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# Defense Report

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## Aid to Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters —A Message to Managua

Some leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives seem bent on ensuring the success of the Marxist-Leninist junta in Nicaragua in overthrowing the governments of its Central American neighbors. Just as Congress seemed to be getting serious in its debate over actions to limit the communist regime's export of violent revolution in the region, revelations of CIA participation in planting mines in Nicaraguan harbors led to a rash of promises on the part of some in Congress to cut off all funding for U.S. covert military activity in Central America.

It is hard to believe that those who would vote to cut off aid to the *Contra* guerrillas are really aware of the scope of the Soviet-supported military buildup in Nicaragua.

To date, three battalions of Soviet tanks have been introduced into Nicaragua along with 1,000 East German trucks, over 200 anti-aircraft guns, numerous Soviet 152-mm and 122-mm howitzers, helicopters, transport aircraft and tons of sophisticated military electronic equipment. This Soviet bloc buildup in Nicaragua is also backed by people. Cuba provides 5,500 civilian and 2,000 military advisors; the Soviets have 100 military and 100 civilian advisors; 135 East Germans are building a security apparatus; and Bulgarian, Czech, Polish and Hungarian economic advisors are also present. In Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, 75 Nicaraguans are being trained to fly MiG aircraft.

The announced intention of the Sandinistas to raise armed strength to 250,000 (50,000 regulars and 200,000 militia or reserves), would put one of every ten Nicaraguans under arms—an unprecedented ratio. The junta has already increased active forces to 25,000 and militia to 75,000. Thirty-nine percent of the physically fit males over 18 years old are already in uniform.

Quite obviously, all this amounts to far more than would ever be needed for the defense of Nicaragua. Members of Congress who vote to relax the *Contras'* pressures against Sandinista export of revolutionary arms and violence throughout Central America might consider the effects on our ability to defend the Panama Canal and the southern approaches to the United States.