

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 1

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Document traces U.S. Latin aims

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WASHINGTON — President Reagan, in a secret directive signed earlier this year, authorized possible new economic sanctions against Nicaragua and diplomatic pressures on Mexico to force both governments to moderate their policies in Central America.

The directive also instructed Secretary of State George P. Shultz once again to warn the Soviet Union, Cuba and Nicaragua that the United States "will not tolerate" the deployment in Nicaragua of advanced combat aircraft or Cuban troops.

It also ordered the Pentagon to activate plans for more military maneuvers in the region this year to deter any military activity by Nicaragua against its neighbors and maintain "steady pressure" on the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Although administration officials privately have ascribed similar purposes to the exercises, publicly Mr. Reagan has denied they had any special meaning.

"I think these maneuvers are something we've done before," Mr. Reagan said in an April news conference. "They're not something unusual or aimed at anyone down there. . . . All they are is war games."

Approval for the admonitions to Moscow, Managua and Havana and pressures on Mexico and the Sandinistas was contained in a National Security Decision Document signed by Mr. Reagan in February. Portions of the document, stamped

"Top Secret-Sensitive," were examined by Knight News Service.

A White House official, asked to confirm the contents of the document, had no comment.

The directive was approved after a National Security Council session at the White House in which the president and his chief advisers reviewed objectives and options for U.S. policy in Central America during 1984.

All the objectives, the document said, would be coupled with an escalation of U.S. "public diplomacy" in Latin America and Western Europe. That would be designed to counter a "Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan propaganda campaign" against U.S. policy in Central America, particularly in El Salvador, according to the document. "Our diplomatic and communications efforts should seek expanded political support for El Salvador from non-Communist governments," it said.

The segment on Nicaragua asked policy-makers to "review and recommend such economic sanctions against Nicaragua that are likely to build pressure on the Sandinistas." The directive ordered the preparation of an "Action Plan" on these sanctions that was to have been delivered to the National Security Council by March 1. That document remains secret.

The document did not specify any concrete sanctions being considered against Nicaragua, but an administration source said one possibility was a ban on Nicaraguan agricultural products still entering the United States. It is unclear whether this option was dropped or is pending. A State Department official said no further sanctions against Nicaragua are about to be announced.

Already the administration has succeeded in denying certain international loans to Nicaragua, has reallocated its sugar quota among U.S. allies in the region and has reduced to a minimum the amount of trade with the country.

A one-paragraph section on Mexico authorized officials to "intensify . . . diplomatic efforts with the Mexican government to reduce its material and diplomatic support for the communist guerrillas [in El Salvador] and its economic and diplomatic support for the Nicaraguan government."

The directive said pressure should be applied "bearing in mind overall U.S. interests and relations with Mexico," apparently to avoid damaging diplomatic ties between Washington and the government of President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado in Mexico City.

It instructed the State Department to prepare a study "of ways in which we can supplement our persuasive efforts" with Mexico. That report, which is still secret, was to have been delivered to the White House on February 24.

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According to a source, some administration officials initially proposed that the directive authorize economic sanctions against Mexico if it did not comply with U.S. requests. However, the source indicated that ultimately only diplomatic pressure was to be exerted on Mexico. Other administration officials said Mexico might have begun to respond, citing its recent moves to upgrade relations with El Salvador.

The warning against the introduction of combat aircraft and Cuban forces into Nicaragua, however, constituted the most explicit confirmation to date that these two developments would be unacceptable thresholds for the administration in Central America.

An administration source said Secretary Shultz already had carried out this directive in private messages to the Soviets, Cubans and Nicaraguans in the last few months. It is not known, however, if he repeated the warning when he traveled to Nicaragua June 1 and met with Sandinista junta coordinator Daniel Ortega. Similar warnings were conveyed to the Soviets, Cubans and Nicaraguans in 1983.

The directives did not say what the administration would do if the warnings were ignored. But in the past, administration officials have said such developments possibly could trigger U.S. military action against Nicaragua.

At one point last year, a senior administration official speaking to reporters on condition he not be identified said a "surgical" air strike against Nicaraguan airfields would be a likely option if Soviet-built MiG aircraft were discovered in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua has sought the MiGs but so far has not received them. Last year, Nicaraguan Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco, during a visit to Washington, said the Sandinista government would delay its request for the planes in an effort to induce the United States to negotiate with his government.

Mr. Ortega visited Moscow last week, and Western diplomats there said he probably requested increased Soviet military aid. However, no mention was made of the aircraft.

Turning to U.S. military activity in Central America, the National Security Decision Document instructed Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, in coordination with Mr. Shultz and CIA Director William J. Casey, to "conduct U.S. military activities in the region that are sufficient to reassure our friends and enhance our diplomatic efforts."

The directive ordered department heads to "develop and implement plans for new exercises in Honduras and naval activities in waters off Central America in a manner that will maintain steady pressure on the Nicaraguans and

deter Nicaraguan military action against its neighbors."

In effect, the directive appears to be the genesis document for the series of military maneuvers that took place in Honduras in March as part of a U.S. effort to provide a framework of protection for the presidential elections in El Salvador.

Another section of the directive showed that even while President Reagan was asking Congress to approve additional military aid to El Salvador in the spring, in February he already had approved the use of presidential contingency funds to dispatch emergency military aid to the country in case Congress did not act in time.

The directive authorized Mr. Reagan to use Section 21(d) of the Arms Export Control Act to ship military equipment to the Salvadoran armed forces because they were said to be running low on supplies.

On April 16, the president did use Section 21(d) to send \$32 million in military aid to El Salvador in light of congressional delays in approving administration requests.