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INQUIRY

Topic: NICARAGUA

Bianca Jagger, 33, a native Nicaraguan, has campaigned against military aid to Central American nations accused of violating human rights. The former wife of rock star Mick Jagger has also appealed for aid for Salvadoran political refugees. She was interviewed in Managua for USA TODAY by free-lance writer Morgan Strong.



Bianca Jagger

'We can't return to way we were'

USA TODAY: What do you think President Reagan wants to accomplish in Nicaragua?

JAGGER: The Reagan administration's rationale is, "We want military victories in Central America." They feel as if it will be possible to get rid of the Sandinistas as if they were a group of 20 or 50 that you could just extract from the Nicaraguan society, put some systems back in place, and things will be exactly as they were in the past. The only thing they don't realize is that in Nicaragua there has been an irreversible process that has nothing to do with the Sandinistas, but with the people of Nicaragua. Things cannot go back to be the same as they were in the past for Nicaragua, for El Salvador or Guatemala.

USA TODAY: But that's not what the administration has stated as its goals, is it?

JAGGER: They hoped that the people in Nicaragua were going to turn against the Sandinistas and go to the counterrevolutionaries. But the Nicaraguans feel that once again the United States is about to intervene militarily in this country. The United States has had 14 military interventions in this country. There is nobody that could really tell me that we can write out completely the possibility that there won't be an intervention of troops from the United States in Central America.

USA TODAY: Do you think the United States would support an invasion of Nicaragua?

JAGGER: In my conversations with many members of Congress, I got the impression that they have been led to believe that the covert operations and the money the CIA is providing to the counterrevolutionaries was only with the intention of intercepting arms going from Nicaragua into El Salvador. But, the El Salvadoran embassy and the Nicaraguan embassy have privately told members of the House and Senate intelligence committees that they feel the amount of arms going from Nicaragua to El Salvador is negligible. Therefore, the argument that it is only with the intention of intercepting arms doesn't hold up.

USA TODAY: Is there any other reason you don't accept that argument?

JAGGER: An article appeared in the *Washington Post* that said the administration intended to fund and back-up militarily 12,000 to 50,000 counterrevolutionaries — that will be almost double the number of insurgents in El Salvador. To me, that makes it very difficult for Congress to believe that there is no desire, whatsoever, on the part of the Reagan administration of overthrowing the Nicaraguan government.

USA TODAY: How did you become involved in these issues?

JAGGER: In 1981, I accidentally witnessed a group of Salvadorans, military and paramilitary, come within five kilometers of the Honduran border into the refugee camps to abduct refugees. That led me to try to understand what kind of conniving there was between the Salvadoran and Honduran governments.

USA TODAY: What did you do to learn more about the issues?

JAGGER: I decided to go to the Atlantic Coast because I wanted to look into the issues more in depth. I also wanted to cross the border area to see about the counterrevolutionaries, to see whether there was enough support from the people toward the Sandinista government, and to see if the government of Honduras was really participating or seriously backing the counterrevolutionaries.

USA TODAY: How do you feel about Honduras' role in this conflict?

JAGGER: It was sad that Honduras, who had just had free elections and had the possibility of becoming a democratic government in Central America, was used by the

United States and has become a military base for the purpose of destabilizing the Nicaraguan government.

USA TODAY: What have you done about what you've learned?

JAGGER: I testified before Congress about the danger of regionalization of the conflict in Central America. I made a comparison between the role that Cambodia has played at this stage and the role that Honduras was about to play in Central America. I also spoke of the possibility of splitting the conflict into two war fronts, one in El Salvador and another in Honduras.