

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Doug, - -

*The Central America package
is en route to you. I think
the attached publication will
serve for "historical perspective."*

[Redacted]

1 ALA/MCD

Date *7 July 73*

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**Directorate of
Intelligence**

Top Secret

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Nicaragua: Accelerating Military Assistance

[Redacted]

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by International Security
Issues Division, Office of Global Issues, and Middle
America-Caribbean Division, Office of African
and Latin American Analysis. It was coordinated with
the Directorate of Operations and the National
Intelligence Council.

[Redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Communist Activities Branch,
OGI,

[Redacted]

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*GI 83-10158C
ALA 83-10104C*

[Redacted]

July 1983

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[Redacted]

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Nicaragua: Accelerating Military Assistance [Redacted]

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Key Judgments

Information available as of 28 June 1983 was used in this report.

The Sandinistas are acquiring military materiel at an increasingly rapid rate. In 1983 we have observed 16 military-related deliveries to Nicaragua, compared with 14 for all of last year. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] In addition, AN-26 transport aircraft were shipped by the USSR to Cuba for assembly and subsequently flown to Nicaragua. Deliveries this year included Nicaragua's first AN-26 transport aircraft, BTR-152 armored vehicles, air-to-surface rockets, and probably 107-mm rocket launchers, as well as additional helicopters and support equipment. [Redacted]

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Communist countries, led by Cuba and the USSR, remain Nicaragua's main benefactors. These suppliers account for an estimated \$35 million of the \$45 million in agreements reportedly signed this year. Since July 1979, they have constituted more than 80 percent of the estimated \$260 million in military agreements signed by Managua. Much of the materiel from Communist countries probably is provided on a concessionary or grant basis. Military support to the Sandinistas far exceeds that obtained by Nicaragua during the Somoza years and is greater than the materiel provided to any other Central American country since July 1979. Concomitantly, roughly 3,500 Communist—mainly Cuban—military/security personnel have helped improve Nicaraguan capabilities, including 1,500 Cuban troops reportedly sent between March and May 1983. [Redacted]

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Assuring the success of the Nicaraguan revolution is Havana's paramount goal in Central America. The Nicaraguan revolution is the only successful case of Cuban-supported armed struggle in the hemisphere, and the regime's long-term viability would help establish a precedent for continued Cuban involvement elsewhere. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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The composition of recent deliveries indicates that Managua is focusing on developing its capability to conduct and support counterinsurgency operations. Armed helicopters, for example, are well suited to this type of combat, while the new transport aircraft will improve Nicaragua's ability to move troops and equipment. Armored personnel carriers will improve ground force mobility against the guerrillas and could be employed in conventional operations. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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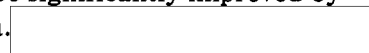
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Managua has developed only a limited capability to conduct offensive operations against its neighbors. Tanks and field artillery could be used in this regard, even though Nicaragua still lacks the ability to conduct sustained operations. The offensive and defensive capabilities of Nicaragua's Air Force, still extremely limited, would be significantly improved by the deployment of fighter aircraft now in Cuba.



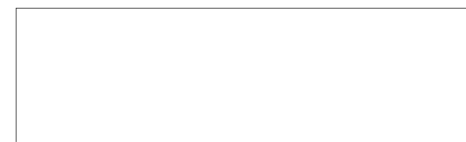
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We believe that Managua will continue to concentrate on expanding counterinsurgency capabilities and improving defenses along the border with Honduras. We expect near-term deliveries to reflect this focus, with additional equipment designed for counterinsurgency and small-unit operations.



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