

# CONFIDENTIAL

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FM WASHINGTON 140137Z NOV 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3376 OF 13 NOVEMBER 1984

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO, MODUK, SAN JOSE, TEGUCIGALPA,  
HAVANA, MEXICO CITY.

MY TELNO 3333 (NOT TO ALL) MIGS FOR NICARAGUA

## SUMMARY

1. NO MIGS UNLOADED. THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS HAS PASSED. BUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S GENERAL PUBLIC LINE ON NICARAGUA IS NOT SOFTENING. OPTIONS REMAIN OPEN.

## DETAIL

2. IT IS NOW REGARDED HERE AS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT NO MIGS HAVE BEEN UNLOADED IN CORINTO FROM THE SOVIET FREIGHTER BAKURIANI; AND AS VERY PROBABLE, IN VIEW OF THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY THE RUSSIANS, THAT NONE WERE EVER ON BOARD. BUT A SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT, POSSIBLY INCLUDING A MI24 GROUND ATTACK HELICOPTER, HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED. THE ADMINISTRATION TAKES A SERIOUS VIEW OF THIS SHIPMENT: IT IS APPARENTLY THE FIRST TIME THAT A SOVIET, RATHER THAN THIRD PARTY, SHIP HAS BROUGHT LETHAL WEAPONS. BUT THERE IS NOW NO (NO) IMMEDIATE PROSPECT OF US MILITARY ACTION.

3. THE STRENGTH OF THE US REACTION LAST WEEK OWED SOMETHING TO THEIR HAVING BEEN CAUGHT BY SURPRISE AT AN AWKWARD MOMENT. FURTHERMORE, AN EARLY (AND POSSIBLY DELIBERATE) LEAK IN WASHINGTON OF THE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION GENERATED INTENSE MEDIA PRESSURES TO WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION WAS COMPELLED TO REACT. THERE WAS NO TIME AVAILABLE FOR QUIET DIPLOMACY. THE PRESIDENT STRESSED AT THE OUTSET THAT THE CONTENTS OF THE SHIP WERE NOT KNOWN; AND SHULTZ AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT TRIED UNAVAILINGLY TO KEEP THE LINE OF COMMENT MEASURED WHILE THE FACTS WERE ESTABLISHED. BUT IT WAS THE STATEMENTS BY THE HAWKS WHICH ATTRACTED MOST ATTENTION.

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4. SINCE 10 NOVEMBER WEINBERGER IN PARTICULAR HAS BEEN SEEKING TO SHIFT THE FOCUS FROM THE QUESTION OF MIGS TO WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS 'THE FLOW OF OFFENSIVE ARMS TO NICARAGUA FROM THE SOVIET UNION'. THIS COULD, HE CLAIMED, HAVE THE EFFECT OF POSING A THREAT TO NICARAGUA'S NEIGHBOURS. WEINBERGER ALSO REFERRED TO THE MONROE DOCTRINE, AND ADDED THAT THE EXISTENCE OF CUBA HAD CREATED A COMPLICATION: AND THAT A SECOND CUBA WOULD DOUBLE IT.

5. MEANWHILE SHULTZ HAS DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF ANY PLAN TO BLOCKADE NICARAGUA, AND IS REPORTED HERE TO HAVE SAID IN BRASILIA THAT NICARAGUAN FEARS OF IMMINENT INVASION WERE 'SELF-INDUCED AND BASED ON NOTHING'. BUT HE ADDED THAT THE US INTENDED TO 'WORK IN EVERY WAY THAT WE CAN TO CAST NICARAGUAN AGGRESSION AND SUBVERSIVE INFLUENCE OUT OF OUR HEMISPHERE'.

6. THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EAR IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE.

WRIGHT

LIMITED — US/SOVIET RELATIONS

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