

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON CENTRAL AMERICA

FACT SHEET

The President today spoke to the American people in a televised nationwide speech on Central America. The major points made by the President were:

- o Vital interests of the United States are at stake because the success of communist subversion in Central America "poses the threat that 100 million people from Panama to the United States border could come under the control of pro-Soviet regimes."
- o The Sandinista regime in Nicaragua has violated its written commitments to the OAS to hold genuinely democratic elections and instead has repressed the democratic opposition, persecuted Christians, Jews and the Miskito Indians; and cooperated with the Soviet bloc and Cuba in the export of subversion and a major military buildup.
- o Administration policy has consistently been to support: democracy, economic improvement, realistic diplomacy and security assistance to help friendly governments threatened by communist subversion.
- o The National Bipartisan Commission agreed with our assessment of the threat, the need for this balanced policy and recommended increased resources.
- o The Administration submitted a comprehensive legislative proposal to Congress in February based on the recommendations of the Bipartisan Commission. Now, it is time for Congress to provide the full amounts requested and to provide the interim supplemental funds requested for FY 1984.
- o The democratic groups and institutions of Central America can succeed if Congress provides the resources now.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. China Trip

- o Trip was a success. We are building a strong relationship in a genuine spirit of cooperation.

B. Proposed speech is to tell American people of basic decisions which are theirs to make.

- o National Security is the most important function of the federal government.
- o Soviets challenging us with a new kind of weapon -- subversion and the use of surrogate forces.
- o Issue now is our efforts to promote democracy and economic well-being in the face of Cuban and Nicaraguan aggression aided by Soviet Union.
- o Issue "is definitely not about plans to send American troops into combat in Central America."

II. THE STAKES FOR THE UNITED STATES

A. Central America is "at our doorstep"

- o Half our shipping tonnage and imported oil passes through Caribbean shipping lanes. Two-thirds of all our foreign trade passes through the Panama Canal and Caribbean waters.
- o One out of eight persons born in the Caribbean lives in the United States. Communist guerrilla warfare in Central America has caused 800,000 people to flee their homes. Concerns about refugees are well founded.

FACTS: Exact figures are difficult to obtain. Reliable estimates indicate refugees and displaced persons include: 500,000 displaced persons in El Salvador; 152,000 refugees cared for by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, including 25,000 Nicaraguans and 20,000 Salvadorans in

Honduras, 12,000 Nicaraguans and 18,000 Salvadorans in Costa Rica, and 42,000 Guatemalans in Mexico; 150,000 displaced persons in Guatemala; in addition, uncounted numbers of Nicaraguans are dispersed in the general population in Costa Rica and Honduras.

B. Alternative Futures

- o Do nothing or too little. This will produce a communist Central America and communist subversion spreading South and North.
- o If we come to our senses too late, after lack of support causes friends to lose the ability to defend themselves, risks to our security will be infinitely greater.
- o The way to avoid these risks is the course recommended by the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America. Requires long-term American commitment and support for democratic development, economic and security assistance, and strong-willed diplomacy.

C. The Only Rational Choice

- o Our policy for the last three years has been the third choice. It is in our interests and it is the morally right thing to do.
- o But it means doing enough to protect our own security and enable neighbors to live in peace and democracy without threat of communist subversion.
- o This choice requires a commitment from our administration, the American people and the Congress.

III. THE FACTS ABOUT CENTRAL AMERICA

A. Some believe we are exaggerating the threat. If that's the case it is time to put that issue to rest.

B. Nicaragua

1. The Sandinistas are communists whose ties to Fidel Castro go back 25 years. Their leaders have been trained in camps supported by Cuba, the Soviet bloc, the PLO.

2. Castro advised the Sandinistas to promise democracy and to form a broad alliance with the genuinely democratic opposition to Nicaragua, in order to deceive western governments and public opinion.
3. The Sandinistas promised in writing to the OAS that they would hold genuinely free elections and that they would establish a real democracy. The OAS recognized the insurgent Sandinista-led government.
4. This was a negotiated settlement based on power sharing between communists and genuine democrats.
5. What have been the results:
 - a. Violation of their democratic commitments to the OAS and internal repression:
 - trade union, civic groups, political parties severely restricted
 - freedom of press and speech virtually nonexistent
 - repression of Protestant Miskito Indians, Jews
 - persecution of religious groups
 - Nicaraguan Catholic Bishop Vega: "We are living with a totalitarian ideology that no one wants in this country."
 - b. Since 1979 aggression and subversion against El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala
 - Nicaragua provided training camps for Salvadoran guerrillas within weeks of coming to power
 - camps continue to operate along with headquarter facilities for Salvadoran and other regional guerrilla movements.
 - military raids into Honduras and Costa Rica also continue today.

FACTS: From June 1982 until the present, Costa Rica has sent 13 protest notes to Nicaragua over border incidents. In June 1983 the Government of Honduras issued a public document listing 210 border incidents initiated by Nicaragua since July 1979. The incidents have continued. In July 1983 a group of about 100 Honduran guerrillas were inserted from Nicaragua into Olancho Department of Honduras. Within two months nearly all the guerrillas had defected or been captured or killed. The guerrillas related that they were recruited two years earlier, brought to Nicaragua, sent to Cuba for training, and then returned to Nicaragua for more training.

c. Militarization of Nicaragua-- 10,000 Cuban, plus Soviet, Eastern European, PLO, and Libyan Personnel

FACTS: Today there are 10,000 Cubans of which 3,000 perform military/security functions. We estimate that in Nicaragua there are about 100 Soviet military and 200 civilian advisers. About 25 Soviet personnel reportedly are assisting the security services. We estimate there are about 50 military and 150 civilian Eastern European advisers in Nicaragua. East Germans have been active in the Nicaraguan internal security organization. North Koreans reportedly have taught personal defense to Nicaraguan security personnel. We believe there have been as many as 20 Libyan and 50 PLO advisers in Nicaragua. The PLO personnel have provided pilot training and the Libyans have been engaged in serving the Polish-built MI-2 light helicopters they have provided. See Attachment A for details on Cuban presence.

-- the new Nicaraguan army

- oo trained forces have increased from 10,000 to 100,000
- oo Soviet bloc delivered over \$100 million in military assistance last year, including tanks, artillery, rocket launchers.
- oo over 40 new military bases and support facilities have been constructed since 1979.

FACTS: From 1979 until March 1984 the Soviet bloc delivered an estimated \$350 million in military equipment to Nicaragua. In the same period, the estimated total value of new military construction was \$139-208 million.

-- Far exceeds Nicaragua legitimate defense needs

- oo Costa Rica doesn't even have an army
- oo Honduras' armed forces total 16,000:
- oo The Nicaraguan buildup began 2½ years before the anti-Sandinista forces took up arms.

6. Consistent Sandinista goal of spreading revolution beyond their borders.
 - U.S. did everything to show openness toward the Sandinistas, willingness to be friends
 - But they kept exporting terrorism.
 - El Salvador now target of Nicaragua and Cuba.

C. El Salvador

1. Struggling to build a democracy.

- is attacked by the violent right and violent left
- this administration opposes both extremes
- democratic institutions are flourishing
- the land reform program has benefitted about 550,000 peasants, nearly a quarter of the rural population

FACTS: Those so far benefitted by the El Salvador land reform represent 11 percent of the total population and about half of the formerly landless population

- From 1979-1983 communist guerrilla attacks have cost the economy about \$826 million compared with total US economic and in those years or 607 million.

D. Looking at the rest of Central America

1. Costa Rica is a flourishing and well-established democracy
2. Honduras made a peaceful transition to democracy in 1982.
3. In Guatemala an election is scheduled for July and there is a real prospect for Guatemala to return to full constitutional government in 1985.
4. The rest of Latin America: 26 out of 33 countries with 90% of the population are democracies or in transition to democracy.

E. Contrast between Nicaraguan and El Salvador

1. El Salvador has held three elections, the most recent last Sunday, May 6, 1984.
2. El Salvador has deferred the guerrillas the opportunity to participate in these elections and the democratic process; the guerrillas have refused.
3. In Nicaragua, the freedom fighters have offered to take part in democratic elections, but the Sandinistas have refused to permit them to compete.

IV. REASON FOR HOPE

- A. Soviet- and Cuban-supported aggression can be defeated if our political process pulls together.
- B. Communist subversion is not an irreversible tide.
 - 1. With bipartisan support, President Truman helped the democratic forces succeed in overcoming Soviet-supported indirect aggression in Greece.
 - 2. Communist subversion was rolled back in Venezuela and Grenada.
 - 3. all it takes is the will and resources to get the job done.
- C. The Bipartisan Commission rendered an important service to all Americans
 - 1. Last January it presented positive recommendations to support democratic development, improve living conditions, and bring peace to Central America.

V. THE TRACK RECORD

- A. In February, the President submitted a comprehensive legislative proposal to Congress to implement the Commission's recommendations.
 - 1. This proposal calls for increased commitment of resources beginning immediately and extending over the next 5 years.
 - 2. The program is balanced, with 70 percent of the dollars to be used for economic and social development
- B. We now await action by Congress.
- C. Meanwhile, evidence mounts of Cuban intentions to double its support to the guerrillas in order to bring down the Salvadoran government this fall.
- D. Requests for interim appropriations to bolster security of Nicaragua's democratic neighbors await action by the House.
- E. For four years, we have provided half the military aid requested for El Salvador.
- F. "Let us show the world that we want no hostile, communist colonies here in the Americas: South, Central, or North."

DATA TABLE

1. Soviet bloc assistance to Cuba and Nicaragua in 1983: \$4,917,000,000
2. US Assistance to Central America in 1983: \$757,700,000
3. Soviet bloc military equipment deliveries to Nicaragua -- estimated dollar value:

1980	\$ 6 million
1981	39 million
1982	80 million
1983	113 million
1984	112 million
	<u>\$ 350 million</u>

4. Cuban presence in Nicaragua:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>MILITARY/SECURITY</u>	<u>CIVILIAN</u>	<u>TOTAL PERSONNEL</u>
7/79	100	65	165
2/80	200	450	650
7/80	200	1,850	2,050
7/81	500	2,800	3,300
10/83	1,750	5,750	7,500
3/84	3,000	7,000*	10,000

*Many have received military training.

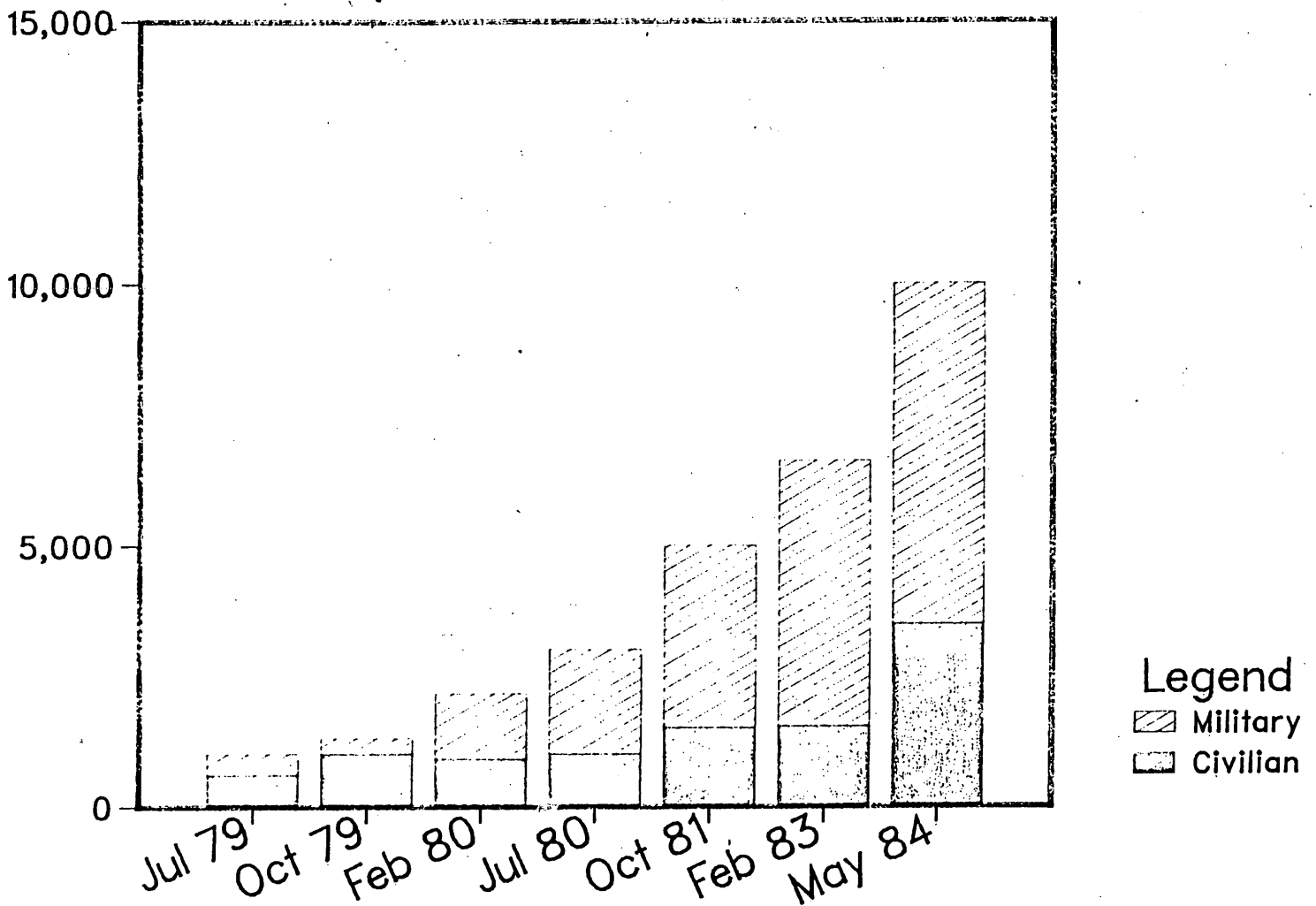
5. Trained Sandinista forces

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
7/79	10,000
1/80	20,000
2/81	35,000
1/82	55,000
1/83	80,000
3/84	105,000

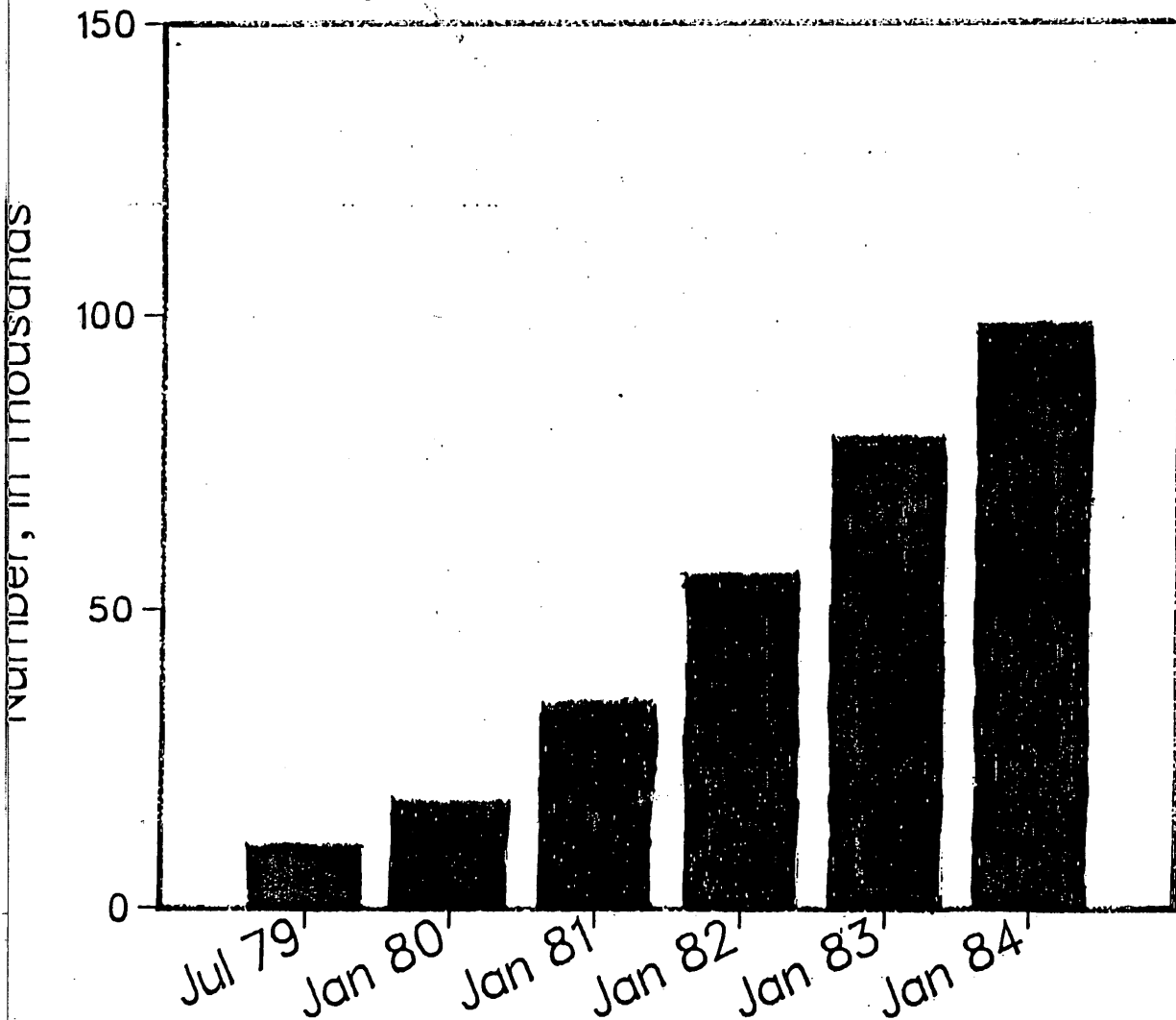
6. U.S. Military Aid to El Salvador (millions of dollars)

<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	1981	1982	1983	1984	<u>TOTAL</u>
Requested	35.5	117.0	136.3	243.5	<u>532.3</u>
Approved by Congress	35.5	82.0	81.3	64.3	<u>263.1</u>

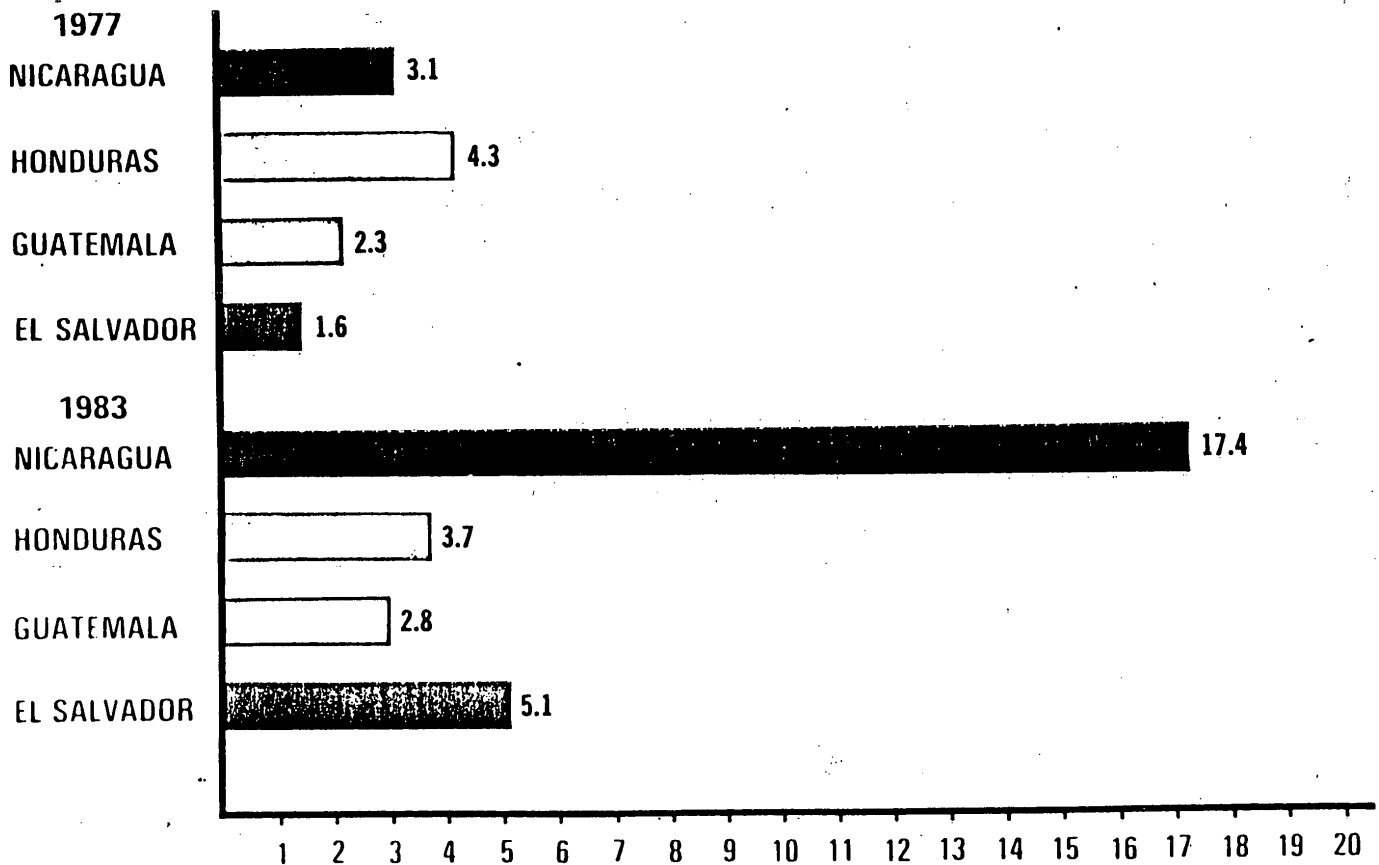
Cuban Presence in Nicaragua July 1979 to May 1984



Growth of Nicaraguan Armed Forces July 1979 to January 1984



TOTAL ARMED FORCES PER 1000 PEOPLE



SOURCE: THE MILITARY BALANCE, INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES



MILITARY AND ECONOMIC FUNDING FOR EL SALVADOR — FY 1980-84(CR)

