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Mike Wallace visits Managua, & D.C.'s worried

FELLOWS like Mike Wallace make folks in Washington nervous.

The CBS newsmen had barely gotten back to the States last week from a visit to Nicaragua for *60 Minutes* before sources reported great concern in the Reagan administration over how the story would be handled.

"We're really afraid of a badly skewed piece," one high-level intelligence source told The Post.

This is the first time Wallace has teamed up with George Crile since Gen. Westmoreland took them, and CBS, to court over their story on how he reported enemy troop strength in Vietnam.

60 Minutes doesn't begin its new season until Sept. 8, and the story, believed to focus on the huge military buildup of the Marxist Sandinista government, probably won't air until later that month.

But the administration, concerned over the way Wallace has gone about getting his footage

and research, has made a preemptive strike.

"The Sandinistas have supplied helicopter support to the CBS crew and Wallace has refused to talk to Costa Rican and Honduran officials for the other side of the story," said our source.

The Sandinistas reputedly now have an army of more than 100,000 and \$400 million worth of weapons, ostensibly to protect themselves against a U.S. invasion. But Costa Rican and Honduran officials are said to fear the the Nicaraguan military buildup is aimed at invading their countries.

"We're doing a story like we always do stories," Mike Wallace told Page Six yesterday. "Whoever gave you this story gave you skewed information. It's such bull-bleep, it's laughable."

Wallace said yes, the Sandinistas were cooperative, showing him and his crew around and providing transportation.

"When you go to Nicaragua, it's very difficult not to spend some time with the people who are running the government there," Mike said, adding, "There are very few contras in Managua."

Wallace said he did get to interview some contras, "but they were prisoners of the Sandinistas, 41 of them on display for the international press corps at Esteli."

As for his supposed refusal to talk with Nicaragua's pro-U.S. neighbors, Wallace said, "The U.S. Ambassador down there knows what's going on. We had a couple of long meetings with him." Those meetings were off-camera, for background, he said.

Wallace seems unperturbed, almost flattered, by the attention of the U.S. government. But after he returned home last week, he went to Martha's Vineyard for the weekend and broke his wrist playing tennis.

"I just shattered it," said Wallace. "Now I'm off to Israel in a cast."