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CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN

WEEKLY UPDATE

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN WEEKLY UPDATE

7 April 1988

This weekly Situation Report is prepared by the [Redacted] Office of African and Latin American Analysis. This paper was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to [Redacted]

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CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN
WEEKLY UPDATE
7 April 1988

Perspective: Honduras Moving Toward Accommodation with Nicaragua

The truce in Nicaragua increases pressure on Honduras to end its role in aiding the anti-Sandinista insurgents and to prepare for an eventual accommodation with Managua. Honduras is uneasy over the growing numbers of Nicaraguan rebels in the Las Vegas salient and is pressuring them to return to Nicaragua. Tegucigalpa fears that the rebels' presence will attract unwelcome international attention and provoke domestic protests. Honduran officials, who have argued for a bilateral deal with Managua, probably view the cease-fire agreement as an opportunity to end support for the anti-Sandinistas.

The Hondurans are likely to actively pursue a tripartite border commission with El Salvador and Nicaragua at this week's meeting of the Central American Foreign Ministers and may open talks on a bilateral treaty with the Sandinistas. Tegucigalpa views its border proposal as a last ditch measure to cope with an expected influx of Nicaraguan refugees and angry rebels in the wake of the cease-fire accord. Honduras also probably calculates that the international commission will reduce the chance of Honduras becoming embroiled in a border clash with Nicaragua. However, Honduras is holding fast to its demand that the Sandinistas must withdraw their World Court case against Tegucigalpa before finalizing an agreement. Moreover, the Hondurans remain skeptical of the Sandinistas' desire to comply with the terms of the cease-fire agreement and are likely to proceed cautiously in seeking a bilateral deal. Nonetheless, Tegucigalpa eventually may decide that a commission and a treaty with Managua will be necessary to secure their borders and obtain Nicaragua's commitment to end its support for subversive groups in Honduras.

Developments This Week

Democratization

- Several Nicaraguan journalists plan to request government permission early this month to establish a new independent radio newscast [redacted]
- A Nicaraguan opposition leader has been harassed by the government since he organized two anti-Sandinista demonstrations earlier this year that drew over 1,000 participants [redacted]. He has been repeatedly questioned and threatened, and workers on his farms--including two youths below draft age--have been conscripted. In a separate incident, [redacted] two merchants were arrested and their goods confiscated in mid-March, allegedly for selling without a license. Both were active members in an anti-Sandinista private sector organization. [redacted]

Cease-Fire/Amnesty

- Technical-level negotiations between Nicaragua and the anti-Sandinista rebels on 29 March ended with a preliminary agreement for five cease-fire zones, according to press. Rebel negotiators [redacted] were instructed to "agree to nothing" in the first round. Talks resumed on 5 April to negotiate two additional zones and rebel resupply. Meanwhile, the rebels postponed directorate-level talks in Managua from 6 to 12 April, citing Sandinista noncompliance with the Sapoa agreement and the need to settle on technical issues, according to press. The [redacted] rebels' strategy is to prolong the Managua round and balk at anything definitive until the Sandinistas meet their own commitments. [redacted]
- At the urging of the Guatemalan rebels, Archbishop Penados, and an independent academic group, President Cerezo has agreed to let the National Reconciliation Commission hold talks with the guerrilla leaders in Costa Rica next week, but continues to insist that rebels must lay down their arms and accept amnesty before more formal negotiations take place [redacted]. Despite opposition from the military for such talks and the lack of strong domestic pressure for dialogue, Cerezo probably hopes that approval of the low-level meeting will bolster his moderate image as

[redacted]
Guatemala prepares to host the International
Parliamentary Union meeting next week. [redacted]

National Reconciliation Commission

- Representatives from Nicaraguan antiregime labor unions will be included in the four-party delegations to the national dialogue [redacted]. The parties will insist the government discuss workers' grievances and say they will withdraw from the dialogue if the response is unsatisfactory. [redacted]

International Verification

- A staff member of the OAS Human Rights Commission travelled to Nicaragua [redacted] to discuss guidelines for the amnesty of ex-national guardsmen [redacted]. The staff member was to meet only with government officials, but the full commission may visit later and meet with nongovernment figures. [redacted]

External Aid to Insurgents

- Salvadoran rebels in Nicaragua enhanced security measures following a Salvadoran demarche to Managua identifying rebel facilities in Nicaragua [redacted].
[redacted]

Arms Control

- Costa Rican President Arias told the press on 29 March that his recent letter to Soviet President Gorbachev deserved a personal reply. He added that he hoped a group of Costa Rican legislators visiting Moscow this month would bring back an answer. [redacted]
- Costa Rican Foreign Minister [redacted] told [redacted] on 31 March that the United States should be invited to join regional security talks after a permanent cease-fire agreement between the anti-Sandinista rebels and the Sandinistas is signed. [redacted]
[redacted]

[REDACTED]

Other Developments

-- Nicaragua retracted its request for temporary safeguards against Honduras at the International Court of Justice on 31 March, [REDACTED]. A generally reliable [REDACTED] in late March Managua offered to withdraw its suit if Tegucigalpa would immediately remove the US troops sent earlier in the month, accept a multilateral peacekeeping force on the border, and sign a treaty of peace and friendship with Nicaragua.
[REDACTED]

-- Mozambican President Chissano visited Nicaragua from 4-7 April, according to press. [REDACTED]

-- [REDACTED] President Arias hopes the US will take responsibility for an estimated 5,000 Nicaraguan resistance combatants and their families who are expected to seek asylum in Costa Rica. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]