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Central Intelligence Agency

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Washington D.C. 20505



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

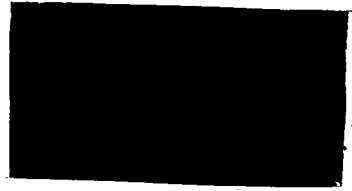
18 September 1989

Nicaragua: Status of the Insurgency



Approved for Release  
Date MARCH 1997

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The Contras: Defensive Posture Ending

Overall Nicaraguan Resistance Army (ERN) troop strength has been consistent since January.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

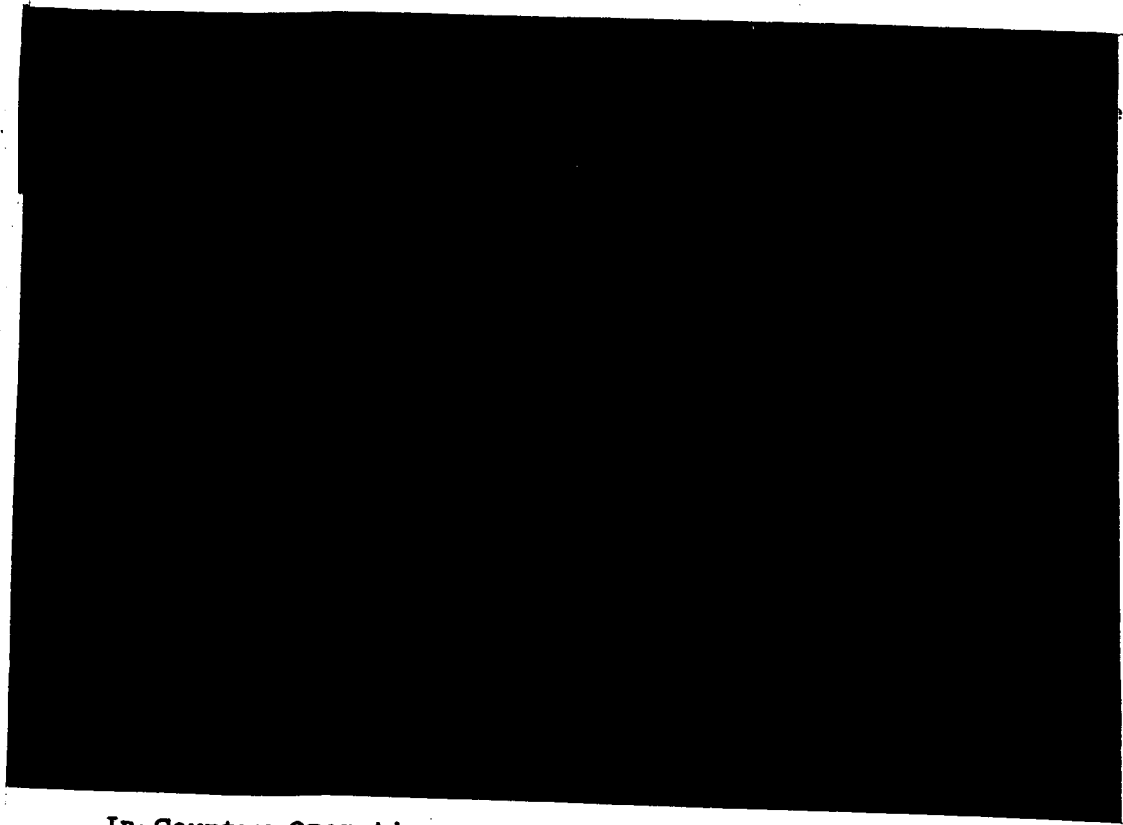
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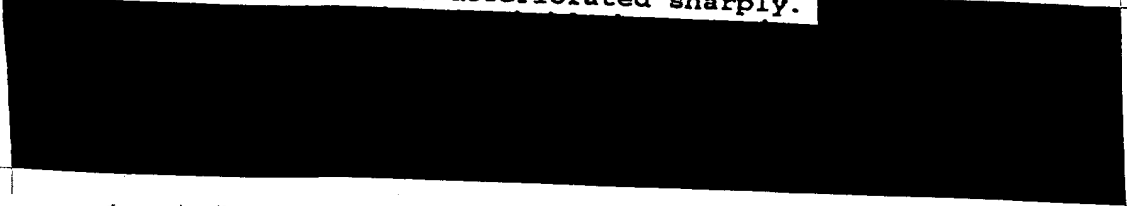
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In-Country Operations. Insurgent activities inside Nicaragua since the US aid cut-off have been largely defensive, especially since last February when the US Congress made continued humanitarian aid contingent on ending offensive actions. Despite the defensive nature of these operations, Contra capabilities have deteriorated sharply.



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[REDACTED]

The insurgents owe their survival inside Nicaragua largely to their civilian support network.

[REDACTED]

The Sandinistas: Uneven Improvements

Forces and Strategy. Managua continues to allocate substantial resources to the counterinsurgency effort.

[REDACTED]

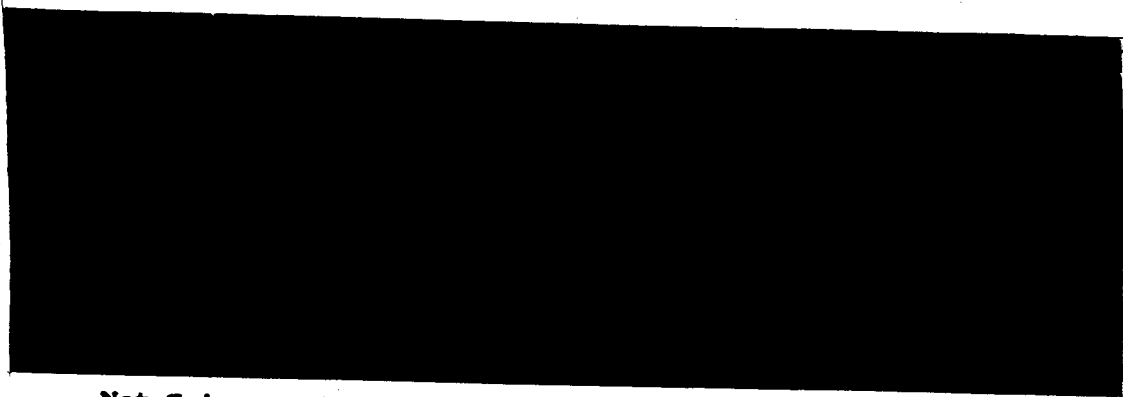
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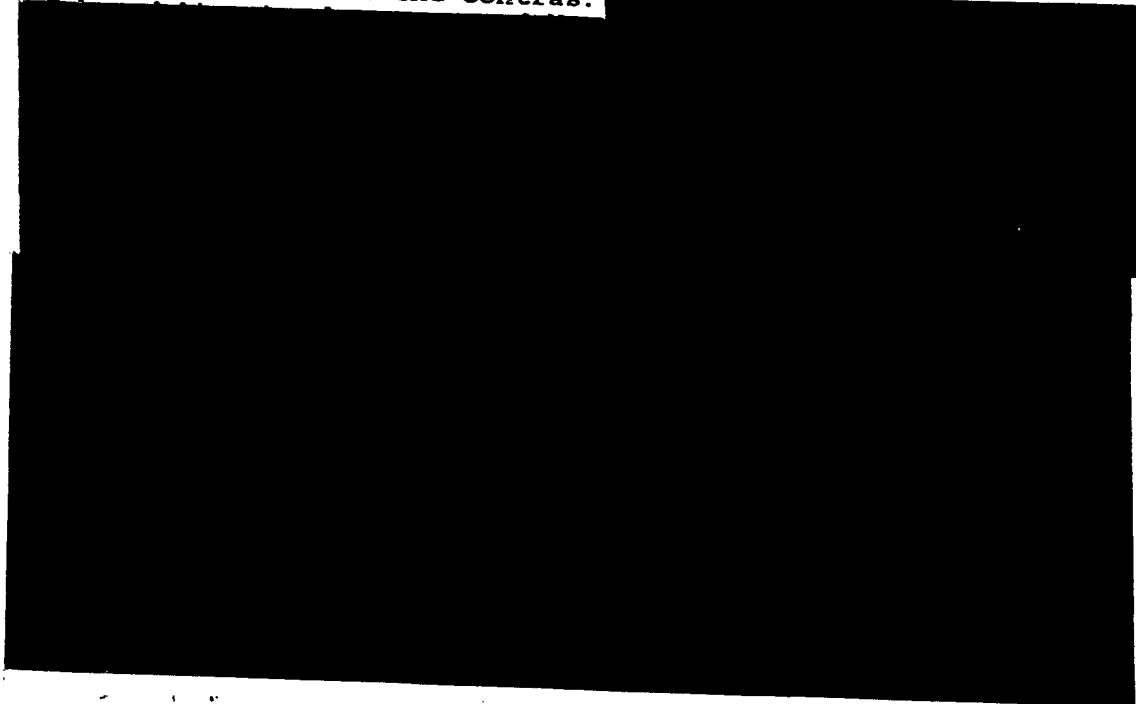
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Net Gains. Since the cut-off of US lethal aid last year, Sandinista capabilities have remained relatively constant, in contrast to those of the Contras.



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Exemption(s): (b)(1), (b)(3)

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Fighting at Low Levels

Not surprisingly, the level of combat activity during the past year has been significantly lower than in 1987 and early 1988,

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Sandinista operations over the past year have achieved mixed results,

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Under the direction of a respected and combat-experienced leadership, the committed core of fighters and supporters--operating in terrain they know well--will pose a continuing but not regime-threatening challenge to the Sandinistas over the next few months. The guerrillas will focus on demonstrating their determination and resilience, both to the government and to their own supporters, and on seizing munitions and other supplies.

[REDACTED]

Managua may also intensify efforts to neutralize rebel supporters, although the current campaign to increase its own backing in rural areas for next year's elections makes it unlikely the regime will resort to the brutal tactics necessary to cause serious damage to the support network.

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