

RADIO TV REPORTS, INC.

4701 WILLARD AVENUE, CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815 656-4068

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM NBC Nightly News STATION WRC TV
NBC Network

DATE April 15, 1983 7:00 PM CITY Washington, DC

SUBJECT CIA/Nicaragua

ROGER MUDD: The Reagan administration today continued protecting its policy in Central America. In a speech in Dallas, Secretary of State Shultz said that Nicaraguan subversion has all of Central America as its target and that the Soviet Union may deploy nuclear missiles in Nicaragua.

But Shultz ignored Congressional charges that the US is breaking its own law by using AWAC planes and radar surveillance to spy on air traffic on and out of Nicaragua.

Fred Francis reports.

FRED FRANCIS: The AWACS are being used to monitor the air corridor between Cuba and Nicaragua. We want to record the traffic, a source told NBC News, that, with the satellite pictures, will give us a fair idea of what Cuba is shipping into Nicaragua.

A second mission for the AWACS is the search for light planes flying guns to leftist insurgents in El Salvador. Another task is to provide early warning of Nicaraguan air attacks to US sponsored guerrillas fighting within Nicaragua. That electronic spying mission is backed up by two Navy frigates sitting off the Nicaraguan coast, and an elaborate ground communications system set up and manned by United States military personnel in Honduras.

OFFICES IN: WASHINGTON D.C. • NEW YORK • LOS ANGELES • CHICAGO • DETROIT • AND OTHER PRINCIPAL CITIES

Material supplied by Radio TV Reports, Inc. may be used for file and reference purposes only. It may not be reproduced, sold or publicly demonstrated or exhibited.

Diplomatic sources have confirmed to NBC News that there are currently several dozen United States Army and Air Force personnel inside Honduras working to support the administration's covert action against Nicaragua.

[Man speaks Spanish.]

FRANCIS: They have set up a sophisticated radio listening post to eavesdrop on all Sandanista army radio traffic. With that information, the CIA-directed guerrillas know the intentions of these Sandanista patrols. And United States airmen have been flying surveillance missions along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border in light planes. They gather still more intelligence, which is passed on to the guerrillas.

Fred Francis, NBC News, Washington.

MUDD: There are now enough senators fretting about Nicaragua that there may be a closed session of the Senate on Monday.

One senator told NBC News today, the CIA has acknowledged having full control of the Nicaraguan guerrillas who would, quote "evaporate without CIA funding."

Tom.

TOM BROKAW: The NBC News investigative team of Brian Ross and Ira Silverman has uncovered a CIA operation in Miami that is working hand-in-hand with anti-Sandanista exiles. The CIA operation does appear to be designed to topple the Nicaragua government.

This exclusive report from Brian Ross.

BRIAN ROSS: In this new office building in Miami there are a number of businesses that are not what they appear to be. American intelligence sources say the businesses are front run by the CIA, the Central Intelligence Agency.

People who have come here to meet with the CIA say this is the hallway on the CIA floor, which we videotaped with a concealed camera. The uninvited visitor finds a series of unmarked locked doors.

Intelligence sources say only specially invited visitors do business here. And these days, much of the CIA's business in Miami, in this building and other secret locations, has to do with the guerrilla war against the Sandanista government in Nicaragua.

Much of what is happening now in Nicaragua is being put together in Miami by the CIA and Nicaraguan exiles.

One gathering spot for CIA agents and exiles is this Nicaraguan restaurant.

[Woman sings in Spanish.]

At night there are songs of how one day the exiles will overthrow the Sandanistas. The food is the same as that served in the best restaurants in Managua. And the restaurant is run by a nephew of the late Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza.

During the day, half of the restaurant is often closed off to the public, and agents, arms dealers, and guerrilla commanders up from Nicaragua met to plan their next move.

And in Miami, the CIA and the exiles have already organized a kind of government in waiting, ready to fly to Nicaragua when the time is right.

Among the leaders of this standby government, the widow of a coffee grower killed by the Sandanistas, a former director of the Nicaraguan Chamber of Commerce, and the former general manager of the Coca-Cola plant in Nicaragua, who was in Washington last week for meetings with the Reagan administration.

The military leader of this standby government is a former Somoza military aide, Enrique Bermudez, now reported to be in command of about 2,000 guerrillas fighting inside Nicaragua.

There has been much secrecy about how this guerrilla army came to be equipped, armed, and trained. But in Miami, the members of this quasi-Nicaraguan government in exile, for the first time, now admit that what they are doing is backed by the American government.

ALFONSO CALLENJOS: It's true -- it's true -- it's true they're helping. We are a very small force as compared to...

ROSS: How many men would you say?

CALLENJOS: Oh, maybe two to four thousand.

ROSS: And how important is the American money?

CALLENJOS: It's important.

4

ROSS: Once again, Miami has become a kind of staging area for a war, much as it was in the early 1960s when the CIA organized the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Now, day after day here at Miami Airport, the flights to Central America are full of Nicaraguans, Americans, and others who are one way or another involved in the guerrilla war.

Intelligence sources identify this man as one of the big weapons suppliers for the Nicaraguan guerrillas. These two men are key field commanders in the guerrilla army heading back to the mountains of Nicaragua by way of Honduras after secret meetings in Miami.

All of this, what's going on in Miami and Nicaragua is supposed to be a big CIA secret. When this man was asked what he was up to, or where he was going, he said he was doing nothing and going no place.

Is it not possible to give us some sense of how the guerrillas are doing?

MAN: I don't know anything about that.

ROSS: Ten minutes later he was on this plane, headed back to his guerrilla base in Nicaragua with the latest from Miami.

Brian Ross, NBC News, Miami.