

SOVIET BLOC MILITARY EQUIPMENT
SUPPLIED TO NICARAGUA
(JUL 1979 - DEC 1988)

The Sandinista regime came to power with the overthrow of Anastasio Somoza in July 1979. In 1980, the Sandinistas began receiving military aid from the Soviet Bloc with a modest \$10 million dollars worth of aid received during that first year. Since then, the Sandinista government has received nearly 140,000 metric tons of military equipment with an estimated cumulative value of approximately \$2.7 billion U.S. dollars from Soviet bloc nations.

This Communist injection of military aid continued to pour into Nicaragua even during the Esquipulas II and Sapoa peace negotiations, when the Sandinistas were supposedly negotiating in good faith with their democratic Central American neighbors and internal opposition. This unceasing buildup has enabled the Sandinistas to field and equip the largest and most powerful armed force in Central America, a force which threatens the very peace and stability the Sandinistas claim to seek.

Since the signing of the Esquipulas II Agreement by the Presidents of the Central American democracies and Nicaragua in August of 1987, the Sandinistas have received some 21,000 metric tons of military aid valued at \$590 million U.S. dollars from the Soviet Bloc nations. Included in this influx of military supplies and equipment were such major items of equipment as air defense missiles, helicopters and trucks as well as other stocks of military consumables.

Since the Sapoa Agreement was signed (March 1988), approximately 15,000 metric tons/\$400 million U.S. dollars worth of Soviet Bloc military aid has passed into the Sandinista military inventory. The bulk of this cargo was military sustainability supplies such as vehicles, small arms, ammunition and spare parts, which permitted the Sandinistas to replenish their stocks and improve their military advantage over the other Central American nations, as well as the vastly outmanned and outgunned Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance.

Major items of military equipment provided to the Sandinista armed forces include:

152	Tanks
237	Other Armored Vehicles
549	Surface-to-Air Missile Launchers (Reloadable)
772	Air Defense Guns
370	Anti-Tank Guns
985	Artillery/Mortars/Rocket Launchers 13
62	Helicopters (includes 12 MI-25 HIND D "flying tanks" and 45 MI-8/17 HIP combat transports)

20	Fixed Wing Aircraft
6000	Trucks
8	Patrol Boats
8	Minesweepers
40	Radars
4	Communications Intercept Facilities
252,000	Rifles
4,300	Light Machine Guns
3,850	Grenade Launchers

The total Sandinista military force (120,000+ regulars, reserves, militia and security forces) is almost as large as the combined military forces of the four Central American democracies (131,840). The Sandinista active duty force (regulars plus mobilized reserves/militia) totals some 80,000, again the largest such military force in Central America (El Salvador/43,600; Guatemala/36,000; Honduras/17,250; Costa Rica/8,000 constabulary force only).

The following are known Communist state and/or anti-U.S. suppliers who have provided military and economic aid and assistance to the Sandinistas:

USSR	Bulgaria	Czechoslovakia
Cuba	Vietnam	East Germany
Poland	Romania	Peoples Republic of China
Libya	PLO	North Korea

There is a large contingent of foreign military and security advisors supporting the Sandinista military establishment, principally in the fields of combat arms, intelligence/internal security and supply/maintenance/logistics functions. The Cuban advisor effort (about 1000-1500) is the largest; the USSR provides 50-75 advisors with another 200+ coming from the combined efforts of the East Bloc nations and periodically from Third World sources such as North Korea.

SANDINISTA PORT FACILITIES

Soviet Bloc ship deliveries of military supplies and equipment to Nicaraguan ports have totaled 140,000 metric tons (estimated cumulative value \$2.7 billion U.S. dollars) since aid first began to arrive in 1980.

Annual data on Soviet and Bloc military aid shipped to Nicaraguan ports are given below.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Arms Shipments</u>	<u>Metric Tons (Thousand)</u>	<u>Estimated Value (Million US \$)</u>
1980	--	1.6	10
1981	2	9.4	160
1982	6	11.2	140
1983	25	13.9	250
1984	37	20.0	370
1985	35	19.4	250
1986	50	22.0	550
1987	60	22.0	500
1988	68	19.0	515

To date there have been no port calls by Soviet or Bloc combatant vessels to Nicaragua. Nevertheless, the possibility that the Soviets may have access to Nicaragua's ports is a troublesome possibility for U.S. defense planning.

There are no known submarine facilities existing or under construction in Nicaragua.

The principal Sandinista port facilities are Corinto, El Bluff and Rama.

Corinto

Corinto, located on the Pacific Ocean side of Nicaragua, can accommodate conventional merchant/cargo ships and roll-on/roll-off (RO/RO) vessels. The main pier is 380 meters long and the port can accommodate ships up to 20,000 dead weight tons. The port is large enough to allow the largest Soviet surface combatants (the KIEV-class V/STOL carrier) to dock. Corinto could also accommodate limited numbers of Soviet missile or attack submarines, together with submarine support ships.

El Bluff

El Bluff, located on the Atlantic/Caribbean side of Nicaragua, can accommodate limited numbers of cargo, tanker and RO/RO vessels. The Sandinistas are in the process of adding two new wharves of 180 and 200 meters in length. When complete, the port will be able to accommodate vessels of up to 25,000 dead

weight tons. Cargo handling facilities will include RO/RO ramps and liquid cargo handling equipment. The port can now accommodate limited numbers of Soviet frigates and smaller vessels, including patrol boats and intelligence collectors, but probably not submarines.

Rama

Rama, located up river from El Bluff, serves as the way station and distribution point for goods received at El Bluff destined for the interior of Nicaragua. Rama can accommodate cargo and RO/RO vessels and could accommodate Soviet frigates and smaller vessels, but not submarines.

SANDINISTA AIRFIELDS

The Sandinistas have seven principle airfields capable of supporting military operations by fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. The airfields and their runway lengths are:

<u>AIRFIELD</u>	<u>RUNWAY LENGTH (METERS)</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
Punta Huete	3,000+	runway completed; support facilities incomplete; currently used operationally
Sandino International	3,000+	civilian/military use
Bluefields	2,000-3,000	
Montelimar	2,000-3,000	
Puerto Cabezas	2,000-3,000	
La Rosita	1,000-2,000	under construction
Esteli	1,000-2,000	

In 1982, with Cuban assistance, the Sandinistas began constructing the Punta Huete airfield. The principal runway at Punta Huete is 10,000 feet in length. It can accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet inventory. Soviet reconnaissance planes flying out of Punta Huete would be able to fly missions along the U.S. Pacific Coast just as they now reconnoiter the U.S. Atlantic Coast from Cuba.

All Soviet tactical fighter-bombers, intermediate-range bombers and long-range bombers could use Nicaraguan airfields,

although some aircraft would be restricted to use of those airfields with runways over 2,000 meters (6,500 feet) in length.

No aircraft in the current Nicaraguan inventory is capable of flying combat missions against targets in the U.S. If introduced into Nicaragua, Soviet tactical fighter-bombers could attack targets in the Central American and Caribbean area, including the Panama Canal and the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic sea lanes (see Regional Maps). Soviet intermediate-range or long-range bombers operating from Nicaragua would threaten the continental United States, with the combat radius of the TU-95 Bear covering all of North America. The potential for Soviet military use of Nicaragua complicates U.S. defense planning. In a crisis situation the United States could be compelled to divert resources to counter such a possibility.

SOVIET AIRCRAFT CHARACTERISTICS:

<u>AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>COMBAT RADIUS (mi)</u>	<u>MAX PAYLOAD</u>	<u>NUCLEAR CAPABLE</u>
MIG-21 FISHBED	465	1,000 KG Bombs	Y
MIG-23 FLOGGER	750	3,000 KG Bombs	Y
MIG-27 FLOGGER	375	3,000 KG Bombs	Y
MIG-31 FOXHOUND	1300	8 X Air-to-Air Missiles	N
SU-17 FITTER	340	3,000 KG Bombs	Y
SU-24 FENCER	800	3,000 KG Bombs	Y
SU-25 FROGFOOT	186	2,000 KG Bombs	N
TU-16 BADGER	1925	9,000 KG Bombs, Air-to-Surface Missiles	Y
TU-22 BACKFIRE	2500	12,000 KG Bombs, ASM	Y
TU-95 BEAR	5150	12,000 KG Bombs, ASM	Y
TU-95 BEAR H	5150	Cruise Missiles	Y

Note: The MIG-21 and MIG-23 are currently in the Cuban arsenal. To date, there are none in Nicaragua.

SANDINISTA RADAR AND COMMUNICATIONS INTERCEPT FACILITIES

With Soviet and Cuban assistance, the Sandinistas have developed an extensive military radar system. Fixed facilities, together with mobile systems, provide radar coverage over most of Nicaragua. The Sandinistas can monitor aircraft movements far off their coasts and deep into Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica. The Sandinista radar system provides them with surveillance, early warning, target acquisition and ground-control intercept capabilities. There is no other comparable radar system anywhere in the region.

In like manner, the Sandinistas have also acquired four communications intercept facilities from the Soviets, the first being established at Santa Maria, near Managua, in 1982. Other intercept sites are located at Puerto Cabezas, San Francisco, and Santa Rosa.

NICARAGUA - THE MILITARY BUILDUP, AUGUST 1979 TO 1 JANUARY 1989 (U)

EARLY MILITARY SUPPLY ACTIVITY

STATUS OF FORCES

	No. Arms Shipments/ Thousands Metric Tons	Million U.S. Dollars	As Of	Total Force*	Tanks	Other Armored Vehicles**	Fixed-Wing Aircraft/ Helicopters**	Airfields	ADA Guns/ Msl Lchrs	Radars
			19 Jul 79	6,000	3	31	30/8	4	2/0	0
	-/-	-	1 Jan 80	16,000	3	31	38/8	4	2/0	0
	-/1.6	10	1 Jan 81	24,000	3	25	40/8	4	39/6	0
	2/9.4	160	1 Jan 82	39,000	30	45	40/10	4	100/6	0
	6/11.2	140	1 Jan 83	41,000	50	45	40/15	4	150/30	0
	25/13.9	250	1 Jan 84	46,000	50	90	44/15	4	150/30	Some
	37/20	370	1 Jan 85	67,000	150	200	45/20	5	200/300	Some
	35/19.4	250	1 Jan 86	74,850	150	199	45/25	5	200/300	Some
	50/22	550	1 Jan 87	74,350	150	220	44/57	5	300/300	4 Sites
	60/22	500	1 Jan 88	80,000	150	250	35/52	6	400+/400+	Numerous
***	68/19	515	1 Jan 89	80,000	150	250	32/50	6	700+/500+†	Numerous

*Live duty and mobilized militia/reserves. Figures since 1 January 1985 have been revised upward to reflect newly declassified figures. Losses (combat and otherwise) may result in no net gain or a lower figure than prior year estimates.

**1988 preliminary estimate. Dollar values for prior years have been adjusted to reflect new data.

†Increase in 1988 ADA Guns/Msl Lchrs is based on EPS weapons inventory listings from Nicaraguan defector Major Roger Miranda. Most of increase is for smaller caliber AA guns never previously verified, which were delivered to Nicaragua during the early 1980's.

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