

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT
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NICARAGUA/U.S.>JENNINGS: There is no letup in the tension between Nicaragua and the Reagan administration. Today, the Nicaraguan government said an American invasion was imminent and put its armed forces on alert. ABC's Anne Garrels is in Managua.

GARRELS: Nicaraguans woke up this morning to find tanks positioned all over the capital. Government radio announced a full military alert. Soldiers are busily digging trenches. The government has warned the Nicaraguan armed forces of an imminent U.S. air attack, and Sandinista civil defense committees have orders to watch all opposition groups. It's not clear what sparked today's mobilization. A U.S. frigate remains offshore, where it has been for several days. The U.S. overflights continue as they have for over a week. 'We'll shoot the U.S. spy planes down,' says a defiant Nicaraguan. But, perhaps because they are now so used to these warnings, most Nicaraguans seem remarkably unruffled by today's military activity. Diplomats suggest the Sandinistas are deliberately exaggerating this latest crisis in order to crack down and deflect attention from the severe economic problems here. Nicaragua is virtually bankrupt; the shelves are bare. Sandinista leaders now travel to remote areas, blaming the sacrifices people must make on U.S. aggression. For all these dire predictions, there's a strangely festive atmosphere to the Sandinista rallies. But here in Montegaba, farmers stand to lose the most from this alert, and they looked grim. Students who were to help pick Nicaragua's most valuable export have been ordered on defense detail, with officials saying it's better to lose the coffee than the country. A popular folk singer woos the crowds with a patriotic song, 'My little Nicaragua, how dear you are, now that you are free.' But under the increasing military and economic pressure from the United States, the cost of this country's revolution grows higher. Anne Garrels, ABC News, Managua, Nicaragua. <

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APO4>NICARAGUA/USSR>JENNINGS: While the Nicaraguan government is doing what it can to mobilize the population, the Reagan administration is struggling over what to do about Nicaragua's military capacity. Reports last week that Soviet MiG fighters were possibly being delivered to Nicaragua only intensified debate within the administration. As ABC's John McWethy reports, nothing has been resolved.

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MCWETHY: The Soviet fighter that the Reagan administration last week believed was carrying MiG fighters to Nicaragua has now left. No high-performance aircraft were unloaded. And as a result, the Reagan administration was not compelled to follow through on its threat to use military force, if necessary, to keep such planes out of Nicaragua. The ground rule, in essence: If no MiGs, then no U.S. strike. This rule, as written by Washington, is now firmly established, but some officials feel it should be broader and much tougher. They argue the administration should try to stop Nicaragua from getting other types of weapons as well. In the last two weeks, for example, hundreds of tons of military supplies have poured into Nicaragua, including new helicopters armed with rockets and machine guns that can fight CIA-backed guerrillas better than MiGs could. With that in mind, there are many who feel the U.S. must be willing to use military pressure to stop the arms flow to Nicaragua all together. Among the options: one, push Congress to provide more money for the CIA-backed Contras, the 15,000-man guerrilla force that is working to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. Two, run more military exercises in the region to intimidate Nicaragua. And, three, if that fails, there are those who believe a naval blockade must be considered next. The Reagan administration views Congress as a major impediment to a more muscular policy toward Nicaragua. Many Democrats say Congress will continue to be an impediment, as long as the administration is considering use of force to achieve its end. John McWethy, ABC News, the State Department. <

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APO5>BRAZIL/OAS>JENNINGS: One of the key policy makers about Nicaragua, <
>MEETING>Secretary of State George Shultz, was in Brazil today for a meeting of the Organization of American States, and relations between Nicaragua and Washington are high on that conference's agenda. Mr. Shultz said fears of an invasion in Nicaragua are self-induced to whip up the Nicaraguan population. Mr. Shultz said what needs to be stopped is the Soviet attempt to bring in bigger weapons to Nicaragua. <