 1960s, Sandinistas were being trained in these camps in Lebanon, and later in camps run by Qadhafi after he seized power in Libya in 1969. PLO-trained Sandinistas participated in efforts to depose King Hussein of Jordan. Another joint Sandinista-PLO operation in 1970 was described by a Sandinista spokesman in an interview with the newspaper *al-Watan* in Kuwait:

A number of Sandinistas took part in the operation to divert four aircraft which the (PLO) seized and landed at a desert airfield

*in Jordan. One of our comrades was also wounded in another hijack operation in which Leila Khaled was involved. She was in command of the operation and our comrades helped her carry it out....Many of the units belonging to the Sandinista movement were at Palestinian revolutionary bases in Jordan....Nicaraguan and Palestinian blood was spilled together in Amman and other places during the 'Black September battles.'*⁴⁷

The reference to a "hijack operation" is the hijacking of an El Al airliner en route from Tel Aviv to London on 6 September 1970. Sandinista Patrick Arguello Ryan was killed in this hijacking attempt; he had been trained at one of the PLO camps. The Sandinistas have named a large dam under construction in Nicaragua in honor of Arguello.

Lasting contacts between Sandinista leaders and Middle East radicals were apparently forged when Tomas Borge, today the Sandinista Minister of Interior, served as Castro's envoy to these groups in the 1970s.⁴⁸ These contacts have provided the Sandinistas with financial and materiel support. In return, the PLO representative in Managua is afforded full diplomatic recognition, giving Nicaragua the distinction of honoring the representative of a terrorist organization with the title "Ambassador." PLO aviation experts have worked closely with the Sandinista air force, and Yasir Arafat has been an effective ally of the Sandinistas in the Middle East. Borge showed the close ties between the Sandinistas and the PLO during a July 1980 visit by Arafat to Nicaragua, when he said:

We say to our brother Arafat that Nicaragua is his land and the PLO cause is the cause of the Sandinistas.⁴⁹

Colonel Qadhafi, perhaps the world's most notorious supporter of terrorism, views Nicaragua as a future base for terrorist operations in the Western Hemisphere, particularly against the United States, and has sought to strengthen the Sandinista dictatorship. He has given several hundred million dollars in economic assistance and has provided Nicaragua with weapons, as well as military personnel. In June 1981, Sergio Ramirez, Sandinista junta member and now vice president (described normally as one of the "moderates" in the Nicaraguan government) spoke warmly of Libya:

The ties between the Libyan people and the Nicaraguan people are not new, but were consolidated when the Sandinista Front struggled in the field of battle to win the liberty of our homeland. The solidarity of the Libyan people, of the Libyan government and comrade Muammar Khaddafi [Qadhafi] was always patently manifest. This solidarity has been made real, has been made effective, has been made more fraternal since the triumph of our revolution.⁵⁰

Libyan military support to the Sandinistas was made "patently manifest" in April 1983. Four Libyan aircraft had to land in Brazil because of engine problems with one of the aircraft. The crew claimed that the planes were carrying medical supplies to Colombia. Brazilian authorities became suspicious when the pilots could not produce cargo manifests of such Colombia-bound medicines. The planes were then searched by skeptical Brazilian officials, who found over 80 tons of arms, explosives, and other military equipment. This included at least one dismantled jet trainer/attack aircraft, wire-guided missiles, rifles, machine guns, mortars, bazookas, 90mm cannons, eight multiple rocket launchers, five tons of bombs, eight anti-aircraft guns, 600 light artillery rockets, and other unspecified crates of military equipment.⁵¹

Had the airfield the Cubans were constructing in Grenada been operational, the planes would have been able to land there instead of Brazil and Libya's deep involvement with the Sandinistas would have remained hidden. Qadhafi has since given up any pretense of obscuring his relationship. He was quoted by the *New York Times* in September 1984:

We have fought along with Nicaragua, some miles away from America. Libyan

fighters, arms, and backing to the Nicaraguan people have reached them because they fight with us. They fight America on its own ground.⁵²

The Sandinistas as Manipulators

Aided by the Soviets and Cubans, the Sandinistas have established an abominable human rights record. They have enforced press censorship unequalled in Nicaraguan history, restricted freedom of religion, and waged unrelenting aggression against their neighbors. Moreover, they have reneged on the promises they made to respect true political pluralism. Many Nicaraguans who helped to bring the Sandinistas to power now feel they have been manipulated. In the summer of 1979, Violeta Chamorro, widow of newspaper editor Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, whose 1978 death was the spark for the revolution, was one of those signing a letter to the OAS on behalf of the Sandinistas promising a representative government. She was an heroic figure at that time, carrying on the fight of her slain husband against a brutal dictatorship. But by August 1985, Violeta Chamorro had become so disillusioned with the Sandinistas that she wrote the Secretary General of the OAS:

...enough time has elapsed for me to see beyond any possible doubt those principles for which we all fought until we succeeded in ousting Anastasio Somoza Debayle from power have been flagrantly betrayed by the ruling party, namely the FSLN.

For this reason I feel it my duty to denounce the fraud committed by the FSLN, which, abusing the trust we placed in its leaders, has perverted the democratic foundations and led Nicaragua down the path of Marxism-Leninism, a doctrine that clashes with our Christian and democratic principles. The FSLN's outrageous behavior has immersed our country into a very serious foreign and domestic conflict that bleeds our youth.⁵³

Many visitors to Nicaragua still insist on viewing the Sandinistas as victims, not aggressors. As Professor Paul Hollander of the University of Massachusetts has written:

Marxist-Leninist Nicaragua has in the last few years emerged as the new destination of political tourists from the United States who have revived a grotesque and embar-

passing tradition in Western intellectual-political history: The reverential pilgrimage to highly repressive Communist countries by educated people, beneficiaries of considerable political freedom and material well-being.⁵⁴

The work of public relations and legal firms hired by the Sandinistas is enhanced by foreign visitors who are

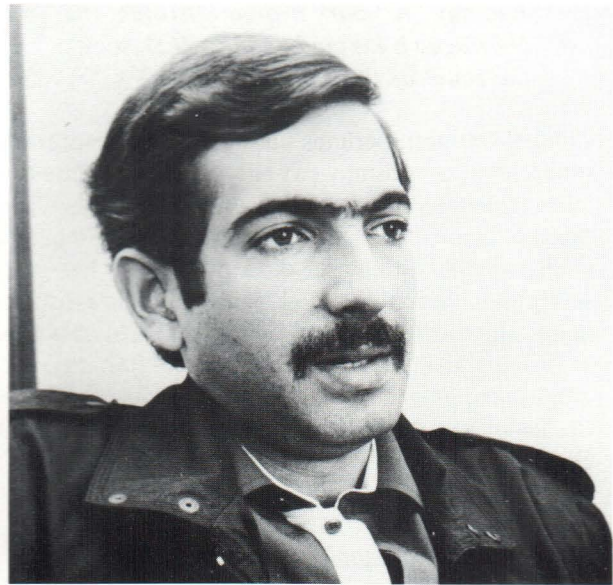
Wide World Photo



Nicaraguan Minister of Interior Tomas Borge masterminds the campaign to manipulate foreign public opinion. He maintains an office adorned with religious artifacts specifically to impress visitors, and refers to those he dupes as his "army of useful fools."

blind to the reality of Nicaragua's Communist dictatorship. This is the same naive view that caused some foreign visitors to view Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany as utopias in the 1930s. Professor Hollander writes of those taking today's guided tours to Nicaragua:

The credulousness of the pilgrims to Nicaragua remains staggering. Not only do they ignore the lessons of similar pilgrimages and tours in the past; they also blind themselves to the abundant information and testimony available about Nicaragua, much of it coming from Nicaraguans untainted by any association with the Somoza regime and who were in fact supporters of the revolution which deposed him, that belies the image projected by the Sandinistas and carefully cultivated through the tours.⁵⁵



Lt. Alvaro Baldizon, formerly chief investigator of the Special Investigations Commission under Interior Minister Tomas Borge, defected from Nicaragua in July 1985. Baldizon's wife was placed under house arrest and his brother confined to a secret prison, as punishment for Baldizon's revelations on Sandinista human rights abuses and involvement in drug trafficking.

The Sandinistas have gone to ingenious extremes in their efforts to deceive visitors to Nicaragua. For example, Minister of Interior Borge maintains a special office to receive foreign visitors, particularly religious groups. This office contains crucifixes, tapestries with religious motifs, a Bible, and a large statue of Christ. In the office where Borge carries out most of his day-to-day duties, there are no religious articles seen. Instead, this office displays pictures of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. This detailed information has been provided by Alvaro Baldizon, a former chief investigator for Borge.⁵⁶ (The religious decor of the office where Borge receives visitors has been reported by others.⁵⁷) Baldizon added that Borge quotes the Bible extensively, not because of a new-found devotion to religion, but instead to delude visitors. Baldizon reports that Borge refers to American visitors who accept his line as "an army of useful fools."⁵⁸

The fact that many foreign visitors have unwittingly been inducted into Borge's "army" demonstrates the Sandinistas' success in disguising their dedication to Marxism-Leninism. Few of these foreign supporters of the Sandinistas hold any sympathy for communism and the brutal price it extracts from the people of the countries in which it is imposed. Borge and his fellow *Comandantes*, however, are cynically exploiting the under-

standable desires of these well-intentioned visitors to help the poor achieve a better future and greater dignity. By focusing on literacy and health care programs, the Sandinistas obscure the incremental erosion of personal freedoms so characteristic of life in Communist societies.

The Sandinistas are using the same deceptive tactics in the 1980s that their patron Castro used in the 1960s. Tragically, many strongly anti-Communist foreign visitors fell prey to this deception by Castro. A lesson to be learned by today's visitors to Nicaragua is found in the words of Armando Valladares, a poet imprisoned by Castro in 1960. After being released in 1982 (only after the intercession of French Socialist President Francois Mitterrand), Valladares reflected on his time in prison:

During those years, with the purpose of forcing us to abandon our religious beliefs and to demoralize us, the Cuban Communist indoctrinators repeatedly used the statements of support for Castro's revolution made by some representatives of American Christian churches. Every time that a pamphlet was published in the U.S., every time a

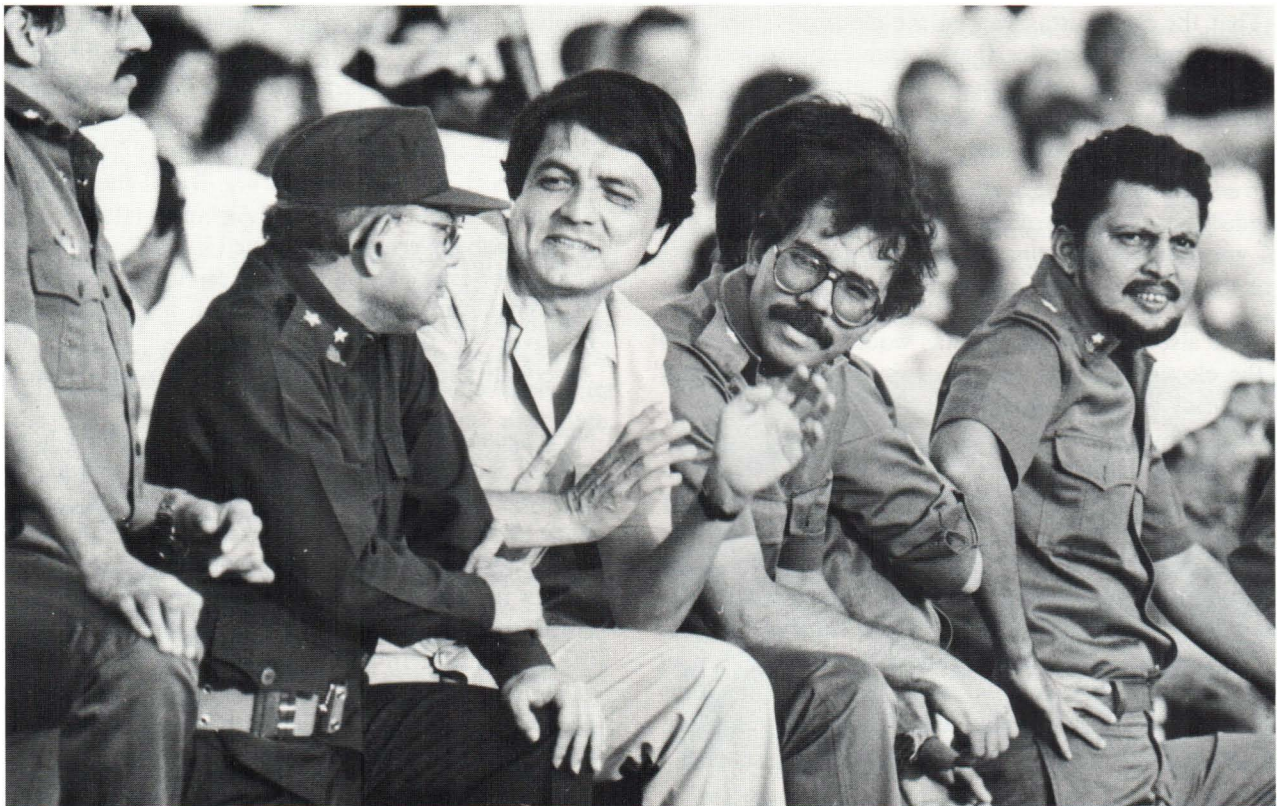
clergyman would write an article in support of Fidel Castro's dictatorship, a translation would reach us, and that was worse for the Christian political prisoners than the beatings or the hunger. Incomprehensibly to us, while we waited for the embrace of solidarity from our brothers in Christ, those who were embraced were our tormentors.⁵⁹ (Emphasis added)

Sandinista Betrayal

In addition to establishing a dictatorship more oppressive than the one they replaced, the Sandinistas have also betrayed their followers on the matter of free elections and a non-aligned foreign policy. The elections were not free, and the Sandinista foreign policy is clearly aligned with the Soviet Union.

The elections of 5 November 1984 were held in an atmosphere of political and psychological intimidation. Food was used as a political weapon by the Sandinistas. Because access to government food stores rested with the local Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS), it was

Wide World Photo



Sandinista leaders at political rally before the 4 November 1984 elections in which Sandinista intimidation prevented a viable opposition to the Sandinista ticket. From left Humberto Ortega, Tomas Borge, Sergio Ramirez, Daniel Ortega, and Bayardo Arce.

widely perceived that not voting would mean not eating. The CDSs played an important role in the period leading up to the election. Shirley Christian wrote that they

went house-to-house giving lessons in how to mark and cast ballots. Comandantes said in speeches that those who refused to vote would be branded counterrevolutionaries. Though press censorship was eased substantially during the campaign, La Prensa had to continue submitting all of its stories for prior review. One of the things that was still censored out of the paper was coverage of turba attacks (Note: Gangs controlled by the Ministry of Interior) on opposition rallies. The nation remained under the state of emergency decreed on March 15, 1982, the day after Contra forces blew up two bridges near the Honduran border. Also, the voting age was lowered from eighteen to sixteen, which brought onto the rolls a substantial number of youths who had been under the influence of the heavily politicized educational changes of the previous five years.⁶⁰

That the Sandinistas viewed the elections more as a public relations device than a true political test was revealed by the Comandante in charge of the FSLN electoral campaign. In the May 1984 secret speech noted earlier, Bayardo Arce said:

We see the elections as one more weapon of the revolution to bring its historical objectives gradually into reality. Therefore, we intend to take advantage of them.⁶¹

Arce also said the Sandinistas would not have called the elections except for "the war situation imposed upon us by the United States."⁶²

There was widespread international criticism of the electoral process, but none more damning than that of Carlos Andres Perez, former President of Venezuela. As President, Perez had been a strong supporter of the Sandinistas in their struggle against Somoza. Displeased over Sandinista conduct of the elections, Perez refused to attend the inauguration of President Daniel Ortega on 10 January 1985, explaining his disappointment with the Sandinistas in an open letter to Ortega:

My last visit to Managua was on Feb. 20, 1984.... We heard you state, in terms even more categorical than those expressed in public, your determination to carry out an electoral process with the broadest

guarantees. These were pledges that we received enthusiastically, and repeated widely.... Those of us who believe we have done so much for the Sandinista Revolution feel cheated, because sufficient guarantees were not provided to assure the participation of all political forces. Sadly, the limiting in this way of true political pluralism weakened the credibility of the elections.⁶³ (Emphasis added)

Another of the promises made by the Sandinistas in seeking OAS support in their struggle against the Somoza regime was that their government would follow a "non-aligned" foreign policy. Just as they have betrayed the other promises to the OAS and the Nicaraguan people, so too have they broken their commitment on their foreign policy orientation. Even while seeking and accepting economic aid from the West (particularly the United States), the Sandinistas moved into the Soviet orbit. While on a visit to North Korea, in June 1980, Tomas Borge said that "the Nicaraguan revolutionaries will not be content until the imperialists have been overthrown in all parts of the world...we stand with the...socialist countries."⁶⁴

Probably nowhere is a nation's political alignment more evident than in its voting record in the United Nations General Assembly. During the 38th General Assembly (1983-84), the Sandinista representative voted the Soviet-Cuban position 96% of the time.⁶⁵ This included support for ousting Israel from the General Assembly. In the 39th General Assembly (1984-85), the Nicaraguan government remained in the Soviet-Cuban camp. For example, on the vote on Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Nicaragua abstained, while Cuba voted in favor of the Soviet position. All other Latin American nations voted against the Soviet Union.⁶⁶

Nicaraguans of all social classes have had their hopes dashed as Daniel Ortega and his fellow Comandantes betrayed them. More than 200,000 have left Nicaragua since 1979 rather than live under Sandinista rule. Many of the poorest of these unfortunate Nicaraguans have chosen the hardship of life in refugee camps in Honduras and Costa Rica to the cruel reality of life under the Sandinistas. In part because the promises of 1979 were broken, a resistance movement of courageous Nicaraguans began fighting to achieve the real freedom they mistakenly thought they gained with the ouster of the Somoza dynasty. To the extent that this resistance movement remains an effective force, the revolution against dictatorship that drove Somoza from Nicaragua remains alive.

THE DEMOCRATIC RESISTANCE FIGHTERS: WHO THEY ARE AND WHY THEY FIGHT

Origins of the Movement

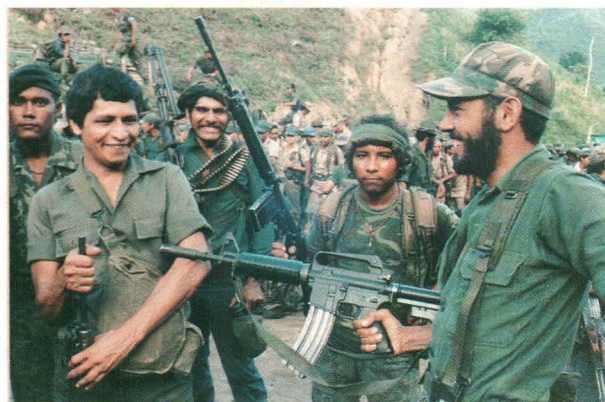
The Soviet-Cuban connection has enabled the Sandinistas to impose their will on the Nicaraguan people and carry out aggression against neighboring countries. Frustrated by the Sandinistas' betrayal of the 1979 democratic revolution, some 20,000 Nicaraguans have joined a growing armed resistance movement. These Nicaraguan fighters are referred to by the Sandinistas as counterrevolutionaries, or "contras." This term is intended to picture the resistance as being opposed to social, economic, and political change so necessary in a real revolution. In reality, the resistance leaders are fighting for a return to the principles of democracy, which they believed had been won in the triumph over Somoza.

Resistance to the Sandinistas was minimal in the immediate post-revolutionary period. Somoza's National Guard had disintegrated, and thousands of its members were imprisoned. Some national guardsmen began conspiring against the Sandinistas almost immediately after the fall of Somoza. Their influence was negligible, however, for the Sandinistas were riding the crest of a wave of popularity, and these small bands of former guardsmen found themselves isolated.

It soon became obvious, however, that the Sandinistas were a Marxist-Leninist political elite concerned with consolidating power, not sharing it through representative political democracy. It was against this new collective dictatorship that the opposition—both armed and unarmed—began to form, just as rebellion had developed against the old elite of the Somoza dynasty.

By early 1980, some Sandinista soldiers were becoming disenchanted with the political direction the government was taking. They were joined by peasants who had

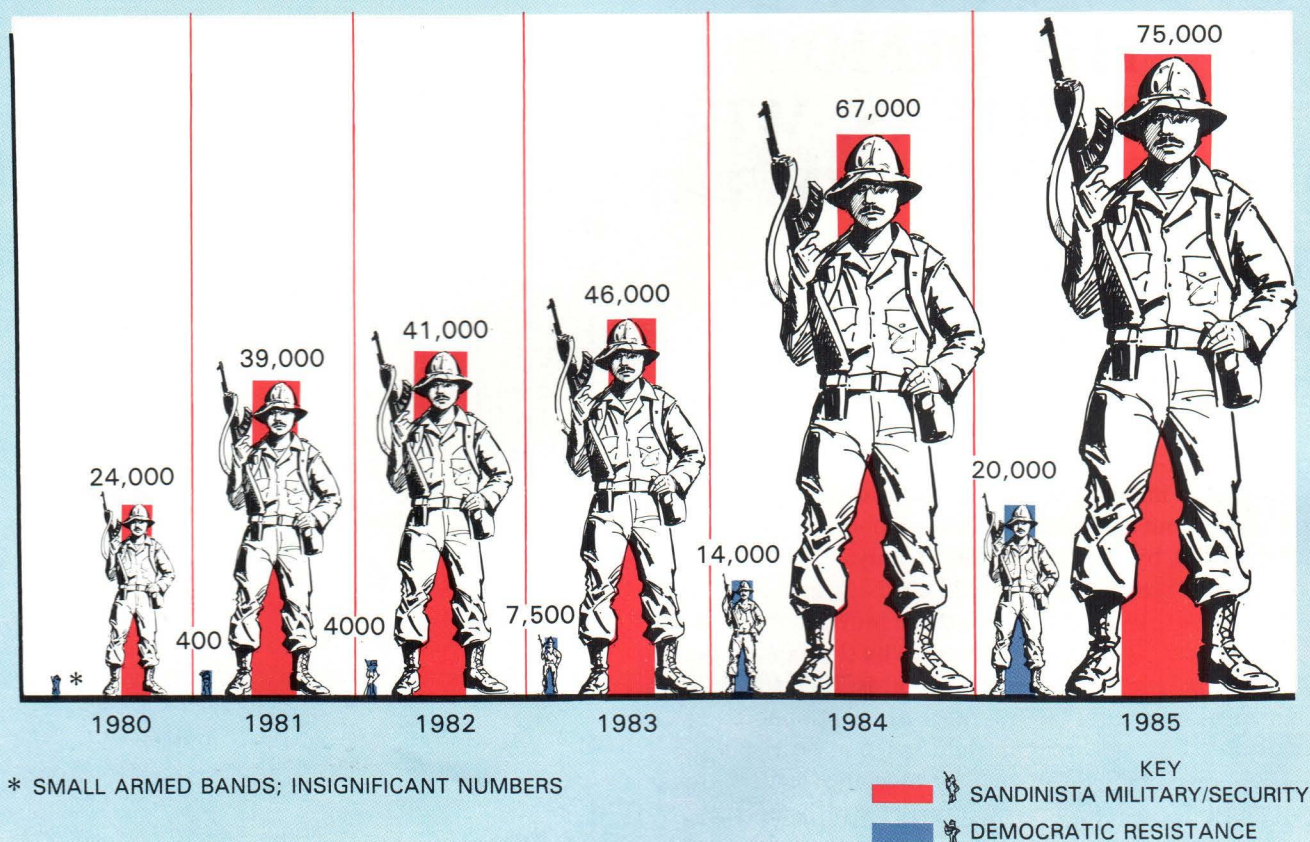
become upset with the authoritarian and abusive treatment they received at the hands of the Sandinistas, despite their support for the Sandinistas against Somoza. Because of the abuses they had individually and collectively suffered at the hands of the Somoza's National Guard, these peasants and former Sandinistas were wary of an alliance with the few hundred former guardsmen operating on the northern border of Nicaragua. Eventually, however, they concluded that the new Sandinista government was far worse than the National Guard had ever been, and the former guardsmen had access to weapons. An informal alliance developed, and the beginning of what was to become the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) was taking shape. The resistance was set to challenge the usurpers of the 1979 revolution, and had concluded that the only opportunity to stop the Sandinistas from establishing a foreign-dominated Communist dictatorship lay in military pressure. The task was more daunting for the Nicaraguan resistance because the enemy they now



Peter Bertie

The bearded FDN soldier on the right fought with the Sandinistas against Somoza. Shortly after the revolution he left the Sandinista army after witnessing a Sandinista mob brutally torture and murder two of his friends.

COMPARISON OF THE GROWTH OF THE SANDINISTA ARMED FORCES & THE DEMOCRATIC RESISTANCE MOVEMENT



This chart shows the comparative growth of the Sandinista military and the armed resistance. By their own admission, the Sandinistas faced no real threat from "counterrevolutionaries" at the time they were building Central America's largest armed forces.

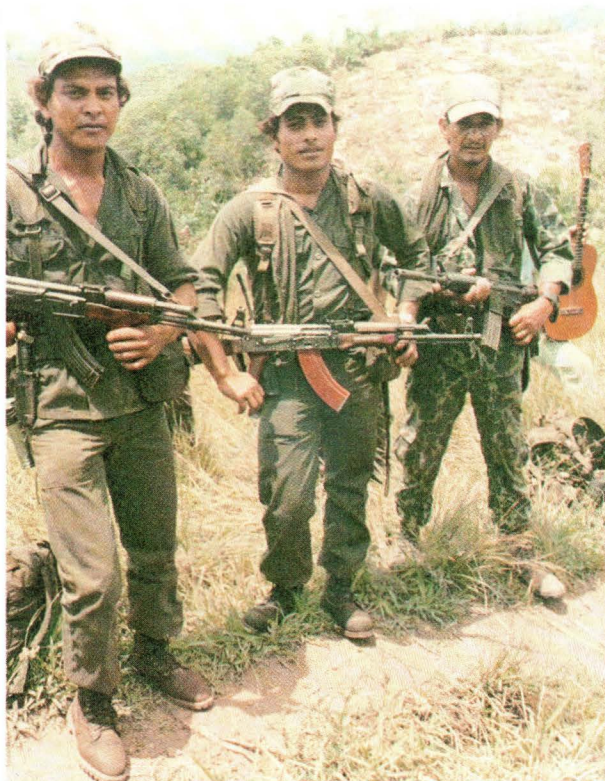
faced—the Sandinista armed forces—was far larger and better armed than was the National Guard. By December 1980, the Sandinistas, with Communist-bloc assistance, had already become the largest military in Central American history, having grown from about 5,000 to at least 24,000 men, an increase of almost 400% in only 18 months.⁶⁷

As noted in the previous chapter, the Nicaraguan ambassador to the United States has admitted that the Sandinistas knew in 1981 that they faced no significant armed resistance.⁶⁸ But such a threat is frequently cited by supporters of the Sandinistas as the reason Managua was "forced" to devote so much of its scarce resources to the development of a large military. The Sandinistas and their supporters also claim that the massive arms buildup was necessary to deter an invasion from a hostile United States. The Sandinistas, however, had turned to the Soviets and Cubans for the weapons to

build their armed forces at the very time the United States was providing the bulk of their economic assistance.⁶⁹

The Resistance Movement Today

The resistance movement is a cross section of the Nicaraguan population. It comprises in the main young peasants, but also includes businessmen, students, former Sandinista soldiers, and former national guardsmen. Sandinista abuses fused this coalition of unlikely bedfellows; it even includes clergymen who have decided that the atheistic and barbaric nature of the Sandinistas provides the moral justification to take up arms, just as the Catholic bishops had told the Nicaraguan people that an uprising against Somoza was morally acceptable.⁷⁰



Sandinista brutality drove the three men shown here from their religious vocations to the resistance. On the left is a former Catholic seminarian who is now a paramedic; center is a former Evangelical pastor who is now a task force commander; at right is a former Evangelical pastor who is second in command of a regional command.

The photo above shows three such former churchmen who have now joined the resistance movement: a former Catholic seminarian and two former Evangelical pastors. The seminarian fled after he and 17 of his classmates were imprisoned and beaten by Sandinista security forces in June 1980. He said that two of his classmates were tortured and murdered. He now serves in the FDN as a paramedic and hopes someday to continue his studies for the priesthood. The first Evangelical pastor became disillusioned when mobs under the control of Interior Minister Tomas Borge threatened to burn his church and kill him. Although he had no military background, he is now commander of the Chontales Task Force. The other Evangelical pastor decided to take up arms in October 1982 when a fellow pastor was murdered by the Sandinistas. He is now the Deputy Commander of the Jorge Salazar Regional Command.⁷¹ (Salazar, a popular Nicaraguan businessman, was murdered by the Sandinistas in 1981⁷² because they feared he could become a rallying point for the anti-Sandinista sentiment already developing.)

The rapid growth of the armed democratic resistance movement is a testimony to the tenacity and courage of the Nicaraguan people, as well as to the oppressiveness of the Sandinista regime. To become a guerrilla and face hardship, uncertainty, and danger is the ultimate step in alienation from a political system. The growth of anti-Sandinista resistance in four years from a few hundred to about 20,000 in a country of less than 3 million is even more remarkable when compared to El Salvador. There, a guerrilla force that dates back to the early 1970s has only about 5,000-7,000 fighters out of a population of almost 5 million. Furthermore, the Nicaraguan resistance doubled between May 1984 and June 1985—the very time when the U.S. government was providing no military assistance.

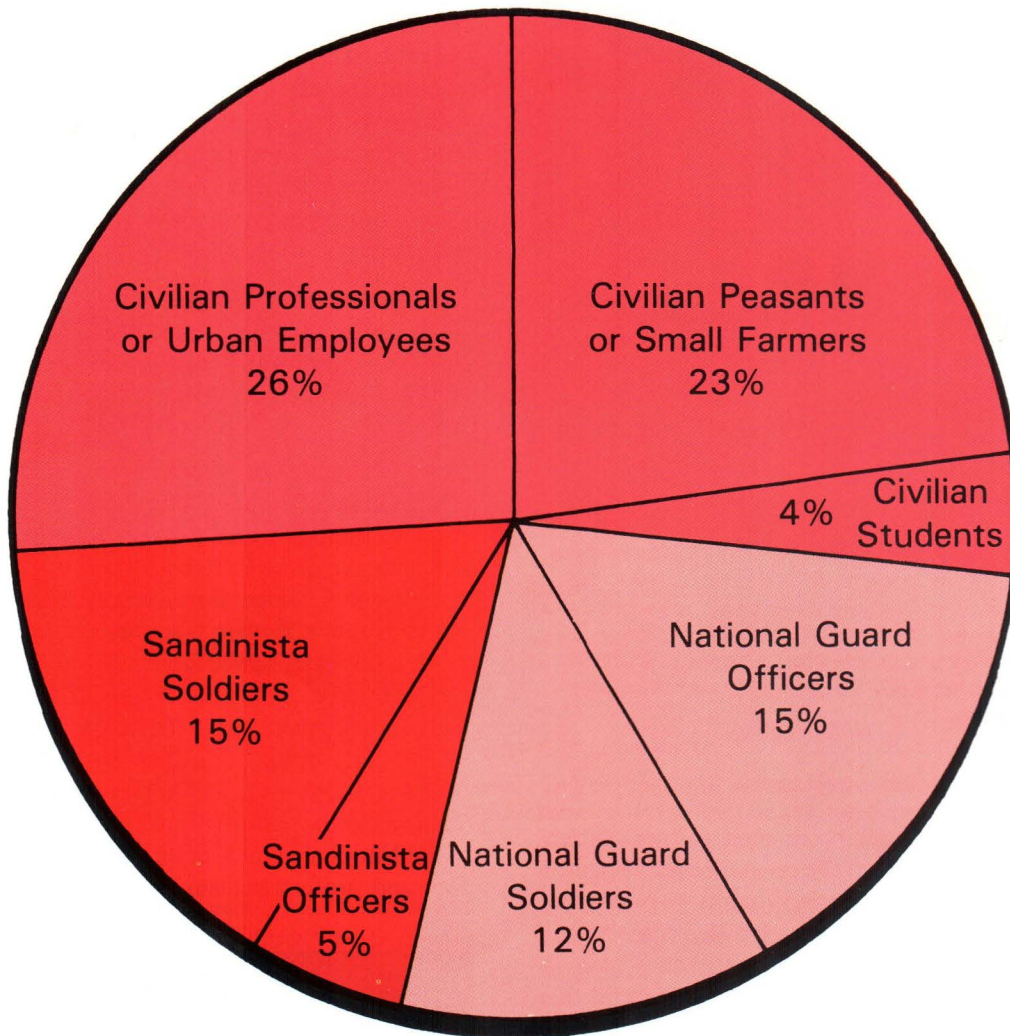
Most of the resistance fighters come under the umbrella organization of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO), which was formed in June 1985. UNO is headed by Nicaraguans who were strong opponents of Somoza.

The myth that the resistance movement is Somoza's National Guard attempting to regain power is perpetuated by the Sandinistas and their supporters. However, the facts are quite different. The main target of such criticism is Enrique Bermudez, FDN military commander and a former National Guard colonel. Bermudez, however, served from 1975-1979 as Nicaragua's representative to the Inter-American Defense Board in Washington, D.C., away from the revolutionary war taking place in his homeland. In the final months of the struggle, the Carter Administration suggested to Somoza that he name Bermudez as the new commander of the National Guard, in an effort to improve its conduct and professionalism.⁷³



The Sandinistas have driven thousands, such as this woman and her family, from their lands and into resettlement camps in northern Nicaragua. An FDN patrol that found her after she had escaped from such a camp gave her money for food.

Background of FDN Military Leaders: Late 1985



Total Civilian	53%
Total National Guard	27%
Total Sandinista	20%

This chart shows the background of leaders of the FDN, the largest of the resistance movements that have developed in reaction to the Sandinistas' betrayal of the 1979 revolution. Statistically, this chart is based on the top 153 command and staff positions. These are the headquarters positions, and the Regional and Task Force command positions.



Glen Thibodeaux

A group of recruits at an FDN camp. About 90% of the soldiers of the resistance are between 18 and 22, with some as young as 15.

While the FDN did have a relatively high percentage of former guardsmen among the few hundred in its ranks in 1982, it certainly does not today. Of the approximately 17,000 in the FDN, fewer than 200 were once in the guard. Of the 14 Regional Commands of the FDN, three are headed by former National Guardsmen, while six are headed by former Sandinistas. The remaining five commanders had no previous military experience. Of the approximately 50 commanders of Task Forces—the principal combat elements—13 are former National Guardsmen, while 12 are former Sandinistas. The remainder had no previous military experience. Out of a total of 21 key staff officers in the headquarters of the FDN, there are only 12 former guardsmen—all former enlisted men except Bermudez.⁷⁴

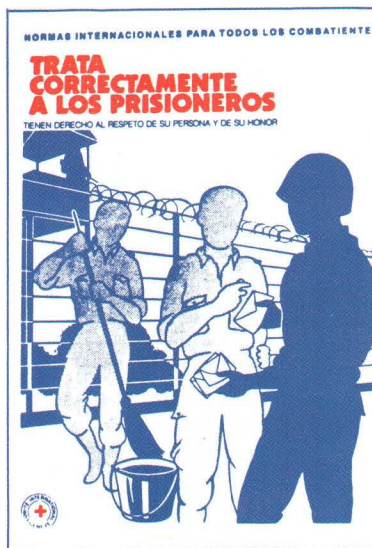
Of the young men and women in the ranks, more than 90% are in their teens and early twenties—too young to have served in the National Guard, which disintegrated in 1979. They come principally from rural areas,

the classic peasants that westerners with a romanticized view of revolutionary movements think are attracted to the Marxist-Leninist cause. In Nicaragua, Sandinista oppression has become the principal recruiting tool of the resistance movement. Young men and women have enlisted in the resistance movement after seeing first hand the brutality of the Sandinistas, and many have joined to avoid being conscripted forcefully into the Sandinista army.⁷⁵

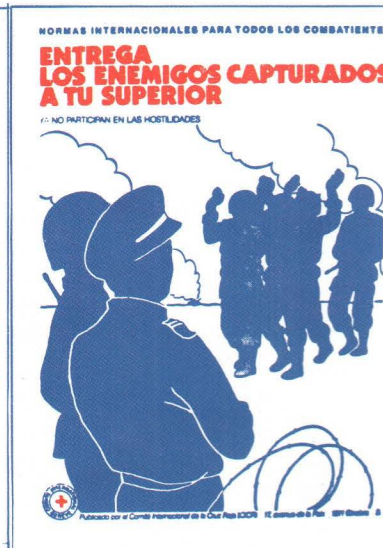
The Sandinistas have sought to discredit the resistance movement by an intense propaganda campaign. The Ministry of Interior's General Directorate for State Security, trained by East Germans and Cubans, regularly fabricate stories of human rights violations. Alvaro Baldizon, formerly a chief investigator in the office of Interior Minister Borge, has reported that Borge has formed units that wear FDN uniforms and carry out atrocities to discredit the resistance movement.⁷⁶



COMBATANT'S MANUAL



Give Proper Treatment to Prisoners



Bring Captured Enemy Soldiers to Your Superior

Soldiers of the FDN are issued copies of this "Manual for Combatants" produced in accordance with international Red Cross standards. The booklet outlines the code of conduct required of FDN soldiers.

In the type of war being fought today in Nicaragua, as in all wars, abuses of human rights unfortunately take place. Individual soldiers of the resistance have indeed committed abuses. Such breaches are unacceptable. Leaders of the resistance are aware that their forces must follow a high standard of conduct. They realize that to gain and maintain the allegiance of the populace, they must be known as a positive, not a negative, alternative to the Sandinistas. To this end, Ismael Reyes, the former President of the Nicaraguan Red Cross who played a major role in calling the world's attention to Somoza's brutality in 1978-79, has been appointed to head UNO's Human Rights Commission. The soldiers of UNO receive daily instruction on human rights during basic training. They also receive a combatant's manual which presents a code of conduct that warns that acts of violence against civilians and prisoners will be punished. Where there have been instances of human rights violations, the UNO leaders have conducted trials and individuals convicted of abuses have been punished.

The Sandinistas and their supporters in the United States claim that the resistance movement has little popular support, and that the contra "atrocities" have dried up what little support they did enjoy. What the Sandinistas and their supporters cannot explain away is that the resistance movement has increased in size so dramatically that it now has four times more com-

batants than the Sandinistas had in their ranks when they came to power. A guerrilla movement guilty of widespread abuse would not be attracting thousands of young men and women to join its cause.

The Legal Question

International law is based in part on the principle that unprovoked force is illegal, but that a proportional defensive response to such aggression is permitted. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter specifies a nation's "inherent right of individual and/or collective



Members of the resistance movement travel freely throughout northern Nicaragua, frequently acquiring transportation from local peasants as shown here.

Peter Bertie

self-defense.”⁷⁷ Nicaragua has indeed been guilty of unprovoked aggression against its neighbors, as the United States Congress has consistently stated, most specifically in two public laws, as shown on page 24. Despite the evidence of their guilt, the Sandinistas deny providing military support to the Salvadoran guerrillas, and thus proclaim they have not provoked a defensive response. They have brazenly charged that the United States has waged unprovoked war against them since 1982. On the basis of such distortions the Sandinistas seek protection under the same international law they have violated since 1979. The Nicaraguan position is analogous to one antagonist saying to another, “the fight started when you hit me back.” The story of aggression in Central America certainly did not start with the first resistance attacks in late 1981 and early 1982. It started when the first arms and ammunition went from Cuba to Managua and then to the Salvadoran guerrillas, more than two years earlier.

A respected international law scholar, Professor John Norton Moore of the University of Virginia Law School, has addressed the basic question of the legality of U.S. aid to the resistance movement, and has concluded that such aid is both legal and obligatory. He stated in October 1984:

The essence of the basis for the legality of U.S. aid to the “contras” is that Cuba, with Soviet-bloc assistance, and acting in conjunction with the government of Nicaragua, is providing military support, arms, training, command, control and communications support to groups seeking to overthrow the government of El Salvador and other Central American states.

Such actions by Cuba and Nicaragua clearly violate Article 18 of the OAS Charter which declares that no state has the right to intervene directly or indirectly in the internal or external affairs of any other state.

Under the provisions of Article 51 of the U.N. charter, Article 3 of the Rio Treaty and Articles 22, 27, and 28 relating to self-defense and mutual assistance, the United States has both the right and obligation to assist the Government of El Salvador by defending it against Nicaraguan-based aggression.

*Legal scholars have quite clearly interpreted Article 51 to mean that an armed attack need not simply be armies on the march, but can take place by organization, institution, and support of a sustained insurgency.*⁷⁸

In the January 1986 *American Journal of International Law*, Professor Moore has written:

*Few who have seriously reviewed the evidence—from the attacked Governments of Central America to the congressional intelligence oversight committees and the bipartisan Kissinger Commission—doubt that the root of the world-order problem in Central America is a serious, ongoing secret war directed from Cuba and Nicaragua against neighboring states, particularly El Salvador. The contra response is just that: an effort by the democracies to defend against that attack and to create a meaningful incentive for the perpetrators to stop.*⁷⁹

The Sandinistas know an admission that they are providing assistance to the Salvadoran guerrillas in their war against a sovereign government would undermine Nicaragua’s argument that it is the victim of unprovoked aggression. Consequently, the Sandinistas have persisted in saying that they are “not engaged....in the provisions of arms” to the Salvadoran guerrillas.⁸⁰

The Sandinistas have mounted an intensive propaganda campaign aimed at obscuring Sandinista aggression against its neighbors and oppression of its own citizens, and at discrediting the democratic resistance as Somoza’s National Guard in new garb. Critics of U.S. policy claim that the United States is using a double standard by supporting guerrillas in Nicaragua, while criticizing Nicaragua for doing the same in El Salvador. But there is no contradiction, as Charles Krauthammer pointed out in a *Time* magazine essay in April 1985:

*The difference between El Salvador and Nicaragua is that in El Salvador, a fledgling democracy is under attack by avowed Marxist-Leninists. In Nicaragua, a fledgling totalitarianism is under attack by a mixture of forces, most of which not only are pledged to democracy and pluralism but fought for just those goals in the original revolution against Somoza.*⁸¹

The Question of Aid to the Resistance Movement

The resistance movement has consistently called for a peaceful solution to Nicaragua’s troubles. In March 1985, the armed resistance joined the internal opposition in a call for a national dialogue, a cease-fire and

an agreement that the Sandinistas remain in power until open, internationally supervised elections could be held. The Sandinistas, who advocate power sharing by the Communist guerrillas in El Salvador, adamantly refused this offer. UNO has kept this offer open, but the Sandinistas have categorically rejected this opportunity for dialogue.⁸²

UNO certainly offers an alternative to an anti-democratic political system which is determined to control all aspects of life in Nicaragua, and which is subordinating the dignity of the individual to the power of the state. This state, in turn, is subordinating itself to the interests of the Soviet Union and Cuba. As Shirley Christian has observed:

*The leaders of the Sandinista Front intended to establish a Leninist system from the day they marched into Managua, whether they called it that or not....Any indication the Sandinista leaders gave of wanting something other than a Leninist system in Nicaragua was, as they admitted several times, for tactical or strategic purposes, not for reasons of substance.*⁸³

She goes on to say that the Sandinistas gave

*themselves meekly to the Soviets in exchange for more and more weaponry. In a sense, they sold themselves for the means to stay in power in the face of failed policies and widespread unhappiness.*⁸⁴

The notion of supporting guerrillas fighting a sitting government is difficult for many citizens of democracies to accept. The political reality of the 1980s, however, often forces difficult moral choices. There is no question that the Marxist-Leninist government in Nicaragua has seized power through armed revolution and false promises. The United States opposes the Sandinistas because Sandinista Nicaragua today serves the interests of the Soviet Union and Cuba, and thus is inimical to the security interests of the United States and the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

The United States has a clear, undeniable moral imperative to support the democratic resistance in its fight to establish democracy and respect for human rights in Nicaragua. It is a traditional imperative stemming from more than 200 years during which the United States has lent its support to those around the world struggling for freedom and independence.

Dr. John Silber, President of Boston University and a member of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, has summarized the dilemma facing the United States in the conduct of foreign policy:

*We face the tragic limitation on our moral choice in that we do not always have the option of choosing between good and evil. It is perfectly moral to support the lesser of two evils. It is utterly immoral to abandon an inadequate democracy struggling to become an effective one, leaving it an easy prey to forces that are effectively totalitarian.*⁸⁵

The democratic resistance in Nicaragua is indeed struggling to achieve a democracy, just as many of its leaders united with the Sandinistas in the fight against Somoza. Yet support in the United States and Europe is far less vocal in 1986 for this movement than was the support for the Sandinistas in 1979—although much more is known today about the democratic credentials of the leadership of UNO than was known of the Sandinista Comandantes in 1979.

Alfonso Robelo, one of the UNO leaders and a former member of the Sandinista government, made an eloquent plea for support to his fellow Social Democrats of the democratic left in the United States in June 1985. In calling for liberals in the United States to recognize that their political hopes for Nicaragua were more closely represented by UNO than by the Sandinistas, Robelo described himself and his UNO colleagues as follows:

—It is we who stand for a free trade union movement in Nicaragua.

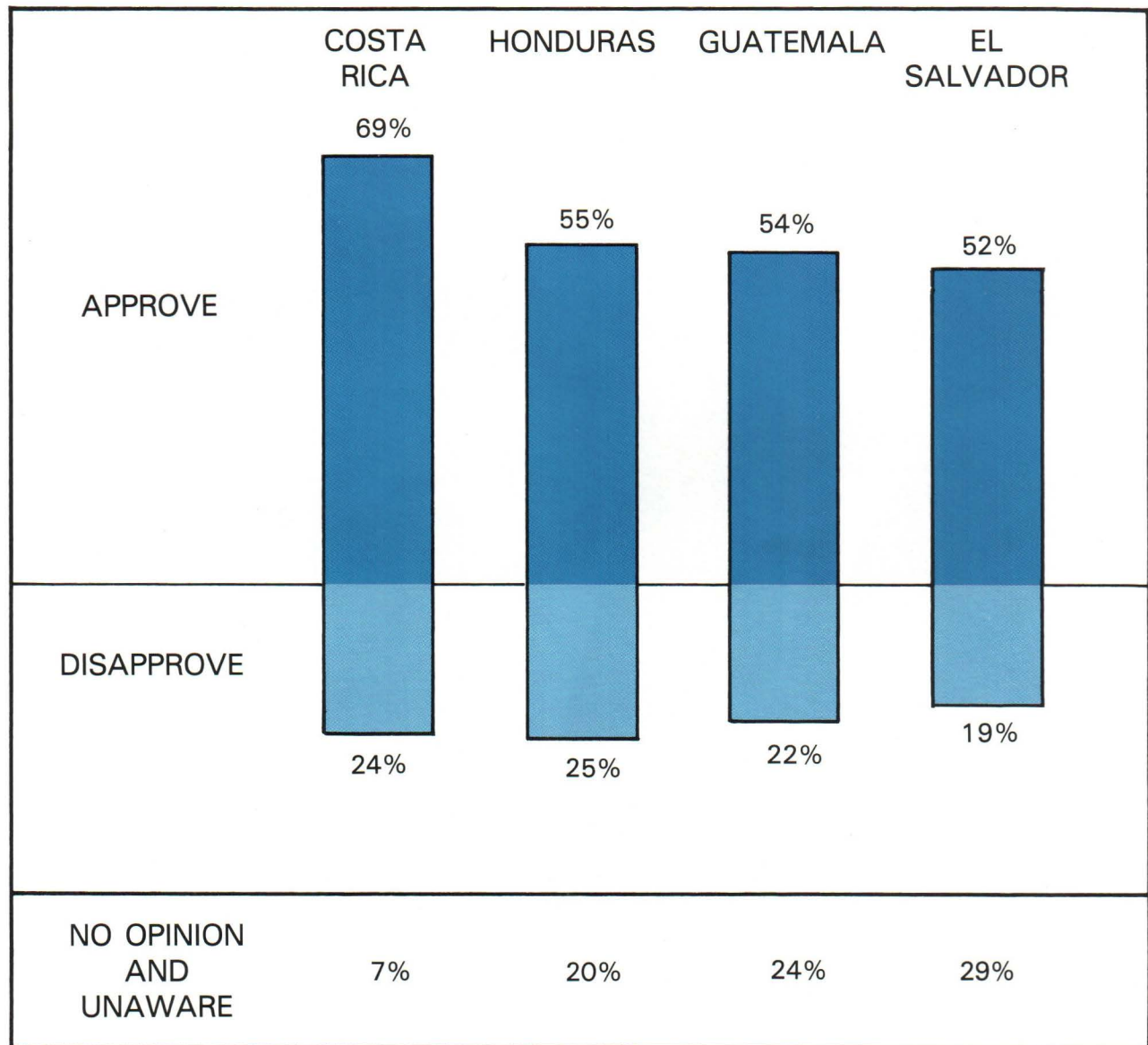
—It is we who stand for the rights of the Miskito Indians and the Creoles on the Atlantic coast.

—It is we who stand for a free press, for civil and political rights, for schools that teach rather than indoctrinate, and for religious liberty.

—And it is we who want and deserve the full support of the liberals of the United States.

—Only when we have bipartisan, liberal and conservative support in the United

SHOULD THE UNITED STATES PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE RESISTANCE FORCES IN NICARAGUA?



According to a 1985 survey by an international affiliate of Gallup, U.S. support for the democratic resistance is overwhelmingly endorsed by Central Americans.

States can we promise our other friends and supporters that we will be able to follow a steady and effective course of action.

—Only when we have broad popular support in this country [the U.S.] and elsewhere can we consolidate our unity as Nicaraguans. Then we can achieve far more coordination and discipline among all the insurgent forces in Nicaragua's civil war. This will help us prevent human rights abuses by individuals in our country who may react recklessly to the provocations of the Sandinistas. This will help us achieve the cohesion we need if we are to actively pur-

sue a political solution to the conflict, opening the doors for national reconciliation.⁸⁶

The backgrounds of the UNO leaders, their declarations of intentions, their actions to date, and the popularity of the resistance movement stand in stark contrast to the increasingly totalitarian nature of the Sandinista regime. These UNO leaders are confident enough of their support that they will lay down their arms and compete with the Sandinistas in internationally supervised elections. They seek a political solution. The Sandinistas, however, seek a military solution in order to eliminate the principal obstacle to their total domination of Nicaragua.

The Washington Times



The leaders of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO). From left to right are Adolfo Calero, a former businessman and long-time foe of the Somoza dictatorship; Arturo Cruz, a former member of the Sandinista junta and former Sandinista Ambassador to the United States; and Alfonso Robelo, a member of the first Sandinista junta and a key figure in the struggle against Somoza.

EL SALVADOR: DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE

The Beginnings

El Salvador is the principal victim of the Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan efforts in Central America. Much of El Salvador's history has been characterized by repression, social injustice, and governmental corruption. A peasant uprising in the 1930s was violently suppressed. The high population growth rate and a population density greater than India's aggravated Salvadoran social frictions. By the 1960s, the coffee-based economy was growing, aided by the Alliance for Progress and the moderately successful Central American Common Market. This economic upturn of the 1960s, however, helped to create the social forces that define the El Salvador of today.

A military-landowner elite controlled El Salvador's sparse land, confining most of the poor to menial labor, migratory farm work, or urban poverty. In the 1970s El Salvador's Communist party splintered. Breakaway groups—later joined by the Communist party itself—abandoned peaceful political opposition to foment violent revolution as the route to social change. Other political elements, however, continued to believe that social change could be achieved through the political process. Jose Napoleon Duarte and his Christian Democrat Party were at the forefront of this reformist movement. In the 1972 presidential election, Duarte was winning until the military stopped the vote count, declared "their" candidate the victor, tortured and imprisoned Duarte, and then exiled him. This action by the military radicalized many, though Duarte himself retained his faith in democracy.

By 1979, terrorism was widespread as five competing Marxist-Leninist factions carried out assassinations, bombings, and kidnappings for ransom, while private "armies" of the right responded with violence. In July 1979, the broad Sandinista coalition in Nicaragua toppled Somoza. Despite growing violence in El Salvador, the Salvadoran military did not increase repression. Instead, in October 1979, a group of young officers over-

threw the military strongman ruling the country and called for a series of reforms calculated to address the inequities that made El Salvador as ripe a target for Communist guerrillas as Nicaragua had been.

Following the failure of a series of short-lived juntas which spanned the Salvadoran political spectrum, the military eventually requested their former adversaries—the Christian Democrats—to cooperate with them in forming a government. In December 1980, Jose Napoleon Duarte was asked to lead the junta, the same Duarte who had been denied the presidency by the military in 1972.

Social, economic, and political reforms announced by the junta came under attack from the extreme right and the extreme left. An ambitious effort was a land reform program to break the control of the old elite and democratize agricultural production. The extreme right saw the reforms as a threat to their interests; the extreme left knew that agrarian and other reforms would do much to remove the grievances and hatred upon which their "class struggle" depended.

Since the initial reformist movement began, the political base of the right has been narrowed, and the traditional military-landowner alliance has been broken. The "death squads" have been sharply curtailed. Many who resisted the changes of post-1979 have now accepted them. The extreme left, however, has continued its efforts to escalate its unrelenting war against the government. The once-competing indigenous terrorist groups have become a well-armed, well-coordinated guerrilla force that, to a significant degree, is armed and influenced by Cuba and Nicaragua.

Salvadoran Guerrillas and Their Allies

Only days after assuming power, Sandinista officials met with Salvadoran guerrilla leaders in Managua to plan how to continue the Central American struggle.

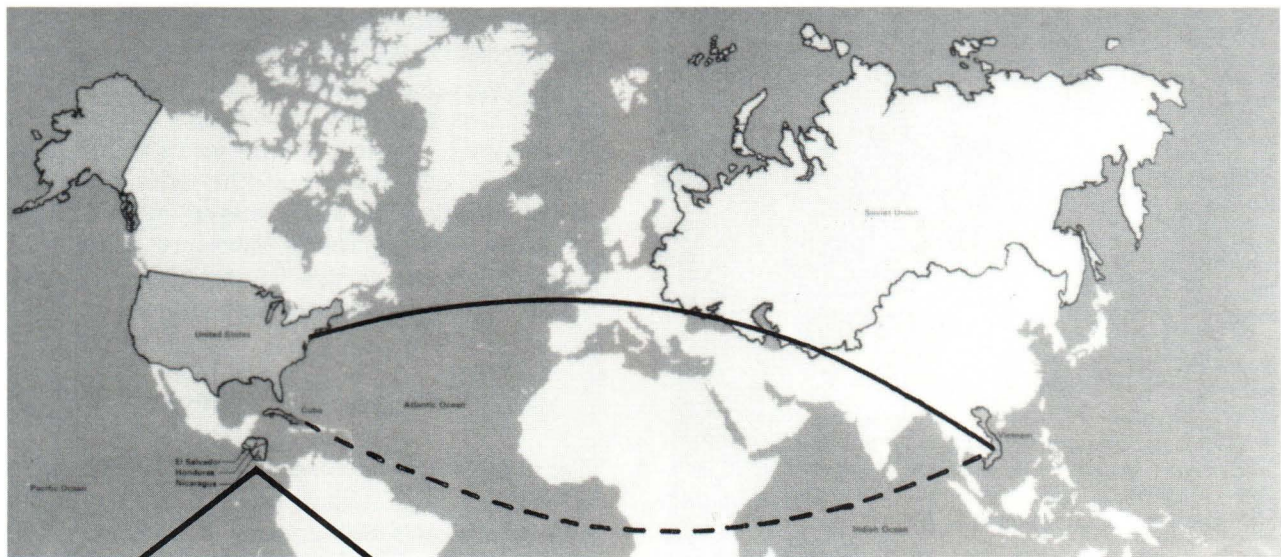


The Salvadoran revolution of 1979 ushered in a series of long overdue social and economic reforms. As a result of the land reform program, more than 25% of El Salvador's rural population either own their land outright, or as members of cooperatives, such as those shown here.

A sizable portion of the millions of dollars raised by Salvadoran terrorists in the late 1970s through ransoms and robberies had gone to assist the Sandinistas in their struggle. Now it was the Sandinistas' turn to help their brothers-in-arms. Overseeing the Central American campaign was Fidel Castro, whose support for the Sandinistas had been indispensable. He called a meeting in Havana in December 1979 at which three of the competing leftist Salvadoran factions pledged to forget their differences. Later, the two other factions joined, and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) was born and named for El Salvador's Communist leader of the 1920s and 30s. Linking the names of Marti and the Sandinistas' patron, Cesar Augusto Sandino, in a Marxist-Leninist struggle was ironic. Sandino, a fervent nationalist, had severed all ties to the "Comintern" (the Moscow-aligned Communist International) and ejected Marti from Nicaragua about 1930 because of the latter's dedication to international communism.⁸⁷ Today Sandino's followers, betraying their patron's nationalist ideals, have joined in a struggle in support of Marxist-Leninist revolution. In the words of the late Cayetano Carpio, patriarch of Salvadoran Communists, the Sandinistas are uniting "the internal struggle with international solidarity",⁸⁸ precisely what Sandino had wished to avoid.

The first arms to be shipped to the Salvadoran guerrillas came from Sandinista stockpiles in Costa Rica. By mid-1980, however, Nicaragua was the logistics center for the Salvadoran guerrillas. In May of that year, at still another meeting in Havana, Castro demanded complete unification of the still rival factions of the Salvadoran guerrillas as the price for Cuban support. After the meeting, Jorge Shafik Handal, leader of the Salvadoran Communist Party now fully integrated into the violent revolution, left Havana for meetings with Soviet officials in Moscow. From there he traveled, with Soviet blessing, to various Communist countries in his quest for help.⁸⁹

In Vietnam, Le Duan, the Executive Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, promised Handal large quantities of captured U.S. weapons from the more than 700,000 M-16 rifles⁹⁰ and other materiel that had been captured by the North Vietnamese Army in 1975. The first of these promised weapons arrived in Cuba in September for shipment to Nicaragua, and then onward to El Salvador. Other Communist countries also began sending weapons, and by November, the guerrillas in El Salvador were being urged to absorb the windfall of military equipment.⁹¹



The government of Vietnam promised the Salvadoran Communist guerrillas large quantities of captured U.S. weapons. This map depicts the probable route of the M-16 rifle shown, which was shipped to Vietnam from Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on 1 July 1968, and was captured on 27 July 1984 in El Salvador. Two thirds of the almost 1,800 M-16s captured, or known to be in guerrilla hands, have been traced by serial number to shipments made originally to Vietnam by the United States.

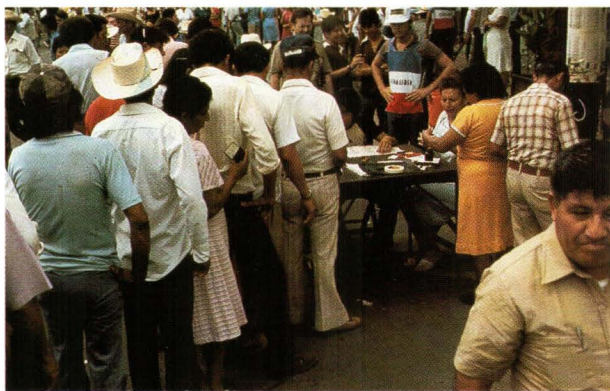
Despite the efforts to hide Communist-bloc support, the sheer volume of shipments forced the Cubans and Sandinistas to be more open in their arms transfers to the FMLN guerrillas in their preparations for a "final offensive" to install a Marxist-Leninist government in El Salvador. Sandino Airport in Managua was closed to traffic from 10 PM to 4 AM for several weeks in late 1980 to accommodate Cuban cargo planes carrying arms, ammunition, and other supplies to Nicaragua. From Nicaragua, the arms went by air, land, and sea into El Salvador. The guerrillas' "final offensive" began on 10 January 1981. Despite the large quantities of weapons that had poured into El Salvador, the guerrillas failed to overthrow the government because they lacked popular support.

The political complexion of the regime that would have emerged had the FMLN triumphed during its January "final offensive" was described by then U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Robert White in a 15 January

1981 press conference when he said of the guerrillas then fighting to seize control of the country: "Their objective is to install a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship in this country....The kind of government that they would install in this country, in my opinion, would be totally subject to the Soviet Union, along the Cuban style."⁹²

The Guerrilla Challenge: 1981-83

The Carter Administration responded to this Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan-sponsored offensive in El Salvador by sending the Salvadoran government emergency military aid on 16 January 1981. After taking office four days later, the Reagan Administration set out to provide both the economic and military aid necessary to carry out the 1979 reforms of the civilian-military junta. In response to this U.S. assistance, and to keep their movement alive after the failure of the "final offensive," the guerrillas and their Cuban and Nicaraguan



Salvadorans have gone to the polls four times since 1982, despite continual threats and attacks by the guerrillas. International media and observers judged these elections free, fair, and representing the will of the Salvadoran people.

patrons decided to concentrate on attacks on "soft" economic targets in order to unnerve the people and undermine their confidence in the government. At the same time, the guerrillas were building their force into mobile, heavily armed units capable of carrying out large-scale operations.

In early 1982, arms from Nicaragua again increased dramatically as the FMLN prepared to disrupt the 28 March Constituent Assembly elections. The guerrilla efforts did not succeed. More than 80% of the eligible voters turned out despite the guerrillas' intimidation tactics and attacks on polling locations. As the *Washington Post* editorialized on 30 March 1982:

One understands now why the guerrillas were so eager to destroy, and the political opposition to denounce, the elections in El Salvador. They seem to have sensed that the people would choose to take the way offered by the government to express their pent-up longing to have done with the war and to reconstruct the country.... The process seemed fair. The voters came out despite death threats, logistical and procedural obstacles and a history giving little comfort to the notion that elections matter.... The insurgents were hurt badly by the elections: they failed to intimidate or dissuade the masses and were substantially spurned by them.⁹³

But this political repudiation did not dissuade the FMLN from its strategy of the "prolonged war." By mid-1982, they were starting to operate in larger units, using more sophisticated communications equipment and weaponry and conducting operations more typical

of a conventional war than a guerrilla conflict. Government forces in 1983 were clearly on the defensive and the tide appeared to have shifted in favor of the guerrillas. In December 1983—after having trained in Cuba for this special mission—FMLN forces successfully attacked the headquarters of the Salvadoran Army Fourth Brigade in El Paraiso, massacring the defenders. In January 1984 guerrilla saboteurs destroyed the Cuscatlan Bridge on the Pan American Highway, a severe blow to the country's economy.

The Government's Response—1984-86

The tide started to turn in early 1984, as the Salvadoran government became more aggressive. In November 1983, the army's high command had undertaken a reorganization that led to more effective command and control and the assignment of more effective field commanders to key areas. The philosophy underlying this change was to carry the fight to the guerrillas and keep constant pressure on their supply lines.

Progress was continuing in the basic reforms undertaken in 1979-80. By mid-1984, almost 25% of the rural inhabitants of El Salvador owned their own land, or were working their land as co-owners of cooperatives. Politically, the government moved to continue the success generated by the elections of 1982 and the resulting Constituent Assembly. A constitution was signed in 1983. Presidential elections were held in March 1984. Duarte, the reformist Christian Democrat candidate, received a plurality of votes against his main opponent, conservative Roberto D'Aubuisson, a former army major. Without a majority, however, the Constitution required a run-off in May. The FMLN, in both March and May, attempted to derail the elections by intimidating voters. As in 1982, they failed. Duarte defeated D'Aubuisson in the run-off election. (In the March 1985 legislative elections, Duarte's Christian Democrats surprisingly wrested control of the Legislative Assembly from the conservative coalition that had led it since 1982.) Duarte's clear mandate enabled him to initiate a dialogue with the FMLN leadership in October 1984, followed by a second meeting the following month with the guerrillas and their political leadership, the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). At that meeting, the guerrillas expressed their right to carry out sabotage in their "peoples war." They also reiterated the call for abrogation of the constitution, a repudiation of the elections, an equal role in the government, and a reorganization of the armed forces.⁹⁴



President Duarte of El Salvador initiated peace talks with the guerrillas at La Palma in October 1984. Shown in this picture are the guerrilla political leaders Guillermo Ungo (center, with glasses) and Ruben Zamora (far right, bearded with glasses). The woman in the center wearing a hat is Nidia Diaz, who was captured six months later.

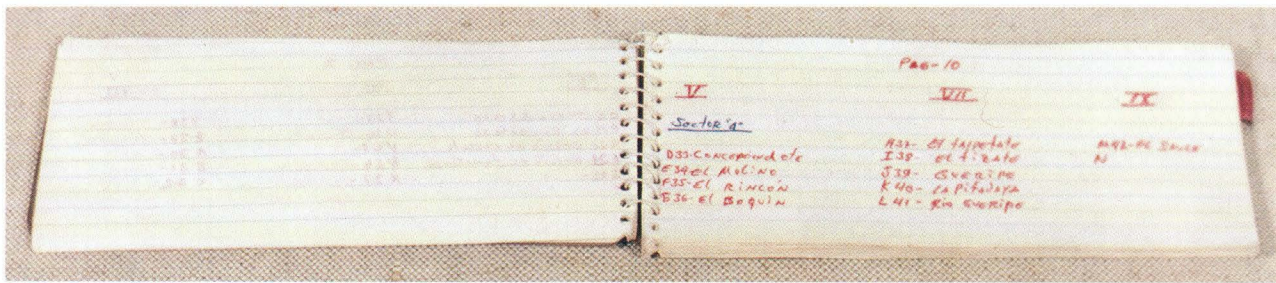
The Logistic Lifeline

The arms, ammunition, and explosives that enable the FMLN to wage war in El Salvador continue to flow in from Nicaragua through an elaborate land, sea, and air network. The land route originates in Nicaragua and passes through Honduras into El Salvador. The notebook and map shown on page 52 illustrate one supply method used by the guerrillas and their Sandinista suppliers. A Salvadoran guerrilla squad was intercepted by Honduran authorities in March 1983. In the ensuing fire fight, the guerrillas were killed. On the body of the squad leader was found a notebook that contained 125 place names with coded identifiers to protect the secrecy of the guerrillas' routes starting at the Nicaraguan border. Plotted on a map, these locations traced a corridor from Nicaragua, through Honduras, and into northern El Salvador.

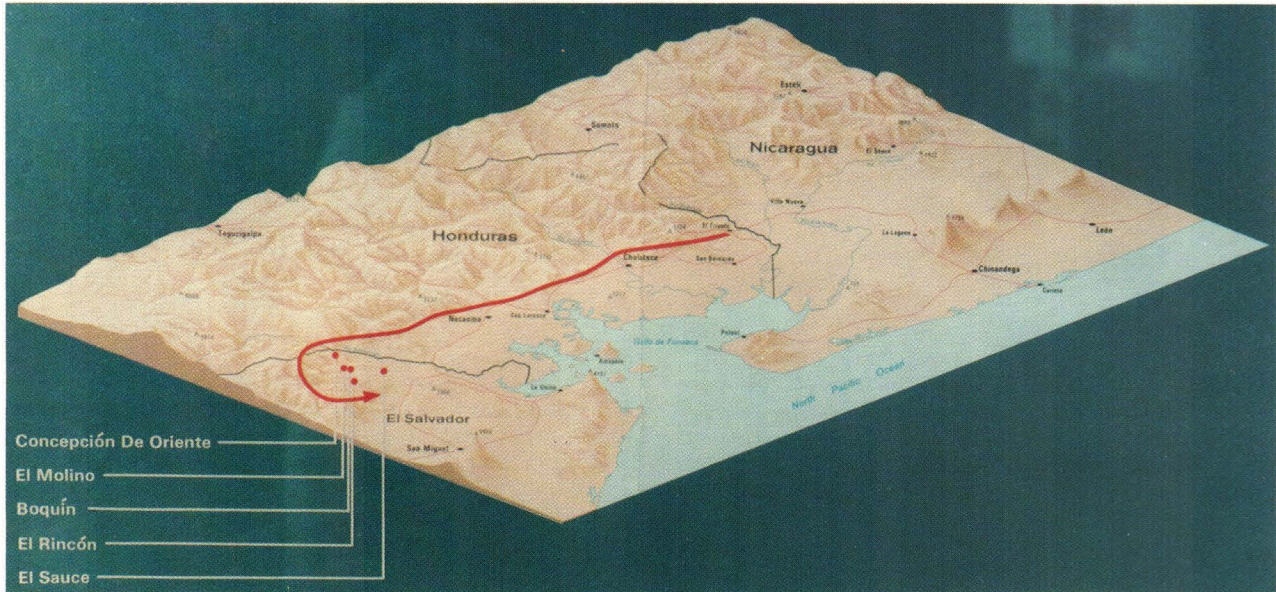
Although the land route from Nicaragua continues to be an important resupply channel, information provided by guerrillas who have defected indicates that the bulk of supplies now come in directly from Nicaragua by sea, across the Gulf of Fonseca, and on to beaches

in the Salvadoran department of Usulután. These maritime deliveries are made at night, and coded radio messages coordinate the shipments, which are placed in caches short distances from the beaches. Guerrilla factions are notified of the arrival of the supplies.

One of the former guerrilla leaders who has provided valuable information on the Nicaraguan supply link is Napoleon Romero, who defected to the government on 11 April 1985. He was a well-known FMLN leader who had fought under the name Miguel Castellanos. He commanded all units in San Salvador of the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the largest of the FMLN's factions. Romero stated that the bulk of his organization's supplies came from Nicaragua. He added that much of the training of Salvadoran guerrillas takes place in Cuba (where he himself had been trained) and that "the Sandinistas and the Cubans have set up special organs in Managua for political and logistical matters."⁹⁵ A factor that contributed to Romero's decision to defect was what he described as the "subjection of the FMLN to the tactical and strategic control of the Cubans and Sandinistas."⁹⁶



In March 1983, a notebook was taken from the body of a Salvadoran guerrilla squad leader by the Honduran armed forces. This notebook contained compass headings, codes and 125 place names, aligned with coded identifiers to insure the secrecy of the guerrillas' movements. When plotted on the map below, these locations trace a corridor from Nicaragua to El Salvador.



On 18 April 1985, another important guerrilla leader, Nidia Diaz, was captured carrying the files of her organization, the Central American Revolutionary Workers Party (PRTC), one of the factions belonging to the FMLN. Although she never cooperated with the government (and was eventually returned to the guerrillas as part of the exchange for the kidnapped daughter of President Duarte), she acknowledged the authenticity of the documents she had been carrying when she told a national television audience in El Salvador:

*I had the central files with plans, projects, and reports from all areas...all this revealed the work of the organization, the ideas of the FMLN. There were basic documents, war plans, overall plans.... Our structures and everything have been compromised, but since I have not talked, this was due to the (captured) documents.*⁹⁷

Among the documents she authenticated was a 24 November 1983 letter to the "Comrades of the National

Directorate of the FSLN" in Managua which was signed by the General Command of the FMLN Headquarters—Shafik Handal, Joaquin Villalobos, Roberto Roca and Leonel Gonzales. The letter stated that the FMLN leaders

*are in agreement that the electoral period in the United States is the appropriate moment to influence the American electorate. ...We support the current diplomatic initiatives of the FSLN to gain time, to help Reagan's opposition in the United States, and to internationally isolate his aggressive plan toward Nicaragua and El Salvador.*⁹⁸

With respect to the provision of arms from Nicaragua, the FMLN leaders chided the Sandinistas in this letter for not being more generous:

We also consider that, given the level of our confrontation with imperialism and the puppet forces, our process requires a much higher level of logistic assistance. We believe

*that present circumstances are favorable to take daring steps in this direction. (Emphasis added)*⁹⁹

Further evidence of the Salvadoran guerrillas' logistic supply from Nicaragua was revealed by chance in December 1985. A car with Costa Rican license plates was involved in an accident in Honduras. The car was found to have secret compartments containing 7,000 rounds of ammunition, 21 hand grenades, 86 blasting caps, other military supplies, and 39 computer-generated code booklets addressed to Salvadoran guerrilla units. Much of this material was wrapped in recent copies of *Barricada*, the Sandinista political party's newspaper. The code booklets were for use in exchanges of messages between the guerrilla command in Managua and field units in El Salvador. The driver, a member of the pro-Sandinista Communist party of Costa Rica, acknowledged that the car was en route to El Salvador, and that he had taken a similar trip in the same car in July 1985.¹⁰⁰ Secret compartments in vehicles have been used by Nicaragua to shuttle arms and ammunition to the Salvadoran guerrillas since 1980.¹⁰¹

The U.S.-made M-16 rifle has been the basic arm of the Salvadoran guerrillas since the first weapons from Vietnam via Cuba and Nicaragua arrived in 1980. This was before the United States shipped any M-16s to the Salvadoran military. Of the 1779 M-16 rifles captured or known to be in guerrilla hands from captured property records, as of 31 December 1985, two-thirds have been traced by serial number to weapons originally destined for Vietnam.¹⁰² Previously cited documents that were captured in El Salvador in November 1980

revealed that the Government of Vietnam promised to deliver to El Salvador large quantities of captured U.S.-manufactured weapons. Former guerrilla leaders, including Romero, have confirmed that these weapons came to El Salvador from Nicaragua.

Despite all the evidence of their complicity, the Sandinistas continue to deny they have provided arms to the Salvadoran guerrillas. Foreign Minister D'Escoto went so far as to file a sworn affidavit with the International Court of Justice in April 1984 in which he stated the official position of Managua: "In truth, my government is not engaged, and has not been engaged in, the provision of arms or other supplies to either of the factions engaged in the civil war in El Salvador."¹⁰³ D'Escoto's claims, however, run counter even to statements made by critics of the policy of the United States. For example, a witness for Nicaragua at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) acknowledged that there were arms shipments "in late 1980 and early 1981"¹⁰⁴ and another opponent of U.S. policy claimed that there was "a drastic reduction in arms shipments after early 1982,"¹⁰⁵ implicitly acknowledging that there had been an arms flow until 1982, which the Sandinistas adamantly deny.

The logistic flow from the Sandinistas has indeed been the lifeblood of the FMLN. As early as March 1982, at the time the Sandinista-FMLN connection was attempting to destroy the Salvadoran elections, the Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Congressman Edward P. Boland (D-MA), observed that the Salvadoran insurgents

are well-trained, well-equipped with modern weapons and supplies, and rely on the use



This Soviet-built Lada car was involved in an accident in Honduras on 7 December 1985. It was enroute to El Salvador through Nicaragua, driven by a member of the Costa Rican Communist party. Investigating police found large quantities of military supplies concealed in six hidden compartments.



This photo shows what the car contained: 7,000 rounds of ammunition, 86 blasting caps, 21 grenades, 12 radios, and 39 code booklets for use by guerrilla units in El Salvador to communicate with their headquarters in Nicaragua.

*of sites in Nicaragua for command and control and for logistical support. The intelligence supporting these judgments provided to the Committee is convincing.... Contrary to repeated denials of Nicaraguan officials, that country is thoroughly involved in supporting the Salvadoran insurgency.*¹⁰⁶

The Political-Military Situation—1986

The Salvadoran military has continued aggressive operations against guerrilla strongholds. As a result, FMLN strength, which hit a high of 9,000-12,000 in 1982-83, has now dropped to 5,000-7,000.¹⁰⁷ This decline is due to battlefield casualties inflicted by the much-improved Salvadoran armed forces, increasing desertions from guerrilla ranks and the inability of the FMLN to attract Salvadoran youth to the guerrilla cause.

The armed forces have placed strong pressure on the guerrillas in the countryside, while improving—with U.S. assistance—their ability to counter urban terrorism and attacks on the economic infrastructure. Morale and confidence within the armed forces remain high. Throughout 1985 and into 1986, the Salvadoran armed forces consolidated their military gains and continued to improve human rights practices. Employing a mix of large-unit operations and smaller, patrol-size tactics, they are inhibiting the guerrillas' ability to concentrate their forces for large attacks.

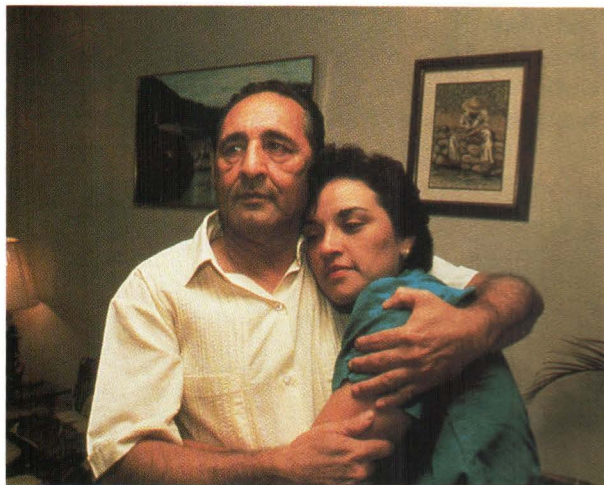
To react to this dramatically changed military situation, the FMLN has embarked on a strategy centering on: (1) continuing efforts to destroy the nation's economy; (2) intensifying urban terrorism; and (3) engaging in rural land-mine warfare. This third element has added a particularly vicious aspect to El Salvador's suffering. The indiscriminate placing of land mines has maimed and killed hundreds of civilians in rural areas, most of them children under the age of 15. The FMLN expresses little remorse at this, using its clandestine radio to announce it will continue to use land mines to impede the coffee harvest.¹⁰⁸ Despite criticism of the use of land mines by the Catholic Church, the guerrillas show no sign of ending this tactic.

While stepping up the military tempo against the guerrillas, the Salvadoran government has left open the door for a dialogue that could allow the guerrillas to take their cause to the people by participating in the democratic process. In March 1986, President Duarte announced a major peace initiative. He proposed to

Nicaraguan President Ortega a plan that called for simultaneous talks between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN, and the Nicaraguan government and the UNO. Such negotiations would automatically trigger talks between the United States and Nicaragua. Duarte also proposed a continuing regional dialogue to take place in a permanent Central American parliament. The Sandinistas categorically rejected the entire proposal, with the initial rejection being voiced by Comandante Bayardo Arce during an official visit to Moscow. The Salvadoran guerrillas echoed the Sandinista line. The other countries of Central America, however, gave a solid endorsement to the Duarte plan.¹⁰⁹

The Role of the Catholic Church

In 1979-80, the Salvadoran Catholic Church was in the forefront of the call for social, economic, and political reform. The leader of the Salvadoran Catholic Church, Archbishop of El Salvador Oscar Romero, was murdered while saying Mass. The guerrillas attempted to create the impression that the Church sided with them. In truth, the Church saw the guerrillas for what they were—increasingly dedicated to the establishment of a Communist government. On the other side of the equation, the Church saw the government as well-intentioned but ineffective in controlling activities of



Cindy Karp/Time Magazine

Because of their declining fortunes in the countryside, Salvadoran guerrillas have turned increasingly to urban terrorism and kidnappings. These have included elected officials and the daughter of President Duarte, shown here with the President after her release for ransom. The Salvadoran Catholic Church referred to this kidnapping as a "cowardly, criminal act that constitutes the most despicable act of blackmail."

death squads and other atrocities such as the December 1980 slaying of four American churchwomen by members of the Salvadoran security forces. The guerrillas attempted to capitalize on the state-church tension by saying that "The Salvadoran Church supports the guerrilla struggle against the regime of President Duarte,"¹¹⁰ a claim the Archbishop's office immediately denied.¹¹¹ The guerrillas later reportedly forged the signature of Romero's successor, Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas, on anti-government pamphlets distributed abroad to raise money for the FMLN, once again arousing the ire of the Church.¹¹²

The Salvadoran Church has often been quoted as being opposed to U.S. military aid to the army. The official newspaper of the Diocese of Salvador, however, has commented on pressures being exerted on the United States government by American citizens to cease such military assistance to El Salvador. The *Orientacion* editorial observed that

*although the war is cruel and we long for peace, it is no longer so easy to condemn United States arms shipments. Disarming the Salvadoran army logically would mean furthering a guerrilla victory. We conclude that this would not be just, given how many times the people have already demonstrated their will. This is the truth and we do not understand why other people, entities or persons seek to decide our destiny. No one wants war. We all want peace. The reasonable thing, therefore, would be to ask to halt the flow of arms to the army as well as to the guerrillas. The just thing would be to look for humane and reasonable mechanisms with which to achieve that peace, without having to resort to arms.*¹¹³ (Emphasis added)

The Catholic Church in El Salvador consistently calls for dialogue and condemns violence from both sides. It remains a trusted and credible intermediary between the government and the guerrillas. It has supported the reforms it sees as having helped transform El Salvador from the explosive 1979-80 period to the more hopeful era of the present. In reviewing the political alignment in their country in 1985, the bishops, in an 8 August pastoral letter, stated:

We have, on one side, a constitutional government, endorsed by the massive turnout at the voting urns in four successive elections, which have been practically a repeated 'referendum' in favor of democracy; and,



Wide World Photo

Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas of the Diocese of El Salvador, and the other bishops of El Salvador, issued a pastoral letter in August 1985 calling the Duarte government one with popular support, while the guerrillas lack such support and "resort to violence and sabotage as an essential component of their struggle, thus placing themselves in a position of which we cannot approve."

*on the other side, are the FDR/FMLN, who arrogate to themselves a representativeness of the people which they cannot certify and who, in addition, resort to violence and sabotage as an essential component of their struggle, thus placing themselves in a position of which we cannot approve.*¹¹⁴

The Immediate Future

Despite the progress of the last six years, El Salvador's future is precarious. The Soviets and Cubans are determined to assist Nicaragua in maintaining the flow of arms, ammunition, land mines, and explosives to the Salvadoran guerrillas. Although their fortunes have wavered over the last two years, the guerrillas retain the ability to carry out sabotage on an extensive scale and to conduct major attacks on Salvadoran military installations. Demolition experts continue to destroy electric pylons that provide power throughout the country. In the closing months of 1985, they emphasized the destruction of the coffee crop. The use of land mines is an acknowledged tactic of the guerrillas to hinder this harvest, upon which El Salvador is so dependent. This form of economic warfare is taking a serious toll. Unemployment is over 40%, in large part due to the guerrillas' unrelenting destruction of the economy. Inflation is currently running at over 30% per year. Ironically, many of the Duarte administration problems are products of the success of the last few years. Labor unions are now increasingly restive, in part because the Communists are infiltrating and agitating. In previous years, the labor unions' activities would have been



The Salvadoran guerrillas have concentrated their efforts on destroying the economy of the country. Since 1980, this destruction has amounted to more than \$1 billion, with bridges and the all-important electrical system key targets.

sharply curtailed by authoritarian military governments. The political opening that has defined El Salvador's success has quite naturally encouraged people to demand more of their political leaders. Similarly, the success of the armed forces since early 1984 has forced the guerrillas to shift to urban terrorism, to increase kidnappings (including that of elected officials and the President's daughter), bombings, and other actions designed to terrorize the population and undermine confidence in the government. These actions by the guerrillas symbolize their determination to continue the war against the elected government by whatever means they deem necessary. The Salvadoran military, organized to defeat a guerrilla force in the field, knows it is less able to confront the new threat in the cities, although it is adjusting to this new challenge. The FMLN's tactics are designed to provoke the military into a return to the repressive tactics of previous years.

Despite the violence and economic problems confronting it, El Salvador is on far more solid footing in 1986 than it was as recently as three years ago, and certainly better than in the volatile 1979-80 period. El Salvador remains the principal focus of the Soviet-Cuban connection in the region, with Nicaragua the linchpin of Communist strategy in Central America. The Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan offensive is not limited to El Salvador, however, for all of Central America is the target.

GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, AND COSTA RICA: DEMOCRACY REGAINED AND MAINTAINED

The Road to Peace and Democracy

Although El Salvador has borne the brunt of Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan aggression, the other three countries of Central America have not been immune from attack. Guatemala, Honduras, and even Costa Rica, with no army to defend itself, have all suffered violations of their national sovereignty. These three countries have all had successful presidential elections in 1985 and early 1986, demonstrating that the people of Central America want to choose their own leaders, not have them imposed by extremists of either the left or the right.

The events in Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, and El Salvador show that the true revolution taking place in Central America is the democratic revolution in which the people are demanding to be listened to, and are indeed having their voices heard. In Nicaragua, however, much of the population has been disenfranchised by a minority which has raised the scourge of Central America—militarism—to new heights.

The people of the region are acutely aware of the anti-democratic, expansionist nature of the Marxist-Leninists in Managua. This was shown clearly by opinion polls taken by Interdisciplinary Consultants on Development, a Costa Rican-based affiliate of Gallup International. The surveys were made in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica in 1983 and 1985. (Such independent opinion polling is forbidden in Nicaragua; by decree of the Sandinista government, opinion polling has been declared a monopoly of the state.) These 1983 and 1985 surveys, using standard Gallup polling techniques, found that the overwhelming majority of respondents: (1) fear Nicaragua, (2) see Cuba as a Soviet agent, (3) see Nicaragua as an agent of Cuba and the Soviet Union, and (4) approve U.S. military aid to their countries and to the anti-Sandinista resistance movement. In Honduras and Costa Rica, U.S. military presence is overwhelmingly approved by respondents in those countries.¹¹⁵

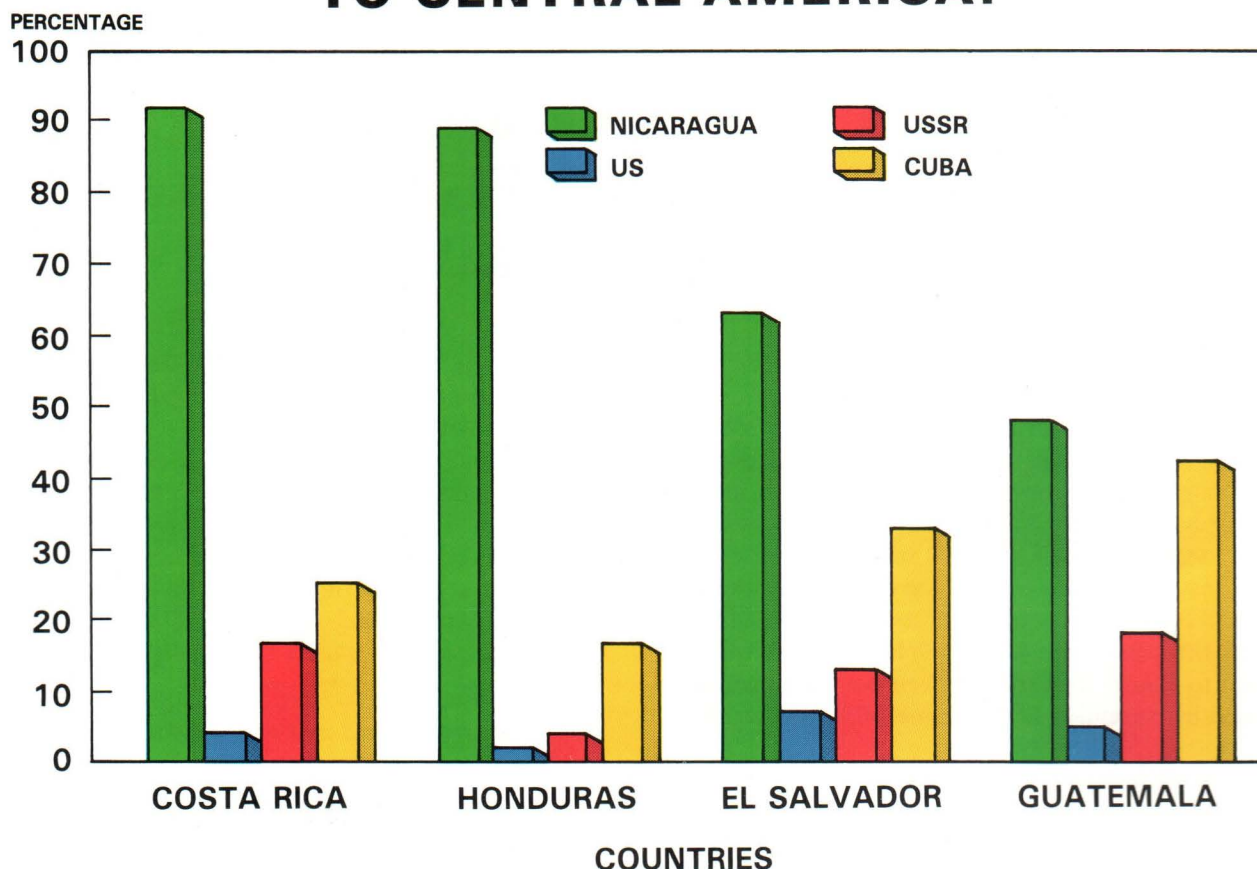
Reflecting the views of their citizens, the democratic governments of Central America reacted positively to President Duarte's peace proposal (see page 54). In March 1986, the recently inaugurated Presidents of Guatemala and Honduras, and the President-elect of Costa Rica, asked the Nicaraguan government to engage in a dialogue with its opposition, which would cause a similar dialogue in El Salvador and discussions between Nicaragua and the United States. In their statements, the three leaders said of the proposal:

*We support it, convinced that it is necessary to mount a broad and very serious effort in concert to induce the rulers of Nicaragua to recognize the urgency of opening dialogue and thus creating propitious conditions for achieving peace in the Isthmus and consolidating democracy.*¹¹⁶

An exchange of telegrams between Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and then Costa Rican President Luis Alberto Monge demonstrated clearly the contrast between the reactions of the Communist government of Nicaragua and the democratic government of Costa Rica to the Duarte initiative. In his 14 March 1986 message, Ortega wrote:

I have to express my firm and categoric rejection of the recent declaration signed in Honduras on March 31 supporting the initiative of President Duarte, which in essence involves his government in an act which violates morality, international law and existing treaties, and promotes the manipulation of the Government of El Salvador by the United States. The proposal of President Duarte is directed at intervening in internal matters of Nicaragua and seeks support for the mercenary forces in service of a foreign power attempting to establish an absurd and immoral symmetry between the civil war in our brother republic

WHAT COUNTRY IS A MILITARY THREAT TO CENTRAL AMERICA?



Central Americans are keenly aware of the military threat posed to their countries by Nicaragua. This fact was clearly shown by a poll taken by a Gallup International affiliate based in Costa Rica in 1985.

of El Salvador, resulting from structural and economic injustices, and a war of aggression imposed by the Government of the United States against the people of Nicaragua and condemned by the international community.¹¹⁷

In his 26 March 1986 response to Ortega, President Monge said:

With respect to your opinion that Costa Rica committed an immoral and illegal act in supporting President Duarte's initiative, I must point out to you that the plan responds to the spirit of the Contadora negotiations, in the sense of moving forward with national reconciliation processes in Central America. I understand that for the current government of Nicaragua, it might be unacceptable to go forward with

a process of that nature, but for that reason I cannot accept your criteria of the manner in which Costa Rica should direct its foreign policy, and for that reason I reject those criteria energetically, emphasizing that we have always believed in dialogue as a way of solving political problems, and that if we have maintained that should be the line followed in El Salvador, we believe it's equally indispensable that it should also be so in Nicaragua.¹¹⁸

Nicaraguan intransigence to a peaceful solution has been a constant since the Sandinistas marched into Managua in 1979. In effect, little has changed since the days of Somoza, who sought a military, not political, solution for his country's problems in 1978-79. But for the other countries of Central America, the peaceful, democratic road has been the one taken in the 1980s.



On 14 January 1986, Vinicio Cerezo was inaugurated President of Guatemala, capping an electoral process that started with Constituent Assembly elections in July 1984. Cerezo's election to the presidency is a reflection of the march of democracy in Central America.

Guatemala

Guatemala is the most populous country in Central America, and the one with the broadest economic base. An economically healthy and democratic Guatemala would have positive impact on all of Central America. On 14 January 1986, Vinicio Cerezo was inaugurated President of Guatemala, capping an electoral process that started with Constituent Assembly elections in July 1984. Cerezo's election to the presidency is an accurate reflection of the change in Guatemalan politics since 1980.

As a leader of the reform-minded Christian Democrats, Cerezo was considered an enemy by the military governments that have ruled Guatemala, especially that of President Romeo Lucas Garcia (1978-82). It was during Lucas Garcia's tenure that Cerezo was the target of three assassination attempts. Cerezo was an outspoken critic of the human rights abuses and the campaign of violence orchestrated by the government. In March 1982, a group of junior officers unseated President Lucas Garcia before he could hand over power to his hand-picked successor who had "won"

fraudulent elections. These officers asked retired General Efraín Ríos Montt to head a new government. He instituted a vigorous and successful counter-insurgency-civic action campaign, but his eccentric personal style eventually resulted in a military coup in 1983 by his Defense Minister, General Oscar Humberto Mejía Victores. Under the new military government the political atmosphere started to change. Mejía set an electoral time schedule and stuck to it, with the Constituent Assembly elections of July 1984 starting the process. When the campaign got under way for the 1985 presidential elections, Cerezo was openly campaigning, fairly secure in the belief that the military was intent on keeping its pledge to open the political process, oversee free and honest elections, and then return to the barracks.

Many of Guatemala's critics said a moderate like Cerezo could never be elected. They argued that the country was too polarized by social and economic inequities for a centrist solution to be achieved. The conventional wisdom held that because elements of the military and the landowning elite perceived reformists as Communists, violence, not accommodation, would continue to define Guatemalan political life. The results



Vice President George Bush congratulates newly inaugurated President of Honduras, Jose Azcona Hoyo, on 27 January 1986. Honduras has enjoyed two successful democratic presidential elections since 1981.

of the 1985 elections proved the critics wrong: Guatemalans clearly rejected extremism when they went to the polls. They elected a man and a party pledged to the implementation of reforms of benefit to the poor and Indian majority.

The future of civilian government and democratic practices in Guatemala rests on the shoulders of President Cerezo and his government. The clear mandate Cerezo won in the December presidential runoff has presented him with a great opportunity to open a new era in Guatemalan politics. If he enjoys success in addressing Guatemala's problems, democracy will probably take firm root; if he fails, an authoritarian government of the right, or a totalitarian government of the left, may replace him. The pitfalls facing the new government are many and serious. The difficulties it faces include improving human rights, convincing the military that it must give up a direct political role, keeping in check a potential resurgent guerrilla movement, and bringing about necessary economic and political reforms.

The economic situation inherited by the Cerezo government is unsettling and contributes to a heightened threat from insurgent groups. Fidel Castro, despite providing them assistance, never succeeded in unifying the disparate elements of the extreme left in Guatemala as he did in El Salvador, although the Guatemalan leftist groups formally pledged unity in a meeting with Cuban and Sandinista leaders in Managua in 1980. Should Castro and the Sandinistas decide to provide additional aid to the Guatemalan guerrillas, a rejuvenated and unified guerrilla movement could indeed pose a serious challenge to the new Guatemalan government. How well the President and other sectors of society work together to meet this challenge will do much to shape the future of Central America.

Honduras

In the last six years, Honduras has been at the forefront of events in Central America. A country with a strong



Wide World Photo

Honduran soldiers in action against Cuban-Nicaraguan supported guerrillas in 1983. The guerrillas were routed, as was another group a year later in the Cuban-Nicaraguan effort to destabilize Honduras.

record of military rule, Honduras held Constituent Assembly elections in 1980 and presidential elections in 1981 and 1985. Jose Azcona Hoyo's succession of Roberto Suazo Cordoba as president marked the first time in 50 years that an elected civilian had succeeded another elected civilian to the presidency. Like his counterparts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Costa Rica, President Azcona faces a staggering array of economic and political problems, many of them stemming from the aggressive and expansionist policies of his Sandinista neighbors. Honduras shares a 508-mile border with Nicaragua, and a 226-mile border with El Salvador. These geographic factors have made Hon-

duras a pivotal element in Nicaraguan efforts to overthrow the government of El Salvador. Honduran territory has been used since at least 1980 as a conduit for arms, ammunition, and supplies from the Sandinistas to the Salvadoran guerrillas.

Cuba and Nicaragua have also trained, armed, and infiltrated Honduran guerrillas into the Honduran countryside in an effort to destabilize the Honduran government. In July 1983, a 96-man guerrilla force entered the Olancho area of Honduras to establish a base of operations. These young Hondurans had been recruited in early 1981, given military training in Cuba, and then

sent into combat in mid-1983 in Nicaragua under the command of Sandinista officers. The Hondurans were then provided with weapons, ammunition, and equipment and sent into Honduras to initiate guerrilla warfare in their own country. The group received virtually no support from area residents and many of the guerrillas soon were suffering from lack of food and from exposure and illness. The Honduran military intercepted the group and killed or captured the guerrillas.

In July 1984 another unit—this time consisting of only 19 men who also trained in Cuba and who also were battle experienced in Nicaragua—was infiltrated into El Paraiso province. Again, the Honduran security forces reacted rapidly and this contingent was rounded up in October 1984. Those who had defected, or were captured, told the same story as that told by the Olancho group: Cuba and Nicaragua had jointly sponsored aggression against the Honduran government.

Before leaving office, President Suazo Cordoba gave a speech in which he reviewed the accomplishments of his administration. He commented on the double standards of those who support Nicaragua, while claiming that Honduras has become an “armed camp” of the United States due to the training exercises conducted by the U.S. military with the Honduran armed forces:

Those who usually praise the regimes of atheist totalitarianism say Honduras is an occupied country. However, they do not mention that a neighboring country is occupied by advisers of all the Marxist countries of the world. I think ideological subversion is or will be on the rise. We in Honduras know from where it will come. I said on a previous occasion that if we had had sufficient money—despite everything, we did a lot to equip the Armed Forces—to spend 100 million, 200 million, 300 million to equip our Armed Forces, that would be an insignificant amount in exchange for the tranquility and peace of our country. It is sad to see a country in fear of the terror of those who agree with international communism.¹¹⁹

President Suazo's words reflect the concern that many Central Americans have of expanding Nicaraguan militarism. Perhaps nowhere is this concern more prevalent than in Costa Rica, the other country sharing a border with the Sandinistas.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica abolished its army in 1948, placing itself, in effect, under the security umbrella of the OAS. In the 1980s, however, Costa Ricans fear for their country's security because of neighboring Marxist-Leninist Nicaragua's overwhelming military superiority and aggressive political philosophy. President of Costa Rica, Luis Alberto Monge, a long-time bitter and vocal foe of Somoza, spoke for the vast majority of Costa Ricans when he said in 1983, “in 40 years of Somocismo, we never had the threat that we have in 4 years of Sandinismo.”¹²⁰

The four years have now grown to seven, and attitudes of Costa Ricans have become even more hostile to the belligerence they see emanating from the Sandinistas. More than 90% of those polled in the July 1985 Gallup Poll in Costa Rica said they considered Nicaragua the principal military threat faced by their country.¹²¹

But it was not always so. During Somoza's final year of rule in Nicaragua, Costa Ricans admired the young Sandinista guerrillas fighting against the hated dictator. In early 1979, at great risk to its own security, Costa Rica allowed its territory to be used as a conduit for arms and supplies for the Sandinistas in their struggle against Somoza. Arms provided by Panama and Venezuela reached the Sandinistas openly through Costa Rica, and Somoza threatened to bomb Sandinista sanctuaries in Costa Rica.

Castro was also providing assistance to his long-time Sandinista friends via Costa Rican territory, but not so openly. Aided by corrupt Costa Rican officials, Castro established a covert arms trafficking route to the Sandinistas. He did this clandestinely in order to avoid an overt linking of Cuba and the Sandinistas that would have tarnished the democratic image the Sandinistas were projecting in order to gain domestic and international support.

The circumstances surrounding these clandestine arms shipments were established by a special commission created in June 1980 by the Costa Rican legislature to investigate charges then circulating that after the Nicaraguan civil war, a black market had developed in connection with war materiel left behind in Costa Rica.¹²² During the course of its investigation, the commission discovered the covert supply network of arms shipments from Cuba. The commission determined that

there had been at least 21 flights between Cuba and secondary airports in Costa Rica where a minimum of one million pounds of arms were delivered. Rodrigo Carazo, then President of Costa Rica, first denied that the flights had occurred when questioned by the commission on 4 November 1980, but later admitted them. On 25 March 1981, five Costa Rican pilots publicly admitted their participation in the transshipment of arms from Cuba and gave details of the operations and the names of the Cuban and Costa Rican officials involved in supervising the clandestine flights. They recalled that on one of the trips to Cuba, Manuel Pineiro Losada, Chief of the Cuban Communist Party's Americas Department, asked whether they would be willing to fly arms to El Salvador.¹²³

Nicaragua has continually bullied its democratic neighbor and has supported efforts of Costa Rican

Communists to destabilize the country. Costa Rica today realizes that it is militarily defenseless against an invasion by Nicaragua, but also knows that such blatant aggression is unlikely, as it would probably trigger a response by the United States. The real concern felt by San Jose is that the Sandinistas are attempting to disrupt the social fabric of the country as a means to undermine Costa Rica's strong democratic traditions. The government has had to reinforce outposts on the border with Nicaragua because of repeated violations by the Sandinistas, resulting in fewer security personnel available in San Jose and other cities. Consequently, crime has increased dramatically, much of it drug related. Costa Rica remains committed to neutrality. But this does not mean that it will remain passive in the face of aggression, or be less than passionate in its defense of democracy. A North American scholar of Costa Rica who resides in San Jose has written:

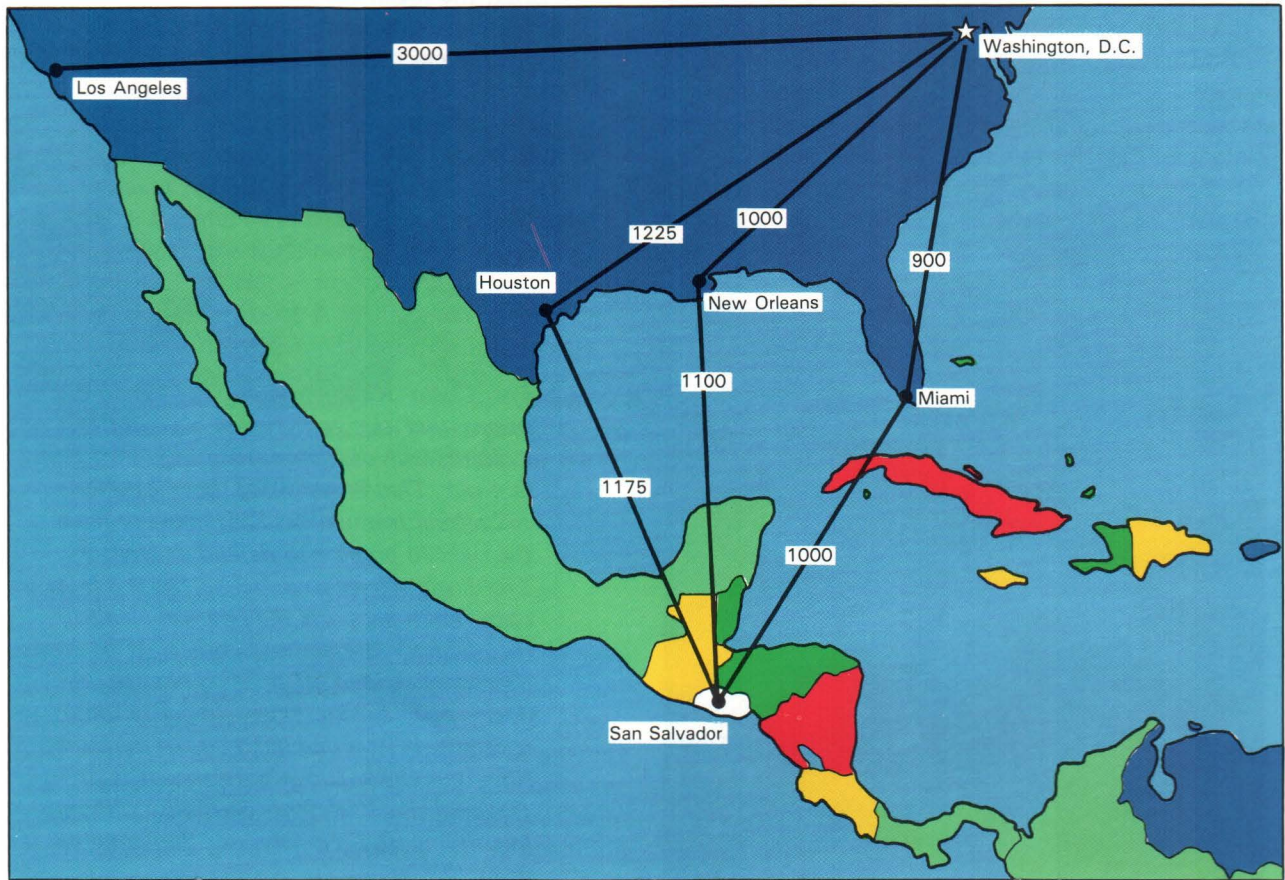
*For Costa Ricans, neutrality essentially means that the government will not ally militarily with or against any group involved in a war. That is not to say that Costa Rica will refrain from political alignment or from the right to prepare to defend its territory. The Costa Rican government has made it clear that it supports the political ideals of the United States and other Western democracies and that it looks to the developed democracies for economic assistance in its economic crisis. At the same time, the Costa Rican government is professionalizing its defense capability without identifying this activity as "building an army."*¹²⁴

Costa Ricans went to the polls on 2 February 1986 and elected Oscar Arias to succeed fellow National Liberation Party member Monge as President of Central America's most established democracy. This election showed once again that Costa Ricans cherish democracy and wish to maintain their peaceful way of life. Costa Rica remains a country that is the complete antithesis of Marxist-Leninist, militaristic Nicaragua—a democracy with individual freedoms, where the rule of law prevails over the rule of the gun.

Dave Valdez/The White House



Oscar Arias was inaugurated President of Costa Rica on 8 May 1986. This leader of Central America's most democratic country wrote in early April 1986 that Nicaragua "has neither a true interest in, or the will for, peace in Central America."



One of the reasons Central America and the Caribbean is so important is the proximity of the region to the southern border of the United States. Notice that San Salvador is about the same distance from Miami as Miami is from Washington, D.C.

THE FUTURE

We have concluded this exercise persuaded that Central America is both vital and vulnerable and that whatever other crises may arise to claim the nation's attention, the United States cannot afford to turn away from that threatened region. Central America's crisis is our crisis.

*National Bipartisan Commission
on Central America, January 1984*

Using Nicaragua as a base, the Soviets and Cubans can become the dominant power in the crucial corridor between North and South America. Established there, they will be in a position to threaten the Panama Canal, interdict our vital Caribbean sea lanes, and, ultimately, move against Mexico. Should that happen, desperate Latin peoples by the millions would begin fleeing north into the cities of the southern United States, or to wherever some hope of freedom remained.

*President Ronald Reagan
Address to the Nation
March 16, 1986*

Once the People's Sandinista Revolution has achieved its purpose of ousting the dictatorship and installing the People's Democratic Revolutionary Government, we will be able to develop openly along progressive Marxist-Leninist lines. We will be a party of iron, forged and tempered in the same process to enable us to fully organize and mobilize the masses.

*Sandinista General Political/Military Platform
November 1977*

Your Sandinista party has already created a great concentration camp in Nicaragua. But the Nicaraguan people are not losing their liberating spirit and will never lose it even in the worst of the gulags your mind is able to conceive.

*Violeta Chamorro
Owner of La Prensa
Letter to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega
July 1986*

Potential Consequences of a Soviet-aligned Central America

The Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua have worked effectively and incrementally toward the objective of establishing additional Marxist-Leninist regimes in Central America and the Caribbean. Although Castro has become more calculating in the support of violence and the exploitation of poverty, his anti-democratic aims remain much as they were in the 1960s. Cuba publicly proclaimed in its 1976 Constitution the right and duty to support "revolutionary" and "national liberation" movements. For its part, the Soviet Union has continued to attempt to divert U.S. attention and resources from other global areas of critical importance. The fact that the Soviets have outspent the U.S. government in economic and military aid by a factor of almost five to one in the Caribbean region since 1980 is a measure of their interest. Nicaragua has become the principal agent in Central America for the Soviets and the Cubans in their efforts to exploit the region's vulnerabilities and intensify instability.

As noted, the conditions that lead to instability are not created by the Soviet Union and Cuba. The long-standing inequities of poverty, illiteracy, and lack of representative political institutions can ultimately drive men to violence. Moscow, Havana, and Managua ex-

ploit these underlying causes to exacerbate existing popular frustrations. The Soviets and their clients, in waging guerrilla war, are not working to improve the social environment, but to make matters worse, attempting to undermine the confidence the people have in their governments. Should political vacuums result, the Soviets stand ready to assist in the creation and consolidation of Marxist-Leninist governments.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas are intent on consolidating their control. Should they succeed, there will indeed be a "second Cuba" in the hemisphere—this time in the middle of Central America. A potential Soviet base on the American continent, as well as a guerrilla arsenal and terrorist training center and sanctuary, would pose an even greater danger to hemispheric security than does the island of Cuba. Given the Sandinistas' self-proclaimed dedication to "revolutionary internationalism," the *Comandantes* would undoubtedly intensify efforts to bring like-minded guerrillas to power in El Salvador and the other countries of Central America. Sandinista support for subversive activities is already a source of concern to Nicaragua's neighbors. The President's National Bipartisan Commission, in its January 1984 report, observed:

The consolidation of a Marxist-Leninist regime in Managua would be seen by its neighbors as constituting a permanent



One of the consequences of Communist rule is the tragedy of refugees leaving their birthland because the yoke of oppression is so great. The refugees in this photo put on their "Sunday finest" before entering Honduras. They represent more than 200,000 Nicaraguans who have fled their homeland since the Sandinistas seized power.

*security threat. Because of its secretive nature, the existence of a political order on the Cuban model in Nicaragua would pose major difficulties in negotiating, implementing, and verifying any Sandinista commitment to refrain from supporting insurgency and subversion in other countries. In this sense, the development of an open political system in Nicaragua, with a free press and an active opposition, would provide an important security guarantee for the other countries of the region and would be a key element in any negotiated settlement.*¹²⁵

If the Sandinistas succeed in avoiding such a negotiated settlement, and are in fact able to consolidate their militarized, expansionist government, the consequences would be felt beyond Nicaragua. The resulting ability of the Soviet Union to expand its influence in the region could cause the United States to review its global priorities. In order to protect its security and economic well-being, the United States could be forced to shift military forces close to home, or create additional forces, thus placing greater strain on the defense budget. Should a series of Sandinista-type governments come to power—Communist dictatorships kept in power by military force and Soviet-Cuban support—the United States could be faced with an avalanche of refugees. Millions have fled the Communist states that have come into being since World War II. The regimes of Eastern Europe, Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and now Nicaragua have created this human tragedy. These people have chosen the great hardship of refugee life to avoid the human rights abuses and suppression of liberty that are characteristic of Marxist-Leninist governments. A refugee flow of millions into the United States—highly likely in a Soviet-aligned Central America with its resulting pressure on Mexico—could create fiscal, economic, and cultural strains in areas of the southern and southwestern United States.

The Contadora Process

One means to avoid such a crisis and achieve the security of Central America and the United States lies in the Contadora process, where the countries of Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela are attempting to find a peaceful solution. The essential thesis of the Contadora Group is that a lasting peace in the region can be achieved only by addressing the fundamental causes of conflict, as outlined in the September 1983 21 Point Document of Objectives. In the Document, the participants committed themselves to an agreed set of ob-

jectives, including political, economic, and security concerns to be reflected in a comprehensive treaty.¹²⁶

In the security field, Contadora is seeking *verifiable* steps to end support for external subversion, reductions in the numbers of foreign military and security advisers, a halt to illegal arms trafficking, and controls on armaments and troop levels. Democratization, national reconciliation, and respect for human rights are central elements of the political objectives of Contadora, which calls for establishment throughout the region of democratic, representative, and pluralistic systems ensuring fair and regular elections.

Contadora's objectives are compatible with U.S. policy toward Nicaragua, which calls for ending the arms buildup; removing Soviet, Cuban, and other foreign military personnel; ending Sandinista support for the insurgency in El Salvador and other countries; and promoting political pluralism in accordance with the Sandinista promises made to the OAS at the time of the revolution in 1979. The Contadora process is intended to bring a peaceful solution to the turmoil in Central America by creating a forum for meaningful negotiations among all the parties. Despite lip service to the democratization aspects of Contadora, the Sandinistas have demonstrated by their actions that they are opposed to any internal changes that would lessen their control of political life in Nicaragua.

It is also clear that Nicaragua has used Contadora, in the words of President Arias of Costa Rica, "for its international propaganda value." Commenting further on the 5-7 April Contadora peace talks, Arias wrote on 9 April 1986:

*In Panama the true situation was made very clear. Twelve Latin American Foreign Ministers, among them the Foreign Ministers of four Central American countries, supported the prompt signing of the [Contadora] Acta in accordance with international opinion. Only Nicaragua was opposed, thus demonstrating once again that it has neither a true interest in, or the will for, peace in Central America.*¹²⁷

The United States has encouraged direct dialogue between the Sandinistas and the democratic resistance and the internal opposition. To date, the Sandinistas have repeatedly rejected any such discussions, although they demand negotiations with the United States. The United States Government, however, does not believe it has the right to decide unilaterally the fate of the Nicaraguan people. The Sandinistas' refusal to talk with

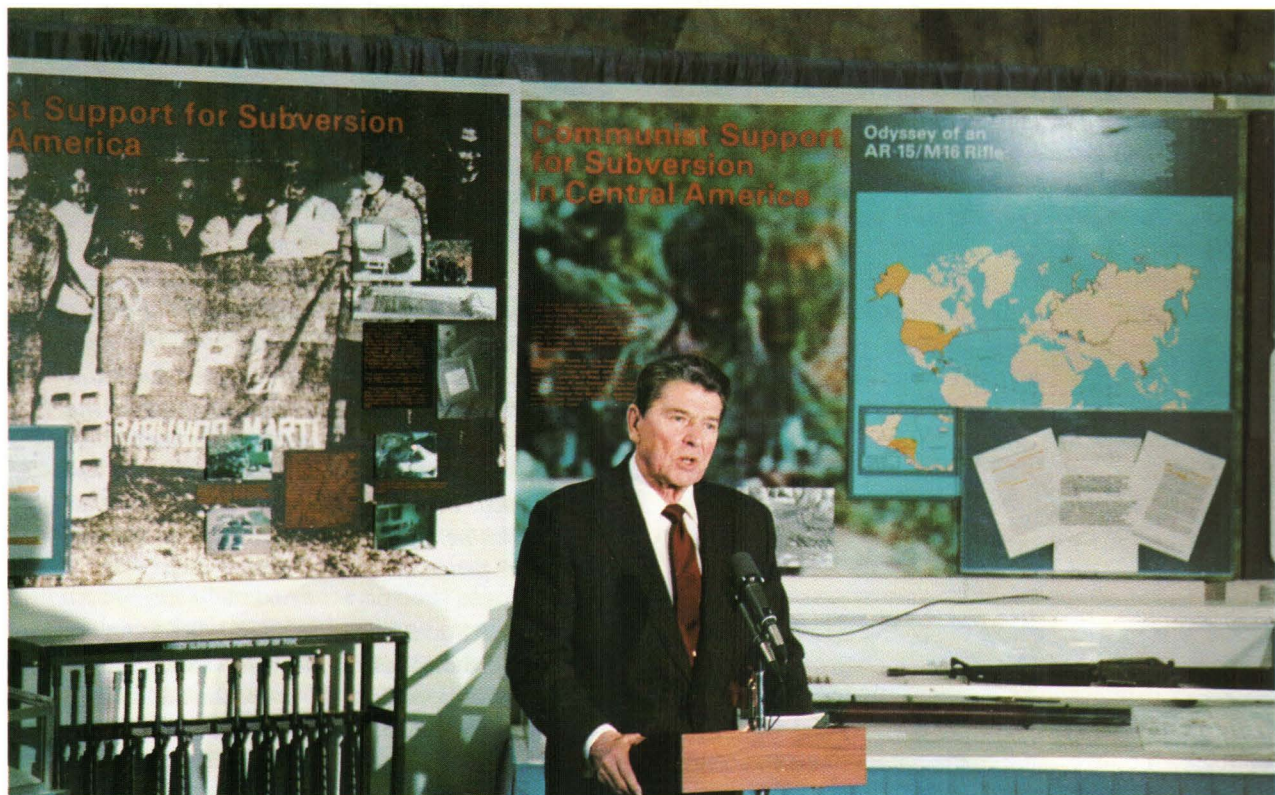
their opposition stands in sharp contrast to President Duarte's repeated openings to the insurgents in El Salvador.

An Emerging Consensus

There is a growing consensus in the United States that the Soviet Union should not be permitted to develop Marxist-Leninist states or military bases in Central America, and that the region should not serve as a springboard for terrorists. This has been unequivocally stated even by members of Congress opposed to the Administration's policy. In addition, there is little sympathy at this point for the Sandinistas, who have shown their "true political colors" as the *New York Times* editorialized in October 1985.¹²⁸ The Sandinistas are now seen by objective observers for what they have always been—aggressive Communists intent on exporting, through force of arms, their oppressive form of government to the other countries of Central America. This emerging consensus can be the impetus for an effective bipartisan policy toward the region, one that makes a firm commitment of national will and resources. It will be far less costly to make this com-

mitment now than to delay and later be confronted with more difficult choices because of an even greater security threat created by increased Soviet presence.

The United States has both moral and strategic interests in seeing that representative democracies develop in the region, and that the spread of communism is stopped. Should the Sandinistas succeed in consolidating a Soviet-supported Marxist-Leninist regime in Nicaragua, it is unlikely that there can be peace or democracy in Central America. The Sandinistas have developed a police state that is armed by the Soviet Union, trained by Cuba, and kept in power to a great degree by intimidation of the Nicaraguan people. The progress achieved over the past several years in the region will be jeopardized if the Nicaraguan, Cuban, and Soviet-backed aggression against the Central American democracies continues. The Soviet Union has made a large investment, and is hoping for strategic and political return. Cuba remains the key proxy for the Soviets, but the threat to Western Hemisphere stability has been heightened by the addition of Nicaragua to the Soviet camp. The Sandinistas are playing a pivotal role in efforts to expand Soviet influence throughout Central America.



President Reagan speaks at the State Department on 13 March 1986 at the opening of a display of captured weapons and documents showing the extent of Cuban and Nicaraguan support to Central American guerrillas.

President Reagan called attention to this fact on 13 March 1986, in opening a display of captured weapons and documents demonstrating Cuban and Nicaraguan support for subversive elements in Central America. The President illustrated the systemic nature of this Nicaragua-based subversive network when he said:

*One doesn't need to be of a particular party or even privy to secret information to see what's happening in Central America. It's clear: Nicaraguan Communists are using their country as a staging area for aggression against their neighbors, while totally subjugating their own people. Their campaign of internal repression and external aggression is being aided and abetted by the Soviet Union, Cuba, East Germany, Bulgaria, Iran, Vietnam, Libya, and other radical states, movements, and organizations.*¹²⁹

The Soviet Union and its allies are indeed mounting an intensive challenge to democracy in Central America. If they are successful in fomenting instability and possibly creating additional Communist governments in the region, the consequences for the United States will be profound. For years, the Central American region had been considered an area relatively immune to the problems associated with the East-West struggle. Fidel Castro's move into the Soviet camp in the 1960s, however, changed the equation of East-West relations, and has provided Moscow with the means to carry out a strategy whose intent is to create unrest for the United States along its Southern Flank. This strategy cannot be permitted to succeed. The United States must make the commitment of national will and resources to enable the democratic countries of Central America to continue on the path chosen by their people. In making this commitment, the United States will blunt the challenge to democracy and enhance its own security.

NOTES

1. Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980-85: An Imperial Burden or Political Asset?* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, September 23, 1985), pp. 284-286.
2. U.S. Department of State/Department of Defense, *The Soviet-Cuban Connection in Central America and the Caribbean* (Washington, D.C.: March 1985).
3. For an exhaustive analysis of Cuban history, with particular emphasis on the Castro struggle against Batista and the ensuing Castro government, see Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).
4. Rolando Bonachea, "United States Policy Toward Cuba, 1959-1961," unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1974.
5. Thomas, p. 1373.
6. Broadcast on Madrid Domestic Service, January 5, 1984. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, Latin America, January 9, 1984, p. Q4.
7. Mark Falcoff, *Unscrambling Cuban Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Cuban American National Foundation, Inc., 1983), p. 10.
8. Jerry Flint, "Cuba: Russia's Wondrous Weapon," *Forbes*, March 28, 1983, p. 39.
9. A microfiche of this document, the original found by the U.S.-Caribbean security forces in the October 1983 Grenada rescue mission, is available for examination in the National Archives, Washington, D.C., Document Number DSI-83-C-004845.
10. Ibid., Document Number DSI-83-C-004844.
11. Ingles made this declaration on a television program in San Salvador, entitled *Cuatro Comandantes*, Cadena Nacional, June 11, 1985.
12. U.S. Department of State, *Maurice Bishop's "Line of March" Speech*, September 13, 1982, Grenada Occasional Papers — No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: August 1984).
13. U.S. Department of State/Department of Defense, *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection*, (Washington, D.C.: September 1984), pp. 17-1—17-8.
14. Paul Seabury and Walter A. McDougall, eds., *The Grenada Papers* (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1984), pp. 101-104.
15. U.S. Department of State/Department of Defense, *Grenada: A Preliminary Report* (Washington, D.C.: December 16, 1983), p. i.
16. Paul Hollander, "The Newest Political Pilgrims," *Commentary*, August 1985, p. 37.
17. "Rebels Train To Overthrow Somoza," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1978.
18. "Nicaraguan Junta Assumes Rule in Jubilant Managua," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1979.
19. Organization of American States, *Seventeenth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs*, Resolution II, Document 40/79, Rev. 2, Washington, D.C., June 23, 1979.
20. Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 133.
21. Organization of American States, *Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Republic of Nicaragua*, June 30, 1981, pp. 4-5. The others signing this letter were Daniel Ortega (now President of Nicaragua), Sergio Ramirez (now Vice President), Moises Hassan (now Mayor of Managua), and Alfonso Robelo (now one of the leaders of UNO in opposition to the Sandinista regime; along with Violetta Chamorro, Robelo was one of two non-Marxist-Leninists in the original junta).
22. This speech was delivered by Arce, who had been placed in charge of the November 1984 elections, to the Nicaraguan Socialist Party in an effort to induce this party to align itself with the FSLN in the elections. The speech was tape-recorded by someone in the audience (without Arce's knowledge) and reprinted in the Barcelona, Spain, newspaper *La Vanguardia* on July 31, 1984. Daniel Ortega later acknowledged the authenticity of the speech (*Foreign Report* - August 23, 1984, published by *The Economist*). The speech has been translated and reproduced by the U.S. Department of State as *Comandante Bayardo Arce's Secret Speech Before the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN)*, (Washington, D.C.: March 1985).
23. Eden Pastora interview in *El Comercio*, Lima, Peru, July 27, 1985. Reported by *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, Latin America, August 20, 1985, p. P-13.

24. Carlos Tunnermann, "We Will Never Negotiate with the Contras," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1985.
25. James Payne, "Marx's Heirs Belie their Pacifist Promise," *Wall Street Journal*, April 5, 1985.
26. This document is formally titled "Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista People's Revolution," dated October 5, 1979. It reported in detail on an extraordinary September 21-23, 1979 meeting of the leadership of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN)*. It outlined the situation in Nicaragua and the world as the Sandinista leaders saw it, and set forth their plans for consolidating the revolution. The report has been translated and distributed by the U.S. Department of State as *The 72-Hour Document, the Sandinista Blueprint for Constructing Communism in Nicaragua*, (Washington, D.C.: February 1985).
27. David Nolan, *FSLN: The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (University of Miami, Florida: Institute of Interamerican Studies, 1984), p. 126.
28. Christian, p. 187.
29. See interview with ex-Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, on January 30, 1981, *Washington Post*. He is quoted as saying arms and supplies being used by El Salvador's guerrillas are transiting Nicaragua "certainly with the knowledge and to some extent the help" of Nicaraguan authorities.
30. United States Congress, *International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985*, Section 722(c)(2)(C).
31. United States Congress, *Intelligence Authorization Act for 1984*, Section 109a.
32. United States Congress, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Report To Accompany H.R. 2760*, May 13, 1983.
33. Wesley Smith, *The Sandinista Prison System: A Nation Confined* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty, March 13, 1986).
34. Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 140-160.
35. Ismael Reyes, "The Genocides Continue in Nicaragua," *Diario de las Americas*, November 11, 1983.
36. Humberto Belli, *Breaking Faith: The Sandinista Revolution and Its Impact on Freedom and Christian Faith in Nicaragua*, (Garden City, Michigan: The Pueblo Institute, 1985), pp. 106-117. Belli is a former Sandinista who was later the editor of the editorial page of *La Prensa*. For additional information on Sandinista abuse of the Miskitos, see Christian, pp. 254-266.
37. For additional information see William C. Doherty, Jr., "A Revolution Betrayed: Free Labor Persecuted," *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, March 1984.
38. Mrs. Chamorro's letter was carried in the *New York Times* on July 29, 1986; the *Times* editorial condemning Sandinista betrayal of the revolution appeared on July 10, 1986.
39. For a thorough analysis of Sandinista efforts to neutralize the influence of the Catholic Church, see Belli, especially pp. 222-236.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
41. Interview with Tomas Borge, *Excelsior*, Mexico City, June 4, 1984.
42. "Nicaragua: The Scandal of a March," *L'Osservatore Romano*, March 2, 1986.
43. "Nicaragua: The Oppression of a Church," *L'Osservatore Romano*, March 9, 1986.
44. "Sandinistas Attract a Who's Who of Terrorists," *Miami Herald*, March 3, 1985.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Thomas, p. 1477.
47. David J. Kopilow, *Castro, Israel, and the PLO* (Washington, D.C.: Cuban American National Foundation Inc., 1984), p. 11.
48. "The Arab-Israeli Contest for Influence in Latin America," *Business Week*, November 3, 1983, p. 52.
49. Center for International Security, *The Sandinista-PLO Axis: A Challenge to the Free World* (Washington, D.C., February 1984), p. 3.
50. "Arab States Help Nicaragua," *Washington Post*, July 14, 1981.
51. "Brazilians Study Libyan Arms Cargo: Reports Vary on Contents," *Washington Post*, April 26, 1983.
52. "Qaddafi Says He Has Sent Troops to Help Nicaragua Against the U.S.," *New York Times*, September 2, 1984.
53. August 13, 1985, letter reported by *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, Latin America, August 27, 1985, p. P-14.
54. Hollander, "The Newest Political Pilgrims," p. 40.
55. *Ibid.*

56. U.S. Department of State, *Inside the Sandinista Regime: A Special Investigator's Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: February 1986), pp. 11-12.
57. Christian, p. 205.
58. U.S. Department of State, *Inside the Sandinista Regime*, p. 11.
59. Belli, p. 247.
60. Christian, p. 299.
61. U.S. Department of State, *Comandante Bayardo Arce's Secret Speech Before the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN)* (Washington, D.C.: March 1985), p. 7.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
63. Carlos Andres Perez, letter to Daniel Ortega, "Socialist International Leader Sends Daniel Ortega His Regrets," *Wall Street Journal*, January 11, 1985.
64. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, Asia, June 12, 1980, p. D-17.
65. John Norton Moore, "The Secret War in Central America and the Future of World Order," *The American Journal of International Law*, January 1986, p. 52.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
67. Christian, p. 196, puts the size of the army by early 1981 between 30,000 and 40,000. The 24,000 figure is the U.S. government estimate. Sandinista officials rarely provide information on the size of their armed forces.
68. Tunnermann, *Washington Post*, March 30, 1985.
69. For a succinct account of U.S. efforts to assist the Sandinistas, see Lawrence E. Harrison's, "We Tried to Live with the Nicaraguan Revolution," *Washington Post*, June 30, 1983. As U.S. AID Director in the U.S. Embassy during the first two years of Sandinista rule, Harrison was directly responsible for administering the more than \$118 million in economic aid to Nicaragua.
70. Belli, p. 253.
71. Interview with Peter Bertie, free-lance Canadian writer who spent five months with the FDN in 1985. Interview conducted by Colonel Lawrence L. Tracy, Department of State, and Ms. Kay Stephenson, Department of Defense, February 15, 1986.
72. Christian, pp. 170-185.
73. Anastasio Somoza, *Nicaragua Betrayed* (Boston: Western Islands Publishers, 1980), p. 383.
74. See letter to Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, from Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, February 24, 1986. This letter has been reproduced in U.S. Department of State publication *Documents on The Nicaraguan Resistance: Leaders, Military Personnel and Programs*, Special Report No. 142, March 1986.
75. Bertie interview.
76. Alvaro Baldizon, Press Conference, Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., March 14, 1986.
77. Moore, pp. 82-83.
78. Paper presented by Professor John Norton Moore at the White House Outreach Program, October 17, 1984.
79. Moore, "The Secret War in Central America," p. 61.
80. Affidavit filed before the International Court of Justice by Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, April 21, 1984.
81. Charles Krauthammer, "The Reagan Doctrine," *Time*, April 1, 1985, p. 54.
82. Examples of Sandinista intransigence are rejection of President Duarte's March 1986 call for government-insurgent dialogues in both Nicaragua and El Salvador and the April 1986 rejection of the Contadora Peace Treaty. See Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Contadora Comes Up Short," *Washington Post*, April 8, 1986.
83. Christian, p. 306.
84. *Ibid.*
85. John R. Silber, "The Kennedy Doctrine: Principles for a Settlement in Central America," *Strategic Review*, Fall 1984, p. 20.
86. Alfonso Robelo, "The Nicaraguan Democratic Struggle: Our Unfinished Revolution," *SD Papers*: 8. Paper presented before Social Democrats, USA, New York on June 15, 1985.
87. For an account of the friction that developed between the nationalist, non-Communist Sandino, and the internationalist, Communist Marti, see Carlos Ripoll, "Sandinismo y Comunismo," *Ideal*, September 1, 1974, p. 17.
88. Carpio said this at the Managua funeral of his second-in-command of the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) Comandante Ana Maria, who had been murdered in Managua by fellow members of the FPL. Carpio himself committed suicide a few days later. For an account of this bizarre episode, see various *Barricada* (the FSLN newspaper) issues in April 1983. See also *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, Latin America, April 11, 1983.

89. Documents pertaining to Handal's trip and the supply routes into El Salvador were captured by the Salvadoran military from November 1980 to January 1981. Facsimiles of 19 of these documents were released by the Department of State on February 23, 1981: *Communist Interference in El Salvador: Documents Demonstrating Communist Support of the Salvadoran Insurgency* (cited hereafter as "*Documents*"). Document EL, p. 1 was Handal's report of his June 9-15, 1980 trip to Vietnam. Handal was promised 60 tons of arms which would be "ready for shipment during the first five days of September."
90. Edward Clinton Ezell, *Small Arms Today* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1984), p. 229.
91. "Informe #4" (Report #4), *Documents*, K, p. 2. This was a handwritten letter from the files of the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCES) that was among documents captured in November 1980.
92. WGBH TV Boston (PBS), *Frontline* four-part series on "Crisis in Central America." The segment "Battle for El Salvador," in which Ambassador White's statement was included, aired on April 12, 1985.
93. "Salvador Votes," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1982.
94. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, Latin America, December 3, 1984.
95. *Cuatro Comandantes*, Cadena Nacional, June 11, 1985.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. U.S. Department of State Press Packet on documents captured with Comandante Nidia Diaz, April 23, 1985.
99. Ibid.
100. U.S. Department of State Press Conference by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, December 13, 1985.
101. In 1980, a refrigerator trailer truck was intercepted by Honduran authorities enroute to El Salvador. It was found to have 100 M-16 rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition. See U.S. Department of State, *Communist Interference in El Salvador*, February 23, 1981.
102. Twenty-eight percent of the captured weapons were shipped to El Salvador, captured by the guerrillas (principally in 1983), and subsequently recaptured by the Salvadoran Armed Forces. Five percent were traced to various locations other than Vietnam and El Salvador, and one percent had originally been shipped to Somoza's National Guard.
103. Affidavit filed before the International Court of Justice by Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, April 21, 1984.
104. Verbatim Record of transcript of testimony of David MacMichael before the International Court of Justice, September 18, 1984, p. 20.
105. Wayne Smith, "Nicaraguan Arms," *Washington Post*, January 18, 1986.
106. Press release, March 4, 1982, Congressman Edward P. Boland (D-MA), p. 1.
107. U.S. Department of State, *The Situation in El Salvador*, April 1, 1986, p. 5. This report was submitted to Congress in fulfillment of requirements of the Administration to report on progress being made in El Salvador to strengthen democracy.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Radio Acan, Panama City, Panama, January 30, 1981, as quoted in Kerry Ptacek "Misconceptions About the Role of the Church" in *Crisis and Opportunity: U.S. Policy in Central America and the Caribbean*, Mark Falcoff and Robert Royal, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1984), p. 266.
111. Ibid.
112. *National Catholic Register*, June 14, 1981.
113. *Orientacion*, San Salvador, El Salvador, December 8, 1981.
114. This pastoral letter centered on the possibility of effective negotiations. The letter was signed by all the bishops of El Salvador, and issued on August 8, 1985.
115. For the results of the 1983 poll, see *La Nacion Internacional*, San Jose, Costa Rica, November 20-24, 1983. For the results of the 1985 poll, see the *Congressional Record*, No. 16, February 20, 1986.
116. U.S. Department of State, *The Situation in El Salvador*, p.12.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, Latin America, January 22, 1986, pp. 11-12.
120. Georgie Anne Geyer, "Taking the Sandinistas at their Word," *Wall Street Journal*, August 23, 1985.
121. Poll, *Congressional Record*, No. 16, February 20, 1986.
122. The Costa Rican Legislative Commission issued its report on May 14, 1981. See *La Nacion*, San Jose, Costa Rica, May 15, 1981, as reported by *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, on June 2, 1981. See also *New York Times*, "Arms Scandal is Charged in Costa Rica," May 21, 1981.

123. Ibid.
124. Jennie K. Lincoln, "Neutrality Costa Rican Style," *Current History*, March 1985, p. 136.
125. *Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America*, prepared for the President. Henry A. Kissinger, Chairman. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1984), p. 114.
126. United Nations Document S/16041, October 18, 1983.
127. Oscar Arias, "Nicaragua Fears Democracy," *La Nacion*, San Jose, Costa Rica, April 9, 1986.
128. Nicaragua Bares the Nightstick," *New York Times*, October 18, 1985.
129. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, March 17, 1986, Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration.

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