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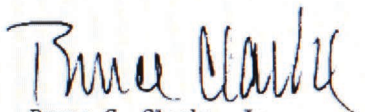
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

3 OCT 1980

NOTE FOR: The Honorable Zbigniew Brzezinski
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

Attached is the monthly report on Cuba-Nicaragua: Support for Central American Insurgencies. In this issue we discuss Nicaraguan involvement in shipments of arms, funds, and personnel to the Salvadoran guerrillas. Also treated is reported Soviet and Cuban aid to the insurgents in El Salvador.



Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.
Director

Attachment: a/s

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

30 September 1980

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MEMORANDUM

Cuba-Nicaragua: Support for Central American Insurgencies

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Highlights

(15 August - 18 September 1980)

Salvadoran guerrilla leaders claim that one successful aspect of the strike of 13-15 August was their ability to divert the attention of government forces so that additional arms and other supplies could be brought into the country. There are indications that such an effort was in fact made, and that it may have included considerable involvement by Nicaragua.

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Government leaders continue to deny publicly that Nicaragua is helping the Salvadoran insurgents, but one official-

-has reportedly acknowledged in private that the Cubans are using Nicaraguan territory to ship arms and personnel to El Salvador. he did not know the details, but claimed the quantities involved were "considerable."

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The USSR, using Nicaraguan intermediaries, has also reportedly begun providing funds and a "limited" amount of arms to the Salvadoran revolutionaries.

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This memorandum was requested by the National Security Adviser to the President. It responds to specific questions and is not intended to be an analysis of the overall relationship between Cuba-Nicaragua and Central America. It was prepared by the Latin America Division of the Office of Political Analysis under the direction of the National Intelligence Officer for Latin America, and coordinated with the Directorate of Operations. Information in this memorandum reflects material available through 18 September 1980. Questions and comments may be addressed to Chief, Latin America Division, OPA,

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WARNING NOTICE
INTELLIGENCE SOURCES
AND METHODS INVOLVED

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[redacted] Moscow realizes this is a "delicate and dangerous" operation in which "even a slight mistake could seriously aggravate Soviet-US relations." [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] special flights to Managua in the first half of September. Many of these apparently contained arms shipments, some of which could have been destined for transshipment to neighboring countries. Havana reportedly still favors waiting for the Nicaraguan Government to consolidate its position before the Salvadoran insurgents begin their "final offensive." On the other hand, Cuba is said to believe that the situation in Guatemala now calls for "increased leftist activities" and plans to step up both funding and arms shipments to revolutionaries there. [redacted]

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El Salvador

Although set back in their mid-August bid for greater public support, the Salvadoran revolutionaries obviously retain a capacity for acts of terrorism and economic disruption. Regardless of how the current spate of guerrilla activity is viewed, the insurgents' capabilities for further military action depend in large measure on their ability to replenish supplies expended in the recent heavier fighting. [redacted] 25X1

As leftist leaders evaluated the effects of the strike of 13-15 August, [redacted] they had been particularly successful in at least one respect--drawing government forces away from outlying areas "to allow the entry of arms and personnel from Nicaragua and Honduras." Although this "success" could be no more than a rationalization of otherwise generally unfavorable results, we have received a variety of indications suggesting that such a supply effort could have been made, possibly using Sandinista helicopters flying from Nicaragua. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] helicopter supply flights to various areas in El Salvador during the 13-15 August period. [redacted] the arms recipients believed that the flights came from Nicaragua, one because of the observed flight direction, the other because FSLN National Directorate member Bayardo Arce had allegedly intimated to the group earlier that such an effort would be made. [redacted]

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TOP SECRET [redacted]

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[REDACTED]

Moreover, Nicaraguan Vice Minister of Defense Eden Pastora reportedly was involved early this spring in an effort to buy helicopters on behalf of the Salvadoran revolutionaries. We originally tended to discount the report because of several details that appeared doubtful at the time:

- The arrival date of the helicopters was allegedly to be late April-early May, but so far as we could tell in early August, they still had not made an appearance.
- The helicopters reportedly were to be flown by Sandinista Air Force (FAS) pilots, but to the best of our knowledge then, the Sandinistas had no such qualified personnel. Subsequently, however, we have learned [REDACTED] FAS pilots completed helicopter flight training in late spring. [REDACTED]

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Other Nicaraguan Involvement

Foreign Minister D'Escoto, during his visit to Bonn in late August, noted that Nicaragua would not intervene actively "unless someone else does." Both Managua and Havana have been stridently pushing a propaganda theme claiming current or impending US and other imperialist military "intervention"--arms, training, even actual troops--in various Central American countries. In the course of a lengthy diatribe on Havana's domestic television detailing the alleged US military presence in the area, a commentator noted "it is necessary to recall that...Zbigniew Brzezinski said in the capital of the empire that Washington will use any method, even the most reproachable, so that what happened in Nicaragua is not repeated in El Salvador." [REDACTED]

Defense Minister and FSLN National Directorate member Humberto Ortega gave a hard-hitting speech during the celebration on 23 August marking the end of the literacy campaign.

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According to Ortega, Nicaragua will "continue to show total solidarity with the Salvadoran people" and will also "continue supporting active struggles, not merely wars of pamphlets." In the course of noting that "only the armed strength of the people" can prevail, he ridiculed press reports that Nicaragua was "sending Soviet weapons and even tanks to El Salvador."

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Soviet and Other Aid

The USSR reportedly is getting directly involved in providing funds and arms to the Salvadoran revolutionaries.

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[REDACTED]

Cuban Intentions in Central America

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group in late August that Havana favors "a delay of the final insurgent offensive" until the Nicaraguan Government is consolidated and "can act as an adequate staging area."

25X1 Managua's preoccupation with a faltering economy and increasing counterrevolutionary activity "could result in a delay of up to one year." In the meantime, Havana reportedly intends to encourage the guerrillas to 25X1 continue harassing activities but only to engage in large-unit operations "when practical."

25X1 As to Guatemala.

Havana views the situation there as "favorable for increased leftist activities" and plans to increase both funding and arms shipments to Guatemalan guerrilla groups. the stepped-up aid will be funneled overland via Nicaragua and Honduras or through Belize.

Cuban Arms Deliveries

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There was a marked increase in the number of special flights from Cuba to Nicaragua during the first half of

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September-

[REDACTED]

We have received no direct additional information this month on the recipients of such arms shipments, but a variety of earlier reports have suggested that at least some of the materiel is intended for transshipment through Nicaragua, primarily to El Salvador but also to Guatemala and even Honduras. [REDACTED] 25X1

We also continue to receive occasional reports of arms delivered by Cuban ships and stored in warehouses at the remote east coast port of Puerto Cabezas. A number of indications over the past several months have suggested that at least some of these weapons are also being sent on to neighboring countries. [REDACTED] 25X1

Other Regional Developments

Guatemala: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] a leader of the militant Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA) feels so confident of his arms resupply arrangements that he has offered to replace weapons lost by the Guatemalan Communist Party's dissident faction. The ORPA leader claimed that his group is "receiving a steady supply from Nicaragua" and has no difficulty bringing the weapons across Honduras. Although no mention was made

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[REDACTED]
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**SUBJECT: Cuba-Nicaragua: Support for Central American
Insurgencies**

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NFAC/OPA/LA/ [redacted] (3August80)

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