

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT  
14 November 1984

MCWETHY: The Reagan administration backed away from its comparison to the Cuban missile crisis, officials say, because, in fact, that episode in history bears little resemblance to what is now happening in Nicaragua. One man who worked at the State Department in 1962, Thomas Hughes, says to compare Cuba then to Nicaragua now is wrong. THOMAS HUGHES (former assistant secretary of State): I think it's inflammatory, in the sense that it's deliberately designed to hype up the nature of the crisis without the evidence that's necessary to back it up.

MCWETHY: Today, in Nicaragua, two to three ships bearing weapons are unloaded each month, on average. In 1962, 30 to 40 Soviet ships a month were bringing weapons to Cuba--10 times more than what is happening in Nicaragua. Intelligence analysts say there may be 3,000 Soviet and Eastern-bloc military advisers in Nicaragua today. In 1962, there were some 22,000 Soviet military advisers and troops in Cuba. Again, an enormous difference. And, in 1962, the Russians brought in 40 brand new MiG-21 fighters, along with 40 bombers, and the U.S. said

nothing. Today, the Nicaraguans, who have neither, have expressed an interest in obtaining some of the 20-year-old MiG fighters and the U.S. has threatened military action to stop them. Even though officials now admit the White House went too far in raising the specter of the Cuban missile crisis, they say the arms buildup in Nicaragua is a serious problem and could get worse. John McWethy, ABC News, the State Department. <