FROM: Phyllis Schlafly

68 FAIRMOUNT, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002 / (618) 462-5415

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THREATS FROM NICARAGUA

Since Congressional committees in recent years seldom provide a forum for witnesses with expertise on the subject of internal security, some private organizations have moved to fill the gap. A group of military and intelligence experts collaborating under the name "National Committee to Restore Internal Security" has just published the transcript of a hearing it held in the Senate Hart Office Building on threats to the United States from Nicaragua.

The witnesses told how Nicaragua has not only become a base for an extraordinary and dramatic buildup of military weapons and equipment, but has also become a major part of the international drug system. The Sandinistas are replacing Columbia as a leading processor of cocaine and, with the help of the Cuban naval escorts, are moving enormous amounts of cocaine into the United States.

The accelerated military buildup in Nicaragua is far more extensive and dramatic than was the buildup rate in Cuba. It is probably faster than has ever occurred in a peacetime situation anywhere in the world.

In five years, the Sandinista Communist leaders have built the largest and best-equipped military force in Central America. Nicaragua now has 49,000 troops on active duty and an additional 50,000 in standby reserves. But who does Nicaragua have to defend itself against? Its neighbors have no army, no tanks, no air force.

As soon as the Sandinistas took over, they built up the airfields so they could handle extensive jet traffic. Two new parallel runways at Punta Hueta, 10,500 feet long, are designed to handle the heaviest bomber aircraft that the Soviet Union has.

This extraordinary military buildup was accomplished under the guidance of about 3,000 Cuban military advisers extending down even to the infantry level, one for every 60 soldiers. Today there are about 9,000 Cubans in Nicaragua.

One witness was Earl E. T. Smith, who was the U.S. Ambasasador to Cuba during the Castro Communist revolution. He reaffirmed a fact which many try to ignore: that

"international Communism has established a base 90 miles from our shores, from which it has been organizing against the United States throughout Latin America."

In 1983 the Soviet bloc delivered over $100 million in military hardware to Nicaragua. But it isn't just Russians and Cubans who manage the Sandinistas' military policy; foreign advisers also include Vietnamese, North Koreans, Bulgarians, East Germans, and PLOs.

Another witness, General John K. Singlaub, testified that uniformed Vietnamese officers are openly holding forth at Managua's Intercontinental Hotel. They have large quantities of American-made weapons captured by the Communists during the Vietnam War.

Still another witness, Col. Samuel T. Dickens, director of Inter-American Affairs at the American Security Council, produced evidence that the Sandinistas sent their pilot trainees off to Bulgaria and East Germany. He also told about Soviet MIG-21s earmarked for the Sandinistas.

In 1982, and again in 1984 by the lopsided margin of 77-3, the Senate passed the Symms Amendment. It reaffirms the Monroe Doctrine, then goes on to refer to the Rio Treaty of 1947 which states that an armed attack against any American state shall be considered as an attack against all the American states. It points out that the Organization of American States in January 1962 declared that Castro's government "has identified itself with the principles of Marxist-Leninist ideology."

Fidel Castro calls his aggressive actions all over the world "the revolution without frontiers." When Thomas Borge, the Nicaraguan Minister of the Interior, visited North Korea, he said: "The Nicaraguan revolutionaries will not be content until the imperialists have been overthrown in all parts of the world."

Will Castro and the Sandinistas push the frontiers of their revolution to the American border? Can we afford to have any more Communist countries in the Western Hemisphere? The lifelines of our oil imports and other strategic materials come through the Caribbean. That area is of the utmost importance to our national security.

The witnesses concluded that the legal obligations of our President under the Monroe Doctrine, and the Organization of American States and the Rio Grande Treaties, make it the duty of our President to take action against the aggression in Nicaragua, as well as in Grenada.