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Nicaragua Receives Six Additional Helicopters From U.S.S.R.

by Deborah Tyroler

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In Oct. 28 press conferences in Washington, spokespersons for the State Department and the Pentagon told reporters that the Nicaraguan government has received six additional Soviet-made HIND MI-25 helicopters. In 1984, the Soviets had provided the Sandinistas with the same number of MI-25 copters. Referred to as "flying armored tanks," the helicopters were delivered by a Soviet cargo ship at the Nicaraguan Pacific coastal port of Corinto. Robert Sims, spokesman for the Pentagon, said the Soviets have used the MI-25 helicopters effectively against the Afghan guerrillas. The aircraft are used principally for ground attacks, providing air support cover and transporting troops. The helicopter can transport up to eight soldiers, and is equipped with a variety of weaponry. The spokesman stated that the Soviet Union had provided 18,800 metric tons of military hardware to the Sandinistas this year, a much larger quantity than delivered in previous years.

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