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WASHINGTON POST
10 October 1986

Captured American Says CIA Ran Supply Missions

Prisoner Says Flights Coordinated From El Salvador

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Washington Post Foreign Service

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, Oct. 9— Eugene Hasenfus, an American prisoner of the Sandinista government, said today he has been part of an extensive air resupply operation for the Nicaraguan rebels run from a Salvadoran Air Force base by CIA employees.

"The people I met in El Salvador, that I knew, were all company people," Hasenfus said, using a term commonly used to refer to the CIA.

"These company people were about 24 to 26 personnel," Hasenfus continued. "They consisted of flight crews, maintenance crews, drivers and two Cuban nationalized Americans that worked for the CIA that did most of the coordination of these flights and overseen [sic] all our housing projects, transportation projects and also refueling and some flight plans."

[Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, said in Washington Thursday that there is "no relation at all between the CIA" and Americans aiding in resupply efforts. Abrams suggested Hasenfus' statements were a result of Nicaragua putting "pressure" on him.]

Hasenfus spoke at a press conference this morning called by the Nicaraguan military, and was accompanied by the chief of Army intelligence, Capt. Ricardo Wheelock, and a translator.

He made a slow, sparsely worded, wooden statement that seemed to have been rehearsed beforehand with his captors. Hasenfus did not stumble over his words or appear to be giving unfamiliar information. But the prisoner did not answer questions from reporters.

In response to shouted complaints from the journalists as Hasenfus was led away from the stage, Wheelock asserted that the Amer-

ican prisoner had requested not to be required to answer reporters' questions.

Hasenfus gave the names of two alleged CIA employees who conducted the Salvadoran operation as "Ramon Medina" and "Max Gomez."

Wheelock said Hasenfus had told Sandinista Army officers that "he is a worker for the CIA. He used the word 'worker,' rather than 'employee.'"

Two Americans, William Cooper and Wallace Blaine Sawyer, and an unidentified Latin American were killed when their C123K cargo plane was shot down Sunday in southern Nicaragua. Hasenfus was the only survivor.

Hasenfus said Cooper contacted him in June 1986 about a job as an air freight handler to fly over Central America. He said he was hired by a company called Corporate Air Services, based out of Southern Air Transport, an air cargo firm in Miami reported to have had extensive links to the CIA in the past.

The captive said he flew 10 flights into Nicaragua, in DHC4 Caribous and C123Ks.

Six flights originated at the Ilopango base of the Salvadoran Air Force on the outskirts of San Salvador. The routes of these missions, he said, took them down the western coast of Nicaragua over Pacific waters, then east across the northernmost part of Costa Rica and north into Nicaragua.

Four flights began at Aguacate, a Honduran military air facility in central Honduras, Hasenfus said. He said the missions carried small arms and ammunition. "These were dropped to the contras," Hasenfus added, referring to the Nicaraguan rebels.

Wheelock said Hasenfus had "cooperated" with his interrogators.

Sandinista officials have suggested Hasenfus could face trial here. His public comments could affect the Nicaraguan government's decision to prosecute him.

Most of the information given at the press conference could not be independently verified from Managua in the time available today.

However, contra and Salvadoran sources confirmed the presence of at least one man of Cuban origin living and working at the Ilopango base who they believed to be linked to an American intelligence agency. The man was said to have been coordinating air resupply and other aspects of the contra operation in El Salvador for some time.

Wheelock displayed a pile of logbooks and documents he said were recovered from the plane's shattered wreckage. The documents included two small red flight logbooks with pilot Sawyer's name handwritten in the front. One bore the name and address of Southern Air Transport on the front leaf. They covered flights piloted by Sawyer from April 1985 to September 1986.

Another document was what appeared to be a flight log bearing the marking 824, apparently a registry number for the crashed aircraft.

Sandinista intelligence officers provided a list of 34 American-sounding names cited in Sawyer's logs as crew members on his flights.

Wheelock said Sandinista intelligence had learned from Hasenfus and from documents found in the wreckage that Medina and Gomez, the alleged CIA employees, did not fly on any resupply missions but controlled all operations from their headquarters at the Ilopango base. Reporters were not shown documents backing up Wheelock's allegations on this point.

Hasenfus said he was paid \$3,000

a month for his work as a "kicker," pushing cargo out of the planes over Nicaragua. Wheelock quoted Hasentus as saying the money was deposited directly to his bank account in Marinette, Wis.

The remains of the two American crash victims were turned over to U.S. officials at midafternoon in a raucous melee among journalists at the embassy gate.

A U.S. official said the Nicaraguan government had agreed to drive a truck with the two coffins through the gate. Instead, government employes carried the coffins from almost two blocks away and left them on the street outside, attracting a swarm of press.

Nicaraguan authorities cremated the remains without advising the embassy, a U.S. official said. A statement issued late tonight said the em-

bassy "abhors the ghoulish behavior" of Nicaragua in the incident.

The embassy noted that no U.S. official has been allowed to talk with Hasentus despite repeated requests. "This raises serious questions about other rights of Mr. Hasentus that may have been violated," Alberto Fernandez, the embassy spokesman, said.

[Abrams said in Washington, "There is no prediction when we will get access" to Hasentus. "The question is why, [and] the obvious answer is to maintain pressure on him." Abrams added: "I haven't the slightest doubt they're telling him if he says the right thing he'll be out soon and if not he'll be in jail . . . This is an outrageous violation of international law and we will continue to insist on our rights."]