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KALB: The World Court, once the U.S. was an enthusiastic supporter, now a reluctant critic, primarily because the court has ruled that it is a proper place for airing Nicaragua's charges against the United States, and the U.S., fearing it may lose, totally disagrees.

ALAN ROMBERG (State Department spokesman): We have consistently taken the position that this case brought by Nicaragua is a misuse of the court for political and propaganda purposes.

KALB: And there is another reason too. In a carefully drafted report issued today, the State Department explains why it can not lay out its evidence against what is called Nicaragua's aggression. 'We will not risk U.S. national security,' it says, 'by presenting such sensitive material in public or before a court that includes two judges from Warsaw Pact nations,' namely the Soviet Union and Poland. The problem started last spring; when the CIA masterminded a mine-laying operation off Nicaragua's coast. Nicaragua, among others, objected and took its case to the World Court, arguing that the U.S. was violating international law. PAUL REICHLER (lawyer for Nicaragua): Well above all, it's a confession of guilt. It's an admission by the administration that it has no legal justification whatsoever for its covert war against Nicaragua.

KALB: The U.S. tonight is signalling a harder line toward Nicaragua, not only threatening to pull out of the World Court, as it did UNESCO, but also suspending bilateral talks with Nicaragua at least for the time being. Marvin Kalb, NBC News, the State Department.