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Remarks

STAT

Executive Secretary

15 Mar 85

Date



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Executive Registry
85- 795

March 8, 1985

MEMORANDUM TO DISTRIBUTION LIST A

FROM: S/LPD - Otto J. Reich *lyB*

SUBJECT: Nicaragua: A Haven for Leftists;
Public Diplomacy Calendar

Enclosed are two articles from the March 3 Miami Herald regarding the numerous left-wing militants from around the world who have settled in Nicaragua since the Sandinistas took over in 1979.

As the articles describe, the majority of these militants "are simple political exiles or leftist sympathizers come to express solidarity with the Sandinista revolution and mingle with ideological brethren in a friendly environment. Several Sandinista officials acknowledge, however, that a significant minority, mostly Latin Americans, are active guerrillas, plotting the overthrow of home governments. They hold strategy meetings and, sometimes, undergo military training here and in Cuba, the officials say."

Also enclosed is an updated Public Diplomacy Calendar.

Enclosures:
As stated.

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Sandinistas attract a whole lot of leftists

By JUAN O. TAMAYO
Herald Staff Writer

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — He is a 5-foot-11, gray-eyed surgeon, treating children in a Managua slum. She is a petite journalist, writing for a Paris magazine. Both are fugitives, wanted in their native Italy for leading left-wing guerrilla gangs.

Two West Germans linked to the Baader-Meinhof Gang are now officers in the People's Sandinista Army. One is in charge of a counterintelligence unit. The other commands an artillery battalion.

And an Argentine Montonero guerrilla, widow of the Argentine rebel who led the commando team that assassinated former Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza in Paraguay, is dating a ranking Nicaraguan official trained as a guerrilla by the PLO in Lebanon in the early 1970s.

These are but a few of the left-wing extremists from Europe and Latin America who came to Managua after the 1979 Sandinista revolution, seeking safe haven and a chance to prove their solidarity with the Nicaraguan government.

It is the same kind of revolutionary "networking" — leftist militants call it "internationalism" — that benefited the Sandinistas during their long guerrilla struggle to topple Somoza.

In the late 1960s, the Sandinistas signed a pact with the Palestine Liberation Organization to train Nicaraguan guerrillas in Lebanon. Somoza was a steadfast supporter of Israel, and Nicaragua was one of the first nations to recognize the Israeli state in 1948.

A former Israeli intelligence agent once based in Nicaragua said at least 150 Sandinistas were trained in the 1970s in Lebanon camps run by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the PLO faction most committed to terrorism in Europe and the Middle East.

Veteran Sandinistas say that it was at the PFLP camps that the

Nicaraguans first met European leftists — Germans from the Baader-Meinhof Gang and its spin-offs; Italians from the Red Brigades and other radical groups — and began establishing the close personal relationships that persist today.

"The European leftists believe that the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the Quebrada del Yuro run through their countries, too," said one Sandinista official, referring to a key guerrilla supply line in the Vietnam War and the Bolivian gully where famed guerrilla chief Ernesto "Che" Guevara was killed in 1967.

One PLO-trained Sandinista, Patricio Arguello, joined the PFLP's most notorious terrorist, Lella Khaled, in a botched attempt to hijack an Israeli jetliner from Amsterdam to New York on Sept. 6, 1970. Israeli security agents killed Arguello and captured Khaled, who was later exchanged for hostages seized by another group of PFLP hijackers. The Sandinistas have named a geothermal power plant after Arguello.

Another PLO-trained Nicaraguan was Communications Minister Enrique Schmidt, killed in combat with anti-Sandinista guerrillas last November. Schmidt's widow, a West German citizen born in the Basque region of Spain, now works for the Sandinista Front's Department of Political Education. Health Ministry workers say she lectured them last year on the ideology of the Basque Homeland and Liberty guerrilla group, known as ETA, fighting for independence from Spain.

Yet another Sandinista trained in Lebanon is Deputy Interior Minister Rene Vivas. He is now dating an Argentine Montonero guerrilla, the widow of Julio Alfredo Irurzun, head of the Montonero team that assassinated Somoza in Paraguay in September 1980, in what the killers called a show of "revolutionary solidarity" with Nicaragua.



'It's a lie,' Defense Minister Humberto Ortega says of reports that Nicaragua harbors leftist fugitives from around the world. 'We do not require that type of support to defend our principles.'

The PLO now has a fully accredited embassy in Managua. And the Sandinista Front has "fraternal" relations with leftist groups from Italy, West Germany, Spain's Basque region, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Colombia, Libya, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica.

The Italian government on Feb. 8 gave the Sandinistas a list of 22

Italian leftists believed to be living in Nicaragua — about half of them wanted fugitives, the rest described only as "extremists." The Foreign Ministry said it knew nothing about the Italians but would investigate.

Topping the list, obtained by The Herald, is Guglielmo Guglielmi, 39, a one-time Rome surgeon facing five arrest warrants for crimes between 1979 and 1983 ranging from kidnapping to illegal weapons possessions to "participation in armed gangs."

International terrorism records show that Guglielmi, now working at a government-run children's clinic in the Managua slum of Ciudad Sindino, was a top leader of the Unita Combattente Communist, a guerrilla band that spun off from the Red Brigades in the late 1970s. He was convicted in absentia last June of kidnapping and sentenced to 22 years in prison.

Also on the list is a 33-year-old Milan sociologist wanted on a warrant charging her with "organizing and leading armed gangs in Italy and abroad." An Italian woman with the same name as the fugitive is a journalist accredited in Managua as correspondent for a Paris-based magazine that specializes in Third World issues.

The fugitive is also described in the international records as a member of a group that helped Guglielmi and three other Italian fugitives move from Paris to Nicaragua after the Italian government accused France in 1983 of harboring more than 200 wanted Italian militants.

The woman journalist in Managua declined comment when two Italian journalists tried to interview her last month. "I am not who you think I am," she said. Her name is known but omitted here because of the absence of proof that the journalist and the fugitive are the same.

Roberto Sandalo, 27, a Red Brigades defector living in Kenya, told Italy's Oggi news magazine

last month that five Brigadisti are now serving as officers in the Sandinista army. "That's a lie," Defense Minister Humberto Ortega said last week. "We do not require that type of support to defend our principles and our flags."

Sandinista government sources said two West Germans who have bragged of having been part of the Baader-Meinhof Gang are now serving in the army — one as a captain in an artillery unit stationed at the Montelimar base southwest of Managua and the other attached to a military counterintelligence unit.

A West German known only as "Fitz" has told friends there is a warrant for his arrest in Germany. "Fitz," described as an anarchist, fought in the Sandinista revolution and later worked as an administrator at the government-owned Julio Buitrago sugar mill.

Also living in Nicaragua is Peter Paul Zahl, a well-known West German writer with former links to Baader-Meinhof who spent four years in prison for the attempted murder of a policeman in Cologne, Germany. Friends said Zahl, who is not wanted for any other crimes, is in Bluefields setting up a theater group for the port's West Indian blacks.

Nicaraguan government officials said a handful of Basque ETA guerrillas also lived in Managua until 1983, when Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, a strong Sandinista sympathizer, protested to the Managua government. Several ETA members moved to neighboring Costa Rica and some went to Venezuela, the officials said.

Gregorio Jimenez, 32, an ETA militant wanted by the Spanish government on terrorism charges, was arrested in Costa Rica in September 1983 and charged with plotting to assassinate Eden Pastora, leader of an anti-Sandinista guerrilla group based in Costa Rica.

Costa Rican Justice Ministry officials say Jimenez, still awaiting trial, has confessed that a Managua-based group of ETA rebels planned Pastora's assassination, without authorization from the Sandinistas, but as a sign of "revolutionary solidarity."

Since the revolution triumphed, Nicaragua has also been visited for varying periods by a string of leftist militants from Europe and Latin America, many of them simple political exiles, some of them well-known guerrilla leaders.

Mario Firmenich, head of Argentina's Montoneros, traveled legally through Nicaragua — once staying several days in the home of Interior Minister Tomas Borge — as well as Mexico and Costa Rica before the Buenos Aires government put out a warrant for his arrest. He was detained in Brazil last year and extradited to Argentina.

Two Baader-Meinhof gang members visited Nicaragua in 1980 to express their support for the Sandinistas and explain the reasons for their own struggle. They sought out three foreign journalists living in Managua and granted them interviews, one of the reporters said.

And Lauro Azzolini, 41, a Red Brigades founder sentenced in absentia to 30 years in prison for the 1978 kidnap-assassination of Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro, visited Nicaragua in early 1980 and tried to hold a news conference to explain Moro's slaying. Journalists invited to the conference said the Sandinistas blocked it.

Azzolini, alleged to have been the man who killed Moro with a close range blast from a Czechoslovak-made Skorpion machine pistol, was later captured in Italy and is in prison.

5 The Miami Herald
Sunday, March 3, 1985

World's leftists find a haven in Nicaragua

Some sought on charges of terrorism

By JUAN O. TAMAYO
Herald Staff Writer

MANAGUA. Nicaragua — Scores of left-wing militants from around the world — some of them wanted on terrorism charges in their home countries — have settled in revolutionary Nicaragua since the Sandinista triumph of 1979.

Some are treated by the Nicaraguan government as virtual diplomats, representing their organizations. Others are fugitive militants, granted jobs, identification papers and safe haven.

An overwhelming majority are simple political exiles or leftist sympathizers come to express solidarity with the Sandinista revolution and mingle with ideological brethren in a friendly environment.

Several Sandinista officials acknowledge, however, that a significant minority, mostly Latin Americans, are active guerrillas, plotting the overthrow of home governments. They hold strategy meetings and, sometimes, undergo military training here and in Cuba, the officials say.

The Reagan administration has used the presence of so many people with ties to left-wing groups as proof that Nicaragua has become a nest of international terrorism. U.S. officials say they will focus on these links in asking Congress to resume U.S. assistance to anti-Sandinista rebels. Anti-Sandinista leader Alfonso Robelo calls Nicaragua "the center of

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The International Connection

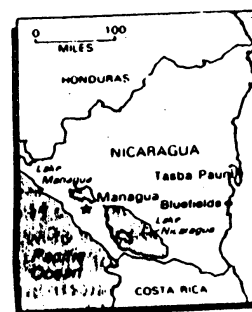
Nicaragua's network of the left

PLO — A PLO faction trained as many as 150 Sandinista guerrilla fighters in the 1970s, including the late head of the Nicaraguan telecommunications office. A Sandinista, Patricio Arguello, was killed during a Palestinian hijacking attempt. The PLO now has an embassy in Managua.

Red Brigades — Sandinistas reportedly first met members of Italy's Red Brigades in Palestinian training camps. The Italian government has claimed that 22 terrorists and political extremists now are living in Nicaragua, a claim the Sandinistas say they will investigate.

Baader-Meinhof — Sandinista contacts with Baader-Meinhof terrorists also began in Palestinian training camps. Two West Germans now in the Sandinista army reportedly have said they were Baader-Meinhof members. Other Baader-Meinhof members are reported to have visited Nicaragua since the revolution.

Montoneros — Former Sandinista fighter Eden Pastora says 20 to 30 of the Argentine guerrillas joined Sandinistas fighting Somoza. A Montonero commando team assassinated Somoza in Paraguay. Several Montoneros now live in Nicaragua.



world's leftists find haven in Nicaragua

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terrorism in Latin America today."

But several knowledgeable sources interviewed in Managua, elsewhere in Central America and in the United States argue that Nicaragua is less a terrorists' training ground than a tropical sand-and-surf watering hole for the international revolutionary set.

One leftist intellectual close to both exile circles and the Sandinista leadership called Nicaragua "a winter barracks for over-repressed guerrillas." Training of foreign terrorists, he said, "is not government policy."

Whether they are guerrillas-at-ease or terrorists-in-waiting, it is clear that Nicaragua is attracting them by the droves.

On almost any day, Argentine and Uruguayan guerrillas gather at the Yerba Buena, a beatnik-style coffee shop-bookstore in the heart of Managua. Salvadoran rebels can often be found dining at the Los Gauchos restaurant. Italians and Germans gather for small house parties.

Some are indeed fugitives: Italians from the Red Brigades and Unita Combattente Comunisti; West Germans linked to the Baader-Meinhof Gang; members of Spain's Basque ETA separatist guerrillas; leaders of Honduras' Cinchonero guerrillas; militants from Peru's Shining Path; Montoneros from Argentina; Tupamaros from Uruguay; and a hodgepodge of Salvadorans, Costa Ricans, Colombians, Chileans, Guatemalans, Paraguayans and Bolivians.

On Feb. 8, the Italian government handed the Sandinistas a list of 22 left-wing Italian extremists believed to be living in Nicaragua, some already sentenced in absentia to 22 years in prison, some wanted on arrest warrants, others described only as "subversives."

'Clean conscience'

The Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry has denied any knowledge of the 22 Italians. Sandinista officials also say their "conscience is clean" regarding the Reagan administration allegations they consider most damaging to their image: Reputed links to Libyan strongman Moammar Khadafy, Iranian Moslem extremists and Colombian drug traffickers.

However, one ranking Sandinista official acknowledged that "we can't deny everything... It is perfectly possible that on special occasions there would be [training] courses scheduled." The official, like almost every other knowledgeable source contacted, agreed to talk about the sensitive issue on promise of anonymity.

Some Nicaraguan officials, though not many, say they regard the aid to leftists as retaliation for U.S. support for anti-Sandinista guerrillas. And they say the European leftists are fighting NATO, "the symbol of American imperialism in Europe."

Conversations with a variety of sources indicate that the Sandinistas

between guerrilla movements that have armies in the field and terrorist organizations that specialize in bombings, kidnappings and assassinations. Guerrillas, especially those from El Salvador and other Central American countries, can get training and guns. The others, mostly from Europe, are kept at arm's length.

Help was denied

But on occasion the Sandinistas have even denied help to Latin American guerrillas. Leaders of Colombia's April 19 Movement have told friends they were denied permission to use Nicaragua as a staging base for their 1981 incursion into Colombia's Caqueta province. A Peruvian writer known to be close to Shining Path guerrillas was expelled from Nicaragua last year. And Salvadoran rebels said that the Sandinistas almost refused them permission to use the Managua airport as a stopover last month for 10 crippled guerrillas traveling from Costa Rica to Europe for medical treatment.

Despite these occasional rejections, Nicaraguan government officials said, the Sandinistas have built an extensive, intricate and highly discreet system for maintaining and cultivating contacts with the foreign leftists and funneling different kinds of assistance to them.

Many Sandinista officials acknowledge that in a sense they are repaying past favors. The Palestine Liberation Organization trained at least 150 Sandinistas in Lebanon during the 1960s and 1970s, said a former Israeli intelligence agent who used to live in Nicaragua. And Argentina's Montonero guerrillas sent 20 to 30 foot soldiers to fight in the revolution, said Eden Pastora, a one-time Sandinista turned opposition guerrilla leader, in a Miami interview.

Cuba relationship

The Sandinistas' relationship with Cuba dates back to 1961, when Interior Minister and Comandante Tomas Borge underwent guerrilla training there. Hundreds of Sandinista rebels eventually trained in Cuba. And in 1979, Havana sent several planeloads of guns and ammunition for the final offensive against President Anastasio Somoza.

Controlling today's aid system in Nicaragua is the Sandinista Front's Directorate for International Relations, supervised by Bayardo Arce, like Borge one of the nine comandantes who have ruled Nicaragua since 1979. Arce is regarded as one of the most radical of the nine, which also include Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

The directorate, all of the sources agreed, manages the Sandinista party's "fraternal" relations with everybody from official ruling parties, to loyal oppositions, to broad front coalitions, leftist alliances, guerrilla groups and bands of terrorists.

This includes groups battered by repression because of their



Tomas Borge: A long relationship with Cuba.



Bayardo Arce: 'Fraternal' relations with all fronts.

active opposition to their governments," said one Nicaraguan official. "Many of these are underground groups."

And many of them are still virtually underground in Nicaragua, under Sandinista orders to stay out of public view. Long-time Sandinistas said this is the same wink-and-a-nod arrangement the Cubans imposed on them when they lived in exile in Havana in the 1960s and 1970s.

The sources said at least 30 of the clandestine groups have *delegados* in Managua who are officially recognized by the directorate. A *delegado* has three duties: maintain official contacts with the Sandinista Front; organize his group's meetings, publications and other political work; establish links with other foreign groups and potential sponsors.

PLO embassy

The Palestine Liberation Organization has an embassy and diplomatic staff in Managua. Colombia's April 19 Movement has a political office. The Salvadoran guerrillas have three news and propaganda offices, as well as a clandestine radio transmitter.

Once a *delegado* has established himself, his key job is to find work for down-and-out compatriots living in Nicaragua, Sandinista officials said. The directorate will not help here, but allows the *delegado* to exploit his personal contacts within the government.

One Latin American exile living in Managua said that Montoneros in 1980 offered to use some of their savings, amassed in dozens of ransom kidnappings, to build a Managua factory that would employ some of their guerrilla countrymen. There is no indication whether the project was carried out.

Several of the *delegados* have taken advantage of the Sandinistas' hospitality to summon followers abroad to strategy-setting sessions in Managua. Peru's Shining Path held a "spiritual retreat" last year to study Von Clausewitz's book *On War* and "the theory of betrayal" according to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, said one person who attended.

Sandinista officials usually stay away from such revolutionary seminars, sources said, although they almost certainly know about them. "They are notoriously careful about who they let into the country, so it must be with their knowledge," one official said.

A former official of the Nicaraguan Interior Ministry who now lives in Costa Rica said the directorate also occasionally helps fugitive guerrillas and terrorists by arranging financial aid through labor unions and other Sandinista-run organizations. It also can provide safe houses, false passports, Nicaraguan identification cards and false license plates, he said.

The Interior Ministry's General Directorate for State Security and the Sandinista army, the source added, both have officers specially assigned to help any foreign leftist that gets into trouble — a car accident or a drunken brawl.

For the first four years of the revolution, the sources said, the Sandinistas provided a steady flow of aid and assistance to their leftist friends, especially the Salvadorans.

'Ripe for revolution'

"The Sandinista triumph brought a certain revolutionary euphoria," said one Sandinista official with close ties to the exiles. "We thought all Latin America was ripe for revolution.

so there was a lot of assistance going out. Those people could count on support."

But by mid-1983, the official said, and especially after the U.S. invasion of Grenada in October of that year, the Sandinistas "began to realize that the tide of Latin American history was moving against us."

On Nov. 20, 1983, the Sandinistas gave the Salvadoran guerrillas two days to transfer some of their people out of Nicaragua and close down some safe houses. They moved some of their logistics operations, including a radio station, to more discreet locations on the outskirts of Managua, Salvadoran rebel officials said.

A year later, however, the Sandinistas moved in still another direction after noting that controversial U.S. policies — the Grenada invasion and deployment of U.S. cruise missiles in Europe — had gone forward without effective international opposition.

Seeing themselves as the next target for U.S. aggression, Nicaraguan officials said, the Sandinistas sought closer links with the radical European left, the failed anti-missile movement, other Latin American leftists and even U.S. liberals.

Visitors from the United States, Europe and Latin America now return home, said one official, "sensitized to the Central America problem, and if they've spent any time at all here they have passionate sentimental links to Nicaragua."

Some of the visitors leave with more than passions. According to several of the sources, there is a second level of Sandinista assistance to Latin American leftist volunteers — one that includes military training.

Cuba's top military representative in Nicaragua, Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa, runs this program through two parallel chains of command, according to the former Interior Ministry official and two present Sandinista government officials.

'Cuban Force'

One, the "Cuban Force," is made up entirely of Cuban officers. The other, the "International Force," has only Latin American exiles, many of them Argentines, Chileans and Uruguayans, who live in Cuba and hold officers' rank in the

Cuban military. All foreign military advisers are issued Nicaraguan identification cards, the defector added.

Sources with access to the People's Sandinista Army's payroll records said about 700 Cuban military advisers and 355 International Force officers were in Nicaragua in 1980. The number tripled the following year, they added.

The pick of the Latin American volunteers go to Cuba for instruction in special camps in the western province of Pinar del Rio and an installation near Guanabo, close to Havana, known as "Base 00," the defector said. In 1983, he said, he saw Cuban military officers at the Managua airport escorting 10-12 Costa Rican volunteers aboard a plane for a flight to Havana.

Second-level prospects, the sources said, are trained in Nicaragua, either in groups from the same country or as individuals integrated into regular Sandinista army units. Several Honduran guerrillas captured in 1983 and 1984 described 2½ years of training in Cuba and Nicaragua, followed by several months of fighting with the Nicaraguan army against anti-Sandinista rebels.

Still, most foreign leftists living in Nicaragua did not come to hone military skills or hide out.

The majority are political exiles who fled right-wing governments, or they are militant leftists who moved to Nicaragua because of what one South American intellectual called a "moral imperative" to support the Sandinista revolution.

Many of the exiles, usually professionals and technicians who would have difficulties working in more developed countries, also came to Nicaragua because they can find jobs here, replacing a managerial class rapidly fleeing Sandinista rule.

And Nicaragua is a safe haven, a place where enemies cannot easily watch them, where they can gather in groups and perhaps persuade the government to grant them the kind of international solidarity that the Sandinistas enjoyed during their long struggle against Somoza.

"The Sandinistas received a lot of help when they were guerrillas," said a one-time high-ranking Sandinista security official now living in Costa Rica. "Now the others are collecting the debt."

LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CALENDAR

2/28/85

FEBRUARY

Feb. 28- Mar. 3 Sec. Shultz visits Ecuador and attends Sanguinetti inauguration in Montevideo, Uruguay.

MARCH

Mar. 1 Inauguration of President-elect Julio Sanguinetti in Uruguay.

Mar. 6 Amb. Middendorf speaks to National Student Body of Presidential Classroom at Shoreham Hotel on "Foreign Policy: America's Approach to World Problems."

Mar. 7-15 Clarence M. Bacon, American Legion National Commander, visits Mexico, Guatemala, Panama.

Mar. 10-15 Inter-American Press Association meeting in Panama. Amb. Otto Reich will speak at one session.

Mar. 15 Inauguration of Brazilian President-elect Tancredo Neves.

Mar. 18-25 President Alfonsin of Argentina makes state visit to United States.

Mar. 31 Legislative Assembly and municipal elections in El Salvador.

APRIL

Apr. 6-10 Festival of Democratic Youth in Kingston, Jamaica

Apr. 9-12 PBS series on Central America and the Caribbean.

Apr. 11 Assistant Secretary Motley speaks at SRI International (formerly Stanford Research Institute) conference on "Restructuring for Growth in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Apr. 14 National elections in Peru.

Apr. 18-20 Latin American Studies Association meeting in Albuquerque, N.M.

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- Apr. 20 Scheduled end of State of Emergency in Nicaragua.
Apr. 27 Second anniversary of President Reagan's address to joint session of Congress on Central America.

MAY

- May 31 Deadline for Guatemalan Constituent Assembly to complete new constitution.

JUNE

- June ? Moscow World Festival of Youth and Students.

JULY

- Jul. 19 Termination of offer of general amnesty in Nicaragua; anniversary of the victory of the Sandinista revolution.

OCTOBER

- Oct. 27 Guatemalan national elections.

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 25 National elections in Honduras.

DECEMBER

- Dec. 15 Guatemalan installation of national congress and elected municipal government officials.

1986

JANUARY

- Jan. 14 Installation of new Guatemalan president and vice president.