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Central Intelligence Agency



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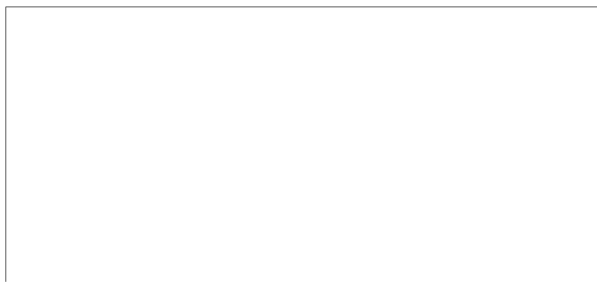
COSTA RICA: Intelligence Overview

- Democratic socialist Luis Alberto Monge took office in May 1982.
- President Monge has expressed strong public opposition to the communist left and the extreme right in the Central American region and has taken a leading role in regional efforts to isolate Nicaragua, most recently through the meeting in San Jose of six Central American and Caribbean democratic states.
- Cuba has used Costa Rica as a major staging area for political and military support to the Sandinistas and then the Salvadoran/Guatemalan extreme left.
- Costa Rican voters gave the communists only 6.4% of the total vote in 1982, but the extreme left in Costa Rica can count on the following resources:
 - A communist party of about 6,000-7,000 members, although less than half are active; the party effectively controls approximately 50,000 workers.
 - Costa Rican armed extreme left groups not necessarily united at present--totaling a few hundred.
 - A Cuban-backed far-left political paramilitary group headed by former internal security minister Johnny Echeverria.
- The DDI/ALA January 1982 report also summarizes "a recent increase in the use of Costa Rica as a support base for Salvadoran insurgents" as follows:
 - Training camps and weapons shipments by sea and air in this border area with Nicaragua.
 - Sandinista recruitment of land squatters and others for eventual deployment to El Salvador.
 - Salvadoran guerrilla or Sandinista attempts at gaining control of the refugee camps [redacted]

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-- [redacted] extensive evidence of Cuban and Nicaraguan actions seeking to neutralize Costa Rica and prevent it from cooperating to contain the regional extreme left groups; also, there is evidence of preparations to destabilize Costa Rica including:

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-- [redacted] report in which several Marxist-Leninist groups describe a specific action program for doing this

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-- Increasing attempts by the Sandinistas to intimidate Monge, including part of Nicaraguan complicity in a terrorist incident in San Jose.

-- Other developments:

-- Monge has expelled 17 of 25 Soviet diplomats and personnel in a "too large" embassy.

-- The economy is in serious condition with a 110% inflation, GDP declines of -5% in 1981 and -6% in 1982, rising unemployment (14%) and a foreign debt of \$3.1 billion.

-- However, austerity measures have been enacted, agreement with the IMF has been reached and significant bilateral economic aid is expected.

-- Costa Rica is receiving help from the US, Venezuela, Israel, Argentina, and Panama to upgrade its 7,000-person, lightly armed security forces.