

On Coordination Call: [redacted]

extension: [redacted]

unit analyst [redacted]

04/01/86 ALA [redacted]

date unit P.O. (b) (r) (g)

NICARAGUA:HONDURAS Evaluating the Border Fighting Photo/Map

country subject graphic

Managua's recent incursion into Honduras cost it heavy casualties and bad publicity but served a longstanding Sandinista strategy. By concentrating forces along the border the regime has sought to disrupt rebel infiltration and confine the war to a single front to exploit its superiority in troop strength and firepower.

The multibattalion incursions last week [redacted]

were the most [redacted]

extensive operations to date [redacted]

The incursions continue a strategy dating back to the first years of the regime. The Sandinistas sustained casualties in Honduras as early as 1981, and, as the insurgency has gathered support and improved its effectiveness, Managua generally has responded with more aggressive operations in the border areas.

Executive File: [redacted]

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Keeping Up the Pressure

The regime primarily relied on irregular warfare battalions, which seem to have suffered heavy losses. Managua may calculate that disrupting insurgent infiltration and logistic support is more important than the casualty rate. It likely knew that large numbers of rebels had been resupplied and were still in the base camps. The regime also apparently recognized that it would have to limit its air support because of the possibility of retaliation by the Honduran Air Force.

The Sandinista incursion was not particularly well managed, however, and government forces experienced some logistics and coordination difficulties.

[REDACTED]

The Sandinistas, however, are working to improve logistic shortfalls.

[REDACTED]

Outlook

Sandinista forces are located along the border from the Las Vegas

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the Las Vegas

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salient to the operating areas of Indian insurgents on the east coast, 44  
suggesting that Managua wants to restrict combat to the northwest and to 45  
prevent the rebels from reactivating the northeast front. It also wants 46  
to put strong pressure on Tegucigalpa. President Ortega's recent 47  
reference to fighting in "border areas" over which the Hondurans have no 48  
control--a tacit admission that Nicaraguan forces had entered 49  
Honduras--seems intended to justify this and future incursions and 50  
intimidate the Hondurans. [REDACTED] 51

If the rebels continue to infiltrate past the Sandinista forces at 52  
the border and move south [REDACTED] 53  
[REDACTED] Managua again will have to disperse its forces, reducing the 54  
scope of fighting at the border. [REDACTED] 55

[REDACTED]

*[Handwritten signature]*  
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