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PROGRAM Good Morning America STATION WJLA-TV
ABC Network

DATE April 4, 1983 7:00 A.M. CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Civil War in Nicaragua

JACK ANDERSON: Well, Nicaragua is torn by its second civil war in four years. My reporter John Lee Anderson is traveling with the rebel forces which are operating inside Nicaragua. Here's his latest report:

The man directing the invasion in Nicaragua is Enrique Bermudez. He used to be the defense attache in Washington for the ousted dictatorship. He insists that the fighting in Nicaragua is not an attempt to bring back the dictatorship. As Bermudez explained it, the battle plan is to coordinate the various guerrilla forces.

The main attack is coming from Honduras in the North. Then the Miskito Indian guerrillas are operating on the Atlantic Coast in the Northeast. Finally, another rebel group is maneuvering along the Costa Rican border. Bermudez says he's directing the three-pronged civil war from Honduras by means of a central command center inside Nicaragua. He uses both human messengers and radio communications in code.

Bermudez says the government forces have retreated, leaving the rebels a chance to occupy territory and distribute arms to the native population. The exile leader claims the most significant development is the way the peasants have rallied to their cause. He predicts the civil war will be largely a rural operation, and he's confident the rebels will control the countryside.

In other words, the situation in Nicaragua appears to be like that in El Salvador. The government controls the cities, while the rebels control the countryside. The difference is that in Nicaragua it's the leftists who are trying to defend the

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cities against anti-communist rebels out in the hills.

Bermudez insists his people will keep fighting -- these are his words -- as long as there's a Marxist-Leninist regime in Managua.