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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #00159-85  
10 January 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth  
National Intelligence Officer for USSR  
Robert Vickers  
National Intelligence Officer for Latin America  
SUBJECT: Discussion with Staff Aide to Senator Robert Byrd

1. Per arrangements made by OLL, we had a discussion with Mike Epstein a principal aide to Senator Byrd, who has supported the Senator on SSCI matters. The general subject was Soviet and Cuban stakes in Nicaragua; the specific concern was what, if anything, the Soviets and Cubans would do if the US took escalatory steps against Nicaragua, such as blockade, air strikes, or intervention.

2. We described in general terms the ideological and strategic interests felt by Moscow and Havana to be at stake in the Sandinista revolution, and the sense in those capitals that the Sandinistas are handling their challenges pretty well. We also stressed the consistent message from both to the Sandinistas that there are limits to Soviet and Cuban support if the Sandinistas get into direct military trouble with the US.

3. Epstein seemed to be fishing for judgments that the Soviets would "escalate horizontally" in response to US initiatives against Nicaragua, especially if their own people or assets (e.g., ships) were threatened. He was told:

We've given some thought to this, but have not done a systematic review of all Soviet or Cuban options in response to concrete scenarios.

Executive Registry  
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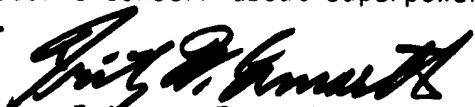
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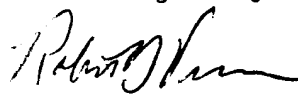
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On the whole, the Soviets are likely to avoid "tit-for-tat" responses just to save face because a) rather than undermine public support for US actions, militant Soviet responses are likely to galvanize such support by making it a clear East-West issue, and b) consequential Soviet actions in areas of real superiority (e.g., Berlin) run the risk of an open-ended confrontation but would not necessarily save the Sandinistas.

3. Further, Epstein was told that the dominant Community view of the Soviets tends to see them as risk-averse regarding potential confrontations and cold-blooded in weighing long-term wins and losses in international power politics. Although probably a sound basis for predicting Soviet caution in any Central American crisis, it was noted that Kremlin politics as well as Moscow's concern about superpower reputation might inject some uncertainties.

  
Fritz W. Ermarth

  
Robert Vickers

cc: DDI  
NIO/AL (FH)  
OLL

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Executive Registry  
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CONFIDENTIAL

NIO/USSR  
10 January 1985

ERMARTH

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- With Bob Vickers, met with Mike Epstein, aid to Senator Byrd, to discuss Soviet and Cuban attitudes toward Nicaragua, as arranged by OLL.
- NIO and A/NIO did DCI Talking Points on Soviet reactions to Geneva, leadership developments.

Executive Registry

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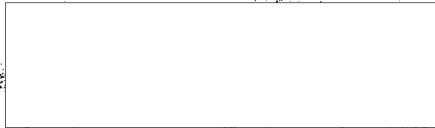
5 May 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Office of Independent Counsel Request #14

1. Attached is the material you requested from the files of the NIO/USSR regarding a briefing he and the NIO/LA gave to Mike Epstein of Senator Byrd's staff on Soviet and Cuban policy toward Latin America in January 1985 (page 10 of the request).

2. We have no material in our files regarding the breakfast NIO/USSR attended with a group of Senators and Congressmen on 28 April 1986 on Soviet activity in Central America. A conversation with the former NIO/USSR indicated that he never wrote up anything about that particular session (page 5).



Assistant NIO/USSR

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Executive Register 3,923  
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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC 01465-85  
15 March 1985

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: Robert D. Vickers, Jr.  
National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

SUBJECT: Meeting with Senate Staffers

1. On 14 March 1985, I met with Christopher Manion, a Staff assistant to Senator Jesse Helms, to discuss the forthcoming briefing on 19 March with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I outlined in brief the subjects we were planning to address with the Committee. Mr. Manion asked that we also be prepared to address the subject of Sandinista disinformation and Sandinista involvement in drug trafficking. He also mentioned that we should be prepared to provide specific intelligence information [redacted] to help make our case.

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2. On 15 March, I met with Mike Epstein, a staff assistant to Senator Robert Byrd and an ex officio representative to the SSCI. Mr. Epstein wanted to discuss the recent estimate on the prospects for Sandinista consolidation. In particular, he wanted to know the genesis of the estimate and who had reviewed and coordinated it at each step of the way. It was obvious to me that he had read the estimate carefully from cover to cover and was trying to determine if it had been influenced in any way by policy direction. I assured him that it had not been and that in fact I had gone out of my way to try to ensure that it was as objective as possible in its language and presentation. He then surprised me by asking if we intended to have the Key Judgments declassified. I told him that we would not as this was not normally done, but that the Annex had been declassified as well as the table on Sandinista policy statements. He mentioned that he thought that this would be an extremely important estimate in influencing Senate opinion, and that I should expect to be questioned on it closely in any testimony for the SSCI. He added that I should be prepared to address the question of why there is such a difference between the Intelligence Community's assessment of the Sandinista regime and that provided by the numerous American clergy and other individuals more sympathetic to the Sandinistas.

*Robert D. Vickers*  
Robert D. Vickers

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(12)

The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #00159-85  
10 January 1985

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National Intelligence Officer for USSR

Robert Vickers  
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[Signature]

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3. Further, Epstein was told that the dominant Community view of the Soviets tends to see them as risk-averse regarding potential confrontations and cold-blooded in weighing long-term wins and losses in international power politics. Although probably a sound basis for predicting Soviet caution in any Central American crisis, it was noted that Kremlin politics as well as Moscow's concern about superpower reputation might inject some uncertainties.

*Fritz W. Ermarth*  
Fritz W. Ermarth

*Robert Vickers*  
Robert Vickers

cc: DDI  
NIO/AL (FH)  
OLL



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Executive Registry

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10 January 1985

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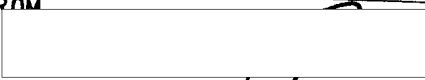
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TRANSMITTAL MANIFEST

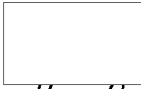
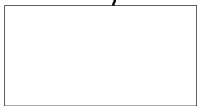
DATE <sup>27</sup> 11 May 87 ~~22~~

TO OGC/ITF  
VIA: OCA            DDO           

FROM   
Focal Pont Officer, DCI

Nº 215940

STAT

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	REMARKS
1	NIO/USSR & NIO/LA Meeting with Senate Staffers, in Jan 1985, re Soviet & Cuban Policy Toward Latin America.	OIC Req # 14 - Page 10, (1985) Pages: 13,923 thru 13927
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		 <i>I don't see how any of this package is relevant, especially the papers on Soviet and Cuban stakes in Nicaragua. Can you deny this info?</i>
	Returned to OGC/ITF 26 May 1987	
	Phase III (See comments re non-relevancy from DO)	

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FORM 3.75 12

required (13-47)



**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**  
Office of Congressional Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20505  
Telephone: 482-6136

**TO:**

[Redacted]

Focal Point Officer, DCI

Office of Congressional Affairs have no  
objections to the release of documents  
forwarded under ~~TM 215940~~ & TM 112876

[Redacted]

20 May 1987

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(CLASSIFY IF APPROPRIATE WHEN FILLED IN)

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TRANSMITTAL MANIFEST

DATE ~~90x~~ 11 May 87

TO OGC/ITF  
VIA: OCA \_\_\_\_\_ DDO \_\_\_\_\_

FI \_\_\_\_\_  
Focal Point Officer, DCI

Nº 215940

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	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX LAST ENTRYXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	

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FORM 3-75

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Signature Required  
on Third Sheet (13-47)

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CAUTION - Blank form requires secure storage in field.

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<b>TRANSMITTAL MANIFEST</b>		DATE <del>23</del> 11 May 87
TO OGC/ITF		
VIA: OCA DDO	Focal Point Officer, DCI	215940

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DATE

SIGNATURE OF RELEASING OFFICER

*2 May 87*

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Secure Storage in Field.

TRANSMITTAL MANIFEST		DATE
TO OGC/ITF		37 <del>30x</del> 11 May 87
VIA: OCA _____ DDO _____		<b>Nº 215940</b>
FROM [Redacted] Focal Point Officer, DCI		
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FORM 1236a USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS  
3.75

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(CLASSIFY IF APPROPRIATE WHEN FILLED IN)

NOTE—Signature required on Third Sheet

(13-47)

SECRET

5 May 1987

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Assistant NIO/USSR

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R. 14-89-10

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cc: DDI  
NIO/AL (FH)  
OLL

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CONFIDENTIAL

S E C R E T

## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

## COORDINATION SHEET FOR DOCUMENTS RELEASE TO OIC

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
	RECEIVED	FORWARDED		
FROM: [redacted] DCI Focal Point Officer 7E12, Headquarters	EXTENSION		NO. 215940	
			DATE 12 May 1987	
1. DCI AREA [redacted] 7E12 HQS				The documents attached concerning NIO/USSR & NIO/LA Mtg with Senate Staffers, in Jan 85, re Soviet & Cuban Policy Toward Latin America.  OIC Req #14-Pg 10 (1985) Pages 13,923-13,927  are to be released to the staff of the Independent Counsel to be taken out of CIA Headquarters and maintained in a secure facility at the FBI. Your initials on this routing sheet indicate your concurrence with the release of these documents.
2. OCA Att: Edith 7B24, Hdqs.				
3. DA AREA [redacted] 7D18 HQS				
4. [redacted]				
5. DI AREA [redacted] 7E4814 HQS				
6. [redacted]				
7. DO AREA [redacted] 7E26 HQS				
8. [redacted]				
9. DS&T AREA [redacted] 6E45 HQS				
10. [redacted]				
11. [redacted]				
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13. [redacted]				
14. [redacted]				
15. [redacted]				

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FORM 1.79 610 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

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