Latin Hotspot
Honduras Is Becoming A New Battleground For Central America
Its Strategic Position Fuels Both U.S. and Nicaragua's Terrorism
We Are All Getting Scared

Tegucigalpa, Honduras—Just a year ago, all was serene here in this lovely capital, where horses jog in the Carlos. Today, the tension is razor-sharp. Police uncover a new terrorist hideout just about every week, and the capital's streets are routinely deserted.

The sudden changes here illustrate how Honduras is fast turning into the new battlefield for a regional war in Central America. It had been mostly spared the political violence sweeping the area—a leftist revolution in Nicaragua and the continuing battles against leftist rebels in El Salvador and Guatemala. Political experts figured that Honduras didn't have the same geopolitical priorities as its neighbors because it doesn't have the same ideological distribution of wealth or history of repression.

Crucial Geography
It does have strategic position, however. Sandwiched among countries in turmoil, Honduras is being used more and more by the major players, the United States and Nicaragua.

As a result, terrorism now affects its cities and battles with fighters from across the border. The latest incident ended last Saturday, when leftist guerrillas, who had captured more than 150 officials and businessmen and held some of them hostage for eight days in San Pedro Sula, fled out of the country after dropping their demands for the release of 60 prisoners, among other things. And as tension mounts, many here fear that the U.S. and Cuba-backed Nicaragua are seeking to turn Honduras into a deadly showdown from which it can only emerge a loser.

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Latin Hotspot: Honduras Becomes New Central America Battleground

Both sides in the conflict are reacting to sharply differing perceptions. Nicaragua, seeing the U.S. as a guarantor of its independence, has been receiving military assistance from the U.S. with the U.S. seeing Nicaragua as a, "hotbed of international terrorism." The Reagan administration has asked Congress for $581 million for military aid to Nicaragua.

The Honduran government, meanwhile, is worried about a possible invasion from Nicaragua. The Honduran army has been bolstered with new weapons and training, and is now preparing for a possible invasion from Nicaragua.

Fears of a "hotbed of terrorism" have led to increased security measures in the region. The Honduran government has closed its border with Nicaragua and has increased border patrols.

Despite the tensions, both sides are trying to negotiate a peaceful solution. The Sandinista government in Nicaragua has called for talks with the Honduran government, and the Honduran government has also expressed a willingness to negotiate.

The situation remains tense, with both sides wary of the other's intentions. However, there is a hope that a peaceful resolution can be reached through dialogue and negotiation.