

and regimes must depend primarily on their own forces.⁶¹ More broadly, Soviet writers seem to be increasingly concerned about the possibility of general war growing out of regional conflict.⁶² Soviet statements are careful to limit the degree of their implied commitment to Nicaragua, conspicuously ignoring, for example, the claims of Sandinista leaders to be adhering to Marxism-Leninism, only occasionally referring to Nicaragua as a state of "socialist orientation"⁶³ and labelling the Nicaraguan Revolution as a "people's democratic" one rather than a socialist one.⁶⁴

In practice, the Soviets have refrained from using Nicaraguan territory for their own military purposes⁶⁵ and have limited the categories of weapons transferred to Nicaragua, presumably out of a desire not to provoke precipitate US military action. For example, there were good grounds to suspect that the Soviet Union was preparing to deliver MIG 21 fighters to Nicaragua during the Carter period (a number of Nicaraguans were dispatched to Bulgaria for pilot training on jets) and again in 1982-3, when crated MIG fighters were off-loaded in Cuba with some evidence that they were to be trans-shipped to Nicaragua, while the Nicaraguans were upgrading the Punta Huete military airfield near Managua to handle such aircraft. But when in the latter instance the United States disclosed its knowledge of the impending transfer, and in a number of ways, such as interference with Soviet-Bloc shipping bound for Nicaragua, demonstrated its resolve that it should not occur, the Soviets backed off.⁶⁶ Soviet restraint is also evident in the number of Soviet military personnel stationed in Nicaragua.

To summarize, though the Soviets had no significant role in the revolution itself, they quickly recognized the consequent oppor-

⁶¹ For example, as early as July 1981, in an article dealing with problems of socio-economic development in revolutionary Nicaragua, no mention was made of Soviet or other external assistance in this process. I. Bulychev, "Uspekki i Problemy Sandinistskoi Revolyutsii" *Latinskaya Amerika* (1981), #7, pp. 26-41.

⁶² See MacFarlane, *op. cit.* (note 17), pp. 309-10.

⁶³ For a discussion of the meaning and significance of this concept, see S.N. MacFarlane, *Superpower Rivalry and Third World Radicalism: The Idea of National Liberation* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 164-7.

⁶⁴ See the Soviet May Day slogans for 1982 (*Pravda*, 11.iv.82).

⁶⁵ It is of course unclear whether the Sandinistas would permit them to do so in any case, as both their nationalist commitments and their realistic assessment of probable American responses militate against providing the Soviet Union with extensive base rights.

⁶⁶ Contra Ramet and Lopez-Alvez, "Moscow and the Revolutionary Left in Latin America", *Orbis* XXVIII, #2 (summer 1984), p. 356, where it is maintained that the Nicaraguans had received 80 MIG fighters. There is no evidence of any such shipment.