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THE SOVIET-CUBAN CONNECTION in CENTRAL AMERICA and the CARIBBEAN

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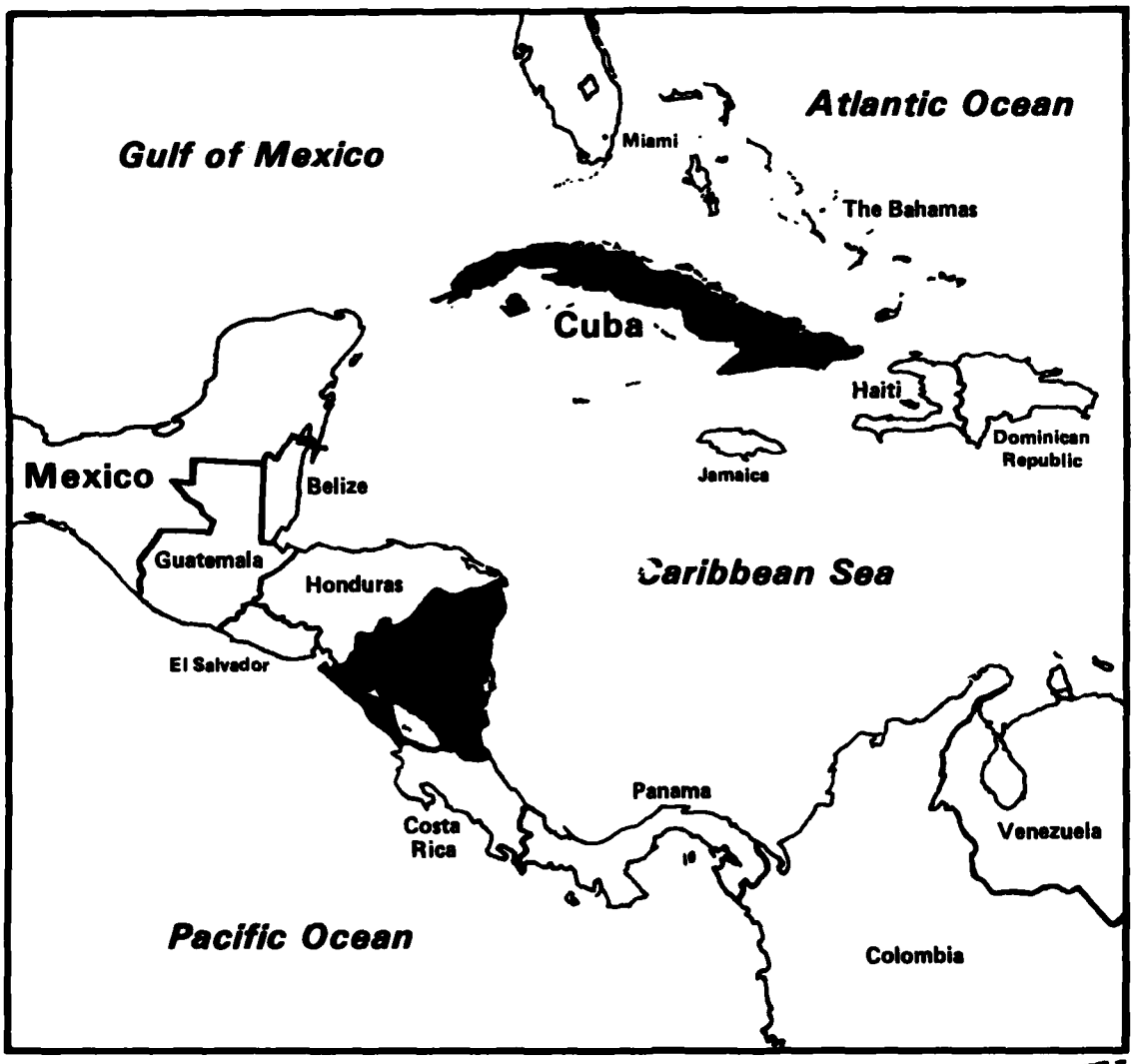
THE SOVIET-CUBAN CONNECTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



2ND PRINTING
APRIL 1985

DTIC
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MAY 28 1985
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Original contains color plates: All DTIC reproductions will be in black and white

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Justification
GPO# 2.25
By
Distribution/
Availability Codes
Dist | Avail and/or Special
A1 | 24

Stock #008-000-00419-6
Price: $2.25

STOCK No. 008-000-00419-6

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402

We Americans should be proud of what we're trying to do in Central America, and proud of what, together with our friends, we can do in Central America, to support democracy, human rights, and economic growth, while preserving peace so close to home. Let us show the world that we want no hostile, communist colonies here in the Americas: South, Central, or North.

RONALD REAGAN
May 1984

This booklet provides information about Soviet and Cuban military power and intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. The threats resulting from this factor are as much a part of the region's crisis as are better known indigenous and historic factors.

United States policy in the area is based on four mutually supportive elements that are being pursued simultaneously:

- To assist in the development of democratic institutions and to encourage creation of representative governments accountable to their citizens.

- To address on an urgent basis the economic and social problems of the region by providing economic assistance to stimulate growth, create opportunity, and improve the quality of life of the people.

- To provide security assistance to enable the countries to defend themselves against Soviet-bloc, Cuban, and Nicaraguan supported insurgents and terrorists intent on establishing Marxist-Leninist dictatorships.

- To promote peaceful solutions through negotiation and dialogue among the countries of the region and among political groups within each country.

This policy is working. Democracy is now emerging as the rule, not the exception. Five of the six countries in Central America have conducted elections widely judged free and fair. Only in Nicaragua did people go to the polls with no real choice, due to Sandinista harassment of the democratic opposition.

Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Soviet Union are the principal threats to democracy in Central America. In El Salvador, the guerrillas are fighting the reforms of President Jose Napoleon Duarte and his elected government with arms channeled through Nicaragua with the active support of the Sandinistas. Since 1979, guerrilla actions have cost the Salvadoran people endless suffering and their economy more than $1 billion. The goal of the guerrillas, acting in concert with Havana and Managua, is to establish a Marxist-Leninist government in El Salvador.

Marxist-Leninists promise freedom, national development, and a classless society. In reality, they deliver repressive governments that are unable to produce economically, but are ever ready to give assistance to foreign groups trying to seize power in other countries. Castro's Cuba has been the prime example of this form of government in the Western Hemisphere. Sandinista Nicaragua is following the Cuban example. Grenada was on the same path until October 1983.

Soviet interest in exploiting the economic, political, and social problems of Central America and the Caribbean is evident in a document found by U.S.-Caribbean security forces during the Grenada rescue mission. In a 15 April 1983 meeting with Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko was quoted as describing the region as "boiling like a cauldron" and saw Cuba and Nicaragua as "living examples for countries in that part of the world." Cautious opportunism was evident in Gromyko's words, advising Bishop that "imperialism" should not be "agitated," to avoid alerting the United States prematurely. At the same time he urged Grenada to continue revolutionary operations in the region.[1]

Over the last five years, the Soviet Union has sought to exploit this "boiling cauldron" by providing more military assistance to Cuba and Nicaragua

than the United States has provided to all of Latin America. The Sandinista military buildup began in 1980, two years before there was any significant armed opposition to the Managua regime. From July 1979 through April 1981, the United States was providing generous economic assistance to Nicaragua ($118 million) and providing only small amounts of military assistance to Nicaragua's neighbors. Subsequent increases in U.S. military assistance to these neighboring countries has been a direct reaction to the military build-up and support for guerrillas undertaken by Nicaragua, Cuba, and the Soviet bloc.[2]

The Soviet Union sees in the region an excellent and low-cost opportunity to preoccupy the United States—the "main adversary" of Soviet strategy—thus gaining greater global freedom of action for the USSR. While the Soviets are not likely to mount a direct military challenge to the United States in the Caribbean Basin, they are attempting to foment as much unrest as possible in an area that is the strategic crossroads of the Western Hemisphere. Working through its key proxy in the region, Cuba, the Soviet Union hopes to force the United States to divert attention and military resources to an area that has not been a serious security concern to the United States in the past.

President Reagan outlined the challenge faced by the United States in his 9 May 1984 televised speech to the nation:

> As the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, chaired by Henry Kissinger, agreed, if we do nothing or if we continue to provide too little help, our choice will be a Communist Central America with additional Communist military bases on the mainland of this hemisphere, and Communist subversion spreading southward and northward. This Communist subversion poses the threat that 100 million people from Panama to the open border on our south could come under the control of pro-Soviet regimes.
>
> If we come to our senses too late, when our vital interests are even more directly threatened, and after a lack of American support causes our friends to lose the ability to defend themselves, then the risks to our security and our way of life will be infinitely greater.

CUBA: THE KEY SOVIET PROXY

The 1959 revolution carried out by Fidel Castro and his 26th of July Movement has been of inestimable value to the Soviet Union. The first proof that the USSR understood the strategic advantages it could gain from Cuba came in the early 1960s. At that time, the USSR lagged behind the United States in long-range nuclear systems, and in 1962, the opportunistic Soviets secretly introduced medium- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Cuba. Had they succeeded in keeping the missiles in Cuba, the Soviets would have controlled a nuclear base only 90 miles from the Florida coast.

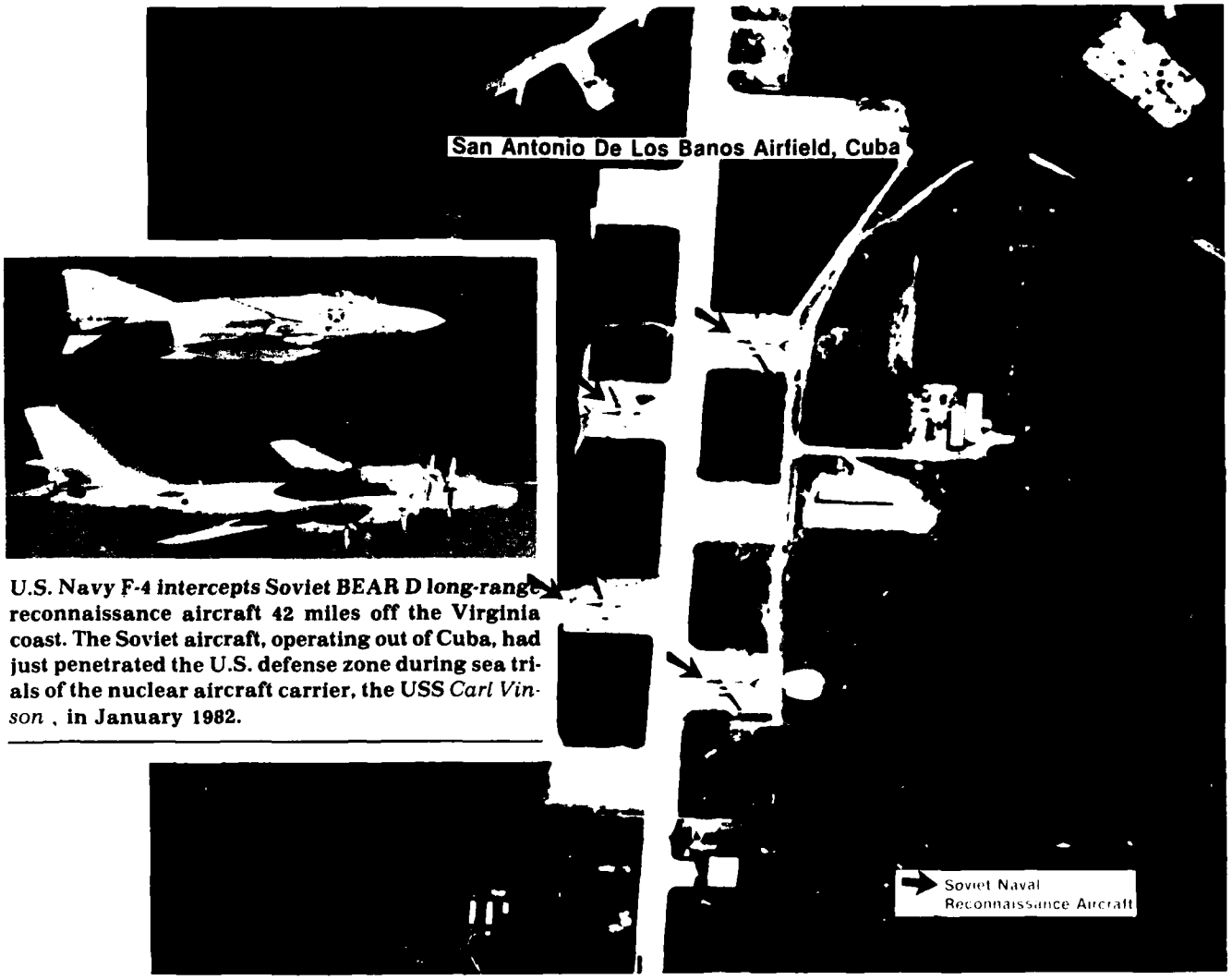
The Soviets now have in Cuba 7,000 civilian advisers, a 2,800-man combat brigade, another 2,800 military advisers, plus about 2,100 technicians at the Lourdes electronic intelligence facility. Since 1969, the Soviet navy has deployed task forces to Cuba and the Caribbean 24 times. Soviet long-range naval reconnaissance aircraft are also deployed to Cuba. From there, they operate along the U.S. East Coast and in the Caribbean, shadowing carrier battle groups and spying on other U.S. military forces and installations. The Soviets also use Cuba as a stopover point for reconnaissance aircraft enroute to Angola.

To protect their military investment in Cuba, the Soviets are making a sizeable economic investment as well. Each year the Soviets provide more than $4 billion to the Cuban economy. During the last four years alone, they have given the Cubans almost $3 billion in military aid. In fact, since the early 1960s, Cuba has not paid for any of the military assistance it has received from the Kremlin.

This substantial investment in Cuba gives the Soviet Union both military and intelligence capabilities in an area that is a lifeline for the U.S. economy. The Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico maritime routes carry about 55% of imported petroleum to the U.S., as well as approximately 45% of all U.S. seaborne trade. Furthermore, in any NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation, more than half of all NATO resupply would be shipped from Gulf ports and would have to pass by Cuba.

Cuba's strategic location makes it an ideal site for an intelligence facility directed against the United States. The Soviet Union established such a site at Lourdes near Havana in the mid-1960s. Lourdes today is the most sophisticated Soviet collection facility

Soviet naval combatants in Caribbean waters during their March-April 1984 deployment. Since 1969, the Soviet navy has deployed task forces 24 times to participate in training exercises with the Cuban navy and to establish a periodic naval presence in the Caribbean.



U.S. Navy F-4 intercepts Soviet BEAR D long-range reconnaissance aircraft 42 miles off the Virginia coast. The Soviet aircraft, operating out of Cuba, had just penetrated the U.S. defense zone during sea trials of the nuclear aircraft carrier, the USS *Carl Vinson*, in January 1982.

Soviet naval long-range reconnaissance aircraft deployed to Cuba. These aircraft collect intelligence on U.S. military installations on the East Coast and U.S. naval activities in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

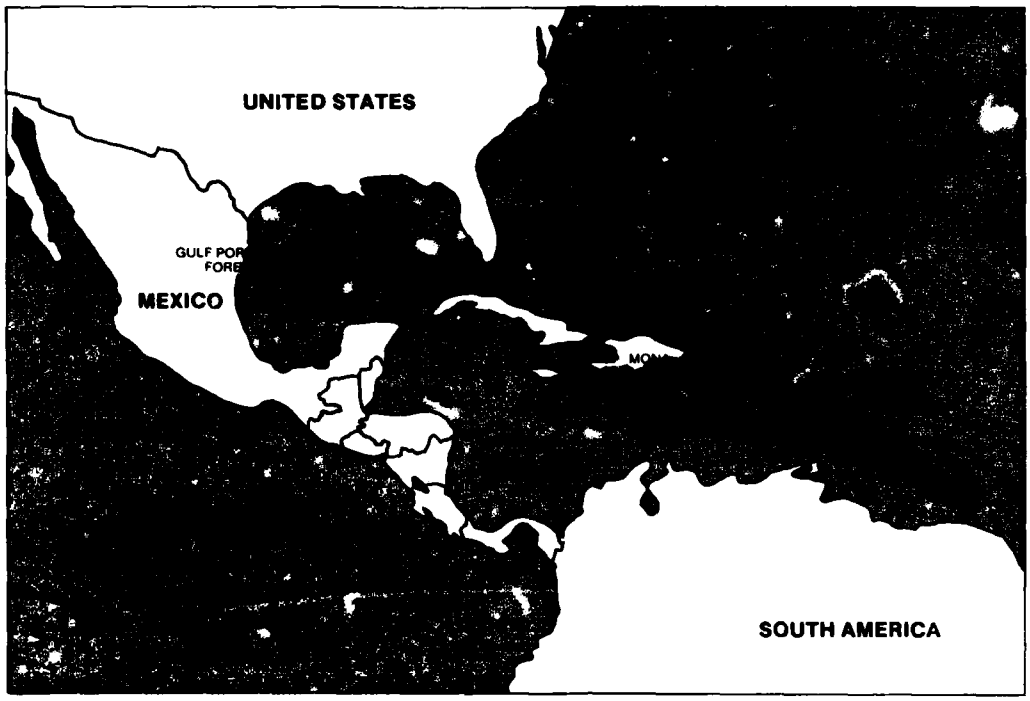
outside the Soviet Union itself. From this key listening post, the Soviets monitor U.S. commercial satellites, U.S. military and merchant shipping communications, and NASA space program activities at Cape Canaveral. Lourdes also enables the Soviets to eavesdrop on telephone conversations in the United States.

It is no surprise that a 1983 article in *Forbes* asked, "Why do the Russians pump $4 billion to $5 billion a year into Cuba's collapsing economy? Because they know it is their best buy when it comes to making trouble for the U.S. For less than the annual cost of supporting a single aircraft carrier task force, the Soviet Union has developed a wondrous weapon."[3]

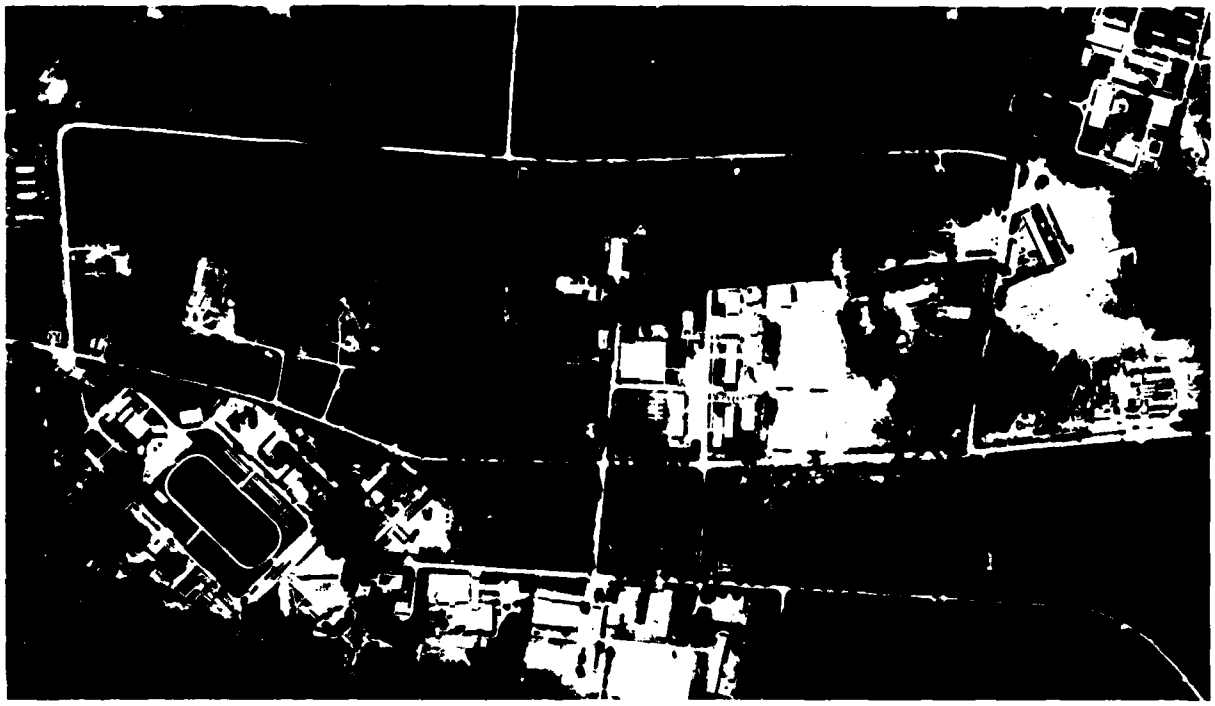
Castro and Communism

It is sometimes asserted that Fidel Castro took Cuba into the Soviet orbit because the United States turned a cold shoulder to his 1959 revolution. This is a double distortion.

The United States was ready to discuss foreign aid with Castro's government. In April 1959, when Fidel Castro made his first visit to the United States, he privately forbade his economic minister to consent to even preliminary discussions with the United States on the topic of economic aid.[4] During a TV interview in Spain in January 1984, Castro confirmed that U.S. hostility was not a major factor in his deci-



The Caribbean sea lanes are viewed by the Soviets as the "strategic rear" of the United States.



Soviet intelligence collection facility at Lourdes near Havana, Cuba. This listening post enables the Soviets to monitor sensitive U.S. maritime, military, and space communications, as well as telephone conversations in the United States.

Cuban President Fidel Castro, after 26 years, is still committed to violent revolution and a close alignment with the Soviet Union.

sion to take Cuba into the Soviet camp, adding that "inexorably, we considered ourselves to be Marxist-Leninists."[5]

During the first years of Sandinista rule in Nicaragua, Castro advised the Sandinistas to hide their adherence to Marxism-Leninism. This is the same pattern that Castro had followed in Cuba. To obtain and hold the support of moderates in Cuba and abroad, Castro portrayed himself as a democrat while the struggle against Batista was underway. After his own dictatorship was firmly established, Castro changed his tune. In a 2 December 1961 speech, he told the Cuban people that he had been an "apprentice Marxist-Leninist" for years, that he had disguised his true political beliefs, and that he would remain a Marxist-Leninist until he died.[6] In a May 1977 interview with Barbara Walters of ABC television, Castro said that he had made the decision to become a communist while he was a student in law school in the late 1940s.[7]

A Garrison State

Under Soviet tutelage, Cuba's armed forces have expanded steadily. They now include 160,000 active duty military personnel, plus up to 135,000 well-trained and experienced reservists who can be mobilized in two to three days. This total force exceeds that of the active duty armed forces of Brazil, a country with 13 times Cuba's population. Through its operations in Africa over the past decade, Cuba has gained more extensive and more recent foreign combat experience than any other country in the Western Hemisphere.

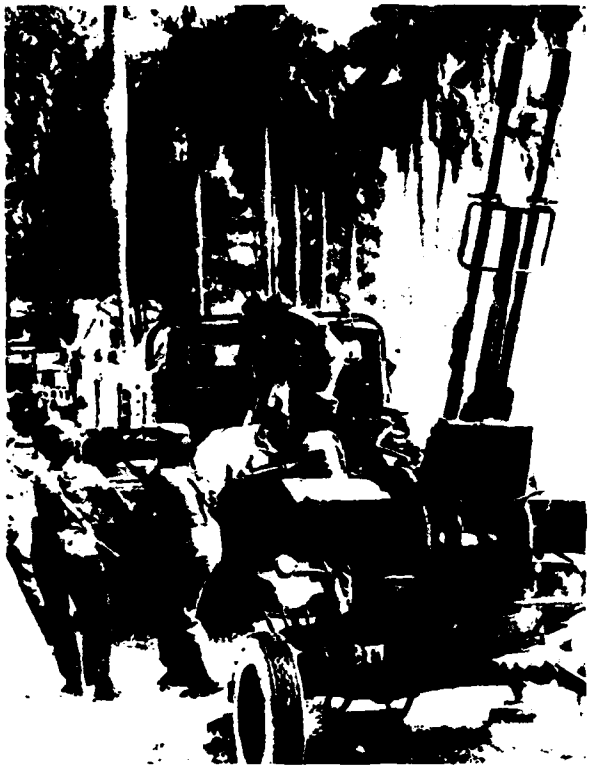
Cuba has more than 950 tanks and more than 200 jet fighters, principally the MiG-21 but also the MiG-23, a front-line fighter of the Soviet Union's air force. In addition, the Soviets have given Cuba an improved naval capability with frigates, submarines, and missile/torpedo firing patrol boats. The Cuban air force and civil air fleet could transport at least 15,000 combat soldiers anywhere in the Caribbean Basin within two to three weeks. Important elements of this force could be in place within a few hours. No single country in the basin, except the United States, has the means to repel such an attack without external assistance.

Cuba has developed the capability, through the recent addition of two amphibious landing ships, together with smaller amphibious craft of the Cuban navy, of placing an initial assault force of about 1,000 men, with either tanks or artillery support, on nearby island nations. The Cuban merchant marine could transport personnel to any country in the Caribbean area as well. This ability, sharpened by extensive training exercises in recent years, is an ominous threat to Cuba's small island neighbors.

The capability of Cuban MiG-23s to support operations throughout the Caribbean cannot be overlooked. These planes have the range to attack targets in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, including key oil fields and refineries. Its operations in Africa, especially those in Angola and Ethiopia, have shown that Cuba can project its military power over great distances.

The Soviet-made MiG-21 shown here, along with the even more advanced MiG-23, give Cuba the most powerful air force in the Caribbean region.

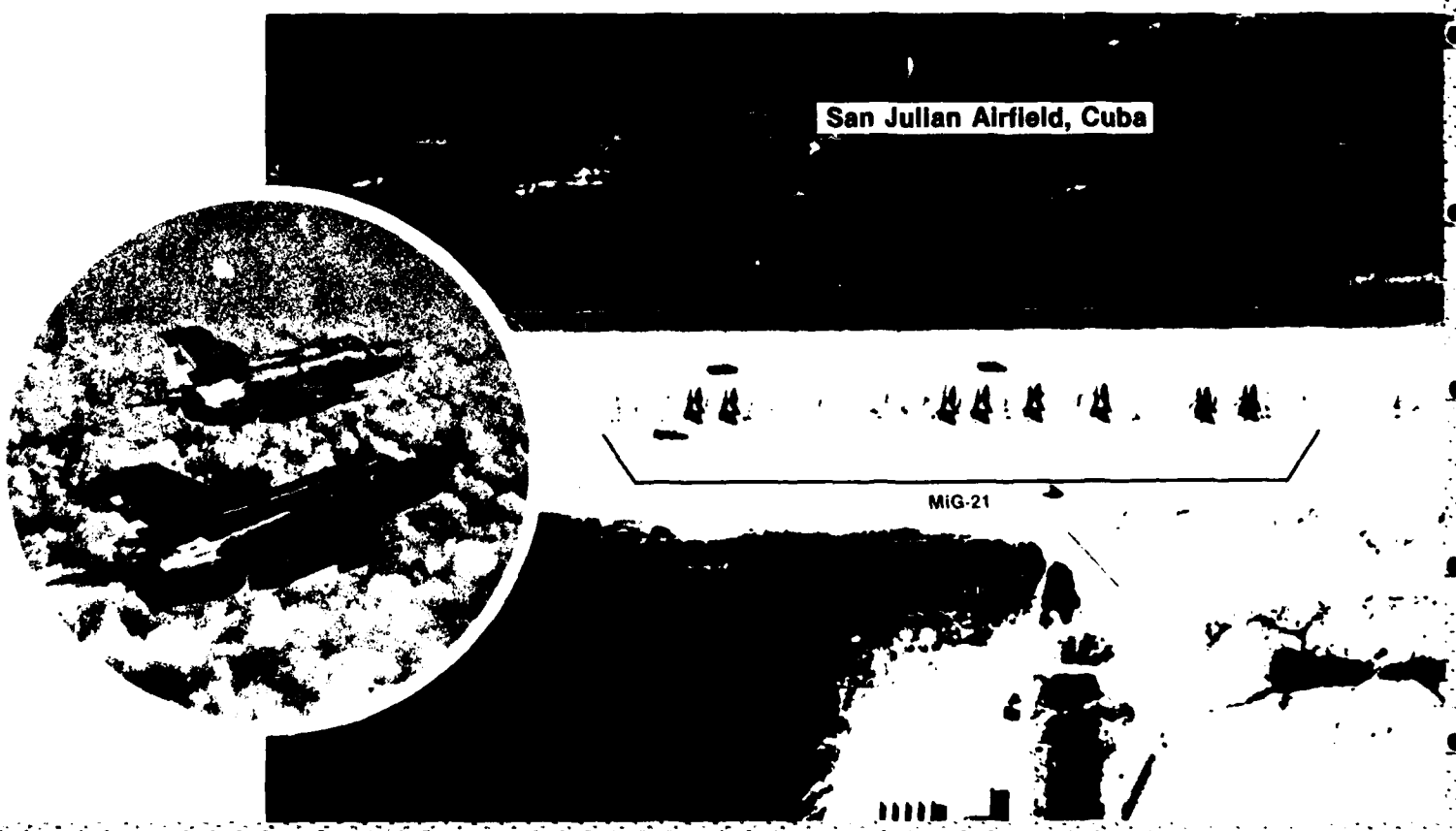
Practically Every Member of Society Is Required To Undergo Military Training in Castro's Cuba.



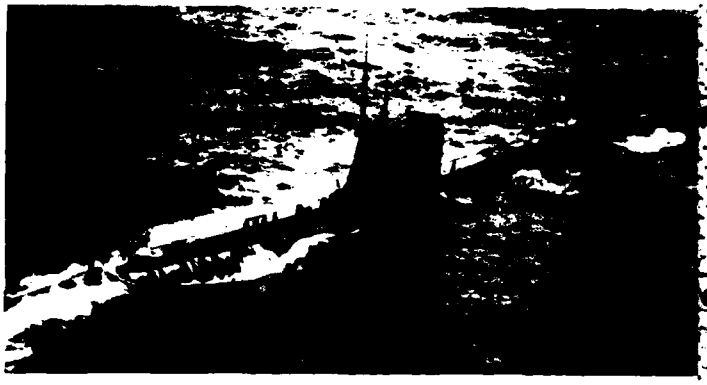
Members of the Cuban Women's Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment demonstrate their skills.

Cuban children training with Soviet-supplied AK-47 assault rifles.

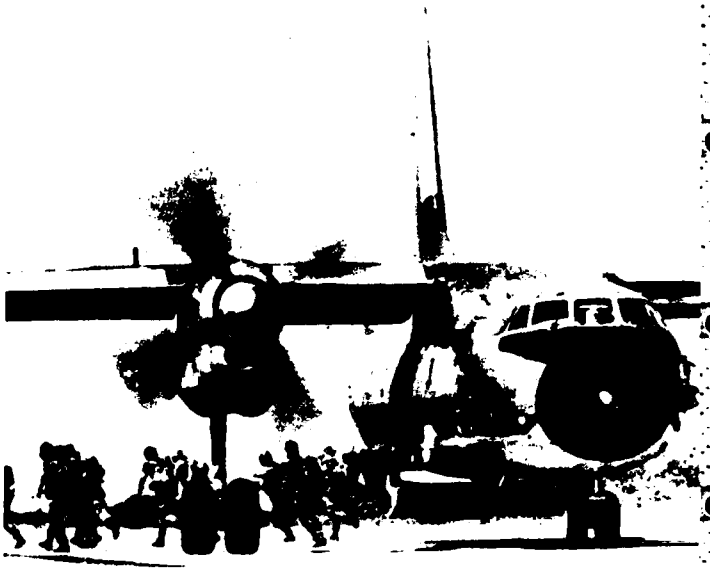
The caption for this photograph, taken from the Cuban magazine *Verde Olivo*, reads, "The activities of SEPMI ensure that the new generation learns, among other things, to shoot, and shoot well!!" SEPMI is the patriotic military education society that promotes military activities among Cuban children.



Cuban troops carry out amphibious landings in training exercise.



One of the three FOXTROT-Class submarines supplied to Cuba by the Soviet Union.

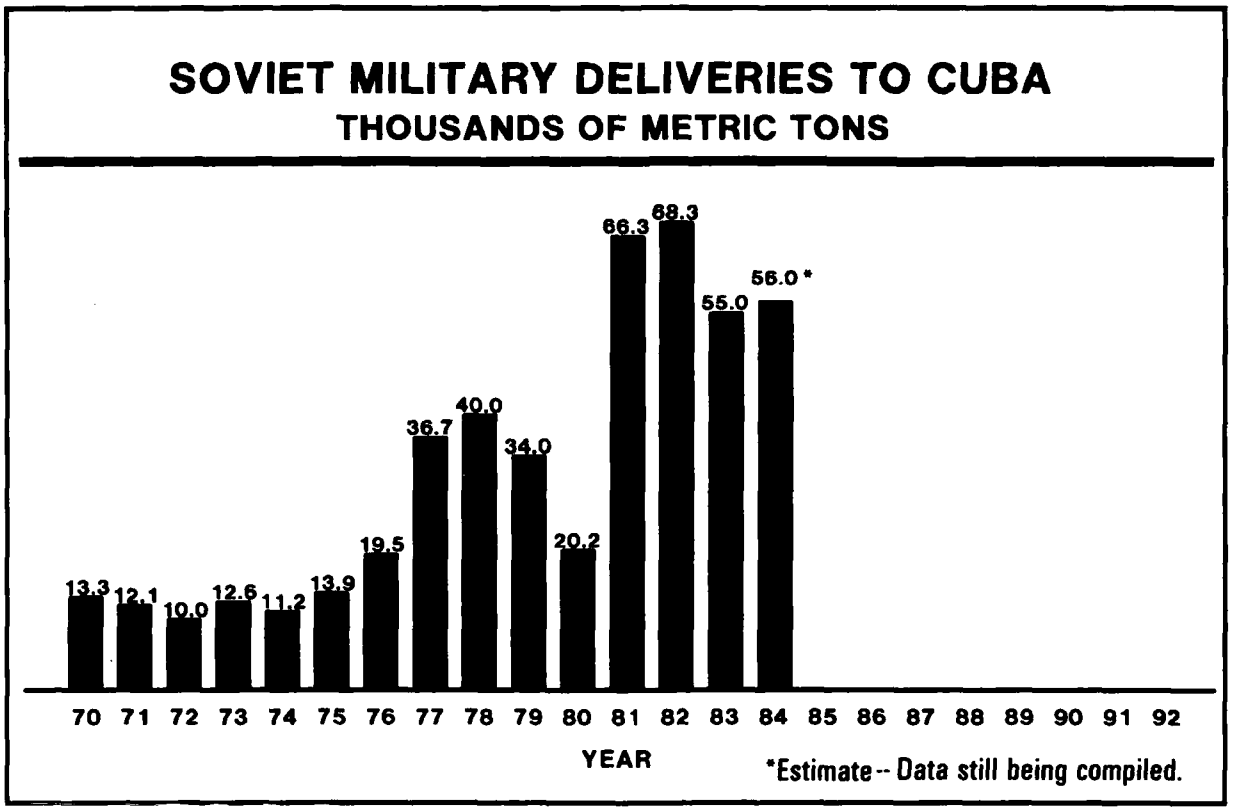


Cuban commandos deploying from a Soviet-built Cuban air force AN-26 transport plane during training exercises.

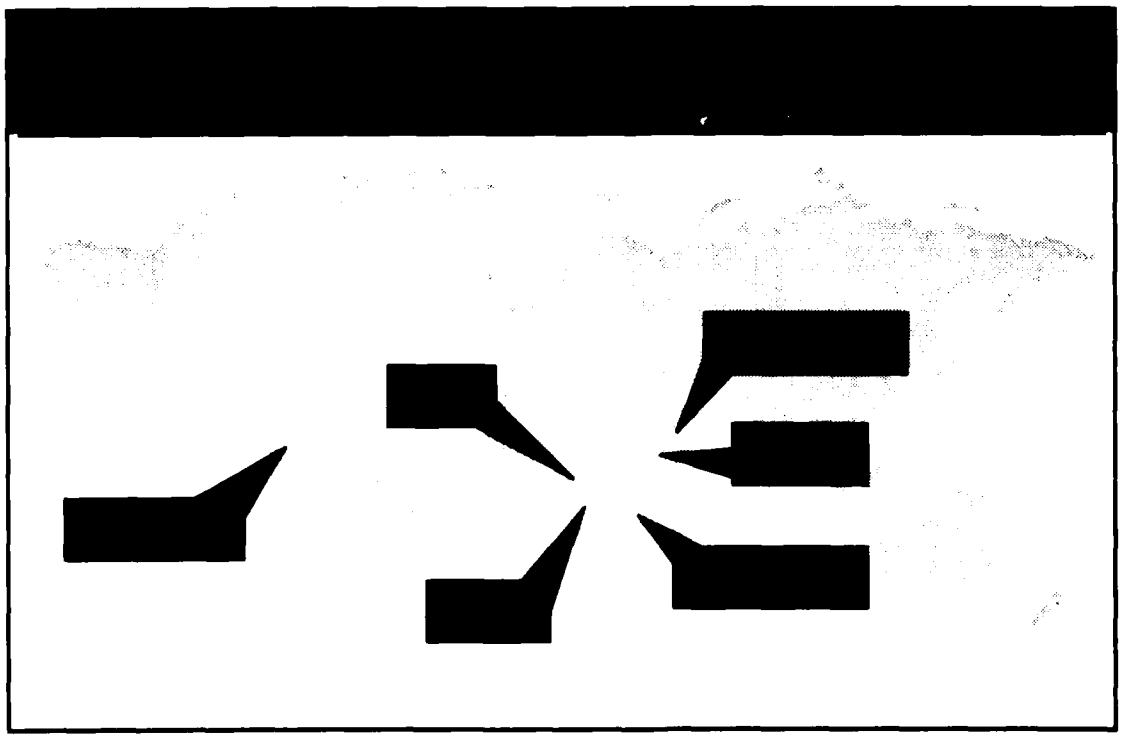
One more submarine, one more plane, one more ship at a time may not seem important. However, by gradually increasing every aspect of its military power, Cuba has made itself a potential military threat to its Caribbean and Central American neighbors.

A Strong Supporter of Communist Expansion

There are now about five times as many Cuban soldiers in Africa alone as there were in the Cuban armed forces that Castro defeated in coming to power in 1959. Ten years after Cuban troops first arrived there, Castro still has a force of 30,000 soldiers in Angola. Since 1975, Castro has sent military forces and/or advisers to Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Yemen, Congo, Ghana, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, as well as Grenada and Nicaragua. Although the propaganda focus is on such ideals as "socialist solidarity," Castro is known to charge many of these countries for Cuban troops, "construction workers," and other "internationalists," draining scarce foreign exchange from local economies. According to reliable sources, recipient governments must pay Cuba a fixed sum per month for each Cuban soldier and each civilian technician. Thus, Castro is



The tonnage of Soviet military deliveries to Cuba in each of the last four years has been greater than in any year since the 1962 missile crisis.



simultaneously playing the world revolutionary role he has always desired, supporting Soviet foreign policy goals, and acquiring hard currency.

Cuba needs the money it gains from foreign ventures. The state-controlled economy of Cuba has shown little growth in the 26 years Castro has been in power. It has become heavily dependent on the Soviet Union. As Hugh Thomas, the noted British historian of Cuba, has written:

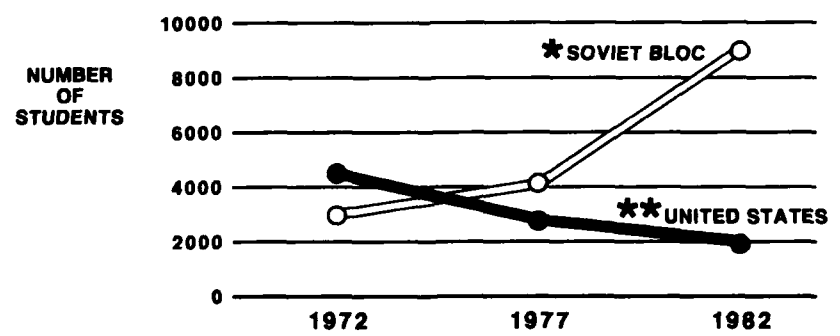
> The Revolution has preserved, even heightened, the extent to which the country depends on one crop [sugar]. For that reason, if no other, Cuba's foreign policy is as dependent on the Russians as it used to be on the U.S. Most of the Russo-Cuba commerce concerns sugar which Russia buys at a price formally about three-times higher than present world market prices.[8]

Castro's assistance is indispensable for guerrilla movements in Latin America. Since the early 1960s, Cuba has attracted guerrillas from virtually every country in the region. Castro has given logistical and financial support to thousands of these guerrillas as well as providing them military training, usually in courses lasting three to six months. The alumni of Castro's guerrilla training range from most of Nicaragua's current Sandinista leadership to the demolition experts sabotaging the economy of El Salvador. A 1981 State Department analysis of Cuba's support for violence in Latin America showed the extent of Castro's efforts to train and supply urban and rural terrorists.[9]

Cuban and Soviet efforts to gain influence are not limited to the military realm. One of their goals is to shape the political attitudes of foreign students who are provided scholarships. Since the mid-1970s, more than 20,000 students—pre-school through university—have studied at Cuba's Isle of Youth educational complex. Students have come from several countries, principally Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, and Nicaragua. In addition to this Cuban effort, the Soviets and their Eastern European allies are providing thousands of government-sponsored scholarships specifically to Latin American and Caribbean students.[10]

The Soviet Union and Cuba have worked effectively toward the objective of establishing additional Marxist-Leninist regimes in Central America and the Caribbean. Although Castro has become more calculating in his export of violence and exploitation of poverty, his aims remain as they were in the 1960s. He publicly proclaimed in the 1976 constitution Cuba's right and duty to support revolutionary and national liberation movements. For its part, the Soviet Union has intensified its efforts to create chaos or conflict near the United States to divert U.S. attention and resources from Soviet challenges in other critical areas of the world.

U.S. AND SOVIET BLOC GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED EXCHANGES, LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN, BY NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND YEAR



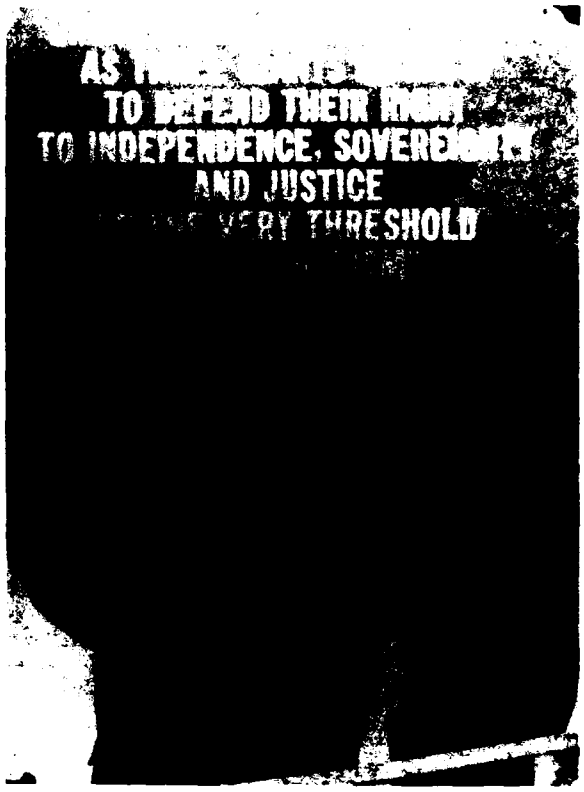
* EXCLUDES CUBA

** THIS GRAPH DOES NOT INCLUDE THE LARGE NUMBER OF NON-GOVERNMENT SPONSORED STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE UNITED STATES

GRENADA: A FAILED REVOLUTION

Grenada turned toward the Cubans and the Soviet bloc in 1979 when Maurice Bishop led a coup to depose the unpopular prime minister, Eric Gairy. Contrary to Bishop's promise that his revolution would modernize the economy, improve living standards, and promote democracy, life in Grenada deteriorated steadily during his four-year regime, 1979-1983. Bishop secretly planned to impose a single-party dictatorship while promising a pluralistic democracy. The Soviets and Cubans were party to the entire deception.[11]

A basic objective of Bishop was to consolidate power in his New Jewel Movement. The NJM was organized along classic Marxist-Leninist lines, with power concentrated in a single leader and exercised through a small central committee and political bureau. Bishop called his regime the People's Revolutionary Government and established close ties with the Soviet Union and Cuba and, to a lesser extent, Libya, North Korea, and Vietnam.



This poster, distributed by the New Jewel Movement (NJM), exemplified Grenada's close ties with Cuba and Nicaragua. Left to right: Daniel Ortega, Maurice Bishop, Fidel Castro.

Grenada Followed Cuba's Model

Following Castro's strategy, the NJM first established a broad coalition. It was led by the radical left, but it also included non-communist elements. "This was done," Bishop explained in his 13 September 1982 "Line of March" speech, "so imperialism won't get too excited."[12] Later, he removed the moderates from government, as Castro had done 20 years before in Cuba. Elections were never held. Opposition was dealt with firmly, often through imprisonment. The media was controlled. Church leaders were denied access to radio since they were seen as a principal impediment to the goals of the NJM.

As in Cuba, Bishop adopted the control and surveillance measures normally found in totalitarian regimes. The Ministry of the Interior kept Western diplomats, businessmen, and local opposition groups under surveillance. The right to privacy of Grenadians and foreigners was routinely violated. Telephones were tapped and mail intercepted as were personal records and private bank accounts. The People's Revolutionary Army was given police functions, conducting searches and detaining suspects without warrants. Human rights violations included torture, beatings, imprisonment, and psychological intimidation. Opposition political parties were forced to disband or go underground. Some opposition

NJM photo of political indoctrination of young Grenadians.

NJM political meeting. In background are portraits of (left to right) Maurice Bishop, Daniel Ortega, and Fidel Castro. (NJM photo)

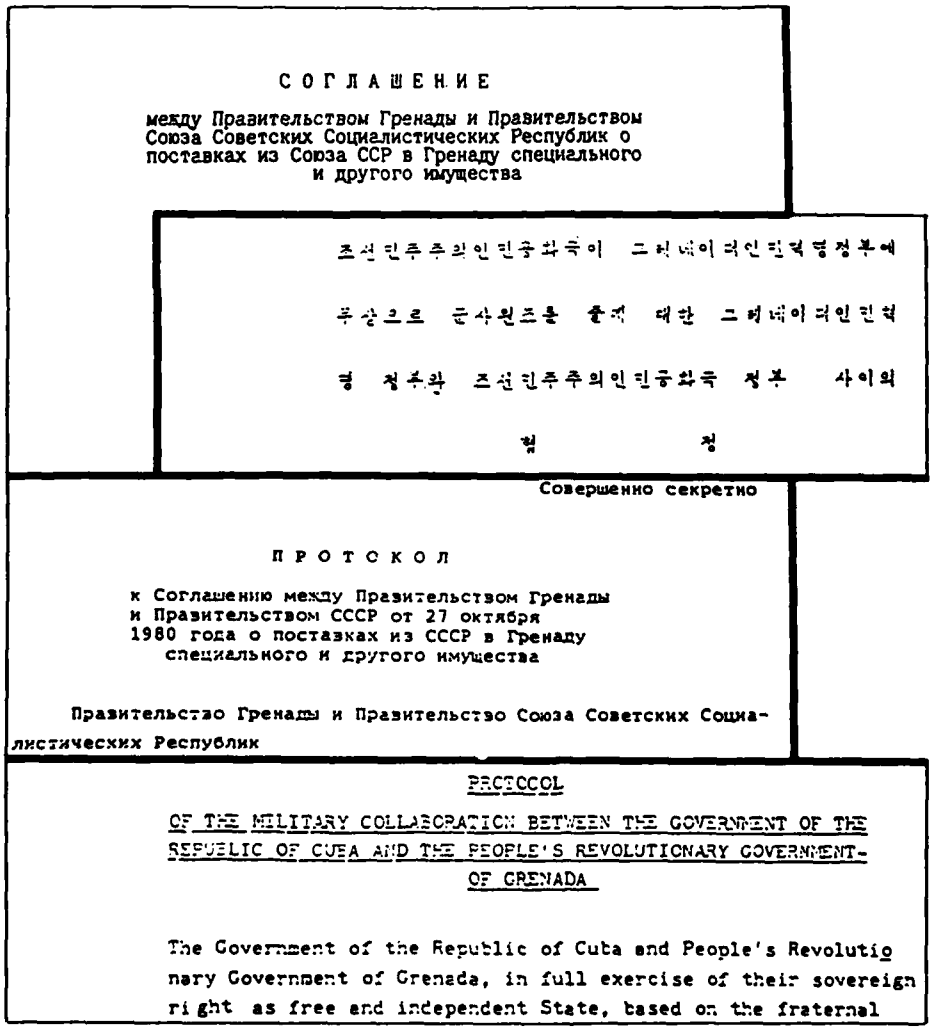
leaders left. Independent churches were seen as a threat. The so-called "People's Laws" gave Bishop and his top lieutenants nearly unlimited power. An important step in assuring Bishop and the NJM total control was a propaganda and indoctrination campaign. Children and adults were required to attend political orientation classes. Ideological training was given to virtually all Grenadians, with the army a special target. In many respects, Bishop was repeating the steps taken by Castro in consolidating power in the early 1960s.

The Soviet-Grenadian Connection

Cubans and Soviets were key actors in Bishop's Grenada, but the extent of Soviet-Grenadian relations after the 1979 coup was not made known until after the Bishop visit to Moscow in July 1982, and even then key details were kept from the public. Among the 35,000 pounds of documents collected in October 1983 were five secret military agreements signed by Grenada—three with the Soviet Union, one with Cuba, and one with North Korea.

The Soviet Union used Cuba to funnel military, economic, and technical assistance to Grenada. This included Soviet and Cuban material and equipment to build the Point Salines airport. This airport, ostensibly for civilian use, was built primarily by armed Cubans, despite the high unemployment on the island of Grenada. The Point Salines airport project was a key issue for Maurice Bishop in his 15 April 1983 meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. Bishop's "Outline of Presentation" for this meeting emphasized the economic benefits of the project, but also included the revealing phrase, "There is also the strategic factor which is well known!!"[13]

Once completed, Point Salines could have provided a stopover point for Cuban flights to Africa, an additional facility for Soviet long-range reconnaissance aircraft, and possibly a transshipment point for arms and supplies for Latin American insurgents and for the Sandinistas. Had the Point Salines airport been operational in April 1983, for example, the Libyan aircraft detained in Brazil, while clandestinely ferrying a cargo of military supplies to Nicaragua, could have refueled in Grenada instead of in Brazil.



СОГЛАШЕНИЕ

между Правительством Гренады и Правительством Союза Советских Социалистических Республик о поставках из Союза ССР в Гренаду специального и другого имущества

조선민주주의인민공화국이 그레나다인민혁명정부에 주상으로 군사원조를 줄 데 대한 그레나다인민혁명 정부와 조선민주주의인민공화국 정부 사이의 협 정

Совершенно секретно

ПРОТОКОЛ

к Соглашению между Правительством Гренады и Правительством СССР от 27 октября 1980 года о поставках из СССР в Гренаду специального и другого имущества

Правительство Гренады и Правительство Союза Советских Социалистических Республик

PROTOCOL

OF THE MILITARY COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA AND THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA

The Government of the Republic of Cuba and People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada, in full exercise of their sovereign right as free and independent State, based on the fraternal

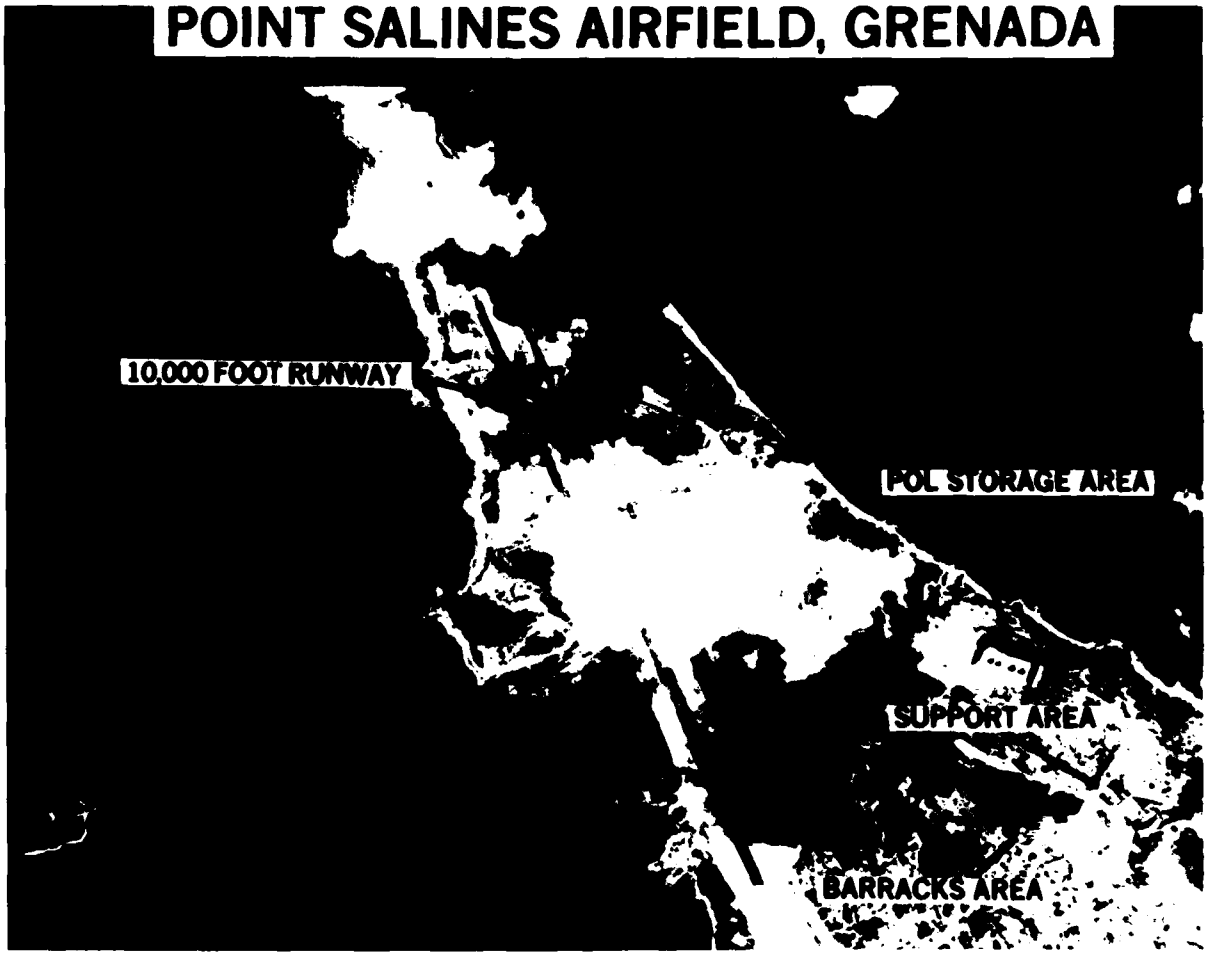
Pages from Soviet, North Korean, and Cuban secret military agreements with Grenada.

Military Assistance

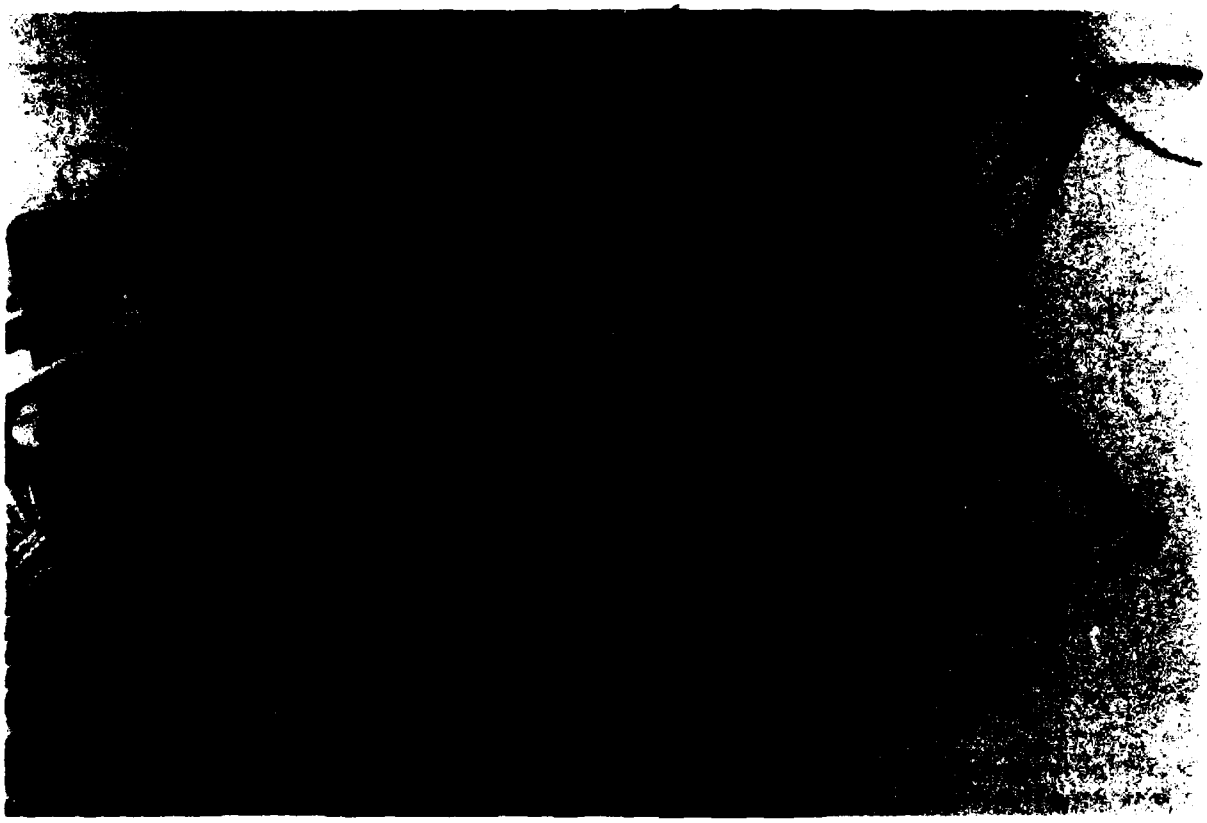
Point Salines airfield under construction in Grenada. Cuban workers in foreground. (NJM photo)

The Soviets and Cubans were quick to exploit the potential of Grenada. Only a month after Bishop seized power, the first large shipment of Eastern-bloc manufactured arms arrived from Havana. This included 3,400 rifles, 200 machine guns, 100 heavier weapons, and ammunition.[14]

Cuban military advisers were assigned by Fidel Castro to organize and train the Grenadian military and internal security forces. Hundreds of young Grenadians were sent to Cuba for military training.



The Point Salines airfield was scheduled to be inaugurated on 13 March 1984. Its runway length would have enabled it to serve as a stopover point for Cuban and Soviet aircraft.



Some of the Soviet-supplied PK 7.62mm general purpose machine guns found in Grenadian warehouses.

Grenadian troops riding Soviet-built BTR-60 armored personnel carriers. (NJM photo)

NJM photo of Grenadian soldiers marching. The NJM had militarized Grenadian society in the classic pattern of a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship.

The Grenadian Army Chief of Staff and both of Grenada's Deputy Secretaries of Defense went to the USSR for training.

The covert nature of much of this assistance was exemplified by boxes of ammunition labeled "Cuban Economic Office" shipped to Grenada by Cuba. By October 1983, tiny Grenada had more men under arms and more weapons and military supplies than all of its Eastern Caribbean neighbors combined—with plans to give Grenada one of the largest military forces in proportion to population of any country in the world.

In addition to signing a secret military agreement with Grenada, Cuba disguised the delivery of 7.62mm ammunition in crates marked "Cuban Economic Office."

Support for Soviet/Cuban Policies Leads to Instability

Under Bishop and the NJM, Grenada fully supported Soviet/Cuban policies, including the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

From the beginning, Bishop and his followers were anxious to prove their usefulness to the Soviet Union. In July 1983, the Grenadian Ambassador to Moscow sent a message to his Foreign Minister reviewing Grenadian-Soviet relations. He emphasized the continuing need to convince the Soviets that the Grenadian revolution was part of a

> world wide process with its original roots in the Great October Revolution [a reference to the Russian Revolution of October 1917]. For Grenada to assume a position of

By October 1983, tiny Grenada had more men under arms and more weapons than all of its Eastern Caribbean neighbors combined. Shown here is a U.S. officer of the U.S.-Caribbean security forces with a crate of Soviet AK-47 assault rifles discovered on the island.

increasingly greater importance, we have to be seen as influencing at least regional events. We have to establish ourselves as the authority of events in at least the English-speaking Caribbean, and be the sponsor of revolutionary activity and progressive developments in this region at least.[15]

To further Grenada's regional ambitions, the Bishop government adopted an active program of meeting with "progressive and revolutionary parties in the region" twice a year to heat up Gromyko's "boiling cauldron." Belize and Suriname were seen as particularly ripe for exploitation. Bishop apparently saw such meetings as a means to convince the Soviets of the pivotal role Grenada could play as the Soviets' Eastern Caribbean agent. The meetings had cost the Grenadians $500,000 by April 1983, and they requested addtional Soviet financial assistance.[16]

Ultimately, of course, it was the Grenadian government that disintegrated when a power struggle erupted within the NJM during the fall of 1983. The assassination of Bishop, three of his closest deputies, and the killing of scores of innocent persons by troops of the People's Revolutionary Army led to the collapse of the NJM. All ports of entry and departure were closed and a 24-hour shoot-on-sight curfew was declared.

The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States made a formal request to the United States for assistance. In addition, the sole remaining source of governmental legitimacy, the Governor-General of Grenada, Sir Paul Scoon, made an urgent and confidential appeal to the regional states to restore order on the island. The United States, responding to these requests and concerned over the safety of 1,000 American citizens on the island, participated in a combined U.S.-Caribbean security force that landed on Grenada on 25 October 1983. Peace and public order were restored.

The reaction of the Grenadian people to the U.S.-Caribbean security force was overwhelmingly supportive. A CBS News poll of 3 November 1983 found that 91% of the Grenadian people expressed strong approval for the actions taken by the United States. On 3 December 1984, the people of Grenada formally closed the books on the failed Marxist-Leninist revolution by successfully holding the island's first election in eight years.

Townspeople of Grenville, Grenada, welcome the arrival of the U.S.-Caribbean security forces. In spite of four years of Marxist-Leninist indoctrination by the Bishop regime, the people of Grenada welcomed the U.S.-Caribbean troops as liberators. A CBS news poll in Grenada found 91% approval of the rescue operation.

FSLN
FSLN

NICARAGUA: A BETRAYED REVOLUTION

In July 1979, a broad and popular coalition led militarily by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) overthrew the government of General Anastasio Somoza and ended a family dynasty that had ruled Nicaragua for more than four decades. The new government owed much of its success to international support for the anti-Somoza forces. The Organization of American States had even adopted a resolution calling for the "definitive replacement" of Somoza and free elections as soon as possible.[17] In gaining this support, the Sandinistas had pledged to have free elections, political pluralism, a mixed economy, and a non-aligned foreign policy. The first junta formed after Somoza fled appeared to confirm the belief that Nicaragua was on the road to democracy.

Since those hopeful early days, Nicaragua has moved not toward democracy, but toward a new dictatorship tied ever more closely to Cuba and the Soviet Union.

The Sandinistas' betrayal of the ideals of the revolution and the establishment of a closely controlled society have driven many of their key allies and thousands of their former rank-and-file supporters out of the country. Former junta members Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo, and even the legendary "Comandante Cero" (Eden Pastora, who served as Deputy Defense Minister), left Nicaragua to take up the fight against their former colleagues. In a 1984 interview, Pastora explained his reasons for leaving the Nicaraguan government. Speaking of the Sandinista leaders he said: "They isolated themselves from what Sandinismo is supposed to be about. Violations of human rights, Cuban troops in Nicaragua, the alignment toward the Soviet bloc, the moral deviations, it's a long list."[18]

By words and deeds, the Sandinista leaders have demonstrated that they are, in fact, dedicated Marxist-Leninists. On 25 August 1981, Comandante Humberto Ortega, the Minister of Defense, told his subordinates that "Marxism-Leninism is the scientific doctrine that guides our revolution. . . . We cannot be Marxist-Leninist without Sandinismo, and without Marxism-Leninism, Sandinismo cannot be revolutionary. . . . Our doctrine is Marxism-Leninism."[19]

Tomas Borge, the powerful Minister of the Interior whose responsibilities include internal security and censorship, stated in a September 1983 interview that he was a communist.[20] According to an article on 24 December 1984, he reconfirmed his views in Cuba: "You cannot be a true revolutionary in Latin America without being Marxist-Leninist."[21] Borge controls the feared *turbas divinas*, or "divine-mobs," composed of Sandinista militants used by the government to raid Catholic churches, break up political rallies, and otherwise harass opponents of the regime. The *turbas* were used in the government's efforts to intimidate potential voters for opposition presidential candidate Arturo Cruz before the November 1984 elections. This contributed to Mr. Cruz's decision not to run for president.

Revealing statements of the Sandinista political philosophy were made in May 1984 by Comandante Bayardo Arce, who had been assigned to run the Sandinista election campaign. Speaking in what he thought was a private and off-the-record meeting with one of the Marxist-Leninist parties "competing" with the Sandinistas, Arce stated that the upcoming elections were a "nuisance" and should be used "to demonstrate that . . . the Nicaraguan people are for Marxism-Leninism." He further stated that "if we did not have the war situation imposed upon us by the

Portrait of Marx and Lenin held high at a Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) rally marking the first anniversary of the revolution against Somoza, 19 July 1980.

Owen Franklin/Sygma

William Gentile/Picture Group

Arturo Cruz after government-controlled divine mobs (*turbas divinas*) attacked his vehicle in September 1984. Mr. Cruz is now a leader of the democratic opposition to the Sandinista government. He was a member of the ruling Sandinista junta and Nicaraguan ambassador to the United States. He resigned to protest the increasingly totalitarian control of the Sandinista party over Nicaraguan society.

United States, the electoral problem would be totally out of place in terms of its usefulness." He concluded his lengthy remarks by stating that the election process could have "positive benefits: the unity of the Marxist-Leninists of Nicaragua."[22] This speech was not reported in the Nicaraguan press.

In the view of many former supporters of the Sandinistas, the Managua regime has demeaned the name of their patron, Cesar Augusto Sandino. This fervent nationalist of the 1920s and 1930s was opposed to all forms of foreign intervention, by international communism as well as the United States. The Salvadoran guerrilla leader Augustin Farabundo Marti, commenting on Sandino, said: "(Sandino) did not wish to embrace the Communist program which I supported. His banner was only for independence, a banner of emancipation, and he did not pursue the ends of social rebellion."[23]

Today in Nicaragua, the banner of Sandinismo is giving way to the reality of communism. Since 1979, the Sandinistas have consolidated control over the government and the armed forces. They have placed under direct state control nearly half of Nicaragua's industry and 40% of its agriculture. By the selective application of monetary and labor laws, they exert pressure against the remainder of the industrial and agricultural sectors. The Sandinistas control all media outlets through censorship. *La Prensa* the only major opposition newspaper, is censored everyday and its writers and editors harassed. Neighborhood watch committees, informant networks, rationing of many basic necessities, and enforced participation in Sandinista organizations are all used to control and intimidate the people.

The Sandinistas' economic mismanagement, human rights violations, and abuse of governmental authority have driven more than 120,000 Nicaraguans into exile (some estimates range far higher). An even greater reflection of popular discontent has been the number of Nicaraguan citizens who have taken up

Daniel Ortega, with raised fist, is sworn in as President of Nicaragua as Fidel Castro looks on--10 January 1985. Castro was the only foreign head of state to attend the inauguration of Ortega.

arms against the Sandinistas. The armed opposition, which began in 1982, has now grown to a strength of some 15,000, most of whom were sympathetic to the ideals of the 1979 revolution. It is interesting to compare this strength with that of the Sandinistas in their long struggle against Somoza. As of late 1978, the Sandinista guerrillas numbered fewer than 1,000.[24] By the July 1979 victory, they had no more than 5,000 in their ranks.[25]

The Sandinista Military Machine: Central America's Largest Armed Forces

The *comandantes* realized from the outset that they would need a large, politicized military to pursue their revolutionary objectives and maintain themselves in power once the bloom of the revolution had worn off and their true political orientation was exposed. In their five years in power, the Sandinistas have followed Cuba's example in developing a massive military establishment. Nicaragua today has the largest, most powerful armed forces in the history of Central America.

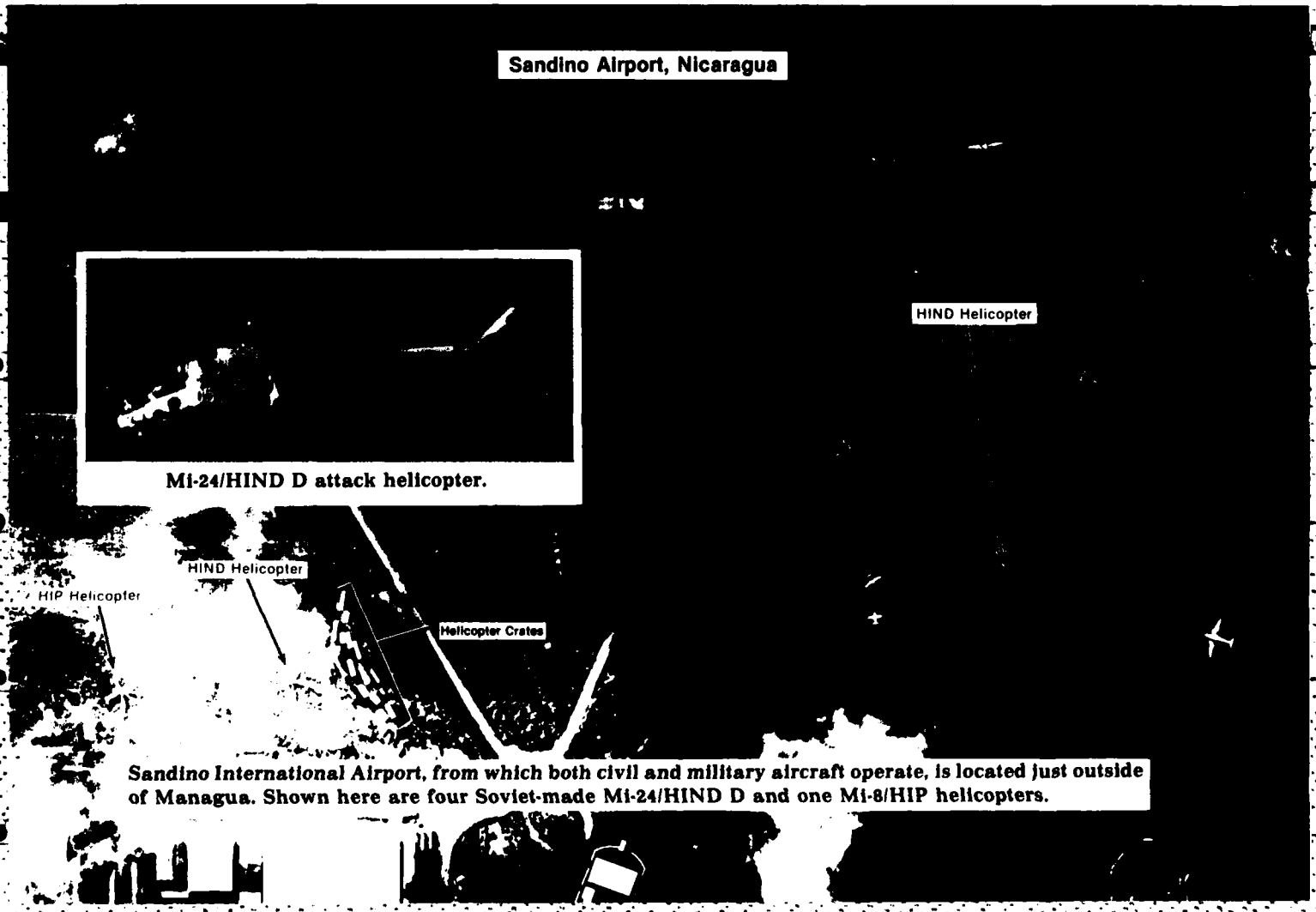
On 5 October 1979 the Sandinistas distributed to their followers the results of a three-day meeting held the previous month for the Sandinista political cadre. In discussing the security situation, the document stated that "at present there is no clear indication that an armed counter-revolution by Somocista forces beyond our borders is going to take place and jeopardize our stability."[26] Nevertheless, they began to build a large and well-equipped military. In February 1981, the Sandinistas announced that they would build a 200,000-man militia to "defend the revolution" against "counter-revolutionaries." But, as the 20 February 1981 *New York Times* article reporting this announcement pointed out, there was "surprisingly little counter-revolutionary activity" faced by the Sandinista government at that time.[27]

A unit of the Sandinista army passes in review, September 1984. The militarization of Nicaraguan society has led to the building of armed forces nearly half the size of those of Mexico, a country with more than 25 times the population of Nicaragua.

The lightly armed Sandinista guerrilla force of about 5,000 in 1979 has now grown to a 62,000-man active duty force, with an additional 57,000 in the reserves and the militia. In late 1983, the Sandinistas instituted the first draft in Nicaragua's history. This action has caused strong popular resentment, with thousands of young Nicaraguans fleeing their homeland to avoid the draft. In rural areas of Nicaragua, there has been open, active resistance by the people against conscription.[28]

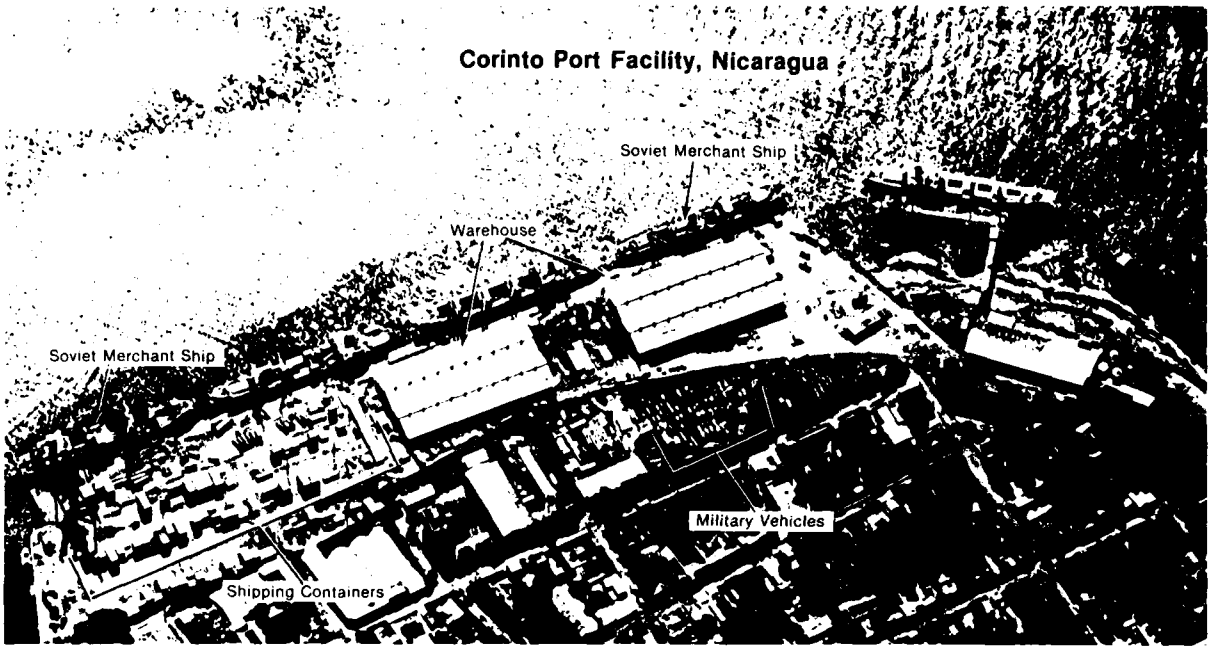
In their struggle against Somoza, the FSLN guerrillas had no tanks or other armored vehicles, no artillery, no helicopters. After their victory in July 1979, they inherited from the Somoza National Guard three tanks, 25 armored cars, seven helicopters, and three artillery pieces. They now have at least 340 tanks and armored vehicles, more than 70 long-range howitzers and rocket launchers, and 30 helicopters, including a half dozen of the world's fastest, best armed attack helicopter, the Mi-24/HIND D. This is the principal attack helicopter of the Soviet army and holds the world helicopter speed record. Its heavy underside armor makes it less vulnerable to small arms fire. It has a heavy machine gun, can fire anti-tank missiles, and can drop bombs. The HIND D adds a new dimension to warfare in Central America since areas of Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica would be within range of these flying "tanks" as they are described in *Jane's All the World's Aircraft.*[29]

The first Soviet-made armor arrived in Nicaragua in 1981, shortly after the 200,000-man militia build-up was announced, but still about a year before significant anti-Sandinista armed opposition had developed. The mainstay of this armored force is some 110 Soviet-made T-55 medium tanks. The T-55 was the main battle tank of the Soviet army for years. Although now of limited value on a European battlefield against modern anti-tank weapons, it is a powerful weapon in Central America. None of Nicaragua's neighbors have tanks with the T-55's firepower. Moreover, the Sandinistas have received in the past year nearly 30 PT-76 light tanks. With their river-crossing capability, these amphibious tanks provide more flexibility than the T-55s. An added potential capability of tanks is to inhibit popular dissent.



Mi-24/HIND D attack helicopter.

Sandino International Airport, from which both civil and military aircraft operate, is located just outside of Managua. Shown here are four Soviet-made Mi-24/HIND D and one Mi-8/HIP helicopters.



Corinto, located on the Pacific coast, has been a principal port through which Soviet-bloc military equipment has been delivered to Nicaragua. Soviet-bloc countries use merchant ships for both military and commerical deliveries.

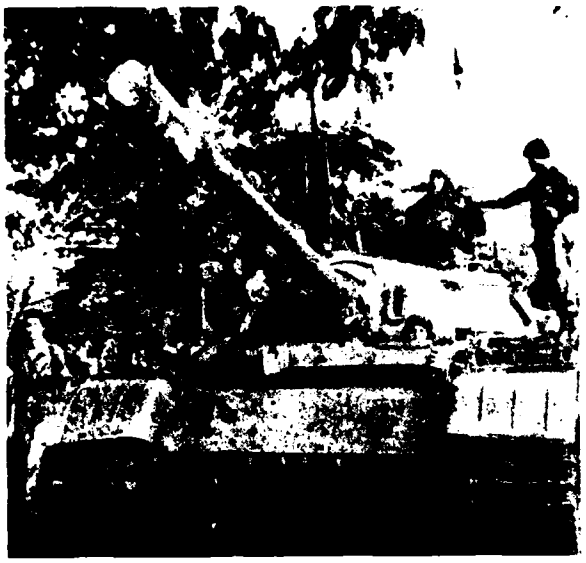
The Soviets have considered the Central American terrain in tailoring the Sandinista armed forces. They have provided about 40 flatbed trucks, which are designed to carry the T-55 tank. The Sandinistas have also been provided with six large ferries, which will enable the tanks to be shuttled across rivers to fighting zones, a significant capability given the fact that long stretches of the borders with Honduras and Costa Rica are rivers. The PT-76s, of course, can cross rivers and be used to secure a beachhead while the T-55s are shuttled across.

The Sandininistas have also been provided with more than 1,000 field kitchens, a number of mobile maintenance workshops, and about 75 gasoline tankers, all requirements for an offensive-minded army. On balance, however, logistics support continues to be a problem for the Sandinistas, but one they are working to correct.

Honduras shares a 570-mile border with Nicaragua. Should the Sandinistas decide to launch offensive operations against Honduras, the most obvious avenue of approach would be through the area known as the Choluteca Gap, in the northwest coastal plain of the Honduran/Nicaraguan border. The Sandinistas have conducted training with tanks, armored personnel carriers, and long-range artillery in areas close to the Choluteca Gap. This narrow routing could prove difficult for the Sandinista tanks if the Honduran Air Force retains the air superiority it currently enjoys. But, if this Honduran deterrent capability is sufficiently neutralized by a strengthened Sandinista air force and an effective air defense system, then the disadvantage of a restricted route into Honduras would be appreciably reduced.

The regime in Nicaragua poses both a real and a psychological threat to the countries of Central America. This fact is readily perceived by the citizens of Nicaragua's neighboring countries as was revealed in a public opinion poll conducted by Gallup International in 1983. This poll showed that Nicaragua's growing military strength and support for subversive movements in other countries was a source of concern throughout the region. In Honduras, for example, about 80% of the respondents saw Nicaragua as the principal cause of instability and as the primary military threat faced by their country.[30]

Panama played a key role in providing military support to the Sandinistas in 1978 and 1979. After the Sandinistas came to power, however, they rejected Panama's advice and offers of assistance. Recently, General Manuel Noriega, Commander of Panama's Defense Force, told the editors of Costa Rica's principal newspaper, *La Nacion*, that the Sandinista arms escalation posed a danger to the entire



T-55 tank at Eduardo Contreras Military Training Center, Nicaragua. This is one of approximately 110 Soviet-made T-55 tanks in the Sandinista armor inventory. In contrast, the Somoza National Guard had three U.S.-made tanks.

To increase its mobility, the Sandinista army has been provided almost 30 PT-76 light amphibious tanks by the Soviet bloc.

The Sandinistas have acquired Soviet-bloc river crossing equipment. The heavy amphibious ferry, shown here, can carry the T-55 tank.

region. In the article reporting Noriega's view, *La Nacion's* editors, reflecting widespread preoccupation in that most democratic of Latin American countries about the militarization of Nicaragua, wrote that "Sandinista militarism has to be halted before it produces a holocaust in the entire Caribbean region."[31]

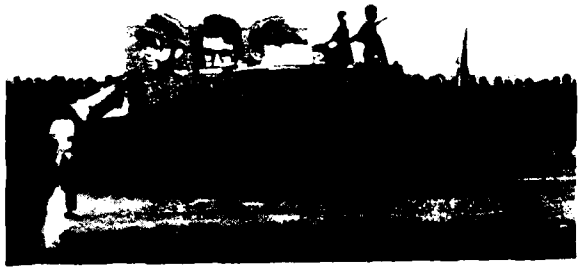
The Honduran army is striving to modernize and professionalize, but it lags behind the rapid expansion of the Sandinista army. Costa Rica has no army. The Salvadoran armed forces are fully occupied with combating Sandinista-supported insurgents. Clearly, Nicaragua's military power threatens—and is not threatened by—its neighbors.

Cubans in Nicaragua

Fidel Castro clandestinely provided weapons and other aid to the Sandinistas during their struggle against Somoza. The first military advisers to the new government were Cuban, arriving on 19 July 1979, the day the Sandinistas took over.

This was the beginning of the Sandinista military alliance with the Soviet bloc. Between 30 to 40 Soviets and over 60 East Germans have followed the Cubans as advisers to the Sandinsta military. Members of the armed forces of Libya and members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which has collaborated with the Sandinistas since at least 1970, are also playing a minor role in the development of the Sandinista armed forces.

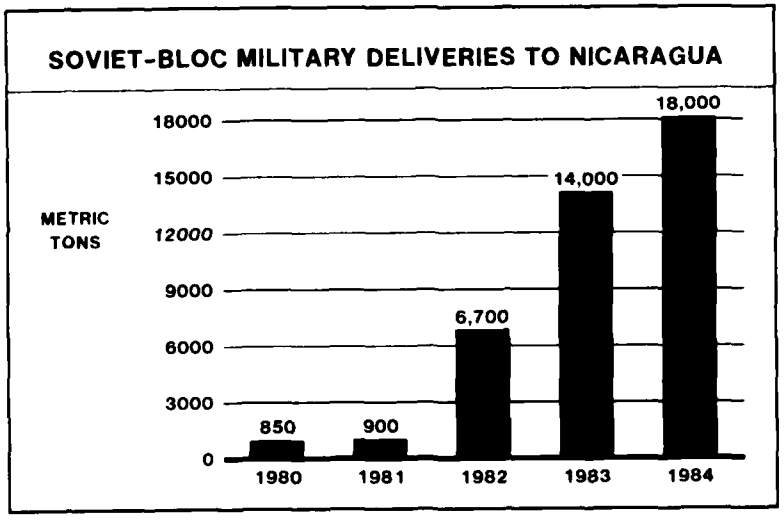
EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TO NICARAGUA.

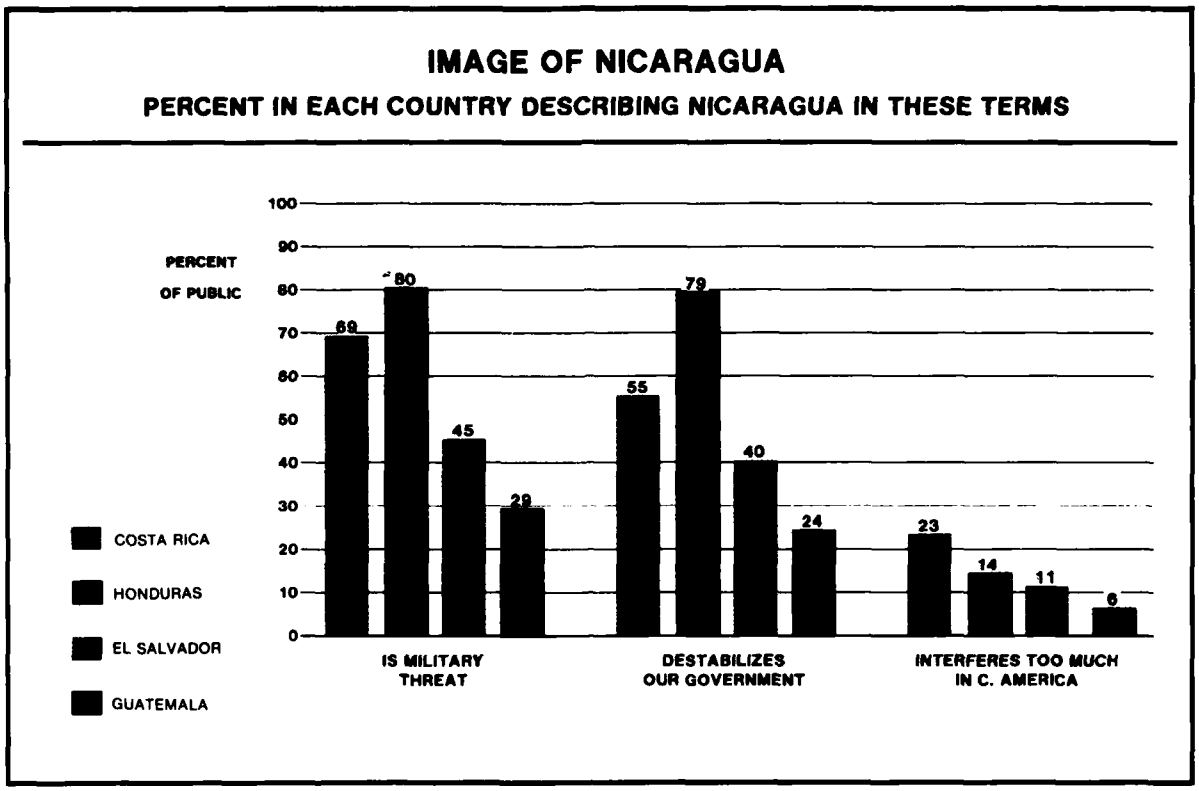


This BTR-60 armored personnel carrier is among the some 340 armored vehicles and tanks in the Sandinista arsenal.

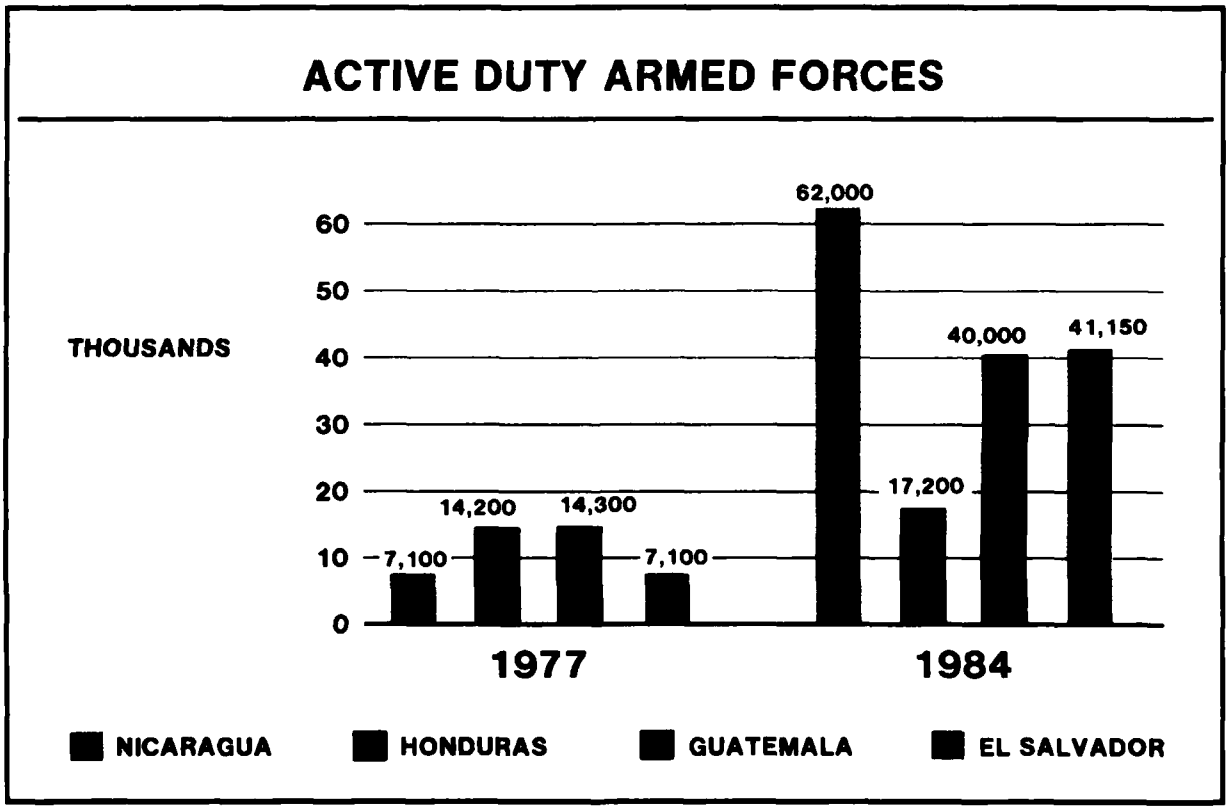
While logistics remain a problem for the Sandinista armed forces, the acquisition of 75 fuel tankers will better enable them to sustain operations.

The 152mm howitzer can hit targets 17 kilometers away. The Sandinistas have more than 70 long-range artillery pieces and multiple rocket launchers. Somoza's National Guard had three artillery pieces.





This Gallup International public opinion poll was conducted in major urban areas of the four countries shown.



Although there have been upwards of 9,000 Cubans in Nicaragua, recent reports indicate that about 1,500 teachers have returned to Cuba. Out of the approximate 7,500 Cubans now present in Nicaragua, some 3,000 are military or security personnel attached to the armed forces, internal security, and intelligence organizations. These military security advisers have made possible the rapid development of Nicaragua's military and security machine. The other Cubans are involved in construction, teaching, medicine, and similar programs. The bulk of these civilians are younger men who have received some military training.

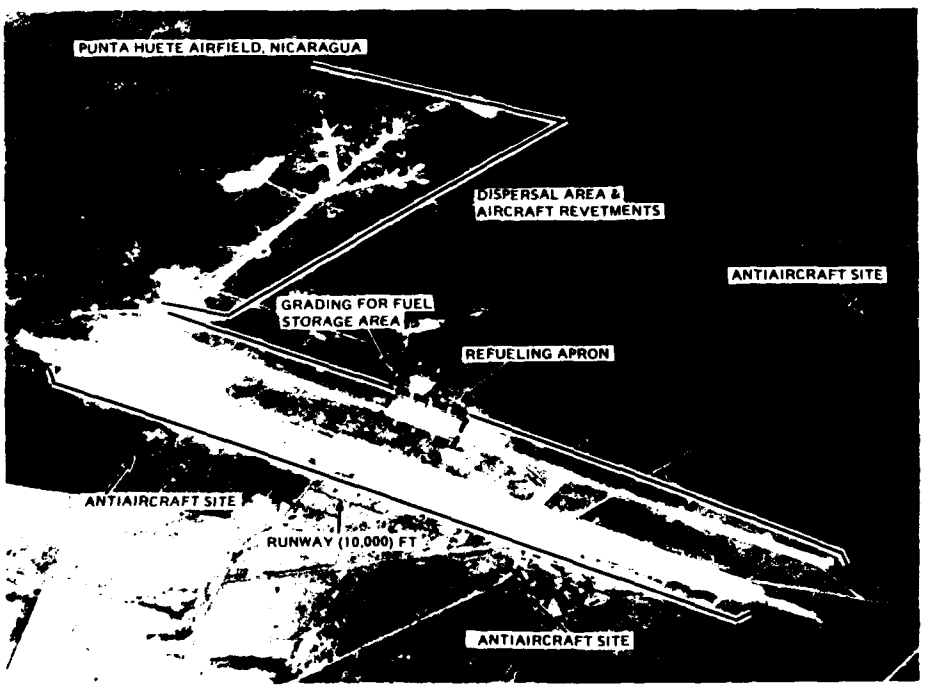
The disproportionate presence of Cuban military and security personnel is resented by many Nicaraguans and is often cited by refugees fleeing Nicaragua as a factor contributing to their decision to leave their homeland.

Nicaragua—Growing Soviet Investment

Several huge construction projects backed by the Soviet bloc represent the investment of hundreds of millions of dollars, including $70 million for nearly 40 new military facilities. In addition, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Cuba are building critical infrastructure facilities which will have important military uses.

The 10,000-foot runway at the Punta Huete airfield, when completed, will be the longest military runway in Central America. As the base took on the unmistakable signs of a military air base, such as protective earthen mounds (or revetments) for fighter aircraft, the Sandinista Air Force Commander admitted that it would be a military air base.[32]

When Punta Huete becomes operational, it will be able to accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet-bloc inventory. The potential threat to Nicaragua's neighbors would then increase dramatically. The recent acquisition of Mi-24/HIND D attack helicopters, along with the existing inventory of Mi-8 troop-carrying helicopters, provides the Sandinistas with a powerful helicopter force. The Sandinista regime has declared repeatedly its intention to acquire combat aircraft, and Punta Huete would be a logical base from which such aircraft could operate. Nicaraguan jet pilots and mechanics have been trained in Eastern Europe and are reportedly now flying in Cuba. Sandinista acquisition of such jet aircraft would further destabilize the regional military balance; the United



When Punta Huete is completed, it will be able to accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet-bloc inventory, to include the long-range BEAR-D reconnaissance aircraft.

The fall 1984 delivery by the Soviets of their top-of-the-line attack helicopter, the Mi-24/HIND D, has considerably strengthened the striking capability of the Sandinista air force. This flying "tank" has devastating firepower and is being used by the Soviets in Afghanistan against civilian and military targets.

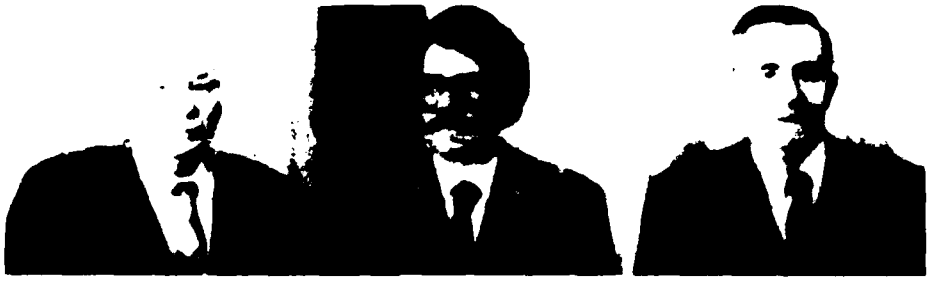
States has consistently made clear in diplomatic channels its concern about such weaponry.

The Soviets could decide in the future that it is to their advantage to fly long-range reconnaissance aircraft from Punta Huete along the West Coast of the United States, just as they currently operate such flights along the East Coast of the United States by flying out of Cuba.

The decisions of the Soviet Union and Cuba to make this investment in Nicaragua indicate that Soviet leaders consider Nicaragua an important complement to Cuba in the Soviet strategy to increase pressure on the United States in the Caribbean Basin.

The first of the Soviet-made armed Mi-8 troop-carrying helicopters arrived in Nicaragua in 1981, well before the Sandinistas faced significant armed opposition.

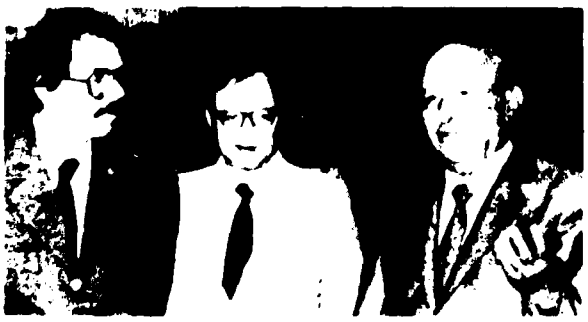
NICARAGUAN PRESIDENT DANIEL ORTEGA, PICTURED BELOW ON JUNE 1984 VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, BULGARIA, EAST GERMANY, AND POLAND.



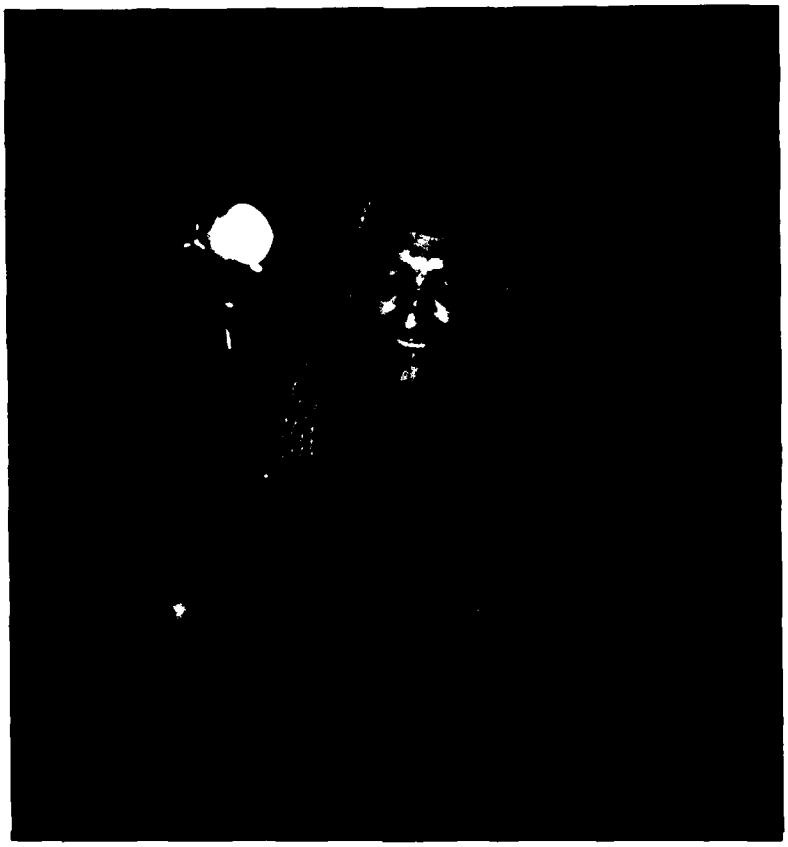
Daniel Ortega with Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Konstantin Chernenko and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in Moscow. Ortega's first trip to Moscow took place in April 1980, only nine months after the Sandinistas came to power, and at a time when the United States was providing Nicaragua with extensive economic aid. One month earlier, a number of agreements were reached between the USSR and Nicaragua, cementing the close relationship that continues today.

Daniel Ortega with East German Communist Party General Secretary and Chief of State, Erich Honecker. East Germany has provided military equipment, as well as internal security and military advisers to the Sandinista regime.

Daniel Ortega pictured with Wojciech Jaruzelski, First Secretary of the Polish United Workers Party and Chairman of the Counsel of National Defense.



Daniel Ortega with Bulgarian Communist Party General Secretary and Chief of State, Todor Zhivkov (on far right). Bulgaria has trained Nicaraguan jet pilots and mechanics, and has also provided the Sandinistas with large quantities of military equipment.



James Nachtwey/Black Star

President-elect Jose Napoleon Duarte after victory in May 1984 presidential run-off elections.

Salvadoran citizens line up to vote during presidential elections on 25 March 1984. Hundreds of international observers attested to the legitimacy of the elections, another step in the democratic process taking place in El Salvador.

EL SALVADOR: A DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

For more than five years, El Salvador has been a target of Cuban and Nicaraguan violence, with the support of the Soviet Union. With a population density greater than India, a feudal land tenure system, and a violent history, in 1979 El Salvador seemed a logical place for communist exploitation. An indigenous guerrilla force, which developed in the mid-1970s in reaction to government-sponsored political abuses, began receiving extensive support from Nicaragua soon after the Sandinistas came to power in July 1979.

Having seen the Somoza regime in neighboring Nicaragua resist social change and subsequently collapse in the face of a popular uprising, reform-minded Salvadoran military officers overthrew the authoritarian government of General Carlos Romero in October 1979. Romero was replaced by a civilian-military junta that pledged social and economic reforms and democratic elections. The successive governments of El Salvador have worked to follow through on these pledges and El Salvador has begun *to build a democracy for the first time.*[33]

Since 1982, the people of El Salvador have shown their support for the democratic process by going to the polls three times in the face of threats and harassment by the guerrillas. In March 1982, they selected a constituent assembly in an election considered fair and free by the many distinguished observers and journalists from Western democracies that monitored the process. Jose Napoleon Duarte, a reform-minded Christian Democrat previously jailed and sent into exile by the military, was elected president in the spring of 1984.

The guerrillas had initially attempted to encourage the people of El Salvador to boycott the 1982 election. When it became apparent that this tactic would not succeed, they resorted to violence, burning buses, and otherwise trying to intimidate the people to prevent them from voting. The response of the people was dramatic; more than 80% of those eligible to vote did so. They repeated their strong support for democracy in the 1984 presidential elections. Again impartial international observers and journalists saw these elections as a true expression of the popular will, and a repudiation of the guerrillas. Commenting on the electoral process, the official publication of the Archdiocese of San Salvador said:

> . . one can say with absolute certainty that three elections in a two-year period have consituted to a true plebiscite in which the people have expressed their will, their faith in democracy, their desire for peace, their rejection of violence, and their intrinsic condemnation of the guerrillas.[34]

Among numerous economic reforms, the most sweeping has been agrarian reform. Although extremists at both ends of the political spectrum resisted these changes, more than 25% of the rural population now either own their land outright or participate as co-owners of agricultural cooperatives. These people have a personal stake in seeing a democratic system flourish in their country.

El Salvador is, in fact, moving toward the goal of establishing a government that is accountable to its citizens. This is being carried out behind the shield of the much improved armed forces, whose initiative on the battlefield, combined with President Duarte's popular mandate, moved the guerrillas to accept President Duarte's call to participate in a dialogue with the government. It began on 15 October 1984, in the town of La Palma.

The Guerrillas

Lacking broad popular support, the guerrillas continue to be a potent military force because of the extensive support they receive from Nicaragua, Cuba, other communist countries such as Vietnam, and radical regimes such as Libya. The unification of the

The Salvadoran guerrillas are open about their Marxist-Leninist leanings, as shown by the flag in this poster. The poster proclaims "Revolution or Death! The Armed People Will Triumph!"

Salvadoran guerrillas was coordinated by Fidel Castro. Shortly after General Romero was overthrown, Castro brought Salvadoran guerrilla leaders to Havana, promising them increased support if they would forget past rivalries and forge a united front. This led to the creation of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), in which five previously separate guerrilla military factions banded together. Along with the FMLN, the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), a parallel political arm, was established.

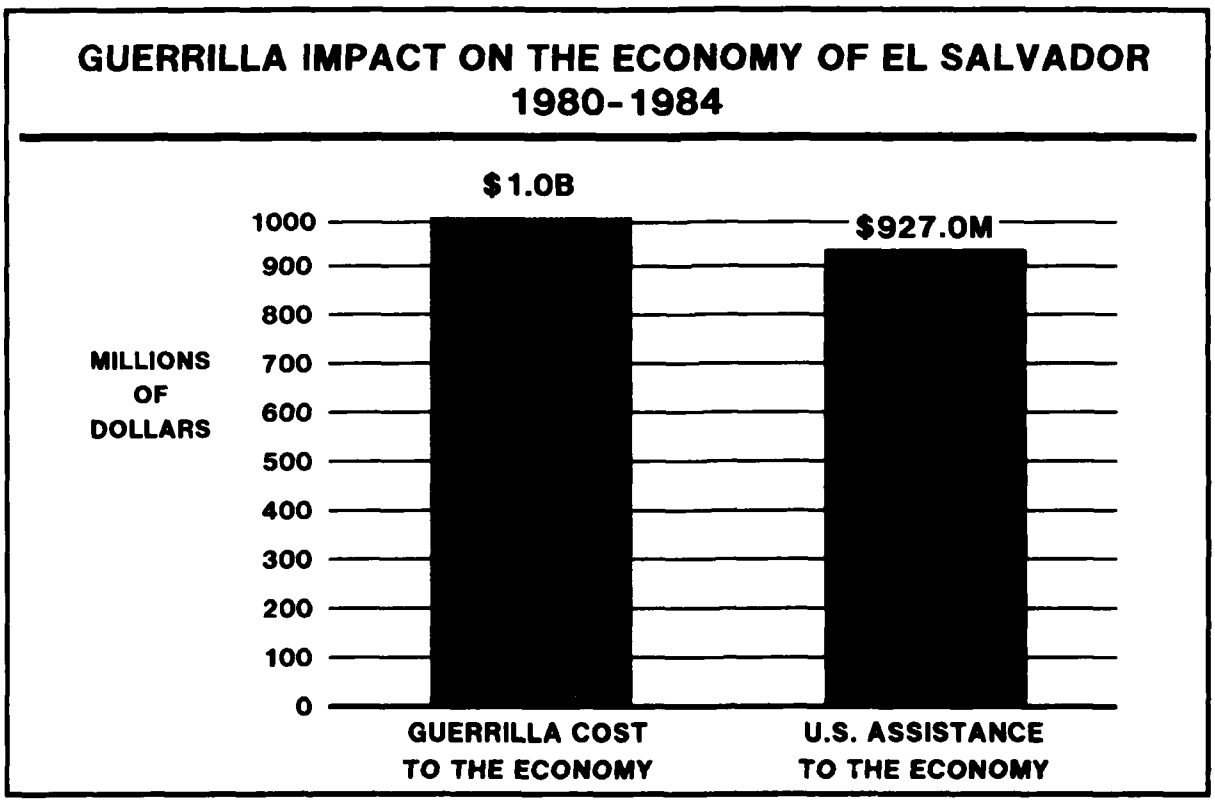
The Puente de Oro bridge, or Golden bridge, was destroyed by Nicaraguan-trained Salvadoran guerrillas on 15 October 1981. Through such economic sabotage, the guerrillas hope to undermine the people's confidence in the government's ability to protect them.

The newly united guerrillas attempted a Nicaraguan-style "final offensive" in January 1981. Their defeat by the Salvadoran army was made possible by the Salvadoran people's refusal to respond to the guerrillas' call to rise up against the government. After this defeat, the guerrillas shifted their tactics to destroying the economic infrastructure of the country. They later openly acknowledged this decision in an April 1983 guerrilla radio broadcast when they declared: "Our forces will start sabotage against the dictatorship's war economy during the next days."[11] This sabotage has included the destruction of bridges and electrical towers, as well as the cash crops so vital to the Salvadoran economy. The government's budget has been severely strained to repair the damage caused by this systematic sabotage. The armed forces have been stretched thin to defend vital facilities and areas of agricultural productivity.

Through mid-1984, the war was a military stalemate. But the Salvadoran army now has the initiative.This has been made possible by the expanded training and additional mobility permitted by increased U.S. military assistance.

The Logistics Network

The guerrillas depend on an elaborate logistics pipeline to support their military operations. The majority of the U.S.-made M-16 rifles captured from the guerrillas by the Salvadoran military have been traced, by individual serial numbers, to shipments made by the United States to South Vietnam, and



Salvadoran guerrilla holds Soviet-designed RPG-2 rocket launcher.

subsequently captured by communist forces after the 1975 fall of Saigon. But guerrilla propaganda efforts seek to create the impression that virtually all of their weapons are taken from government troops. In fact, only a small portion have been captured from Salvadoran forces. Alejandro Montenegro, a former high ranking guerrilla leader, has stated that it was guerrilla policy, directed from Managua, to mislead international media on the true source of guerrilla arms.[36]

Soviet-bloc countries have played a key role in sending weapons to Cuba and Nicaragua, which in turn have moved them into El Salvador through a complex land, sea, and air infiltration network.

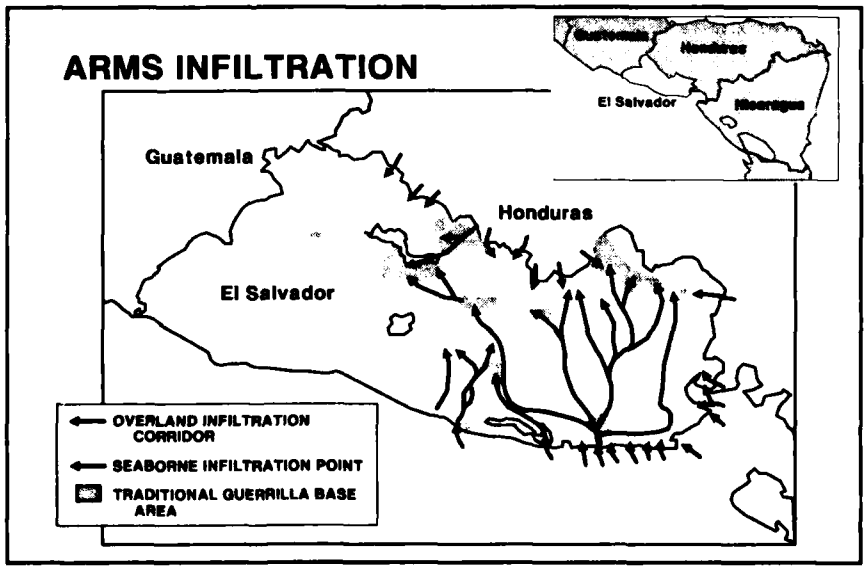
The principal land route for supplying the guerrillas originates in Nicaragua and passes through Honduras into El Salvador. A road and trail network has been developed, with the actual flow of ammunition, supplies, and weapons varying to meet the tactical requirements of the guerrillas.

Seaborne delivery of arms and supplies is carried out largely by ocean-going canoes powered by outboard engines. These canoes are difficult to detect on radar because of their low profile and wooden construction. Leaving Nicaragua after sundown, the canoes make their drop at predetermined points along the southeast coast of El Salvador and return to Nicaragua by dawn.

Aerial deliveries are also employed by the guerrillas. Light planes fly at low altitudes across the Gulf of Fonseca from Nicaragua, landing at isolated airstrips and unloading their cargo of arms and ammunition. Air drops are also used.

Within El Salvador, pack animals, and vehicles with compartments designed to conceal their contents, are used to move supplies to more than 200

The Salvadoran guerrillas receive the bulk of their arms, ammunition, and supplies from Nicaragua. Shown here are the principal land and sea routes for this infiltration.



camps, which are linked by an elaborate series of corridors. Within these corridors, guerrillas select multiple routes and patrol them frequently to assure their security.

Government forces are having some success slowing the arms infiltration, but geography favors the insurgents: a 200-mile coastline, 6,000 miles of roads, 150 airstrips, and a mountainous, ill-defined northern border.

Disinformation and Propaganda

Another aspect of the FMLN's "total war" effort is the utilization of classic Soviet disinformation, propaganda, and deception techniques. The guerrillas' goal in applying such measures is to gain sympathy for their cause. At the same time they wish to sway international and United States public opinion against the Salvadoran government and U.S. economic and military assistance. The political leaders of the guerrilla movement realize the importance of the media in shaping political attitudes in the United States. In February 1982, one of the FDR's political leaders, Hector Oqueli, told the *New York Times*: "We have to win the war in the United States."[37]

The guerrillas back up their disinformation operations with constant propaganda, flowing from their own radio stations (*Radio Venceremos* and *Radio Farabundo Marti*), friendly embassies, and solidarity committees formed to provide propaganda outlets within the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

The Soviet Union also contributes to the guerrilla cause through its extensive "active measures" program. This is a term used by the Soviet KGB for its program of overt and covert deception operations, including use of forged documents, front groups, agents of influence, and clandestine broadcasting. One example that follows the pattern of Soviet active measures targeted on Central America is the forged "State Department dissent paper," which surfaced in 1981. The paper purported to be the thoughts of State Department, National Security Council, and CIA staff officers who disagreed with U.S. policy. Actual "dissent papers," in fact, are used within the government to allow expression of views at variance with current policy. The paper in question warned that further U.S. aid to El Salvador would soon result in U.S. combat involvement. The paper also supported U.S. recognition of the guerrillas, long an insurgent goal. However, this "dissent paper," originally accepted as genuine by the news media, was checked carefully and found to be a forgery.[38]

Soviet front groups have accused the United States of conducting chemical and biological warfare in Central America. Moscow's Radio Peace and Progress, a well-known disinformation outlet, has broadcast such inflammatory allegations as:

> The CIA kidnaps children of Salvadoran refugees in Honduras. . . . Some are sent to special schools for brainwashing. Others, because they are inept for these activities, are sent to CIA research centers. Here they are used as guinea pigs.[39]

> U.S. military advisers participate in torturing Salvadoran rebels and prisoners. . . .[40]

> Everything that is known, up to the present time, indicates that the Yankee CIA, corporation of murderers, is implicated in the death of Torrijos.[41]

Broadcasting by the guerrillas follows this Soviet disinformation pattern. One such example occurred in November 1984 in Suchitoto, a small town 50 kilometers northeast of San Salvador. The guerrillas attacked the town in the early morning hours of 9 November. Their *Radio Farabundo Marti* announced that the Salvadoran air force had indiscriminately bombed the town to include "the church, the hospital, the kindergarten and the central market in Suchitoto."[42] In reality, as reported by the *Washington Post* the following day, "The quaint, whitewashed central Catholic church, the hospital

Salvadoran guerrillas surrender under the government's amnesty program in fall 1982. The guerrillas enjoy far less support today than at any time in the last five years.

and the kindergarten, which rebel broadcasts had said were bombed by the government, were found undamaged. Residents of the city denied that government forces had bombed the city during the fighting today. . . ."[43]

The Future of the Guerrillas

The future does not appear bright for the guerrillas. They now enjoy far less support from the Salvadoran people than at any time in the last five years. It has become increasingly obvious that they represent only a small segment of the population.

The 1981 guerrilla decision to resort to the tactic of destroying the economy, as a means of undermining the confidence of the people in the legitimate government, has failed. The guerrillas continue to operate as a viable military force largely because of the support they are receiving from Nicaragua, Cuba, and ultimately the Soviet Union.

The Salvadoran Catholic Church has been in the forefront in the battle for social and economic change. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, church leaders were critical of the government's unwillingness or inability to implement required changes. By 1984, however, Salvadoran church leaders noted that the political and economic conditions for the people had improved significantly. San Salvador Auxiliary Bishop Rosa Chavez argued this way in a July 1984 sermon:

This, then, is the great question the guerrillas have to ask themselves. No matter how often they attempt to justify their actions of sabotage with arguments that they fight against the government, against oppression and what they call the oligarchy, it is the people who ultimately pay the price. It is the people who suffer when the guerrillas down the towers that carry the cables of electric power; it is the people who suffer when the guerrillas dynamite telephone installations; it is the people who suffer when the guerrillas recruit youths by force. . . . Therefore, I ask myself, in whose favor are they really fighting?[44]

The Cuscatlan bridge, a key link of the Pan-American highway, is shown here in a 1982 photo. It was destroyed by the Salvadoran guerrillas on New Year's Day, 1984. The leaders of the Salvadoran Catholic Church have condemned the guerrillas for such economic destruction, stating, "It is the people who ultimately pay the price."

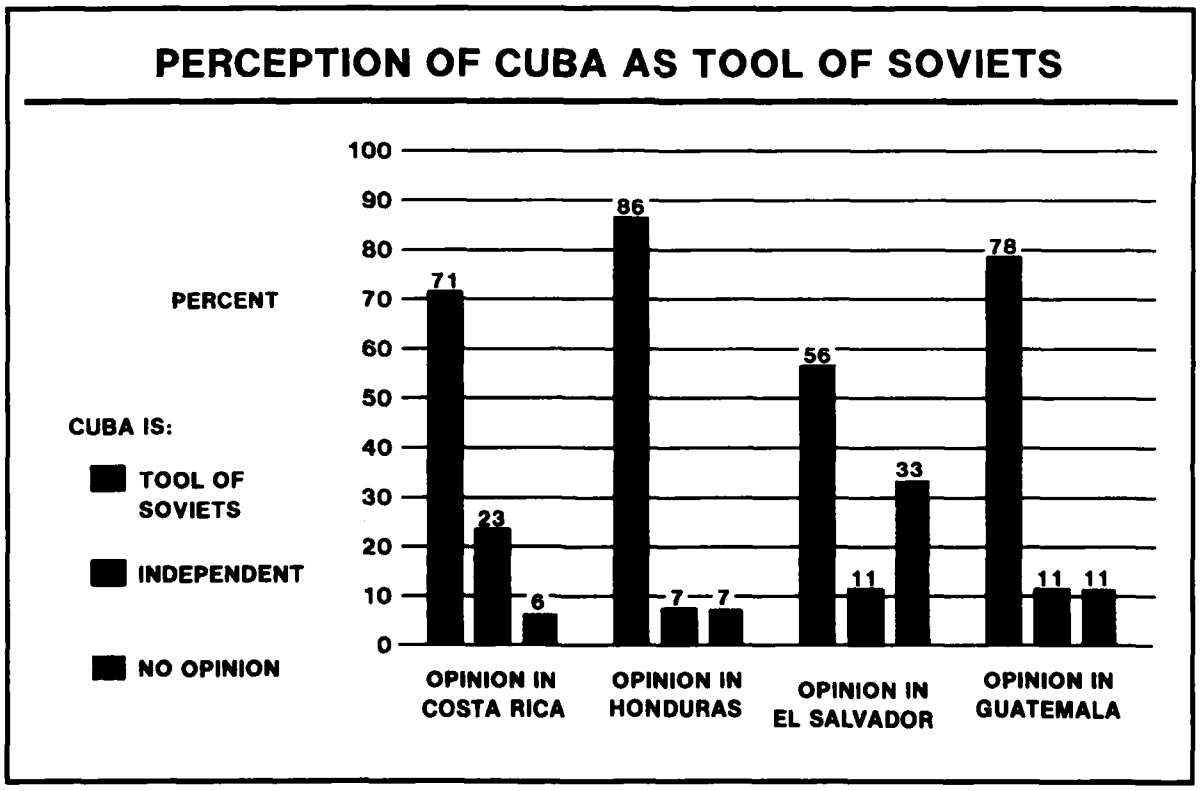
Rural school food and nutrition program. Because of the costs of the war against the guerrillas, the government of El Salvador has been unable to increase health and education expenditures as it had planned.

CASTRO: SUBVERSIVE CATALYST

Acting to fulfill his own revolutionary ambitions as well as being an agent of Soviet influence, Fidel Castro is working closely with subversive elements throughout Central America and the Caribbean. Castro's goal in the 1980s remains much as it was when he assumed power: to oppose the United States and create Marxist-Leninist regimes that mirror his own dictatorship. But the means to achieve this goal have become more sophisticated, in part because of the lessons he learned from guerrilla failures in the region during the 1960s.

Castro has also had to adapt to the changing popular perception of his revolution. Where once Castro was a folk hero to most Latin Americans, today he is seen as having converted Cuba into a bankrupt and oppressive state beholden to a foreign power.[45]

Although Castro's image has dulled with Central Americans at large, he continues to be popular with violent, radical groups throughout the region. This support provides Castro with political and psychological capital. The governments of the region are



A 1983 Gallup International poll indicates that an overwhelming majority of Central Americans view Castro as an instrument of the Soviet Union.

Guerrilla weapons, posters, and flags captured by the Guatemalan armed forces. The guerrillas make no attempt to disguise their ties to international communism.

acutely aware of Castro's ability to orchestrate events in their countries. When the brother of President Betancur of Colombia was kidnapped by guerrillas in November 1983, it was largely the efforts of Castro that eventually gained his release. It was obvious that Castro could also have influenced the guerrillas to keep the President's brother. This case was a vivid example of how Castro has perfected the techniques of political blackmail.

In addition to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have been targets of Castro's subversion. In Guatemala, he has provided training and some financial support to three guerrilla factions, although he has not succeeded in unifying them to the extent he did in El Salvador.

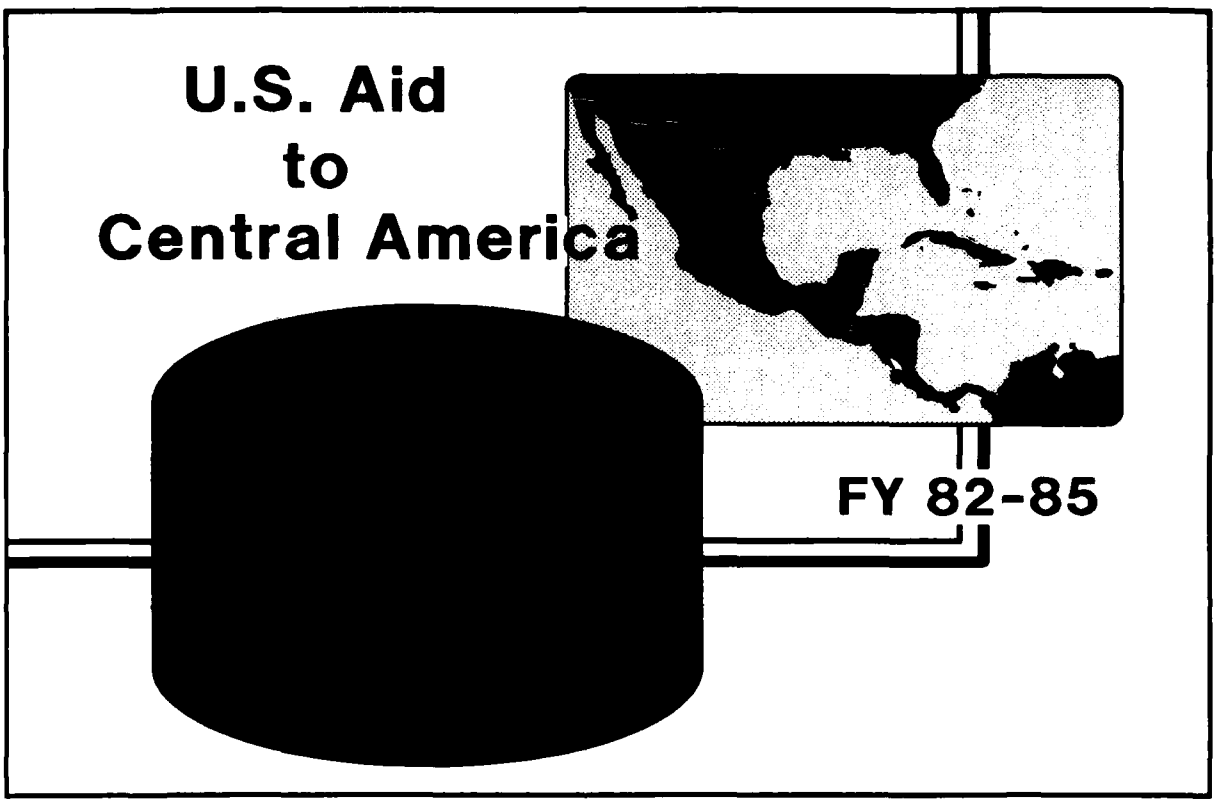
Honduran territory is used principally as a conduit of support for the Salvadoran guerrillas, but Honduras has also been a target of Cuban destablization. In June 1983, although Honduras did not have an active insurgency, about 100 Hondurans trained in Cuba infiltrated into eastern Honduras from Nicaragua. The would-be guerrillas were totally defeated, in great measure because of the Honduran people's support of the government forces. A year later another group of Cuban-trained guerrillas entered Honduras and many of them met the same fate.

A disturbing aspect of the current Castro offensive is the apparent use of money generated by narcotics to supply arms for guerrillas. Several high-ranking Cuban officials have provided protection for planes and small ships carrying drugs. The drugs move northward from Colombia to the United States, at times via Cuba and on at least one occasion via Nicaragua. In 1981, the Colombian government discovered that the Cubans had been using a narcotics ring to smuggle both arms and funds to Colombian M-19 guerrillas. When the Colombian armed forces and National Police entered the town of Calamar in February 1984, they discovered that the guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia had *campesinos* cultivating hundreds of hectares of coca plants.

Recent United States Congressional hearings have established the linkage of Cuba, narcotics, and guerrillas.[46] U.S. arrest warrants have been issued for one Nicaraguan and several Cuban officials involved in drug trafficking from Colombia. Reacting to an all-out anti-drug campaign by the Colombian government, the Colombian drug criminals have murdered Colombian government officials, bombed the U.S. embassy, and issued death threats against U.S. diplomats and their families, Colombian President Betancur and his cabinet, and members of the Colombian supreme court.

The emerging alliance between drug smugglers and arms dealers in support of terrorists and guerrillas is a troublesome new threat to the Western Hemisphere.

Federico Vaughn (front, left, with mustache), described as the "right-hand man" of Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge, loading cocaine on a U.S.-bound plane at Los Brasiles military airfield in Nicaragua. A Nicaraguan soldier can be seen in the background. This cocaine, seized by U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency officials after the plane landed in the United States, was part of the evidence used to indict Vaughn on 13 counts of narcotics trafficking. This photo was released during U.S. Congressional Hearings in August 1984.



Soviet and Cuban subversion seeks to worsen the serious political, economic, and social tensions that plague the region. The United States is responding to this challenge by supporting efforts to develop democratic institutions, increase political dialogue, address the economic deterioration, and provide the capability for the countries to defend themselves. U.S. economic assistance to the countries of Central America is more than three times that of military assistance.

THE CHALLENGE AND THE RESPONSE

The countries of Central America and the Caribbean, struggling to defend or develop pluralistic political systems, are confronted with Soviet-backed guerrilla movements attempting to seize power. The Soviet Union's interest in Central America and the Caribbean was indicated in a 10 March 1983 "Memorandum of Conversation" between Grenadian Army Chief of Staff Einstein Louison and the Soviet Army Chief of General Staff Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov. The Soviet military leader was quoted as saying, "Over two decades ago, there was only Cuba in Latin America, today there are Nicaragua, Grenada, and a serious battle is going on in El Salvador."[47]

Ideology plays an important role in Soviet motivations, as the creation of additional communist states validates the tenets of Marxism-Leninism and bolsters the Soviet Union itself. Most importantly, Kremlin leaders hope that ultimately the United States could become so preoccupied with turmoil in the Central American and Caribbean region that it would be less able militarily and politically to oppose Soviet goals in other key areas of the world.

The Soviets are using Cuba and Nicaragua to exploit the instability and poverty in the area. There is a high degree of congruence in Soviet, Cuban, and Nicaraguan foreign policy goals. These three countries are working in concert to train and support guerrilla organizations in countries throughout the area. Should these guerrillas succeed in coming to power, they undoubtedly will establish regimes similar to those of their patrons—one-party communist dictatorships maintained in power by military force and political and psychological intimidation.

The consequences of a Soviet-aligned Central America would be severe and immediate. The United States would be faced with:

- Additional platforms for regional subversion and Communist expansion, north to Mexico and south toward Panama, and a perception of U.S. ineptitude and powerlessness in the face of Soviet pressures even close to home.
- Far more complicated defense planning to keep open the sea lanes through which pass almost half of U.S. trade, more than half of U.S. imported petroleum, and almost two-thirds of the resupply and reinforcements needed by NATO in time of war.
- Expanded centers for terrorist operations against the United States and its neighboring countries.

The human costs of communism should not be forgotten. History shows that the establishment of a communist regime brings with it severe and permanent suppression of basic human rights; the outpouring of refugees as exemplified in Eastern Europe, Cuba, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia; militarization of the affected society; and economic deterioration.

The countries of Central America and the Caribbean are at a critical juncture. But this can be the impetus for the United States to devote the attention and resources necessary to assist the countries of the region. As the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America stated:

> Our task now, as a nation, is to transform the crisis in Central America into an opportunity.[48]

A cornerstone of United States policy is the belief that the best means to assure the failure of communist expansionism is the development of democratic institutions, leading to governments that are accountable to the people and not imposed on them by either left or right extremes. The basic social and economic inequities which breed frustration and its offspring—insurgent movements—must be addressed if this policy is to succeed.

U.S. aid is designed to improve the quality of life of the people of Central America. In the last four

years, 78% of U.S. aid to Central America has been economic. But the 22% devoted to military assistance is essential if these sovereign nations are to have the capability to defend themselves against the onslaught of Soviet/Cuban-backed guerrillas.

The Caribbean Basin Initiative, the Central America Democracy, Peace and Development Initiative, and U.S. security assistance programs will help to check Soviet and Cuban aggression in this region. But this is only the beginning. The long-term goal is to lay a foundation—a truly bipartisan policy—on which to help build a future for all the people of the region.

If the United States and the countries of the region can marshal the necessary will and resolve to respond to this challenge, then, in the words of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America:

> The sponsors of violence will have done the opposite of what they intended: they will have roused us not only to turn back the tide of totalitarianism but to bring a new birth of hope and of opportunity to the people of Central America.[49]

Notes

1. This document, found by the U.S.-Caribbean security forces in the October 1983 Grenada rescue mission, was not included in the U.S. Department of State/Department of Defense, *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection,* September 1984 publication because it could not be reproduced legibly. A microfiche copy is available for examination in the National Archives, Washington, D.C., Document Number DSI-83-C-004845.

2. For detailed information on Sandinista military activities and support for guerrillas in the region see U.S. Department of State/Department of Defense, *Background Paper: Nicaragua's Military Build-Up and Support for Central American Subversion,* July 18, 1984, and *News Briefing on Intelligence Information on External Support of the Guerrillas in El Salvador,* August 8, 1984.

3. Jerry Flint, "Cuba: Russia's Wondrous Weapon," *Forbes,* March 28, 1983, p. 39.

4. Rolando Bonachea, "United States Policy Toward Cuba, 1959-1961," unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1974.

5. Broadcast on Madrid Domestic Service, January 5, 1984. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS),* Latin America, January 9, 1984, p. Q4.

6. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 1373.

7. Barbara Walters, "An Interview with Fidel Castro," *Foreign Policy,* Fall 1977, No. 28, p. 32.

8. Hugh Thomas, *The Revolution on Balance* (Washington D.C.: The Cuban American National Foundation, 1983), p. 7.

9. U.S., Department of State, *Cuba's Renewed Support for Violence in Latin America,* Special Report No. 90, December 14, 1981.

10. U.S., Comptroller General, "U.S. and Soviet-bloc Training of Latin American Students: Considerations in Developing Future U.S. Programs," *Report to the Congress,* August 16, 1984, p. 1.

11. U.S., Department of State, *Maurice Bishop's "Line of March Speech,"* September 13, 1982, Grenada Occasional Papers—No. 1, August 1984.

12. Ibid.

13. A microfiche of this document, found by the U.S.-Caribbean security forces in the October 1983 Grenada rescue mission, is available for examination at the National Archives, Washington, D.C., Document Number DSI-83-C-004708.

14. Details of this April 1979 delivery, and subsequent military ties with the Soviet bloc are included in U.S. Department of State/Department of Defense, *Grenada: A Preliminary Report,* December 16, 1983.

15. U.S., Department of State/Department of Defense, *Grenada Documents: An overview and Selection,* September 1984, p. 26-6.

16. Ibid., For information on Bishop's request for additional financial assistance from the Soviets, see Bishop's "Outline of Presentation" for his 15 April 1983 meeting with Gromyko. (National Archives, Washington, D.C., Document Number DSI-83-C-004708.)

17. Organization of American States, *Seventeenth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of For-*

eign Affairs, Resolution II, Document 40/79, Rev. 2, Washington, D.C., June 23, 1979.

18. "Sandinista Hero Now Called Traitor," *Washington Times, April 17, 1984, p. 12A.*

19. This speech was carried in Spanish in its entirety in *La Prensa* (San Pedro Sula, Honduras), October 27, 1981, pp. 16-19.

20. Claudia Dreifus, "Playboy Interview: The Sandinistas," *Playboy,* September 1983, p. 60.

21. "A Sandinista Comes Clean," *Newsweek,* December 24, 1984, p. 13.

22. Joaquim Ibarz, "El Comandante Bayardo Arce afirma que se va a implantar el marxismo-leninismo y el partido unico" ("Comandante Bayardo Arce affirms that they are going to establish Marxism-Leninism and a single party"), *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona, Spain), July 31, 1984.

23. Carlos Ripoll, "Sandinismo y Comunismo," (Miami, Fl.: Ideal, September 1, 1974), p. 17.

24. "Rebels Train To Overthrow Somoza," *Washington Post,* October 15, 1978, p. Al.

25. "Nicaraguan Junta Assumes Rule in Jubilant Managua," *Washington Post,* July 21, 1979, p. A1.

26. This 36-page document, formally titled "Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista Peoples' Revolution," dated October 5, 1979, is also known as the "72-Hour Document." It reported in detail on an extraordinary meeting September 21-23, 1979, of the top leadership of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional* (FSLN). It outlined the situation in Nicaragua and the world as the Sandinista leaders saw it and set forth their plans for consolidating the revolution.

27. "Fearful Nicaraguans Building 200,000 Strong Militia," *New York Times,* February 20, 1981, p. A2.

28. "Teen Draft Dodgers Flee from Fighting Nicaragua War," *Christian Science Monitor,* January 5, 1985, p. 1.

29. *Jane's All the World's Aircraft,* 1984-1985, pp. 233-234.

30. For a more complete analysis of this poll, see *La Nacion Internacional* (San Jose, Costa Rica), November 20-24, 1983.

31. "Noriega's Statement," *La Nacion* (San Jose, Costa Rica), October 16, 1984, Editorial.

32. "Nicaragua Confirms It Is Building Military Airport," *Washington Post,* August 17, 1984 p. A4.

33. The turbulent 1979-81 years are detailed in U.S. Department of State, *El Salvador: The Search For Peace,* Background Study, September 1981.

34. "On U.S. Economic-Military Assistance," *Orientacion* (weekly newspaper of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, El Salvador), May 20, 1984, Editorial. The editorial described the guerrilas as the "enemy," saw them as obstructing the democratic process, and said that "to fight the enemy we must have money to generate work and arms to defend the people's rights."

35. Broadcast on *Radio Venceremos,* April 5, 1983. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS),* Latin America, April 6, 1983, p. P7.

36. Interview with Alejandro Montenegro at U.S. Department of State, March 12, 1984.

37. "Salvadorans' U.S. Campaign: Selling of Revolution," *New York Times,* February 26, 1982, p. A10.

38. "Keeping Us Honest," *New York Times,* March 27, 1981, p. A27.

39. Broadcast on Moscow's Radio Peace and Progress, February 4, 1982. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Note,* Publication 9292, August 1982.

40. Ibid., Broadcast on January 12, 1982.

41. Ibid., Broadcast on August 10, 1981.

42. Broadcast on *Radio Faribundo Marti,* November 9, 1984. *Foreign Broadcast Information*

Service (*FBIS*), Latin America, November 13, 1984, p. P6.

43. "Salvadoran Rebels Attack Town," *Washington Post*, November 10, 1984, p. A1.

44. Homily delivered by Auxiliary Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chavez, in the Cathedral of San Salvador, El Salvador, on July 8, 1984.

45. *La Nacion Internacional* (San Jose, Costa Rica), November 20-24, 1983.

46. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Labor and Human Resources, *Drugs and Terrorism*, 98th Cong., 1st Sess., August 8, 1984.

47. A microfiche of this document, found by the U.S.-Caribbean security forces in the October 1983 Grenada rescue mission, is available for examination at the National Archives, Washington, D.C, Document Number DSI-83-C-004844.

48. *Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America*, prepared for the President. Henry A. Kissinger, Chairman. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1984, p. 127.

49. Ibid., p. 127.