

NIE 82/83-81

Insurgency and Instability
in Central America

9 September 1981

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Director of
Central
Intelligence

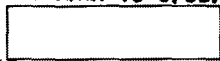
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Insurgency and Instability in Central America

National Intelligence Estimate

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NIE 82/83-81

9 September 1981

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NIE 82/83-81

INSURGENCY AND INSTABILITY
IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Information as of 4 September 1981 was
used in the preparation of this Estimate.

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Treasury.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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KEY JUDGMENTS

Communist exploitation of trends in Central America constitutes the most serious challenge to US interests and freedom of action in the hemisphere since Cuba became allied with the USSR. A continuation of the present trends could result in victory for the extreme left in El Salvador, and such a victory would heighten prospects for the revolutionaries in Guatemala. It may be that those Communist and radical Arab forces providing external support and management help to the insurgencies intend to make Central America a battleground over the next few years which would distract, weaken, and undermine the United States in other parts of the world. The evolution of these scenarios would bring the revolution to Mexico's border, thereby raising the risks of internal destabilization and infiltration by radical leftists.

We believe that prospects are dim for halting Central America's slide toward increasing instability within the next 12 to 15 months. During this period, political extremism and economic deprivation probably will intensify, producing domestic conditions conducive to further revolutionary growth.

Perceiving a weakening of US influence and capability and opportunities to undermine US prestige, Castro since 1978 has increased virtually all types of assistance to revolutionaries in the region, including arms, funding, and training. Under the present circumstances we see little likelihood that Cuba will alter its present course.

The Soviet Union, while allowing Cuba to take the lead, has gradually expanded its involvement—efforts complemented by East European nations, some Communist and Arab states, and the PLO. Given the current situation, Moscow is unlikely to abandon this tack.

The principal objectives of Cuba and the USSR in Central America are to consolidate the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, and to use Nicaragua as a base for spreading leftist insurgency elsewhere in the region. Indeed by virtue of its location, cooperation with Communist and other radical advisers, and support for Central American insurgencies, Nicaragua has become the hub of the revolutionary wheel in Central America.

External support has enabled the Sandinistas to build what is already the region's largest standing army; Nicaragua's armed forces

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will overshadow those of its Central American neighbors by 1983. Managua's leaders consider that they must protect the Sandinista revolution by building up Nicaragua's armed strength. At the same time, however, this buildup is intimidating governments in the region and will give the Sandinistas added confidence to expand their export of revolution.

With Moscow and Havana—and now Managua and others—providing material resources, training, and organizing expertise, home-grown radical movements in other Central American countries are gaining direction and strength.

In *El Salvador*, the flow of supplies through Nicaragua to the insurgents has been climbing slowly in recent months. As long as the guerrillas continue to receive outside support, we see little prospect for a marked shift in favor of the armed forces. Hence we expect the war to drag on indecisively for the next 12 to 15 months.

We believe that arms shipments will continue to grow in coming months, fueling an insurgent offensive aimed at sabotaging the economy and disrupting the elections scheduled for next March. Further economic deterioration or a series of spectacular guerrilla actions could decisively shift momentum against the government.¹

In *Guatemala*, we expect insurgency to intensify but we do not believe that the guerrillas will gain sufficient strength over the next 12 to 15 months to launch warfare on the same scale as in El Salvador.

Nevertheless, the insurgents are benefiting from increased arms flows and additional trained leaders. Chronic abuses by rightwing death squads and security forces are further alienating the once-passive Indian population, making it more responsive to revolutionary appeals.

In *Honduras*, growing economic problems threaten to disrupt social and political stability, but we do not expect the onset of an active insurgency during the period of this Estimate. A more immediate danger is the chance that border clashes with Nicaragua could erupt into major hostilities.

In *Costa Rica*, an inept administration, serious economic problems, and a small-scale but unprecedented surge of terrorist activity have made the country more vulnerable than at any time in decades. Nevertheless, we believe that Costa Rica's strong democratic institutions should allow it to weather these challenges over the period of this Estimate.

¹ The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, believes that the last sentence should instead read, "And in the event of further economic deterioration or a series of spectacular guerrilla actions, the chances would be even that momentum would shift decisively against the government."

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A continuation of the deteriorating situation in Central America also will have ramifications for the *greater Caribbean Basin*. Venezuela, Colombia, and other countries are increasingly concerned about Cuban and Soviet adventurism in the isthmus and perceive further threats to their own internal security.

Some 12 Latin American states have condemned the recent French-Mexican statement recognizing the legitimacy of the left in El Salvador. Moreover, the Christian Democrats of Europe and Latin America for the most part still support President Duarte. Nonetheless, international political support for Central American revolutionaries, especially by West European socialists and Mexico, is likely to continue. We judge that Mexico's influence will weigh against US interests and—as the conflict in El Salvador drags on—the United States will continue to encounter friction in relations with Mexico, France, and other states over Central America policies.

In *Nicaragua*, meanwhile, given a continuance of present circumstances, we judge that the Sandinistas will be likely to maintain their evolution toward a totalitarian Marxist state over the next 12 to 15 months, giving ground temporarily on individual issues but continuing efforts to isolate and politically emasculate democratic forces. The stagnating economy will remain the Sandinistas' major vulnerability, since no foreign government, not even the USSR, seems likely to assume the financial burdens.

Because the US interpretation of events and trends in the region is not shared by many governments, any US effort seen to be stifling revolutionary forces will carry political liabilities. Failing to rise to the Communist challenge, however, would have serious costs for the United States. The hemisphere's political landscape could be altered significantly if the generally weak governments are left to fend for themselves.

Inaction could lead to still more brazen outside radical interference and make the anti-Communist players less amenable to US influence. US credibility would suffer accordingly.

Any defensive *interdiction effort* would have to center on Honduras. Increased efforts there could significantly damage the Salvadoran insurgents' lifeline, but whether this would make them a containable threat is uncertain.

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Disruption of the support network funneling into *El Salvador* is central to thwarting further guerrilla gains. Even success in this matter would not in itself remedy the many basic causes of instability. Minimal economic growth in *El Salvador* and Guatemala would come only at tremendous financial costs.

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DISCUSSION

1. The Communist exploitation of trends in Central America is the most blatant challenge to US interests in the hemisphere since Castro transformed Cuba into a radical Marxist state. Cuba, the USSR, and other entities are now boldly attempting to undermine the United States in its own sphere of influence and, in the process, to distract it from other strategic concerns. The internationalization of the struggle in Central America by Cuba and the USSR and the buildup of Cuban, Nicaraguan, and insurgent military strength assure the Soviets and the Cubans some net gain: either they will succeed in the bid for new client states, or their ejection will come only at high cost to the United States. The longer they have to consolidate their inroads, the costlier it will be for the United States to try to reverse the trend.

2. Central America's slide toward increasing instability probably will accelerate within the next 12 to 15 months. The greatly expanded arms shipments from the USSR to Cuba, the continuing flow of weapons and trained guerrillas from Nicaragua and Cuba to El Salvador and Guatemala, and the Sandinistas' military buildup underscore a pattern of actions designed to exploit conditions already receptive to insurgency and revolutionary growth.

3. During the period of this Estimate, a continuation of these actions will intensify political extremism and economic deprivation throughout the region. As violence increasingly is accepted as the only hope for real change, insurgent groups will continue to expand. Government efforts to remedy national problems will be further inhibited by a scarcity of resources, widespread violence, and the deep-rooted nature of the difficulties.

The Cuban and Soviet Roles

4. *Havana*, acting vigorously to take advantage of these factors, is unlikely under present circumstances to moderate its course. The Castro regime saw the Sandinistas' toppling of Nicaragua's Somoza as symptomatic of a regional climate receptive to destabilization. Perceiving a weakening of US influence and

capability and opportunities to undermine US prestige, Castro in the past three years has increased virtually all types of assistance to revolutionaries in Central America, including arms, funding, and training.

5. *The Soviet Union* has come to share Castro's optimism for revolutionary prospects in Central America. Eager to embarrass the United States in its own sphere of influence and intent on discrediting Washington in the eyes of the Third World, Moscow has gradually expanded its involvement—efforts complemented by East European nations, some Communist and radical Arab states, and the PLO. Nevertheless, Moscow sees the area as less immediately important than does Cuba. The USSR is also concerned with protecting its diplomatic and commercial ties in Latin America, and recognizes that its actions there could further strain its relations with Washington and rally the US public behind tougher actions. These constraints and Cuba's success in Nicaragua underlie Moscow's willingness to let the Cubans take the lead in advancing regional revolutionary causes, a tack it is unlikely to change. Soviet leaders almost certainly consider that their Central American course confronts the United States with a serious policy dilemma: in their view, if Washington does not respond forcefully in Central America, insurgent strength there will grow; and, if the United States does respond forcefully, Moscow will count on exploiting widespread world criticism of US "imperialism" in Central America—and in the process distract attention from Soviet embarrassment in Afghanistan and Poland.

Regional Trends

6. With Havana—and now Managua and others—providing material resources, training, and organizing expertise, the radical movements have gained direction and strength. The psychological boost of having allies to counter the United States, and the practical impact of reasonably steady resupplies, have significantly bolstered their potential. The importance of external factors varies, however, over time and from

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country to country. They are a major element in the staying power of the left in El Salvador, for instance, but not nearly so important yet in Guatemala.¹

7. Nevertheless, no country in the region is immune from destabilizing trends.

— In *El Salvador*, the 24,000-man armed forces and police are stalemated by 4,000 to 4,500 generally well armed and trained insurgents.² We expect the war to drag on indecisively over the next 12 to 15 months. Despite interdiction efforts, the guerrillas are continuing to receive outside support sufficient to sustain a protracted war of attrition. A more widespread insurgent offensive is likely late this year or early in 1982. Meanwhile, the government remains vulnerable to the corrosive economic and political effects of the insurgency, and it is possible that further economic deterioration or a series of spectacular guerrilla actions could decisively shift momentum against the government.³

— In *Guatemala*, the 15,000-man army is increasingly being tested by an estimated 2,000 guerrillas operating primarily in rural areas. On balance, however, we believe it unlikely that the guerrillas will gain sufficient strength over the next 12 to 15 months to launch warfare on the same scale as in El Salvador. Nevertheless, with a well armed and trained cadre, the insurgents are making headway in recruitment. They are aided by economic downturns that will not quickly be reversed, and by the government's reliance on suppression and retaliation instead of a multifaceted counterinsurgency approach.

— In *Nicaragua*, given a continuance of present circumstances, we judge that the Sandinistas are likely to maintain their evolution toward a totalitarian Marxist state over the next 12 to 15 months, giving ground temporarily on individual

¹ See annex A, "Country Outlooks," for details on national situations.

² It should be stressed that information on insurgent strength, casualties, recruitment, and supply links is incomplete. Our estimates are based on intelligence from a variety of human sources and other means of collection.

³ *The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, believes that the last sentence should instead read, "And in the event of further economic deterioration or a series of spectacular guerrilla actions, the chances would be even that momentum would shift decisively against the government."*

issues but continuing efforts to isolate and politically emasculate democratic forces. The regime would prefer to avoid a premature crackdown on moderate groups because this keeps Western coffers open. Meanwhile, however, the Sandinistas will continue strengthening their power base, which is already sufficiently strong to deal with any conceivable alliance of domestic opponents unless they received substantial outside support.

— In *Honduras*, the operations of anti-Sandinista counterrevolutionaries and Tegucigalpa's concern over the military buildup in Managua make major hostilities with Nicaragua a continuing danger. Recent acts of terrorism have prompted security services to depart from their traditional policy of leniency, thus setting the stage for a spiral of violence. But Cuba may prefer to delay the onset of an active insurgency because Honduras contains the major supply routes for guerrillas in El Salvador.

— In *Costa Rica*,

Nevertheless, we believe that Costa Rica's strong democratic institutions should allow it to weather these challenges over the short or medium term.

Nicaragua's Military Buildup

8. For Cuba and the USSR, the immediate objective in Central America is consolidating the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Support of insurgency elsewhere—while a complementary and important goal—is one with a more elastic time frame.

9. The issue of the Sandinistas' survival raises the stakes for these players—immensely so for Havana. Cuban prestige is deeply committed and a secret defense pact has been concluded. Under most circumstances, Castro would be willing to send Cuban troops to defend the regime in Managua against a serious challenge.⁴ We believe that only impending US mili-

⁴ See annex B for details on the Cuban armed forces and the Soviet military presence in Cuba.

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tary retaliation and the strongest of Soviet warnings would deter him.

10. Havana's determination to help consolidate the Sandinista revolution and its desire to use Managua as a support base for insurgents throughout the region are underscored by the substantial Cuban presence throughout the country—a total of 5,200 to 5,650 personnel,⁹ including approximately 1,500 military and 150 to 200 security advisers. Moscow's physical presence is small but growing—45 to 68 personnel, including 35 at its Embassy. It has provided military advisers and instructors, and has delivered some transport aircraft.

11. External support—primarily Cuban—has been instrumental in allowing the Sandinistas to transform a fragmented guerrilla force of 4,000 to 5,000 men into Central America's largest standing army. Nicaragua, with a population of only 2.5 million, has an estimated 22,000 to 27,000 men on active duty plus an equal number of organized reservists. (In contrast, Somoza's National Guard had only 10,500 men in 1979.)

12. Given present goals and recruitment patterns, together with a continuation of current levels of external supply, we expect the Nicaraguan armed forces to reach 40,000 within the next year, with an additional 40,000 reservists sufficiently trained to be integrated into the army. Substantial numbers of less trained militia will serve as an irregular territorial backup. Managua's leaders consider that they must protect the Sandinista revolution by building up Nicaragua's armed strength. At the same time, however, this buildup is intimidating governments in the region and is giving the Sandinistas added confidence to expand their export of revolution. Managua's armed forces will overshadow those of its Central American neighbors by 1983—sooner but for a shortage of trained officers and NCOs, problems with logistics, and a lack of proficiency with newly acquired weapons.

13. The Soviets are closely collaborating with Havana on the flow of military supplies to Nicaragua. Current inventories reflect major increases over the last two years in almost all categories of ground force

⁹ The total includes 2,000 teachers who returned home in July 1981 but will be replaced by February 1982.

light weapons, including undetermined quantities of rocket-propelled grenade launchers, Czechoslovak rifles and submachineguns, and Soviet AK-47s. The Sandinista arsenal also includes at least 12 Soviet 152-mm howitzers; 23 to 28 Soviet-made T-54/55 tanks; and an undetermined but large number of SA-7 surface-to-air missiles. In addition, preparations for the introduction of MIG aircraft reportedly have accelerated, and they could arrive by early 1982. This would enable Nicaragua to offset Honduras's present air advantage.

14. Havana's historical links to the Sandinista movement, and especially its close relationship with the dominant Sandinista clique, point to a further deepening of ties. Cuban training programs are extremely broad and reinforce Cuban influence on the Nicaraguan Army structure, strategy, and philosophy. In addition to training provided by Cubans in Nicaragua, several hundred Nicaraguans are also training or studying in Cuba at any one time. Recent and planned acquisitions of Soviet weapons will increase dependence on both Cuban and, to a lesser extent, Soviet technicians and advisers. The surge in Soviet arms deliveries to Cuba this year apparently in part includes weapons to be shipped through Cuba as well as replacements for Cuban arms previously shipped to Nicaragua.

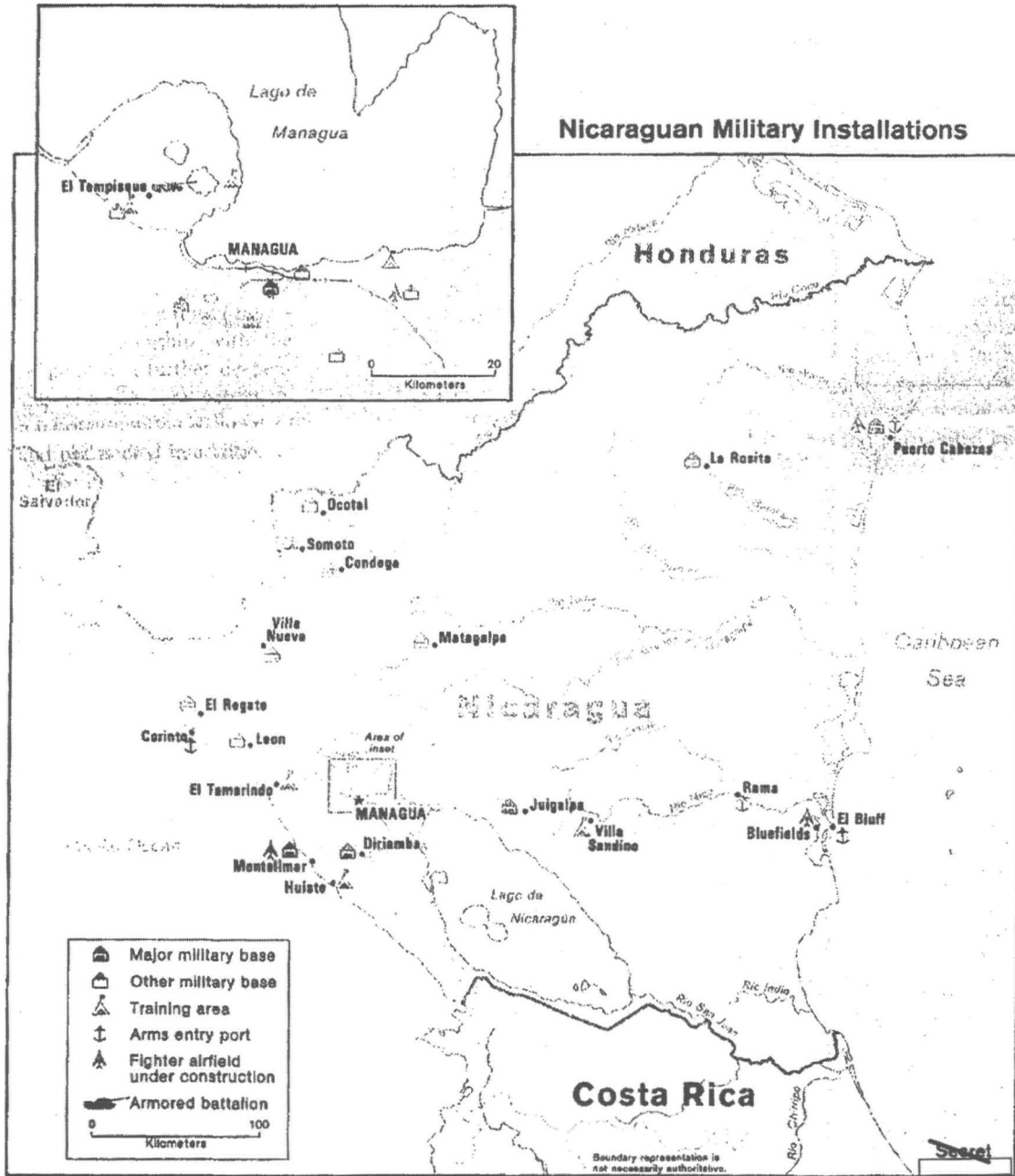
15. Although most of the Soviet effort will continue to be directed through surrogates, Moscow is also expanding its direct role—but in incremental steps in the hope of muting reaction from the United States and key Latin American states. For example, Soviet officers are assigned to the general staff of the Sandinista Army and are assisting in contingency planning. Furthermore, Soviet pilots are flying military missions in two MI-8 helicopters that the USSR recently gave to Nicaragua allegedly for nonmilitary purposes. Moscow reportedly will supply additional pilots for AN-2 short-range transports, at least six of which were provided in early July.

16. Soviet and Cuban solicitations for support from other nations for the Sandinistas also are paying off. Approximately 100 representatives from seven other Communist countries are now in Nicaragua. Of these, the 50 East Germans are probably the most active, providing security advisers, technical and medical aid, and—like other East Europeans—some weapons and other military equipment. Some 15 Bulgarians are serving in Nicaragua, and Sandinista pilots are receiv-

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ing MIG training in Bulgaria. The North Koreans are teaching personal defense to security personnel, and a five-man Vietnamese mission is in Managua, although we lack information on its activities.

17. Certain Arab groups—which probably regard their support of Nicaragua and regional revolutionaries as an opportunity to create and support a bloc of nonaligned states that could undercut US influence—have been similarly forthcoming. The PLO has 30 to 40 personnel serving with the Nicaraguan Air Force, and the Algerians apparently have made two major arms deliveries to Nicaragua this year—including Soviet-made T-54/55 tanks, antiaircraft weapons, artillery, and ammunition; the deliveries were reportedly facilitated by the Soviets, who may have provided the arms or offered to replenish Algerian inventories.

18. There are sporadic reports of Libyan weapons shipments to Nicaragua but, while plausible, we lack confirmation of these. Tripoli has, however, made the largest single financial contribution by the radical Arab countries—which the Nicaraguans are energetically courting. The \$100 million payment this year is reportedly the first tranche of a \$300 million loan. Such amounts, unavailable from the Soviet Bloc, help to ease substantial external financial pressures.

The Spread of Revolution

19. By virtue of its location, its cooperation with a host of Communist and other radical advisers, and its support for Central American insurgents, Nicaragua has become the hub of the revolutionary wheel in Central America. The initial emphasis on aid to the Salvadoran insurgency has already expanded to include the training of Honduran and Costa Rican leftists, and the assumption of a larger role in efforts to unify and supply Guatemalan guerrillas.

20. Aid to regional insurgents is an integral part of Managua's military as well as political strategy. The Sandinistas hope to tie down the armed forces of their neighbors while organizing an insurgent fifth column. As Nicaragua's military capability grows, its export of the revolution is likely to increase because it will be less susceptible to outside pressure. The Sandinistas' internal control is already extensive enough to protect sub rosa operations.

21. Domestic political and economic difficulties will probably not slow either the Sandinistas' conven-

tional military expansion or the growth of their insurgent support network. If anything, pressures from the Nicaraguan democratic opposition and from armed counterrevolutionary bands will accelerate the Sandinistas' military schedule and stiffen their commitment to Central American insurgents. The belief that their domestic opponents are linked to the United States and to conservative regimes in the area strengthens the Sandinistas' willingness to aid revolutionaries in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala as a means of ensuring their own security.

22. The steady buildup of a diversified support capability points toward significantly increased weapons flows to El Salvador later this year. The slowdown in aid earlier this year was clearly a tactical reaction to the defeat of the guerrillas' January offensive and US diplomatic pressures. We believe the flow of supplies has been climbing slowly in recent months and is now sufficient to maintain present levels of rebel activity in El Salvador. Both Nicaragua and the Salvadoran guerrillas reportedly plan increased shipments during the November-February period because of favorable dry season conditions and the Salvadoran left's desire to disrupt the scheduled March elections.

23. The supply and support patterns flow in part from Cuba's return to more militant backing of Latin American revolutionaries, and the strong seconding of this policy by Moscow. The Soviets have complemented Havana's increased activism by encouraging the formation of an umbrella revolutionary organization in El Salvador and by urging the Communist parties in Guatemala and Honduras to join broad revolutionary fronts. The USSR has also played a role in the supply of arms from both Cuba and third parties such as the Vietnamese. With Havana making eventual armed revolution in Honduras one of its objectives, Moscow has undertaken paramilitary training of Hondurans in the USSR for the first time since the mid-1960s and will participate in political training of Hondurans in Havana.

Other Key Players

24. The revolutionary ferment in Central America is having an impact on other nations as well.

25. *West European* diplomatic and political activity in Central America probably will decrease during the next several months, notwithstanding speculation

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about a more activist stance by France under Mitterrand. While France will not hesitate to criticize US policy, it will probably offer only verbal support to the radical left in El Salvador to avoid damaging relations with Washington and setting dangerous precedents for French interests elsewhere, especially in Africa.

26. Many West European socialists have been sobered by repressive Sandinista policies and are concerned over the anti-Americanism that their vocal criticism of the United States has helped to inspire. They will probably ease away from their mediation initiative in El Salvador and express revolutionary sympathy with more discretion—for the small socialist party in El Salvador, for instance, rather than unreservedly for the entire left.

27. With the exception of the UK's Thatcher government and a declining number of conservatives elsewhere, however, most West Europeans remain skeptical that Washington is willing to accept what they view as inevitable and necessary social transformations. The West German and Italian Christian Democrats have tried—in concert with West European socialists—to prevent El Salvador from becoming a partisan political issue in Western Europe. Some of them have even criticized Washington for not taking a more active interest in the socialists' mediation efforts. However, the Christian Democrats of Europe and Latin America have for the most part continued to support President Duarte and the Salvadoran Christian Democrats, while opposing the extreme left as well as the extreme right. Meanwhile, if the conflict in El Salvador drags on, the United States will again encounter friction in relations with some West Europeans and others. And a rapid buildup of opposition to US policies—keyed to leftist gains in the area—remains an ever-present possibility.

28. Mexico's regional policy has become somewhat more pragmatic—especially toward El Salvador—but will continue to be weighted against US interests, at least during the Lopez Portillo administration. Elements of balance, such as financial aid to all regional governments, are outweighed by ideological affinity and material backing for radical causes. Despite this seeming tolerance for the spread of the radical left in Central America, senior Mexican military officers—as well as private-sector leaders—are concerned about the potential emergence of Marxist governments on

Mexico's southern flank. This area is poorly defended, and, because of longstanding socioeconomic problems, would be vulnerable to destabilization and infiltration by radical leftists. In addition, Mexico has expressed some concern over Nicaragua's military buildup and growing Cuban and Soviet involvement, but President Lopez Portillo is unlikely to exercise a significant restraining influence on the Sandinistas.

29. Venezuela will continue as the strongest supporter of US policy in the area, but it is probably approaching the practical limits of its involvement. Increasingly pessimistic over trends in Central America, it will probably soon move to a harder public line toward the Sandinistas. The Venezuelans will continue to pump financial and political aid into El Salvador, but they see the country's two greatest problems—the deteriorating economy and the external support of the insurgents—as requiring substantially greater US efforts. Caracas is somewhat awed by Cuba's ability to foment insurgency and intimidated by Havana's military might—second in size only to Brazil among armed forces in Latin America. Venezuelan leaders fear that Havana may attempt to capitalize on their social and economic problems by returning to its policy of the 1960s, when Venezuelan insurgents were a major beneficiary of Cuban support.

30. Colombia has even greater cause for apprehension, having been the recent target of Cuban-supported subversion. This concern has caused the Turbay government to seek increased political and economic ties with neighboring countries and to begin a modest military modernization program. Military leaders in Argentina and Chile consider the crisis in Central America primarily a US problem. They would like to be supportive of governments in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and are providing limited but discreet military assistance.

31. The political situation in Panama will probably remain relatively stable over the next few months, because top National Guard officers are anxious to maintain the status quo. But the death of Torrijos heralds a protracted period of intrigue and uncertainty as contenders maneuver to fill the power vacuum. Because there are no strong civilian politicians, the key struggle will be among senior officers who want to

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succeed Torrijos as Guard commander. Guard leaders have told leftist-leaning President Royo that they intend to play a larger and more moderating role in the formulation of domestic and foreign policy, particularly that relating to Central America. If Royo does not cooperate, the Guard probably will replace him with Vice President Ricardo de la Espriella, a conservative businessman. Guard leaders are highly nationalistic and—despite their generally pro-US attitudes—will not hesitate to criticize the US role in implementing the Canal Treaty or US policies toward Central America. The operation of the Canal is recognized as vital by virtually all sectors of Panamanian society, however, and Canal operations are unlikely to be disrupted during the period of this Estimate.

32. Havana is monitoring developments in Panama with some apprehension. Several Cuban commercial enterprises are based there, including a large fishing fleet, and Panama City is an important transit point for radical leftists moving to and from Cuba for training and meetings. Havana is advising Panamanian Communists to support Royo, reasoning that his ouster would work against Cuban interests. As Guard officers begin to maneuver seriously for power, Havana probably will back the unprincipled Guard intelligence chief, Lieutenant Colonel Noriega—who has close ties with a variety of Cuban officials. Castro would least like to see the popular, new Guard chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Paredes, come out on top. Paredes probably would try to curtail Cuban activities in Panama.

33. Moscow and Havana aim to see leftist ideology spread and, over time, to see leftist regimes come to power, as underscored by: support networks that lace Central America; Cuba's sponsorship of a guerrilla assault on Colombia, showing that Havana's subversion is not restricted to rightwing dictatorial governments; and the Castro regime's continuing assistance to revolutionaries throughout Latin America.

34. In this context, we expect that the USSR and Cuba would move quickly to take advantage of any opportunities that arise in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, their attention will remain focused primarily on current objectives in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

Implications for the United States

35. Dealing with the challenge in Central America will be complicated by the fact that the US interpretation of events and trends in the region is not shared by many governments. Not only will the nonaligned countries continue for the most part to sympathize with the Central American revolutionaries, but so will Mexico and much of Western Europe—and parts of the US public as well. International leftist propaganda has been enormously successful, and US credibility remains low.

36. In this situation, almost any US effort seen to be stifling the revolutionary forces will carry political liabilities. Particularly, any action smacking of military intervention will revive the historical nightmare of the Yankee big stick throughout Latin America, even among such countries as Venezuela and Brazil, which tend to support overall US policy. Fear of US power remains a dominant, widespread element in the nationalist Latin psyche.

37. Yet, failing to rise to the Communist challenge will almost certainly involve serious costs for the United States. The hemisphere's political landscape could be significantly altered if the generally weak governments are left to fend for themselves against the multinational revolutionary offensive.

38. In addition to El Salvador, one of the most serious threats to regional stability over the next 12 to 15 months is the continuing danger of major hostilities between Nicaragua and Honduras. Hostilities could be precipitated by heightened Nicaraguan raids against counterrevolutionary groups based in Honduras. The odds favoring Nicaragua in such a confrontation increase as time passes, with a correspondingly greater likelihood that Tegucigalpa would ask the United States to intervene. Failure by Washington to respond—either by itself or as part of an OAS-sponsored initiative—would deal a severe psychological blow to pro-US governments in Central America and beyond.

39. The US response to the insurgency in El Salvador involves even greater risks. On the one hand, there is no guarantee that the guerrillas will be decisively defeated even if the United States substantially increases its support to the government. On the other

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hand, inaction could lead to still more brazen outside radical interference in the region, damage US credibility, and make the anti-Communist players less amenable to US influence.

40. The challenges involved in slowing the insurgent threat pale beside Central America's socioeconomic inequities. Even assuming that political violence could be reasonably controlled and that the attitudes of the elite sectors of those nations directly threatened would change, we estimate that: minimal economic growth in El Salvador and Guatemala would require a total of roughly half a billion dollars annually from foreign sources over the next three to

five years; and the annual cost for the region as a whole could approximate twice that amount.

41. Because development and stabilization are necessarily long-range goals, and because dealing with them is inhibited by continuing outside aid for the Central American insurgents, the most critical problem for the near term is disruption of the guerrilla support network funneling into El Salvador. Nicaragua and Cuba—the sources of supply—could be targeted offensively at high political risk.

Note: This section may be downgraded to ~~SECRET~~ [redacted] when separate from annex B. Otherwise, it must be handled in [redacted] channels.

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ANNEX A

Country Outlooks

El Salvador

1. Over the next 12 to 15 months, the war in El Salvador probably will drag on indecisively. As long as the guerrillas receive effective outside support, a dramatic shift in favor of the armed forces is remote (less than 10 percent); at best, improvements in the government's military position will come slowly. In the meantime, the junta will be vulnerable to the corrosive economic and political effects of the insurgency. In the event of a steady economic deterioration or a series of spectacular guerrilla actions, there is some chance—perhaps 20 percent—that the momentum could shift decisively against the government during the period of this Estimate.¹

2. Support funneled through Havana and Managua is critical to insurgent capabilities, and at present is sufficient to maintain current levels of activity indefinitely. Rebel command headquarters in Nicaragua coordinates tactical operations, resupply, and the dispatch of personnel. Programs in Nicaragua and Cuba provide a reasonably steady return of trained Salvadoran insurgents.

3. The guerrillas appear to have increased their force beyond the 4,000-man level existing at the time of the January offensive; we estimate that their strength is now approaching 4,500. Whatever their actual casualty and desertion rates—and our suspicions and some sources suggest they are relatively low—recruitment or impressment appear sufficient to enable them at a minimum to continue a protracted war of attrition.

4. In addition, the guerrillas' communications net is expanding, arms stores are up, and operations continue

to gain sophistication. While there are significant personality and tactical divisions among the various groups, there is a consensus on the need for a prolonged struggle irrespective of domestic political circumstances. This insurgent strategy will result in continuing attacks on economic and infrastructure targets, together with hit-and-run operations to wear down the government—all at minimal cost to the guerrillas.

5. A more widespread insurgent offensive is likely late this year or early next. Some planning has been reported and the supply network is being made ready for the November-February dry season. Even in the absence of increased popular support, the guerrillas will probably see a political need some time around the election period for widespread, headline-generating attacks, which could snowball.

6. Internationalist fighters—who probably number several hundred—are not a major factor, although they do provide a psychological boost to the local insurgents. Their battle experience will provide cadres, such as a reported several dozen Costa Rican guerrillas, that can return home to train others and foment further unrest. Nicaragua almost certainly supplies the largest single contingent. Moreover, the appearance in El Salvador (or Guatemala) of Nicaraguan "freedom fighter" Eden Pastora would, at least initially, seriously unsettle government officials. Given Pastora's reputation, we cannot rule out some spectacular operation paralleling his takeover of the Nicaraguan National Palace in 1978.

7. The military's counterinsurgency effort has made some slow gains, but these have disrupted rather than debilitated insurgent forces. Guerrilla commanders display both the confidence and ability to avoid encirclement, in part because of the armed forces' limited manpower. There has been no significant breakdown in military morale. Interdiction and rapid-reaction capabilities are inadequate and, to move beyond essentially reactive tactics, the army requires

¹ The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and the National Intelligence Officer for Latin America believe that the judgment in the last sentence of this paragraph should instead read, "... there is an even chance—50-50—that the momentum ..."

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improved transport, an increased air and naval capability, and better tactical and national intelligence.

8. The current balance of forces—some 24,000 government troops and police opposing 4,000 to 4,500 regular guerrillas and several thousand additional "irregulars"—gives the Duarte government far less than the 10-to-1 force advantage generally considered necessary to defeat an insurgency. Government—and indeed guerrilla—efforts to expand forces substantially will be aided by the availability of manpower from the large and unemployed young male population. The government, however, will be hindered especially by serious budgetary restraints and a critical shortage of officers and NCOs.

9. In addition, junta efforts to attract civilian support will be hampered by its inability to control indiscriminate violence by security forces and right-wing death squads. This failure will also blunt attempts to gain increased international backing.

10. Politically, the junta will probably hold together for the short term. The center of political gravity in the armed forces has moved steadily to the right since the October 1979 coup and is now stabilized with pragmatic center-right leadership. The military views the Christian Democrats as ideologically objectionable but politically necessary.

11. The junta has become more effective over the last year, but it faces growing frictions as the military becomes increasingly disenchanted with the Christian Democrats' electioneering. Moreover, although the junta is making some efforts to attract private-sector support, even a tactical electoral truce will not prevent some business leaders from working energetically behind the scenes to oust party leader and junta president Duarte. Continued strong US support for the party's inclusion in the junta will remain its principal strength.

12. Although the elections pose a significant risk for the Christian Democrats, they are unlikely to have substantial impact on the insurgency over the next 12 to 15 months. The left is not likely to participate in the electoral process, and the general populace—as well as a significant sector of international opinion—will regard the elections with cynicism. Nevertheless, a contest held without major fraud or disruption would increase the government's legitimacy.

13. If the favored Christian Democrats emerge in a strengthened position, they could attract labor, business, and other sectors. Failure to make a strong showing, however, would greatly increase the chances that the Christian Democrats will be attacked and perhaps shunted aside by military and private-sector leaders. Any such sidelining of the Christian Democrats—the only credible reform element in the government—will significantly boost long-term insurgent prospects.

14. Similarly, the guerrillas would gain from the collapse of the government's agrarian reform program. A lack of funds and technical expertise already is hobbling implementation of the program—potentially among Latin America's most sweeping. Moreover, both extremes of the political spectrum perceive it as a danger and are responding to it with threats and violence.

15. The economy will probably be the country's most serious problem over the next year. Severely worsening terms of trade, guerrilla damage to the infrastructure, and the loss of private-sector confidence have produced an economic downturn that even sizable sums of foreign aid alone could not readily reverse. Until the violence can be arrested and the private sector has some assurance of consistent stabilization policies, foreign aid—even as much as \$500 million annually—will do little more than shore up living conditions and provide basic necessities to refugees. Without these measures, polarization and political anarchy will accelerate and could, by default, result in a radical Marxist victory.

Guatemala

16. The Guatemalan insurgency poses a potential threat—irrespective of foreign support—although it is unlikely to gain sufficient strength over the next 12 to 15 months to launch warfare on the same scale as now obtains in El Salvador. While Havana does not view the guerrillas as ready for major confrontations with the army, the growth of the insurgent movement and the pool of potential recruits being fed by growing economic and political disaffection have made the Castro regime increasingly optimistic.

17. The 2,000 active insurgents face a hidebound, if durable, opponent. There is little indication that the government has the capacity to implement an effective, multifaceted counterinsurgency program. In fact,

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the guerrillas' established strategy of harassment and their increasing predilection for economic sabotage are provoking the military into stepping up politically costly repression. The reform efforts of the outgoing Lucas administration are significant by Guatemalan standards. The land distribution program, for example, could benefit as many as 250,000 by the end of 1981. The principal focus of the program aims to resettle highland Indians on plots in the Northern Transversal Zone. In addition, government-owned farms on the south coast are being broken up and given to peasants who are working the farms. Nevertheless, such efforts are poorly implemented and inadequate, and may be scaled down because of economic constraints. As Guatemala moves toward next year's election, the likelihood that the defense minister will be the next president points to continued heavy reliance on hardline policies.

18. The armed forces are cohesive and determined. Having begun to prepare following the overthrow of Somoza two years ago, they are psychologically ready for a tough battle. Man for man, they are probably a better counterinsurgent force than Somoza's National Guard or the Salvadoran military, but they face substantial mobility, transport, and probably manpower problems. Although the armed forces will probably be strengthened, they must control a country five times the size of El Salvador, and will be weakened further by a sense of international isolation, especially if El Salvador falls.

19. At this point, recruitment is the primary emphasis for the guerrillas. They are aided by economic and ecological deterioration, which has combined with habitual political disaffection to destabilize traditional society. In the predominantly Indian Western Highlands—the current focus of the rural insurgency—already poor living standards are being further lowered by overpopulation, soil erosion, and the low productivity of traditional farming practices. These problems are compounded by the national economic downturn brought about by depressed coffee prices, disrupted regional trade, declining tourism, reduced foreign investment, and capital flight. Unemployment is escalating, and some coffee growers are refusing to harvest—a course that will hurt peasants who depend on seasonal wage labor.

20. Alienation is also generated by the most rigid political structure in Central America. The moderate

left has been virtually eliminated by assassinations perpetrated by security forces and far-right groups operating under tacit government license. Elections are fraudulent. Increasing army abuse of civilians—highlighted by recent massacres of Indian villagers—is a major factor in the growth of popular support for the guerrilla movement in certain areas.

21. Furthermore, Guatemala's Indians—who comprise 50 percent of the country's population—are undergoing a cultural change that is altering traditional passivity. Events such as the Nicaraguan revolution are having a catalytic effect. If repression continues to escalate, and if new aspirations for economic advancement and political equality are frustrated, Indian receptiveness to insurgent appeals will increase. There are reports of increasing Indian participation in the guerrilla organizations. The Indians did not play a part in the serious insurgency in the 1960s.

22. Cuba has been the principal ally of the Guatemalan guerrilla movement, providing arms, funds, counsel, international propaganda support, and guerrilla warfare training. Both Cuba and Nicaragua have had some recent success in forging cooperation among the four insurgent groups, at least in part by providing increased arms supplies, which have begun to flow through Nicaragua and Honduras, and in some reported cases through Belize and Mexico.

23. Cuban involvement is increasing—the same pattern of "supply-following-unity" that preceded major Cuban involvements in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The pace of the increase, however, is probably dependent upon several variables, the most important of which may be the fate of El Salvador. Were the radical left to come to power there, foreign supporters of revolution would refocus their attention on Guatemala. The common land border would make El Salvador an even more effective guerrilla redoubt and supply base for Guatemala than is Nicaragua today for El Salvador.

Nicaragua

24. Given a continuance of present circumstances, we judge that the Sandinistas are likely to maintain their evolution toward a totalitarian Marxist state over the next 12 to 15 months, giving ground temporarily on individual issues but continuing efforts to isolate and politically emasculate democratic forces. The FSLN regime would prefer to avoid a premature

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crackdown on moderate groups because this keeps Western coffers open. Meanwhile, however, the Sandinistas will continue strengthening their power base, which is already sufficiently strong to deal with any conceivable alliance of domestic opponents, unless they receive substantial outside support. FSLN leaders have emphasized, however, that their willingness to tolerate pluralism even within its present confined limits is linked to the level of armed violence against the regime. Should the Sandinistas perceive that they face an imminent foreign invasion or greatly increased internal instability threatening their control, they would see no alternative to large-scale repression.

25. While frictions within the Sandinista leadership have become increasingly apparent over time, these are rooted in personal rivalries and differences over tactics, rather than in serious ideological cleavages. The Sandinistas' continuing concern about external threats to the revolution have been sufficient to prevent jockeying for position to get out of control. We believe that National Directorate members would be even more inclined to coalesce if their paranoia about challenges to their rule intensifies.

26. The stagnating economy will remain the Sandinistas' major vulnerability, since no foreign government—not even Moscow—seems likely to assume the financial burden for propping up the regime. Although Nicaragua recovered slightly in 1980 from the devastation of the revolution, real economic output this year will decline and the GNP will still be below the 1978 level. Growth will be sluggish as long as private investment remains weak. Arbitrary and vaguely legal nationalizations following Somoza's ouster have put the government in control of roughly 40 percent of GNP. Private-sector confidence slipped further in July, when Managua expropriated 15 more companies and announced plans to take over additional large amounts of agricultural land. These latest nationalizations were ostensibly designed to combat capital flight, even though this outflow slowed from a total of about \$500 million during 1978-79 to \$20 million last year. We expect the regime to cite anemic economic performance to justify further nationalizations in the months ahead.

27. Although increasingly pessimistic about the prospects for preserving a mixed economy, most business leaders still hope that the Sandinistas—to avert even more severe economic dislocations—will see the

need to reach a modus vivendi with the remaining private sector. Led by the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), an umbrella organization representing a broad array of economic groups, the private sector is viewed by the FSLN as its most formidable domestic opponent. With nearly 60 percent of GDP still in private hands, businessmen retain the potential for calling a general strike, a tactic they used effectively against Somoza. A growing number of private-sector leaders are coming to believe that such confrontational tactics will be needed. Most recognize the risks such a course entails, however, and still hope to wring concessions from the Sandinistas through political pressure and negotiations.

28. In addition to the private sector, five moderate political parties—which range from the remnants of the traditional right-of-center Conservative Party to the left-of-center Social Christians—serve as potential vehicles for mobilizing support against the Sandinistas. Since last November, Alfonso Robelo, the most prominent of the moderate political leaders, has become an important force in building a democratic coalition from elements of the moderate parties, the private sector, and two independent labor unions. The coalition's growing unity has complicated Sandinista efforts to cow individual democratic groups. It has also enabled the moderates to increase their stature at home as well as to develop foreign ties they hope will inhibit further Sandinista repression. Continued harassment and violent intimidation by the FSLN, however, have largely neutralized the parties' efforts to augment their small, predominantly middle-class memberships.

29. Given the restraints on moderate political parties, a major burden of the effort to rally public opposition to the Sandinistas has devolved to the independent media, which comprise most notably the newspaper *La Prensa* and a small number of radio stations. *La Prensa* has effectively—often brazenly—carried an increasingly anti-Sandinista message to a readership twice that of the two progovernment journals. It has elicited strong public response by criticizing the involvement of Cuban and other advisers from Communist countries. While the international prestige of *La Prensa* has so far allowed it to survive, it is financially pinched and has also been

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ordered to suspend operations on three occasions since July—underscoring its increasing vulnerability.

30. While not formally a member of the loose coalition of democratic groups, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church has been an outspoken defender of political pluralism and an opponent of Sandinista radicalism. Aided by the popularity and moral stature of Archbishop Obando y Bravo, the church is a magnet for those who object to the FSLN's methods or its Marxist ideology—a fact reflected in the steady increase in church attendance over the past two years. Recognizing that in staunchly Catholic Nicaragua the established church is an important vehicle for mobilizing dissent, the government recently used its monopoly of television to deny Obando continued access to that medium and is intensifying efforts to discredit him. The Sandinistas are also trying to sow dissension by backing the church's small but active radical wing, whose members include three prominent cabinet members. Nonetheless, the church's deep roots in Nicaraguan society suggest that it will continue to have greater success in resisting Sandinista pressure than did its counterpart in Cuba during the early stages of the Castro revolution.

31. In addition to nonviolent opposition from democratic forces, the Sandinistas confront a small but growing challenge from a number of armed groups. Since last summer, they have had to contend with sporadic hit-and-run attacks from Honduran-based exile groups whose members are predominantly former members of Somoza's National Guard. While the enduring loathing most Nicaraguans feel for the National Guard has prevented such exile groups from mounting a serious military threat, opposition to the FSLN is beginning to spawn other antiregime insurgent groups within Nicaragua.

32. Although scattered armed anti-Sandinista incidents reportedly are increasing in central Nicaragua, by far the most serious unrest is in the country's remote and culturally distinct Atlantic Coast region. Some 2,000 Indians belonging to the Misurasata organization began fleeing to Honduras in April because of increased Sandinista repression. Their leader, Steadman Fagoth, established ties with ex-National Guard counterrevolutionaries there, and the Sandinista Army reportedly is reinforcing its garrison in Puerto Cabezas following recent clashes with Indian insurgents. Given the widespread antagonism toward the Sandinistas on

the Atlantic Coast, that area will remain fertile territory for antiregime insurgents, despite the government's overwhelmingly superior military resources.

Honduras and Costa Rica

33. Neither Honduras nor Costa Rica is in immediate danger of destabilization, although they are being buffeted by regional turmoil and are facing unaccustomed unrest. For revolutionaries, the primary value of both is still as support bases for neighboring guerrillas, but the Cubans, Soviets, and Nicaraguans are stepping up training of local insurgents in preparation for more serious agitation in the medium term.

34. Although the two countries are strikingly different politically and socially, both lack many of the factors that spawn radical insurgency. Neither has a high degree of socioeconomic stratification, serious demographic pressures, a dictatorial dynasty, or a power structure strongly opposed to change. The peaceful solution of conflicting interests is enhanced by free presses, significant organized labor movements, and the interplay of political parties (which, even during periods of military dictatorship in Honduras, have not been severely repressed).

35. In both countries, however, these buffer elements are breaking down, with significant impact on the psychological climate. The regional economic downturn and poor domestic economic management are undermining confidence. Domestic politics are unsettled by the Sandinista military buildup, and Tegucigalpa especially is concerned over the risk of open war. Both nations have long-established, pro-Soviet Communist parties that are splintering and breeding radical factions, a process hastened by events in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

36. In Honduras growing economic problems threaten to disrupt social and political stability. An IMF-mandated austerity program will force a reduction in real expenditures on social welfare programs that will probably exacerbate tensions among the poor, while policies that hold down wage increases will be challenged by the large, well-organized labor sector.

37. We see scant evidence that either of the political groups likely to win the November presidential and congressional elections possesses the leadership qualities and expertise to resolve the economic problems. Presuming a victory by the favored Liberals,

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significant political infighting is probable, especially if they fail to gain a majority. The combination of the generally unsettled regional outlook, the threat from Nicaragua, and the prospect that the armed forces will follow an increasingly hard line narrows the latitude any civilian government will have before military leaders feel it necessary to step in again.

38. The principal leftist group—the Moscow-oriented Communist Party of Honduras (350 members)—still views an electoral strategy as viable and plans to support leftist candidates in November. At the same time, however, paramilitary training of party members is increasing. In addition, a splinter group of radicals—in collaboration with Salvadoran guerrillas—reportedly intends to initiate a campaign of violence as soon as possible and has already carried out several acts of terrorism—developments previously absent from the Honduran scene. The security services—departing from their traditional policy of leniency—have retaliated by assassinating two radical leaders, thus possibly setting the stage for a spiral of violence.

39. In *Costa Rica* a discredited administration, major economic problems, and unprecedented terrorist actions have undermined popular confidence in the government. Although apparently more vulnerable now than at any time in decades, strong democratic institutions should allow Costa Rica to weather these challenges over the short-to-medium term.

40. The government's low credibility is largely a result of President Carazo's erratic style, uncompromising politics, and collusion in arms trafficking. The probable election next year of National Liberation Party candidate Monge may offer some relief, but his administration is likely to be characterized initially by infighting over economic policy and questions concerning how to deal with labor strife.

41. Although Costa Ricans are beginning to respond, their economic challenges are substantial. The

coffee industry is depressed by low world coffee prices, the high cost of oil is contributing to large trade deficits, prices are rising 40 to 50 percent annually, and unemployment is climbing toward 15 percent. Overall economic decline will be about 5 percent this year.

42. The left has been moving toward a more radical posture, and the recent spate of terrorist actions is a harbinger of further disruptive efforts. Radicals in the nonviolent Moscow-line Communist Party (6,000 to 7,000 members) have been trying to unseat longtime Secretary General Mora; either they will ultimately succeed or the party will continue to spawn radical offshoots.

43. The regional character of the insurgent effort is also increasingly apparent in Costa Rica. In late 1980 the Cubans and Soviets helped arrange meetings between the Communist Party and a radical splinter group to coordinate support for Salvadoran insurgents. As noted earlier, several dozen Nicaraguan-trained Costa Rican radicals are now fighting in El Salvador. Some terrorist incidents in Costa Rica have been undertaken in support of the Salvadoran revolutionary struggle.

44. The radical left is still embryonic, however, and its principal impact in the short term will be to add to the psychologically unsettled climate. Because the public is overwhelmingly anti-Communist, early efforts at domestic destabilization could be counterproductive. Over the longer term, however, Costa Rica's traditionally tolerant attitudes [redacted]

[redacted] provide an easy environment for continued leftist activities.

Note: This annex may be downgraded to ~~SECRET~~ [redacted] when separate from annex B. Otherwise, it must be handled in [redacted] channels.

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ANNEX B

Cuban Armed Forces and the Soviet Military Presence

1. Since the mid-1970s, when Cuba intervened in Angola on a large scale and the Soviet Union began to provide modern equipment, the Cuban military has changed from a predominantly home defense force into a formidable power relative to its Latin American neighbors. The armed forces currently total 220,000 to 260,000 personnel—120,000 to 130,000 on active duty either in Cuba or overseas, and 100,000 to 130,000 in the ready reserves, subject to immediate mobilization.

2. With a population of just under 10 million, Cuba has by far the largest military force in the Caribbean basin and the second largest in Latin America after Brazil, which has a population of over 120 million. Some 1.2 to 1.3 percent of the Cuban population belongs to the regular, active-duty military, as compared with an average of only slightly over 0.3 percent in other countries in the Caribbean Basin (see table B-1). In addition, Cuba's large paramilitary organizations would be available to support the military internally.

Size and Role of the Cuban Armed Forces

3. The quantitative and qualitative upgrading of the armed forces since the mid-1970s and their combat experience in Angola and Ethiopia give the Cuban military definite advantages over the forces in most of Cuba's neighbors. Equipment delivered to the army—such as T-62 tanks, BMP infantry combat vehicles, BM-21 multiple rocket launchers, and ZSU-23-4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns—has begun to alleviate earlier deficiencies in mechanized capability, as well as providing increased firepower.

4. The Cuban Air Force is one of the largest and probably the best equipped in all Latin America, with over 300 Soviet-supplied military aircraft, 200 of which are MIG jet fighters. Although many potential targets in Central America do not fall within the range of Cuba's fighter aircraft for round-trip ground-attack missions, some Cuban MIGs would be capable of limited engagements there in an air superiority role.

Table B-1

Military Strength of Selected
Latin American Countries

Country	Population (in millions)	Armed Forces	Percent of Population in Armed Forces
Cuba	9.9	220,000-260,000 total ^a (120,000-130,000 active duty)	2.2-2.6 (1.2-1.3)
Nicaragua	2.5	45,000-55,000 total ^a	1.8-2.2
Colombia	26.5	65,000-70,000	0.3
El Salvador	4.9	24,000 ^b	0.5
Guatemala	7.2	15,000	0.2
Honduras	3.8	12,000	0.3
Mexico	68.7	110,000-115,000	0.2
Panama	1.9	9,000 ^b	0.5
Venezuela	14.8	40,000	0.3
Brazil	120.4	270,000-275,000	0.2

^a Includes regular military and reserve units.

^b Includes national guard and police forces.

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Effective employment in either role, however, would require basing on Central American soil—a feasible option given the closeness of relations with Nicaragua.

5. The Cuban Navy has been significantly upgraded since 1979. When its two recently acquired F-class submarines and single Koni-class frigate are fully integrated into the operational force, it will be able to sustain operations throughout the Caribbean Basin.

6. Cuba's capability to intervene in a hostile environment is modest by Western standards, but is considerably more formidable in the Central America context. As in 1975, when a single battalion of Cuban airborne troops airlifted to Luanda at a critical moment played a role far out of proportion to its size, a battle-tested Cuban force injected quickly into a combat situation in Central America could prove a decisive factor. Moreover, since the Angolan experience, Havana has increased the size of its airborne-trained forces to its current level of 2,200 troops and has significantly improved its airlift and sealift capacity as well.

7. Cuba lacks the aircraft needed to transport heavy military equipment and would have to turn to the Soviets to achieve such a capability. Since 1975, however, the Cuban commercial air fleet has acquired 10 large, long-range jet transport aircraft, each capable of carrying 150 to 200 troops. (By comparison, Cuba conducted the airlift to Luanda in 1975 with only five medium-range aircraft, each having a maximum capacity of 100 troops.) In addition, Havana now has twenty AN-26 military aircraft—capable of carrying a total of 600 paratroops—and some 70 smaller military and civilian transport planes that could be used to fly troops and munitions to Central America.

8. Cuba's ability to mount an amphibious assault is constrained both by the small number of naval infantry personnel and by a dearth of suitable landing craft. Cuba would, however, be capable of transporting significant quantities of troops and supplies in a short time—using ships belonging to the Merchant Marine and Navy—to ports secured by friendly forces, if the United States did not become involved.

9. The importance of the military in Cuba goes far beyond protecting the homeland or carrying out the leadership's foreign policy aims. The armed forces are heavily involved in the actual operation of the govern-

ment and directly control the large paramilitary organizations whose hundreds of thousands of personnel normally are part of the civilian labor force but would be available to support the military during crises. Although these groups would be far less combat-capable than the military, they have received at least rudimentary military training and discipline. They also provide an organizational framework for the rapid mobilization of large numbers of people—a framework unmatched in Latin America. The primary orientation of these paramilitary organizations is internal security and local defense (see table B-2 for the mission, strength, and subordination of each group).

10. The extent to which the military is involved in the civilian sector is also reflected in its economic activity. In addition to uniformed personnel, the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR) has over 30,000 civilian workers employed in factories and repair facilities in Cuba and in building roads and airfields in Africa. Many are employees of MINFAR's Central Directorate for Housing and Construction which, in addition to military construction, builds housing and apartment complexes for military and civilian personnel of both MINFAR and the Ministry of the Interior (MININT). The Youth Labor Army also contributes to economic development by engaging in agricultural, industrial, construction, and transportation projects.

The Soviet Military Presence

11. The Soviet military presence in Cuba includes a ground forces brigade, a military advisory group, and two communications and signal intelligence complexes. This presence is supplemented by periodic visits by naval reconnaissance aircraft and task groups.

12. The ground force brigade has approximately 2,600 men and consists of one tank battalion and three motorized rifle battalions, plus various combat and service support units. Most of the brigade is located near Santiago de las Vegas, about 20 kilometers south of Havana, with one motorized rifle battalion stationed in Lourdes. Soviet ground forces have been present at Santiago de las Vegas since shortly before the missile crisis in 1962. The Soviet unit there slowly evolved until it reached its present size and structure, probably by late 1977.

13. Likely missions of the brigade include providing a symbolic Soviet commitment to Castro, implying a

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Table B-2

Strength and Missions of Cuba's
Paramilitary Organization

Organization	Subordi- nation	Strength	Mission
Youth Labor Army	MINFAR	100,000	Civic action force, receiving little military training in peacetime. One wartime mission would be to operate and protect the railroads.
Civil Defense Force	MINFAR	100,000	"Military" units would assist in providing local police functions; non-military would provide first aid and disaster relief.
Border Guard Troops	MININT	3,000 full-time, plus unknown number ^a of civilian auxiliaries	Help guard Cuban coastline.
National Revolutionary Police	MININT	10,000, plus 52,000 ^a civilian auxiliaries	Responsible for order in peacetime; could help provide rear-area security during wartime.
Department of State Security	MININT	10,000-15,000	Counterintelligence and prevention of counterrevolutionary activities.
Territorial Troop Militia	MINFAR	At least 500,000 ^{a, b} at present; still forming	Regional security/local defense.

^a Because volunteering for service in these paramilitary organizations is interpreted as a sign of political loyalty, many Cubans have membership in several at the same time. There thus is considerable double counting in overall manpower totals.

^b Fidel Castro stated in his National Day speech of 26 July 1981 that the Territorial Militias already had more than 500,000 members. But many of these are not combat ready at present.

readiness to defend Cuba and his regime, as well as providing security for key Soviet facilities, particularly the communications and signal intelligence complex at Lourdes. It is highly unlikely that the USSR would use the brigade as an intervention force, although it is capable of tactical operations in Cuba. Unlike airborne divisions, the brigade is not structured for rapid deployment, and no transport aircraft capable of carrying its armored vehicles and heavy equipment are stationed in Cuba. Elements of the brigade sometimes conduct limited combined maneuvers with Cuban forces, but such activity is only a minor part of the brigade's exercises—it apparently is not directly involved in training Cubans.

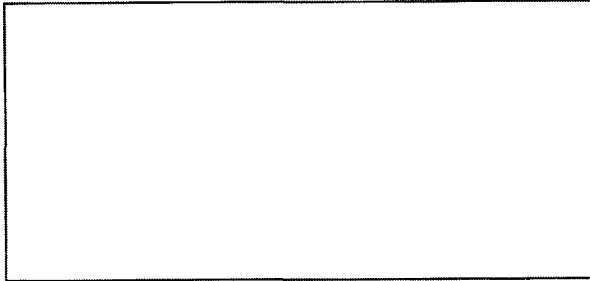
14. The Soviet Military Advisory Group, headquartered in the Kohly section of Havana, consists of at least 2,000 ground, air, and naval personnel. Although scattered throughout the island, about half live and work in Kohly—where the Soviets have extensive facilities, including an underground command center.

A few Soviet pilots probably assigned to the MAG have been routinely detected flying in Cuba, probably to maintain their proficiency. In addition, Soviet naval advisers may be using the small island of Cayo Alcatraz in Cienfuegos Bay as a residential or recreational facility.

15. The Soviets apparently sent 20 to 40 fighter pilots to augment Cuba's air defenses during two periods—January through May 1976 and December 1977 through August 1978—when Cuban pilots were sent to Angola and Ethiopia.

16. The Soviets maintain their largest communications and intelligence complex outside the USSR at Lourdes, about 15 kilometers southwest of Havana.

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with a Cuban submarine and acted as targets for Cuban missile patrol boats and attack aircraft. Soviet intelligence collection ships operating off the US east coast regularly call in Cuba during their patrols, as do hydrographic research and space-support ships operating in the region. In addition, the Soviet Navy keeps a salvage and rescue ship in Havana for emergency operations.

17. Since the visits began in 1969, 21 Soviet naval task groups have sporadically deployed to the Caribbean, all but one of them visiting Cuban ports (see table B-3). The Soviet ships have often exercised with Cuban naval forces while in the region; during the most recent visit, in April 1981, a cruiser and two guided-missile frigates conducted antisubmarine exercises

18. Soviet TU-95 Bear D reconnaissance aircraft have deployed periodically to Cuba since 1970, and other Bear D aircraft stop in Cuba en route to Angola. Typically, these aircraft are deployed in pairs and stay in Cuba for several weeks, during which time they fly two to five reconnaissance missions along the US east coast and in the north-central Atlantic.

Table B-3

Soviet Combatant Deployments to the Caribbean

Number	Dates	Ships	Annual Combatant Shipdays
1	10 July-13 August 1969 (35 days) *	Kynda CG Kildin DDG Kashin DDG 2 F-class SS 1 N-class SSN Submarine tender, oiler, and tanker	338 (1969)
2	6 May-10 June 1970 (36 days)	Kresta I CG Kanin DDG 2 F-class SS 1 E-class SSGN Submarine tender and tanker	400 (1970)
3	4-23 September 1970 (20 days)	Kresta I CG Kanin DDG Alligator LST Oiler, tanker, submarine tender, and heavy lift buoy tender	
4	30 November-29 December 1970 (29 days)	Kashin DDG F-class SS Submarine tender and oiler	
5	9 February-9 March 1971 (29 days)	Kresta I CG N-class SSN Submarine tender, tanker, and intelligence ship	249 (1971)
6	22 May-11 June 1971 (21 days)	E-II-class SSGN Submarine tender	
7	30 October-20 November 1971 (22 days)	Kresta I CG Kashin DDG 2 F-class SS Tanker and intelligence ship	

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Table B-3 (Continued)

Soviet Combatant Deployments to the Caribbean

Number	Dates	Ships	Annual Combatant Shipdays
8	26 February-8 May 1972	Kotlin DDG F-class SS G-II-class SSB Tanker, oiler, training ship, and intelligence ship	
9	24 November 1972-16 February 1973 (37 in 1972; 47 in 1973)	Kresta I CG Kanin DDG E-II-class SSGN F-class SS Tanker, training ship, and intelligence ship	385 (1973)
10	2 August-16 October 1973 (76 days)	Kresta II CG Kanin DDG E-II-class SSGN F-class SS Tanker	
11	28 April-1 June 1974 (35 days)	2 Krivak I FFG G-II-class SSB Tanker	203 (1974)
12	24 September-13 November 1974	2 Kresta II CG Oiler	
13	26 February-5 April 1975 (39 days)	2 Krivak I FFG Tanker	114 (1975)
14	21 May-7 June 1975 (18 days)	2 Kanin DDG Oiler	
15	16 August-21 September 1976 (37 days)	2 Krivak I FFG Oiler	74 (1976)
16	26 June-22 July 1977 (27 days)	Kresta II CG Krivak I FFG Krivak II FFG Oiler	138 (1977)
17	13 December 1977-18 January 1978 (19 in 1977; 18 in 1978)	2 Krivak I FFG F-class SS Oiler	528 (1978)
18	14 March-7 May 1978 (55 days)	Mod Kashin DDG Natya MSF Oiler	
19	12 September-11 December 1978 (91 days)	Mod Kashin DDG 2 Krivak I FFG 1 F-class SS 1 Oiler	
20	13-19 August 1979 (8 days)	Kresta II CG Krivak II FFG Probably a C-class SSGN tanker (No visit was made to Cuba)	24 (1979)
21	12 April-11 May 1981 (30 days)	Kara CG 2 Krivak I FFG Oiler	90 (1981)

* The figure given represents the time the overall group spent in Caribbean waters. A few ships stayed shorter or longer periods than the other ships in their groups.

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