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RADIO TV REPORTS,

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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Crossroads

STATION WDVM-TV
CBS Network

DATE August 29, 1984 8:00 P.M.

CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT The War in Nicaragua

BILL MOYERS: Our story now is the debate in Washington over the war in Nicaragua. It's going to be a political issue this fall. Three years ago President Reagan authorized the CIA to start supporting the rebels fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas, you'll recall, had earlier been cheered by virtually every segment of society there for throwing out of power the much-hated regime of the dictator Somoza. But instead of democracy, the Sandinistas copied the Marxist government of Cuba, with its one-party rule. This drove some Nicaraguans who had supported the revolution into the countryside, where, with members of Somoza's old bodyguard, they've been waging guerrilla war against the Sandinistas.

On the grounds that the Sandinistas were sending arms from Nicaragua to leftist guerrillas in nearby El Salvador, President Reagan began CIA support for the rebels. But then he permitted help for more than the interdiction of weapons, and soon the U.S. was subsidizing attacks not only against the Nicaraguan military, but against civilians and their means of livelihood. This has increased the debate in Washington over whether we should be involved at all.

The Sandinista government calls them criminals, President Reagan describes them as freedom fighters. They are the Contras, the counterrevolutionaries of Nicaragua. These are the insurgents the United States has been supporting, Nicaraguan men and women who have been waging a not-so-secret war against their government.

The song they sing is of fighting and sacrifice and of the urgency of saving their country.

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