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Southern Opposition Front in Costa Rica During the Contra War: 1980-1988

by Bruce W. Fritz

B. A., Wichita State University, 1992

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SOUTHERN OPPOSITION FRONT IN COSTA RICA DURING THE CONTRA WAR: 1980-1988

BY B. FRITZ

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IN COSTA RICA DURING
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ABSTRACT

When one considers the Contras--the forces that opposed the Sandinista government of Nicaragua--the natural propensity is to view these forces as a monolithic institution. The purpose of this thesis is to draw a clear distinction between the Contras that were based in Honduras and the Southern Opposition Front (SOF) that was based in Costa Rica; more than geography separated these two fronts that opposed the FSLN government in the Contra War. In order to draw this distinction, this thesis will first offer a chronology of the Southern Front from its beginnings in 1980 through the declared cessation of hostilities in 1988. Following this, the reasons why the SOF came into existence will be examined through the application of the Collapsible Pyramid Model as presented by Jan Knippers Black and by reviewing the motivation behind US foreign policy toward Central America in the 1980s. Finally, five political science definitions will be presented in order to position the SOF Contras along the political continuum. The SOF's history was profoundly different from the Contra experience in Honduras and the impetus for its formation was likewise different. A variety of factors contributed to the failure of the SOF as both a political and a military organization.

To you, the yet unnamed child that grows within your mother:

"If my heart could do my thinking
and my head begin to feel,
I would look upon the world anew
and know what is truly real."

Van Morrison

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The Fritz Family
The Shelton Family
M.F. Fritz (1900-1985)--Perhaps your wanderlust is your legacy to me.
D.C., J.S., D.A., and *S.N.*--Your friendship reaches me from Wichita and Albuquerque.
J.W.--You are reality's weather forecaster.
E.S.--May my passion for life burn as hot as the rocks in the Womb of Mother Earth.
A.M., L.H., and *B.F.*--Except for a few such as you, Lawrence is rough on friendships.
J.R., T.K., R.W., A.J., L.Mc., J.R., J.S., J.B., J.T., N.M., E.B., R.H., C.E., J.B., L.K., and *C.W.*--You are a kind of second family I see every day at Allen Press.
A.E.--I believe I spend more time behind the wheel now.
S.K.--It was tragic the way you helped me wake up; you are missed by everyone who knew you.
Roy Hobbs--After one thinks about it, it wasn't so strange that you ended up in the maternity ward to recover from those old wounds.
Parsifal--Thanks for finally asking the right question.
St. Christopher--The valleys of the soul can be dark; the path of the heart has infinite cul-de-sacs; the waters of the stream of consciousness are both healing and dangerously swift. Thank you for protecting the traveler.
Jana--You are the partner most men dream about. When I let the Light within me grow dim, it is you and God who send the envelopes of light my direction.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In July 1979 nearly everyone who participated in the Nicaraguan insurgency movement to overthrow the forty-five year old dynasty of Anastasio Somoza García, Luis Somoza Debayle, and Anastasio Somoza Debayle considered themselves Sandinistas. After Anastasio Somoza Debayle fled the country, the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional--FSLN) was faced with the task of facilitating the transition of its role from that of a force to oust the Somoza regime to the role of governing the new Nicaragua as a vanguard party. The armed opposition to the FSLN consisted at first of exiled members of Somoza's National Guard (Guardia Nacional--GN). While the very nature of the FSLN victory in July 1979 created an armed opposition force comprised of disgruntled National Guardsmen, it was the controversial actions of the FSLN government in its attempts to consolidate the Revolution that served as the impetus behind the formation of the true Contra opposition force. As the power of the FSLN's National Directorate

(Dirección Nacional Conjunta--DNC) became increasingly assertive, the power of the Government of National Reconstruction (Gobierno de Reconstrucción Nacional--GRN) gradually declined.

The Sandinistas labeled the former guardsmen as "Contras," for contrarrevolucionarios (counterrevolutionaries). The Fifteenth of September League, under the command of former GN Col. Enrique Bermúdez, became the representative organization of the former guardsmen and was based in Honduras. The stated, as well as the actual "mission" of the Contras, changed throughout the 1980s just as the Contra organization itself was reshuffled both in name and leadership.[1] The establishment of a Southern Opposition Front (SOF) of Contras based along the Nicaraguan-Costa Rica border reached its fruition in 1982 when Edén Pastora--who had defected from the FSLN government nine months previously--announced in San José, Costa Rica that the Sandinistas should be removed from power.[2] The CIA saw in Pastora a symbol of authenticity that could be positively projected upon the Nicaraguan populace. In reality, Pastora and the CIA were constantly at odds over issues of autonomy and legitimacy between a) Pastora and his Contra group, Revolutionary Democratic Alliance (Alianza Revolucionaria

Democrática--ARDE), b) Enrique Bermúdez and his Contra group, Nicaraguan Democratic Force (Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense--FDN)--a consolidated and renamed version of the Fifteenth of September League--and c) the policy goals of the Reagan administration.[3] The culmination of this animosity was the La Penca bombing, an assassination attempt against Pastora which investigative journalist Martha Honey asserts "became the watershed event in the U.S.-contra/Sandinista war along the Southern Front."[4] Pastora "retired" and returned to the life of a fisherman in 1986 while covert US policymakers manipulated the SOF in Costa Rica into a force that was more responsive to the objectives of their benefactors.[5]

In mid-1985, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, working through the "Enterprise" front company and collaborating with CIA Station Chief Joseph Fernandez, secured land in northern Costa Rica to construct an air strip in order to supply arms to the Southern Front.[6] Peace-minded Costa Rican President Oscar Arias threatened to publicly disclose the operations at the Santa Elena air strip following repeated requests made to US officials to halt the resupply effort being conducted from Costa Rican territory. In late-September 1986, the air strip was indeed closed; only a few short days later, Eugene Hasenfus was shot down over southern Nicaragua in an "Enterprise" cargo plane. As the Iran-Contra Scandal was just beginning to unfold, the resupply operation was closing down.[7] Finally, in 1988, the International Commission on Verification and Follow-up (Comisión Internacional de Verificación y Seguimiento--CIVS)--as established under the guidelines of the Central American Peace Accord--stated that Costa Rica had indeed complied with Point 6 of the Accord: *Nonuse of territory for aggression against other countries.*[8]

Whereas Honduras and Costa Rica became the base sites for many of the Contras, more than mere geography separated the Contras forces. Prior to the sweeping revelations of the Iran-Contra affair and the Esquipulas peace initiatives, scholar Esperanza Durán advocated the need for drawing a distinction between the Contra groups.[9] Furthermore, the entire Southern Opposition Front (SOF) received only limited attention in terms of media coverage and US foreign policy focus when compared to the Contras based in Honduras. Likewise, the scholarly coverage indeed offers several studies of the Contras; however, these studies are not without their limitations--either by time frame or scope of focus--in the treatment of the SOF.

The literature concerning the Contras spans several different areas of study. Four basic categories of research--with some overlap, of course--exist: 1) history as interpreted by journalists, 2) history as interpreted by scholars and policy analysts, 3) political science-based studies that focus on inter-American/regional relations, international relations, and/or US foreign policy issues, and 4) the literature concerning the coverage of the Iran-Contra affair. This broad spectrum of information and their sources can be daunting to the scholar in search of concise yet significant data on the Contras and the SOF, in particular. A brief review of some of the literature will bear witness to this.

The 1985 book by Shirley Christian Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family[10] is quite strong in terms of covering the FSLN insurgency against Somoza. The book even has a chapter devoted exclusively to the Contras as well as a chapter focused on the prominent Nicaraguans who left the country. Christian, however, does not deal with the La Penca bombing in 1984. Furthermore, the book was written in pre-Iran-Contra time period. Christopher Dickey's With the Contras: A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua[11] (1985) is a strong journalistic account of the Contras and contains valuable anecdotal information that is passed over by the more scholarly works. Dickey's work likewise antedates the

Iran-Contra scandal and the attention that is given to the SOF, however, is predominantly centered around Edén Pastora. The 1991 book by Stephen Kinzer Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua[12] interprets well the role of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua within the context of national assimilation and counterrevolution in the post-Somoza period. Detail regarding the SOF, however, beyond the role of Pastora is somewhat sparse. Without a doubt, Glenn Garvin in his book Everybody Had His Own Gringo[13] (1992) provides the most colorful depiction of the Contras. This author's "insider" style offers the reader an abundance of interesting data that he gathered from an impressive list of interviewees. Garvin, however, did not utilize some of the more important primary source material available at the time. Hostile Acts: U.S. Policy in Costa Rica in the 1980s[14] (1994) by journalist Martha Honey represents the most comprehensive account of the SOF as well as a fine diplomatic history of US, Nicaraguan, and Costa Rican relations during the Contra War. The author's timing with this project has allowed her to utilize a wealth of primary resource material. The book, by its nature, however, does not investigate the theoretical origins of the SOF.

Dieter Eich and Carlos Rincón's The Contras: Interviews with Anti-Sandinistas[15] (1985 Eng. trans.)

provides a good chronology of the Contras' history yet the number of interviews presented by FDN Contras gives the reader a far better picture of the Honduran-based opposition forces. Furthermore, this book, researched prior to the Iran-Contra scandal, is not, by its nature, a diplomatic history of Nicaraguan, Costa Rican, and US relations. In Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention[16] (1987), author Peter Kornbluh devotes eight pages to the SOF compared to eighteen pages to the Honduran-based forces in the chapter entitled "The Military War." Additionally, as Kornbluh describes the origins of the Contras--the FDN as well as ARDE--he never mentions the important role of the Chamorro Rapaccioli brothers, who were vital in the formation of the Contras and who played prominent leadership roles in ARDE following the La Penca bombing in 1984 that targeted Edén Pastora. In Banana Diplomacy: The Making of American Policy in Nicaragua, 1981-1987[17] (1988), Roy Gutman provides an excellent synthesis of the US policy concepts and their respective "authors"--both within and on the periphery of the Reagan administration regarding Nicaragua. Gutman gives perhaps the most detailed account of the role played by CIA operative and early Contra-Washington liaison Duane (Dewey) Clarridge. Regarding the SOF, however, the author only occasionally mentions the Contra group UND/FARN and never mentions its co-leader "El

Negro" Chamorro Rappaccioli. Furthermore, the La Penca bombing is mentioned only in passing. Washington's War on Nicaragua[18] (1988), by Holly Sklar draws from an impressive bibliography which contributes to two sections contained in two separate chapters which deal with the SOF. Whereas Sklar is able to utilize some of the publications concerning the Iran-Contra Affair to buttress her assertions, some primary resource material was yet unavailable at the time of the book's printing. In Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua[19] (1991, ed. Thomas W. Walker) Peter Kornbluh contributes a chapter, "The U.S. Role in the Counterrevolution." The author incorporates some very valuable primary resource material within the twenty-six page chapter. The purpose of the chapter, however, is to provide the reader with a survey view of the US involvement in the Contra War--both the Honduran and Costa Rican fronts--and is therefore not a specific or detailed study of the SOF. Contra political officer Rogelio Pardo-Maurer offers a comprehensive study of the anti-Sandinista groups in The Contras,1980-1989: A Special Kind of Politics[20] (1990). Whereas the work's title encompasses a nine year period, the emphasis is clearly on the time frame of Lt. Col. North's involvement in Central American foreign policy; little mention is made of Alfonso Robelo's feud with the FSLN and his subsequent departure from the legal institutions of Nicaraguan political participation. Two other works likewise belong in this category: Robert Pastor's Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua[21] (1987), and Anthony Lake's Somoza Falling[22] (1989). Both books are extremely valuable in terms of gaining a perspective on the foreign policy process within the context of the exit of Somoza and the ascension to power by the FSLN. While the two works also provide an excellent account of the historical antecedents of the Reagan administration-FSLN relations of the 1980s, neither book represents a detailed study of the SOF.

Several works exist that should be considered political science studies of regional and international relations. The June 1984 publication, "Costa Rica: The Conflict Over Stabilization and Neutrality, 1983-84"[23] by Lowell Gudmundson, Robert Tomasek's work, "The Deterioration of Relations Between Costa Rica and the Sandinistas"[24] (1984), and the 1987 article by William L. Furlong, "Costa Rica: Caught Between Two Worlds"[25] are all very similar in their thematic focus. The three works are all concerned with the issue of the SOF; however, all three works tend to concentrate on the SOF within the context of Costa Rican neutrality vis-à-vis the Contras and Nicaragua and are therefore not specific studies of the SOF. Costa

Rica en los años '80[26] by Jorge Rovira Mas (1987) demonstrates the interaction between the economic crisis of the early 1980s, the subsequent Costa Rican social unrest, and US foreign policy; the SOF is likewise covered from the standpoint of the Costa Rican neutrality. Costa Rica: Política exterior y crisis centroamericana[27] by Francisco Rojas Aravena (1990) details the foreign policy process of the Carazo and Monge administrations as well as the Central American peace process. The book deals indirectly with the SOF as it relates to Costa Rican politics and to the regional peace process. Additionally, Rojas Aravena edited the 1990 book Costa Rica y el sistema internacional. The chapter contributed by Luis Guillermo Solís[28] on US-Costa Rican relations, the chapter by Melvin Sáenz Biolley[29] on Costa Rican-Nicaraguan relations, and Silvia Charpentier's[30] contribution on the Costa Rican foreign debt are indeed germane to a study of the SOF. The SOF, however, is briefly mentioned within the context of foreign policy.

A reasonable amount of literature exists concerning the peace plans that were formulated throughout the 1980s. Francisco Rojas Aravena's article "1985: Año del Impasse de Contadora"[31] (1986) and the transcript of one of his conference paper's "El Proceso de Esquipulas: El desarrollo conceptual y los mecanismos operativos"[32] (1989) serve as material in his above-mentioned book. Robert Tomasek presented the paper "United States Policy toward the Contadora Peace Process in 1984 and 1985"[33] (1986) which analyzed the various points of the Contadora Treaty drafts in terms of their advantages and disadvantages within the context of US policy objectives vis-à-vis the nations of the region; the SOF receives little direct mention. The 1987 paper "A Comparative Analysis of Peace Proposals for Central America: Contadora, the Reagan-Wright Plan, and the Arias Peace Agreement"[34] by Tomasek mentions some of the concerns the Costa Ricans had regarding the subversion that some felt was a Nicaraguan export to their neighbors to the south in the early 1980s. Tomasek also discusses the issues related to the Santa Elena airstrip but from the standpoint of how the closing of the facility further legitimized the peace efforts of President Arias in the region.

The literature dealing with the Iran-Contra affair has gone through an evolutionary process as more data is gleaned from once-classified documents. The validity of the sources, especially in this instance, often reflect their publication dates. The Tower Commission Report[35] (1987) and its companion index is obviously concerned with the SOF; however, the coverage of the SOF deals primarily with the

Contra resupply effort operated from the Santa Elena airstrip. The Chronology: The Documented Day-by-Day Account of the Secret Military Assistance to Iran and the Contras[36] as coordinated by the National Security Archive in 1987 is an extremely valuable tool in terms of gaining a perspective of the time-frame of the Iran-Contra affair. Furthermore, this work fills in many of the gaps that one may encounter in the Tower Commission Report. The nature of The Chronology, however, is to give the reader an account of the Iran-Contra affair and not a detailed analysis. Another National Security Archive publication--edited by Peter Kornbluh and Malcolm Byrne--is The Iran-Contra Scandal: The Declassified History[37] (1993) which takes the research into the Iran-Contra affair to a higher level by using a variety of declassified documents to support the historical interpretation. What is common to this book is likewise common to the other books that deal with the SOF within the context of the Iran-Contra affair: the majority of the coverage is devoted to Lt. Col. Oliver North's efforts to revive the SOF--minus Pastora--in Costa Rica.

The literature review of the SOF leads to some important conclusions. When considering the broad topic of the Contras and the SOF, there is no great dearth of information. On the other hand, the information is often part of a peripheral subject and, therefore, lacks direct attention to the SOF. Furthermore, the Honduran-based Contras often end up with the lion's share of the coverage of the Contra War. Another limitation to gaining a more complete picture of the SOF has been the works published prior to the Iran-Contra affair versus those which were published in the post-Reagan time period. These conclusions partially serve as the impetus for the following work.

The purpose of this present study is to examine the SOF of the Contra War and, through analysis, comparison, and description, to clarify and dispel the historical or extant perceptions that the Contras represented a monolithic institution. By synthesizing the existing Contra literature with some of the relatively yet untapped primary sources, this study will present a more comprehensive and focused view of the SOF in Costa Rica. Throughout the course of the paper, this study will address many questions and issues that will distinguish and describe the SOF and the role it played in the schemata of Central American politics in the 1980s. The first chapter will be a chronology of the SOF. This chapter will examine the basic evolution of the SOF as well as explain both the groups and the leaders involved. This chapter will also be a military history of the SOF which will focus on the political significance of the military operations. In the second chapter, the question "Why the SOF Contras?" will be posited and answered--by using a theoretical model--from the standpoint of a Nicaraguan political perspective and a US foreign policy perspective. The final chapter will examine the issues concerning how the SOF is categorized through political science and vernacular definitions.

INTRODUCTION

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[2] Shirley Christian, Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family (New York: Random House, 1985), 322.

[3] Krauss, 146.

[4] Martha Honey, Hostile Acts: U.S. Policy in Costa Rica in the 1980s (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), 339.

[5] Ibid., 438-455.

[6] Peter Kornbluh, "US Role in the Counterrevolution" in Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua, ed. Thomas W. Walker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 341.

[7] Krauss, 232-238.

[8] Final Report of the LASA Commission on Compliance with the Central American Peace Accord, by Charles L. Stansifer and Michael E. Conroy, Co-chairmen (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 1988), 2, 6-8.

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[22] Anthony Lake, Somoza Falling (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989).

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[25] William L. Furlong, "Costa Rica: Caught Between Two Worlds," Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 29 no. 2 (Summer 1987): 119-154.

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[29] Melvin Sáenz Biolley, "Costa Rica y Nicaragua: tensiones naturales, dificultades constantes," en Costa Rica y el sistema internacional, 137-180.

[30] Silvia Charpentier, "Costa Rica y la deuda externa," en Costa Rica y el sistema internacional, 243-255.

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CHAPTER II

CHRONOLOGY OF THE SOF CONTRAS

This chapter will represent an historical account of the evolution of the SOF from 1980-1988. The evolution of the SOF can best be followed by considering their history as moving through four distinct phases: 1) the proto-Contras: 1980-the formation of ARDE, 2) the SOF alliance: September 1982-the La Penca bombing, 3) the divided SOF: June 1984-disclosure of the Santa Elena airstrip, and 4) the SOF End Game: September 1986-January 1988. Within each historic phase, the research will focus on: a) the prominent SOF leaders and their respective organizations and their subsequent activities, b) the combat activities of the SOF and their political-military significance, and c) a survey of the major funding sources of the SOF. As was noted in the introduction to this present study, the various Contra groups were often viewed as a monolithic institution. Whereas the primary purpose of this chapter is to present an historical chronology of the SOF, the underlying purpose is to draw the distinction between not only the SOF and Honduran-based Contras but to draw the distinction between the diverse Contra groups that fit under the broad umbrella of the Southern Opposition Front.

The proto-Contra phase of the SOF: 1980-September 1982

The proto-Contra phase of the Contra War, in general, encompasses the time period between when diverse opposition groups were assembling in places like Tegucigalpa, San José, and Miami and when some of these groups coalesced into a more formalized alliance structure. As for the SOF, this time period ranges from shortly after the FSLN victory in July 1979 and concludes with the formation of ARDE in September 1982.

During the proto-Contra phase, the groups that eventually found themselves in San José represented nothing short of a diverse field. Some of the groups in this phase established themselves as major participants in the Contra War for the next several years; other groups were either absorbed into other organizations or merely fell by the wayside as the process of acquiring funds, at times, was rather competitive. Nevertheless, an interesting array of SOF proto-Contra political and military groups existed prior to the formation of ARDE in September 1982.

15 September Legion

The Legion eventually merged with some of the other Honduran-based proto-Contra groups to form the FDN. The Legion and then the FDN, however, maintained a presence in Costa Rica from the early days of the Contra War. The leadership of the Legion was known to include former members of the GN; Defense Department intelligence even referred to the Legion as a "Somocista" group in a mid-1982 report.[1] Just as CIA Washington-Contra liaison Duane "Dewey" Clarridge was dealing with Edén Pastora in early 1982, "the CIA hedged its bets by creating a small, parallel FDN army in Costa Rica."[2] Most of the Legion joined the FDN when that umbrella group was founded in late 1981. Whereas the majority of the FDN moved to Honduras, small groups were indeed sent into Costa Rica where they established political offices in San José as well as training camps in the Guanacaste area of northwestern Costa Rica.[3]

The Legion was also very instrumental in forging links with the Argentines. The first significant Contra attack was launched by Legion forces in December 1980 against the Argentine leftist shortwave radio station in Grecia, Costa Rica *Radio Noticias del Continente*. The government of Argentine President Roberto Viola clearly wanted the station out of operation; the Argentine government believed that the station "was the voice of communism couched in the rhetoric of human rights."[4] In spite of the fact that the mission against *Radio Noticias del Continente* was considered a failed fiasco as the leader, former GN Captain Hugo Villagra (Visage) and other participating Legionnaires were jailed, the Argentine army remained resolved to sponsoring a Nicaraguan exile force. Almost a full year prior to US President Ronald Reagan's more formalized support for the Contras, the Argentines viewed members of the Legion--as well as others--as potential recruits. Throughout the proto-Contra time period, the FDN Contras established a significant base of operation in Costa Rica where Costa Rican security estimated that three hundred FDN Contras were training in the northern area of the country. Furthermore, the FDN had networked well with security forces and right-wing elements throughout Costa Rica.[5]

CDDN (Committee in Defense of Democracy in Nicaragua)

This political group was originally formed in the early 1980s in Caracas, Venezuela. Its president was Tor Halvorsen, a Norwegian native, who headed the Venezuelan Tourist Corporation and was a close friend of former Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés Pérez. Halvorsen was likewise one of the early middlemen for CIA funds being funneled through Venezuela. The CDDN as a CIA-funded organization opened an office in San José in 1982 and was headed there by Nicaraguan lawyer Francisco Aviles. The CDDN, however, clearly favored the FDN versus the early SOF. In San José, they used CIA funds to set up pro-FDN Radio Impacto as well as build support among the Costa Rican ultra-right.[6]

ECN (Nicaraguan Christian Army)

The ECN was also known as the ECLIN (Christian Army of Liberation of Nicaragua). The ECN was based in northern Costa Rica and was led by Dr. Roberto Constantino Pineda. This small group, according to intelligence sources, received no outside support and was believed to be largely inactive. As some of the members of the ECN were thought to have been former members of the GN, perhaps the ECN moved to Honduras where they were absorbed by the FDN or perhaps they became part of the FDN contingency that eventually operated out of US expatriate John Hull's ranch in northern Costa Rica.[7]

FAD (Democratic Armed Force)

FAD was reportedly a small resistance group that was composed mainly of young ex-Sandinistas operating within

Nicaragua with supporters in Guatemala, Honduras, as well as Costa Rica. FAD suffered a severe set-back in mid-1980 when two key leaders were arrested by FSLN security forces.[8] As with many of the other proto-Contra groups, FAD was most likely either absorbed into a larger organization or faded into obscurity.

27 May Command

This group was believed to be merely a desk organization in San José whose members were remnants of the Honduran-based organization headed by former Somoza business partner Pedro Ortega "Juan Carlos" Macho, the ENL (National Liberation Army). It seems that the claims made by the 27 May Command were, in some cases, so fantastic that the CIA seriously doubted their validity.[9]

15 September Legion

This group should not be confused with the 15 September Legion that was integrated with the FDN based in Honduras. Led by former GN Captain Justiano Pérez, this 15 September Legion left the other, more mainstream "Legion" when it aligned with the other groups to form the FDN. The renegade "Legion" was more of a terrorist group than a proto-Contra paramilitary organization as it was responsible for three airport-related terrorist acts--

including the hijacking of a Costa Rican SANSA airliner from San José in October 1981.[10]

UDN/FARN (Nicaraguan Democratic Union/Nicaraguan Revolutionary Armed Forces)

The three key leaders of UDN/FARN in the proto-Contra phase were brothers Fernando (El Negro) and Edmundo (Comandante Uno and Sabastián) Chamorro Rappaccioli and--until the formation of the FDN--José Francisco (El Chicano) Cardenal. Fernando Chamorro was first an anti-Somocista with a combat record that goes back to the late 1950s when he and his brother, Edmundo, were students. The Brothers Chamorro were involved in the siege of two GN barracks in Jinotepe and Diriamba in November 1960. The incident served as the inspiration for the name of their guerrilla organization, "The November 11 Movement" (N-11). The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Nicaragua (FARN), formed in late 1980 as the military wing of UDN, appear to be a more formalized extension of N-11.[11]

During the anti-Somoza insurgency of the late 1970s, the Chamorro brothers served with Edén Pastora along the Southern Front and Fernando Chamorro was responsible for a rocket attack launched against the GN bunker across the street from the Hotel Inter-Continental in Managua.[12]

Throughout the anti-Somoza insurgency, N-11 favored a more traditionally democratic outcome to the conflict. In October 1978, N-11 even claimed that it had forced the "Extremists to sign an agreement that if triumph is achieved it will have to be a democratic form of government."[13]

Immediately following the FSLN victory, "El Negro" Chamorro returned to his Chevrolet dealership in Managua.[14] Chamorro's name resurfaced, however, in 1981 when he was named as among the important leaders of the Internal Front of the N-11 counterrevolutionary group--at that point integrated with UND/FARN. Furthermore, the source went on to state that "El Negro" had received training in Argentina and Honduras as well as having received $50,000 from the Argentines in order to purchase weapons in Miami for shipment to Honduras.[15] Chamorro continued to shuffle the FARN forces back and forth from Honduras and Costa Rica until the formation of ARDE in late 1982. In early 1982, "El Negro" was the target of an assassination attempt at his apartment in San José.[16]

Edmundo Chamorro, along with his brother Fernando, were the two principal leaders of N-11, FARN, and its associated political organization UDN (Unión Democrática

Nicaragüense). Following the FSLN victory of 1979, Edmundo chose exile rather than returning to private life in Nicaragua like his brother's immediate choice. In fact, in the Contra literature dealing with the time period prior to the formation of ARDE, Edmundo usually commanded more headline space than his brother. In August 1980, Edmundo was arrested, along with five other N-11 guerrillas, by Costa Rican officials for arms trafficking. Furthermore, Edmundo accompanied his brother on the 1981 trip to Argentina and then Miami which netted first money and then weapons and food for the small UDN/FARN forces based, at that time, near the Honduran-Nicaraguan border.[17]

In late 1980, shortly after the formation of UDN/FARN, Edmundo Chamorro and fellow UDN/FARN co-founder and leader José Francisco Cardenal wanted to include the newly elected Reagan administration in the Contra struggle. Shortly after the 1980 US Presidential victory of Ronald Reagan, Chamorro sent a proposal letter of Contra action drafted by Cardenal to national security adviser nominee Richard Allen; the letter was sent standard post from San José. Allen's office clearly lacked the appreciation for the significance of the letter as Chamorro was sent a form letter that never reached him because Allen's staff mailed the letter to Chamorro in San José with neither a street address nor a postal box number. Chamorro perhaps read the letter along with much of the Nicaraguan populace after FSLN agents or sympathizers in the Costa Rican post office intercepted the letter bound for Chamorro and forwarded it to Managua where it was printed on the front page of Barricada.[18]

The third key leader--as well as the leader with the shortest tenure--in UDN/FARN was José Francisco (El Chicano) Cardenal. Cardenal participated in UND/FARN only after moving through a personal process that resembled that of Alfonso Robelo: anti-Somocista, Sandinista, anti-Sandinista. Cardenal was part of the contingent of businessmen associated with COSIP which opposed Somoza during the insurgency. In April 1980--during the crisis of the FSLN-initiated realignment of the Council of State and Alfonso Robelo's subsequent resignation--Cardenal reluctantly accepted the position of vice-president to the Council. A number of days later, Cardenal likewise resigned and fled to San José and then eventually to Miami "where he began to search for the means to overthrow the Sandinistas."[19]

In May 1980, Cardenal made contact with anti-Sandinista businessman Jorge Salazar and former GN Col.

Enrique Bermúdez. Cardenal and Bermúdez formed the political/military group ADRIN (Nicaraguan Revolutionary Democratic Alliance). By November 1980--the time of Salazar's death--ADRIN had accomplished little more than the establishment of political organizations in some US cities and in Costa Rica. The group split up over several issues including Cardenal's misgivings about being associated with former members of the GN; the dissolution of ADRIN directly led to the formation of UND/FARN in late 1980. Whereas Bermúdez left the organization and retained the 15 September Legion name, Cardenal and other civilian leaders formed UDN and established a military wing under the name of FARN which included Orlando Bolaños and the Chamorro brothers of N-11. Following the trip to Argentina by the Chamorro brothers, Cardenal received word from the Argentine military that stated that more assistance would be forthcoming but that it was conditioned on an alliance of the exile forces.[20]

In an ironic way, the first real attempt at Contra unity facilitated the first schism. A group of Argentine military officers assembled several Nicaraguan exiles in Guatemala and the organization that was the product of that meeting was the FDN. Whereas the objective of this group was to integrate the civilian and military elements of the

Nicaraguan exile forces, Edmundo Chamorro and UDN/FARN left the newly-formed alliance while Cardenal and his faction of UDN remained more closely tied to the FDN. Cardenal and the Argentines maintained rather strained relations as Cardenal believed that the Argentines were far more concerned with eradicating communism from the Americas than they were with building a stable democratic foundation in Nicaragua.[21]

Following Edén Pastora's "severance speech" in April 1982 in San José in which he officially broke with the FSLN, Cardenal negotiated with Pastora and Robelo on behalf of the FDN with the hope of forging an alliance of the forces of the northern and southern fronts. In a rather maverick move, Cardenal offered the co-commandership of the Contra army--along with Bermúdez--to Pastora and assured Robelo that the Contra political directorate would be expanded to include him as well. Pastora refused the offer as he would only accept the total exclusion of the former members of the GN.[22]

In spite of the fact that Pastora, Robelo, and Cardenal were high school buddies, the variable of personality was perhaps the greatest impediment to cooperation and eventual alignment;[23] "each felt betrayed by the role that the others had played in the past, and each felt the tug of ambitions in an uncertain future."[24] The most important aspect of these failed negotiations between the northern and southern proto-Contra forces was that the lack of agreement eventually led to formation of ARDE.[25]

As the north-south Contra negotiations proved fruitless, many in the Nicaraguan exile community were questioning Cardenal's leadership role in FDN politics. Furthermore, El Chicano's relationship with the former members of the GN as well as with the Argentines remained problematic. In spite of Cardenal's direct contact with the CIA through Agent John Perham, the CIA was unable to save Cardenal from the FDN's committee in Miami. The committee ousted Cardenal from the FDN political directorate and by 1983 the CIA had also withdrawn its support from Cardenal. The CIA's rationale behind cutting off Cardenal's support was based on US Congressional criticism and the general negative publicity that was beginning to develop among the US populace regarding Contra funding. Lacking both FDN and CIA support, Cardenal retired from politics and sold insurance in Miami.[26] Whereas Cardenal was edged out of participation in Nicaraguan exile politics, the Chamorro brothers--at least for the time being--were able to adapt to the *de jour* politics of the proto-Contra phase, move south, and survive to fight another day.

MDN (Democratic Nicaraguan Movement)

The political life of Alfonso Robelo has moved through a variety of Nicaraguan political circles as an anti-Somocista, a Sandinista, and an anti-Sandinista. Robelo first became involved in opposition politics against Somoza in 1974 through his business/political organization COSIP (Consejo Superior de la Iniciativa Privada). COSIP, under Robelo's direction, functioned as a major, more moderate opposition force to the Somoza regime prior to the assassination of opposition leader and newspaper publisher Pedro Joaquín Chamorro in January 1978. In March 1978, Robelo organized the social democratic MDN; in the summer of 1978, several groups--including the MDN--organized to form the Broad Opposition Front. The efforts of the moderate opposition to Somoza--including the MDN-- always seemed to be out-maneuvered by the FSLN forces. When the FSLN forces saw the inevitability of their victory, the Provisional Government Junta of National Reconstruction (GRN) was announced on June 16, 1979 in San José; Robelo was named as one of its five members.[27]

By the spring of 1980, power within the FSLN government was clearly shifting away from the moderate positions in the GRN as represented by Robelo and Violeta Chamorro and toward the FSLN's National Directorate (DNC) and Sandinista-dominant organizations. This power shift is best exemplified by the crisis that occurred regarding the semilegislative Council of State. The original plan for the Council of State was drawn up by the DNC in June 1979. Within this configuration the FSLN would have occupied only 13 of the 33 seats with the remainder being apportioned among a broad cross-section of organizations. However, instead of being forced to compete with parties and organizations which had already accepted FSLN leadership in post-Somoza Nicaragua, the DNC merely expanded the number of Council seats to 47 with the new seats going to FSLN-dominated or FSLN-associated organizations. These FSLN political maneuvers, combined with the reported nationalization of the Nicaraguan banks, were the prime motivational factors behind Robelo's resignation from the GRN in April 1980; citing poor health, Violeta Chamorro resigned a matter of days prior to Robelo.[28]

Throughout late 1980, Robelo and the MDN sharpened their public criticism of the FSLN. The FSLN responded in early November 1980 when the Interior Ministry declared that an MDN rally scheduled to take place in the town of Nandaime was classified as "political proselytizing" and was therefore prohibited. The tension generated between the MDN and the FSLN was further exacerbated by decree 511 which prohibited the publication of the events surrounding the FSLN's intervention in the Nandaime rally. The situation reached a point of culmination when young MDN supporters clashed with a group of FSLN youths, *turbas*, in Managua; by the end of the week, four MDN youths were arrested and the MDN headquarters were ransacked.[29]

Throughout 1981, Robelo found political life as an opposition leader in the FSLN's Nicaragua to be rather difficult. Militant FSLN youths, the *turbas*, continued to harass Robelo and the MDN. *Turbas* once again wrecked the MDN building in Managua and attacked Robelo's home as well. Furthermore, Robelo sensed that the Reagan administration was working to settle the issues in Nicaragua on its own terms. He was likewise frustrated with the "Liberal Democrats" in Washington for what he saw as either their inability or their ineffectiveness in supporting such advocates of genuine pluralism within Nicaragua as himself. Therefore, Robelo and the entire MDN structure left Managua as voluntary exiles in March 1982; some went to Honduras but most went to Costa Rica.[30]

Even prior to the formal announcement of the formation of ARDE in September 1982, Robelo and the MDN were clearly throwing their support behind Pastora. *Comandante Cero* had surfaced in San José to lambaste the DNC in his formal break with the FSLN only a month after Robelo left Managua. By summer 1982, "the MDN announced suspensions of all civic activities in Nicaragua and called upon its members and supporters within the country to aid Pastora."[31] Additionally, it was no longer a secret that Pastora, Robelo, and the Nicaraguan ambassador to the United States, Arturo Cruz, Sr., were involved in an alliance.[32] Six months following his departure from Managua, Robelo and the MND joined with the others to form ARDE.

FRS (Sandino Revolutionary Front)

The charismatic Edén Pastora, *Comandante Cero*, was not only the "star"[33] of the anti-Somoza insurgency and the leader of his own proto-Contra group; Pastora was the most prominent figure in the SOF. The course of *Comandante Cero's* political/military life mirrored that of many of the other Contras: anti-Somocista, Sandinista, anti-Sandinista.

Pastora was already bent on vengeance toward the Somocista structure as his own father was killed by GN thugs when Edén was just seven years old. Furthermore, classmates at the Jesuit Colegio Centroamérica in Granada noted that Pastora was perhaps resentful about the fact that he lacked the pedigree of some of the Nicaraguan "imperial" families. His last name was not as prominent as Chamorro and he came from the "poor side" of the Pastora family. This same vengeance aimed at the Somocista structure served as the catalyst for Pastora's withdrawal from medical school in Mexico in 1959. Upon his return to Nicaragua, Pastora joined one of the many seminal anti-Somoza groups--the Sandino Revolutionary Front. Pastora circulated among the various anti-Somoza groups until 1961 when he began his association with the FSLN.[34]

Antagonism was a fact of life among the FSLN leaders in the 1960s and the early 1970s as different theories and the individual personalities that espoused them often clashed. Pastora and Tomás Borge were both strong personalities and they each perceived the other as lacking the genuine character traits of a revolutionary leader. Pastora thought of Borge as a café revolutionary who was more of a theoretician than a fighter. It was perhaps Borge, conversely, who blocked Pastora's visit to Cuba in the late 1960s after Borge advised Fidel Castro that Pastora was a social democrat and not a committed marxist. The Somocista crackdown on the FSLN following the 1967

Nicaraguan election landed several of the Front's leaders in prison and severely demoralized the FSLN. The FSLN did not recover until the 1974 Christmas Party raid. Pastora was a target of the resentment of some of the FSLN leaders as he was not scorched by the baptismal fires of the revolutionary: prison, torture, and day to day involvement in the struggle. Instead, Pastora was in Mexico, the United States, Italy, and Switzerland. Then Pastora grew tobacco in Nicaragua after accepting an amnesty from the Somoza government. Finally, in 1973--after an "on again-off again" commitment to the life of the mythical "revolutionary in the mountains"--Pastora became a fisherman in the Barra del Colorado region of Costa Rica. It was here that Sergio Ramírez and Carlos Coronel found Pastora in 1977 and offered him the opportunity to participate again in the insurgency. Daniel and Humberto Ortega were in San José, according to the envoys, and they were approaching the revolution from a different angle; the *tercerista* faction would broaden the insurgency's base by including the groups and individuals who had previously been alienated by the FSLN's factionalized marxist dogma.[35]

Pastora first mentioned his vision of the raid on the National Palace--the meeting venue of Nicaragua's congress as well as the offices of several of Nicaragua's government agencies--to others in the FSLN in 1970. The successful execution of the raid's plans were primarily contingent upon deceiving the GN security forces at the National Palace and convincing them that a surprise visit by Somoza was in the offing. In August 1978, Pastora's assault team commanded the National Palace within three minutes of entering the building; the FSLN team suffered no casualties. Following a couple of days of negotiations, Somoza--fearing that Pastora was not bluffing about his threat to kill the 1,500 hostages that were held in the National Palace (including Somoza relatives)--agreed to release 59 political prisoners (including Tomás Borge) and grant the FSLN $500,000 in ransom. The National Palace raid was a brilliant ploy for several different reasons: 1) the FSLN claimed a much needed victory which served as the catalyst for greater popular rebellion in the following month; 2) the FSLN now had a hero with Pastora; 3) the raid was planned to coincide with as well as upset a GN-planned coup against Somoza which further diminished the *Somocismo sin Somoza* option vis-à-vis the Nicaraguan populace; and 4) Pastora's nationalist-populist ideology gained wide support among the region's social democrats which translated into support for the FSLN.[36]

Following the National Palace raid, the FSLN's DNC was concerned about the possibility of a personality cult developing around Pastora. Therefore, Pastora was named as the commander of the FSLN's southern front where he would remain visible enough to garner outside support for the FSLN's insurgency while remaining out of the thick of the battle which was centered in and around Managua. In a sense, Pastora was used as a decoy to attract the bulk of the GN forces to the south while the more hardline FSLN forces were primed to take Managua; the DNC wanted to neutralize Pastora's "power quotient." Pastora was keenly aware of the jockeying for power that was occurring. In fact, Pastora sent a letter to Washington via former Costa Rican President José Figueres in which he tried to convince the Carter administration to convince Somoza to withdraw the GN forces in the south so that Pastora could advance to Managua unimpeded and thus prevent the outright victory by more radical FSLN forces. The Carter administration, however, still believed it could influence events more directly and establish a non-FSLN government. The DNC's plan to neutralize Pastora was indeed successful. As FSLN fighters arrived in Managua on July 19, 1979, *Comandante Cero* was still engaged in battle with sparse GN forces in the south.[37]

Following the FSLN victory, Pastora's role in the revolutionary government was vaguely defined and, over a period of time, "as Pastora was neglected, his doubts about the revolution began to grow. Socialism seemed to be on the wane, communism on the rise."[38] In spite of his popularity and his contribution to the revolution, Pastora was never included in the DNC. Instead, Pastora was first named as deputy interior minister under Tomás Borge and then later named as deputy defense minister and commander of the militia under Humberto Ortega. A combination of Pastora's perception of the consolidation of the revolution and its drift to the left as well as the simple fact that he was excluded from the upper reaches of power in the FSLN government motivated *Comandante Cero* and nine of his supporters to leave Nicaragua in early July 1981.[39] He left behind a letter to Humberto Ortega that vaguely outlined his plans:

> I am going to discharge my revolutionary gunpowder against the oppressor in whatever part of the world in which he is found, without it mattering whether they call me Quixote or Sancho.[40]

Much like the 1960s and early 1970s, Pastora found himself playing the role of the transient romantic revolutionary. Pastora's first stop was Panama where he met with his political idol and mentor General Omar Torrijos. To all outward appearances, it seemed that Pastora actually did want to assist other revolutionary struggles. He hoped to enlist the support of Torrijos and Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez in helping the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA) of Guatemala which had an ideology quite similar to the *tercerista* philosophy. *Comandante Cero's* hopes, however, were dashed by Torrijos' death in a small plane crash only a few weeks after Pastora had arrived in Panama.

Pastora went next to Havana; then to Libya via Algeria where Colonel Muammar Qadhafi contributed at least $3 million to ORPA. His next stop was back to Havana where he was held under house arrest while Castro tried to coax him back into the FSLN fold and until Torrijos' son intervened on his behalf. Pastora's next destination was southern California where he met with CIA-connected arms dealers. Finally, in early 1982, Pastora met with CIA Latin American division chief Duane "Dewey" Clarridge at a posh hotel in Acapulco, Mexico.[41]

In spite of the fact that Pastora and Clarridge were almost instant friends, the two had different plans for the political struggles of Central America. Rather than Pastora receiving support for ORPA from the CIA, Clarridge and Pastora agreed that a Contra Southern Front should be opened. It was Pastora who set most of the terms: a) Pastora's FRS would hold to the *tercerista* line; b) Pastora would maintain autonomy over the FRS; c) there would be no FRS-FDN alliance; d) the FRS would outwardly be involved in political protests while covertly the FRS would train anti-FSLN fighters in Costa Rica; and e) the CIA involvement in military operations had to remain secret. Furthermore, the agreement established the CIA as the major financial contributor to the SOF until the 1984 La Penca bombing. The deal struck between Clarridge and Pastora was more or less sealed by Pastora's April 15, 1982 news conference in San José when he made his public break with the FSLN.[42]

A short time following the April news conference, Pastora was back on the road again. *Comandante Cero* greeted seventeen FSLN deserters on the Costa Rican side of its border with Nicaragua. The small ceremony at the border looked to many as a violation of Costa Rican exile/military law. Pastora was expelled and went first to Europe to solicit political as well as financial support from socially democratic organizations. Pastora then travelled to Honduras for negotiations with Honduran General Gustavo Alvarez concerning a Contra unity force. The presence of former Somocista guardsmen in the Honduran-based FDN and the personality clash between Pastora and Alvarez impeded any chance of Contra unity. The meeting in Honduras sowed the seeds of doubt among the FDN, the Hondurans, and some in the CIA concerning Pastora's personal stability as a leader.[43]

In spite of the US Defence Intelligence Agency report that predicted the formation of ARDE in the summer of 1982, Pastora resigned in protest to an FDN assault on a village in northern Nicaragua in which some of their prisoners were killed and the FRS was wrongly implicated in the incident by the FDN force. Pastora, however, then met with Costa Rican President Luís Alberto Monge and agreed to live within Costa Rican exile law if he were allowed to return. A month following his meeting with Monge, Pastora and the three other members of the ARDE team announced the formation of their alliance.[44]

MISURASATA (Miskitos, Sumos, and Ramas)

MISURASATA was an alliance of the Miskito, Sumo, and Rama indigenous groups and the creoles, all of the Atlantic coast region of Nicaragua. The Atlantic coast of Nicaragua is an interesting amalgamation of a more British historical legacy, diverse ethnic groups, Protestant rather than Catholic religious orientation, and a swampy lowland geography that isolates the Atlantic region from the more

Spanish-dominated Pacific side of Nicaragua.[45]

The Somozas approached the Atlantic coast region, for the most part, with a non-interventionist agenda. The *costeños* responded without the same hatred and resentment that was rampant in Pacific Nicaragua as the GN presence on the Atlantic coast never acted with the same brutality. Therefore, the anti-Somoza insurgency of the late 1970s "was almost a foreign news story to people in Bluefields and Puerto Cabezas."[46]

Only a few months after the FSLN assumed power, a group of five hundred Indians attended a convention in Puerto Cabezas with the intention of forming an ethnic-based political organization. In spite of the FSLN's efforts to assimilate the Indians into Sandinista "mass organizations," the Indians formed MISURASATA and named Miskito Steadman Fagoth as its leader. The FSLN reluctantly awarded Fagoth a seat on the Council of State as the representative of the indigenous organization. The convention and the assertive attitude of MISURASATA was a harbinger of the growing conflict between the *costeños* and the "Spanish" FSLN of Managua.[47]

The FSLN lacked a clear understanding of the situation on the Atlantic coast. The revolutionary agenda that the FSLN was implementing throughout Nicaragua was most resisted on the Atlantic coast. The Cuban presence in Zalaya province was, according to the *costeños*, unwanted. Furthermore, the FSLN failed to understand that the friction that existed between the FSLN and the *costeños* was motivated more by a sense of *indigenismo* among the groups of MISURASATA than by socio-political counterrevolution. Whereas Fagoth wanted FSLN assurances that the Miskitos could continue their traditional system of communally controlled land ownership, the FSLN considered the region to be socially backward as the Miskitos were, in essence, without a sense of class awareness. The FSLN was clearly upset as the Miskitos saw no class distinction when class distinction and class struggle, theoretically speaking, should have served as the foundation of the proletarian state.[48]

After withdrawing MISURASATA from the Council of State in early 1981 as a general protest to the FSLN's inattentiveness to Miskito demands, Fagoth and thirty other Miskitos were arrested as tensions between MISURASATA and the FSLN mounted. The FSLN charged that Fagoth was not only involved in counterrevolutionary activity but that he was a Somocista informer. Fagoth, Brooklyn Rivera, and others were likewise charged as members of an Atlantic coast separatist movement. Upon Fagoth's release, he fled to Honduras and Brooklyn Rivera took over the leadership of the banned MISURASATA.[49]

In November 1981, Miskito forces who had fled to Honduras returned to Nicaragua--under the command of Fagoth--and launched the "Red Christmas" offensive. Author Martha Honey states that the attacks were a CIA sponsored attempt on the part of the Contras to seize a piece of Nicaraguan territory and declare it "liberated" and seek recognition from the United States and other friendly governments.[50] While the FSLN counter-offensive sent ten thousand Miskitos to the refugee camps in Honduras, the relatively meager CIA assistance in "Red Christmas" created first a power struggle and then a schism within the Miskito proto-Contras. In February 1982, Rivera was asked to leave Honduras; in June 1982, he was expelled from Honduras and went to Costa Rica. Fagoth remained in Honduras and formed the FDN-aligned Miskito group MISURA. Brooklyn Rivera and some of his followers reconstituted MISURASATA and became part of ARDE three months later.[51]

The SOF Alliance: September 1982-May 1984

On September 24, 1982 in San José, Costa Rica, Pastora of the FRS, Robelo of the MDN, El Negro of UDN/FARN, and Rivera of MISURASATA formally announced the formation of ARDE (Revolutionary Democratic Alliance). ARDE pledged that each group would "preserve its identity but coordinate its efforts, and invite all who are dedicated to restoring the original goals of the Nicaraguan revolution to join them."[52] The time period of the SOF alliance spans from the formation of ARDE until the La Penca bombing that targeted Pastora in 1984.

In 1983, ARDE experienced its first significant addition as well as its first significant departure. In early 1983, "El Negro" was encountering trouble from all quarters. Chamorro reportedly left ARDE out of frustration with what he perceived as the alliance's passive approach to the FSLN. The other ARDE leaders feared that "El Negro" not only brought a Somocista-tinged past into their alliance but his military tactics--basically hit and run border raids--were drawing negative attention to ARDE from the Costa Rican authorities. It was of little consequence as to whether Chamorro was pushed out or whether he left; "El Negro" was expelled from Costa Rica for arms trafficking and went to Honduras to fight with the FDN.[53]

Also in early 1983, José Dávila and his group, the FSDC (Christian Democratic Solidarity Front), joined ARDE. Dávila was previously associated with ANUDE (Nicaraguan Assembly of Democratic Unity), a center-left political organization that worked for ARDE-FDN unity. Perhaps more important to the SOF was *who* Dávila knew. Dávila had received a scholarship to study in West Germany from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a political organization that was associated with the West German Christian Democratic Party. Whereas Dávila denied receiving any funds from the foundation, Robelo admitted that ARDE had received money from the German Christian Democratic Party and did not rule out the involvement of the foundation.[54] This was only one of the funding sources for the SOF alliance.

Operation Tipped Kettle, Operation Tipped Kettle II, and Project Elephant Herd were all plans devised by the CIA and implemented with the cooperation of the US Department of Defense (DoD), the CIA, and the Israeli military. The DoD approached the Israelis concerning the possibility of them "granting" captured PLO weapons to the CIA for operational use. Operation Tipped Kettle was the result of the first negotiations in May 1983; Tipped Kettle II was the result of the DoD "returning to the well" in February

1984. Project Elephant Herd was a method for storing the Israeli-granted weapons for later distribution when the covert operations were forced to stay within US Congressional funding limitations.[55] The Contra leaders from both the Northern and Southern Fronts estimated that during 1983 alone they received 6000 Israeli supplied weapons. For the SOF--Pastora, in particular--the Israeli weapons carried a certain price tag. In October 1983, the CIA reportedly halted the shipments of the captured PLO weapons in an attempt to move Pastora toward unity with the FDN.[56]

Whereas ARDE issued its official "call to arms" in April 1983 and launched its first military operation two weeks later against the town of El Castillo Viejo, the most important military operations of the SOF alliance--in terms of political significance--were the series of late 1983 and early 1984 attacks in which ARDE played only a limited role. For many of these operations, the CIA used its own force of "unilaterally controlled Latino assets" (UCLA). In early 1984, UCLA teams deposited mines in the major Nicaraguan ports on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. Alfonso Robelo--following CIA instructions--told the press that ARDE was responsible for the mining of two of the harbors. The political significance of the mining operation was two-fold: a) it demonstrated the degree of CIA involvement in the SOF--in spite of several statements of denial from ARDE; and b) the mining incident proved to be a rallying point for US congressional opposition to the Reagan administration's policies in Central America.[57]

By the end of 1983, it appeared that a "palace coup" was developing within ARDE over the issue of Contra unification. Not long after the formation of ARDE, it became evident that Alfonso Robelo was the alliance's advocate for unity with the FDN. In late 1983, "Robelo sent some of his loyalists to Honduras for military training under CIA/FDN auspices, a move which greatly angered Pastora."[58] Another sign of organizational instability appeared within ARDE in early 1984 when "El Negro" returned to the alliance with his UND/FARN forces and sided with Robelo's pro-unity faction. Just prior to the La Penca bombing, Robelo officially broke with Pastora.[59]

The Divided SOF: June 1984-September 1986

Whereas the SOF alliance was on the decline prior to the bombing at La Penca, the bombing was clearly the watershed event for all of the participants along the Southern Front. The La Penca bombing--for the forces of the

SOF--marked the end of one operational methodology and the beginning of another: the United States was abandoning its goal of creating a "Honduras South" in Costa Rica and opting instead for the eventual creation of a small "dirty tricks" network.[60] Either not all of the SOF Contras were aware of this paradigm shift or they chose to ignore it. The time period of the divided SOF alliance was characterized by several short-lived, shifting alliances and the eventual dismantling of the mainstream SOF structure.

Pastora had arranged to hold a news conference to address the issues concerning the dissolution of ARDE; the news conference was scheduled for May 30 on the Nicaraguan side of the San Juan River. The journey to the remote La Penca camp was a six hour adventure. Of the twenty to twenty-five journalists that attended, a supposed Danish photographer named Per Anker Hansen placed a camera box on the floor near where Pastora was busy basking in the light of the flashing cameras. A few minutes later, the bomb exploded, killing four and wounding eighteen--including Pastora. "Pastora immediately blamed the CIA for the bombing. US and Costa Rican officials blamed the Nicaraguan government."[61] Author Martha Honey--whose husband, Tony Avirgan was present at La Penca--claims that several different individuals and organizations had a vested interest in seeing the demise of *Comandante Cero*.[62] Finally, after an intensive and mystery-shrouded investigation, Honey and Avirgan concluded that the bomber known as Per Anker Hansen was actually Argentine leftist Vital Roberto Gaguine who worked with the FSLN's Interior Ministry in the 1980s.[63]

In less than two months following the La Penca bombing, Robelo and FDN leader Adolfo Calero signed the Panama Pact in Panama which united the two groups under the name UNIR (Nicaraguans United for Reconciliation). "El Negro" replaced Pastora and was named as armed forces general commander of the ARDE forces that followed Robelo. Pastora would presumably continue his anti-Sandinista activities with his followers which included Brooklyn Rivera and José Dávila. The two primary objectives of UNIR were indeed to unify the Contras of the North and South as well as isolate Pastora and Rivera's MISURASATA. As Oliver North and John Hull both supported UNIR, Robelo's ARDE faction that accepted unification and consistent CIA funding became known as "rich ARDE." Pastora's faction was now without the CIA's checkbook and was referred to as "poor ARDE."[64]

Within seven months of the La Penca bombing, Brooklyn Rivera was starting to make overtures toward Managua. Like Pastora, Rivera's support from the CIA had dried up as a result of choosing sides on the Contra unity issue. In November, Rivera went to Honduras to meet with representatives of the rival Miskito group MISURA. Less than a month later, Rivera was negotiating with the FSLN. The FSLN made it clear that they were willing to talk to Rivera but not with the FDN or ARDE; the CIA and the FDN were, of course, upset. In early 1985, Rivera issued a press statement that defined the struggle between the FSLN and MISURASATA as a conflict about ethnicity. Furthermore, he lashed out at all the Contra groups. Oliver North's response was to offer Rivera $100,000 for food, clothing, medical supplies, and munitions in exchange for Rivera to halt his negotiations with the Sandinistas. Rivera took the deal. Later on in 1985, Oliver North and Rob Owen were behind the creation of KISAN (Coast Indians All Unite in Nicaragua) as a means of side-stepping Rivera.[65]

The UNIR combination of Robelo and Calero lasted less than six months until it was replaced by the Robelo, Calero, and Arturo Cruz alliance of UNO (United Nicaraguan Opposition). UNO was yet another US-created alliance that attempted to bring together the Contra forces of the North and South. UNO--like many of the other Contra umbrellas--was rife with internal conflict as Robelo and Cruz often stood on the opposite side of the issues compared to the more conservative Calero. In March 1985, the three leaders of UNO joined with other Contra leaders in San José in a show of unity which also called on the FSLN to make sweeping as well as unreasonable reforms. The Contra gathering had more to do with winning US congressional votes than it did with demonstrating a sense of unity. Of the seven prominent Contra leaders in attendance, Pastora was not among them.[66]

In response to the San José Declaration, Pastora and Alfredo César--former president of the Nicaraguan Central Bank from 1980-1982--formed BOS (Southern Opposition Bloc) in mid-1985. BOS was originally composed of five social democratic political organizations and non-FSLN trade unions. In spite of claiming to be an independent movement supported by the Socialist International, BOS received most of its funds from the CIA.[67]

In 1986, "El Negro" Chamorro's fortunes as well as the fortunes of FARN took a serious turn toward the worst. After the initiatives implemented by Lt. Col. Oliver North and the CIA regarding the SOF had achieved the objective of removing Pastora from the SOF battlefield, the CIA once again asked Chamorro to play an important military role along the Southern Front. At that time, however, the momentum was already building behind North's grand plans for the SOF which included the general dismantling of the conventional structure of the SOF. Largely as a result the North-CIA attrition measures, FARN forces numbered less than twenty in mid-1986.[68]

Pastora's political and military fortunes likewise took a dive in mid-1986. Some of Pastora's long-time allies accepted money from the CIA in exchange for casting their lots behind Chamorro and FARN. Pastora finally did retire in May 1986 and returned to the Costa Rican Pacific coast to resume the fishing business from which he was called away nine years previously.[69]

The SOF End Game: September 1986-January 1988

In mid September 1986, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias ordered the closing of the Santa Elena airstrip. Less than one month later, Eugene Hasenfus was shot down over Nicaragua which put an end to the covert resupply effort.[70] As the Southern Front of the Contra War was "winding down," most of the leaders of the SOF either retired from the political-military arena or they rejoined Nicaraguan politics within the legal framework.

Pastora, as was mentioned earlier, returned to fishing on the Pacific coast. In 1987, Fernando Chamorro resigned from UDN/FARN, accepted the FSLN's amnesty offer and returned to Managua where he worked with Nicaragua's traditional Conservative Party. Following the electoral victory of Violeta Chamorro in 1990, Brooklyn Rivera worked closely with the Chamorro administration concerning Atlantic coast matters. In January 1988, President Arias issued orders to have Robelo--as well as others--to be expelled if they failed to comply with the Central American Peace Plan. Robelo remained in Costa Rica and indirectly assisted with Violeta Chamorro's campaign.[71]

Summary

When one observes the four basic phases of the SOF, it seems somewhat ironic that the SOF spent more of its time being an alliance of factions than an alliance of unity. The chronology of the SOF is, therefore, an account of competing interests and competing personalities. The various points of contention seem to converge at the interrelated issue of unity with the FDN forces and the conditional nature of CIA support; it was this larger issue that facilitated the schisms within the SOF. Pastora's choice to divest himself from the Contra unification efforts and the CIA's eventual divestment of itself from Pastora in the first half of 1984 set the stage for the remainder of the Contra War along the southern front--including the role of the Santa Elena airstrip in the Iran-Contra affair. The divisive nature of the entire Contra unity issue was not the only factor that contributed to the failure of the SOF; it was, however, the most significant factor as it facilitated the shift away from the conventional SOF forces to the North-CIA plan.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE SOF CONTRAS

[1] Honey, 216; Defense Intelligence Agency, "Weekly Intelligence Summary: Insurgent Activity Increases in Nicaragua," July 16, 1982, p. 22. NSA doc. #1547. This document, as well as several other primary resource documents, was obtained through Nicaragua: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1978-1990, The National Security Archive, Wasington, DC. (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, Inc., 1991). Following the citation, the National Security Archive document number will be provided.

[2] Honey, 215.

[3] Ibid., 216.

[4] Dickey, 91.

[5] Ibid., 91, 113; Krauss, 222; Honey, 216.

[6] Honey, 237-238, 258-259. CIA funding of Radio Impacto continued until 1990. The station not only broadcasted pro-FDN programming but following the La Penca bombing it also broadcasted anti-Pastora propaganda. In 1989, Radio Impacto set up three transmitting towers in southern Costa Rica while maintaining its office in suburban San José; the station was, for a time, simultaneously broadcasting CIA-authorized anti-Sandinista and anti-Noriega propaganda. Francisco Aviles, the CDDN head in San José, was later implicated in a Contra drug trafficking operation.

[7] NSA doc. #1547, p. 23; Honey, 216.

[8] Central Intelligence Agency, "Nicaragua: Opposition to the Sandinistas," December 13, 1982, p. 5. NSA doc. #1620.

[9] Ibid. 10-11. The 27 May Command first of all claimed to have recruited 400 Sandinista soldiers in July 1982. At that point in the Contra War, such a significant assertion would have doubtlessly been confirmed by more credible intelligence sources. Furthermore, 27 May claimed that these FSLN deserters brought a number of Cuban trainees with them when they joined 27 May; the Cubans were, according to reports, subsequently executed. The CIA was unable to verify this information and doubted its validity.

[10] NSA doc. #1547, 23.

[11] Christian, 197; Lawrence Pezzullo to Sec. of State, "Cable," July 14, 1981, 1, NSA doc. #1334.

[12] Christian, 197.

[13] Mauricio Solaun to Sec. of State, "Cable," Oct. 31, 1978, 2, NSA doc. #448.

[14] Christian, 197.

[15] Lawrence Pezzullo to Sec. of State, "Cable," July 29, 1981, 2, NSA doc. #1362.

[16] Honey, 225.

[17] Christian, 197-198; Francis McNeil to Sec. of State, "Cable," August 26, 1980, 1, NSA doc. #1177.

[18] Gutman, 28; Garvin, 35-36.

[19] Christian, 158-159.

[20] Ibid., 196-197.

[21] Ibid., 199-200.

[22] Garvin, 55-56.

[23] Dickey, 33; Christian, 279.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid. 285-286; Garvin, 133.

[27] Booth, 102-103; Christian, 59; Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The Unnited States in Central America (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984), 233.

[28] Stephen M. Gorman, "Power and Consolidation in the Nicaraguan Revolution," Journal of Latin American Studies 13 no. 2 (November 1981): 141-142; Jiri and Virginia Valenta, 23-24.

[29] Christian, 179-180. Mario Vargas Llosa, in his article in The New York Times Magazine, defined "Turbas" within the context of Nicaraguan politics as "a derogatory term for the masses, or mob." Vargas Llosa continued: the turbas were "civilians used by the Sandinistas for political intimidation."

[30] Christian, 275-277; Valenta and Valenta, 25.

[31] NSA doc. #1620, 9.

[32] Sklar, 120.

[33] Dickey, 40.

[34] Ibid., 32-34; Garvin, 48-49. Garvin also notes that in a conversation several years later between Chicano Cardenal and Edén's older brother Felix that Felix explained Edén's story of the death of their father, Pedro Panfilo Pastora, at the hands of the GN: "Oh, that's just Edén's bullshit. It was just an argument with a guy in town."

[35] Dickey, 34-37.

[36] Sklar, 16-17; Gorman, 136; and Garvin, 49-51. Garvin also astutely points out that the raid on the National Palace was a terrorist act and not a military battle. This example of Pastora's bravery, which made him a national hero, did not necessarily mean that *Comandate Cero* was a master military strategist.

[37] Garvin, 51-52; Christian, 105.

[38] Dickey, 120.

[39] Ibid.; Garvin, 53; Christian, 268.

[40] Garvin, 53; Lawrence Pezzullo to Sec. of State, "Cable," July 10, 1981, 1-2, NSA doc. #1350. In the comment section of the cable, Ambassador Pezzullo went on to state: "No event since July 1979 has been more dramatic than the Pastora departure, or has greater potential to influence the course of events here." Pezzullo likewise believed that Pastora's departure would prove to be rather problematic for the FSLN. If Pastora was actually going to aid others in their struggle, the FSLN would be perceived as exporting their revolution. Or, on the other hand, was Pastora going abroad to be a voice of opposition to the FSLN?

[41] Kinzer, 174; Honey, 211-214.

[42] Garvin, 54-55; Honey, 214, 235; Gutman, 109. The denial of the CIA's role in the military operations during these early days along the Southern Front were important for three key reasons: 1) the CIA was conducting the operations without White House authorization; 2) the presence of foreign military troops--regular or guerrilla--was against Costa Rican law; 3) Pastora needed to maintain his image as a non-aligned, nationalist leader.

[42] Honey, 217.

[44] Ibid., 218-219.

[45] Christian, 255-256.

[46] Kinzer, 258.

[47] Ibid., 259.

[48] Christian, 260.

[49] Ibid., 260-261; Kinzer, 260-261; Lawrence Pezzullo to Sec. of State, "Cable," February 23, 1981, 2, NSA doc. #1277.

[50] Honey, 229-230.

[51] Honey, 230; Garvin, 211; Memorandum from CIA agent Richard Chidester to US ambassador to Nicaragua Anthony Quianton, March 18, 1982, p. 1-2, NSA doc. #1470.

[52] NSA doc. #1620, 3.

[53] Jean Hopfensperger, "The rebels who turned against their own revolution," Christian Science Monitor, 28 March 1983, 13 (A); Francis McNeil to Sec. of State, "Cable," March 29, 1983, 1, NSA doc. #1674; Tomasek, "The Deterioration of Relations Between Costa Rica and the Sandinistas," 6; Honey, 218.

[54] Valenta and Durán, 419; NSA doc. #1620, 2-3; Honey, 238.

[55] US Court Document, "United States v. Oliver L. North," March 10, 1989, 1-2, NSA doc. #3157.

[56] Honey, 241, 243.

[57] Honey, 220-221; Kornbluh, Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention, 47, 49, 52.

[58] Honey, 222.

[59] Honey, 222-223, 226.

[60] Ibid., 340-341.

[61] Sklar, 282.

[62] Honey, 340.

[63] Honey, "Nine-year Manhunt Ended Quietly," Tico Times.

[64] "Boletín Internacional de la Frente Solidaridad Demócrata Cristiano," July, 1984. 2-3, 9, NSA doc. #2129; Honey, 223.

[65] Shepard Lowman to Sec. of State, "Cable," November 29, 1984, 2, NSA doc. #2311; Harry E. Bergold, Jr. to Sec. of State, "Cable," December 10, 1984, 2, NSA doc. #2318; "Press Statement," "Brooklyn Rivera, General Coordinator of MISURASATA," January 29, 1985, 6, NSA doc. #2352; Memorandum to Robert McFarlane from Oliver North, "The Nicaraguan Resistance: Near-Term Outlook," May 31, 1985, 3, NSA doc. #2491; Honey, 232-233.

[66] Honey, 223, 444; Valenta and Durán, 428.

[67] Pardo-Maurer, xvii; Bloque Opositor del Sur, *Bloque Opositor del Sur: 12 apuntes acerca del BOS: Nicaragua* (San José: ?, 1985), 1-2; Honey, 445.

[68] Honey, 227, 450.

[69] Ibid., 439-440, 442.

[70] Krauss, 237-238.

[71] Honey., 223, 227, 233.

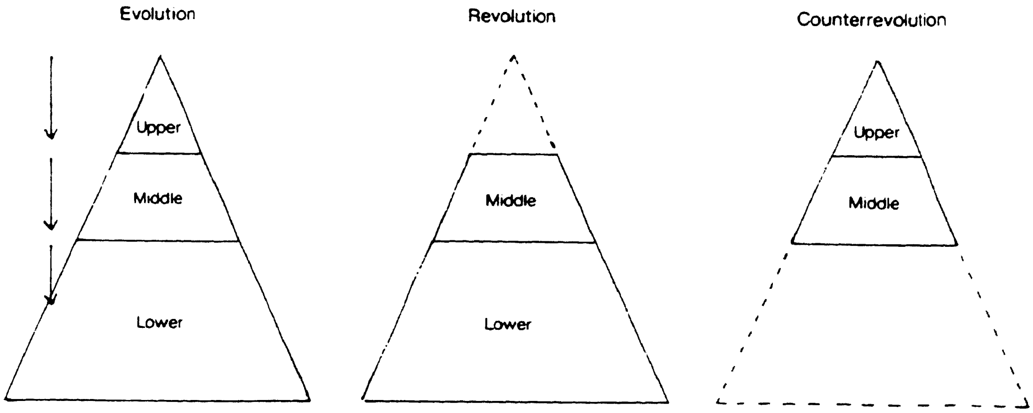
CHAPTER III

WHY THE SOF CONTRAS ?

Several factors were involved in the formation of the Contras. As counterrevolution is in many aspects the flipped-side of the "revolutionary coin," we will first examine the macro-political characteristics of counterrevolutionary activity by reviewing some of the principles of revolution in the Collapsible Pyramid Model as presented by Jan Knippers Black. Whereas no model can serve as a panacea when dealing with the complexities of political development and process, the Collapsible Pyramid Model is applicable to the revolution as well as the counterrevolution in Nicaragua. By asserting that counterrevolution is an organic consequence of the social revolutionary process, the SOF can be analyzied as a counterrevolutionary force responding to the movement of the FSLN through the revolutionary process. In this chapter, the study will offer a general description of the inherent characteristics of the revolutionary process at that particular phase. Then, within this same framework, we will observe if and how some of the policies of the Sandinista government, combined with the natural propensity of the political process, served to solidify what was at first an opposition nuisance into a broader counterrevolutionary movement through the SOF.[1] Finally in this chapter we will see how the Contras were easily integrated into the more encompassing policy objectives of US foreign policy both globally and regionally throughout the decade of the 1980s.

Counterrevolution as a consequence of political evolution and revolution: the case of post-Somoza Nicaragua

In her chapter entitled "Participation and Political Process: The Collapsible Pyramid," Jan Knippers Black outlines the nature of political participation by social strata through the three-phased Collapsible Pyramid Model of Evolution, Revolution, and Counterrevolution.(Fig.1)[2]



Political Participation by Social Strata: The Collapsible Pyramid Model

Political evolution implies the incorporation of new

> political actors, representing previously unrepresented social strata, without the displacement of previous participants in the system. Revolution is defined as the displacement or disestablishment of groups representing one or more strata from the upper reaches of the social pyramid. Our definition of counterrevolution is implied in that of revolution. It is the displacement, or elimination from effective participation, of groups representing strata from the base of the social pyramid.[3]

The four principal phases of the revolutionary process-- 1) power transfer, 2) redistribution, 3) institutionalization, and 4) reconcentration--may be vulnerable to the derailing forces of counterrevolution at any point and in varying degrees in their development. Counterrevolution is, therefore, a possible reaction to an incomplete revolution or the real or imagined fear of revolution.[4] The case of Nicaragua is of course unique according to its own set of circumstances. It should be noted at this time that Nicaragua has not undergone the thorough counterrevolution that was launched in Guatemala in 1954 when President Jacobo Arbenz was ousted by the CIA-backed forces of Carlos Castillo Armas. Given the definition above, it would be more accurate to state that --especially after 1980-- Nicaragua was besieged by a host of opposition groups that engaged in what will be referred to as counterrevolutionary activity. The nature and depth of counterrevolution that would have been undertaken by a group or groups of victorious Contras can be determined only through educated speculation. It is the purpose of this section, however, to review the available resources and draw some conclusions as to how the nature of the FSLN government and the nature of the revolutionary process contributed to the formation of the SOF as a counterrevolutionary movement. In this chapter which describes the revolutionary process, it will be noted that the factors that contributed to the formation of the SOF occurred in each phase of the process. In the redistribution phase of the Sandinista Revolution, many of the individuals and groups that would later constitute the nucleus of the SOF began to view some of the FSLN policies as contributing factors to their growing sense of disillusionment regarding the direction of the revolution. However, it was in the institutionalization phase of the FSLN revolutionary process that the individuals and the groups that they represented actually advanced out of the proto-Contra phase and formed the political and military components of the SOF.

The power transfer phase is the first phase of the revolutionary process. In this phase the exit of the old elite from the pyramid's apex is only a portion of the phase; the opposition groups may begin to express their disillusionment as "the affluent and the indigent, who might agree on the kind of government they do not want, cannot be expected to agree on the kind they want in its place."[5]

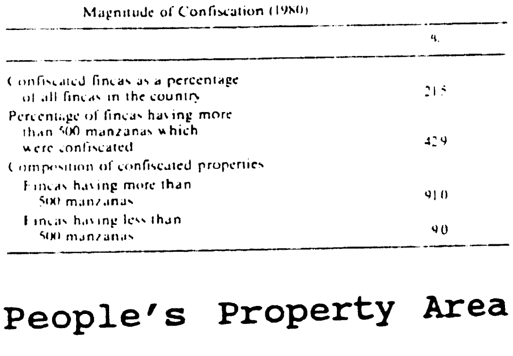
In Nicaragua, the FSLN faced almost immediate opposition on two different fronts in the power transfer phase: a) representatives of the former elite, and b) groups and individuals--from both the right and the left of the political continuum--who helped oust Somoza yet did not favor FSLN governance. The National Guard (GN) acted on behalf of the economic-political elite, which when simply positioned, placed the GN clearly within the pre-FSLN status quo.[6] Additionally, the anti-Somoza business community could not successfully compete with the Sandinista-mobilized workers and peasants in the scramble to fill the power vacuum left by Somoza's departure. Whereas many individuals enthusiastically labored to bring down the Somoza dynasty, many of these same individuals--even in this first phase of the revolutionary process--began to find themselves alienated from the decision making; falling into the ranks of the developing counterrevolutionary struggle was but a short, additional step. Even prior to the initiation of seemingly radical policies, some groups existed--including the seminal military elements of the SOF--that represented neither Somoza's GN nor the specific interests of the business community.[7] In overall terms of the formation of the SOF, however, the power transfer phase was not of great importance. This fact is evidenced by the actions of two of the eventual members of the SOF during this phase of the revolutionary process.

Two of the more influential figures of the SOF, Alfonso Robelo and Edén Pastora, were active participants in the power transfer phase of the revolutionary process. Both men, however, operated from quite different stances *within* the FSLN. Over a period of three years, Robelo made a series of transitions ranging from anti-Somocista, to FSLN junta member, to anti-Sandinista. On June 17, 1979, Robelo was named to the Government of National Reconstruction (GRN) and was recognized--along with Violeta Chamorro--by Carter Administration policymakers as a moderate among a field of influential leftists.[8] Robelo served as part of the GRN until he resigned in April 1980 in protest of what he saw as FSLN political manipulation. He moved to Costa Rica in 1982 where he joined with Pastora, who had defected from the FSLN government in the summer of 1981, to form a "political-military alliance" in opposition to the FSLN.[9]

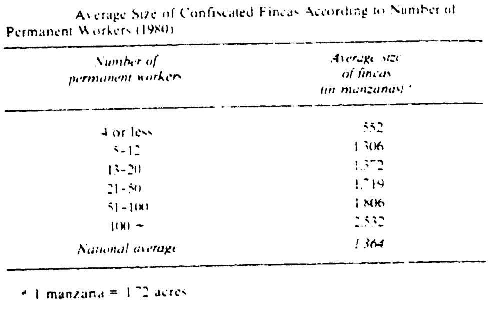
Like Robelo, Edén Pastora played a key role in the power transfer phase. Some of the long-time FSLN members held Pastora in contempt as he was perceived by some as having a propensity to be absent from many of the key events in the evolution of the FSLN. For his battlefield success against Somoza--particularly Operation Pigpen-- and its accompanying popularity, Pastora was awarded the position of Vice Minister of Defense serving under Tomás Borge and was also named as the Commander of the Militia. Pastora, however, was soon disaffected and likewise left the government in July 1981; his departure was shrouded in high-level political mystery.[10] The important aspect of the power transfer phase in terms of the formation of the SOF was that during this phase these two leading figures clearly were more sympathetic with the incoming FSLN government than with the outgoing Somocistas; the same cannot be said of the "other Contras" in Honduras or Miami.

Throughout the revolutionary phase of economic and power redistribution, counterrevolutionary elements may raise serious objections as to how the spoils of the departed elite are managed. The top of the pyramid in Nicaragua consisted of Somoza, his relatives, close associates, the weakened Partido Liberal Nacional (PLN), the GN, and--stabilizing the top of the pyramid from behind the scenes--the US.[11] The resources that were available for redistribution were the political and economic holdings of these former tenants of the upper segment. In mid-1979, estimates hinted that the confiscated properties of Somoza would amount to as much as 50 percent of all of the country's productive facilities.[12] The agriculture structure was, therefore, a major focus of the FSLN's economic redistribution efforts.

The economic redistribution process can be seen in the agrarian reforms initiated by the FSLN's GRN. The agrarian reform program was somewhat paradoxical. On one hand the confiscation of *fincas* was, generally speaking, a thorough and proportionally equitable undertaking (Tables 1a and 1b)[13] yet six years following the creation of the People's Property Area (Area Propiedad del Pueblo--APP), sixty-one percent of the farmland remained under the


Magnitude of Confiscation (1980)

	%
Confiscated fincas as a percentage of all fincas in the country	21.5
Percentage of fincas having more than 500 manzanas which were confiscated	42.9
Composition of confiscated properties	
Fincas having more than 500 manzanas	91.0
Fincas having less than 500 manzanas	9.0


Average Size of Confiscated Fincas According to Number of Permanent Workers (1980)

Number of permanent workers	*Average size of fincas (in manzanas)**
4 or less	552
5-12	1,306
13-20	1,372
21-50	1,719
51-100	1,806
100 +	2,532
National average	*1,364*

* 1 manzana = 1.72 acres

management of individual producers.[14] In spite of the fact that the majority of the land holdings remained privatized, opposition developed regarding not so much over the issue of land confiscation but its consolidation into coöperatives rather than redistribution for greater private ownership.[15] Four and one-half years following the initiation of the agrarian reform laws, private business/agriculture opposition leaders within Nicaragua still bemoaned the FSLN's heavy hand in the agricultural economy and continued to criticize what they perceived as the FSLN's course toward Communism.[16]

Minister of Agriculture Jaime Wheelock did indeed distribute confiscated lands (Somocista land as well as property that had not belonged either to the Somozas or to their associates) to campesinos on state farms and to some individuals. These properties were most likely either inefficiently operated large farm holdings or lands confiscated from the FSLN's opponents.[17] Evidence indicates that as both the Northern and Southern front Contras escalated their campaigns against the government in Managua in 1983 and 1984 that the issue of land expropriation and redistribution added combatants to the Contra ranks while facilitating shifts in the FSLN's agrarian reform policies.[18] During the redistribution phase of the revolutionary process, the issue of state versus private land redistribution and the agrarian reform program in general, was no doubt a point of debate among those who ended up on the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border or in San José. However, as for the actual formation of the SOF, the opposition generated by this issue did not drive thousands of hacendados, agri-businessmen, or marginalized middle-class campesinos into Costa Rica. Successful, large-scale farmers who operated on the sixty-one percent of the private land served the goals of the FSLN in two ways: a) they reinforced the FSLN's claim that it advocated a mixed economy, and b) through the export of some crops, they were able to contribute to the national economy in ways that smaller producers would have been inefficient.[19] On the other hand, by distributing some land to campesinos in the Contra War zones, the FSLN was able to undermine some of the Contra support in those regions; agrarian reform, therefore, became a counter-insurgency weapon used by the Sandinista government.

In the institutionalization phase of the revolutionary process, many administrative and legal concerns will be addressed by the new government. Many new political support groups may emerge on the scene and mass organizations may now assume a more defined role. The new regime may also initiate new laws and draft new constitutions during this phase of the process as the neophytes wish to outline for the populace--both friend and foe--the basic parameters of the revolutionary government. The ultimate goal for the new regime in the institutional phase is to develop and successfully utilize "a mechanism for regulating succession to power" and to be assured that it is "functioning more or less smoothly."[20] It is during this phase that most of the motivating factors for the formation of the SOF emerged. In this section we will examine an important situation that demonstrated how the FSLN-initiated institutionalization policies served as the partial yet significant impetus for the formation of the SOF. The 1984 Nicaraguan elections could be cited as an example of the FSLN's efforts toward institutionalization. Prior to these elections, however, was the FSLN's successful effort to establish the foundation of the institutionalization process by first maneuvering the FSLN party into the role of the nation's hegemonic political force.

Those who would truly hold power in post-Somoza Nicaragua rose to the surface in early 1979; the three factions of the FSLN were unified under the name National Directorate (Dirección Nacional Conjunta--DNC). The DNC not only set the terms for the remainder of the insurgency phase but would also be the supreme governing body in the new Nicaragua. Journalist Clifford Krauss asserts that the Sandinistas simultaneously displayed two vastly different faces of the same victorious insurgency: the pluralist government of the five-member junta (GRN) and the Sandinista-Leninist DNC.[21] To further complicate the post-Somoza power equation, the Council of State was formed in Costa Rica in June 1979. The FSLN gradually established its dominance over both the GRN and the Council of State. The resulting fallout from the FSLN's consolidation of power was the eventual exile of some of the future leaders of the SOF.

The original GRN included bourgeois moderates Alfonso Robelo and Violeta Chamorro, Tercerista Daniel Ortega, *Los Doce* member Sergio Ramírez, and leftist Moisés Hassan. Citing bad health, Chamorro resigned in April 1980; Robelo, upset with the FSLN takeover of the Council of State, tendered his resignation shortly thereafter. *Los Doce* member Arturo Cruz and Supreme Court Justice Rafael Córdoba Rivas replaced the two moderates. By mid-1981, however, the GRN was reduced to three members which left Córdoba as the only remaining non-Sandinista.[22]

The original agreement for the Council of State stipulated that the FSLN would occupy thirteen of the thirty-three seats. To allow for the representation of many of the newly formed mass organizations, however, the membership of the Council was expanded to forty-seven; the fourteen new seats were given either to FSLN members or to FSLN supporters from the leftist Patriotic Revolutionary Front and the mass organizations. When in late 1980, COSEP--the expanded and renamed COSIP--and Robelo's MDN protested against the manipulation of the Council of State, the FSLN government responded by banning an MDN rally and Sandinista youths responded by ransacking the MDN's headquarters in Managua. The Council of State was further expanded in May 1981 to fifty-one members; the new seats were filled by FSLN supporters.[23] This portion of the FSLN's institutionalization phase of the revolutionary process directly contributed to the departure of two of the eventual leaders of the SOF--Alfonso Robelo and Arturo Cruz in 1982 and 1981, respectively.[24]

Reconcentration "refers to a gradual weakening of the power and income positions of political participants from the lower echelons of the social pyramid."[25] Reconcentration likewise implies that the revolution has survived and has been sufficiently institutionalized so that the spoils of the revolution enable the revolutionary leaders to move to the top of the pyramid and into the position of the "new elite." As with the transfer phase, the redistribution phase, and the institutionalization phase, counterrevolutionary activity may occur in this phase as well.

In the early post-Somoza period, many of the FSLN leaders were sharply criticized for their public pronouncements that advocated a simple lifestyle while their private lives reflected something quite the opposite. Humberto Ortega claimed three houses in a posh sector south of Managua--complete with a baseball diamond. Tomás Borge's tastes likewise came under fire as Humberto Ortega pointed out to him how noticeable his Olympic-sized swimming pool was, especially when viewed from an in-coming airliner. Comandante Jaime Wheelock's wife imported flowers from Europe.[26] These excesses should be viewed, however, more as examples of pent-up desire for power and its trappings reaching their fruition than examples of reconcentration. As the revolution matured, however, reconcentration became a serious detriment to the FSLN leadership.

The counterrevolutionary efforts of both the Northern and Southern fronts failed to interrupt the revolutionary process to the extent that the FSLN government was impeded from establishing a Sandinista *nomenklatura*. Author Michael Radu asserts that the FSLN's effect on the economy--coupled with the great disparity of wealth between the Sandinista *nomenklatura* and the general Nicaraguan populace--was "perhaps the single most important cause of the swelling of the insurgent ranks" in the late-1980s.[27] The SOF may have benefitted from the fomation of a new elite but it was not because of their efforts. Top Sandinistas were granted exclusive access to well-stocked stores and were granted the right to the official dollar/cordoba exchange rate. According to high-level defector Roger Miranda, the Swiss bank account of Daniel and Humberto Ortega held over $1 million.[28] Clearly the conspicuous habits of the FSLN--both in the immediate post-Somoza period as well as during the late 1980s--added to the ranks of the anti-Sandinista combatants. The SOF had long moved passed its zenith, however, by the time the FSLN had reached its zenith within the reconcentration phase of the revolutionary process.

The concept of hegemonic presumption in US foreign policy and the formation of the SOF

> Nothing important can come from the South. The axis of

> history starts in Moscow, goes to Bonn, crosses over to Washington, and then goes on to Tokyo. What happens in the South is of no importance.
>
> Henry Kissinger[29]

> A lot will depend on how Central America comes out. If we cannot manage Central America, it will be impossible to convince threatened nations in the Persian Gulf and in other places that we know how to manage the global equilibrium.
>
> Henry Kissinger[30]

It would be irresponsible scholarship *not* to place the two above quotes by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger within their respective contexts.[31] Even within their rightful contexts, however, the two seemingly contradictory comments contain essential elements of truth when one examines US foreign policy and why the SOF evolved into a more significant leverage tool of US policy in Central America in the 1980s. In this section we will briefly review why, and in what ways, "nothing important can come from the South." Then we will look at why, if the South is indeed unimportant, the Reagan Administration could not allow Central America to be "lost" within this bipolar context of the Cold War. Scholar Lars Schoultz posits the view that the foreign policy debate regarding Central America was greatly simplified and narrowed in focus throughout the Cold War and especially during the Reagan Administration. In spite of the fact that both of Kissinger's quotes are relatively true, President Reagan used the tenor of the second quote as justification for the Reagan Doctrine, low intensity conflict, and the exploitation of the complimentary interests between the United States and Costa Rica to initiate an aggressive US foreign policy toward the FSLN government.[32] Finally, we will consider the various "missions" of the SOF as defined by US policy objectives.

Several scholars are in agreement with Kissinger's low priority view of Latin America contained in his first quote. Within the bipolar context of the Cold War, "the close attention of the United States is and must be focused on Western Europe, the southern rim of Europe, and the Far Eastern rim. These areas by virtue of geography, population, human skills, and economic and military power are the crucial areas in the contest between the United States and the Soviet Union."[33] In fact, the importance of areas like Europe during the Cold War made conflict there far too risky as the end result of serious antagonism could have been nuclear war.[34] The perceived low priority regions of the world--much of Africa, Southeast Asia, and Central America--"often come to serve as a laboratory, where outside forces experiment with new ideas in international relations."[35]

When we evaluate other elements of strategic importance, Latin America and Central America are viewed as low priority areas. Central America does not sit atop a great reserve of either vital minerals or raw materials which, if lost would constitute a major security danger to the United States. Additionally, the United States, during the Carter Administration, had a total annual trade with Central America of approximately $1.8 billion, or less than one percent of US foreign trade; only one-half percent of the direct US foreign investment, $700 million, was made in Central America. Furthermore, as warfare technology advanced, the *Delta*-class strategic nuclear submarine of the USSR weakened the strategic importance of Latin America as its missiles now had a 4200-mile range compared to the previous system that had a 1300-mile range.[36] To state that Central America is devoid of strategic importance would have been a misnomer in 1980 just as such a statement made today would likewise be an oversimplification. Jorge Domínguez, however, offers an encapsulating summary: "The objective interests of the United States in Central America outside of Panama are very modest--so modest indeed, that US interests in Central America should be defined almost exclusively as subjective interests."[37]

In spite of the fact that Central America was seemingly unimportant during the years of the Cold War, US policymakers felt compelled to perpetuate the concept of hegemonic presumption toward Central America--especially in the 1980s. Hegemonic presumption, defined by Abraham Lowenthal, is "the belief in this country [US] that the entire hemisphere was a rightful sphere of US influence. That belief led US officials to regard as unacceptable the emergence of any anti-American political group in any Latin American country."[38] If strategic concerns were minimal, hegemonic presumption was maintained in order to validate the US role as a major player in the international sphere-not just Central America. Therefore, to the policymakers of the Reagan Administration, Kissinger's second quote of the above two was far more accurate.

> If Central America were to fall, what would be the consequences for our position in Asia, Europe, and for alliances such as NATO? If the United States cannot respond to a threat near our borders, why should Europeans or Asians believe that we're seriously concerned about threats to them? If the Soviets can assume that nothing short of an actual attack on the United States will provoke an American response, which ally, which friend will trust us then?... The national security of the Americas is at stake in Central America. If we cannot defend ourselves there, we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere. Our credibility would collapse, our alliances would crumble, and the safety of our homeland would be put in jeopardy.[39]

Since Central America was now of such vital importance in the struggle between East and West, Nicaragua became the specific target of the Reagan Doctrine--the USdesired rollback of Soviet influence and revolution in the Third World.[40] The ghost of past policy failure, as manifested in the Vietnam Syndrome, influenced the Reagan administration to take up the strategy of low intensity conflict as the vehicle for the implementation of the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua. LIC is "a multi-force attack deploying a panoply of pressures short of full-scale use of combat troops."[41] The LIC strategy in Nicaragua consisted of four major fronts: 1) Paramilitary Operations, 2) Economic Destabilization , 3) Military Operations, and 4) a Propaganda Campaign. Between March and November 1981, the Reagan Administration had already initiated three of the four strategic objectives of the LIC program in Nicaragua.[42]

The "missions" of the SOF

At the macro-level, US policymakers advocated the sponsorship of the Contras, in general, and the SOF, more specifically not because of Central America's strategic importance but because of the need to exhibit foreign policy prowess in the region. At the micro-level, however, US policymakers outlined the Contras' "mission" under several different and sometimes contradictory definitions.

The first CIA-designated mission of the Contras was to serve as an interdictory force designed to halt the flow of Cuban/Sandinista weapons north-bound out of Nicaragua and into the hands of the Salvadoran-based FMLN Marxist guerrilla fighters. Only a rudimentary background in Central American geography would indicate that this was not the mission of the Contras encamped somewhere near the San Juan River in Costa Rica. Part of the reason why the SOF was in Costa Rica had to do with the tradition of exile invasions between Costa Rica and Nicaragua launched from the other's territory. In terms of US foreign policy objectives, however, "Costa Rica's anti-militarism made it a far more credible victim of 'external aggression' than El Salvador or Honduras if the administration chose to invoke the Rio Treaty against Nicaragua."[43]

Prior to a December 1982 US Congressional Contra aid vote, a newly formed Contra directorate stated that their mission was to facilitate the democratic process in Nicaragua.[44] A presidential "Finding" in September 1983 redefined the objectives of US support to the Contras: 1) to induce the FSLN to cease support for insurgencies in the region, 2) hamper arms traffic, 3) divert FSLN resources away from other guerrillas and redirect those resources to the anti-Sandinista conflict, and 4) facilitate negotiations between the FSLN and the Contras.[45]

At a press conference in February 1985, President Reagan used strident rhetoric not only to spell out his administrations's policy objectives toward Nicaragua; he also implied what role the Contras would play within the context of these objectives through the principles of LIC: the only way that Reagan would have accepted the continuation of the Sandinista government would have been if its leaders would have said "uncle."[46]

Yet another mission of the SOF was that of nuisance diversionary force. In September 1984, US Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North wrote in his diary, following a conversation with Arturo Cruz, that if the Contra forces of the FDN based in Honduras "wants pressure relieved a Southern front needs to be opened."[47] Since forces were already operating along the Southern Front at that time, one can only assume that Lt. Col. North was perhaps referring to the opening of a Southern Front that was more directly managed by the CIA and the NSC than the extant forces.

One interesting yet unlikely contingency mission for the Contras was proposed by United Nations' Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick at a National Security Planning Group meeting in 1984. If the US Congress denied funds for the Contras, Kirkpatrick theorized, Nicaragua would infiltrate thousands of FSLN military personnel into El Salvador to aid the Marxist FMLN insurgents and the US could do little about it. In order to defend against the FMLN-FSLN offensive launched against the US-backed government in San Salvador, Kirkpatrick advocated that, for the time being, the Contras would be sent to El Salvador.[48]

Summary

In this chapter, we have examined two of the key facilitating factors for *why* the SOF came into existence: the natural counterrevolutionary response to the initiation of the FSLN's movement through the four basic phases of the revolutionary process, and the concept of hegemonic presumption that motivated much of the US foreign policy toward Central America. Whereas the SOF had members joining its ranks throughout each phase of the revolutionary process, the institutional phase was the most important in terms of the formation of the SOF. It was not the FSLN's victory in 1979 that was the impetus for the formation of the Contras or the SOF; rather, it was the "FSLN's performance in power" that facilitated the formation of the Contras.[49] The formation of the SOF, from the standpoint of US foreign policy, was a result of framing the issues in Central America within the context of the Cold War paradigm that required the US to meet its responsibilities in the region in order to meet its responsibilities globally.

WHY THE CONTRAS ?

[1] In the next chapter, the political science as well as the more widely used rhetorical terms to describe the Contras will be examined. It is perhaps more appropriate to refer to the Contras as a counterrevolutionary movement as the Contras of Costa Rica and Honduras were indeed a movement with its goal of initiating--in varying degrees--a counterrevolution in Nicaragua. Just as there exists a clear distinction between the insurgency movement that wishes to be the catalyst by which a social revolution is launched and the actual social revolution, likewise there should be a distinction made between the counterrevolutionaries who wish to undermine the "revolution in process" and the actual process of reversing the policies of the social revolution.

[2] Jan Knippers Black, " Participation and Political Process: The Collapsible Pyramid," in Latin America: Its Problems and Its Promise, 2d ed., ed. Jan Knippers Black (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 176.

[3] Ibid., 176.

[4] Ibid., 187, 183.

[5] Ibid., 183.

[6] To state that Somoza, his relatives, and his associates represented the entirety of the Nicaraguan economic-political elite would be somewhat misleading as other groups did indeed belong to this category. Author John A. Booth in The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution, (p.98) characterized the relationship between the Somozas and the other members of the upper-class by stating that "the Somozas, like the proverbial bully on the block, represented to their weaker neighbors both a fearsome adversary and an attractive ally." Between the Somoza's gross mishandling of the earthquake relief and the assassination of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro in 1978, the economic-political elite likewise became anti-Somocistas. Within the Collapsible Pyramid Model, the economic-

political elite, along with other groups, had perhaps envisioned themselves remaining at the pyramid's apogee after Somoza's departure, thus favoring change in the form of *evolution* instead of revolution. In her book, Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family, Shirley Christian reminds the reader (p.248) that "it was not the masses, but the economic and political elites who made it possible for the Sandinistas to march triumphantly into Managua in July 1979."

[7] Jiri Valenta and Esperanza Durán, eds., Conflict in Nicaragua:A Multidimensional Perspective (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 427. The **UND-FARN** "adopted an anti-Sandinista stance almost immediately after the ouster of Somoza." Black, 183.

[8] Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984), 233, 241.

[9] Christian, 101, 184, 277; Lawrence Pezzullo to Sec. of State, "Cable," April 22, 1980, 1, NSA doc. #1136.

[10] Dickey, 121.

[11] John A. Booth, The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), 101, 129.

[12] Richard Fagen, "Revolution and Crisis in Nicaragua," in Trouble in Our Backyard: Central America and the United States in the Eighties, ed. Martin Diskin (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 131.

[13] Eduardo Baumeister, "The Structure of Nicaraguan Agriculture and the Sandinista Agrarian Reform," in Nicaragua: A Revolution Under Siege, eds. Richard Harris and Carlos M. Vilas (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1985), 12, 20.

[14] Valenta and Durán, 27-28.

[15] Baumeister, 20-21.

[16] Mario Vargas Llosa, "In Nicaragua," New York Times Magazine, 28 April 1985, 42.

[17] Christian, 248-250.

[18] Anthony Quinton to Sec. of State, "Cable," June 14, 1983, 2, NSA doc. #1725.

[19] Vargas Llosa, 42.

[20] Black, 186.

[21] Krauss, 136.

[22] Jiri Valenta and Virginia Valenta, "The FSLN in Power," in Conflict in Nicaragua: A Multidimensional Perspective, ed. Jiri Valenta and Esperanza Durán (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 24.

[23] Ibid., 24-25; Fagen, 133.

[24] Christian, 274-275.

[25] Black, 181.

[26] Roger Miranda and William Ratliff, The Civil War in Nicaragua: Inside the Sandinistas, (New Brunswick, CN: Transactions Publishers, 1993), 59-60; Krauss, 136.

[27] Michael Radu, "Nicaragua," in The New Insurgencies: Anticommunist Guerrillas in the Third World, ed. Michael Radu (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 264.

[28] Ibid., 264-265.

[29] Seymour M. Hersh, The Price of Power: Kissinger in The Nixon White House, (New York: Summit Books, 1983), 263.

[30] Henry Kissinger and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "Kissinger and Moynihan: Five Years Later," interview by Ben Wattenberg and Karlyn H. Keene, Pubic Opinion, 6 no.2 (April-May 1983): 54.

[31] The first quote is from a remark that Kissinger made to the Chilean Foreign Minister Gabriel Valdés in June 1969. The previous day, Valdés had vented his frustration concerning the difficulty in dealing with the United States within the inter-American system. Kissinger set Valdés straight at a private lunch the next day with the above quote. The second quote came from a follow-up interview with Sen. Moynihan and Kissinger conducted five years after

a previous interview with these same two statesmen.

[32] See Lars Schoultz, National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), chapter eight, "Latin America and the Global Balance of Power."

[33] Morton A. Kaplan, "American Policy Toward the Caribbean Region," in Issues in Caribbean International Relations, ed. Basil A. Ince et al. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 53.

[34] Stanley Hoffmann, Dead Ends: American Foreign Policy in the New Cold War, (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1983), 5.

[35] Schoultz, 271.

[36] Robert W. Tucker, "The Purposes of American Power," Foreign Policy 59 no. 2 (Winter 1980-81): 270; Sally Shelton, "Estados Unidos y Centroamerica," Cuadernos semestrales de Estados Unidos 6 no. 2 (1979): 17; and Schoultz, 255.

[37] Jorge I. Domínguez, U.S. Interests and Politics in the Caribbean and Central America (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1982), 13.

[38] Abraham Lowenthal, "The United States and Latin America: Ending the Hegemonic Presumption," Foreign Affairs 55 no. 1 (October 1976): 201.

[39] Schoultz, 269. The quote is of an address that President Reagan delivered to a joint session of Congress in April 1983.

[40] Peter Kornbluh, "US Role in the Counterrevolution" in Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua, ed. Thomas W. Walker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 325; Roy Gutman, Banana Diplomacy: The Making of American Policy in Nicaragua, 1981-1987 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 268.

[41] Peter Kornbluh, Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention (Washington: Institute for Policy Studies, 1987), 4.

[42] Kornbluh, "US Role in the Counterrevolution," 326-330.

[43] Kornbluh, Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention, 129; Krauss, 146; See Charles Ameringer, "The 30 Years War Between Figueres and the Somozas," Caribbean Review 8 no. 4 (Fall 1979): 4-7, 40-41.

[44] Kornbluh, "US Role in the Counterrevolution," 334.

[45] National Security Planning Group, Meeting notes, "Finding," September 19, 1983, p. 1, NSA doc. #1824.

[46] Schoultz, 284-285.

[47] Oliver North's Diary, Sept. 26, 1984, p. 2, NSA doc. #2212.

[48] National Security Planning Group, Meeting notes, "Central America," June 25, 1984. p. 8-9, NSA doc. #2127.

[49] Radu, 259.

CHAPTER IV

LABELLING THE SOF CONTRAS

The SOF and the Contras, in general, have been defined from several different perspectives. The first objective in this chapter will be to endeavor to better understand the SOF. The method employed to meet this objective will be to examine some of the definitions used to label the SOF. Finally, a determination will be made as to whether or not the SOF represented a clear political philosophy.

The political taxonomy of the SOF

In 1952, William S. Stokes published the article "Violence as a Power Factor in Latin-American Politics."[1] Stokes explains in great detail the various classifications of political actions common in Latin America. Not surprisingly, however, is the fact that the section dealing with genuine revolution is rather brief. Correlative to this is that counterrevolution likewise lacks a lengthy and illustrative set of examples--in 1952 or contemporary Latin America. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to place the Contras within a contextual framework. Certain definitions will be provided that will clarify the location of the SOF Contras on the vast Latin American political landscape. Furthermore, a discussion of the more rhetorical terms that were used to define the Southern Front Contras will be presented. When applying political science definitions to the SOF, some questions of semantics surface: Should the SOF Contras be considered counterrevolutionaries? Did the SOF launch an insurgency movement against the FSLN government in Managua? Can one definitively label the SOF as either an exile movement or a guerrilla movement? The following section will address these queries and definitions by considering the SOF Contras from several different perspectives: 1) the SOF as insurgents, 2) the SOF as an exile movement, 3) the SOF as a nationalist-based revolutionary front, 4) the SOF as a guerrilla organization, and 5) the SOF as counterrevolutionaries.

The SOF Contras as insurgents

Scholar Jorge Domínguez has defined insurgency as "the use of violence lasting for more than a few hours against the established government by a substantial number of people who do not occupy formal authority roles."[2] The greatest weakness of this definition is also its greatest strength. Such a broad criteria can become burdensome to the investigator, particularly when this definition is used as a tool in comparative analysis; perhaps researchers would prefer a definition of greater specificity. Conversely, the advantage of this categorization is that it is valid without completely dissecting the ideology of the subject group. Whereas this definition equally applies to the Honduran-based forces of the FDN, Domínguez makes a distinction between these forces which were filled primarily from the ranks of the former members of the GN and the SOF; Edén Pastora found it difficult to cooperate with those whom he felt were his one-time enemies.[3] Within this definition, should the SOF Contras be considered insurgents?

When considering the time frame of their operations, the SOF Contras clearly fit within the parameters of this definition. Sporadic and often significant conflict initiated by SOF proto-Contras existed along the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border in early 1980.[4] In 1982, the interrelated issues of the presence of Nicaraguan "refugees" in Costa Rica and the deterioration of relations between the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican governments prompted Costa Rican President Luís Alberto Monge to threaten to invoke the Rio Treaty of the Organization of American States in order to protect its own border.[5] In 1983, Nicaraguan Defense Minister Humberto Ortega offered a general retort regarding the level of violence along both of its borders by stating that Nicaraguan armed forces were ordered to return fire across the Honduran and Costa Rican borders. Furthermore, the Ejército Popular Sandinista (EPS-Sandinista Popular Army) would not stop hot pursuit of Contra forces simply because they reached the border.[6] The conflict had sufficiently de-escalated by 1988 that the Commission on Verification and Follow-up of the Guatemala Accord declared that Costa Rica had complied with "the use of territory" requirements of the Accord.[7] Therefore, the time length of the violence had indeed lasted long enough to meet this requisite of this definition.

In terms of numbers of combatants in the SOF Contras, in 1980 the SOF, in its seminal, proto-Contra phase, was still rather small and informal. In 1983, the estimated 3000-5000 combatants of the SOF had decreased to 1200-1500 fighters by the end of 1987. By 1988, with the cessation of conflict in "the South," the SOF numbers were estimated at 1000.[8] The number of SOF Contras throughout the 1980-1988 time period evolved into a force that should be viewed as constituting, according to the definition as posited by Domínguez, "a substantial number of people."

The last portion of this definition is to distinguish insurgencies from coup d'etats. The SOF Contras also meet this qualification as such leaders as Alfonso Robelo and Edén Pastora left their respective government positions *prior* to their involvement in the conflict.[9] Additionally, Fernando Chamorro was a car dealer prior to and immediately after the anti-Somoza insurgency and, unlike Pastora and Robelo, Chamorro never held a position in the post-Somoza FSLN government.[10] Within each criteria of the definition of "insurgency" as pronounced by Jorge Domínguez, the SOF clearly meets these requirements.

The SOF Contras as an exile force

Given the extensive record of exile disputes and exile-based invasions between Nicaragua and Costa Rica--namely after Costa Rica's 1948 revolution--a valid question would be "Were the SOF Contras an exile force assembled to oust the FSLN ?" To best answer this question, a review of some of the traditional characteristics of exile disputes would prove appropriate. First of all, the exiles flee or are driven from their home countries for political reasons. Secondly, the exiles organize in the country or countries that provide them territorial asylum in order that they may initiate a forcible return to their home country. During this organizational phase, the exiles will assess their need in terms of training and material assistance. Often the exiles will first look to private sources to meet these needs; more likely, however, the exiles will solicit governmental leaders for this aid. A handful of factors determine the amount of assistance the exiles can expect: a) the extent of animosity on the part of the host/sponsor country toward the government of the exiles' home country, b) the degree of sympathy toward the exiles, c) the degree to which the leaders in the host/sponsor country can use the exiles within the context of their own political objectives, d) the extent to which the assistance to the exiles can remain as covert as possible as such sponsorship is illegal, and e) the odds of success. As assistance is granted by the host/sponsor government to the exiles, the host government may spread the burden of sponsorship among other sympathetic governments which serves to broaden the scope of the dispute.[11]

Strategy for the exiles is often based more upon chance than upon definitive plans. Traditionally, the exiles will train in isolated areas in order to maintain a covert presence as well as to maintain the element of surprise when the force indeed moves against their homeland--by air, sea and/or land. The exiles usually invade in full force as the strategy for them is to encounter regular army units sent to repel them; the exiles likewise serve as the catalyst for a broader popular uprising. The host government disavows any involvement in the operation while the exiles that they sponsored are clearly on their own and are usually engaged in combat for a short period of time prior to sustaining casualties, being captured, or being pushed back across the border. Depending on the policy of the host government, the remainder of the exiles may try again from the territory of the host, they may try again from the territory of a more agreeable host, they may discontinue their efforts, or they may continue their efforts without the aid of any host government.[12]

The SOF clearly met the first basic criteria of this definition. In the book, Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family, author Shirley Christian describes, in chapter nineteen, the plight of several of those individuals and often their followers who left their positions within the FSLN government and fled to Costa Rica.[13] The second criteria, however, is certainly more difficult to analyze. Some of the members of the SOF, in the early days of the Contra War, did indeed go to Costa Rica in order to initiate a forcible return into Nicaragua; other Nicaraguan exiles, however, stayed well within the confines of exile law.[14] At the public level, Costa Rica deported leaders of the SOF who violated exile law; within this context, one would discern that Costa Rica did not provide the SOF exiles "territorial asylum." However, the SOF was granted territorial asylum in Costa Rica at 1) a de facto level, and 2) a covert level.

At the de facto level, Costa Rica granted the SOF asylum through the inability and inefficiency of the Costa Rican Civil Guard and Rural Guard to control the 220-mile-long Costa Rican-Nicaraguan border and the subsequent activities of the Nicaraguan exiles that operated in this sparsely populated jungle region. In spite of the open admission by the FSLN which acknowledged that the government in San José was not responsible for the exile activity in the border region, the violence along the border, nonetheless, was one of several points of contention between the governments of Managua and San José.[15]

At the covert level, the Costa Rican government likewise provided the SOF with territorial asylum. In the early days of the Contra War, the SOF was able to violate exile law through the complicity of the Rural Guard. The degree of complicity on the part of the Rural Guard, however, was not a widespread issue when compared to the more direct policies of the Monge administration in terms of providing the SOF with territorial asylum--in spite of the long-standing policy of Costa Rican neutrality. Costa Rican President Monge, in August 1985, consented to a quid pro quo with US officials that stated that Monge "would be willing to provide assistance to the Resistance if the United States government would help fund a certain operation in Costa Rica."[16] The "certain operation" was most likely either the expansion of the Santa Elena airstrip which was already under construction and partially completed in northern Costa Rica or the construction of an intelligence-gathering facility aimed toward Nicaragua.[17]

In terms of funding, the SOF, at first, more or less followed the route taken by other exile groups. Shortly after the formation of ARDE in late 1982, Alfonso Robelo, as a member of ARDE and as the leader of the social democratic political party, the MDN, solicited aid from other Social Democrats and political liberals. These activities were initiated, however, when ARDE was promulgating a policy of nonviolent pressure against the Sandinistas in Managua. ARDE eventually received CIA funds--both directly and through an elaborate network that included several different sources.[18] It is at this point that the traditional definitions of exile invasion forces, in terms of providing support, veer off the beaten path as Costa Rica became the host country and the United States--either directly or indirectly--became the primary sponsoring agent. In analogous terms, it was as if the United States agreed to cater in a feast fit for royalty if the Costa Ricans would merely provide the dining hall and the table service. Clearly, according to the factors used to determine the amount of support the SOF should have received from their Costa Rican host, it would indicate that the Nicaraguan exiles should have garnered substantial funding.

Considerable animosity doubtlessly existed within the government in San José toward the Sandinista government, primarily over five key points of contention: a) the perceived direction of the Nicaraguan political system, b) the perceived infringement upon Costa Rican navigational rights on the San Juan River, c) the perceived Nicaraguan involvement in domestic subversion, d) the perceived Managua-initiated international disinformation campaign, and e) the perceived impingement of Costa Rican national honor and dignity.[19] When these sources of ill-will between San José and Managua were combined with the Reagan administration's foreign policy perception and goals for the region, support for the Nicaraguan exiles moved closer to realization.

The case for the Costa Ricans providing assistance to the SOF is further buttressed by the degree of sympathy that existed toward the exiles. Sympathy toward the exiles was prevalent at the governmental level through the rural and small-town Costa Rican populace. Costa Rican leaders favored free elections in Nicaragua in which exile leaders like Robelo, who was on good terms with Costa Rican leaders (including a very familiar relationship with President Monge), would be able to participate. Furthermore, Costa Rican townspeople in the border region who were sympathetic to the operations of Pastora often gave next to nothing in terms of information to Civil Guardsmen; many of the officials in the Civil Guard who were likewise sympathetic to Pastora turned a blind eye to *Comandante Cero's* activities. Finally, in spite of the fact that the military threat posed by Nicaragua toward Costa Rica was more rhetorical than real, Costa Ricans overwhelmingly perceived Nicaragua as the military threat to the region and more than two-thirds of the Costa Rican respondents to the same 1985 Gallup International survey approved of US assistance to the Contras.[20]

The degree to which the Costa Rican government could use the presence of the Nicaraguan exiles within the context of its political agenda is a rather complex issue that combines Costa Rican domestic politics and economics, US foreign policy, and Nicaraguan foreign policy toward Costa Rica. An interesting anecdote from the 1986 Costa Rican presidential campaign represents a good summary: Presidential candidate Oscar Arias began to suggest that the presence of the exiled Contras endangered Costa Rican peace. Arias "even joked that it was too bad Nicaragua didn't have a tenth comandante on the party directorate, since each comandante was worth $50 million in annual U.S. aid to Costa Rica."[21]

The extent to which the assistance to the Nicaraguan exiles could remain covert was not a significant factor for either the Costa Rican government prior to the Arias administration or the US government except for considerations given to the parameters of US Congressional limitations. As was mentioned earlier, the Costa Rican Civil and Rural Guards lacked the ability and often the willingness to secure its northern border region. SOF leaders were indeed expelled from Costa Rica and an ARDE safehouse in suburban San José was closed. However, the Costa Rican government turned "a blind eye to most contra activities inside Costa Rica unless they [were] flagrantly exposed in the press."[22] Perhaps the US lack of importance placed on the maintenance of its covert presence in Costa Rica, and the region in general, can best be seen in the announcement in 1984 by the Reagan administration that the United States would refuse to accept the legal ruling presented by the World Court concerning the US involvement in the mining of the Nicaraguan harbors.[23]

Finally, the amount of assistance that the SOF might have received as an exile force from their host was also based upon the perceived odds of success. Author-journalist Clifford Krauss believes that the Monge administration would have perhaps taken a more pro-SOF position if the SOF had demonstrated that it was a combat-proven force.[24] The United States was likewise doubtful of the odds of success of the SOF, especially when one considers how Lt. Col. Oliver North took command of the operation and dismantled the original SOF structure. The misgivings that the North network held regarding the SOF, however, had more to do with the level of trust that the leaders of the SOF never established with their sponsors than their performance on the field of battle.[25]

Throughout the course of the Contra War, both Costa

Rica--indirectly and unintentionally--and the US sponsors solicited other countries and individuals to help fund the efforts of the SOF which inevitably served to broaden the scope of a regional conflict. In early 1982, a deal was struck between the US National Security Agency and Israel that sent Israeli military advisors and weapons to Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica; some of the arms were eventually funneled to the SOF.[26] As for the US efforts--beyond the more publicized plans of the Iran-Contra network--an ARDE intelligence officer shed additional light on the subject of expanded outside sponsorship: "In 1983, the principal funds arrived from Venezuela and the Germans. It was CIA money, sent through covert channels."[27]

When considering the issue of strategy within the context of traditional exile movements in Central America and the Caribbean Basin, it is here that the SOF differs greatly. At least two notable plans existed, however, that advocated an exile invasion based on more traditional strategies. In early 1981, UDN/FARN, through operations coordinated by exiled Nicaraguan businessman Raúl Arana in Tegucigalpa worked to facilitate a kind of exile invasion. UDN/FARN, including Fernando and Edmundo Chamorro, hoped that small exile bands in the Jinotega region along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border would serve as the catalyst and then the support for an internal uprising in Nicaragua.[28]

A far more comprehensive plan for an exile invasion was presented to Gen. John Singlaub (RET.) in April 1986 by the Contra reform organization CONDOR (Nicaraguan Coalition of Opposition to the Regime). The twenty-page plan called for, among other things, the infiltration of Chontales and Boaco Departments by Southern Front units as well as seizure of the Immigration posts on the Honduran and Costa Rican frontiers and simultaneous Southern Front infiltration movement toward the Bluefields-El Rama area. Point Seven of the CONDOR strategic plan stated that "The main attack will be against the city of Managua itself, forcing the active participation in the struggle of the entire population. There will be an insurrection initiated and directed by our forces."[29] The ironic fate to this rather elaborate plan was sealed when Singlaub met with US SOF coordinators in San José and failed to mention either CONDOR's report, which was also a damning editorial regarding Contra corruption, or the conversation that Singlaub had with the CONDOR leadership in Miami.[30]

A variation on the traditional exile invasion theme that held considerable weight during the Contra War was the "liberated territory" strategy. In spite of the schism between Steadman Fagoth and Brooklyn Rivera that sent the former to Honduras and the latter to Costa Rica, the basic objective of their respective Contra organizations remained similar: "both MISURA and MISURASATA [were] to 'liberate a region of territory on the Atlantic Coast' and declare a 'provisional government,' then calling for international recognition and US military assistance."[31] Likewise, in late August 1984, following the La Penca bombing, newly formed Contra umbrella organization UNIR, which included Alfonso Robelo as the representative from ARDE, advocated the declaration of a "territorio liberado" as part of the provisional plan of the larger Plan de Gobierno.[32]

The SOF clearly exhibited some of the characteristics of a traditional exile force, especially in terms of the methods in which the various organizations were supported. In spite of the fact that plans existed for both more traditional exile invasions and "liberated territory" seizure and subsequent declarations, the SOF never successfully followed through on either of these similar conflict strategies. Whereas the SOF met some of the criteria contained in the definition of an exile invasion force, their actions and strategies demonstrated that the SOF did not represent a true exile invasion force.

The SOF as nationalist revolutionary force

On April 15, 1982, Edén Pastora resurfaced in San José, Costa Rica in order to issue a "severance statement" that formalized his break with the FSLN. Additionally, Pastora indicated that he would still work within a revolutionary framework as the real problem in Nicaragua was not with sandinismo but with the manner in which the FSLN's National Directorate--and others--had interpreted sandinismo. In the same statement, Pastora clearly defined himself as an anti-imperialist, lashing out at the historical legacy left by US intervention in Nicaragua as well as pointing out the imperialistic nature of both the United States and the Soviet Union.[33] In December 1982, the newly formed ARDE issued a statement that explained ARDE's position on the peace initiatives that were proposed at that time. Also in the statement was a reaffirmation of ARDE's nationalist, revolutionary ideals: "Por eso como nicaragüenses, como defensores de la soberanía, como verdaderos demócratas y como revolucionarios, consideramos un deber impostergable agotar todos los caminos de paz, sin renunciar a principios."[34] In order to adequately determine if the SOF Contras fulfilled its pronouncements as a nationalist, revolutionary front, two important questions should be addressed: a) Did the SOF, as reflected in some members of their leadership, represent the political spirit of the Nicaraguan people? and b) Did the SOF maintain autonomy over their organizations and operations?

When one considers the composition of the original Revolutionary Directorate of ARDE, one may conclude that Edén Pastora, Alfonso Robelo, Fernando "El Negro" Chamorro, and Brooklyn Rivera represented a broad cross section of the Nicaraguan people. These leaders, of course, were not without their detractors.

Edén Pastora, the most popular of the ARDE directorate, was viewed with ambivalence by the Nicaraguan people. In a 1983 Christian Science Monitor story, one former southern Atlantic coast resident expressed his positive opinion concerning Pastora's continued popularity: "If tomorrow Edén Pastora would walk into town, things would start happening." In the same story, however, a northern Atlantic coast resident commented, "Pastora smells of Sandinista and the Atlantic coast people don't want that."[35]

Alfonso Robelo should have drawn considerable support from both the non-FSLN, non-Marxist, Nicaraguan democratic Left as well as the private business sector. A Nicaraguan opposition party leader stated, however, that Robelo's political party, the MDN, had not built a substantial infrastructure in its rather brief history and that its exiled status would only work to diminish further its already limited presence in Nicaragua. Furthermore, COSEP, the private business and industry federation which Robelo once led, avoided involvement in exile politics and therefore forged no links with ARDE.[36]

Fernando Chamorro clearly took the most activist stance among the ARDE leaders with combat actions against the FSLN government dating back to 1980.[37] Just a few short months after the formation of ARDE, however, "El Negro" and his UDN/FARN forces left the organization and reportedly were going to Honduras to join with the FDN forces. Chamorro claims that he voluntarily left ARDE because of what he perceived as ARDE's increasingly softer line toward the FSLN. Members of ARDE, on the other hand, claimed that they distanced their organization from "El Negro" because of his high-profile military activity and because he was endangering ARDE's revolutionary credentials through past association with Somocistas.[38] In reality, the UDN/FARN hiatus from ARDE proved to be quite brief.

Brooklyn Rivera was likewise considered a valuable asset as he brought Atlantic coast indigenous groups under the ARDE umbrella. Rivera's feud with his brother-in-law and FDN

Miskito Contra leader, Stedman Fagoth, however, prevented either ARDE or the FDN from mobilizing the full impact of the rampant discontent that existed among the Atlantic coast indigenous groups. Furthermore, Rivera had differing goals than ARDE concerning the motivation behind opposing the Sandinista government. This often led him to pursue a course of action that reflected the interests of his organization, MISURASATA; the goals of Rivera and MISURASATA--especially after the La Penca bombing--did not always automatically coincide with the overall goals of the SOF Contras.[39]

In the time period following the La Penca bombing, the shifting alliances and the subsequent isolation of some groups over the support of other groups did not necessarily translate into either greater leadership effectiveness or genuine widespread popularity. The short-lived UNIR organization that was formed between SOF leader Robelo and FDN political leader Calero gave way to UNO in early 1985 which included Robelo and "El Negro" Chamorro.[40] Regarding the level of commitment demonstrated by the UNO leadership within the context of their stated goals and, in turn, their relationship with the Nicaraguan people, Rob Owen--the courier for Lt. Col. Oliver North--issued a scathing indictment in early 1986:

> Uno is in name only. There is more and more fluff being added, but there is no substance. I care and believe in the boys and girls, men and women who are fighting, bleeding and dying. But the reality as I see it is there are few of the so called leaders of the movement who really care about the boys in the field. THIS WAR HAS BECOME A BUSINESS TO MANY OF THEM; THERE IS STILL A BELIEF THE MARINES ARE GOING TO HAVE TO INVADE, SO LETS GET SET SO WE WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE THE ONES PUT INTO POWER.[41]

Evidence indicates that the leaders of the SOF Contras reflected many of the views of the key groups within Nicaraguan society. For various reasons, including their overall perceived credibility among the Nicaraguan populace, the SOF leadership could never build a genuine consensus among these groups to truly mobilize them.

In order to present themselves to the Nicaraguan people and, in some cases, the international community as a nationalist-based revolutionary movement, another question arises: were the SOF Contras able to maintain autonomy over their organizational structure and their operations? A 1984 CIA report stated that ARDE had "stronger anti-Somoza credentials than the Nicaraguan Democratic Force."[42] The anti-Somoza credentials of ARDE should be viewed, however, as a paradox; a simultaneous blessing and curse. It was the strong anti-Somoza credentials that initially caught the attention of the CIA. In February 1982, CIA operative Duane Clarridge approached

Pastora and arranged a meeting in Mexico. The April 1982 "severance statement" that Pastora made in San José was primarily a product of a secretive, informal agreement between Clarridge and Pastora. Pastora launched this rhetorical barrage toward the FSLN on behalf of Clarridge so, in Pastora's words, "the war in the north [Nicaraguan-Honduran border] would be legitimized."[43] Clarridge and the CIA envisioned Pastora as commanding the southern front that they wanted to operate out of Costa Rica as well as have Pastora forge ties with the FDN forces in Honduras: "A combination of Pastora's popular support in Nicaragua and the military strength of the FDN would increase the threat to the Sandinistas."[44] The alliance between Pastora and the FDN never materialized. The disdain that Pastora held regarding the presence of the former GN members in the FDN was certainly a hindrance to the alliance. The suspicion in which the FDN viewed some of Pastora's fellow travelers as well as personality conflicts between Pastora and Honduran General Gustavo Alvarez were also to blame for the failed alliance.[45] The failed attempt at unification of the north and the south, however, deterred neither the efforts of the CIA to continue to seek such an alliance nor did it deter Pastora from accepting CIA support.

Pastora accepted CIA financial support, stringing the

CIA along in a proposed quid pro quo agreement that required ARDE to join forces with the FDN while the CIA would reciprocate by providing assistance. In spite of clear statements denying the acceptance of CIA funds, ARDE received--either directly or indirectly from the CIA prior to the La Penca bombing--monthly allowances that ranged from $90,000-$625,000.[46] Therefore, the report submitted by ABC News in April 1984 regarding the SOF contained more than just a slight grain of truth: "These rebels are now under the total control and direction of the CIA."[47] A team of CIA operatives established several Contra media outlets as well as supervised the planning of the more specialized operations out of the ARDE office in suburban San José.[48]

The degree of direct CIA penetration--within both the SOF and the Honduran-based Contras--perhaps reached its highest level in late 1983 through early 1984 when, in the words of a CIA operative, "There was a push to have some kind of success in Nicaragua...."[49] The operative continued within the same context: "If the FDN and Pastora's people can't really do things that hurt, it's got to be worked out another way."[50] The "other way" in which this was "worked out" was for the CIA to conduct operations that were considered too sophisticated for the Contras; the two

Contra groups were to take credit for these operations while only committing themselves to minimal and indirect involvement. Furthermore, the CIA recruited its own supplemental force, UCLA (unilaterally controlled Latino assets), which was comprised of Spanish speaking operatives from several different Latin American countries; UCLA also carried out sabotage missions.[51] One of the more notable examples of CIA penetration into the operations of the SOF Contras was the CIA delivery of a Hughes 500 (H-500) helicopter which was originally based in El Salvador. Additionally, a little over a week after the delivery of the H-500, Nicaraguan-piloted helicopters were launched from CIA "mother ships" that provided advanced gun and rocket support to suspected FSLN positions prior to a two-day SOF Contra occupation of San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua.[52]

The SOF Contras, as the record shows, were greatly influenced by outside forces which weakened their nationalist-based revolutionary credentials. In early May 1986, the CIA initiated an agreement with several of the closest military and political associates of Edén Pastora. In exchange for $5000 for personal use plus a portion of legitimate US-Contra aid, these Pastora loyalists shifted their support from "poor ARDE" and Pastora to El Negro

Chamorro and FARN under the UNO umbrella. Between battle fatigue and their CIA-fattened wallets, these former "poor ARDE" field commanders sat out the next several months of the Contra War in San José. Pastora snidely remarked: "It is a great drama. They fight with each other to pay the bills at the bars now."[53]

The body of evidence indicates that while the SOF may have indeed represented a viable alternative to the FDN, the body of evidence presented here likewise indicates that such statements made by Edén Pastora in 1985 that claimed that *his* branch of ARDE spoke "of non-alignment, of an anti-imperialism opposed to both Washington and Moscow, of nationalism,"[54] clearly lacked validity. Furthermore, Alfonso Robelo, also in 1985 and representing *his* branch of ARDE under the UNO banner, openly called upon the support of both liberals and conservatives in the United States.[55]

The SOF could have justifiably made the claim that their ranks were not filled with substantial numbers of former guardsmen and therefore represented a more genuine nationalist force. To stridently define the SOF, however, as a true nationalist revolutionary force would be to ignore large portions of the credible historical record. Each of the prominent leaders of the SOF possessed their own character flaws that undermined their individual and thus their organizational nationalist credentials. Additionally, the SOF accepted vast amounts of direct and indirect economic and material support--in spite of repeated denials--from the CIA and US Congressional funding sources. When analyzing the nationalist credentials of the SOF leadership and the source of the lion's share of its support, it is difficult to label the SOF as a *true* nationalist revolutionary front.

The SOF as a guerrilla force

The SOF Contras clearly exhibited some of the characteristics that could lead one to define it as a guerrilla force. Some of the key points of guerrilla warfare will be discussed in this section within the context of the SOF Contras in order to posit a response to the query "Were the SOF Contras a guerrilla force?" The issues of guerrilla warfare that have been considered in previous sections under different labels include: a) outside support to the SOF, and b) the execution of autonomous strategies. As these issues have been sufficiently covered in the previous sections, the focus of this section will therefore be concentrated on a) the deployment of guerrilla tactics and b) the level of support the SOF was able to receive from the Nicaraguan populace.

An interesting and significant example of the deployment of guerrilla tactics was the SOF-initiated bombing of the international airport in Managua in September 1983. The CIA was indeed deeply involved in the planning of the air strike named "Voltaje al Sol" which included the three small planes of the ARDE air forced based at Ilopango Air Base in El Salvador as well as a small plane based in the San José suburb of Pavas. Three planes embarked on their mission with pre-selected targets in Managua. Instead of attacking the Presidential House and Central Bank as agreed, the pilots of one of the planes radioed back to their Venezuelan CIA (UCLA) contact and informed him that "they intended to hit the Sandino International Airport instead."[56] Not only were three persons killed--including the two SOF pilots--and four Nicaraguans injured but US Senators Gary Hart and William Cohen witnessed the destruction just hours after the bombing. Their shock at the incident turned to anger when FSLN officials clearly indicated the CIA's hand in the operation. Hart and Cohen contended that targeting a civilian airport would generate resentment rather than support among the Nicaraguan populace toward the Contras. Furthermore, the maverick and reckless nature of the bombing was, in part, the impetus behind the CIA's distancing from Pastora's faction of ARDE.[57]

In an optimal scenario, a guerrilla force would build an infrastructure of popular support from which to call upon for such essential needs as food, weapon storage, operational concealment, and basic medical care. Within the context of building popular support among the Nicaraguan people--both in rural and urban areas--three important initiatives undertaken by the FSLN government made the task of gaining popular support for the SOF from the Nicaraguan people difficult: 1) the changing role of agrarian reform, 2) the Sandinista Defense Committees, and 3) the limited autonomy provisions granted to the Atlantic coast region. These factors constituted an additional burden to the SOF which, as discussed earlier, was already grappling with some leadership and organizational flaws--according to the perceptions of some Nicaraguans and some of the US benefactors of the SOF.

Between 1980-1984, the FSLN program of agrarian reform experienced two major adjustments. First of all, Minister of Agriculture Jaime Wheelock expedited the pace of land distribution to peasants both as individuals and within cooperatives; Wheelock was responding to "the pressure of peasant expectations to control their own land."[58] Secondly, Wheelock distributed land out of fear that the Contras would gain support from a) campesinos who might have been lured by the prospect of personal, individual land ownership, and b) from small independent landholders who feared that even their small holdings might have been confiscated or integrated into cooperatives. In June 1983, Wheelock announced that 15,000 manzanas out of a total of 117,696 manzanas of land would be given out in the Rio San Juan region along the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border; these lands were to serve as the basis for the "Defense and Production Cooperatives." As the FSLN stated, these cooperatives would provide the more traditional trappings of an agrarian reform program yet this "new" cooperative would go beyond agricultural production and social leveling and would give arms to the campesinos which would in turn, theoretically, bolster the FSLN's military capabilities in these "at-risk" regions. In short, the program was "explicitly linked to the counterinsurgency effort against the FDN and ARDE."[59]

Just as the agrarian reform program served as a counterrevolutionary strategy in the vulnerable rural areas, the Sandinista Defense Committees (Comités de Defensa Sandinista-CDS) served a similar function in the urban areas. The CDS evolved from the FSLN-established Comités de Defensa Civil of the anti-Somoza insurgency.

Former FSLN government official Alvaro Taboada Terán described the CDS as having "administrative and political functions." Terán continues: "four CDS directors (one for each street in the block) [could] exert control over 80 or more persons in a given block by means of constant watching, control of food rationing cards, and recommendations for work, driver license, passport, etc."[60] Little evidence exists that directly demonstrates how the CDS intervened in the prevention of the SOF from establishing a support base in urban areas. However, and in spite of some restructuring by the FSLN and a decline in their numerical strength, "the CDSs still provided the FSLN with a numerous and committed base, far larger than that of any other party."[61] Perhaps the CDSs impeded the execution of any initiatives on the part of the SOF to make inroads into the FSLN strongholds of the middle-class and lower-class barrios.

The policy shift initiated by the FSLN in 1985 regarding the Atlantic coast region basically succeeded in removing Brooklyn Rivera and the SOF as viable competitors vis-à-vis the Sandinista government in Managua. In 1985, Interior Minister Tomás Borge was chosen to manage the FSLN policy regarding the Atlantic coast region. Borge was named de facto governor of Zelaya province and initiated a twopronged counterinsurgency strategy that "was a masterful blend of resolve and compromise."[62]

On one hand, Borge and the FSLN government worked to undercut Rivera's power base from the grassroots up by assessing and then addressing the basic needs of the *costeños* at the village level. Furthermore, Borge worked to undermine Rivera's leadership legitimacy by pledging to Miskito combatants that if they ceased fighting they would be allowed to return to their home villages and replace the existing FSLN security forces which therefore enabled the Miskitos to re-establish a sense of autonomy at the local level.[63] As 150,000 Indians returned to villages that had been reconstructed by the Sandinistas, Borge's policies served the two-fold purpose of restoring a measure of credibility among the *costeños* regarding FSLN governance as well as diminishing the level of support for Rivera among the Miskitos.[64]

The other phase of Borge's policies involved dealing with Brooklyn Rivera at a more personal level. Following the breakdown of negotiations between Rivera and the FSLN, Rivera defied Borge's enforced exile and entered Nicaragua in early 1986. Borge responded by tailing Rivera and his band of close loyalists and harassed them to the extent that they eventually were forced out of Nicaragua. The bombing of Rivera's encampment near the Miskito village of Layasiksa demonstrated Borge's resolve regarding his agenda for the Atlantic coast.[65]

Some of the strategies initiated by the SOF could have been perceived as counter-productive and alienating instead of focused and sensitive to the opinions of the disgruntled ranks of the Nicaraguan population. On the other hand, the FSLN government initiated policies that proved to be effective counterinsurgency measures that greatly reduced what popular appeal the SOF, and the Contras in general, may have enjoyed. Ché Guevara, one of Pastora's revolutionary icons, commented on guerrilla strategy: "The main demands of the peasantry should be met to the degree and in the form which circumstances permit, so as to bring about the unity and solidarity of the whole population."[66] Between questionable SOF guerrilla-style tactics and FSLN policies, the SOF failed to meet this key objective. The SOF, within a strict definition, was not a genuine guerrilla force.

The SOF as counterrevolutionaries

Much of the previous chapter was devoted to viewing the interrelationship between the revolutionary process and the development of counterrevolutionary activity. Counterrevolution, according to Jan Knippers Black and as mentioned earlier, "is the displacement, or elimination from effective participation, of groups representing strata from the base of the social pyramid."[67] Also, and according to the definition of the revolutionary process as posited by Black, the FSLN revolution in Nicaragua did not reach full fruition. However, as the FSLN government would take steps to further the revolutionary process, the SOF would take commensurate steps in the direction of counterrevolution. Contra leader Jaime Morales Carazo, who was admittedly more closely associated with the FDN, addressed the semantics of the word *CONTRA*:

> Los sandinistas lo identifican peyorativamente como contrarrevolucionarios....Es sinónimo de lucha armada u oposición civil contra la dictadura totalitaria y su opresión; contra quienes les han privado de sus tradiciones, libertades, derechos y valores; contra quienes han llevado millares de cubanos, búlgaros, alemanes orientales y otros extranjeros que denominan "internacionalistas"....Los verdaderos Contras no se sienten ofendidos porque les llamen Contras. Al contrario.[68]

Regardless of who qualifies the definition of the word *Contra*, the SOF should be considered a counterrevolutionary force.

The ideology of the SOF

In Conflict in Nicaragua: A Multidimensional

Perspective, authors/editors Jiri Valenta and Esperanza Durán refer to some of the resulting amalgamation of the SOF as "representing 'the South'." Valenta and Durán continue: "To most Nicaraguans, 'the South' connotes those organizations that sustain a belief in deep social and economic reforms within a political structure of representative democracy."[69] In this section, the investigation will be focused on revealing any points of distinction that would define the ideology of the SOF; did the SOF embody the political thought of "the South"?

Within the personal political philosophies of Edén Pastora and Alfonso Robelo, one can see what these members of the ARDE Revolutionary Directorate envisioned as their ideological direction. Pastora was doubtlessly influenced in his political orientation by Panamanian leader Gen. Omar Torrijos. Pastora and Torrijos shared the same vision of Central American regimes that were the products of non-Marxist revolutions and that followed a populist agenda "that sought to maintain political and economic freedoms while channeling public resources to the poor."[70] In a sense, Pastora believed that he was merely continuing the original goals of the *tercerista* faction of the anti-Somoza FSLN which was more nationalistic than Marxist-Leninist in its interpretation of sandinismo. Pastora did not perceive himself as a Contra; rather, he considered himself "a 'true Sandinista' who stood for democratic, nonaligned socialism and respect for human rights."[71]

In 1982, Alfonso Robelo brought his political party, the MDN, into the ARDE fold. Whereas the MDN started out in 1978 as an anti-Somoza party and evolved into an opposition party vis-à-vis the FSLN government--especially after 1980--the MDN maintained its social-democratic orientation. Robelo perhaps placed the social- democratic credentials of the MDN into question when he cast his lot with Arturo Cruz and Adolfo Calero's FDN to form the Contra organization UNO; the 1985 "photo-op" of President Reagan, Lt. Col. North, Calero, Cruz, and Robelo was a statement that stood in direct contrast to the ideal of operational independence of which Pastora at least gave lip service. The social-democratic vacuum along the Southern Front created by Robelo's coalescence with UNO was filled, ideologically speaking, by the Bloque Opositor del Sur (BOS).[72]

In July 1985, shortly after the formalization of the UNO alliance, Pastora and Alfredo César announced the formation of BOS which was eventually an amalgamation of five opposition groups. The group was supported by the Socialist International (SI); in fact, BOS was granted observer status (as was the FSLN) at the SI regional conference held in Lima, Peru in June 1986. In spite of its social-democratic credentials and its association with SI, however, BOS received most of its funds from the CIA.[73]

When reviewing some of the ideological stances taken by the individuals and groups of the SOF, the SOF did in many ways represent the politics of "the South." The three examples that were discussed in this section, Pastora, Robelo, and BOS, however, all compromised their ideological principles in order to maintain the operations of their respective organizations.

Summary

Upon reviewing some of the labels that have been used to classify the SOF, each label has at least one component that is clearly applicable to the characteristics of the Contras of the Southern Front; some labels are more applicable. The SOF was indeed an *insurgency force* according to the basic yet useful definition presented by Jorge Domínguez. In many ways the SOF met the criteria of an *exile force*. The Costa Rican economy, the Reagan administration's policy goals for the region, and the ill-will that existed between Nicaragua and Costa Rica all worked in concert to set the stage for a Nicaraguan exile force based in Costa Rica. In terms of funding, however, the main support for the SOF came from the CIA and not the Costa Rican hosts. In terms of strategy, some plans existed that advocated an exile invasion with a subsequent popular uprising. Even if the efforts of the Contras could have been coordinated to complete such a mission, the US Contra managers had plans of a much smaller design for the SOF. The SOF likewise exhibited characteristics of being a *nationalist revolutionary force*--especially when compared to the FDN in the early days of the Contra War. The SOF, however, had its nationalist credentials tainted by its acceptance of CIA operational and economic support. As a *guerrilla force*, the SOF lacked the ability to deliver to the Nicaraguan populace any significant benefits of government. By the end of 1985, the Contra War had already facilitated major policy shifts among the FSLN that were passed down to the people. Finally, the SOF did not represent a strident militaristic stereotype of a *counterrevolutionary force*. However, the SOF did indeed oppose the FSLN revolution and--by virtue of the definition of counterrevolution provided by Jan Knippers Black--the SOF should be considered a *counterrevolutionary force*.

In terms of ideology, the various groups that fell under the broad listing of the Southern Opposition Front did indeed exhibit political characteristics that demonstrated that the SOF not only professed to be social-democratic in its orientation but that some individuals and groups were recognized at more formal levels as being social democrats. Each group, however, was highly dependent upon the conservative, anti-communist Reagan Administration in Washington.

LABELLING THE SOF CONTRAS

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[1] William S. Stokes, "Violence as a Power Factor in Latin-American Politics," The Western Political Quarterly 5 no. 3 (Sept. 1952): 445-468.

[2] Jorge I. Domínguez, "Insurgency in Latin America and the Common Defense," Political Science Quarterly 101 no. 5 (1986): 807.

[3] Ibid., 819; U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, The Challenge to Democracy in Central America (Washington, D.C.: 1986), 41. This US government publication shows that the composition of the FDN did indeed become more "civilian" after 1982. However, in 1986, out of approximately 50 Task Force commanders, 13 were former members of the GN. Additionally, more than one-half of the 21 key staff officers at FDN headquarters were former members of the GN. the inclusion of civilians to the FDN leadership was not an organic occurrence. In a 1983 cable from the US Embassy in Honduras, Ambassador John Negroponte stated, "[Adolfo] Calero has now been elevated to top leadership position of FDN movement as part of effort to 'civilianize' its organization," NSA doc. #1842.

[4] Frank Ortiz to Sec. of State, "Cable," April 1, 1980, 2, NSA doc. #1130. "The most active exile movement is headed by the brothers Fernando and Edmundo Chamorro working out of Costa Rica. This group had made armed forays of some magnitude into southern Nicaragua."

[5] Adams to Sec. of State, "Cable," August 3, 1982, 1, NSA doc. #1568.

[6] Anthony Quainton to Sec. of State, "Cable," Oct. 3, 1983, 1, NSA doc. #1840.

[7] Comisión Internacional de Verificación y Seguimiento, "Informe sobre los progresos en el cumplimiento de los acuerdos del procedimiento para alcanzar la paz firme y duradera en Centro América," January 14, 1988, p. 82, NSA doc. #3058.

[8] Jaime Morales Carazo, La Contra: Anatomía de una múltiple traición,¿Bahía de Cochinos de Reagan? (México: Planeta, 1989), 117.; Dooley Foundation, Project Proposal, "Humanitarian Aid Program for the Nicaraguan Resistance Forces in Honduras; Costa Rica." Intermed-USA, Inc. January, 1988. p. 3, NSA doc. #3055.

[9] NSA doc. # 1136; Lawrence Pezzullo to Sec. of State, "Cable," July 9, 1981, 1, NSA doc. #1349.

[10] Christian, 197.; In David and Goliath: The U.S. War Against Nicaragua, (1987) authors William I. Robinson and Kent Norsworthy draw a grossly oversimplified picture when on p. 44 they lump Fernando Chamorro and his brother, Edmundo, together with other Somocistas simply because they were anti-Sandinistas.

[11] Robert D. Tomasek, "Caribbean Exile Disputes as a Special Regional Type of Conflict in the Field of International Relations," 2.

[12] Ibid. 3.

[13] Christian, 267-287.

[14] Honey, 225.

[15] Anthony Quainton to Sec. of State, "Cable," April 26, 1983, 2, NSA doc. #1682.

[16] NSA doc. #3157, 27-28.

[17] Honey, 407, 410.

[18] Hopfensperger, 13 (A); Kornbluh, Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention, 29.

[19] Tomasek, "Deterioration of Relations Between Costa Rica and the Sandinistas," 3-4.

[20] Tomasek, "The Deterioration of Relations Between Costa Rica and the Sandinistas," 1, 4, 7; Krauss, 231-232; Department of State and Department of Defense, The Challenge to Democracy in Central America, 45, 58.

[21] Krauss, 233.

[22] Jennie K. Lincoln, "Neutrality Costa Rican Style," Current History (March 1985): 119.

[23] Kornbluh, The Price of Intervention, 52.

[24] Krauss, 231.

[25] Honey, 455.

[26] Honey, 240-241.

[27] Ibid., 237.

[28] Christian, 176, 197-198.

[29] CONDOR, To: Gen. John E. Singlaub. Re: The Nicaraguan Situation. April 1986. 21-22, NSA doc. #2734. The first signatary to the CONDOR report was Gerardo Martínez (aka Comandante Chaco) of the FDN forces. As a point of amusement and interest, Martínez was the representative and one of the founding members of the "Jeane Kirkpatrick Task Force" which was named "in honor of the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations who has backed their cause." Edward Cody, "Nicaraguan Rebels Say Funds Adequate," The Washington Post, 5 June 1984.

[30] Honey, 432.

[31] Gillian Brown, "Miskito Revindication: Between Revolution and Resistance," in Nicaragua: A Revolution Under Siege, ed. Richard Harris and Carlos M. Vilas (London: Zed Books, 1985), 187.

[32] Unidad Nicaragüense de Reconciliación, "Estructura Organizacional," Agosto 29, 1984, 2, NSA doc. #2185.

[33] Christian, 274.

[34] Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática, "Propuesta de paz en Nicaragua para la paz en Centroamérica," (San José (?): ARDE, 1983), 3.

[35] Jean Hopfensperger, "The rebels who turned against their own revolution," Christiian Science Monitor, 28 March 1983, 13 (A).

[36] Ibid.

[37] NSA doc. #1130, 2.

[38] Hopfensperger, 13 (A); NSA doc. #1674, 1; Christian, 197-198.

[39] Hopfensperger, 12 (A); Brown, 199.

[40] Honey, 223; Valenta and Durán, 428.

[41] TC (The Courier-Rob Owen) to BG (Blood and Guts-Lt. Col. Oliver North), Eyes Only Memorandum, "Overall Perspective," March 17, 1986, p. 4-5, NSA doc. #2712.

[42] Kornbluh, Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention, 28.

[43] Gutman, 109. The agreement between Pastora and Clarridge was to remain secret as both parties would benefit from deniability. See The Wall Street Journal, March 4, 1985.

[44] Christopher Dickey, With the Contras: A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 149, 151; Gutman, 109; NSA doc. #1620, 2.

[45] Dickey, 150-151.

[46] Kornbluh, Nicaragua : The Price of Intervention, 29; Washington Solidarity Office of ARDE, "Newsletter," June 10, 1983, p. 2, NSA doc. #1720; Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, "Transcript of meeting with Eden Pastora," Nov. 17, 1983, p. 7-8, NSA doc. #1885; Honey, 236-247.

[47] Kornbluh, Nicarugua: The Price of Intervention, 29.

[48] Honey, 260-261.

[49] Dickey, 258.

[50] Ibid., 258.

[51] Kornbluh, Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention, 47; David Rogers and David Ignatius, "The Contra Fight," Wall Street Journal, 6 March 1985, 1 (A), 20 (A).

[52] "CIA Internal Report Details U.S. Role In Contra Raids in Nicaragua Last Year," Wall Street Journal, 6 March 1985, 20 (A); Kornbluh, Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention, 48.

[53] Honey, 439-440, 442.

[54] Edén Pastora Gomez and ARDE, "Nicaragua 1983-1985: Two Years' Struggle Against Soviet Intervention," Journal of Contemporary Studies, 8 no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1985): 8.

[55] Department of State and Department of Defense, The Challenge to Democracy in Central America, 44, 46.

[56] Honey, 284.

[57] Ibid. 284, 286.

[58] Christian, 249.

[59] NSA doc. #1725, 2, 4. In the "Comment " section of this cable, Quainton expressed doubts concerning the potential effectiveness of the cooperatives as the FSLN government lacked the economic resources to provide the needed technical assistance and the true loyalties of the campesinos was always in question. The "Armed Cooperative" or "Defense and Production Cooperative" is a variation on a familiar theme: the strategic hamlet. For a brief history of the strategic hamlet and its application in the Vietnam War, see Stanley Karnow, Vietnam: A History, 255-258.

[60] Alvaro Taboada Terán, "Aspects of the Evolution of Law in Sandinista Nicaragua," in Conflict in Nicaragua: A Multidimensional Perspective, ed. Jiri Valenta and Esperanza Durán (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 78.

[61] Booth, 193.

[62] Kinzer, 269.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Honey, 231.

[65] Kinzer, 281.

[66] Ché Guevara, "Guerrilla Warfare: A Method," in Che Guevara Speaks, ed. George Lavan, (New York: Merit Publishers, 1967), 84; Dickey, 148.

[67] Black, 176.

[68] Morales Carazo, 9.

[69] Valenta and Durán, 420.

[70] Kinzer, 174.

[71] Honey, 212.

[72] Valenta and Durán, 420, 425; Kornbluh, Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention, 65.

[73] Honey, 445; Valenta and Durán, 420.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this conclusion is to posit two final questions that will both recapitulate and encapsulate: a) why did the SOF fail? and b) what is the underlying current that is present throughout this work that serves as a bridge between its components and draws the work to a close that relates to its point of departure?

It was, of course, a variety of factors that contributed to the failure of the SOF. Some of the reasons can be found in the character flaws and personalities of the leaders of the SOF and how the US-Contra middlemen perceived and reacted to these flaws. Sometimes the failure of the SOF can be traced back to the goals of US policy in the region and how covert policymakers often chose the leadership based on characteristics other than leadership capability. Likewise, the Costa Rican Presidential administrations of Luís Alberto Monge and Oscar Arias affected the SOF. Some of the policies of the FSLN also hindered the possibility of success for the SOF.

When the SOF was analyzed as a nationalist revolutionary movement, the research show that each major leader had an Achilles' heel that diminished his credibility among the Nicaragua populace. Pastora's constant objection to an ARDE-FDN alliance was certainly a significant component to the Contra War. Pastora's objection to the alliance and the subsequent denial of CIA funds, however, should not be cited as the major factor in the failure of the SOF; Robelo's CIA-blessed alliance with Adolfo Calero and Arturo Cruz did not translate into UNO victory. The issue of an ARDE-FDN alliance eventually became a moot point as Pastora, Rivera, and "El Negro" were never fully trusted by Lt. Col. North. In terms of the failure of the original SOF structure, Pastora's stonewalling on the alliance was only a contributing factor to the distrust that North held regarding the SOF. The United States is largely responsible for the failure of the SOF: "Ambassador Tambs' mission was not, as he testified, to build the Southern Front; it was rather to dismantle the existing contra armies."[1]

Politics in Costa Rica also contributed to the demise of the SOF. As was noted earlier, President Monge backed off from a greater commitment to the SOF as he doubted its combat effectiveness. Monge skillfully maintained a balance: "While he was helpful enough to the rebels to secure American economic aid, he never gave the anti-Sandinista forces his total support."[2] Furthermore, President Arias demonstrated his resolve on the peace issue by ordering Robelo to leave Costa Rica if he refused to abide by the Central American Peace Plan.

Problems among the SOF leaders contributed to the failure of the SOF. The politics of neutrality in Costa Rica under Monge allowed the SOF to thrive yet not flourish and the politics of peace under Arias certainly impeded the efforts of the SOF. It is the role of the United States in the policies regarding the SOF, however, that was the greatest contributor to its failure. It is difficult to say if the SOF would have succeeded with more committed CIA support; it is almost inevitable that they would fail without it.

The SOF represented a clear alternative to the FDN forces, especially in the time period prior to the La Penca bombing. Robelo, Pastora, and Chamorro had all served as anti-Somocistas. Robelo and Pastora served as Sandinista before taking up the struggle against the FSLN. In terms of the revolutionary process, the SOF formed more out of frustration with the direction of post-Somoza politics whereas the former members of the GN moved toward the formation of the FDN without experiencing FSLN governance. Many of the labels that were used to analyze the SOF could likewise be applied to the Honduran-based Contras. The FDN, however, did not have the same ties to the democratic socialist community that the SOF at least cultivated from time to time. Both the former members of the SOF and of the Honduran-based Contras--regardless of ideology and loyalties--were faced with reconstructing Nicaragua in the wake of the anti-Somoza insurgency and the Contra War.

CONCLUSION

[1] Honey, 455.

[2] Krauss, 225.

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