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ON PAGE 3A**MORNING BULLETIN****INSIDE THE BELTWAY****Nicaraguan MiGs**

Senior officials plugged into current intelligence say there's nothing to the rumor — which hits the conservative grapevine every few months — that "the United States knows" that Soviet MiGs have been secretly stationed in Nicaragua.

One senior administration official termed the notion "ludicrous," adding that Soviet involvement of that sort would "put the nail in the coffin" of the upcoming summit. Moreover, he said, "the people who would be concerned about such a thing would be in the bunkers planning something [and] . . . down in the situation room. They aren't."

Some officials suggest the MiG rumor is artfully planted disinformation, designed to obscure the possible movement of Czech L-39 aircraft into Nicaragua. That would be a major concern, because these trainer planes can become lethal ground support weapons — more sensible for Nicaraguan fighting. Sandinista pilots have received training in L-39s, and Cuba has an excess of the planes.

— John Elvin