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NICARAGUA/ LEHRER: Nicaragua is again in the news today, and our
FIGHTING special Central America correspondent, Charles Krause, is again just
back from there. Judy Woodruff will handle both developments. Judy?

WOODRUFF: Jim, in Nicaragua the government is reinforcing its troops near the Honduran border. The Sandinista leadership expects new attacks by the U.S.-supported rebels known as contras. Last week, government troops fought two major battles with the contras, and according to the Nicaraguan defense ministry, 120 rebels and 19 Sandinista soldiers were killed in the fighting. The Nicaraguan government has been pressing its claim that the United States is trying to destroy the Sandinista revolution. Reporter Charles Krause, on assignment for this program, talked Sunday night with the head of the Sandinista government, Comandante Daniel Ortega. Krause asked about American activity directed at Nicaragua, including aerial spying by the CIA.

DANIEL ORTEGA (Leader of Nicaragua) (translated by Krause): We believe there is a continuity of the flights from the bases the United States has in Panamanian territory, flights, also, which leave from Honduran territory and from Salvadoran territory. These have been continued. We know that the North American government, more specifically the Pentagon... the Pentagon, has completely measured to the very last bit of territory for their military purposes, which they can use both for CIAgents (sic), CIA agents, in their terrorist activities, such as mining, or they can use for broader actions, such as an invasion by the United States of Nicaragua. That's the point and the goal of these flights, and they intend to keep the information up to date by continuing the flights.

KRAUSE: Well, now, the Reagan administration has justified mining your ports because it says that you are transshipping arms from Nicaragua to the guerrillas in El Salvador. Is your government involved in shipping arms to

the guerrillas in El Salvador and providing other assistance to them?

ORTEGA (translated by Krause): We've been very clear so far as affirming that it is not the policy of the Nicaragua government to carry out activities like this transshipment of arms. Our support has been limited to the political areas. In fact, we've been very, very assertive in presenting internationally, both in the United Nations and to the United States,

specific proposals to try to find a political solution to the problems of El Salvador.

KRAUSE: What is the Reagan administration's objective with regard to your government? ORTEGA (translated by Krause): They're trying to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution; that's what they want. Why? Because they do not understand the changes which are going, which are being gone through in Nicaragua. These are errors which have been carried out by different administrations, and now this administration is carrying it out again. They do not understand, in Latin America, the desires of the people, and that's what leads them to carry out an erroneous policy as in this case. One day they pose one thing, another day, another thing. And one day they say the problem is the arms traveling to Salvador, and next day they say, no, now it's these alleged centers of transmissions. They themselves say publicly that there no longer are arms trafficking, or at least it's diminished

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