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Nicaragua v. United States: A Look at the Facts

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which were C³; the need to march at night; the scarcity of helicopter support; and the need for individuals to keep in mind their own survival.

Their commanding officer has written a well-deserved tribute to his men and to those who fought alongside them or supported them.

W. P. C. MORGENTHAUER, JR.
Naval War College

Turner, Robert F. *Nicaragua v. United States: A Look at the Facts*. McLean, Va.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987. 159pp. \$9.95

"... if the US Congress decides once again to deny support to groups in Central America who wish to resist the Sandinistas, Nicaragua—with the continued support of Cuba and the Soviet Union—can be expected to succeed in its efforts to overthrow neighboring democratic governments." On 3 February 1988, four weeks after the book containing this warning became available, the U.S. House of Representatives defeated a modest funding request that was 90 percent humanitarian and 10 percent military assistance.

If persuading the U.S. Congress to identify Nicaragua as the military aggressor in Central America is the norm by which Robert F. Turner's book must be judged, the verdict is in and he has failed. Yet, the case is rationally argued, assembled with balance, and meticulously documented.

Turner's "Background to Conflict" chapter describes the legacy of the two U.S. military occupations of

Nicaragua, the broad-based Sandinista revolution of 1977-1979, and two years of U.S. economic support for the new regime. Next, the "Marxism-Leninism" chapter details the long-term process, 1961-1979, by which a dedicated minority manipulated the revolution and seized control in the hour of victory. That margin of control, Turner demonstrates, was Cuban support carried out within Managua by expert conflict managers.

The strongest chapter is "Nicaraguan Aggression Against El Salvador," which outlines the steps by which Cuba's government used Nicaragua as a staging base for arming and assembling a revolutionary coalition in El Salvador. Some attention is devoted to the brilliant steps by which disinformation and active measures were employed to deceive members of the U.S. Congress, the press, and the celebrity world. Succeeding chapters reveal a surprisingly well-documented pattern of Sandinista aggression against Honduras and Costa Rica.

The final chapter is a moral and legal argument for U.S. aid to the democratic resistance (Contras). Turner, once a U.S. Army officer and later a State Department official in South Vietnam, offers no melancholy domino theory, just a warning that the United States will be forced to pay a higher military price to neutralize Soviet surrogate military power in Central America later.

Turner clears up many common misbeliefs about recent turmoil in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The Sandinistas militarized to a level ten

times higher than the Somoza regime they overthrew two years before the United States carried out modest regional defenses and support for the democratic resistance. For twenty months the United States gave the victorious Sandinistas their largest aid package, greater than the sum provided to all the rest of Central America.

How then could anyone read this book and still hesitate to quarantine the Sandinistas, militarily, through force of their own people who saw them steal the revolution? Robert F. Turner, eminent international legal scholar of East-West surrogate conflicts, omitted a key chapter on the Soviet Union's role in Central America from this otherwise superb book. He does not seem to comprehend that the U.S.S.R. uses first party (Cuba) and second party (Nicaragua) military surrogates because the United States lives in dread of being branded what it is—the ultimate military force in preserving Western civilization.

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Nalty, Bernard C. *Strength for the Fight*. New York: The Free Press, 1986. 424pp. \$22.50

Subtitled *A History of Black Americans in the Military*, Bernard Nalty's comprehensive account takes its title from a line in "The Warrior's Prayer" by black poet Paul Dunbar who did not ask the Lord to front the fray but to give him strength for the fight. Since the American Revolution,

blacks have been part of the American military. The experience of blacks in the military has paralleled their experience in American society—they have been sought when manpower was needed and rejected when it was not. Although this could be an angry book, Nalty has written a scholarly, objective history.

Black sailors were initially welcomed into the Navy during the days of the lash, salt pork, hammocks, and weevily biscuits. It was a hard service and few men volunteered for it. Up through the Civil War, black sailors were integrated into the sea service although there were no black officers. As it turned from sail and muscle to steam and machinery, the Navy's attitude was that blacks were inherently unable to learn the increasingly technical skills required. Additionally, Jim Crow had set into American society and it was believed that white sailors would be unwilling to serve with blacks. Blacks were thus largely confined to mess attendant duties. By the time the "Great White Fleet" sailed around the world, it was appropriately named.

The Army raised "colored" regiments during the Civil War. After the war, Congress limited the Army to four such regiments—the 9th and 10th Cavalry (of no small fame in Western history and legend) and the 24th and 25th Infantry. The 10th and 24th distinguished themselves in the assault on San Juan Hill which Theodore Roosevelt conveniently forgot as the legend of the Rough Riders grew.

When the First World War began, many blacks agreed with W. E. B.