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Administration Spokespersons Claim Lack Of Details On Recent "incursion" Of Nicaraguan Troops In Honduras

by Deborah Tyroler
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At a Nov. 20 press briefing in Washington, State Department spokesman Charles Redman was asked if he had any comment on the recent "incursion" by Sandinista troops in Honduras. He responded that he was aware there had "been some build-up of Sandinista troops in the northern part of Nicaragua," but that on specific questions he had nothing to add. Robert Sims, Department of Defense spokesman, told reporters on the same day they should "talk to the Hondurans about what may be happening on their territory." One reporter commented that last spring Sims "shouted out the word that the Sandinistas had staged a major incursion into Honduras, and we sent down helicopters and $20 million worth of aid." The reporter then asked why the government had no information on the recent "incursion." Sims said that in the spring US helicopters were used at the request of the Honduran government to transport personnel to "an area, not where there was combat, but an area near the border, because they were concerned about a major Sandinista incursion at the time and wanted to deal with it." This time, he pointed out, Washington has not been called on to provide assistance to the Honduran government. As a result, the Department of Defense had "nothing" on the border incursions.

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