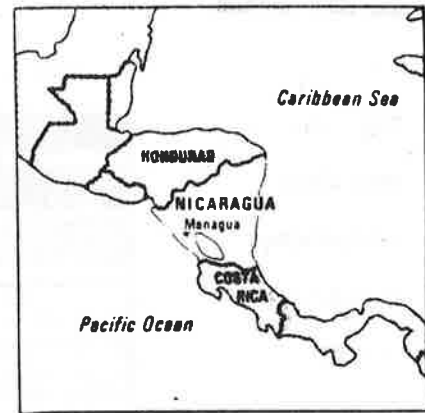


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## NICARAGUA

MEF G-2: Telephone:	CG I MEF//G-2// STU-III AV 365-9103
Theater J-2: Telephone:	USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//J-2// STU-III AV 282-3209
DIA DB Desk Code: Telephone:	DIA WASHINGTON DC//DB-3C// STU-III AV 243-3096
Embassy Defense Attache: Telephone:	USDAO MANAGUA NU//DATT// 011-505-2-666010/666013

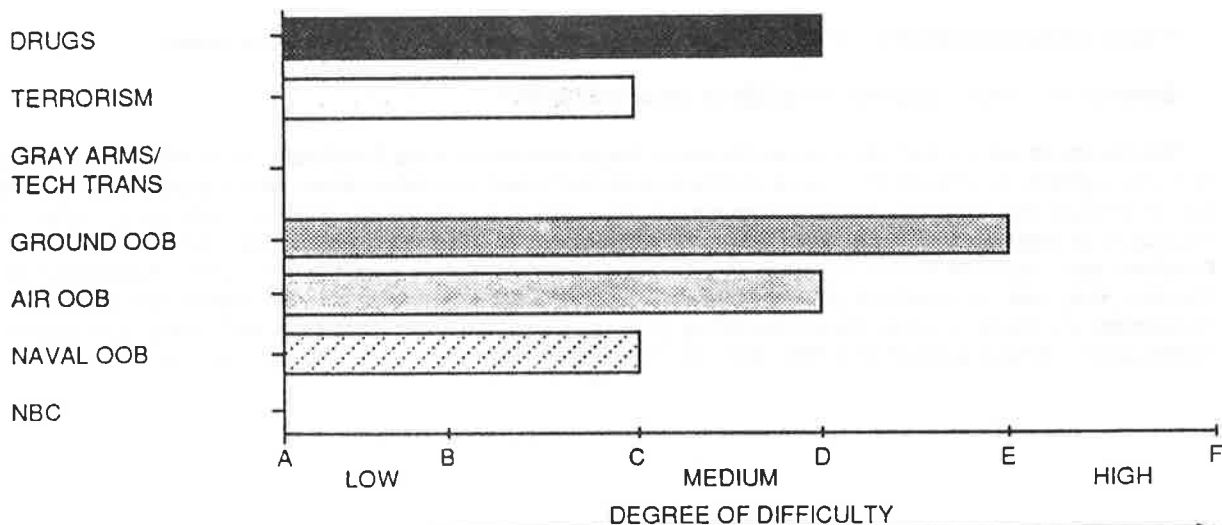


### SUMMARY

Despite the election of Violeta Chamorro and the trend toward democracy in **Nicaragua**, the Sandinistas still remain a strong force in the Government. After ten years of civil war between the former Sandinista Government and the U.S. backed Contra rebels tensions remain high, particularly in rural areas. The Sandinistas continue to control the powerful Defense and Interior ministries within the new Government and military ties to **Cuba** and the **U.S.S.R.** reportedly remain strong. U.S. efforts are focused on assisting the new Government and promoting democratic ideals. The economy is in poor condition with an \$11 billion foreign debt. **Nicaragua** is a suspected transit point for cocaine moving from **South America** to the **U.S.**, and Government officials have allegedly been engaged in drug trafficking. **Nicaragua** has provided training and safe haven to terrorist and guerrilla groups such as the FMLN operating in **El Salvador**. **Nicaragua** should be considered a serious concern due to its involvement in narcotics trafficking and terrorism. The **Nicaraguan** ground OOB is the largest in **Latin America**, but the Chamorro Government plans to reduce this force by one-third. All the services possess significant amounts of **Soviet** equipment.

Due to the dense forests, mountains, and swampy eastern coastal plain, cross-country movement of tracked vehicles would be precluded in about three-fourths of **Nicaragua**. The average standoff distance for engagement by line of sight weapons (intervisibility) would be limited to less than 1,000 meters due to broken terrain, thick vegetation, and frequent heavy rainfall which obscures visibility. While hydrographic conditions permit NGF platforms to approach the coast and provide support for operations ashore, opposition could be expected from **Nicaraguan** coastal defense weapons. Coverage by 1:50,000 scale maps is absent in much of eastern **Nicaragua**. An airfield is available to handle C-5 aircraft but port facilities are constrained. The time necessary for a MEU from the **U.S.** east or west coasts to arrive in **Nicaragua** is estimated to be in excess of six days. NEO conducted by a MEU under normal conditions would be very difficult due to the large number of potential evacuees (1,800).

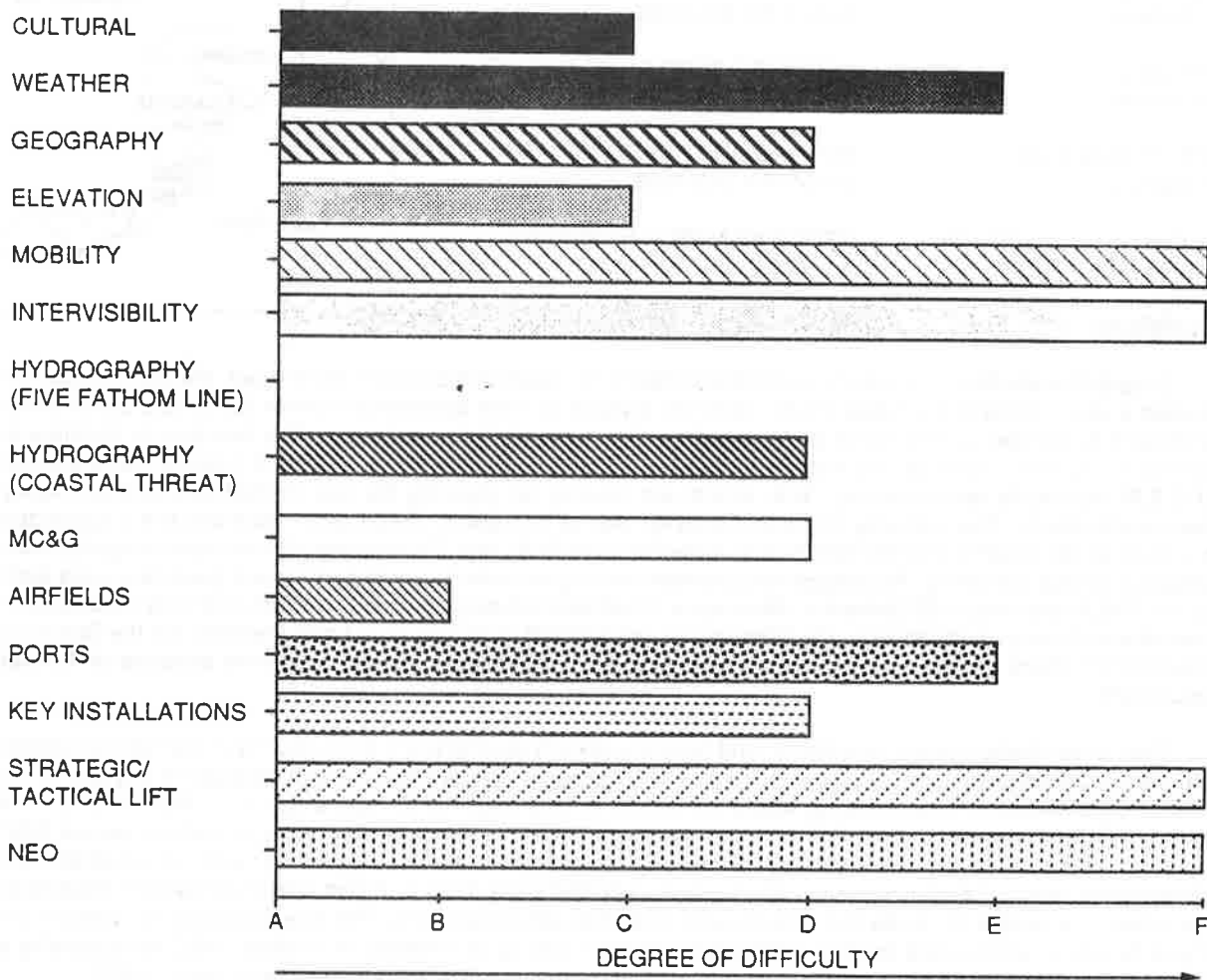
NICARAGUA THREAT SUMMARY



Nicaragua - 1

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NICARAGUA - TERRAIN AND LOGISTICS SUMMARY



### Existing Ongoing Conflicts

- Recent conflict between **U.S.** backed rebels and the former Communist Sandinista Government.
- Sandinistas strongly supported by the **Soviet Union** and **Cuba**.

The insurgents were a mixture of former Somozan troops and disillusioned Sandinista rebels who ran the gamut from ultra-rightists to ultra-leftists, plus a sizable dissatisfied Indian population which would probably be in arms against whoever was in power. These groups did not coalesce into a unified front. But they had a serious effect on the stability of **Nicaragua** while operating both internally and from secure bases in **Honduras** and **Costa Rica**, with **American** blessings even though Congress became increasingly reluctant to continue funding covert activities there. The insurgency was regarded with great concern by the former **Nicaraguan** revolutionary Government, supported by the **Soviets** and **Cubans**, which made conciliatory gestures toward the rebels and, more particularly, **U.S.** opinion. The situation stabilized somewhat in 1990 when the Sandinista Government was voted out of power.

U.S. Equities in Nicaragua

- Continuing U.S. efforts to promote democratic ideals and reduce communist influence.
- Overall U.S. equity is low.

While stating a policy of nonalignment, the former Sandinista Government of **Nicaragua** moved this country into the **Soviet** camp. The **U.S.** encouraged severance of **Nicaraguan** ties to **Cuba** and the **Soviet** bloc, and increased diplomatic efforts to solve the problems in this country. Efforts are being made by the **U.S.** to assist the newly elected democratic Government.

Direct Inv (Mil of \$)	Exports (Mil of \$)	Imports (Mil of \$)	U.S. Aid (Mil of \$)	Total Equity (Mil of \$)	U.S. Citizens	\$ Rating Rating	Total Numerical Rating	Overall U.S. Equity
80	-	-	-	80	1,800	1 3	4	Low

Drug Threat

Drug Production	Drug Processing	Precursor Chemicals	Money Laundering	Transit Point
	X			X

- **Nicaragua** is a suspected cocaine transit point.
- Government officials have reportedly been engaged in trafficking.

**Nicaragua** continues to be mentioned by informants and traffickers as a cocaine transit point. In 1986, there were accusations that top Government officials engaged in trafficking. **Nicaragua** is now cooperating with **Costa Rica** on drug matters.

Terrorism

- Has sponsored terrorist groups in **Latin America**.

Like **Cuba**, **Nicaragua** has provided training and safe haven to **Latin American** terrorist and guerrilla groups. The Sandinistas supported the FMLN in **El Salvador** despite their commitment to end such assistance. In addition to dealing with individual groups, **Nicaragua** has occasionally acted as a coordinator for **Latin American** insurgents, including hosting meetings between **Central** and **South American** subversives.

Consolidated Threat

Within the region, **Nicaragua** constitutes a threat to **U.S.** interests because of its involvement in narcotics trafficking and terrorism.

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## General Ground OOB

- Largest ground OOB in **Central America**.

Infantry	Tank OOB	Artillery	Army Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
Reg/TR	T-54	Bloc	80	11	201	E

Ground OOB consists of 80,000 troops of which 20,000 are conscripts and 35,000 reservists. **Nicaragua** has the largest military force in **Central America**. Training for enlisted men is accomplished at the National Guard Training School at **Managua**. Officers attend the **Nicaraguan** National Military Academy or the **Chilean** Military School. The Sandinistas continue to control the **Nicaraguan** Army and supply the **Salvadoran** FMLN and other Latin insurgencies with training, facilities, political guidance, and weapons. Tanks: PT-76, T-54, T-55; Artillery: D-20, D-30. (Note: the recently elected Chamorro Government is reportedly reducing the size of the army by one-third.)

## General Air OOB

Air OOB	Close Air	AAW (IAD)	Air Force Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
Day/VFR Jets	Day Jet Atk	Bloc	2	11	103	D

Fighter Aircraft: none; Close Air: AT-28, AT-33A (light attack), Mi-24; Air Defense: SA-7, SA-9, and SA-14 SAMs and AA guns.

## General Naval OOB

Naval OOB	S/S Missiles	Patrol Craft	Navy Size (Thousands)	Quality	Total Capability Value	Rating
Small Surface	None	Bloc	1	11	72	C

Ships: none; SSMs: none; Patrol Craft: 4 Inshore Minehunters with guns and radars (Ex-Soviet); 4 Minesweeping Boats with guns (Ex-Soviet); 16 Small Gun Boats (8 Ex-Soviet, 2 Ex-North Korean, 2 Ex-U.S., 2 Ex-Israeli, 2 Ex-French).

## Culture (Language and Religion)

Primary language - Spanish (English and Indian Dialects)  
Primary religion - Catholic

There is a relatively small cultural difference between **Nicaragua** and the **U.S.**

**Weather**

Average Temperature (Degrees Fahrenheit)	Average Relative Humidity (Percent)	Average Annual Rainfall (Inches)	Rating
68-86	62-84	45-100	Wet/Hot

Nicaragua's climate is tropical. Rainfall is heavy year-round and is greater on the **Caribbean** coast than on the **Pacific**. Some sections of the country have as much as 300 inches of rain annually.

**General Geographic Conditions**

URBAN	DESERT	JUNGLE	MOUNTAINOUS
		X	

**Operational Elevation**

<2,000 FT	<4,000 FT	<6,000 FT	>6,000 FT	>9,000 FT	>12,000 FT
		X			

The largest of the **Central American** republics, **Nicaragua** borders **Costa Rica** to the south and **Honduras** to the north. **El Salvador** is across the narrow **Gulf of Fonseca**. **Lake Managua** and **Lake Nicaragua**, the region's largest bodies of water, are in the west; north of them, the coastal plain gradually rises toward rugged mountains. Beyond the mountains lies a sparsely inhabited area of forested plains and hills. The swampy eastern coastal plain extends 64-80 kilometers (40-50 mi.) inland.

**General Cross-Country Mobility**

- **Nicaragua** is generally unsuited for cross-country movement of tracked vehicles.

Cross-country tracked movement would be precluded in about 75 percent of **Nicaragua**, mainly in steep hills and mountains, dense forests, and swamps. In the remaining parts of the country, movement would be difficult for part of the year.

**Intervisibility (Line of Sight)**

- Poor, with line of sight distances limited to less than 1,000 meters.

Line of sight distances of less than 1,000 meters should be expected in about 75 percent of **Nicaragua**. This is due to the steep hills and mountains, dense ground cover, and heavy rainfall which would obscure visibility.

**Hydrography (Five Fathom Line)**

- NGF platforms are able to approach the coast to provide satisfactory support for operations ashore.

DMA Chart #	5 Fathom Line from Shore (Meters)	NFG Rating
28120	2,415	Good

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## Hydrography (Coastal Threat)

- Significant coastal threat.

Maximum Capability Coastal Defense Weapon	Maximum Range of Weapon (Meters)	Rating (Compared with 5"/54 cal)
152 mm GH	24,000	U.S. NGF and Threat Equal

## MC&G Shortfalls

- Limited map coverage.

1:50 New	1:50 Old	Some 1:50	MSI Avail	1:250 New	None
		X			

Eastern **Nicaragua** is lacking in 1:50,000 scale map coverage except for areas such as **Puerto Cabezas** and **Bluefields** on the east coast.

## Airfields

- Accessible by air, with more than one airfield that can accommodate C-5 aircraft.

Number of Airfields	Type Aircraft (C-5, C-141B, C-130) Accommodated	Airfield Utility (Unconstrained/Constrained)	Rating
8	1 C-5 1 C-141B 3 C-130 3 None	1/7	1/C-5

Airfields	Type Aircraft	Comments
Augusto Cesar Sandino (Managua)	C-5, C-141B, C-130	-
Cortezal	None	-
El Terrero	None	-
La Paz	C-130	Daylight VFR only. Low runway WBC.
Los Dos Montes	None	-
Montelimar (Masachapa)	C-130	Daylight/VFR only. Low runway WBC.
Oscar Garcia	C-130	Daylight/VFR only. Low runway WBC.
Punta Huete	C-141B, C-130	The C-141B operations are limited to runway only. Daylight/VFR only.

**Ports**

- One small port is available with limited capability to handle strategic sealift.

Major Ports	Harbor Size	Channel/Anchorage Depths (Feet)	Cargo Pier Depth (Feet)	Cranes
Corinto (Pacific coast)	Small	26-30/26-30	26-30	-

**Key Installations**

Due to **Nicaragua's** economic difficulties the country's communications and transportation facilities are in poor condition and are likely to remain so for the immediate future. The country is traversed from north to south by the Inter-American Highway and from west to east by rivers, by a road to **Puerto Cabazas**, and by a road and river to **Bluefields**.

U.S. Embassy	Communications	Highways	Railroads	Major Ports	Primary Airfields	Pipeline	Oil Field	NBC
Managua	- Low-capacity telcomm - Microwave connection - 45 Radio stations - 7 TV stations - Satellite ground station	25,000 km	373 km	1	8	- Crude oil	None	None

**Strategic and Tactical Lift**

The time required for a MEU on the U.S. east and west coasts to embark on amphibious ships and sail to **Nicaragua** is in excess of six days. The AAF/ACB can arrive within 24 hours but these elements do not possess a forcible entry capability.

**NEO**

- NEO conducted by a MEU under normal conditions in **Nicaragua** would be very difficult due to the large number of potential evacuees (1,800).

Embassy Staff	Evacuees	Inland Objective (nm)	Rating
40	1,800	26 (Managua)	F

Note: In **Nicaragua**, the following factors are of little significance:

- Gray Arms/Technology Transfer
- NBC

