

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 16A

MIAMI HERALD
14 JANUARY 1983

Nicaragua shows off raiders, who claim U.S. backed them

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MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Sandinista officials on Thursday exhibited two captured counterrevolutionaries, and their weapons, which they held up as proof that the Reagan Administration is trying to "destroy the Nicaraguan revolution."

The exhibit, at Government House, was organized by Nicaragua's leftist government for the benefit of dozens of foreign reporters in Managua to cover a ministerial conference of the Nonaligned Movement.

Nicaragua has been seeking the endorsement of nonaligned nations on its contention that the United States is an aggressor through its alleged backing of anti-Sandinista counterrevolutionaries based on Honduran territory.

Some countries friendly to the United States have attacked a proposed conference communique, drafted by Nicaragua, as "too harsh" on Washington.

Guarded by Sandinista soldiers, the exhibit of captured weapons included a dozen, dusty U.S.-made M16 and AR15 automatic rifles and a variety of U.S.-made anti-tank rockets, mortars and directional mines bearing the warning, in English, to "point front toward enemy."

Two landmines on display appeared to be homemade, and were covered with lids from school

lunchboxes adorned by cartoons of Mickey Mouse.

There was a box filled with 60mm mortar shells and green uniforms, all labeled as manufactured in the United States.

"This exhibit is resounding proof of the aggression perpetrated against Nicaragua by [contras] who receive the support of the Reagan Administration and the CIA," said a government press spokesman.

The exhibit also included, however, an armful of Chinese-made AK47 rifles and RPG2 anti-tank rocket grenades. The spokesman did not explain how the weapons wound up in the hands of the contras.

Several U.S. publications, including The Miami Herald, have reported recently that the Reagan Administration has provided money to the contras to harass, but not to overthrow, the Sandinistas.

However, Lt. Oscar Loza, operations chief for State Security, said, "The purpose of the United States and the contras is to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution and bring back the Somoza dictatorship," referring to the Anastasio Somoza government overthrown in 1979.

He went on to say that the contras' medium-term aim is to seize a portion of Nicaraguan territory, establish a government and obtain diplomatic recognition from the United States and Honduras.

Since contra groups stepped up

their activities last year, he said, 147 persons have been killed, 249 have been kidnaped and 72 have been wounded in various attacks, mostly near the Honduran border.

Loza introduced the first prisoner as Juan Ramon Urei Osorio, 28, allegedly taken Dec. 8 as he led a unit bent on disrupting Nicaragua's coffee harvest.

"I know the governments of the United States and Honduras help the contras because I saw officials of both countries in the contra camps" in Honduras, Urei said.

Another purported contra prisoner shown to the press was identified as Nadin Peña Gadea, 18, allegedly captured Jan. 2 as he carried explosives from Honduras into Nicaragua to blow up railway tracks.

Peña described himself as a contra intelligence officer who had been recruited and assigned to identify strategic Sandinista facilities in Managua and nearby Masaya. He also said he has seen "several Argentine and American and Honduran officers in the contra camps."

Neither Urei nor Peña could provide the names of Americans they saw, nor did they explain how they knew the men were Americans.

Carlos Alberto Izaguirre Umanzor told reporters he was a Honduran army corporal who deserted last year, because "of what we were doing to help the contras against Nicaragua," and also because he had "problems with a [Honduran army] captain."

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