

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT  
6 June 1983

NICARAGUA/  
U.S. EXPULSIONS

DAVID BRINKLEY: Good evening. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista government accused three diplomats in the American Embassy of plotting the murder of Nicaraguan leaders and gave them 24 hours to get out of the country. The embassy said the charges were absurd. But in any case, the three will have to get out. Here's ABC's Barrie Dunsmore at the State Department.

DUNSMORE: The U.S. Embassy in Managua has confirmed that three American diplomats are being expelled by the government of Nicaragua. They include Linda Pfeifel, the Political Affairs officer, David Greig, a first secretary, and Ermila Rodriguez, a second secretary. They are accused of criminal actions, plotting the assassination of government leaders, and trying to recruit dissidents. In Washington, the State Department vigorously denied the charges. ALAN ROMBERG (State Department Spokesman): We reject the Nicaraguan allegations that our personnel were engaged in non-diplomatic activities, and we are protesting this action to the government of Nicaragua.

DUNSMORE: This afternoon in Managua, \*Lenin Cyrns, the head of state security police, presented what his government alleges is evidence for his charges. He introduced a Nicaraguan national named \*Marlene Moncata, whom he claimed the CIA tried to recruit when she was a secretary at the Nicaraguan embassy in Honduras, but who in fact was a double agent. Cyrns pointed to the tools of the spy trade Miss Moncata was allegedly given by the CIA, a portable two-way radio, special paper and pads which can be swallowed and digested, and he produced a bottle of wine which he charged was laced with lethal poison and was intended for Nicaragua's foreign minister, Miguel D'Escoto. Then a video tape was shown of Moncata leaving a school with a woman she alleges was her contact in Managua, Ermila Rodriguez, of the U.S. Embassy. Finally, Moncata was shown retrieving a package, which it is claimed she was directed to by Miss Rodriguez and which contained the poison wine. The assassination attempt case, as documented by the Nicaraguans, is very thin. No one denies that the U.S. tries to encourage the opposition in Nicaragua, but all that the pictures shown today prove is that an alleged double agent and a U.S. Embassy official had some kind of contact. One other observation, of all the Nicaraguan officials the U.S. might wish weren't there, Foreign Minister D'Escoto is at the bottom of the list. He is the least powerful of the Sandinistas, and the easiest for Washington to deal with. Barrie Dunsmore, ABC News, the State Department.

BRINKLEY: Later tonight on Nightline, a live interview with Nicaraguan's foreign minister.

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MUDD: Relations between the Reagan administration and the left wing government of Nicaragua today went from bad to worse. The Sandinista government expelled three American diplomats on charges of plotting criminal activities. The U.S. Embassy in Managua called the charges simply absurd. Here's diplomatic correspondent Marvin Kalb.

KALB: A news conference today in Managua conducted by the director general of security, a Nicaraguan officer named \*Lenin Cyrna. This video tape, purchased by the American networks from the Nicaraguan government for \$2,600 each. \*Cyrna accused the CIA of trying to assassinate Nicaragua's Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto and other top leaders. He also accused the U.S. of trying to destabilize the Sandinista regime, and he showed what he called proof of the three American diplomats engaged in the alleged effort. One of them, \*Ermila Rodriguez, identified as a second secretary, shown getting into a car, but for what purpose, is not clear. Here in Washington, the administration dismissed the Nicaraguan charges. State Department Spokesman Allen Romberg... ROMBERG: We reject the Nicaraguan allegations that our personnel were engaged in nondiplomatic activities, and we are protesting this action to the government of Nicaragua.

KALB: There then followed a strong hint of retaliation.  
ROMBERG: We have under consideration on what steps might be appropriate in light of this particular action.

KALB: In fact, one and possibly two Nicaraguan diplomats have already been earmarked for quick expulsion. The President's special envoy to Nicaragua, Richard Stone, is still expected to visit Nicaragua this Friday, so U.S. officials say. But it is also being acknowledged here that relations between the two countries are deteriorating so rapidly that a recall of ambassadors, even a break in diplomatic ties, is now considered possible. Marvin Kalb, CBS News, the State Department.

MUDD: The United States cut off all aid to Nicaragua two years ago, claiming the Sandinistas were trying to destabilize Central America by smuggling weapons to the leftists in El Salvador. But at the same time the U.S. has doubled its military aid to Honduras, which borders Nicaragua, and Nicaragua has called our military presence there a provocation.

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SECRET ARMY

BROKAW: This whole business of covert American aid to a secret army of anti-Sandinista rebels is by now an open secret. Tonight Robin Lloyd reports on one of the groups supported by the CIA, and describes their close connection to Honduras as well.

LLOYD: Early morning at a rebel base camp in the mountains of Northern Nicaragua, a platoon of U.S. backed commandos stands by. Another guerrilla unit heads off on patrol. The mission—to ambush Nicaraguan government troops. At all times there is radio contact. Rebel sources say almost all of this equipment and these weapons have been purchased with CIA money, an estimated \$22 million this year. Late in the afternoon the military leader of the region, Commander Mack, returns after weeks on patrol. With him are 40 recruits, and many refugees who say the Sandinistas have set up their oppressive communist regime. This man says he decided to join the rebels because he would like to see the day once again when Nicaragua will be free. That evening, the camp celebrates the return of their commandant by roasting a pig. The commandos say morale is growing stronger every day. Despite the fact that the Anti-Sandinista rebels are now firmly entrenched inside Nicaragua, it is here in Honduras that the major decisions are being made. Honduras is the command center for the rebels, as well as the key link in their supply line into Nicaragua. The rebels say they can count on the support of Honduran military leader General \*Gustavo Alvarez. They say he is behind their movement 100%. Honduras is the base of operations for rebel leaders like this man, \*Endalecio Rodriguez, a member of the rebel's political directorate. The Sandinistas say that the Honduran military is openly assisting the rebel movement with helicopters and firepower. Honduras denies this. The rebels claim that their commandos inside Nicaragua will take over the country before the end of the year, a prediction many believe is overly optimistic. They concede, however, not only on their soldiers, but more important on continued U.S. aid and the continued support of Honduras. Robin Lloyd, NBC News, Honduras.