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In 1956 the Commander of the National Guard, Anastasio Somoza, was assassinated. Somoza had ruled Nicaragua for two decades, and after his death his oldest son Luis took over leadership. Luis allied Nicaragua with the anti-communist sentiments of the United States, expanded the Nicaraguan economy, and favored the elite members of his country at the expense of the poor. In 1972 a devastating earthquake killed thousands of Nicaraguans and injured many more. The U.S. offered aid, but Somoza (Luis' brother, who then held power), gave it to his allies and friends, and the poor continued to suffer. Anti-Somoza rebels begin to grow in number, and by 1978 were supported by some of the middle-class and conservative Nicaraguans who were upset by the assassination of a prominent journalist who headed the newspaper opposing the Somoza's rule.

With the support of Cuba in July of 1979, communist rebels known as the Sandanistas, seized power from Somoza and established a military-ruled government focused on widespread social and economic reforms. Under the Sandanistas, Nicaragua saw gains in literacy, health care, education, land reform and unions. In opposition to the Sandanista government, conservatives who had once sided with Somoza, moved to the border of Nicaragua and formed an oppositional group known as the Contras. Meanwhile, the Reagan administration perceived an increasing Communist influence in Central America and was committed to supporting various anti-Communists in the region, who they labeled "freedom fighters." The United States funneled aid and weapons to the Contras, despite the Contras' brutal treatment of social service workers and citizens. A U.S. Congressional act – the Boland Amendment of 1982 – declared that the United States shall no longer fund the violent and repressive Contras. In 1984 this amendment was strengthened, as the CIA was found to have been encouraging the Contras' actions. Nevertheless, Reagan's administration continued to funnel money to the Contras until 1986 when the Iran-Contra scandal broke back home. The Sandanistas and Contras eventually agreed to more peaceable terms as American and pro-communist forces withdrew support from the war.

Primary Source #1: James N. Briggs and Pedro Joachim Chamorro. "Document 493: Memorandum of Conversation, Managua, May 6, 1970." *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*. Vol. E-10: Documents on American Republics, 1969-1972. Accessed 8 December 2012.

<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d493>

[University] students made clear, Chamorro said, that they would not participate in "Nicaragua's present rigged political system" and insisted that Somoza has no intention of allowing representative government to develop here. The students argued that their participation in the current "political game" would only serve to add credibility to an authoritarian regime controlled by oligarchs who will never give up their present control peacefully. Chamorro claimed that the students then gave him another surprise when they told him that if he is willing to head a revolution against Somoza and has access to the needed arms and financial support, they will be ready to follow his leadership ... the students...insisted that basic change in Nicaragua can only come about through violence. Chamorro said that his meeting with the students also underscored his previous understanding that there is a widespread sympathy among the students for the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional and that this sympathy is growing.

In discussing his plans for the ANC, Chamorro remarked that he and most of his followers want very

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much to return to the Conservative Party. He said that he is now convinced that because of the country's two-party tradition it is virtually impossible to create a new party in Nicaragua which would make a good showing in 1972. The only stumbling block to a Conservative-ANC reconciliation, he argued, is Fernando Aguero, whose dictatorial manner, Chamorro insisted, is ruining the party and alienating some of its best leaders. In time, Chamorro speculated, Aguero will be moved aside because of his lack of success; and when that occurs he, Chamorro, will be ready to come back into the fold. As long as Aguero remains as head of the party, Chamorro said, La Prensa will continue to give Aguero and the party as little coverage as possible and actively look for ways to discredit Aguero.

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Primary Source #2: "Letter to William Casey, CIA Director, from Senator Barry Goldwater (R) Arizona." April 9, 1984. *Understanding the Iran Contra Affair*. Brown University. Accessed 7 December 2012. http://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/documents/d-nic-9.pdf

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United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

April 9, 1984

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184-1274

The Honorable William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Declassified/Released on 3FC88
by E.O. 12356
National Security Council

Dear Bill:

All this past weekend, I've been trying to figure out how I can most easily tell you my feelings about the discovery of the President having approved mining some of the harbors of Central America.

It gets down to one, little, simple phrase: I am pissed off!

I understand you had briefed the House on this matter. I've heard that. Now, during the important debate we had all last week and the week before, on whether we would increase funds for the Nicaragua program, we were doing all right, until a Member of the Committee charged that the President had approved the mining. I strongly denied that because I had never heard of it. I found out the next day that the CIA had, with the written approval of the President, engaged in such mining, and the approval came in February!

Bill, this is no way to run a railroad and I find myself in a hell of a quandary. I am forced to apologize to the Members of the Intelligence Committee because I did not know the facts on this. At the same time, my counterpart in the House did know.

The President has asked us to back his foreign policy. Bill, how can we back his foreign policy when we don't know what the hell he is doing? Lebanon, yes, we all knew that he sent troops over there. But mine the harbors in Nicaragua? This is an act violating international law. It is an act of war. For the life of me, I don't see how we are going to explain it.

My simple guess is that the House is going to defeat this supplemental and we will not be in any position to put up much of an argument after we were not given the information we were entitled to receive; particularly, if my memory serves me correctly, when you briefed us on Central America just a couple of weeks ago. And the order was signed before that.

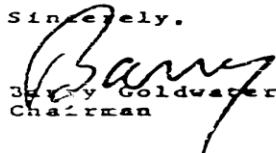
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I don't like this. I don't like it one bit from the President or from you. I don't think we need a lot of lengthy explanations. The deed has been done and, in the future, if anything like this happens, I'm going to raise on hell of a lot of fuss about it in public.

Sincerely,


Barry Goldwater
Chairman

Primary Source #3: Ronald Reagan. "Speech from the Oval Office about the Iran-Contra Affair." 4 March 1987. *American Experience: Reagan*. WGBH Educational Foundation. Accessed 8 December 2012. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/reagan-iran-contra/>

First, let me say I take full responsibility for my own actions and for those of my administration. As angry as I may be about activities undertaken without my knowledge, I am still accountable for those activities. As disappointed as I may be in some who served me, I'm still the one who must answer to the American people for this behavior. And as personally distasteful as I find secret bank accounts and diverted funds - well, as the Navy would say, this happened on my watch.

...Now, another major aspect of the Board's findings regards the transfer of funds to the Nicaraguan contras. The Tower board wasn't able to find out what happened to this money, so the facts here will be left to the continuing investigations of the court-appointed Independent Counsel and the two congressional investigating committees. I'm confident the truth will come out about this matter, as well. As I told the Tower board, I didn't know about any diversion of funds to the contras. But as President, I cannot escape responsibility.

...yesterday I met with the entire professional staff of the National Security Council. I defined for them the values I want to guide the national security policies of this country. I told them that I wanted a policy that was as justifiable and understandable in public as it was in secret. I wanted a policy that reflected the will of the Congress as well as of the White House. And I told them that there'll be no more freelancing by individuals when it comes to our national security.

... One thing still upsetting me, however, is that no one kept proper records of meetings or decisions. This led to my failure to recollect whether I approved an arms shipment before or after the fact. I did approve it; I just can't say specifically when. Well, rest assured, there's plenty of recordkeeping now going on at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

...My fellow Americans, I have a great deal that I want to accomplish with you and for you over the next 2 years. And the Lord willing, that's exactly what I intend to do.

Good night, and God bless you.

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With your partners, review the timeline of events. Discuss which event would provide “headline” news as well as give an opportunity to discuss an overview of events. Agree as a group which event from this timeline you will use as your newspaper topic.

	<p>1956: Somoza is assassinated; his oldest son Luis rules Nicaragua until 1967. Luis expands the economy, but his regime continues to pamper the National Guard Officers and wealthy elites at the expense of the majority of Nicaraguans. Luis Somoza promises the US to be a reliable ally against communism.</p> <p>http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/somoza-debayle.htm</p>
	<p>1972: A large earthquake levels the capital, Managua. Anastasio Somoza, the new leader, takes US aid from President Nixon for his friends and allies. Conditions for the poor worsen, so rebel groups begin to proliferate.</p> <p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-19909695</p>
	<p>1978: The assassination of Pedro Joachim Chamorro of <i>La Prensa</i>, Nicaragua’s leading newspaper, by Somoza’s death squads drives middle class and conservative Nicaraguans to support the Sandanistas. The Catholic Church joins protests. http://www.nicaraguadispatch.com/news/2012/05/alba-monument-occupies-historic-park/4068</p>
	<p>Spring 1979: President Jimmy Carter begins to withdraw US aid for Somoza’s regime after protests in the US over Somoza’s brutal dictatorship.</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidency_of_Jimmy_Carter</p>
	<p>19 July 1979: Cuban-backed communist rebels, the Sandanista National Liberation Front (FSLN), seize power. Somoza flees but is assassinated. Sandanista leaders establish a National Assembly, controlled by their military junta. http://sandinovive.info/?page=paginas&actual_page=2&id_page=3</p>
	<p>1982: Conservative groups fleeing Nicaragua under the Sandinistas form guerilla units on the border of Nicaragua and Honduras; they call themselves “contras.” The US supplies and arms an offensive by contras. Their acts of rape, torture, and murder of social service workers and civilians leads to the Boland Amendment, which outlaws US support for the contras.</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_Contra_Affair</p>
	<p>1984: Junta leader Daniel Ortega is elected in the first elections since the 1930s. Before the election, opposition groups are suppressed and media increasingly is controlled by Ortega. Moderates pushed out of the junta and National Assembly join the “contras” based in neighboring countries.</p> <p>http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1225283.stm</p>

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	<p>1984: The US is caught mining Nicaraguan waters. The UN begins a case against the US in international court. Part of the case includes CIA directions to contras on terrorizing civilian populations. The US Congress strengthens the Boland Amendment so that Reagan cannot send funds to the contras.</p> <p>http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1225283.stm</p>
	<p>1986: Ortega's suppression of dissent grows as "contras" step up their attacks in border areas. Reagan's administration secretly sends arms and funds to the contras in violation of US law.</p> <p>http://21stcenturysocialism.com/article/achieving_development_by_working_around_capitalism_nicaragua_ortega_and_alba_02085.html</p>
	<p>November-December 1986: Exposure of Reagan's secret funding for contra groups (known as the "Iran Contra Affair") ends US support of guerillas. Reagan's officials scramble as Reagans say does not remember authorizing funding the contras. http://www.2facts.com/PrintPage.aspx?PIN=haa00001810</p>
	<p>August 1987: Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela sponsor negotiations to end guerilla warfare throughout Central America. Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua agree to elections, and rebel groups agree to a cease-fire. The US, USSR and Cuba end support for guerilla groups.</p> <p>http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/08/20/2956622/the-memory-of-a-rare-success.html</p>

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The event our newspaper will cover is _____.

Divide up the sources below. These websites, or any others you find, should appear in the bibliography section of the newspaper you will eventually create for this assignment (page 2, lower left corner). Each of you will read ONE of them to start.

Research Task #	Website Title/Description	URL
1	BBC Magazine: "Sandinistas claim election victory."	http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/5/news_id_2538000/2538379.stm Follow links from this story for more details.
2	PBS.org: "American Experience: The Iran Contra Affair"	http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/reagan-iran/ Begin with the general overview here and follow links for details
3	History Channel: Go to www.history.com and search "Somoza"	After reading selections about the Iran-Contra affair, search Sandanistas and "Iran-Contra", as time permits.
4	Time Magazine: "Why Daniel Ortega will go on ruling Nicaragua"	http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2047235,00.html Use information from the article to find other news about Ortega's rule in the 1980s.
5	Encyclopedia: ask your librarian to help you find two articles about Nicaragua.	Search for the following key words within the encyclopedias or other sources: CIA/contras/cocaine in Nicaragua, Castro/Ortega, Anastasio Somoza, Reagan.