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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

DDI-682-82
26 January 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: Latin America

1. Cuba

The arrival of eight more MIG-23s in Cuba has heightened concerns that MIG aircraft may soon appear in Nicaragua. Most analysts expect that MIG-21 or MIG-17 aircraft would be flown to Nicaragua, providing us with little or no warning. Sandino Airport in Managua is the only Nicaraguan airfield currently prepared to accept MIGs; Puerto Cabezas and Montelimar airfields still lack defensive revetments and jet fuel storage capabilities, although fuel trucks could be used. [REDACTED] 25X1

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[REDACTED] Reporting that Cuba plans to hold military training exercises in late January was noted as unusual. The exercises could be related to anticipated increased guerrilla activity in Central America, but analysts as yet are unable to cite evidence suggesting a direct relationship. [REDACTED] 25X1

2. El Salvador

Since mid-December, the level of insurgent activity has risen significantly, particularly with regard to raids on towns and economic sabotage. Additional insurgent activity is anticipated this week to mark the 50th anniversary of the communist-led peasant uprising in 1932. The guerrilla leaders apparently have concluded that elections will be held in March and will increase their concerted campaign to disrupt them and discourage foreign participation. Most analysts believe that the guerrillas are not planning a major offensive (such as that attempted last January), but that they will continue to focus their efforts mostly on increased terrorism, sabotage, and harassment. Guerrilla military capabilities are improving, however, as evidenced by greater coordination among the various factions, more joint

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operations, reports of unprecedented amounts of arms entering the country, and the appearance of two more clandestine radio stations. [REDACTED]

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Salvadoran military casualties are up (280 in December 1981 compared with an average of 244 earlier in the year) and expected to remain high. The government probably will have serious problems coping with the increased violence and may not be able to guarantee security in some rural areas during the March election. [REDACTED]

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3. Guatemala

Guerrilla activity also has increased sharply in Guatemala, suggesting that the insurgency there could be entering a new, more activist phase. Of most concern is a report that beginning in late December 1981, additional arms started arriving for the guerrillas from Costa Rica. Cuba and Nicaragua appear to have increased their support. Analysts expressed concern that, given the prolonged nature of the Salvadoran insurgency, Castro may have decided to support an even more active insurgency in Guatemala simultaneously with the effort in El Salvador. [REDACTED]

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Rumors of a military coup before the 7 March election are widespread, but most analysts believe an attempt is not likely as long as the presidential frontrunner remains in the lead. To our knowledge, the military officers remain basically committed to elections and probably would not risk disunity in their ranks and tarnishing their international image by attempting a coup or encouraging the cancellation of the election. [REDACTED]

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4. Nicaragua

Nicaragua continues its full support for subversion in El Salvador and Guatemala. Analysts believe that Managua is involved in the recent increased movement of arms to El Salvador and Guatemala but lack the evidence, particularly SIGINT, to prove it conclusively. Reports indicate that Nicaraguan repression of the Atlantic Coast Indian communities increased sharply in recent weeks. [REDACTED]

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Anti-Sandinista raids into Nicaragua may result in Nicaraguan attacks on anti-Sandinista camps in Honduras and stepped-up Nicaraguan support for insurgent groups operating in Honduras. As long as they lack air superiority, Nicaraguan forces probably will try to avoid engaging the Honduras military. [REDACTED]

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5. PLO Assistance

PLO and radical Arab assistance to Latin American revolutionaries--including military training and small arms--has grown rapidly since early 1979, reflecting (in part) Soviet and Cuban pressures. A forthcoming DDI analysis notes that the Soviet Union encouraged this involvement as a way of lowering the Cuban profile somewhat. The analyst pointed to the Soviet-controlled DFLP as the Palestinian group most likely to be used for terrorist action in the region. PLO activity is likely to intensify in 1982; its support will be concentrated on Central America--with more aid probably going to Guatemalan and Honduran insurgent groups than was the case last year. [REDACTED]

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