E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
PREL, PINR, PROP, PINS, HO, NU, XK
NICARAGUAN EFFORTS TO GENERATE WAR SCARE

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACIT IMMEDIATE

INFO: AMBASSARY BELIZE
AMBASSARY GUATEMALA
AMBASSARY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE
AMBASSARY PANAMA
AMBASSARY SAN JOSE
AMBASSARY SAN SALVADOR
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

TEGUCIGALPA 2759

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT
2. Doctor Suazo called me to his office afternoon March 22
to discuss Humberto Ortega's latest news conference and
associated Nicaraguan efforts to generate scare of war
between Honduras and Nicaragua.

3. Suazo expressed concern that Nicaraguans might engage
in some limited cross-border strikes followed by an effort
to bring matters before Security Council. According to
Suazo, purpose of Nicaraguan maneuver would be to pin blame
for regional tensions on Honduras and get Security Council
to create multilateral force to police Honduras-Nicaragua border.
4. I expressed some doubt that Nicaraguans were about to launch any type of cross-border attack. I told Suazo that I thought it more likely that Nicaragua was engaged in a strictly propagandistic exercise the purpose of which would be to distract world attention from its internal difficulties and also to avoid blame it deserves for the regional problems it is causing. In other words, we may be witnessing an accentuated version of the famous Nicaraguan "bilateral thesis".

5. Suazo did not reject my speculation. He nonetheless observed that if Nicaragua engaged in some sort of attack, Honduras could not stand idly by with its arms folded. There would have to be a response. We agreed that matters had not, in any event, reached that point and as an immediate measure we should ask our respective intelligence organizations to increase their efforts to monitor any Nicaraguan buildup along Honduran border. We then left this subject and went on to other more mundane topics such as strike at local American-owned brassiere factory (reported septels).

6. Three hours after my meeting with Suazo, he called to say that he had just received word from his U.N. delegate to effect that Nicaragua is proposing Security Council meeting on the Honduras-Nicaragua border situation. Suazo said he was awaiting further details from his Ambassador in New York before deciding on next steps.
7. COMMENT: Unless there is some military activity on border of which we are as yet unaware, fact that GON is reported to be pressing for a Security Council meeting at this time would appear to confirm that this is a propaganda exercise. If a Security Council debate takes place, we believe it is important to focus on fact that Nicaragua is now facing serious dissidence well within its borders. Indeed, armed resistance is now reportedly taking place as far as 150 kilometers inside Nicaragua from the Honduran border and within 60 kilometers of Managua itself. We also believe that any debate will be useful opportunity to once again air Honduran peace plan, San Jose peace formula and the destabilizing regional role being played by Nicaragua.

8. It also occurs to us that Nicaragua may be engaging in this exercise at this time because of serious loss of prestige it incurred by shabby treatment of Pope John Paul II. Socialist International meeting may also be additional factor. Lastly, we recall that it is the anniversary almost called by Nicaragua last year to the day of the Security Council meeting/on this very same situation.

9. How many times can they cry wolf?