Honduran Attack On Nicaraguan Military Positions, Fighting In Honduran Territory: Notes

Deborah Tyroler
Honduran Attack On Nicaraguan Military Positions, Fighting In Honduran Territory: Notes
by Deborah Tyroler
Category/Department: General
Published: Wednesday, December 17, 1986

Since Dec. 7, when Honduran planes reportedly strafed Sandinista troops in Wiwili and Murra inside Nicaragua, the Honduran government reported its forces had killed 10 Nicaraguan soldiers in combat. The government statements emphasize that the clashes occurred after US helicopters airlifted Honduran soldiers to the border to repel an alleged Nicaraguan incursion near Las Trojes, 80 mi. east of the Tegucigalpa. Meanwhile, the Nicaraguan government said seven of its troops were killed and 12 wounded 12 mi. inside the border in an attack by Honduran warplanes. As reported by the NEW YORK TIMES (12/11/86), Efrain Lisandro Gonzales, Honduran ambassador to Nicaragua, said Honduran A-37 Dragonfly planes had been sent Dec. 7 to bomb Nicaraguan troops inside his country. Gonzales told reporters that he could not "completely deny" the planes hit Wiwili and Murra. The Honduran army colonel said, "Those are places inside Nicaragua, and the Honduran Air Force said it did not hit targets in Nicaragua. Of course, it is possible, but technically, professionally, I do not believe it." The ambassador asserted that Honduran President Jose Azcona Hoyo spoke with Nicaraguan counterpart Daniel Ortega by telephone on Dec. 6, and that Azcona "told Ortega to withdraw his soldiers or there would be an armed reaction, using all the means at our disposal to expel the invaders. Ortega gave his word, as President to President, that no troops had crossed over. The President then authorized the Honduran Air Force to bombard sectors occupied by the Sandinista army." Next, the TIMES (12/12/86) reported that Honduran refugees in Las Trojes said both contra and Honduran troops had fought Sandinista soldiers during the previous few days. They also confirmed the Sandinistas had carried out attacks well inside Honduras against the contras and Honduran army. The refugees stated as well that Nicaraguan soldiers burned the border towns Buena Vista and Maquingales, and fought contras near the hamlets of Arenales, Espanolitos, and Zepeda. According to the Honduran army, 71 Honduran soldiers and civilians have been killed or wounded in fighting along border since 1984. The government in Managua has reported 13,000 deaths and 23,000 wounded in the war with the contras over the past five years.

-- End --