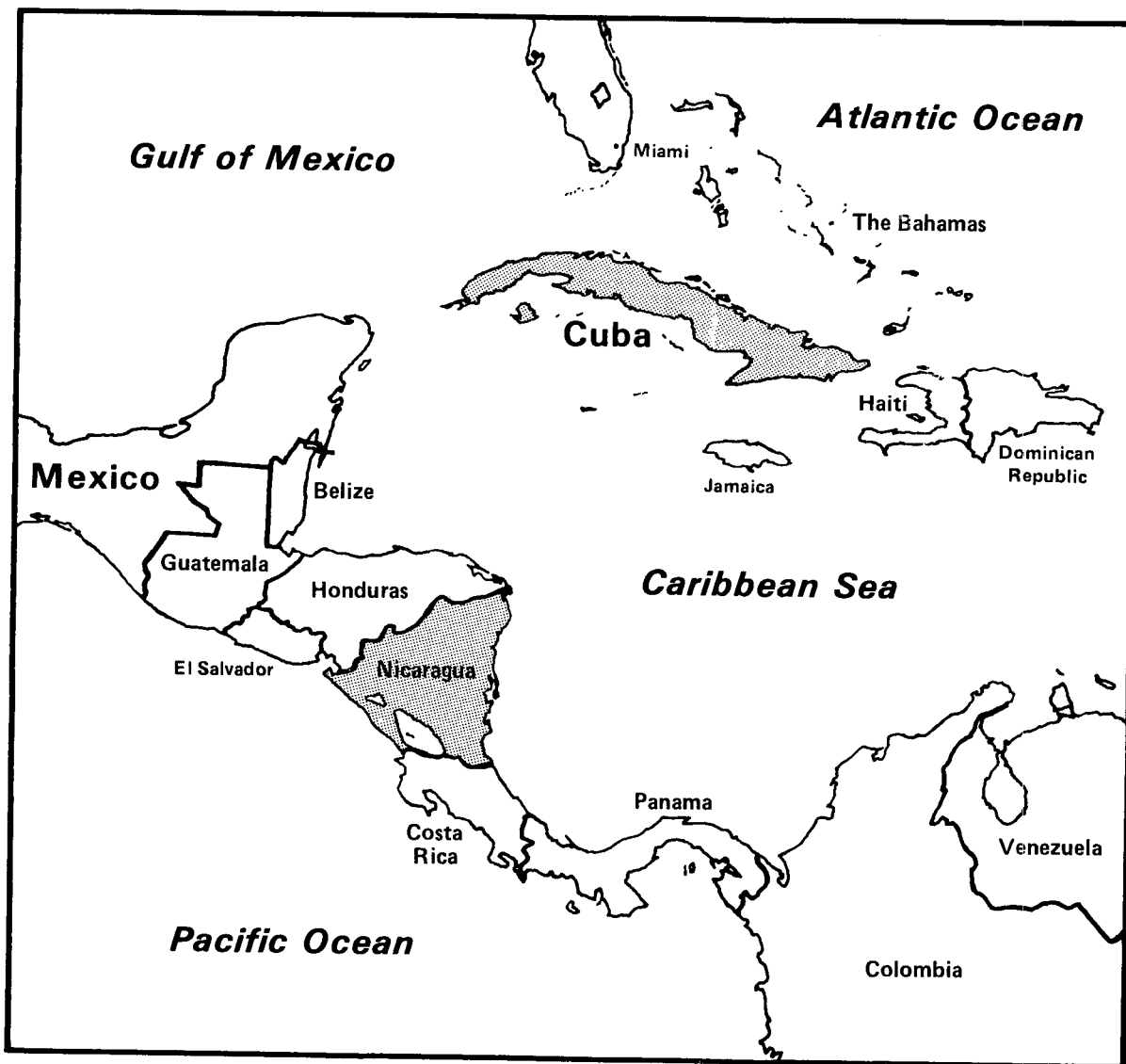




BACKGROUND PAPER: NICARAGUA'S MILITARY BUILD-UP AND SUPPORT FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN SUBVERSION



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AND

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SUMMARY

The Sandinista leaders of Nicaragua have sought to project an image of themselves as "nationalist revolutionaries." Unfortunately for their immediate neighbors, the day-to-day reality of the Sandinistas' behavior does not match the moderate image that many who live far from the reality still perceive. This report examines Sandinista words and actions from the July 19, 1979, seizure of power to the present, particularly as they relate to Nicaragua's military power, ties to Cuba and other communist countries, and relations with guerrillas and subversive groups in neighboring countries.

The picture that emerges is troubling. The Sandinista leaders understood in 1979 that their plans for establishing a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship in Nicaragua would arouse resistance among their neighbors and in the United States. They also knew that blatant revelation of their Marxist-Leninist orientation would tend to reduce the amount of aid they could expect from the West. During visits of Westerners to Managua and in their own travels abroad, the Sandinistas masked their real intentions. Nevertheless, they have worked quietly and steadily toward their objectives of building the power of the state security apparatus, building the strongest armed forces in Central America, and becoming a center for exporting subversion to Nicaragua's neighbors. The Sandinistas believed that they would have to expand their revolution to the rest of Central America or see it defeated. They chose expansion.

In less than five years the Sandinistas have built the largest and best equipped military force in Central America. About 240 tanks and armored vehicles, surface-to-air missiles, 152mm howitzers and 122mm multiple rocket launchers give it a mobility and firepower capacity unmatched in the region. (Honduras, for example, has a total of 16 armored vehicles.) Nicaragua has a 48,800-man armed force. A total of about 100,000 men have been trained and could be mobilized rapidly.

The rapid growth of Nicaraguan military strength could not have been possible without the help of about 3,000 Cuban military-security advisers, some of whom are deeply involved in the decision-making process in Nicaragua. A total of about 9,000 Cubans are in Nicaragua. In addition, the Soviet Union, East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Libya have military and/or civilian advisers in Nicaragua. Also, international groups, including the PLO, Argentine Montoneros, Uruguayan Tupamaros, and the Basque ETA all have offices or representatives in Nicaragua.

The subversive system that seeks to destabilize neighboring democratic governments includes communications centers for Salvadoran guerrillas, safehouses, arms depots, vehicle shops, training camps for guerrillas, and assistance in transporting military supplies to Salvadoran guerrillas via air, land, and sea. El Salvador has been the principal target of guerrillas and Nicaraguan-sponsored subversion, but Costa Rica and Honduras have also been subjected to armed attacks, bombings, attempted assassinations and other violent activity.

The threat from Nicaragua to the democratic governments of Central America and the support system Nicaragua maintains for guerrillas are all the more formidable because behind Nicaragua, providing support, are Cuba and the Soviet Union.

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Introduction

When the Sandinistas and other anti-Somoza Nicaraguans seized power in Nicaragua in July 1979, people in the United States and elsewhere tended to believe Sandinista public pledges to have genuine democracy in Nicaragua and to live at peace with neighboring countries. Nicaragua's clear need at the time was to restore its economic health so that its people could begin to enjoy a better life. Its neighbors were not hostile; indeed two of them--Panama and Costa Rica--had helped in the struggle against the Somoza regime. In 1979 and 1980, the U.S. Government, as evidence of its good will, granted Nicaragua the largest economic assistance program provided to any Central American country at that time.

The Sandinista leaders tried initially to maintain a moderate image in the United States and elsewhere in the Western world. In the two months before taking power in July 1979, Sandinista leaders in various public pronouncements pledged adherence to non-alignment in foreign policy and pledged to hold elections, to guarantee human rights, and to permit private enterprise to continue.¹ In their early meetings with U.S. Administration officials, members of the Congress, and non-government groups, the Sandinistas sought to portray their regime as non-aligned and not patterned after Cuba or the Soviet Union.

Evidence that the Sandinistas have not lived up to their original promises has steadily mounted. Step by step, they have become a menace to their neighbors and to the Nicaraguan people. Although most Central Americans no longer harbor illusions about the Sandinistas,² some people in the United States and elsewhere still think of the Sandinistas as

¹"Nicaraguan Rebels Soften Stand on National Guard," New York Times, July 12, 1979, p. A-14.

²A public opinion poll, commissioned by the U.S. Information Agency, was conducted by an experienced Costa Rican affiliate of Gallup International in 1983. Using standard Gallup sampling and questioning procedures, the poll was carried out in the capitals of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica. (Nicaragua does not permit independent public opinion surveys.) The results of the poll suggest that Nicaragua is perceived as a military threat by the people of neighboring countries, and Cuba is seen as a tool of the Soviet Union. Both countries are viewed as destabilizing the area, especially by respondents in Costa Rica and Honduras. For full results of the survey, and notes on methodology, see the November 20-24, 1983, editions of La Nacion International, San Jose, Costa Rica.

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idealistic and nationalistic revolutionaries. This view is illusory. Behind the facade of friendship and moderation very different plans were being made, despite the honeymoon the Sandinista leaders were enjoying with the democratic world. In just under five years the pattern of their actions and policies shows an image very different from what they sought to project in 1979.

In his weekly radio address of April 14, 1984, President Reagan noted that:

- Central America has become the stage for a bold attempt by the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua to install communism, by force, throughout this hemisphere.
- Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador are being threatened by a Soviet-bloc and Cuban-supported Sandinista army and security force in Nicaragua that has grown from about 10,000 under the previous government, to more than 100,000 in less than five years.
- In 1983 the Soviet bloc delivered over \$100 million in military hardware. The Sandinistas have established a powerful force of artillery, multiple rocket-launchers, and tanks in an arsenal that exceeds that of the other countries in the region.
- Our friends in the region face subversion from across their borders that undermines their democratic development and wrecks their economies. This subversion has been felt by all of Nicaragua's neighbors.
- El Salvador, struggling to hold democratic elections and improve the conditions of its people, has been the main target of Nicaragua's covert aggression.
- The region also contains millions of people who want and deserve to be free. We cannot turn our backs on this crisis at our doorstep. Nearly 23 years ago President Kennedy warned against the threat of communist penetration in our hemisphere.

The following report elaborates on two of the three aspects of Sandinista behavior mentioned by President Reagan: the arms build-up and export of subversion to other countries in the region, and the Cuban/Soviet involvement in both of these areas. (The third area is that of internal repression.)

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The public record of the past five years in Central America contains extensive evidence of the Sandinista military build-up, links to the Cubans and other communist countries, and support for guerrillas. We have cited Sandinista documents, press reports, and interviews with captured guerrillas and defectors in preparing this report, but intelligence sources also have provided thousands of pieces of information that support the conclusions in this report. We have not, however, cited specific intelligence reports because of the potential consequences of revealing sources and methods. Statistics provided herein, such as the number of tanks in the Sandinista arsenal, are based on intelligence information, unless specific sources are identified.

The availability of enough supplies and money to keep 10,000 guerrillas fighting in El Salvador is in itself strong evidence of outside support. What has been lacking in the past has been a systematic compilation of available evidence. In this report we provide details--and a framework--for analyzing the Nicaraguan military build-up and support for subversion in Central America. There is little in this report that alone is sensational, but the sum total adds up to a composite picture of Nicaragua's involvement as a support system for advancing communism in Central America.

Privately the Sandinistas and Castro have admitted their involvement to diplomats and others. During an interview in 1982 with Stephen S. Rosenfeld of the Washington Post, Nicaragua's Foreign Minister admitted that arms and supplies were flowing through Nicaragua to Salvadoran guerrillas but he denied that the flow was "substantial" and that it was authorized.³

The body of intelligence documenting Nicaraguan and Cuban involvement in subversion and support for guerrillas active in Central America has been reviewed by the Senate and House Select Intelligence Committees. In May 1983, the House Intelligence Committee, after reviewing the intelligence-based evidence and finding it convincing, reported:

³Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "The Sandinistas Call it War," Washington Post, March 8, 1982, p. A-13.

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It is not popular support that sustains the insurgents. As will be discussed later, this insurgency depends for its life blood--arms, ammunition, financing, logistics and command-and-control facilities--upon outside assistance from Nicaragua and Cuba. This Nicaraguan-Cuban contribution to the Salvadoran insurgency is longstanding. It began shortly after the overthrow of Somoza in July 1979. It has provided--by land, sea and air--the great bulk of military equipment and support received by the insurgents.⁴

Evidence obtained from intelligence continues to reveal Nicaraguan involvement in providing Salvadoran guerrilla groups with material, command and control support, and safe haven.

Sandinista Strategy in 1979: Two Faces to the World

When the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN) was mounting its struggle against the Somoza dictatorship, its leaders were careful to present themselves to the public and governments of the Western world as "nationalist revolutionaries" struggling against a right-wing dictatorship, somewhat reminiscent of the "Robin Hood" image that Fidel Castro tried to project 20 years earlier. Indeed, Castro, who in retrospect apparently felt that he had shown his true Marxist-Leninist colors too early after his seizure of power, consistently advised the Sandinista leaders to go slow in showing their Marxism-Leninism to avoid scaring Western donors and provoking a strong United States reaction before their

⁴U.S. Congress, House, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Report to Accompany H.R. 2760, 98th Cong., 1st Session, 1983, Rept. 98-122, Part 1, p. 2.

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rule could be consolidated. He also advised them to consolidate their revolution quickly. Sandinista leaders made strenuous efforts to get a broad array of international backing. They travelled repeatedly to the United States to lobby in favor of the large economic assistance package that the Carter Administration had presented to Congress. They sought to convince United States Government and private sector leaders of their moderate nature.⁵

It is now clear that the strategy of the hardline Marxist-Leninists among the Sandinistas was one of deceiving the outside world. They knew that their policies would eventually generate resistance from their neighbors and the United States. But in the meantime they were deliberately seeking to cultivate favor and support among sympathetic people in the U.S. Government, Congress, private sector, religious community, and others both to hide their true nature and to delay eventual alienation. Reportedly the Sandinistas hoped that a confused and deeply divided American public opinion would immobilize United States policy responses toward Nicaragua as the Sandinistas built up their military power, supported subversion and guerrillas in neighboring countries, and installed the internal security apparatus of a totalitarian state.⁶

Most of the Sandinista rank and file, and some former Sandinista leaders, such as Eden Pastora Gomez, or Commander Zero as he is popularly known, appear to be genuine nationalists. But the nine members of the Sandinista National Directorate, the center of power in Nicaragua today, are all Marxist-Leninists. Soon after the July 19, 1979, victory, the non-communist leaders and supporters of the revolution began to be put aside by the Marxists. The issue was clear: The nine comandantes had begun, slowly but surely, to establish a Marxist-Leninist regime. Had the world been listening earlier, it might have anticipated the Sandinistas' intentions. One of the founders of the Sandinista movement, Carlos Fonseca Amador,

⁵For a more complete analysis of Nicaraguan strategy, see Ernest Evans, "Revolutionary Movements in Central America: The Development of a New Strategy," Howard J. Wiarda, ed., Rift and Revolution (Wash., D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984) pp. 177-180.

⁶Ibid.

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sent a message to the 1971 Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in which he referred to the FSLN as "the successor of the Bolshevik October revolution" and went on to state that "the ideals of the immortal Lenin are a guiding star in the struggle."⁷

From the outset, the Sandinista leaders in private regarded the United States as an enemy. This was evident in the Sandinistas' first major policy and planning document, prepared two months after their July 19, 1979, seizure of power. In that document they identified the United States as the "rabid enemy" of peoples struggling for "national liberation" and referred to the Nicaraguan middle class as the "traitorous bourgeoisie." Although the document focused on consolidating their power internally, it also discussed strengthening the Central American, Latin American, and worldwide revolution.⁸

Arturo Cruz Sequeira, a Sandinista government official who was intimately familiar with the thinking of the top FSLN leadership, confirms that, given the Sandinistas' long-term revolutionary goals for the region, conflict with Nicaragua's neighbors and the United States was inevitable:

According to the National Directorate, a region as small as Central America allowed for only one of two options: a revolutionary solution for the entire region, given the "ripple effect" of the Nicaraguan revolution, or the eventual defeat of Nicaragua. Thus, the detente with Honduras at the beginning of the revolution could only be temporary. To the comandantes, it was not even certain that friendly relations would continue with Costa Rica and Panama. The new Nicaragua could not expect favorable inter-national public opinion indefinitely. The Nicaraguan advance toward socialism, and the country's

⁷"Central America's Guerrillas Aren't 'Robin Hoods,'" Human Events, March 31, 1979, p. 16.

⁸This 36-page document, formally titled "Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista Peoples' Revolution," dated October 5, 1979, is also known as the "72-Hour Document." It reported in detail on an extraordinary meeting September 21-23, 1979, of the top leadership of the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN). It outlined the situation in Nicaragua and the world as the Sandinista leaders saw it and set forth their plans for consolidating the revolution.

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ties with the Soviet Union and Cuba would, sooner or later, alienate the European social democrats, American liberals, and even regional governments such as Venezuela and Mexico.⁹

The Sandinistas constantly seek to portray the build-up of their armed forces as a reaction to the policies of the Reagan Administration and to the Nicaraguan opposition. The truth is quite different. The Sandinistas were launched on their present path long before 1981. Many Nicaraguans who now oppose the Sandinistas were active in the struggle against Somoza and tried to collaborate with the Sandinistas during the post-1979 period. Some of the present anti-Sandinista leaders who were members of the post-1979 leadership--Alfonso Robelo and Eden Pastora are examples--did not oppose the Sandinistas until the military build-up was well underway and the Sandinistas showed no intention of allowing a democratic system, including peaceful opposition, to develop.

In an Op-Ed article written for the New York Times, in mid-1982, Eden Pastora outlined the reasons he broke with the Sandinistas:

I left the Government in mid-1981. I had tried in vain to convince the Sandinista leaders of the need to adhere to the principles of the revolution. As the situation continued to deteriorate I began in April this year [1982] to speak out publicly against Nicaragua's new dictatorship....

To ensure its control over the nation, the Directorate has set up a powerful secret police apparatus with the help of foreigners, most of them East German or Cuban agents. This local version of the Gestapo spies on citizens and arrests those it deems enemies of the state. Today in Nicaragua there is terror where there was once bright hope.¹⁰

⁹Arturo Cruz Sequeira, "The Origins of Sandinista Foreign Policy," in Robert S. Leiken, ed., Central America: Anatomy of Conflict (Wash., D.C.: Pergamon Institute, Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 1984), p. 104. (Cruz Sequeira is the son of Arturo Jose Cruz Parros, former junta member and later Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States.)

¹⁰"Tyranny of Far Left or Far Right? Nicaraguan Sees Another Choice," New York Times, July 14, 1982, p. A-23.

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The Largest Armed Force in Central America

An immediate priority of the Sandinistas after July 19, 1979, was to transform their guerrilla force of about 6,000 men into a conventional army and concurrently to develop large militia and reserve forces. The "72-hour Document" of October 1979 made clear the Sandinista intention to build a powerful military force.

After nearly five years of effort, the Sandinistas have increased the number of their troops on active duty--army, air force, navy, active reserves, and militia--to some 48,800.¹¹ In addition, they are continuing to expand the militia and have enacted a nationwide universal military service law. All told, the armed strength available to Nicaragua, if fully mobilized and including the reserves, is over 100,000.

Concurrently, with the rapid increase in the number of men under arms, the Sandinistas have more than doubled the number of major military installations. The configuration of most of these installations clearly indicates the Soviet/Cuban influence. Dozens of smaller military facilities have also been built or converted from former civilian use.

Nicaragua's Armor Units and Artillery: An Offensive Capability?

Nicaragua now has about 100 Soviet medium tanks (T-54/T-55), over 20 light amphibious tanks (PT-76), and 120 other armored vehicles. Two deliveries of tanks and APCs on Bulgarian ships this year have more than doubled the size of Nicaragua's tank and mechanized forces since May 1983.¹² By contrast, Honduras has 16 armored reconnaissance vehicles. These are not amphibious and cannot carry personnel other than crew members. Costa Rica has no army, much less any tanks, and El Salvador, while having a few dozen armored personnel carriers, does not have tanks. Nicaragua also has increased

¹¹The National Guard of Anastasio Somoza numbered about 7,500 in peacetime and about 14,000 at the height of the 1978-79 civil war.

¹²"More Soviet Weapons Landed in Nicaragua", Washington Times, June 5, 1984, p. A-1.

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its inventory of other military vehicles sharply. During the first six months of 1984, the U.S. Government noted the arrival in Nicaragua of over 200 military trucks, about 300 jeeps, plus smaller numbers of other vehicles and spare parts. In 1983, Nicaragua received nearly 500 trucks, over 500 jeeps, and about 100 other vehicles. East Germany alone has provided more than 1,000 trucks since 1980. The Soviets have supplied at least six heavy ferries to give additional amphibious mobility to the Nicaraguan armed forces. With these ferries, the non-amphibious tanks could be taken across rivers or other bodies of water.

We have confirmed the deployment of almost 50 Soviet 152mm and 122mm howitzers in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas have received at least 24 122mm multiple rocket launchers from Soviet-bloc suppliers. The rocket launchers and howitzers, in addition to the 240 tanks and armored vehicles, give Nicaragua a firepower and mobility unmatched in the region, and the amphibious ferries provide a water-crossing capability for the armor force.¹³

Until 1982, Soviet deliveries of weapons to the Sandinistas were made primarily via Algeria, from which they were transshipped on commercial cargo vessels, perhaps to mask Moscow's deep involvement in Nicaragua. Since late 1982, however, arms shipments from the Soviet Union and Bulgaria have been primarily in their own and other bloc country ships.

The Sandinista Air Arm

In addition to the land forces build-up, the Sandinistas have put together the foundation for a strong air force. They have about 120 Soviet-made anti-aircraft guns and at least 700 SA-7 surface-to-air missiles. They have about ten MI-8 helicopters and six AN-2 light transport aircraft received from the Soviet bloc. Despite initial Soviet and Sandinista claims that the helicopters were for civilian use, they have been armed and camouflaged and are flying military missions against the anti-Sandinista and Indian insurgents.

¹³Nicaragua's neighbors cannot help but note that parts of their borders with Nicaragua are demarked by rivers and that in other places rivers run close to the frontiers and would have to be forded in the event of a Nicaraguan attack.

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The Sandinistas have received four Italian-made trainer/tactical support aircraft, we believe from Libya. These airplanes are armed with machine guns and have been used in combat operations against anti-Sandinistas. They also have received helicopters from Libya, and about 20 Libyan pilots and mechanics. The Sandinistas have formed a new airborne special troop battalion. Two Soviet-made AN-26 transport planes arrived in April 1983.

Preparations for using Soviet fighter aircraft in Nicaragua have been underway for more than three years. In 1980, a first group of Nicaraguans reportedly was sent to Eastern Europe for flight training in MiGs. Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) pilots and mechanics have been in Nicaragua, reportedly to provide assistance to the Nicaraguan Air Force. Aircraft revetments to handle high-performance military aircraft have been completed at Sandino airfield outside Managua, and runway extensions and improvements continue at Puerto Cabezas. A new military airfield at Punta Huete, when completed, will have the longest runway in Central America (3,200 meters), and will be capable of receiving any aircraft in the Soviet inventory. (See photo.)

Thus a basis has been laid for the receipt of modern jet fighters and for accommodating large military planes, such as heavy transport planes and Soviet "Backfire" bombers. If Nicaragua were to receive MiG fighters, the Sandinistas could rapidly develop a formidable air force. A Nicaraguan defector who had been part of the Sandinista security apparatus provided information on the Sandinistas' consideration of the acquisition of Soviet MiG fighter aircraft. In discussing the arms build-up, he said: "There are already assigned MiGs waiting in Cuba. Nicaraguan pilots who will graduate from schools in Bulgaria will fly the MiGs."¹⁴

A more recent indication that the delivery of MiGs remains a possibility was a statement by junta leader Daniel Ortega, on June 10, 1984, that Nicaraguan pilots are being trained to fly

¹⁴Excerpt from Washington Post interviews with Miguel Bolanos Hunter, at the Heritage Foundation, June 16-17, 1983. For statements from Defense Minister Humberto Ortega in 1982 saying that Nicaragua was pushing forward with plans to acquire Soviet MiG or French Mirage fighters, see "Nicaragua Says It Seeks Soviet, French Planes," Washington Post, July 29, 1982, p. A-1, A-24.

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both MiGs and Mirage fighter aircraft.¹⁵ This was followed June 12 by an editorial in the pro-government El Nuevo Diario, stating that the Sandinista National Directorate "had resolved" to use high performance combat aircraft. Undoubtedly, any delivery of MiGs to Nicaragua would arouse deep concern among Nicaragua's neighbors and the United States.

The Cuban Presence and Involvement

The pervasiveness of the Cuban presence led Alfonso Robelo, a former member of the Sandinista junta, to refer to Nicaragua as "an occupied country...where no crucial decision is taken without the approval of the Cubans."

Approximately 9,000 Cubans are now in Nicaragua. Of these, some 3,000 are military and security personnel attached to the Nicaraguan armed forces and to internal security and intelligence organizations, from the general staff down to individual battalions. The rapid build-up of Nicaraguan military strength from 1979 to the present could not have been possible without the presence of the Cuban military/security advisers and large-scale arms and equipment shipments from the Soviet Union. Other Soviet-bloc governments, radical regimes such as Libya, and groups including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), have also made significant contributions to the growth and training of Nicaragua's armed forces.

Although only about 3,000 of the Cubans in Nicaragua are assigned directly to military/security positions, many others have had military training and could be mobilized to form part of an armed force, just as happened in Grenada. For example, the 2,000 Cubans sent to Nicaragua in mid-1982 have been given basic military training. Cubans are involved in virtually every Nicaraguan Government agency and in activities such as teaching, medicine, and participation in mass organizations.¹⁶

¹⁵Reported in the daily Barricada, Managua, Nicaragua, June 11, 1984.

¹⁶For a description from public sources of the extent of Cuban influence in Nicaragua from the perspective of an ex-Sandinista security official, see the transcript of Miguel Bolanos Hunter's testimony, October 19, 1983, before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, as well as Bolanos' interview with the Washington Post at the Heritage Foundation, June 16-17, 1983. Information on Cuban activities from a different source, a captured Salvadoran guerrilla leader, is contained in "Cuba Directs Salvador Insurgency, Former Guerrilla Lieutenant Says," New York Times, July 28, 1983, p. A-10.

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The Sandinista Directorate's Marxist-Leninist Nature and Close Ties with Communist Governments

The Sandinista government represents the first triumph of the generation of Latin American guerrilla fighters trained and unified by Fidel Castro. The ideological orientation and backgrounds of key Sandinista leaders leave no question as to why the ideals of Lenin are a "guiding star" in their struggle. Tomas Borge Martinez, Nicaragua's interior minister, who received indoctrination and guerrilla instruction in Cuba, became "General Coordinator" of the FSLN guerrilla organization. Thenceforth, Borge was the key liaison with Cuba. Other beneficiaries of instruction in Cuba on guerrilla tactics and ideology include the brothers Humberto and Daniel Ortega Saavedra, Defense Minister and Coordinator of the government junta, respectively, and Henry Ruiz Hernandez, Planning Minister.

In early 1979, the FSLN was composed of three groups. One of these contained some democratic elements. Castro, dissatisfied with the lack of coordination between the groups, wanted a unified FSLN command structure. To accomplish this--as well as the hidden agenda of strengthening the Marxist-Leninist elements of the FSLN--Castro called Borge and the Ortegas to several meetings in Havana. Non-Marxist-Leninist FSLN members were excluded. The message Castro delivered at these meetings was that a unified command structure would have to be formed prior to the FSLN's receiving additional Cuban assistance.

The unification of the Sandinista forces in March and April 1979 coincided with the end of Carlos Andres Perez' tenure as President of Venezuela. Under Perez, the Sandinistas had received the bulk of their logistical support from Venezuela via Panama. In the spring of 1979, Cuba became the Sandinistas' primary supplier of military assistance, acting through a logistics network set up near the northern Costa Rican city of Liberia. At least 21 Cuban aircraft loaded with weapons and ammunition flew directly from Cuba to Llano Grande Airport in Liberia. This logistical support was important to the Sandinistas. It enabled them to take advantage of the Somoza government's increasingly widespread unpopularity by pushing for a military victory over the disintegrating National Guard.¹⁷

¹⁷See report of the Special Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica on Arms Traffic, May 14, 1981.

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Immediately after the Sandinistas and other anti-Somoza Nicaraguans seized power in July 1979, with the general support of the populace, more Cuban advisers arrived in Managua. (A limited number of Cubans were already in Nicaragua assisting the FSLN clandestinely.) Panamanian offers of military advisers were rejected. In less than two years, about 600 Cuban military advisers were introduced into Nicaragua, despite the protests of many non-Marxist leaders who fought with the Sandinistas against Somoza. Through intelligence sources, the U.S. Government learned that one of Castro's most experienced high-ranking officers, General Arnaldo Ochoa Sanchez, was sent to Nicaragua in June 1983 to oversee the arms build-up and strengthen the overall Cuban role. Ochoa had previously supervised Cuban military activities in Angola and Ethiopia.¹⁸ According to Nicaraguan defectors and other sources, Cubans have been assigned to key ministries within the Sandinista government, including Interior and Defense. The Cuban influence extends beyond participation in the Nicaraguan security and training apparatus.

In the opinion of at least two Sovietologists, the triumph of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua signaled a milestone in what Moscow considered the progressive transformation of the Caribbean basin, perhaps equal in importance to the victory of Castro in Cuba. In both cases, according to the same analysts, the United States was perceived by the Soviets as suffering humiliating political defeat.¹⁹ Evidence of the importance of Nicaragua is reflected in the following excerpt from a memorandum of conversation between Soviet Army Chief of Staff Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov and the Grenadian Army Chief of Staff: "The Marshal said that over two decades ago, there was only Cuba in Latin America; today there are Nicaragua, Grenada, and a serious battle is going on in El Salvador."²⁰

¹⁸For more information on General Arnaldo Ochoa Sanchez see "Cuban Commander in Nicaragua Post," New York Times, June 19, 1983, pp. A-1, A-10.

¹⁹See Jiri Valenta and Virginia Valenta, "Soviet Strategy and Policies in the Caribbean Basin," Howard J. Wiarda, ed., Rift and Revolution (Wash., D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984), pp. 197-247.

²⁰March 10, 1983, memorandum of conversation between Soviet Army Chief of General Staff Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov and Grenadian Army Chief of Staff Einstein Louison, who was then in the Soviet Union for training.

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Military and/or civilian advisers from the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Libya, and East Germany are also active in Nicaragua, albeit in smaller numbers than the Cubans. Their apparent mission is to build a Sandinista-controlled political apparatus and to expand Nicaragua's military and security forces to unprecedented levels.

Crucial to the Central American support system for subversion in Nicaragua are the officers and representatives of guerrilla and subversive groups from elsewhere in Latin America, as well as from the Middle East and Africa. These include the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Argentina's Montoneros, Chile's Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), Spain's separatist Basque Homeland and Liberty (ETA), and Uruguay's Tupamaros. Their numbers are small. The PLO office, equivalent in status to a diplomatic mission, helped to train the Sandinista Air Force and serviced military aircraft. NOTE: Although activities initiated by the PLO in the period 1980-82 have continued, its severe reversal in southern Lebanon in 1982 and subsequent events in the Middle East apparently prevented the initiation of new activities during 1983 and 1984.

Montonero leader Mario Firmenich frequently traveled to Nicaragua and other Central American countries prior to his arrest in Brazil in February 1984.²¹ One of his lieutenants, Estela Caloni, operated safehouses and propaganda facilities for the Montoneros in Managua during 1983.²² Caloni also held a job in the Nicaraguan Government's press office. Nicaraguan defectors report that veteran Argentine and Chilean guerrillas serve as instructors at Cuban-staffed training camps for guerrillas from El Salvador and other Central American countries, further confirming the fact that the Sandinistas have turned Nicaragua into a center for insurgency in Central America. Members of these international organizations are suspected of having participated in assassinations, kidnappings, bombings, and other violence in neighboring countries, particularly Costa Rica.

²¹Firmenich has been detained in Rio de Janeiro, pending a Brazilian Supreme Court decision on an Argentine government extradition request. We understand that a decision was made during the week of June 17, 1984, to honor the Argentine request.

²²Miguel Bolanos Hunter interviews with the Washington Post, June 16-17, 1983, at the Heritage Foundation, and discussions at the State Department, November 1983.

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Creation of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)

Anti-government guerrillas in El Salvador are directed by the Frente Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional (FMLN). Cuban and Nicaraguan involvement with the FMLN's main components and leadership cadres in El Salvador predates the Sandinista rise in Nicaragua.²³ By July 1979, Cuba had trained over 200 guerrillas of the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) faction of the FMLN in guerrilla warfare tactics.²⁴ Ferman Cienfuegos, leader of another Salvadoran group, the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), which engaged in an extensive kidnapping campaign against the Salvadoran and foreign business community, also met regularly with Cuban intelligence officers.

During a visit to Mexico in May 1979, Fidel Castro declared that "Nicaragua and El Salvador will soon fall to guerrilla forces" and their governments will "take their place in the trash heap of history."²⁵ At that time the FSLN victory was all but assured in Nicaragua, and terrorist activity (which preceded full-scale guerrilla war) in El Salvador was reaching its peak.²⁶ However, with the launching of agrarian, banking, and export sector reforms in El Salvador, the leftist groups realized that the political ground had been cut from beneath them, and by June 1980 they had turned to war.

²³Before the FMLN was formed in 1980, there were five smaller, independent Salvadoran guerrilla organizations. These continue as distinct entities but under the umbrella of the FMLN. The FMLN is named after Farabundo Marti, a Salvadoran communist of the 1930s who for a time fought alongside Augusto Sandino in Nicaragua. Sandino, however, who was a nationalist, not a Marxist, expelled Farabundo Marti from his forces because of Marti's communist orientation.

²⁴Miguel Bolanos Hunter discussion at the State Department, November 1983; also see Chicago Tribune, June 27 and July 1, 1979, for reporting on Cuban involvement.

²⁵Reported on NBC Evening News, May 18, 1979, and in "Will El Salvador Be the Next to Fall?" Human Events, August 11, 1979.

²⁶Prior to 1980 the five Salvadoran Marxist-Leninist factions focused on terrorist activities, such as bombing of public buildings (including supermarkets), bank robberies, assassinations, and kidnappings for ransom. This effort, which was centered primarily in urban areas, focused on terrorizing the populace, raising funds for the guerrilla treasury, and setting the stage for widespread guerrilla warfare.

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Just as Cuba had done earlier with the Sandinistas, it conditioned training and material support for the five Salvadoran guerrilla groups on the formation of a unified front. Feelings between groups on the Salvadoran extreme left were antagonistic. Traditionally they had engaged in violent infighting which sometimes resulted in assassinations within the guerrilla groups, but they unified to gain Castro's support. In May 1980, following meetings the previous month of Salvadoran revolutionary leaders, including Cayetano Carpio of the Frente Popular de Liberacion (FPL) and Communist Party Chairman Shafik Handal, as well as top Sandinista and Cuban officials, the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) was created. It encompassed both the political and military arms of the guerrilla alliance.²⁷ In October 1980, the five guerrilla factions, loosely coordinated under the DRU, took a step toward closer unity by forming the FMLN.²⁸

One of the top leaders of the Salvadoran guerrillas, Joaquin Villalobos, in mid-1980 explained the role of Cuba in the Salvadoran revolution to one of his chief field commanders) Alejandro Montenegro. Montenegro, who was captured in mid-1982

²⁷Events surrounding the formation of the FMLN were described in Shafik Handal's diary, which was among documents captured by the Salvadoran army in 1980. As early as 1979 the close working relations between Cubans, Sandinistas, and Salvadoran guerrilla groups were becoming clear. The Cubans were training both the Sandinistas and the Salvadoran guerrilla cadre and providing large-scale shipments of arms to the former. Also the Salvadoran guerrillas were helping the Sandinistas. For example, during the 1979 kidnapping of Israeli honorary consul and leading coffee exporter in El Salvador, Ernesto Liebes, the FARN demanded that part of the ransom for his release be deposited in FSLN bank accounts in Costa Rica.

²⁸The political front for the FMLN is the Frente Democrático Revolucionario (FDR), which was formed in April 1980. It includes three tiny non-communist parties as well as representatives of the Marxist-oriented guerrilla groups. The democratic elements of the FDR have no voice in the DRU, which makes decisions affecting the conduct of the war and the overall political strategy for the FMLN. The FDR's primary role is to serve as a non-communist facade in the FMLN's relations with democratic groups abroad.

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in Honduras, quoted Villalobos as saying, "We have to recognize that the Cubans are the fulcrum of the revolution in Latin America." According to Montenegro, in order to unify the diverse guerrilla functions, the Cubans even sanctioned assassinations within the guerrilla groups: "A top leader in Managua killed in the 1980-1981 period was Ernesto Jovel, a FARN (Armed Forces of National Resistance) chief. The Cubans killed him because he always openly opposed Cuba's plans. His plane exploded while he was on the way to Costa Rica."²⁹

During an interview with the New York Times, Montenegro further underlined the Cuban role: "From the political and military point of view, all the decisions that the DRU took--from the strategic sense, from the military sense--were done in coordination with the Cubans. For example, in November 1980, when guerrilla leaders met in Havana, the military plan for the final offensive in January 1981 was authorized by the Cubans."³⁰

The Nicaraguan support structure for the Salvadoran DRU has been incorporated into the FSLN's party structure and state apparatus. The "Comision Politica," headed by FSLN national coordinator Bayardo Arce, is in charge of facilitating propaganda and diplomatic support for the Salvadoran guerrillas. Nicaraguan military support for the FMLN is coordinated through the "Comision Militar," which is composed of Cuban and Nicaraguan staff officers working with Salvadoran

²⁹Montenegro interview with State Department officials, March 12, 1984. NOTE: The circumstances surrounding Jovel's death were deliberately obscured by the FMLN leadership. First, they announced that he had been killed in the war in El Salvador. Their next release said he had been killed in an automobile accident. Finally, they acknowledged that he had been killed in a plane crash, alleging that he had been enroute to Panama. Montenegro's allegation that the Cubans had Jovel killed appears to be the version accepted privately within the guerrilla leadership. We have no information from outside the guerrilla leadership to corroborate the allegation that the Cubans planned Jovel's aircraft accident.

³⁰"Cuba Directs Salvador Insurgency, Former Salvadoran Guerrilla Says," New York Times, July 28, 1983, p. A-10.

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guerrilla leaders based in Managua.³¹ This body operates out of the Ministry of Defense in Managua under the control of Defense Minister Humberto Ortega Saavedra. Joaquin Cuadra, the Cuban-trained Sandinista Army Chief of Staff, directs the day-to-day supervision of the "Comision Militar."

The Nicaraguan Supply Operations for the Salvadoran Guerrillas

Arms shipments through Nicaragua to Salvadoran guerrillas increased dramatically after the formation of the DRU in June 1980. Communist governments and other "revolutionary" sponsors abroad began to send Western-made weapons, including M-16 rifles, through Cuba and Nicaragua to the guerrillas. To accelerate donations of arms for the so-called "final offensive," which was launched in January 1981, Cuba and other Soviet-bloc countries also agreed to replace any arms that the Sandinistas donated.³²

The rate and composition of the supply flow to guerrillas in El Salvador has varied, depending on a number of factors. During the initial rapid build-up from November 1980 to January 1981, arms and ammunition made up much of the shipments and the flow in arms was heavy. Since then, the Salvadoran guerrillas and their mentors in Managua have varied the flow of arms and supplies, depending on their tactical requirements and the interdiction efforts they have encountered. Throughout, there has been a steady flow of ammunition, explosives, medicines, and clothing. There have also been sporadic increases in the movement of guerrilla weapons to meet the demands of planned offensives or the organization of new guerrilla groups.

The supply network between Nicaragua and El Salvador follows various routes. Deliveries routinely go by land, using Honduran territory, and by air and sea. Questioned by the New York Times about the arms flow from Nicaragua, former guerrilla Commander Montenegro said that the guerrilla units under his command in 1981 and 1982 in San Salvador and north of the city received nearly all of their arms from Nicaragua. They received monthly

³¹Miguel Bolanos Hunter interviews at the Heritage Foundation with the Washington Post, June 16-17, 1983. For more information on the Nicaraguan Government's linkages with and support for Salvadoran guerrillas and the direct Cuban role in these activities, as well as Cuban controlling influence in certain aspects of the Nicaraguan state security apparatus, see the transcript of Bolanos' October 19, 1983, testimony before the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

³²Ibid.

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shipments, mostly via the overland route through Honduras in specially designed trucks. Montenegro said that guerrilla commanders were under orders from their commander in chief (in Nicaragua) to give false information when asked about arms supplies, i.e., that the arms were captured or purchased when in fact they had come from Managua.³³

Vessels disguised as fishing boats leave from Nicaragua's northwestern coast and then transfer arms to large motorized canoes which ply the myriad bays and inlets of El Salvador's southeast coast. Two active Nicaraguan transshipment points for delivery of military supplies to Salvadoran guerrillas were attacked and damaged by anti-Sandinista forces in September 1983. These were located at La Concha in Estero de Padre Ramos, 40 km NW of Corinto, and at Potosi on the Gulf of Fonseca. Western reporters visited La Concha.³⁴ A radio-equipped warehouse and boat facility disguised as a fishing cooperative served as a center of arms trafficking on the island. Local fishermen reported seeing wooden crates being unloaded from military vehicles and put into motor-powered launches. The site was littered with empty ammunition boxes.

Arms continue to be shipped from points in Nicaragua across the Gulf of Fonseca to southeastern El Salvador. The Salvadoran Government has had some success in disrupting the internal Salvadoran part of the supply network. For example, on May 21, 1984, two Salvadoran patrol teams in the Isla Montecristo area near the Lempa River delta engaged a small group of guerrillas in an exchange of fire, killing two guerrillas and capturing one. Acting on information provided by the prisoner, on May 25 the Salvadoran army raided a guerrilla camp north of where the prisoner had been captured. After a stiff fight, the camp was taken and destroyed. The camp's main purpose had been to serve as a link in the supply route from Nicaragua. Thirty-four large canoes were captured.

³³See Hedrick Smith's "A Former Salvadoran Rebel Chief Tells of Arms From Nicaragua," New York Times, July 12, 1984, p. A-10. This article also includes Montenegro's description of the supplies received, and the overland routes used by the trucks.

³⁴"Base for Ferrying Arms to El Salvador Found in Nicaragua," Washington Post, September 21, 1983, pp. A-29, A-31. NOTE: La Concha is also named La Pelota.

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Among the documents found at the site were maps of the coastal area depicting guerrilla-controlled supply routes. (See guerrilla map.) Once weapons and supplies are landed in southeastern El Salvador, they are transported along trails, primarily by backpack, to the northern war zones. Recent reports indicate that young Salvadorans forced into service with the guerrillas are being used to carry arms as their initial duty in the guerrilla ranks.³⁵

Honduran authorities have occasionally interdicted some weapons passing overland through Honduras from Nicaragua to El Salvador. A dramatic interdiction occurred in January 1981, when a refrigerated trailer truck from Nicaragua, passing through Honduras on its way to El Salvador, was found to be carrying more than 100 M-16 rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition, including rockets and mortar shells, in its hollowed roof. The guerrillas are using a combination of automobiles, small vans, trucks, mules, and people with backpacks for transporting arms overland. A group of Salvadoran guerrillas were caught by Honduran authorities in March 1983 with arms and a map tracing a route from Nicaraguan through Honduras to El Salvador. (Photograph of weapons captured are at the end of this report.) Also the Hondurans have succeeded in locating safehouses and breaking up some groups including Honduran and Salvadoran guerrillas (see pp. 26-29). A former Nicaraguan security official reported in 1983 that arms were also transported through Mexico and Guatemala to the Salvadoran guerrillas. He also said that increased reliance was being placed on small aircraft to fly supplies from Nicaragua to El Salvador.³⁶

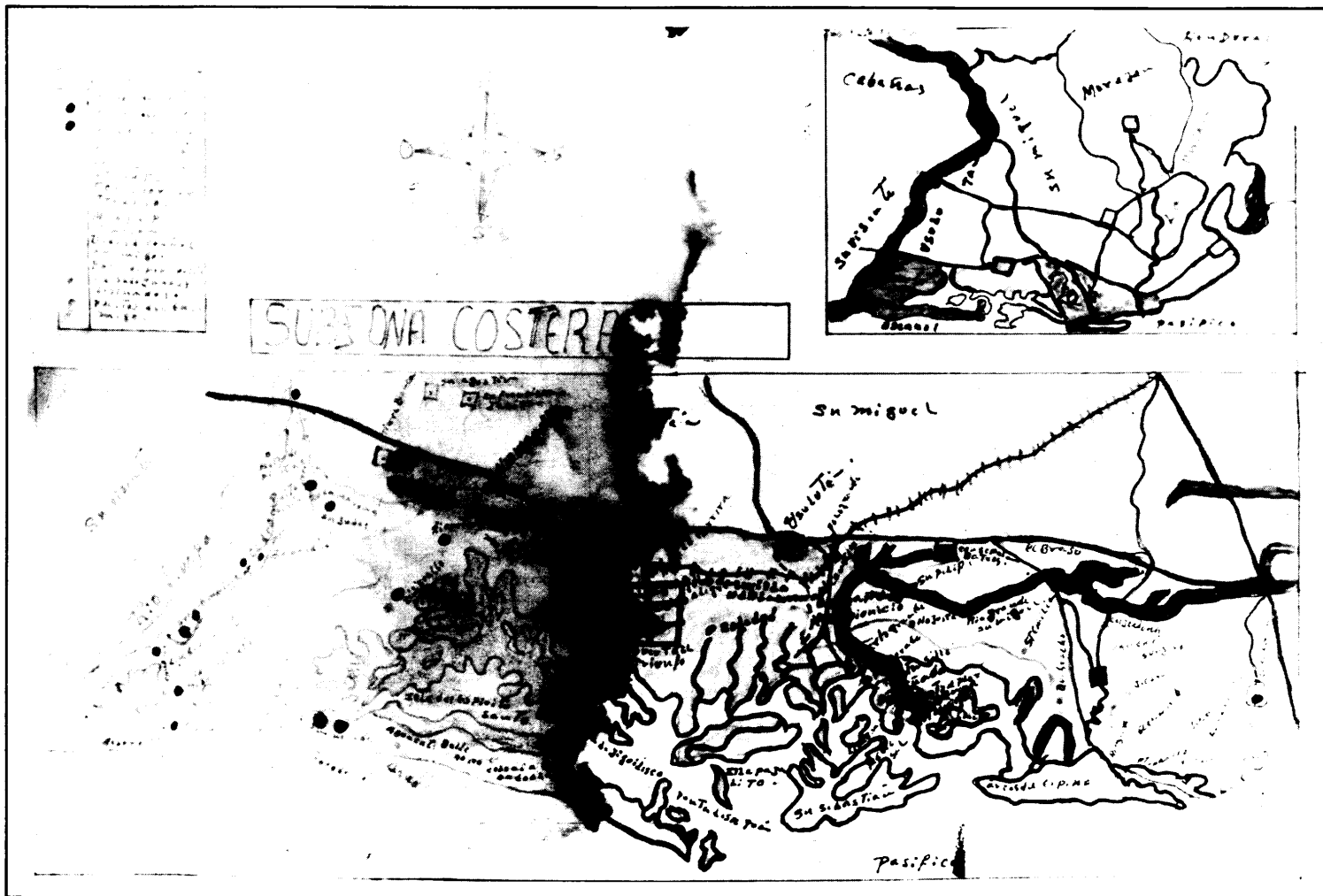
Salvadoran military and civilian observers have frequently sighted light aircraft flying from Nicaragua. The number of such flights increases significantly prior to major guerrilla operations. Some of these flights originated at an airstrip on a former sugar plantation at Papalonal, north of Managua.

³⁵"Rebels Use Harsher Methods: Guerrillas Recruit Youths by Force in Salvadoran Town," Washington Post, June 18, 1984, pp. A-1, A-19. Radio Cadena, San Salvador, (0025 GMT, May 28, 1984) provided details on how guerrillas use children as young as 10 years old as couriers. From March 1 to June 9, 1984, the FMLN reportedly forcibly recruited over 1,500 individuals. As a response to these activities, the Salvadoran Catholic Church has demanded that the guerrillas assume a more respectful attitude toward the civilian population.

³⁶Miguel Bolanos Hunter, discussions at the State Department, November 1983.

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This map of a Salvadoran coastal area, located 75 miles northwest of Nicaragua, was discovered during a May 25, 1984, Salvadoran Army raid on a guerrilla camp. The map depicts guerrilla camps and routes for transporting arms within El Salvador.



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The main drop points are located in guerrilla-controlled areas of Morazan Province in northeastern El Salvador. In addition to dropping material by parachute, the planes land on roads, highways, and dirt airstrips for offloading. Many of the crew members for these arms flights are foreign nationals, recruited for the airborne supply operations by Jose Trejos, a Costa Rican who organized air delivery of weapons for the Sandinistas while they were fighting Somoza. He was identified by Bolanos Hunter as the technical coordinator for the Sandinista airlift to guerrillas in El Salvador.³⁷

The collaboration of Nicaragua with Cuba and other suppliers of arms for Central American guerrillas, particularly Nicaragua's active participation in providing logistical support and the free use of its territory for smuggling of military supplies, has been of immeasurable help to guerrillas in the region. Bolanos Hunter maintains that the FMLN in El Salvador in 1983 was far better armed than the Sandinistas were in Nicaragua in mid-1979, just prior to taking power.³⁸

American reporters, interviewing Western European and Latin American diplomats in Nicaragua during April 1984, were told that the Nicaraguan Government is continuing to send military equipment to the Salvadoran insurgents and to operate training camps for them inside Nicaragua. One European diplomat in Managua was quoted: "I believe support for the revolutionaries in El Salvador is continuing and that it is very important to the Sandinistas."³⁹

Sources of FMLN Armaments

In mid-1980, an FMLN delegation led by Salvadoran Communist Party chairman Shafik Handal visited Cuba, the Soviet Union, Vietnam, East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Ethiopia to obtain arms for use in El Salvador. Soviet officials helped to arrange for large-scale shipment of U.S. arms, most of which had been captured by Vietnamese forces. These arms were shipped

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹"Salvador Rebels Still Said To Get Nicaraguan Aid," New York Times, April 11, 1984, pp. A-1, A-8.

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first to Cuba, then airlifted to Nicaragua for subsequent shipment to the guerrillas in El Salvador.⁴⁰ This arrangement disguised the Soviet-bloc origin of the weapons and helped lend credence to FMLN propaganda that the guerrillas arm themselves with weapons captured from the Salvadoran Army or bought on the black market. Many of the M-16s captured from or turned over by guerrillas to the El Salvador Government still bear serial numbers indicating that they had been shipped to Vietnam by the U.S. during the conflict there. Others have had the serial numbers filed off to hide their origin. Former guerrilla leader Montenegro, speaking of the arms that the guerrillas began receiving in December 1980, said: "After that the majority of arms was given by Vietnam, American M-16s. The arms came from Vietnam to Havana. Havana to Managua. Managua to El Salvador."⁴¹

In addition to Vietnam, Montenegro also identified Algeria, Ethiopia, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua as suppliers of arms.⁴² Grenades used by Salvadoran guerrillas are of Soviet-bloc origin, and some military equipment captured from the guerrillas bears markings in Amharic, a language native only to Ethiopia.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) also has helped ship arms to Salvadoran guerrillas. In January 1982, PLO leader Yasser Arafat boasted publicly of the PLO's links to the Salvadoran guerrillas: "We [PLO] have connections with all revolutionary movements throughout the world, in Salvador, Nicaragua--and I reiterate Salvador--and elsewhere in the

⁴⁰This information and a detailed account of Handal's meetings during his trip were obtained from Handal's diary, which was among documents captured in San Salvador in December 1980. For more details, see Background Paper: Central America, released by the Departments of State and Defense, Washington, D.C., May 27, 1983.

⁴¹"Cuba Directs Salvadoran Insurgency, Former Salvadoran Guerrilla Says," New York Times, July 28, 1983, p. A-10.

⁴²Another public reference to Algeria as a source of arms to revolutionaries in Central America is contained in Christopher Dickey, "PLO's Nicaragua Office Dealing in Military Expertise," Houston Chronicle, June 4, 1982, Sec. 1, p. 12.

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world."⁴³ Again the same month, he was quoted in Beirut's As Safir as saying his group had sent pilots to Nicaragua and guerrilla fighters to El Salvador.⁴⁴

Libya also has shipped arms to Nicaragua. It is likely that a portion of this material was destined for El Salvador. Guerrilla leader Cayetano Carpio, leader of the FPL faction, was visiting Libya when his FPL colleague, Melida Anaya Montes, was murdered in Managua by other FPL members in a power struggle.⁴⁵ In April 1983, Brazilian authorities seized four Libyan transport aircraft (three Soviet-made Ilyushins, and one U.S.-made C-130) that had stopped in Brazil while en route to Nicaragua with nearly 100 tons of armaments, labeled as "medical supplies." Some Libyan arms shipments subsequently arrived in Nicaragua, including one flight that, according to the Trinidad press, was denied permission to refuel in Trinidad and Tobago on August 23, 1983.

Training, Communications, and Staging of the FMLN

Salvadoran President Alvaro Magana told a Spanish newspaper on December 22, 1983, that "armed subversion has but one launching pad: Nicaragua. While Nicaragua draws the attention of the world by saying that for two years they have been on the verge of being invaded, they have not ceased for one instant to invade our country."

The close ties between the Sandinista leaders and Salvadoran guerrilla leaders are well known. Events surrounding the deaths in Managua of Salvadoran guerrilla leaders in April 1983 provided public confirmation of the presence of top guerrilla leaders in Nicaragua and of their close relationship with the Sandinista leadership. In the April 6 announcement of the stabbing death of Nelida Anaya Montes, the second in command of the Salvadoran FPL forces, the

⁴³Arafat speech before the General Confederation of Palestinian Writers, quoted in "Arafat Says PLO Aids Foreign Guerrilla Units," Wall Street Journal, January 14, 1982, p. 4.

⁴⁴"PLO's Nicaragua Office Dealing in Military Expertise," Houston Chronicle, June 4, 1982, Sec. 1, p. 12.

⁴⁵"Key Salvadoran Rebel Leader Kills Himself," New York Times, April 21, 1983, pp. A-1, A-24.

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Nicaraguan Minister of Interior revealed her permanent residence in Managua.⁴⁶ Carpio's death on April 12, allegedly by suicide, was made public by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Interior at the request of the Salvadoran guerrillas.⁴⁷

Captured guerrillas and Nicaraguan defectors have confirmed that central command and control, training, communications, and other support activities were established for Salvadoran guerrillas in Nicaragua. After the Grenada events in late 1983, the Sandinistas allowed rumors to spread that the guerrilla command and control center would leave Nicaragua. Immediately thereafter, some of the FDR politicians departed, but there is no indication that the guerrilla leaders or their command center were transferred.

Safehouses are maintained in Managua for the exclusive use of the FMLN. Guerrillas posing as refugees are funneled into these installations through Sandinista front organizations such as the Comite de Solidaridad con la Lucha Salvadorena. At these safehouses FMLN members rest and receive medical treatment. They often are assigned there to await new instructions or arrangements for special training at guerrilla camps elsewhere in Nicaragua or in Cuba.⁴⁸

A former Salvadoran guerrilla commander described how instructions were passed to guerrilla field units in El Salvador through the network of FMLN communications facilities in Nicaragua. Several of these facilities were located in northwest Nicaragua. One or possibly two of these communication facilities

⁴⁶For press reporting on these dramatic events, see: "Salvadoran Rebel Leader Assassinated in Nicaragua," Washington Post, April 7, 1983, pp. A-30; "Nicaragua Warns Honduras on Raids," New York Times, April 10, 1983, pp. A-1, A-16; and "Key Salvadoran Rebel Leader Kills Himself," Washington Post, April 21, 1983, pp. A-1, A-24.

⁴⁷On April 21, 1983, Barricada, the official organ of the FSLN, announced the death of Carpio with the front page headline "Muere Marcial, pero El Salvador Vencera ("Marcial Dies, but El Salvador Will Triumph"). Under the headline is a photo of Daniel Ortega and Tomas Borge standing next to the Salvadoran guerrilla (FPL) banner, which displays the Soviet hammer and sickle. (See photo.)

⁴⁸Montenegro interview at State Department, March 12, 1984.

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were attacked on February 2 and 3, 1984, by aircraft of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN).⁴⁹ Another radio was near the outskirts of Managua in a residential area at the end of Via Panama. Its high frequency transmitters had long antennae that could be seen from the Pan American Highway; it was moved to a more secluded location after authorities concluded it had become too visible.⁵⁰

At least three military camps in Nicaragua have been used exclusively as training areas for Salvadoran guerrillas.⁵¹ They include the base of Ostional in the southern province of Rivas, a converted National Guard camp in northwestern Nicaragua close to the River Tamarindo, and the camp of Tamagas, about 20 kilometers outside Managua. These training facilities have been operated by Cuban military personnel serving as instructors and administrative staff. The direct Nicaraguan presence has been limited to one representative officer and the camps' security forces. In the Tamagas camp, FMLN guerrillas undergo special instruction in sabotage techniques. The camp has been run by a Cuban major who trained the FMLN team that carried out the January 1982 assault on the Salvadoran Air Force base of Ilopango during which the major part of El Salvador's military aircraft were destroyed. Alejandro Montenegro, who commanded that attack, later revealed details of his team's training in Tamagas as well as prior guerrilla instruction in Cuba.⁵²

⁴⁹Credit for the attack was claimed by FDN leader Adolfo Calero during a press conference in Washington, D.C. See "Chairman of the Contras," Washington Post, February 4, 1984, p. C-1.

⁵⁰Montenegro interview at State Department, March 12, 1984.

⁵¹Miguel Bolanos Hunter discussion at the State Department, November 1983.

⁵²Montenegro interview at State Department, March 12, 1984.

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The Honduran Front

Honduras as well as El Salvador became a target for extension of Marxist-Leninist subversion in Central America immediately after the Sandinistas' July 1979 victory in Nicaragua and long before the anti-Sandinistas began their operations. This has been confirmed by captured guerrillas and Nicaraguan defectors. The following excerpt from the transcript of Miguel Bolanos Hunter's June 1983 interview with the Washington Post (at the Heritage Foundation) indicates that Honduras was already a Sandinista target in 1979:

When I was an assistant to Cuadra [Joaquin Cuadra, Vice Minister of Defense of the Nicaraguan Government and Chief of the General Staff of the Sandinista Army] in 1979, a month after the triumph, I was able to witness five or six Soviet generals that were his advisors. They looked at a map of Nicaragua and Honduras. The map outlined symbols of men and airplanes and where they were. Also outlined were the Sandinista forces and the number of people necessary to become a force. From that time on we began to study how to use confrontations with Honduras. We looked at the real possibilities.... The plan was to beat Honduras.

The saga of the late Honduran guerrilla leader, Jose Antonio Reyes Mata, illustrates the collaboration between Honduran guerrillas and the Nicaraguan and Cuban Governments. Reyes Mata, a long-time Honduran communist leader, led a group which in April 1980 kidnapped Arnold Quiros, an American who was Vice President of Texaco's Caribbean operations. The effort failed when Reyes and his men lost their way enroute to a safehouse and were captured by Honduran authorities. Reyes was later released as part of an amnesty decreed by the newly elected Honduran President, Roberto Suazo Cordova. Reyes proceeded to Nicaragua and then to Cuba.

In March 1981, a group called "Cinchoneros" hijacked a U.S.-bound Honduran airlines flight and diverted it to Managua. They threatened to blow it up with all the passengers and crew on board unless the Honduran Government released 15 prisoners, including 13 Salvadoran FMLN members who had been captured in Honduras while smuggling arms for guerrilla operations in El Salvador. Honduran government officials were denied access to the radio control tower of Managua's airport during the episode. The Nicaraguans also turned down a Honduran request to launch a commando mission to recover the aircraft. The Honduran Government was ultimately forced to accede to the hijackers' demands, freeing two Hondurans with the 13 Salvadorans and flying them to Cuba.

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In late 1983, Reyes Mata was back in Honduras again as leader of a 96-member guerrilla group column with the objective of establishing a rural guerrilla base (a "foco") in the Department of Olancho. The group had returned to Nicaragua from Cuba where they had been given training. In Nicaragua they were equipped with guerrilla gear, including two rifles each, and then were infiltrated into Honduras carrying their equipment with them. The second rifle given to each man was provided in anticipation of finding and equipping new recruits in Honduras.

Honduran authorities were alerted to the plan by guerrillas who defected when they entered Honduras from Nicaragua, and by peasants living in the area. Honduran guerrilla defectors, who participated in the attempt to establish the base, told interviewers that they were duped into going to Nicaragua in October 1981 with promises of agricultural and mechanical schooling. Instead, they were sent to Cuba where they received guerrilla instruction for nine months at Camp P-30, run by the Cuban Ministry of Interior's Department of Special Operations, in Pinar del Rio Province. They were sent back to Nicaragua in September 1982 and were quartered at a safehouse in Managua before infiltrating back into Honduras as part of the 96-member guerrilla group. According to the defectors, some of the group attempted to desert in Nicaragua and were imprisoned by Sandinista security. Their group was the advance element of a larger force designed to operate in four Honduran provinces, using a network of logistical bases in the rural highlands. Air drops of arms and supplies had been promised to the Honduran insurgents by Nicaragua.⁵³ But supplies did not materialize in time to save the operation in Olancho, where Reyes was killed.

The guerrillas had more success in other violent actions in Honduras. One of the country's leading bankers, Paul Vinelli of the Banco Atlantida, was kidnapped in 1981 and held for a ransom of more than \$1 million. The leader of that operation was reported in the Honduran press to be a Salvadoran guerrilla trained in Nicaragua.

⁵³For a detailed press account of the operation in Olancho, including descriptions of how Hondurans had been sent abroad to Nicaragua and Cuba for guerrilla training, see "Honduran Army Defeats Cuban-Trained Rebel Unit," Washington Post, November 22, 1983, pp. A-1, A-14.

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By late 1981, the Salvadoran ERP had formed a joint Salvadoran/Honduran military and political command in Tegucigalpa. The unified command directed a military organization of 50 persons, 15 of whom were Salvadorans. The command was led and dominated by Salvadorans but had some Honduran leaders in secondary positions to give the impression of a joint organization. On July 4, 1982, the Salvadoran ERP sabotaged the main power station in Tegucigalpa and on August 4, 1982, bombed various U.S. businesses, including IBM and Air Florida. The ERP attributed the operations to a "phantom" Honduran group to confuse local authorities. A Salvadoran guerrilla captured in Honduras admitted to helping in the sabotage of the Tegucigalpa power station and the IBM attack. He had obtained explosives from Nicaragua and transported them to Tegucigalpa in concealed containers in a truck modified for arms trafficking in Nicaraguan guerrilla workshops.

The arms for these operations were brought from Nicaragua by the Salvadoran FMLN. Before being deposited at various hiding places, the weapons were processed through a "logistical center for war material transformation" located in a farm house on the outskirts of Tegucigalpa. Police also arrested four Salvadoran FMLN operatives who were in Tegucigalpa at the time of the attack, including Comandante Alejandro Montenegro.⁵⁴

As it did in El Salvador and Nicaragua, Cuba (now working with Nicaragua) has tried to develop a unified guerrilla movement in Honduras. Training of Honduran guerrillas was already underway in 1979. In March 1983, Honduran guerrilla organizations merged into the National Unity Directorate of the Revolutionary Movement of Honduras (DNU-MRH), just as the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran guerrilla groups had formed unified commands to receive Cuban backing.⁵⁵ Guerrillas who subsequently defected from this group estimated that at least 250 Hondurans had been recruited to go to Nicaragua for guerrilla training in March 1983. Some also were sent to Cuba.

⁵⁴Background Paper: Central America, Departments of State and Defense, Washington, D.C., May 27, 1983.

⁵⁵The Frente Morazanista de Liberacion Hondureno (FMLH), the "Cinchoneros" Peoples' Revolutionary Union/Popular Liberation Movement (URP/MPL), and the Central American Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRTC) issued a joint message which announced the armed struggle against the Government of Honduras. See "Honduras: Proclama de Lucha Armada Contra el Gobierno," Barricada, Managua, Nicaragua, April 21, 1983.

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Another consequence of Nicaraguan actions against Honduras has been the danger to vehicles travelling inside Honduras near the frontier. Attacks on vehicles seldom draw media attention except when foreigners are the victims. For example, in June 1983, two American journalists were killed while travelling on a Honduran road which had been mined by Sandinista troops.⁵⁶

Introducing Political Violence into Costa Rica

Even Costa Rica, which had supported the Sandinistas and other Nicaraguans in the struggle against the Somoza regime, has become a target of what the Sandinistas call "revolutionary internationalism." That small country, one of the most stable democracies in Latin America, is particularly vulnerable to the Nicaraguan threat. Since 1981, it has experienced sporadic terrorist acts including bombings, kidnappings, and other attacks, some of which have been traced to Nicaragua, and others to the Salvadoran guerrilla factions. Commenting in January 1984 on the threat from Nicaragua, Costa Rican President Luis Alberto Monge said: "I never thought I would say, as I do now, that we would have it worse in four years [of Sandinismo] than in 40 years of Somoza."⁵⁷

Intelligence sources have reported for some time that a small number of Costa Rican leftists are fighting alongside Sandinista troops against the Nicaraguan rebels. Some of them are reportedly Cuban-trained and, according to a U.S. journalist who visited Costa Rica recently, some Costa Ricans believe they will return to Costa Rica to begin guerrilla activity when the time is right.⁵⁸

Underlying Costa Rican concerns are a number of violent incidents, including shootings, kidnappings, and bombings. For example, in July 1981, Costa Rican authorities intercepted six heavily armed men who had entered the country from Nicaragua.

⁵⁶"Honduran Says Land Mine Killed 2 U.S. Newsmen," Washington Post, June 30, 1983, p. A-35.

⁵⁷Syndicated Columnist Georgie Anne Geyer, "Central America Faces up to Sandinista Expansion," Washington Times, January 10, 1984, p. 2C.

⁵⁸Ibid.

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Their stated objective was to seize the Guatemalan Embassy and hold the ambassador hostage in order to demand the release of prisoners convicted of violent terrorist acts in Guatemala. The six-man team, equipped with grenades and submachine guns, included two Nicaraguans affiliated with the Sandinista Front, a Salvadoran, two Guatemalans, and a Mexican.

In 1982, a group of Salvadoran guerrillas and one Nicaraguan in San Jose attempted to kidnap expatriate Salvadoran businessman Roberto Palomo Salazar and Japanese corporate executive Tetsuji Kosuga, the San Jose representative of the Matsushita Electric Corporation. Kosuga was mortally wounded in the attempt, and the Matsushita Corporation pulled all of its personnel out of Costa Rica. The two incidents caused sufficient concern to provoke uncertainty in the climate for private investment.⁵⁹ Press reports of June 1984 indicate new threats of similar foreign-supported violence in Costa Rica.⁶⁰

In July 1982, the same week that Honduran airlines (SAHSA) offices were bombed in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, a bomb exploded at the SAHSA office in San Jose. Costa Rica's investigation into the bombing implicated a Colombian M-19 member who had been recruited by Nicaraguan Embassy officials in Costa Rica. Two Nicaraguan diplomats were expelled from Costa Rica as a result. The Costa Rican government expelled these Nicaraguan diplomats after the M-19 member had demonstrated his connections with the Embassy by arranging a clandestine meeting with one of the diplomats, whom the Costa Ricans detained on the spot.

At the same time, the Nicaraguan, Cuban, and Soviet media had embarked upon a campaign seeking to portray democratic Costa Rica as a dictatorship. With reference to this campaign, President Monge stated: "The Communist Party international

⁵⁹During the initial stages of insurgent activity in El Salvador, one of the groups operating in San Salvador, the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), which today forms part of the FMLN, employed similar tactics to drive the Japanese textile firm INSICA out of El Salvador. FARN abducted two of INSICA's local managers and killed the company's president, Fujio Matsumoto.

⁶⁰"Threatened U.S. Executives Are Said To Leave Costa Rica," New York Times, June 21, 1984, p. A-4.

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campaign has been to place Costa Rica as an aggressor nation, and many in the Socialist International have taken this up. And we do not even have an army. While we see ourselves as a country under attack, we are being pictured as a country with the U.S. against Nicaragua."⁶¹

The Central American subversive network has also used Costa Rican territory for receiving and transshipping arms and supplies to Salvadoran guerrillas. For example, on March 15, 1982, Costa Rican security forces raided a San Jose safehouse and captured nine suspected subversives along with a large supply of weapons, material, and vehicles. Those captured included four Salvadorans, two Nicaraguans, a Chilean, a Costa Rican, and an Argentine. An Argentine Montonero, the group's commander, admitted that the weapons were to have been delivered to insurgents in El Salvador prior to the March 20, 1982, election. The passport of one of the Salvadorans showed Costa Rican entry stamps indicating at least 15 trips to Costa Rica, presumably for the purpose of picking up arms and ammunition and for other guerrilla liaison work.⁶² The multinational composition of this group is further evidence of how the international subversive network centered in Nicaragua functions and enjoys support from leftists throughout the region.⁶³

Since exiled Nicaraguan opponents of the Sandinista regime established the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE), the government in Managua has dispatched agents to Costa Rica to assassinate ARDE leaders. On June 26, 1983, a former

⁶¹Syndicated columnist Georgie Anne Geyer, "Costa Rica President Must Contend with Chaos After Nicaragua Revolt," Columbia Missourian, January 5, 1984.

⁶²Among the arms and other material captured during the March 11, 1982, raid in San Jose were: about 175 weapons (including about 70 M-16s, 50 of which were traceable to Vietnam), fragmentation grenades and a grenade launcher, homemade bombs, dynamite and ammunition, 500 combat uniforms and gas masks, 13 vehicles (Mercedes Benzes and BMWs) with hidden compartments for arms concealment, blank travel papers and drivers' licenses, passports (Costa Rican and Ecuadorean), airport/immigration seals from more than 30 countries, and a printing press for producing false documents.

⁶³For extensive reporting on this incident, see La Nacion, San Jose, Costa Rica, March 16-21, 1982.

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Nicaraguan Vice Minister of Health, Rodrigo Cuadra, accompanied by an undercover agent of the Nicaraguan General Directorate of State Security (DGSE), Francisco Martinez, entered Costa Rica to meet with ARDE leaders Eden Pastora and Alfonso Robelo. The two officials pretended to be Nicaraguan Government defectors seeking to join ARDE, and had arranged to speak with Robelo and Pastora. Cuadra and Martinez were carrying a time bomb hidden in an attache case which they planned to leave with the ARDE leaders once their meeting was concluded. However, apparently because of an error in setting the timer, the device exploded in their car on June 29, killing Cuadra and critically wounding Martinez.⁶⁴

Hector Frances, an Argentine citizen who reportedly was working with Nicaraguan insurgents elsewhere in Central America, was kidnapped on the streets of San Jose, Costa Rica, where his wife resided. Subsequently, Nicaraguan official television paraded a haggard Frances before the cameras to confess to a litany of anti-Sandinista activity. Frances has not been seen since the TV show.

The 1982 kidnapping of Kaveh Yazdani, an Iranian emigre who resided in San Jose, illustrates the manner in which Costa Rica is buffeted by regional insurgencies which respect no borders. Yazdani was kidnapped by Salvadoran guerrillas (including, however, at least one Nicaraguan citizen) of the FARN faction of the FMLN on January 8, 1982. He had no connection to the Salvadoran conflict, and was apparently chosen solely as a means to raise money--his father was very wealthy. Although no direct Nicaraguan Government involvement in the kidnapping has ever been proven, during the year in which Yazdani was held, representatives of his family met at least twice in Managua with the Salvadoran guerrillas to discuss the ransom payments needed to keep his captors from murdering him. This is another example of Nicaraguan safehaven for the FMLN.

On March 17, 1981, a small Costa Rican group which called itself La Familia blew up an American Embassy vehicle carrying three marine guards and a Costa Rican driver who were proceeding to the Embassy to stand watch. In this first attack on a marine guard detail, one marine--who still suffers from

⁶⁴"Bomb Kills Nicaraguan in Costa Rica," Washington Post, June 30, 1983, p. A-35.

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the wounds--was gravely injured. The others escaped with minor injuries. La Familia was a group of middle-class youths with links to the Salvadoran FMLN. They had been recruited by exiles from the Montonero and Tupamaro groups who had taken up residence in Costa Rica. Subsequently, La Familia murdered several policemen and even a taxi driver before the group was broken up and members charged and convicted by the Costa Rican courts. This splinter group was an offshoot of the Marxist-Leninist splinter party called the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (MRP), whose leadership had ties to both Cuba and Nicaragua.

The International Connection

In September 1983, Costa Rican police arrested Gregorio Jimenez Morales, a member of the Spanish Basque separatist organization ETA.⁶⁵ Costa Rican authorities concluded that Jimenez, using the alias of "Lorenzo Avila Teijon," had been instructed by the Nicaraguan Government to assassinate Eden Pastora.⁶⁶ At the moment of his capture, Jimenez was sketching a map outlining various approaches to Pastora's home. He had entered Costa Rica from Nicaragua in May 1983 and remains in detention in San Jose awaiting a ruling on an extradition request by the Spanish Government.⁶⁷

The Costa Ricans reportedly had been warned about the presence of ETA operatives in Central America by Spanish authorities through INTERPOL.⁶⁸ While the Sandinista government was denying any connection with either Jimenez or the ETA, Nicaragua's official press was reporting the formation

⁶⁵According to an article in El Pais, Madrid, Spain, on January 13, 1984, ETA's first guerrilla cadre or members of its "rama militar" (military branch) were trained in 1964 at training camps in Cuba. The Basque organization has carried out extensive campaigns of violence in Spain for more than twenty years.

⁶⁶"Cien Eurras en Nicaragua," Cambio 16, Madrid, Spain, October 3, 1983, p. 22.

⁶⁷Jimenez, who joined ETA in 1979, was highly trained and experienced in handling explosives. He had carried out several actions in Spain during 1981, including the destruction of electric power facilities in the northern Spanish city of Besain. Pursued by Spanish police, Jimenez escaped into France in February 1982 and made his way through Cuba to Nicaragua.

⁶⁸"Cien Eurras en Nicaragua," Cambio 16, Madrid, Spain, October 3, 1983, p. 29.

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of a "Basque Brigade" in Nicaragua to help with the coffee harvest. A Spanish weekly, Cambio 16, reported in October 1983 that over 100 ETA members were present in Nicaragua, serving as instructors at guerrilla bases.⁶⁹ Spain's leading daily, El Pais, maintains that ETA runs an office for forging documents in Managua.⁷⁰

The Cambio 16 article, in describing ETA and Sandinista linkages, stated that the ETA has a recruiting station, called "Team International," in Mexico City. The station allegedly is directed by a Palestinian described as the right arm of Abu Nidal, chief of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FPLP). According to the article, the FPLP executes "dirty work" for the Sandinista regime in Latin America. Allegedly this office made the initial contacts for the Sandinistas with the Argentine Montoneros and the Chileans who assassinated Anastasio Somoza in Paraguay.⁷¹

Costa Rican authorities suspect that international terrorists were responsible for the May 30, 1984, assassination attempt on Eden Pastora near the Costa Rican/Nicaraguan border. In this action, four people--an American reporter, a Costa Rican TV cameraman, and two members of Pastora's rebel group--were killed, and 27 others, including Pastora, were wounded.⁷² (A significant aspect of the Pastora assassination attempt was that the Sandinista radio announced that the device was made of plastic explosive several hours before anyone in Costa Rica had determined the nature of the explosive.)

ETA has also been linked to the Salvadoran FMLN. According to Alejandro Montenegro, ETA operatives in Nicaragua entered into an agreement in 1979 with one of the FMLN's main

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰"Un Comando de ETA Intento Asasinar en 1983 al Ministro de Defensa de El Salvador, Segun Informe del Gobierno," El Pais, January 13, 1984, Madrid, Spain, p. 11.

⁷¹"Cien Etraras en Nicaragua," Cambio 16, Madrid, Spain, October 3, 1983, p. 22.

⁷²For two accounts of the status of the Costa Rican investigation into the bombing see "Basque Terrorist Sought in Attack on Nicaragua Rebel," Miami Herald, June 8, 1984, p. 14A, and "Costa Rican Officials Admit Mistakes in Bombing Probe," Miami Herald, June 14, 1984, p. 24A.

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components, the Peoples' Revolutionary Army (ERP), to provide training and personnel for guerrilla operations in El Salvador. ETA also reportedly delivered \$250,000 to the ERP and contributed an assassination team to target top government officials in San Salvador. ETA operatives were reportedly involved in two abortive attempts on Salvadoran Defense Minister Jose Guillermo Garcia's life in 1982 and 1983.⁷³

The Significance of the Subversive Network

Nicaragua, by itself, without its international revolutionary ambitions, would not necessarily be a serious threat to any of its neighbors--except perhaps in the military sense--since its military force is the largest and the only one in the region with a large number of tanks and armored vehicles. But what magnifies the Nicaraguan threat to its neighbors are the resources of an international subversive network that operates with Nicaragua as a nerve center. Along with Nicaragua, a key element of the network is Cuba and, behind it, the Soviet Union. The linkages extend to other communist governments of the Eastern bloc, including Vietnam, to the radical regimes of Libya and Ethiopia, and to international groups such as the PLO, the Basque ETA, the Argentine Montoneros, and Uruguayan Tupamaros. The collaboration and joint action (which was shown in some of the incidents described herein) lends a credibility to Nicaraguan threats. One example is Nicaragua's suspected use of "internationalists" in assassinations of Nicaraguan opposition leaders in Costa Rica. Another example is the team of Argentine and Chilean assassins who killed Anastasio Somoza in Paraguay in 1980. Intelligence reports, apparently shown to the press at the time, indicated that "the Nicaraguan Government had in fact been involved up to its neck in planning and financing Somoza's murder."⁷⁴

Thus, in attacking their enemies the Sandinistas can rely upon the resources of other members of the subversive network centered in Nicaragua. Assassinations can be accomplished through one of the international groups without seemingly involving Nicaragua. They can also use the powerful Cuban/Soviet propaganda machines to advance their efforts.

⁷³"Un Comando de ETA Intento Asasinar en 1983 al Ministro de Defensa de El Salvador, Segun Informe del Gobierno," El Pais, January 13, 1984, Madrid, Spain. Also confirmed in Montenegro interview with State Department officials, March 12, 1984.

⁷⁴See Cord Meyer's "Somoza's Difficult Ghost," The Washington Star, October 18, 1980, p. A-11. Also see "Cien Etarras en Nicaragua," Cambio 16, Madrid, Spain, October 3, 1983, pp. 22-28, for a description of Sandinista, Basque, and Montonero linkages.

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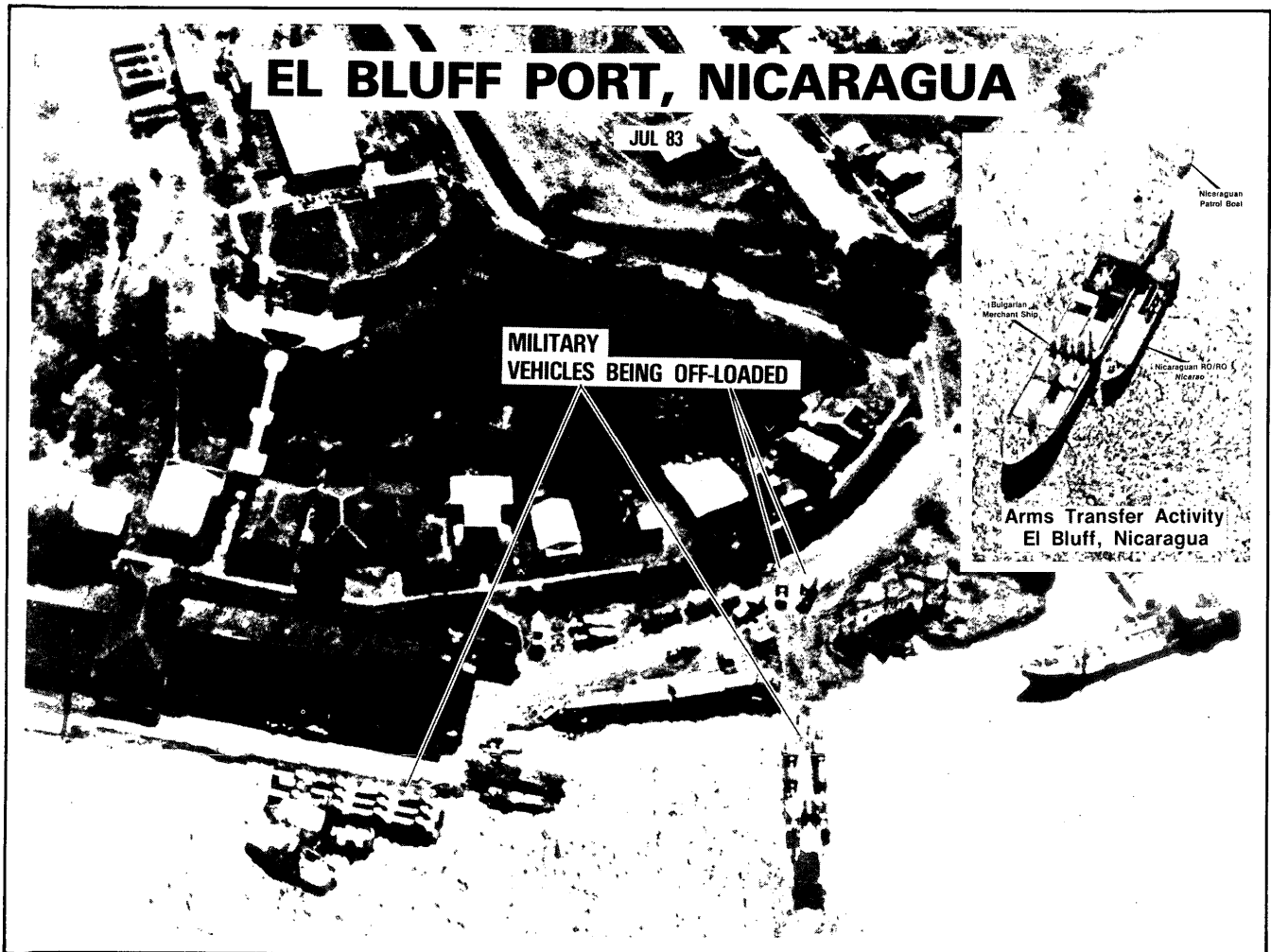
Conclusions

- The Central American democracies face serious threats from forces within and outside the Central American region.
- Since 1979, Nicaragua has provided a support base for groups attempting to destabilize and, in some cases, overthrow neighboring governments.
- Nicaragua's Sandinista leaders, beginning in 1979, understood that their plans for establishing a dictatorship in Nicaragua and for expanding the revolution would bring opposition from their neighbors and the United States, and eventually alienate democratic socialists in Europe.
- They sought to delay the process of alienation by concealing their true intentions and their Marxism-Leninism by adopting a gradualist approach for implementing communism in Nicaragua.
- In 1979 they began to plan for the largest and best equipped armed forces in Central America, for a Cuban/Soviet style internal security apparatus, and for cooperation with the Cubans and others in supporting guerrilla movements.
- The Sandinistas now have almost 49,000 men on active duty, and an additional 50,000 men who could be mobilized.
- Nicaragua now has over 120 Soviet-made tanks and 120 other armored vehicles. No comparable armored force exists elsewhere in the Central American region.
- The infrastructure for a formidable air force is developing rapidly in Nicaragua.
- This rapid growth of military strength would not have been possible without the help of some 3,000 Cuban military/security advisers, some of whom are deeply involved in the decision-making process in Nicaragua. (A total of about 9,000 Cubans are in Nicaragua.)
- Not only Cuba, but also the Soviet Union, East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, have or have had military and/or civilian advisers in Nicaragua.

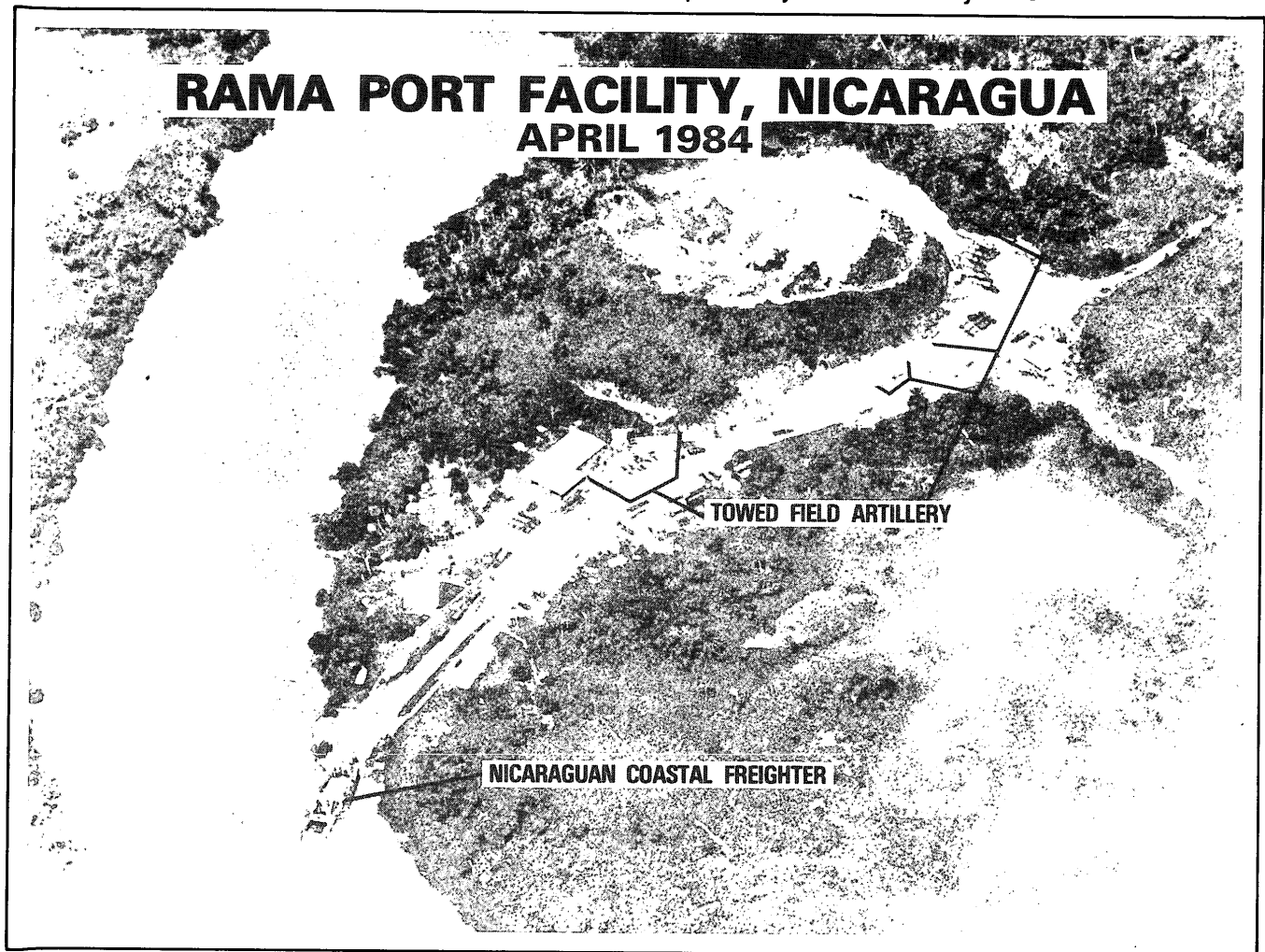
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- Some international groups, including the Argentine Montoneros, Uruguayan Tupamaros, and the Basque ETA, have a presence in Nicaragua and form part of the support system for subversion in Central America.
- Cuba has played a crucial role in unifying and supporting the guerrilla groups of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.
- Guerrilla and Sandinista defectors maintain that the Nicaraguan regime provides the Salvadoran guerrillas communications centers, safehouses, storage of arms, shops for vehicles, and transportation of military supplies.
- Costa Rican and Honduran authorities have exposed Nicaraguan diplomats directly involved with guerrillas and terrorists.
- Most military supplies used by Salvadoran guerrillas and similar groups in Honduras and Costa Rica are provided by communist-bloc countries and by countries such as Ethiopia and Libya.
- Training of Central American guerrillas has taken place in Nicaragua, Cuba, and Vietnam.
- Because of the subversive system involving a number of governments and terrorist organizations centered in Nicaragua, the Sandinista Government is able to threaten neighboring countries and to carry out the threats, indirectly, through one or other of the organizations.

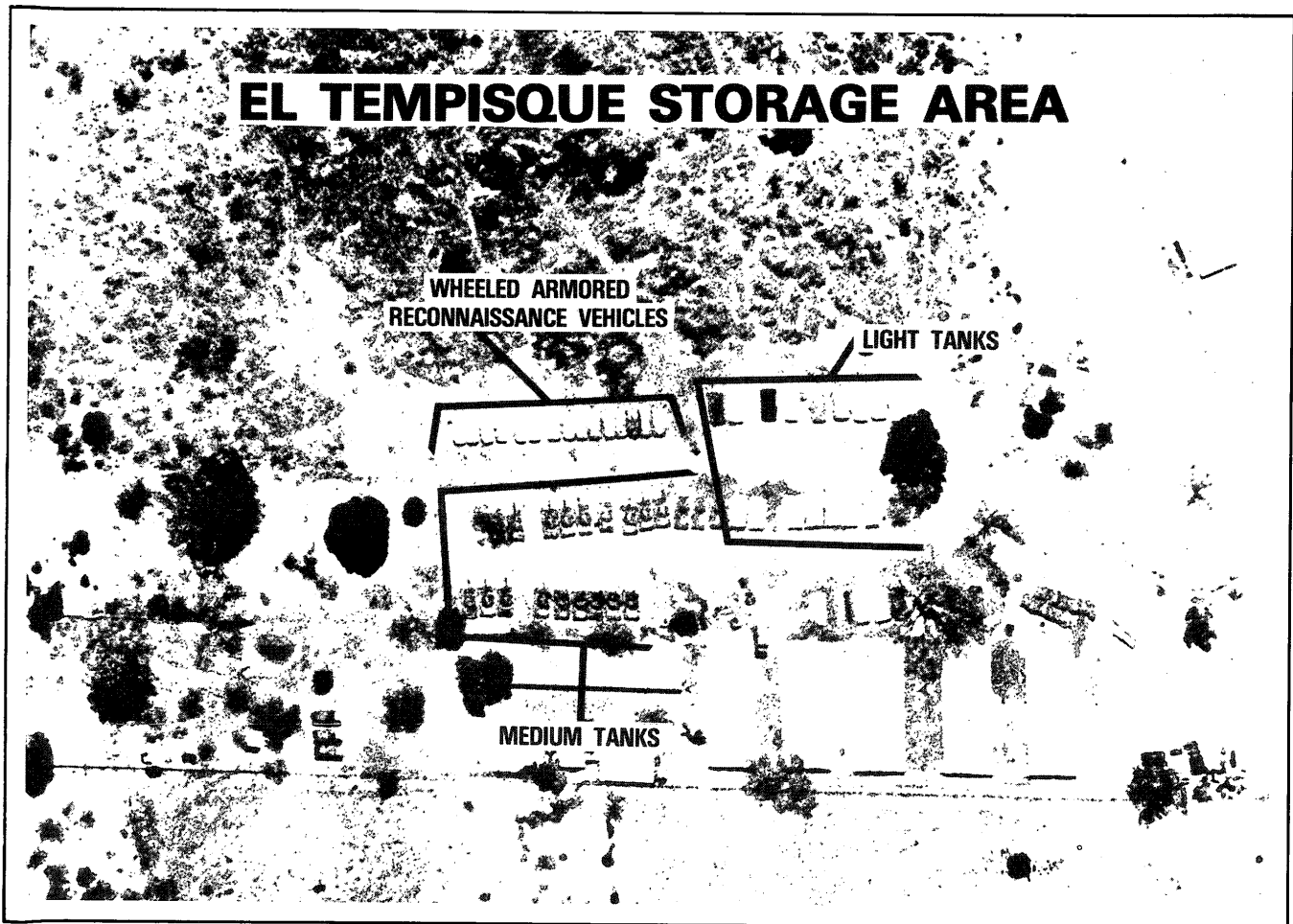
The port of El Bluff is a Caribbean Sea unloading point for Eastern-bloc military deliveries to Nicaragua. The equipment is then ferried by Nicaraguan roll on/roll off ships (as shown in insert) 50 km up river to the port of Rama.



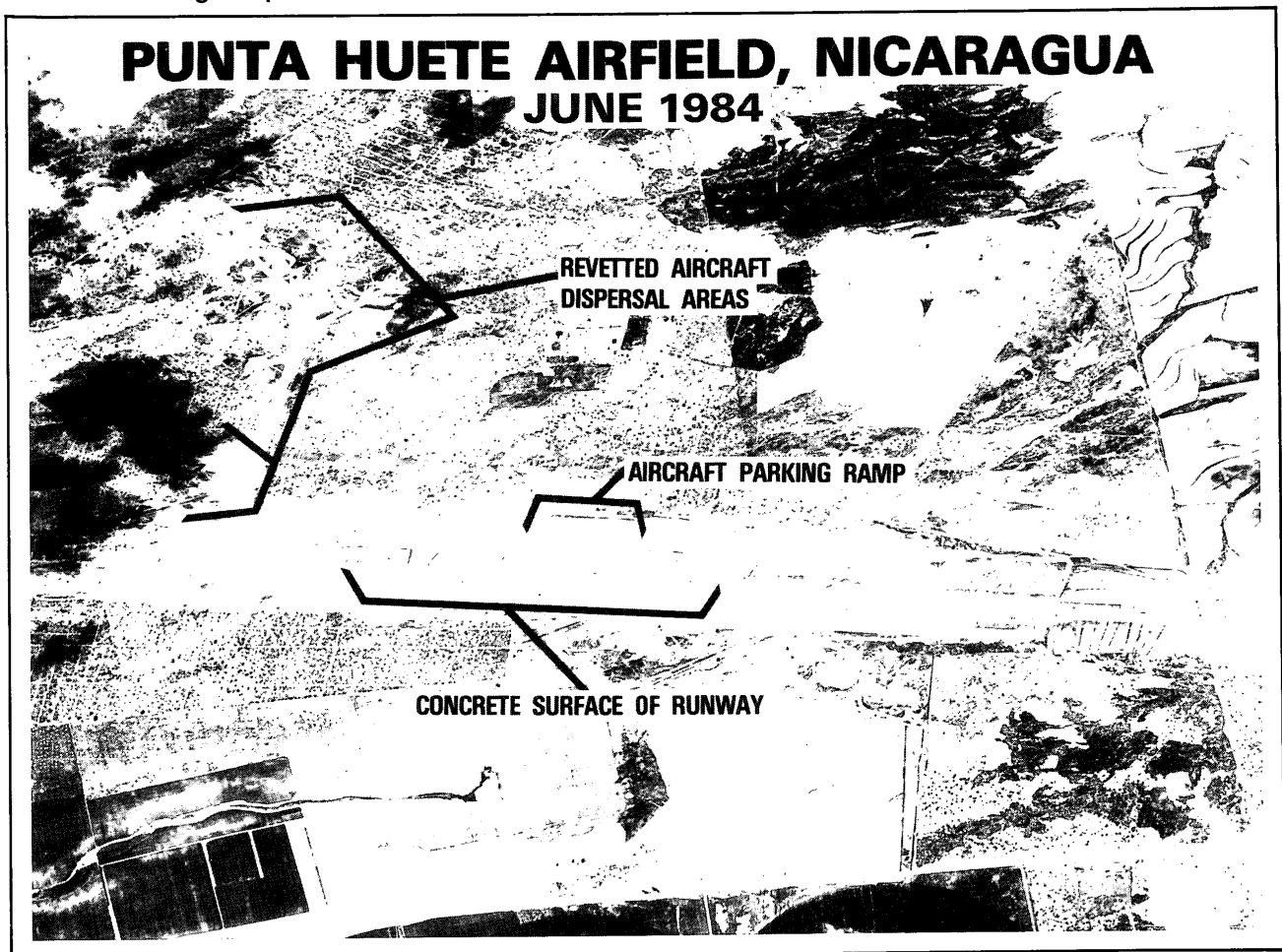
The river port of Rama is located at the beginning of the only paved road connecting eastern and western Nicaragua. After being off-loaded, the equipment, such as the Soviet-bloc origin artillery shown here, is transported by road to military units.



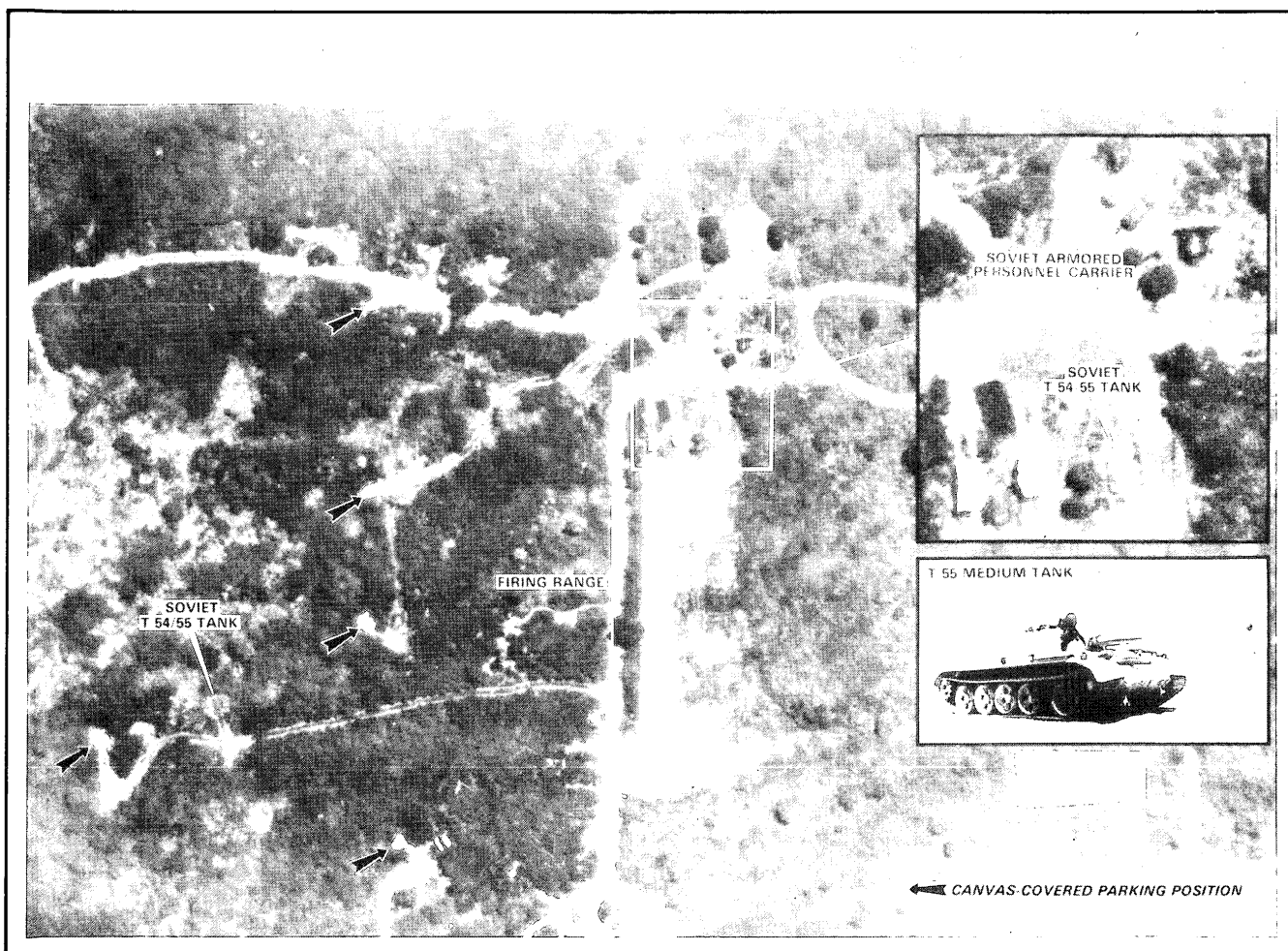
El Tempisque is one of two known tank garrisons in Nicaragua. The Soviet-made tanks and armored reconnaissance vehicles shown here are part of a March 1984 delivery made by a Bulgarian merchant ship. The PT-76 light amphibious assault tanks, with their greater mobility, are a significant addition to the Sandinista armored vehicle inventory which has doubled in the past year.



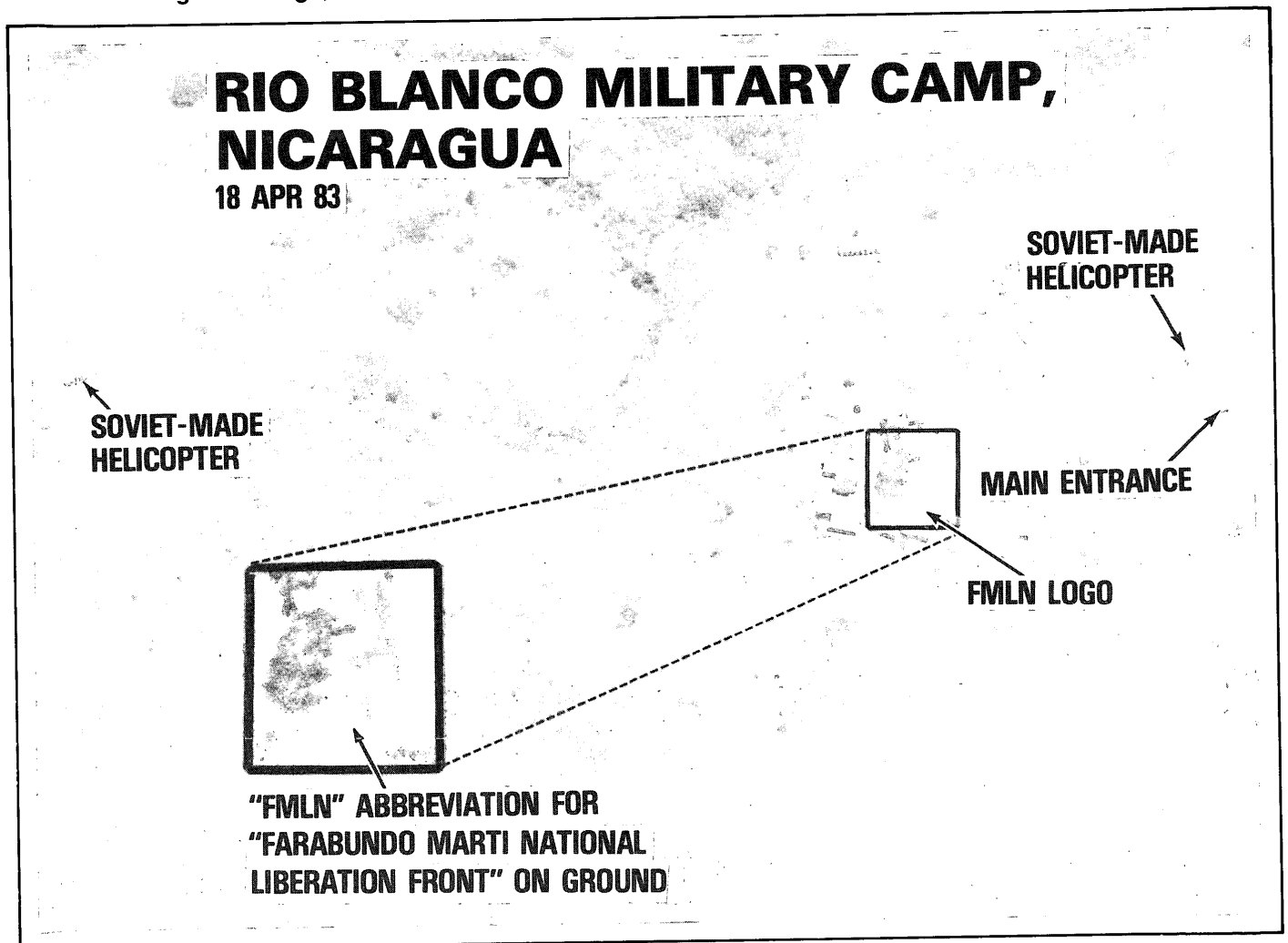
When completed, this air base at Punta Huete, 30 km northeast of Managua, will have at least 16 revetted areas for aircraft protection. Its 3200 meter length, 44 meter width and one meter thickness will make it the largest and most capable military airfield in Central America. It will be capable of receiving aircraft in the Soviet inventory to include their strategic-capable BACKFIRE bomber.



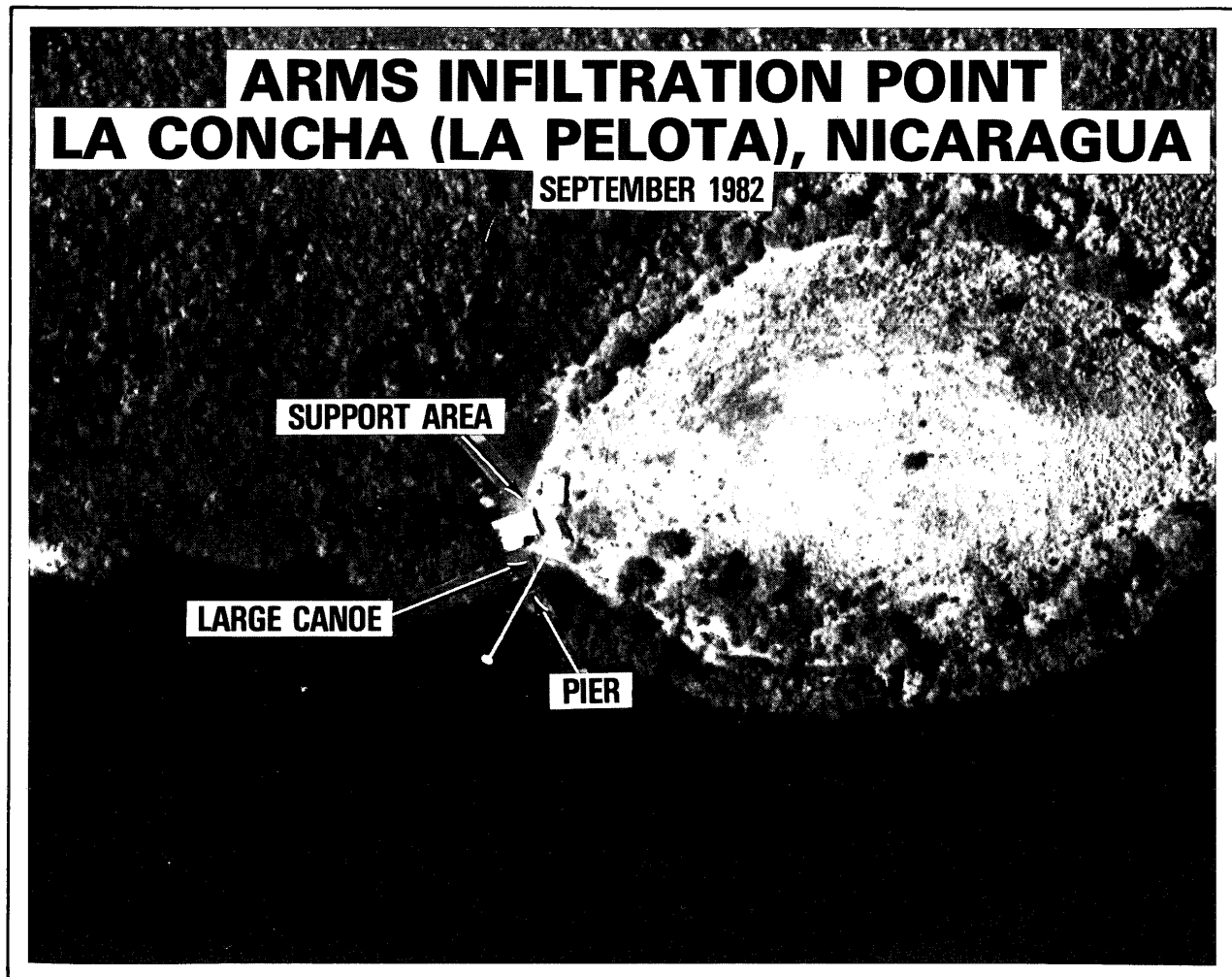
The tanks and armored personnel carriers shown in this November 1981 photo were delivered to Nicaragua several months earlier, long before armed resistance activity began.



This photo shows the Nicaraguan military camp at Rio Blanco. Note the Salvadoran guerrilla logo, "FMLN", on the ground.

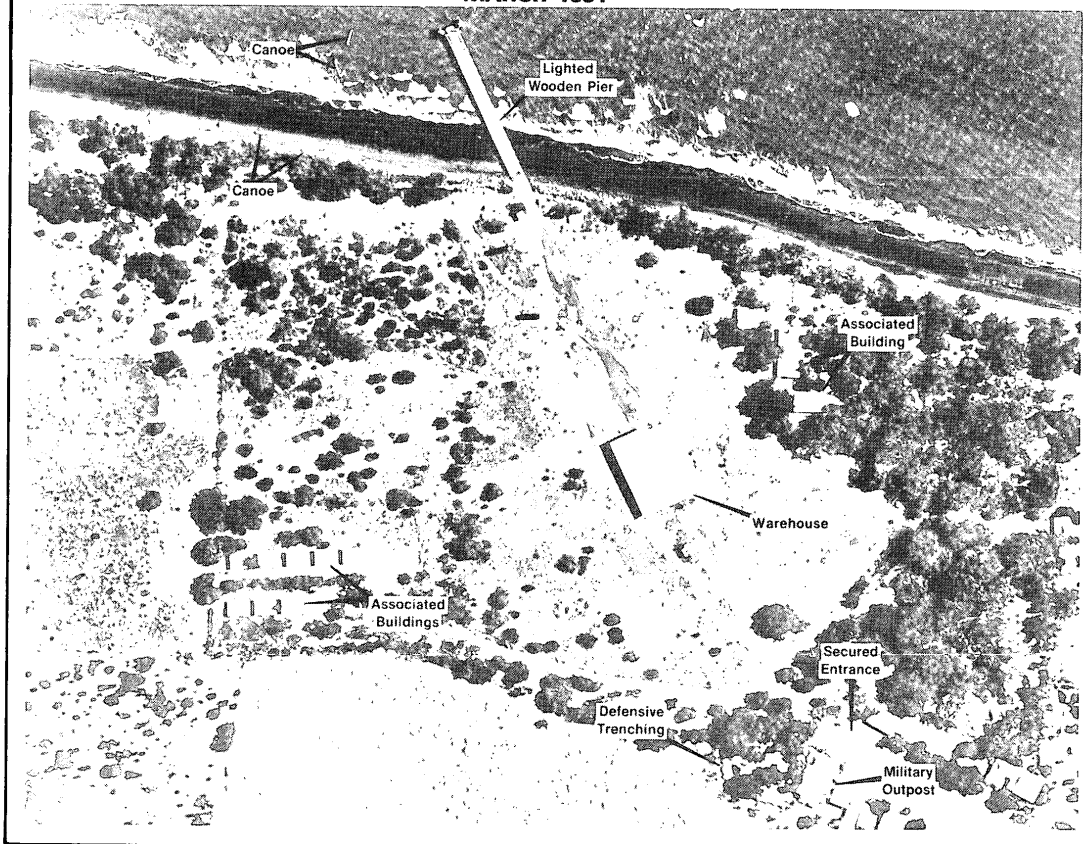


This "fishing cooperative" at La Concha has served as a transshipment point for arms to Salvadoran guerrillas.

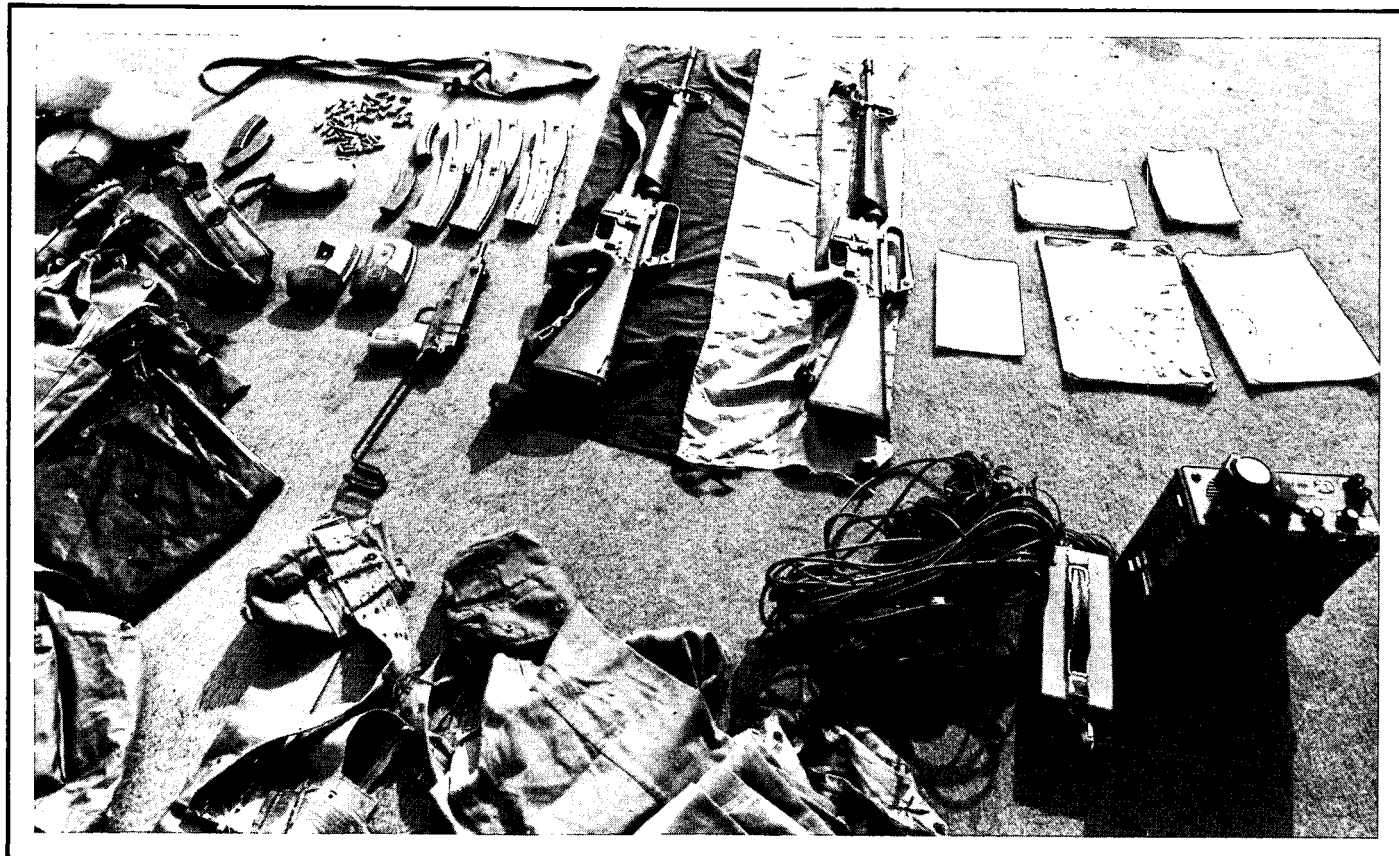


Another transshipment point used to transport arms and supplies across the Gulf of Fonseca to Salvadoran guerrillas was located at Potosi. Both La Concha and Potosi were attacked and damaged by democratic resistance forces in September 1983.

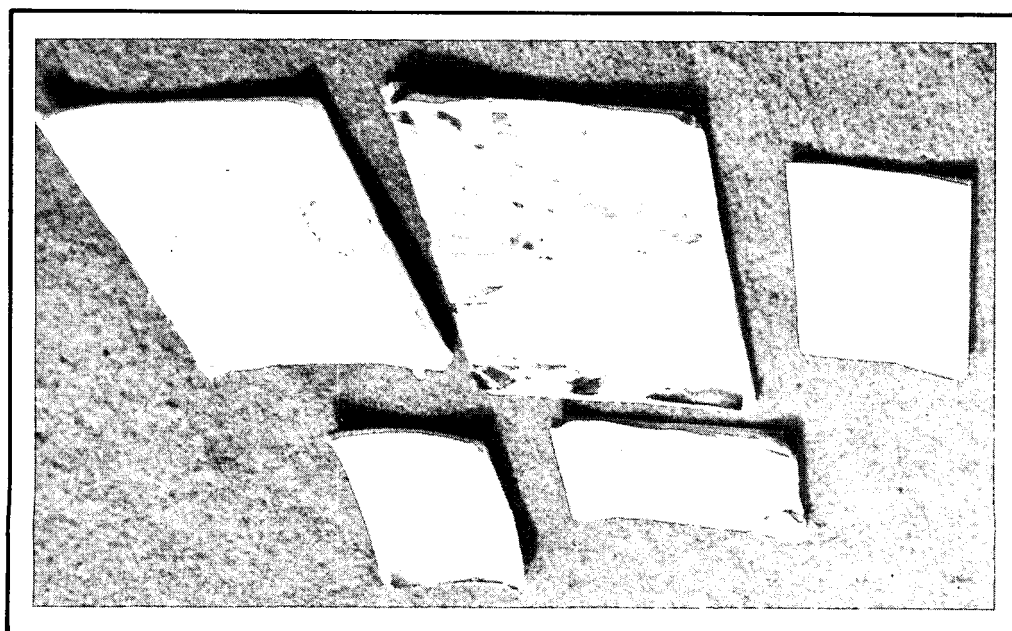
ARMS INFILTRATION POINT POTOSI, NICARAGUA MARCH 1984



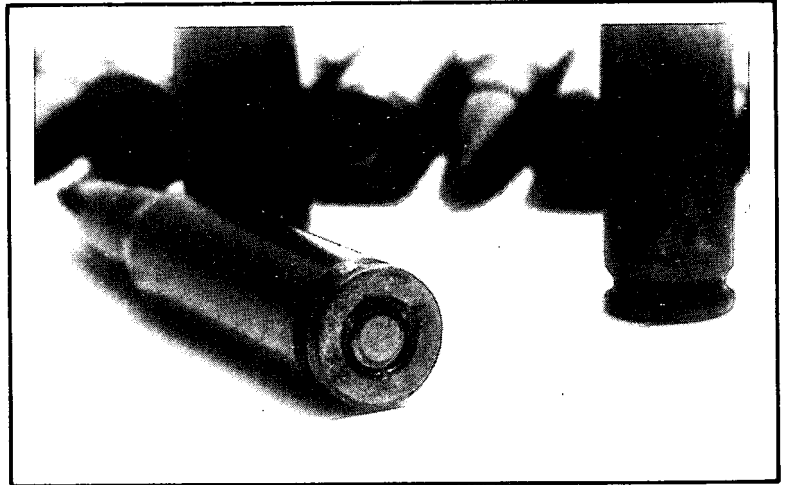
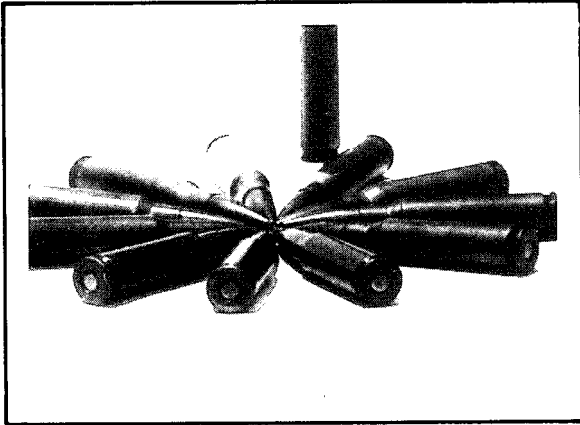
In March 1983, a group of Salvadoran guerrillas was intercepted by Honduran security forces in Honduras. A notebook found on the body of the slain guerrilla squad leader contained over 30 well-known place names in Honduras and El Salvador, and traced a route from Nicaragua through Honduras to El Salvador. Shown here are some of the weapons captured (including two M-16s originally shipped to Vietnam by the U.S. government) as well as a guerrilla flag and documents (see enlarged section of photo below).



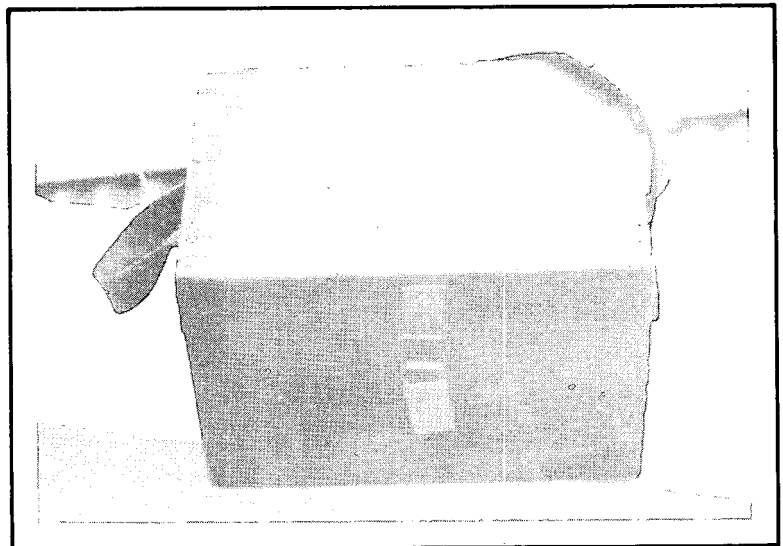
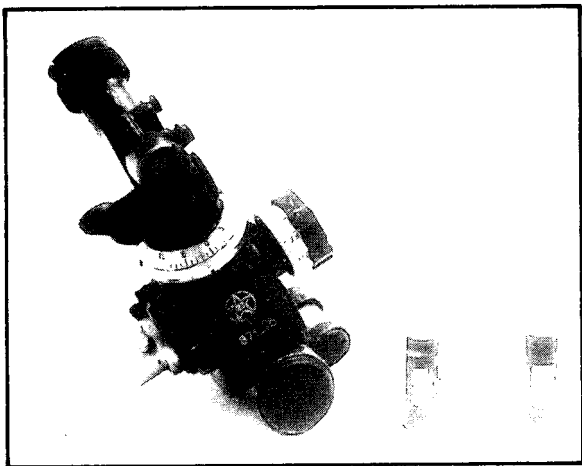
The documents captured included a booklet with the initials FSLN (the Sandinista party) and FMLN (the Salvadoran guerrilla organization) on the cover, a booklet entitled "We Are Sandinistas" in Spanish, and a pamphlet on the military situation in El Salvador.



This ammunition, captured by the Salvadoran Army in May 1984, was manufactured in Bulgaria.

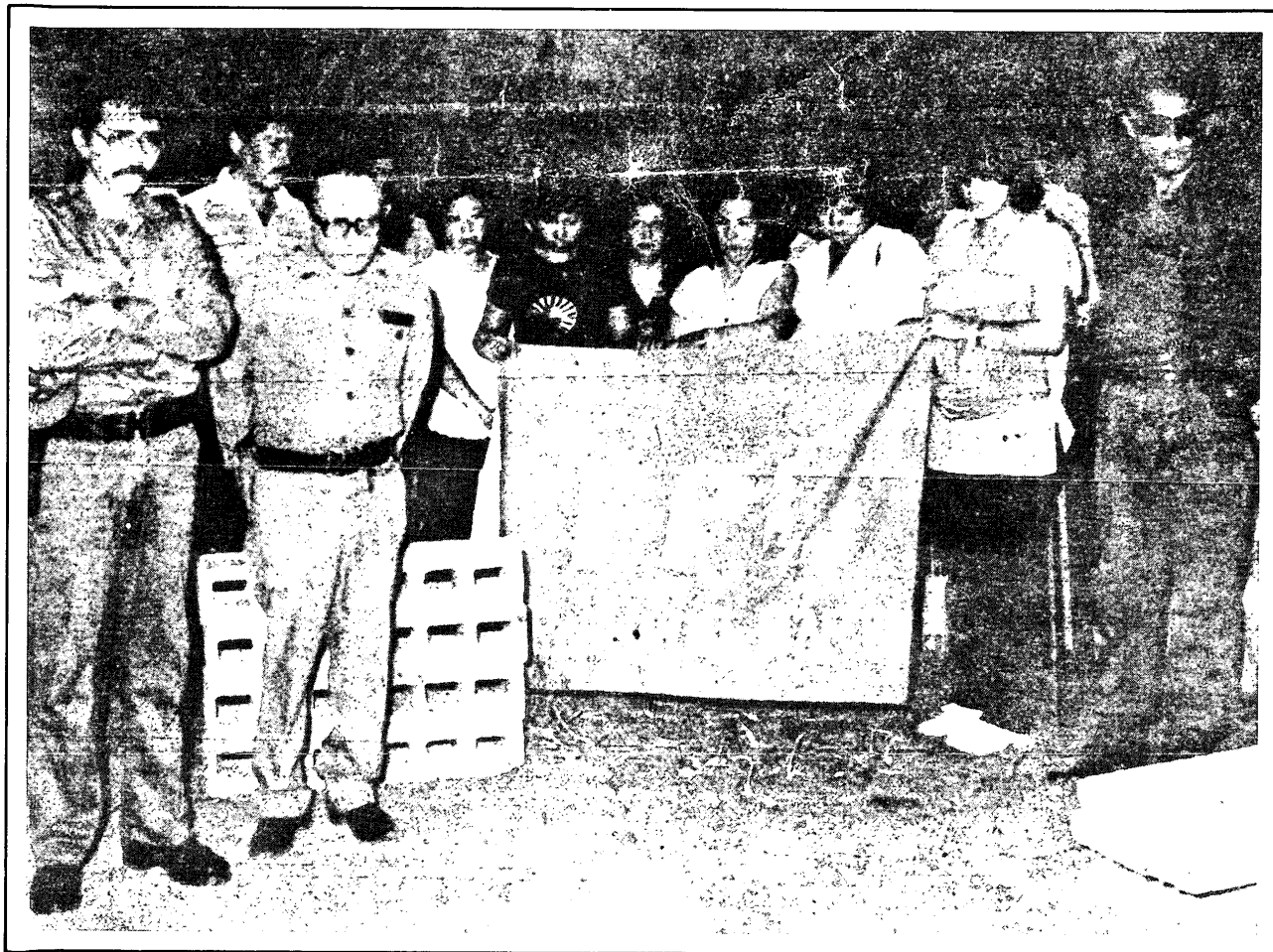


Also captured in May 1984 was this mortar sight found in a box with Vietnamese markings. It has been modified to fit the US-made 81 mm mortar.



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This photo, from the Sandinista newspaper "Barricada", shows the Sandinista leaders Daniel Ortega and Tomas Borge at the funeral of Salvadoran guerrilla leader Cayetano Carpio in Managua, Nicaragua, in April 1983. The flag with the hammer and sickle is that of the FPL, the guerrilla faction Cayetano Carpio headed.

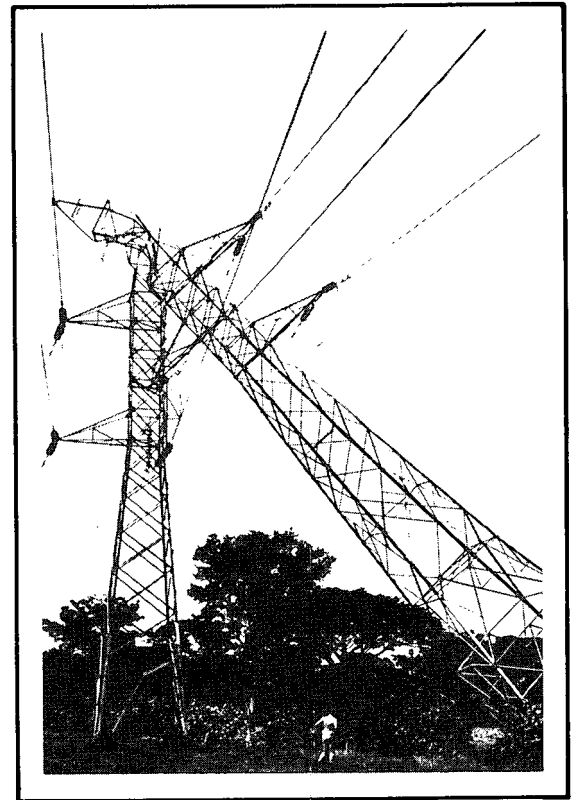
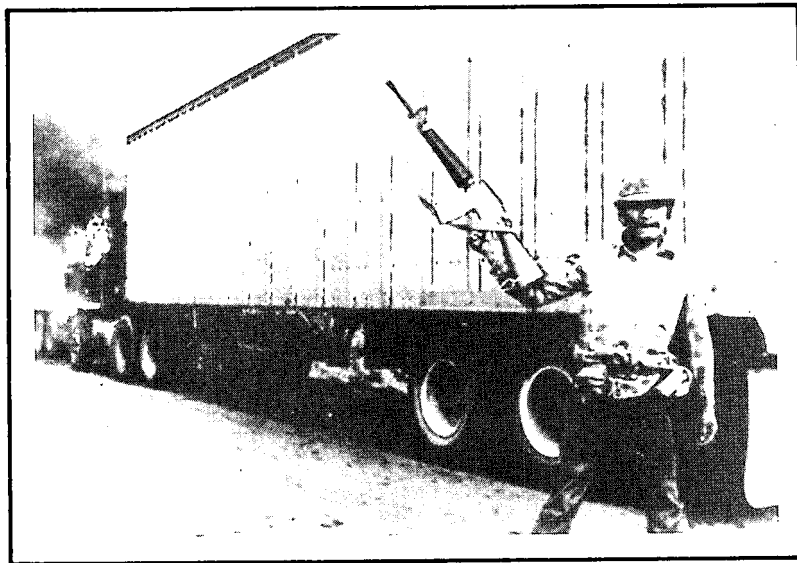
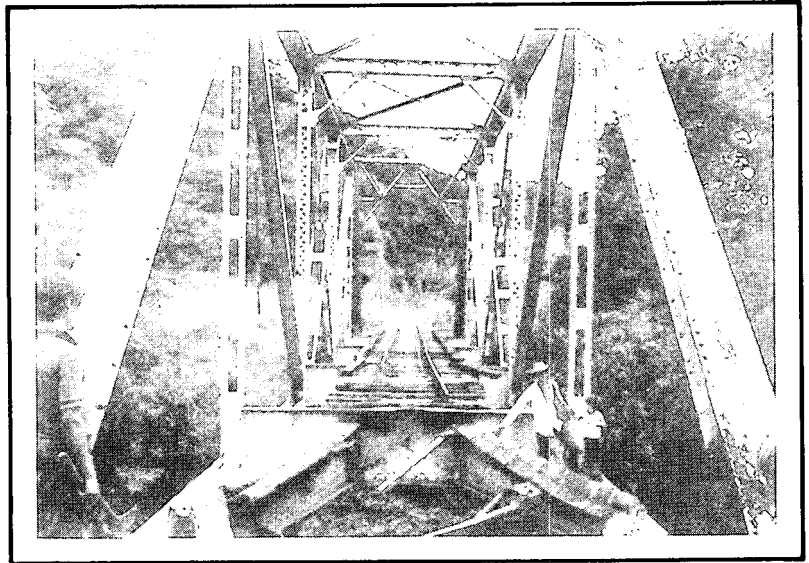
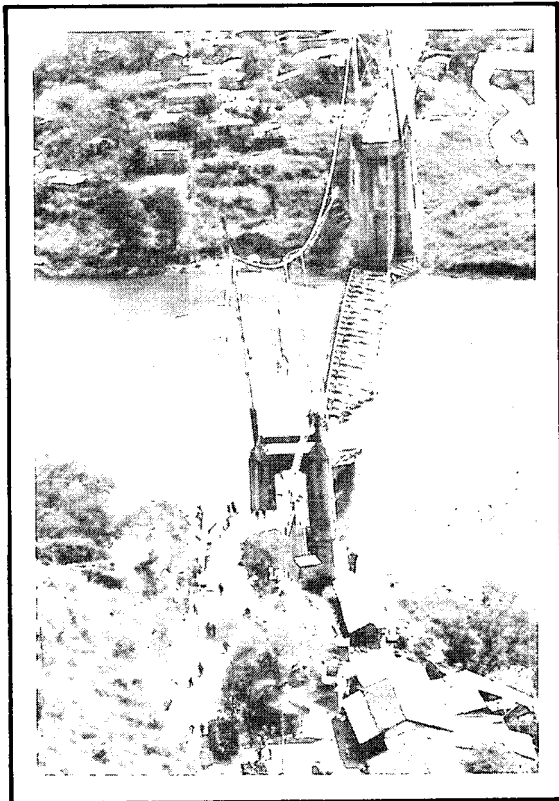


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Salvadoran guerrilla poster proclaiming "Revolution or Death! The Armed People Will Triumph!"



A central focus of the Nicaraguan-backed guerrillas has been the destruction of the Salvadoran economic infrastructure.



This is one of three demolition charges used by the Salvadoran guerrillas in a January 1982 attack on Ilopango Air Base, near San Salvador. The blasting caps, mechanical time delay igniters, and the fuzes of the demolition charges were of Soviet origin. Alejandro Montenegro, who directed the attack, subsequently defected from the Communist guerrilla cause. He and his team were trained for the Ilopango raid in Cuba.

