

EXCISE

1247

TEXT OF TELEGRAM 82MANAGU004943

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO	OCT-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	INR-10	SS-10	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	H-01	NSC-01	NSAE-00	SY-06	HA-08	L-03	TRSE-00
	PM-09	PA-01	MCT-02	ACDA-12	USIE-00	SP-02	SPRS-01

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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

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 4943

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 OF 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 ARMEC 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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REVIEWED by ARK DATE 3/5/81

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REVIEWED by Appeals Review Panel DATE JUN 26 1990

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~~S~~SANDINISTA FORCES OR WERE DETECTED AND REPELLED BY BORDER UNITS. ON SOME OCCASIONS, CONTRAS SITUATED INSIDE HONDURAS ALLEGEDLY FIRED 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. |

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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 SCORES 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 HAPHAARD 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 MUSAWAS 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 (EPS) 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-

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'S BEST EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE THEM MUST BE UNSETTLING TO THE FSLN LEADERSHIP. WHILE THE CONTRAS DO NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO DISPLACE THE GR, THEY ARE AN EVER-PRESENT IRRITANT WHICH EXERTS CONSTANT PRESSURES

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ON THE SANDINISTA SYSTEM. THE CONTRAS ALSO COMPEL THE GRN TO DIVERT AN INCREASING PORTION 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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