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CORD MEYER

Kissinger should talk to Bolanos

Henry Kissinger and the presidentially appointed bipartisan commission of which he is chairman should spend a few hours early in their deliberations listening to the most recent defector from the Nicaraguan government, Miguel Bolanos Hunter.

As the young, courageous leader of a 60-man guerrilla unit in the revolution against Somoza, Bolanos won a high position in the Sandinista security apparatus. The one published interview with him since his defection only scratched the surface of his knowledge. Most instructive is his insider's advice on how the U.S. should deal with Central America.

Having hijacked a small plane to escape to Costa Rica two months ago, Bolanos was quickly flown to the U.S. where he has impressed the State Department with the accuracy of his information. Warning that the American media and public gravely underestimate the Cuban-Soviet role in Central America, Bolanos describes how much more difficult it was for Castro to help the Sandinistas than it is for him now to support the Salvadoran guerrillas.

Back in 1978, the Cubans had no secure base on the mainland, and Bolanos remembers how he and the other Sandinista cadres had to be transported by circuitous routes to Cuba for training. Lines of communication and transport were continuously subject to hostile interdiction, and it was only by bribery that some supply routes were kept open.

Bolanos describes the transformation that has already taken place in the geopolitics of Central America as the result of the establishment on the mainland of a Cuban ally. He explains in vivid detail how the entire governing apparatus of his country has cooperated with the Cubans in their effort to score a second guerrilla triumph in El Salvador.

In effect, Nicaragua under Sandinista rule has become the training base, the communication center and the supply depot for the Salvadoran guerrillas. Cuban experts in Managua run the encrypted radio network that reaches into every Salvadoran province, and the logistical mix of trucks, boats and planes that supplies the guerrillas is directed by Cubans.

Behind the more than 6,000 Cuban advisers in Nicaragua stand hundreds of Soviet and East German experts, and the whole expensive enterprise is made possible by the more than \$4 billion annual Soviet subsidy to Havana.

Bolanos specifically warns that many of the 2,000 Cuban teachers in Nicaragua are also trained as tank crews and are capable of operating the T-55 Soviet tanks which the San-

dinistas are still learning to drive. The feared escalation of a disguised Cuban troop presence has already begun.

In his counterintelligence role in the Department of State Security, Bolanos not only participated in attempts to compromise American diplomats but also saw at first hand how the Sandinistas used every trick in the book to demoralize all competing social organizations from the democratic political parties to the free trade unions and the Catholic Church. Feeling himself the privileged beneficiary of an increasingly repressive system, he managed to escape with his wife and son. His advice to Americans is blunt.

As a first priority, he urges continued American support to all three elements of the armed anti-Sandinista resistance, including the Miskito Indians in the north, the "contras" in the west and Eden Pastora's guerrillas in the south. He would like to see the U.S. joined in this effort by all the moderate democratic governments in the region, and believes the internal popular opposition to Sandinista misrule is deep and growing.

Although Bolanos does not favor the use of U.S. troops in El Salvador, he believes the U.S. has no choice but to continue supporting the Salvadoran government with economic and military aid against the Cuban-directed guerrilla offensive.

He cannot understand the logic behind the congressional limitation of 55 U.S. military advisers when the Cubans seem to have the U.S. outnumbered by 50-to-1 in this category of military assistance.

As a believer in the objectives of the original popular movement to overthrow Somoza, Bolanos clearly thinks the U.S. could do more in its military training programs to strengthen the commitment to democratic institutions. He combines this with a plea for detailed, informative and powerful radio broadcasts to his countrymen.

While there is wide agreement on the need for a long-term U.S. program of economic assistance to Central America, the new presidential commission cannot avoid a clear choice between those who believe with Bolanos that the U.S. should commit sufficient military resources to contain the Cuban-Soviet expansion and those who believe military aid can be safely reduced in favor of dialogue and negotiation.

If Henry Kissinger can use this opportunity to forge a broad bipartisan consensus behind the combination of economic and military measures that are now urgently necessary, he will confound his detractors and give democracy a new lease on life in Central America.