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# 'Secret war' is ineffective and immoral

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Guest columnist

MIAMI — U.S. involvement in the "secret war" against Nicaragua should be terminated as quickly as possible.

This covert operation cannot achieve U.S. objectives — neither the real objectives nor those claimed by the administration. Spokesmen have suggested that all the administration really wants is for the Sandinistas to move up elections (now scheduled for 1985) and respect human rights.

Our policies elsewhere hardly bear out such concerns. For example, Pinochet, the military dictator in Chile, has just announced that he will not hold elections until 1989.

A freshman political science student knows that one does not promote liberalization with an external threat. That almost always results in calls for internal discipline and mobilization.

So has it in Nicaragua. The secret war has discouraged elections, not promoted them.

The administration has also suggested arms interdiction as its principal goal. By its own criteria, the administration has failed — it cannot point to a single rifle that has been "interdicted."

The real purpose of the "secret war" is to overthrow the Sandinista government. But it has almost no chance of doing so. The few thousand rebels cannot defeat the large, tough, well-trained Sandinista army — not unless there were massive defections within that army and among the people.

Yet, by building its "secret" army around a nucleus of hated Somoza supporters, the administration has virtually assured that the rebels will receive no public support.

All this was unnecessary. In 1981 statements, the administration said that Sandinista support for the El Salvador guer-

rillas seemed to have been suspended or reduced.

There seemed to be ample room for negotiations. But the Reagan administration did not want to negotiate; it wanted to get rid of the Sandinista government, and so it mounted its "secret war."

This war threatens to leave our nation without constructive influence in Nicaragua; it has carried us to the brink of a regional war in Central America.

If this effort to overthrow another government is approved, that would be entirely inconsistent with the moral values on which the nation was founded. This is the United States, not the Soviet Union. We are guided by a different code of conduct. Let us not forget it.

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