



Since 1981, there had been increasing sabotage of infrastructure and export crops, but in 1983 plans attempted to bomb the only oil refinery and the airport in Managua, as well as other substantial productive facilities.

In the fall came the mining of Nicaragua's harbors on both coasts and the CIA-directed raid on Corinto, with the consequent destruction of oil storage facilities and much of the port itself. The 35,000 inhabitants of Corinto had to be evacuated.

And very close to the date of the U.S. presidential elections there were revelations about the CIA's manual distributed to the *contras* advising assassination and terror, even the killing of *contra* personalities in order to create martyrs.

This should have come as no surprise, given the behavior of the *contras* towards the civilian population of Nicaragua and the history of CIA performance in many countries over the years.

But the impact was such that it was an embarrassment to the U.S. Further, the International Court of Justice in the Hague condemned the mining of the harbors, and European allies of the U.S., including Great Britain, have found the incident distasteful.

Fourth, the U.S. diplomatic offensive, which seemed to be undercutting the Sandinistas internationally, especially in Western Europe, suffered some major setbacks.

Nicaragua surprised the U.S. by being the first Central American country to accept the provisions of the Contadora peace proposals. The U.S. was caught flat-footed and State Department flunkies had to mumble things about Nicaragua only wishing to derive propaganda value and not truly being serious about a regional peace settlement.

Western hemisphere countries that the U.S. wished to bring into line, especially Mexico, maintained an independent and non-interventionist position.

Fifth, the U.S. was not able to stop Nicaragua's elections on November 4. It did cause considerable damage to them, though, and this was reflected in the failure of many countries to send official observers, the same countries which had sent observers to the El Salvador elections earlier in the year.

After the CIA effort to create a unified *contra* force failed, and Eden Pastora fell out of the picture (some say the CIA set the bomb which just missed killing him), the U.S. turned to disrupting the elections by discrediting them. Opposition parties on the right in Nicaragua refused to participate. Though some leaders of those parties were unaware of it, the U.S. had never intended that they participate. These same parties had participated in the formulation of legislation on political parties and on the election, but then argued the conditions were not adequate for a campaign.

Ultimately, the only thing that would have satisfied the Coordinadora Democratica, the opposition grouping, and the Independent Liberal Party, would have been the political abdication of the Sandinistas. But in recent weeks, it has been revealed in the major media that the CIA paid rank-and-file of the two opposition groups to agitate against participation.

Lastly, Ronald Reagan was re-elected in the U.S. His original foreign policy team, Haig and Enders, had promised him quick fixes in Central America in 1981. Yet in 1984, the El Salvador war looked worse than ever, no concrete evidence had been found to "prove" Nicaraguan, Cuban and Soviet creation of the revolutionary crisis in El Salvador, and the Sandinistas were still there, apparently with massive popular support.

The ideological imperative weighs heavily on the President, his advisers and the hot-breathed New Right, which regards this new Reagan presidency as their baby.

Reagan has to do something to keep the U.S. collective mentality heading rightwards, to prepare it to accept whatever form of intervention the militarists deem appropriate.

The arrival of Soviet weapons is a convenient red herring. The issue of Nicaraguan sovereignty and a state's right to defend itself did not enter the debate.

An unnamed "Western military analyst", interviewed by Oakland Ross for the *Globe and Mail* (Nov. 13, 1984) said in Managua that the weapons were "defensive on the whole, except for the attack helicopters — and they're fair game against the *contras*."

But Secretary of State Schultz and his cohorts shriek that it is a Soviet plot to "alter the balance of forces" and establish "further beachheads" in the Western Hemisphere.

There are some U.S. citizens who are not impressed. ABC TV news showed footage taken on the weekend of November 9-11 of Christian Witness for Peace activists confronting a U.S. warship off the Nicaragua coast. Any invasion would result in two kinds of U.S. dead — the invaders, and the U.S. citizens they would have to kill to get at the Nicaraguans.

At present, despite the strong convictions of Nicaraguans that invasion is imminent, the more likely scenario is the maintenance of a climate of fear, increasing economic sabotage, perhaps a few bombing raids by unmarked planes, even a naval blockade.

This last scenario would have most serious international repercussions, since it is an act of war and against international law. It would undoubtedly be aimed at Soviet ships and would create a high seas confrontation similar to that in the October Missile Crisis of 1962. It would also bring condemnation by U.S. allies.

Despite these qualifications, an actual invasion is possible. The *Globe and Mail* of Nov. 12 notes that the same military hospital in the U.S. set aside from Grenada invasion casualties in October 1983 has been closed to civilians, as it was shortly prior to the invasion. Naval maneuvers and airborne unit mobilizations have also taken place. Such activity has occurred before without an invasion, but more of the invasion apparatus is in place at this juncture than ever before.

Certainly the Nicaraguans are taking the possibility with the utmost seriousness. Mobilization has reached a pitch unknown since the fighting of 1979. Concerned individuals and organizations everywhere should accept Nicaragua's fears in good faith, apply pressure to the U.S. government to cease its intervention and threats, and prepare to respond effectively to the worst case.

The fact is that the U.S. is already waging an undeclared war against Nicaragua. The question is merely one of its form.