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LETTER DATED 11 MAY 1984 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
NICARAGUA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

As you know, on 8 May the Nicaraguan Anti-Aircraft Defence, acting in defence of our sovereignty, shot down one of two helicopters of the Honduran Armed Forces which had violated our airspace in an area of great military tension resulting from the constant attacks launched from Honduran territory by mercenaries of the Central Intelligence Agency. As a result of that deplorable incident, eight Honduran nationals lost their lives.

Today the Government of Honduras, using their own errors as a basis, decided to expel our Ambassador to that Government, thus aggravating the already tense relations between our two countries.

The Government of Nicaragua wishes once again to give the international community a true account of the events, the sole responsibility for which rests with those who have gratuitously lent themselves to the manoeuvres of the United States Government against our country and our revolution.

I am transmitting herewith a communiqué of today's date from the Government of Nicaragua and communiqués from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 8 May in connection with the deplorable incident, and I should be grateful if you would circulate them as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Javier CHAMORRO MORA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Nicaragua
to the United Nations

Annex I

Communiqué dated 8 May 1984

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic, Father Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, at a press conference with national and international correspondents, stated the following:

Today, Tuesday, 8 May 1984, at 9 a.m., units of the Sandinist People's Army stationed at Potosí shot down a helicopter of the Honduran Air Force; all five crew members were killed.

One of the crew members, José Napoleón Castellán, carried an identity card of the Honduran Air Force, No. 00129, and had, according to the same card, worked in the Engineering Department of the Honduran Air Force.

The helicopter, one of two that had entered our territory at the same place and time, crashed 8 kilometres north-west of Potosí, at a place called Santa Julia, in Nicaraguan territory.

This incident again shows the dangerous nature of the policy pursued by Washington, which, in the face of the political and military failure of the actions carried out by mercenaries directed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is pressuring the Honduran Armed Forces to participate more and more directly in the aggression against our country.

Regretting the death of these Honduran brothers who have become victims of the Reagan Administration's policy in the region, we express our heartfelt condolences to their families and appeal to the Government of Honduras to reconsider and put an end once and for all to its irresponsible policy of risking the lives of its own nationals, increasingly involving them in the CIA's criminal aggression against Nicaragua.

Annex II

Communiqué dated 8 May 1984

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated the following in connection with the military helicopter shot down today in the Potosí sector.

Initially, it was believed that the helicopter was of Honduran nationality because a card found on the body of one of the crew members identified him as a member of the Honduran Air Force. However, subsequent investigations have determined that part of the tail fuselage of the helicopter bore an inscription reading "U.S. Army Commander", from which it may be presumed that the helicopter belonged to the United States armed forces. The serial number of the helicopter was found to be HH-3792 (AL14AL1101). Another card found bore the name of Oscar Armando Flores, apparently a technician with the rank of corporal in the Honduran Air Force. The helicopter had a total crew of eight persons. Investigations are currently being continued with a view to determining the nationality of the downed helicopter and identifying the other crew members.

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Annex III

Communiqué dated 11 May 1984

In the face of the arbitrary decision taken today by the Government of Honduras to order the expulsion of Colonel Edwin Zablah, our Ambassador accredited to that country, the Government of Nicaragua, acting more calmly, wishes to state its position on a long series of recent events which, at the instigation of the United States Administration, attempts are being made to escalate in a dangerous manner:

(a) It is generally known that on 8 May a formation of two military helicopters penetrated 8 kilometres into our territory and one of them was downed on Nicaraguan soil by anti-aircraft fire from our defence units. Subsequently it was determined that the downed helicopter, which bore United States military insignia on its fuselage, belonged to the Honduran Air Force.

The Cosigüina Peninsula, the part of Nicaraguan territory in which these events took place, has been converted into an area of high military tension because of the repeated incursions into our territory during the past three years; the incursions have included attacks with naval launches and armed aircraft and helicopters, in addition to the fact that the Gulf of Fonseca has been transformed into a region occupied by United States naval forces, also established in adjoining Honduran territory.

(b) The Government of Nicaragua proceeded to communicate these events immediately to the Honduran authorities, offering all necessary facilities for the return of the bodies of the eight crew members of the military helicopter. Constant communication was maintained throughout the day and before the return of the bodies between the military authorities of Nicaragua and Honduras, specifically between Commander Raúl Venerio, Chief of the Sandinist Air Force, and General Walter López, Chief of the Armed Forces of Honduras, who subsequently delegated Colonel Francisco Zepeda Andinos for such communication; furthermore, Minister for Foreign Affairs Miguel D'Escoto remained in communication with Honduran Minister for Foreign Affairs Edgardo Paz Barnica.

Neither in any of these instances of official communication nor subsequently was any authorization requested for a governmental or military mission from Honduras to visit the site in Nicaraguan territory where the military helicopter had been downed. The assertion to the contrary made by the Honduran Ministry for Foreign Affairs as part of the pretext for expelling Ambassador Zablah is a falsehood which must be most strongly denied.

(c) Despite the fact that no such request has ever been made, the Government of Nicaragua expresses its complete readiness to let the Government of Honduras send a mission which will be authorized to visit the site in our territory where the military helicopter was downed, and it is requesting the countries of the Contadora Group also to name representatives to accompany the Honduran mission on that visit.

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(d) We wish to draw the attention of the international community and of the people of Honduras itself to the fact that the dangerous escalation which is being attempted at the instigation of the United States Administration conceals ulterior motives of aggression against Nicaragua and a desire to unleash an armed conflict between two countries which would only cause suffering and destruction for our peoples and from which only the United States Government could benefit in accordance with its outspokenly warlike policy towards the Central American region.

(e) The loss of the lives of the eight Honduran nationals who were crew members of one of the helicopters, servicemen who flew deep into the national territory of Nicaragua, without anyone's knowing even under what orders and for what purpose they did so, must be added to those of the many victims that United States aggression launched from Honduran territory has already cost Nicaragua since the beginning of the illegal war, which has been condemned in a number of world forums. One thousand eight hundred Nicaraguans have fallen victim to that truly criminal policy, which the International Court at The Hague has ordered the United States Government to cease immediately.

As we once again extend our condolences on these deaths of military and civilian Honduran nationals, we urge the people of Honduras not to see Nicaragua as an aggressor, as the enemies of peace in Central America would have it believe, but to call upon its Government to cease its tragic collusion with the interventionist United States forces and their efforts to keep drenching Central America in blood, so that the peace and security of Hondurans may be permanently assured.

The Government of Nicaragua also wishes to reaffirm its unshakable decision that it will never take the first step in a military confrontation with Honduras but, on the contrary, will continue to seek every possible way to achieve peace.

(f) The Government of Nicaragua is proceeding immediately to inform the United Nations Security Council, the member countries of the Contadora Group, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and all those nations and organizations of the world interested in peace in Central America about all these events about the dangers of the escalation of this conflict audaciously expressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras and about the catastrophic consequences that may result.
