TEXT OF TELEGRAM 82MANAGUOO4943

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 DOD-00
H-01 NSC-01 NSA-00 SY-06 HA-08 L-03 TSE-00
PA-09 MCT-02 AGDA-12 USIE-00 SP-02 SPRS-01
OBS W

R 201935Z OCT 82
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4724
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN

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EO 12356: DECL: 10/19/88
TAGS: MPOS, PINT, NU
SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF RECENT COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY

REF: MANAGUA 4114

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. SUMMARY: ANTI-SANDINISTA ELEMENTS (CONTRAS) CONTINUE TO HARASS GRN FORCES ALONG NICARAGUA'S NORTHERN FRONTIER AND IN THE EASTERN DEPARTMENT OF ZELAYA. WHILE THE CONTRAS DO NOT THREATEN THE EXISTENCE OF THE GRN, SANDINISTA LEADERS ARE CLEARLY TROUBLED BY CURRENT TRENDS AND THE IMPLICATIONS CONTINUED EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO THE CONTRAS. THE FSLN EXPLOITS THE PRESENCE OF THE CONTRAS IN ITS PROPAGANDA, BUT THE CONTRA ACTIVITY ALSO HAS SOME HEAVY COSTS FOR THE SANDINISTAS. END SUMMARY.

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3. COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY OPERATIONS CONTINUE TO PLAGUE THE GRN. REPORTS OF ARMEE CLASHES DIMINISHED IN THE WEEKS FOLLOWING THE AUGUST 29 ATTACK ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE AT IYAS (REFTEL) BUT ARE ONCE AGAIN INCREASING, ALTHOUGH NOT YET TO THE INTENSITY OF KULY. MUCH OF THE RECENT ACTIVITY HAS OCCURRED ALONG THE NORTHERN BORDER IN CHINANDEGA, NUEVA SEGOVIA, AND MADRIZ DEPARTMENTS. THE GRN HAS REPORTED FREQUENT INCIDENTS IN WHICH CONTRA BANDS CROSSED THE BORDER FROM HONDURAS AND ATTACKED

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SANDINISTA FORCES OR WERE DETECTED AND REPELLED BY BORDER UNITS. 
ON SOME OCCASIONS, CONTRAS SITUATED INSIDE HONDURAS ALLEGEDLY 
FIRE RIFLES, MACHINE GUNS, AND MORTARS ACROSS THE BORDER AT 
SANDINISTA POSITIONS IN NICARAGUA. THE GRN HAS ALSO CLAIMED 
THAT CAMOUFLAGED HELICOPTERS HAVE MADE SORTIES INTO NICARAGUAN 
AIR SPACE IN NUEVA SEGOVIA DEPARTMENT.

4. SANDINISTA LEADERS CONTINUOUSLY HIGHLIGHT THE DANGER PRESENTED 
BY THE COUNTERREVOLUTION AND LINK THE CONTRAS TO ALLEGED U.S. 
COVERT ACTION PLANS. THEY HAVE DISPLAYED CAPTURED WEAPONS, 
AMMUNITION, EXPLOSIVES, AND COMMUNICATIONS GEAR TO THE PRESS 
AS EVIDENCE OF U.S. SUPPORT. THE GRN HAS CLAIMED THAT THE 
INCREASED SIZE OF CONTRA UNITS AND THEIR PROGRESSION FROM 
RAGTAG BANDS TO ORGANIZED COMBAT ELEMENTS ALSO CONFIRMED A 
HIGH LEVEL OF ALLEGED CIA TRAINING AND FUNDING.

5. IN THE FSLN'S DRIVE TO ERADICATE THE CONTRAS, INTERIOR 
MINISTER TOMAS BORGE DECLARED ON SEPTEMBER 30 THAT 357 HAD 
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BEEN KILLED IN THE PRECEDING FOUR MONTHS. IN EARLY OCTOBER, 
AN ADDITIONAL N CONTRA ACTIVITY. IN RECENT WEEKS, THE GRN HAS 
ACKNOWLEDGED ARRESTING SCORSS OF CONTRAS BELONGING TO 
DIVERSE ANTI-FSLN GROUPS IN VARIOUS REGIONS THROUGHOUT THE 
COUNTRY. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THERE ARE MANY OTHERS 
WHO HAVE BEEN DETAINED AS SUSPECTED CONTRAS AND ARE 
UNDER INVESTIGATION. THE GRN'S HAPAHAARD MANNER OF REPORTING 
ON CONTRA ACTIVITY RENDERS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE AN INDEPENDENT 
TABULATION OF CONTRA LOSSES.

6. THERE IS NOT RELIABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON SANDINISTA 
CASUALTIES. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, SANDINISTA ARMY 
SPOKESMAN CAPTAIN ROBERTO SANCHEZ HAS ADMITTED THAT 109 SOLDIERS, 
RESERVISTS, AND MILITIAMEN HAVE DIED IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS. 
OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS ADMIT ONLY A HANDFUL OF FATALITIES IN 
RECENT WEEKS. FOUR OF THESE WERE KILLED AT MUSAWS IN NORTH 
ZELAYA ON SEPTEMBER 29 DURING A BATTLE IN WHICH 24 CONTRAS 
REPORTEDLY DIED. THESE BELONGED TO THE 80-15 RESERVE BATTALION 
FROM MASAYA, STRENGTHENING THE PERCEPTION THAT RESERVE AND 
MILITIA UNITS RATHER THAN REGULAR SANDINISTA ARMY (EPA) UNITS 
BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE FIGHTING AGAINST THE CONTRAS.

7. THE FSLN USES THE PRESENCE OF THE CONTRAS AS A POWERFUL 
PROPAGANDA TOOL. GRN LEADERS CONSISTENTLY SEEK TO LINK CONTRAS 
WITH SOMOZA'S DESPISED NATIONAL GUARD. THE SANDINISTA PRESS 
GIVES EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY TO CONTRA ATTACKS, AND FUNERALS FOR 
SLAIN SANDINISTAS ARE ROUTINELY TURNED INTO POLITICIZED SPEC-
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TACLES. THE SANDINISTAS EMPHASIZE THE PURPORTED U.S. CONNECTION. THEY THEN APPEAL TO NICAARAGUAN PATRIOTISM AND NATIONALISM BY CALLING FOR UNITY IN THE FACE OF EXTERNAL AGGRESSION.

8. THE CONTRA ACTIVITY ADVERSELY AFFECTS THE SANDINISTAS IN SEVERAL WAYS. THE FACT THAT THE CONTRAS CONTINUE TO SURVIVE, AND IN FACT SEEM TO BE GROWING, DESPITE THE SANDINISTAS' BEST EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE THEM MUST BE UNSETTLING TO THE FSLN LEADERSHIP. WHILE THE CONTRAS DO NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO DISPLACE THE GRN, THEY ARE AN EVER-PRESENT RITANT WHICH EXERTS CONSTANT PRESSURES

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ON THE SANDINISTA SYSTEM. THE CONTRAS ALSO COMPEL THE GRN TO DIVERT AN INCREASING POSTION OF ITS MEAGER RESOURCES TO SECURITY. IN ADDITION, THEY SERVE TO PROVIDE ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE OPPONENTS OF THE REGIME WHO ARE CONVINCED THE SURVIVABILITY OF THE GRN IS AT RISK.

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