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INFORMATION SERVICE

# Special Memorandum

STATEMENTS BY NICARAGUAN LEADERS  
ON SUPPORT FOR INSURGENCY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

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9 MARCH 1982

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The key leaders of the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua (FSLN) have been careful from the outset to formulate public statements of support for insurgencies in the region in such a way as to avoid suggesting present or future Nicaraguan material aid. The standard line is that because Nicaragua received foreign support in its struggle against the Somoza regime, it is "dutybound" to show "solidarity" with kindred "national liberation struggles." There is consistent emphasis on the moral and political nature of Nicaraguan support.

The Nicaraguan leaders address the issue of material aid only to deny that they are providing any to the Salvadoran insurgents--normally in the context of propaganda broadsides against U.S. policies. The leaders are on record, seconded by routine media propaganda, with repeated denials of U.S. charges that Nicaragua has furnished the Salvadoran rebels with arms or permitted them to use Nicaraguan territory for military training.

Specific discussions of aid--professions of moral support or denials of material aid--address only the Salvadoran insurgency. So far, at least, the Nicaraguan leaders' infrequent public references to the Guatemalan insurgency have gone no further than to pledge "solidarity" with the rebels and to hold up the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua as a model for Guatemala and other Latin American countries.

The issue of Nicaraguan support for the Salvadoran insurgents is most frequently and most authoritatively addressed in the media by Junta Coordinator Daniel Ortega, Interior Minister Tomas Borge, and Daniel Ortega's brother, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega. Of 108 discussions of the Salvadoran insurgency by these three leaders in speeches monitored by FBIS since November 1979, 35 refer to support for the Salvadoran revolutionary movement--25 by Borge, eight by Daniel Ortega, and two by his brother. Borge has given frequent interviews to foreign publications. While most of the other six FSLN commanders have occasionally commented on the subject, they have invariably followed the standard line. Editorial comment in Nicaraguan media does not go beyond that line.

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Representative statements by the three key leaders are reproduced on the following pages in reverse chronological order, covering the period November 1979 through February 1982. The most recent statement, by Tomas Borge on 21 February, pledges Nicaraguan "solidarity" with the insurgencies in both El Salvador and Guatemala but makes no reference to aid or support.

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STATEMENTS BY NICARAGUAN LEADERS

ON SUPPORT FOR INSURGENCY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Interior Minister Tomas Borge at the closing session of the Fifth Permanent Conference of Latin American Political Parties (Managua domestic service, 21 February 1982)

How can a patriot be indifferent to the fate of his Latin American brothers? . . . How can we keep our arms folded in the face of the crimes that are being committed in El Salvador and Guatemala? How can one be decent, simply decent, in this continent without showing solidarity for the efforts of these heroic people? . . . From the wounds of only one of the Latin American peoples flows the blood of all Latin America. This explains once again why we Sandinistas show solidarity with all peoples who are fighting for their liberation. If we are accused of expressing solidarity, if we are forced to sit in the dock because of this, we say: We have shown our solidarity with all Latin American peoples in the past, we are doing so at present and will continue to do so in the future.

Borge in a message to the continental conference for peace, human rights, and self-determination of El Salvador (Radio Sandino, 21 January 1982)

The struggle of the Salvadoran people is the struggle of all honest men and women of the continent. . . . This is the struggle of all those who feel dutybound to support a brave David facing a criminal and arrogant Goliath, it is the continuation of the struggle of Sandino, Farabundo Marti, Che Guevara, and Salvador Allende.

Borge interview in the Budapest newspaper MAGYAR HIRLAP, 28 August 1981

We are undoubtedly in solidarity with the revolutionary movement in El Salvador. . . . We do, of course, support the patriots of El Salvador in their struggle, but our support is only of a political and moral nature.

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Borge in a speech marking the second anniversary of Nicaraguan revolution (Managua domestic service, 19 July 1981)

This revolution goes beyond our borders. Our revolution was always internationalist. . . . This does not mean that we export our revolution. It is sufficient--and we cannot avoid this--that they take our example, the example of gallantry, courage, and determination of our people.

Borge interview in the Caracas magazine BOHEMIA, 20-26 April 1981

[Question] The U.S. Government insists that Nicaragua has become a bridgehead for the shipment of weapons to El Salvador by the Cubans and Soviets.

[Answer] They say that we are sending weapons to El Salvador but they have not offered any real proof. But let us suppose that weapons have reached El Salvador from here. This is possible. More than that, it is possible that Nicaraguan combatants have gone to El Salvador, but this cannot be blamed on any decision of ours. Our solidarity with that country and that people are part of the consolidation of our revolutionary process.

Borge press conference in Santo Domingo (Madrid news agency EFE, 25 March 1981)

We have helped the Salvadorans, but that aid has consisted in our example, for we defeated a bloody tyranny and proved that it is no longer a myth to defeat the strong who are in power. That is why we believe that our victory against the Somoza dictatorship is our aid to El Salvador.

Defense Minister Humberto Ortega at the first international meeting of solidarity with Nicaragua (Managua domestic service, 31 January 1981)

We stand accused of being in solidarity with the just struggle of the Salvadoran people, and we are accused of intervening in El Salvador, of arming the Salvadoran people. What happens is that our enemy does not realize that when they decide to struggle, people find arms anywhere and turn everything into a weapon, just as the Nicaraguan people did when they turned paving stones into weapons, turned into weapons their will to die until they were victorious.

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Junta Coordinator Daniel Ortega at a ceremony of brotherhood between Nicaragua and Mexico (Managua domestic service, 17 January 1981)

We have never concealed anything, either before or after the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution. We said it on 19 July [the anniversary of the 1979 Sandinista revolution] before U.S. representatives, and we have also told U.S. representatives on every occasion: We are sympathetic toward the Salvadoran people's struggle. We have voiced our solidarity with the Salvadoran people's cause. And that is a right won by the Nicaraguan people on 19 July: the right to decide our foreign policy, the right to make our own decisions on our foreign policy without anybody telling us what to do.

Borge at a ceremony to promote several Interior Ministry officials (Radio Sandino, 27 December 1980)

Those who say that the Salvadoran revolution is being promoted from other countries are deliberately lying. For example, although we support the Salvadoran people, we have not interfered in their internal affairs. . . . On the contrary, our position is that the Salvadorans should be permitted to resolve their own dramatic national situation without interference from anyone. . . . El Salvador's struggle is the last battlecry of a continent that has fought throughout the centuries for its liberation. . . . Therefore, our solidarity with El Salvador is not merely a matter of principle. . . . We are morally and politically on the side of the Salvadoran people, although this displeases many, and with internationalist enthusiasm we will continue to be on their side.

Borge interview in the Moscow weekly ZA RUBEZHOM, 19 July 1980

We are not exporting revolution. We are building a new Nicaragua. . . . If our example inspires the peoples of neighboring countries groaning beneath the yoke of military dictatorships, we will be glad. That was what Augusto Sandino dreamed of.

Borge interview in the West German DER SPIEGEL, 18 February 1980

[Question] Revolutionaries from other countries, such as El Salvador and Guatemala, participated in the war in Nicaragua. Are these now being supported by you in their struggle against their own regimes?

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[Borge] Well, they are supported by our example. What we cannot give them, however, is arms and training camps. . . . We are as a matter of principle opposed to the export of revolution. We are trying to consolidate ours, and that will be stimulus enough for the struggle of the peoples of Latin America.

Borge at a ceremony in Havana marking the 21st anniversary of the Cuban revolution (Panamanian news agency ACAN, 4 January 1980)

Nicaragua must express its solidarity with the other Latin American peoples struggling against or defeating imperialism or trying to shake off the yoke of foreign masters. . . . That is what we must learn from our Cuban brothers, who, despite their limitations and their poverty, have been generous with our people. Tomorrow, if necessary, we may have to take the food out of our mouths to express solidarity with other Latin American brothers with the same affection, firmness, and solidarity that the Cubans have shown.

Borge at a seminar on Nicaraguan foreign policy (ACAN, 17 November 1979)

The Nicaraguan revolution is being blamed for what is occurring in the internal politics of other countries, as if we were to blame for the repression of the people, the backwardness and poverty that affect the large majority of the people in Latin America. To support the struggle for the liberation of other peoples is not the same as sending rifles to other countries. That would be an error, a provocation, because revolutions are born of the people. Revolutionaries will always find ways to get rifles.



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HPSCI - 9 December 1981

SSCI -10 December 1981

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