

Abrams said that early this month the Honduran authorities had discovered weapons and documents consigned to Salvadoran guerrillas, claiming that the weapons were found in a Soviet-made automobile that suffered an accident on the Pan-American Highway, after entering Honduras from Nicaragua, and that the Managua government was probably involved.

"This fallacy shows the desperation of the Reagan administration in trying to convince Congress of the need to approve lethal aid for the mercenaries," [Alejandro] Bendana [Secretary General of the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry] told REUTER, referring to the anti-Sandinist rebels supported by Washington. Bendana added that the alleged incident was an invention, like the U.S. accusations of Nicaraguan complicity in the guerrilla attacks against the Palace of Justice in Colombia last month.

The U.S. charges that Nicaragua is involved in arms trafficking to El Salvador have been used by President Reagan to justify the support granted to the rebels fighting the Sandinist government from Honduran bases.

Following Abrams' accusation, the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington said tonight that Managua had no information on the presumed accident and seizure of weapons in Honduras.

"We were greatly surprised that it should be the State Department and not the Honduran Government, in whose territory the accident took place, who would make such absurd accusations against Nicaragua," an Embassy communique noted.

The Embassy's press attache, Miriam Hooker, described Abrams' accusations as "new elements in a campaign intended to create the conditions for the U.S. Congress to approve the military aid for the 'contras,'" as the rebels are known in Nicaragua.

#### ORTEGA ADDRESSES MARCH FOR PEACE GATHERING

PA200506 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 0330 GMT 20 Dec 85

[Statement by President Daniel Ortega to close the "Face the People" meeting with the participants in the peace march for Central America; in Managua -- live]

[Text] Approximately 25 to 30 questions have been asked. We always like you to ask questions and then we make a speech to the group as a whole. We want to make a speech in which all the people play a part. In this case, it is you, the peace marchers, and us, the officials serving the Nicaraguan people.

We know that you are tired. You have had a hectic journey. Many of you have come from countries in time zones that are hours away from Nicaragua's. You are possibly still unused to the time difference. That is why we did not want to exhaust you by answering each question individually. That would have kept us here until daybreak.

It is meaningful that this beautiful gesture you are staging is taking place in December, a month that is so symbolic for humanity. You are calling for peace. You want peace for the world, for the peoples. Peace, however, has not made itself fully present on earth or in Central America.

You are touring the Central American countries during the month of December, like it was done in the days when Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary were traveling around seeking a place where they would be given shelter so that Christ could be born. Unfortunately, no one wanted to give them shelter until they came to a humble manger where, according to history, Christ was born.

Some Nicaraguans have a submissive attitude toward the United States and see the U.S. Armed Forces as a power which attacks Nicaragua. They assume that the United States will win this battle because it is a powerful nation with innumerable resources and Nicaragua is a small nation; and this creates tension within our country.

When the United States offers the armed solution, many Nicaraguans are easily attracted either because they are gullible or because they have no political experience. They are thus compromised in armed counterrevolutionary actions. This is how some Miskitos [corrects himself] some Nicaraguans and Miskitos Indians become involved in armed counterrevolutionary actions. Even the Somozist guards who live in Honduras became involved in the armed actions when the United States brought them weapons and paid them salaries. If the United States came to Honduras and, instead of offering weapons and salaries to the guards, offered tractors and plows to till the land in Honduras, there would be no counterrevolutionary forces.

The same thing would have happened with the Miskitos if they had been offered food, clothes, and work instead of weapons.

In addition, with its actions of state terrorism, the United States provoked and has provoked some expectations among some of the Catholic Church hierarchs. However, the truth is that I cannot say that all bishops are against the revolutionary process. There are some priests who do not understand the revolution, and therefore are against the revolutionary process. So the truth is that if we make a comparison, as Father Cardenal has explained, although the Nicaraguan government revoked the residence of 10 foreign priests, some bishops in Nicaragua have revoked the Nicaraguan residence of more than 200 priests and nuns. Priests and nuns have been expelled from our country for the crime of identifying themselves with the process of change in Nicaragua.

But of course, this is a political problem, and therefore political positions are in conflict. So there is a polemic, and there are clashes in the political field with those who oppose the revolution in the political field. But on the other hand, there is no religious persecution here. Here the people can practice their religion in complete freedom, and the religious leaders can conduct their activities with absolute freedom.

As for the Miskito population, Companero [Ray] Hooker has already mentioned the progress that has been made regarding this problem. Companero Hooker is from the Atlantic Coast; he was kidnapped for several months by the counterrevolutionary forces, and is currently actively participating in the autonomy process.

There is another question here about the use of the Sandinista symbols in the march. I would say that it is your decision, and we recognize your efforts in favor of peace. We are not asking you to say that you support the Sandinist revolution, because the fact that you favor peace, and that Nicaragua is also in favor of peace, makes us feel that you support us through your gesture. [applause]

We were also asked if the Nicaraguan Government would authorize the creation of a human chain from the U.S. Embassy to the Soviet Embassy. Well, we have no reason to impose any restrictions on you. You are free to do whatever you want here. You are in free Nicaragua. [applause]