

A441
R

AUG 24 14 52 '82

NNNNVV ESB036ESC224
PP RUESTE
DE RUEHFD #9170/01 2360409
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 240407Z AUG 82
FM USINFO WASHDC
TO ALL C A POSTS. PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02

USINFO

ICA ATTN PAD, ID

EO 12065 N/A

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
() Release (/) Excise () Deny () Declassify
Date 10/2/98 Exemption _____

(FOLLOWING FS MATERIAL NOT FOR PUBLICATION)
AUG. 22 WASH POST OPINION BY ELLIOTT ABRAMS TITLED "THE SILENCE ON NICARAGUA"

(BEGIN TEXT)

CONGRESS, THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE JUST COMPLETED EXTENSIVE REVIEWS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR, IN CONNECTION WITH THE "CERTIFICATION" OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS THERE. BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEES HELD HEARINGS; SEVERAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS ISSUED REPORTS, INCLUDING A 272-PAGE REPORT PRODUCED JOINTLY BY TWO SUCH GROUPS; AND ALL OF THIS WAS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO BE FEATURED ON TELEVISION NEWS PROGRAMS.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS PICTURE IN EL SALVADOR WARRANTS THIS ATTENTION. BUT AN EQUALLY SERIOUS QUESTION IN A NEARBY COUNTRY -- NICARAGUA -- HAS RECEIVED ONLY SCANT ATTENTION. THIS IS TRUE EVEN THOUGH THE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE SEEN AN EXTRAORDINARY DETERIORATION THERE. THE NEW DEVELOPMENTS COME AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF REPORTS OF TORTURE, CONTINUING GOVERNMENT HARASSMENT OF THE NICARAGUAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AND CONTINUING VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIAN TRIBES, WHICH HAS RESULTED IN THE FLIGHT FROM THE COUNTRY OF SEVERAL HUNDRED SUMO INDIANS IN RECENT WEEKS.

NOW, HERE ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR INCIDENTS OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS ALONE:

-- THE BISHOP OF THE ATLANTIC COAST PROVINCE, WHO HAS BEEN HARASSED REPEATEDLY BY THE SANDINISTAS, WAS ONCE AGAIN DETAINED.

-- THE SANDINISTAS PROHIBITED PUBLICATION OF A PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE POPE TO THE BISHOPS OF NICARAGUA, WHICH HAD BEEN READ IN CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ON AUG. 1. FOR TWO WEEKS, LA PRENSA WAS FORBIDDEN TO PUBLISH IT, AND THE CHURCH'S RADIO STATION WAS FORBIDDEN TO PUBLISH IT, ON THE AIR. BECAUSE OF THIS DISPUTE, LA PRENSA WAS NOT PRINTED FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

-- ON AUG. 9, MORE THAN 20 CHURCHES BELONGING TO SEVERAL PROTESTANT SECTS WERE SEIZED BY THE SANDINISTAS' "NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEES," WHOSE SPOKESMEN SAID THE CHURCHES WERE IN CONTACT WITH THE CIA AND WORKING FOR THE

NNNNVV ESB037ESC228
PP RUESTE
DE RUEHFD #9170/02 2360413
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 240407Z AUG 82
FM USINFO WASHDC
TO ALL C A POSTS PRIORITY
BT

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02

USINFO

ICA ATTN PAD, IO

EO 12065 N/A

QUIRIES REGULARLY FROM HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS ABOUT EVENTS IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS EL SALVADOR AND CHILE; TO DATE WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ONE INQUIRY ABOUT THIS ATTACK ON RELIGION IN NICARAGUA.

NOW, SOME PEOPLE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND IN THE CHURCHES ARE QUITE SIMPLY PRO-SANDINISTA. THEY BELIEVE NICARAGUA HAS A "PROGRESSIVE" REGIME. TO JUDGE BY THEIR BEHAVIOR, MANY ARE SIMPLY UNWILLING TO APPLY TO "PROGRESSIVE" COUNTRIES THE SAME SEVERE STANDARD THEY APPLY TO COUNTRIES WHOSE GOVERNMENTS THEY DO NOT SUPPORT.

FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT, NICARAGUA, WHERE THE SANDINISTAS HAVE CO-OPTED ALL OF THE LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLS OF SOCIAL REVOLUTION AND PROGRESS, IS A CRUCIAL TEST. THOSE WHO INSIST ON EXAMINING EL SALVADOR WITH A MICROSCOPE, WHILE SEEING NO EVIL IN NICARAGUA, ARE UNDERMINING THE CLAIM OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT TO BE INTERESTED IN PEOPLE RATHER THAN POLITICS.

YET THIS DOES NOT EXPLAIN THE ATTITUDE OF THE MANY WHO HAVE NO POLITICAL BIAS TOWARD THE SANDINISTAS: THEIR SILENCE IS A TRUE MYSTERY. IT IS UNINTEREST IN A COUNTRY NOT ALIGNED WITH THE UNITED STATES? A DESIRE TO AVOID CRITICIZING A COUNTRY OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS EXCUSE? SIMPLE LACK OF INFORMATION?

THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE SILENCE IS DEAFENING. AND WHILE IT CONTINUES, CHURCHES AND CLERGY IN NICARAGUA WILL BE SUBJECTED TO INCREASING MENACE.

THE WRITER IS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS.

(END TEXT)

(PRECEDING FS MATERIAL NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

ITEM

BT
#9170

COUNTERREVOLUTION.

-- WHEN THE NICARAGUAN ARCHBISHOP REPLACED A PARISH PRIEST WHO WAS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE REGIME, AN ORGANIZED MOB GATHERED AT THE CHURCH. WHEN THE AUXILIARY BISHOP OF MANAGUA CAME TO THE SCENE, HE WAS BEATEN UP BY THE MOB. THE ARCHBISHOP HAS EX-COMMUNICATED ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE BEATING.

-- THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH'S RADIO STATION, A PRIEST WAS FORCED TO DISROBE AT GUNPOINT BY SANDINISTA POLICE AND WAS MARCHED NAKED THROUGH THE STREETS OF MANAGUA TO JAIL. PICTURES OF THE NAKED PRIEST WERE SHOWN ON THE GOVERNMENT TELEVISION STATION AND PRINTED IN THE SANDINISTA PRESS. THE SANDINISTAS SAID HE HAD BEEN CAUGHT IN A LOVE TRIANGLE; WHEN LA PRENSA TRIED TO PRINT AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIEST, THE STORY WAS CENSORED.

-- IN THE LAST WEEK, VIOLENT CLASHES IN MASAYA BETWEEN SANDINISTA MOBS AND CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HAVE RESULTED IN THREE DEATHS, AND MOBS HAVE TWICE TRIED TO ATTACK ARCHBISHOP OBANDO Y BRAVO.

ALL OF THESE EVENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF JULY, AND NO ONE CAN DOUBT THE PATTERN THAT THEY FORM: THE SANDINISTAS HAVE DECIDED ON A TREMENDOUS INCREASE IN PRESSURE ON ORGANIZED RELIGION IN NICARAGUA. AS THE OFFICIAL VATICAN NEWSPAPER, L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, HAS SAID: "THE CHURCH AND ITS INSTITUTIONS HAVE BECOME TARGETS OF OFFENSIVENESS AND VIOLENCE BY GROUPS OF SANDINISTAS, A SITUATION THAT HAS NEVER BEFORE COME ABOUT IN A NATION WHERE CATHOLIC FAITH AND TRADITION HAVE BEEN SO FIRMLY ROOTED."

WHERE ARE THE PROTESTS? DOES ANYONE DOUBT THAT A SERIES OF EVENTS HALF AS SERIOUS IN EL SALVADOR WOULD BE FRONT-PAGE NEWS? DOES ANYONE DOUBT THAT HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS WOULD BE CLAMORING? THEY WOULD BE RIGHT TO DO SO, AND THE SILENCE OVER EVENTS IN NICARAGUA IS DEEPLY TROUBLING.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES PROTESTS AND IN-

BT
#9170