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U.S. Modifies Estimate Of Soviet Bloc Weapons Shipments To Nicaragua

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On Oct. 4, unidentified administration officials told the New York Times (10/05/89) that intelligence sources had established a 20% decline in Soviet bloc weapons shipments to Nicaragua this year. Two weeks previously, shortly before Secretary of State James Baker met with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in Wyoming, the State Department asserted there had been an overall increase in deliveries of Soviet-bloc weapons compared with the corresponding period in 1988. An unidentified official said the new assessment was based on intelligence gathered through the end of September, while the earlier estimate was derived from reports through the end of July. Officials also claim the assessments support the State Department's assertion that Cuba and Eastern European countries have increased their arms deliveries to Nicaragua as Moscow has stopped its shipment of weapons. In May, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev sent a letter to President Bush saying Moscow "had not been sending weapons" to Nicaragua since Jan. 1, 1989. Bush administration officials say that Cuba and Eastern European nations have increased their arms shipments to Nicaragua.

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