

INDIGENOUS CRISIS IN CENTRAL AMERICAN AND THE CARRIBEAN REGION

Nicaragua: Sandinistas, MISURASATA and the Rights
of the Miskitos, Sumus and Ramas

(A background and Policy paper of the NCAI Office of Tribal International Relations prepared by Rudolph C. Ryser.)

Indigenous populations in Central America and the Caribbean region have suffered increasing violent attacks on their leaders and communities during the last twenty years. The wave of violence now blanketing Central America and southern Mexico is proclaimed by the international press and foreign ministries from capitals in North America to Europe and the Soviet Union as a contemporary struggle between the forces of the political right and left to gain control over each of the Central American Countries. Hidden under the propaganda and rhetoric is the struggle of millions of indigenous peoples to control their own political and economic future. Tribal groups and indigenous nations have become targets of minority political factions within each Central American country; the result of which is that even as each faction seeks to destroy the other indigenous populations are being caught in the "cross-fire."

The current conflicts in Central America have many dimensions which hold great significance for the future of Indigenous peoples all over the world. This paper will examine the historical, economic and political circumstances that surround the Miskito, Sumu and Rama peoples who live on the Atlantic coastal strip of Honduras and Nicaragua. Though the focus of this paper is on Nicaragua and the Miskitos the circumstances throughout Central America are directly related. At the root of our discussion is the basic question of tribal survival and the future of the rights of Indigenous peoples to live freely. This paper will demonstrate that the actions of nation-states in pursuit of their own interests are aimed at the dislocation and eventual destruction of indigenous societies. The Indigenous Crisis in Central America boldly demonstrates the fact that while nation-states will agree that genocide must not be practiced on each other it can be practiced on indigenous populations and tolerated. To prevent nation-state genocide against indigenous populations the World Council of Indigenous Peoples called upon indigenous populations throughout the world to help one another. The National Congress of American Indians has accepted the WCIP challenge, and has therefore adopted its own policy to aid indigenous nations and groups in their efforts to defend against nation-state threats.

The questions this paper will attempt to answer are: What are the historical, social, economic and political circumstances surrounding the Miskito, Sumu and Rama tribes and how do they relate to the current confrontations with the Nicaraguan Sandinista Regime? To what extent would a solution to the Miskito (et al) and Sandinista conflict contribute to a session of hostilities throughout the Central American Region. What place should indigenous ^{peoples} have in the proposed conflict settlement negotiations (President Portillo of Mexico proposal)? What role can the National Congress of American Indian play in the

reduction of hostilities between Miskitos and the Sandinistas, and the protection of Indigenous interests in Central America and Mexico? What initiatives should the NCAI take to increase the WCIP's effectiveness as a supportive influence in Central America?

Statement of the Problem:

The Miskito, Sumu and Rama peoples are currently caught in the political and military cross-fires of non-indigenous powers and interests -- their livelihood, security of their peoples, lands and natural resources are threatened with destruction and expropriation as a consequence of the following:

1. The powerfully nationalistic Sandinista Regime which overthrew the regime of Anastasio Somoza on July 20, 1979 has assumed governmental authority over Nicaragua. The new Regime is attempting to consolidate political and military control over Nicaraguan territory and now seeks to "integrate the Atlantic Coast as a priority" (the Atlantic Coast is the Miskito reserved territory which has been semi-independent until 1962). To consolidate its authority, the Sandinista Regime has begun to institute a series of "assimilationist" policies and installed its military presence in many Miskito, Sumu and Rama villages and towns. Through their current "national" organization, MISURASATA and local indigenous community organizations tribal leaders have pressed the Sandinistas to recognize and respect Miskito, Sumu, and Rama territory (land rights) and their right to control and use their own natural resources. The Sandinistas have responded by charging the indigenous leadership with being "anti-revolutionary, separatists and racists. The Sandinistas clearly regard the Indigenous demands for recognized land rights and control over natural resources as a threat to "national stability" and the regime itself.

2. Remnants of the followers of Anastasio Somoza (landed oligarchy, businessmen, politicians and military) have taken up exile in enclaves located across the border from Nicaragua and Miskito territory in Honduras. The Somoza forces in Honduras (with similar camps in Guatemala, California and Florida) are staging incursions into Miskito Territory with the intent of overthrowing the Sandinista Regime. The Miskito population located in the PuertoCazas area (the northeastern part of the territory on the Honduran border) has borne the brunt of incursions in the last year. Sandinista military forces are heavily entrenched in this part of Miskito Territory. In an effort to prevent subversion of Miskito people, and to prevent pro-Somoza forces from organizing Miskitos against the Sandinistas the Nicaraguan Regime relocated up to 10,000 Miskito people by moving them farther south and to the interior.

3. Former MISURASATA leader, Stelman Fagoth Muller, became an exile in May of 1981 after having served in prison from the time he was arrested with other tribal leaders in February 1981. Fagoth attracted 3,000 Miskito followers to join him in Honduras as he closed ranks with the Somoza followers. A provisional tribal leadership has been installed to head the MISURASATA organization. Meanwhile, Fagoth appears to have come to the belief that the Somoza forces will help protect Miskito, Sumu and Rama interests against the Sandinista Regime. Fagoth has traveled to Washington D.C. and

consulted with U.S. authorities, and made public charges against the Sandinista Regime. Some Miskito, Sumu and Rama leaders have closed ranks with the Sandinista Regime, while many others remain neutral.

4. The United States and the Soviet Union have elevated the civil strife in Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatamala to the status of a "confrontation between the super powers" Both the US and the USSR have attempted to apply military measures to problems which are essentially political in character. The U.S. has claimed hegemony over the Central American and Caribbean Region off and on for decades. As its "great power sphere of influence" countries in Central America and the Caribbean have been expected to be loyal to the United States. U.S. domination of the region was upset when Cuba experienced a revolution opposed by the United States. Cuba established close relations with the Soviet Union. Jamaica was closely allied to socialist and non-aligned countries until the government of Michael Manley was, in effect, overthrown at the election polls in 1980; his government was replaced with a government more sympathetic to U.S. interests. The island country of Granada became a progressive socialist regime aligned with Cuba and then the Sandinista forces overthrew the Somoza Regime which had been sympathetic to US interests. These events have caused US policy makers to generate reactionary policies aimed at the "overthrow" of any government not sympathetic to U.S. political and economic interests. The U.S. considers its vital interests to include: the Panama Canal Zone, fisheries and oil resources in the Caribbean Sea, U.S. multi-national corporate activities in control of timber, oil, bauxite and alumina production, coal and gold. These interests combine with the US desire to control shipping lanes. The Soviet Union is seen as a threat to US interests as it supports (economically and militarily) the Cuban, Granada and Nicaraguan Regimes. The Soviet Union portrays itself as supporting popular revolutions which break down feudalistic systems in the region. Clearly, in the "great powers" context the Soviet Union believes it is protecting its political and economic goals by providing aid and assistance to countries experiencing violent revolutions. The Soviet Union's activities in the Caribbean and Central America may be closely linked to their need to counter U.S. military and economic support to Poland, Turkey and Afghanistan. Each of these countries sit on the USSR border, well within what it considers to be its sphere of influence.

The "great powers" struggle has focused on El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatamala in large measure due to the instability of the governments in each of those countries. Nicaragua has become a specific propaganda target for the United States while El Salvador has become a propaganda target for the Soviet Union. Cuba, Mexico, Granada, Lybia, France and the Soviet Union have formally offered their support to the Sandinista Regime to oppose Somoza followers and US intervention. The United States is the only country formally supporting counter-insurgency moves against Nicaragua. Canada, West Germany, Australia and Scandinavian countries have publicly remained neutral though behind the scenes each is applying political pressure on behalf of Nicaragua. The United States has publicly focused its attention on

Nicaragua to distract attention away from the turmoil in El Salvador and Guatemala -- two military regimes the United States is attempting to legitimize and support. In its attempts to undermine the Sandinista Regime, the US has seized upon public disclosures (made by Stedman Fagoth Muller) concerning the Sandinista's treatment of the Miskito, Sumu and Rama peoples. The US has implied that it will not prevent former Somoza militia and other counterinsurgency forces from attempting to overthrow the Sandinista Regime.

Private gun runners inside Central American Countries and in the United States are transporting large quantities of weapons which originate in Germany, Israel, Brazil, China, France, Canada, Soviet Union, Libya and Argentina into all three countries of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala.

5. President Jose Portillo of Mexico has been attempting since last year to set in train a process of negotiations to halt the violent conflicts in Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Portillo has gained the support of the governments of Cuba, Granada, France, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama and Canada. Such negotiations do not now contemplate participation of Indigenous leadership. The Central American Regional Council of the WCIP (CORPI) has been considering this possibility since August of 1981. There are community and "national" indigenous organizations in each of the central American Countries. In their own territories indigenous populations are the majority with a total region-wide population estimated at more than 23 million. Miskito, Sumu and Rama peoples are sophisticated in indigenous politics, but do not have a great deal of direct experience with "western" ideologies and political methods. If the negotiations or the violence is permitted to continue without organized indigenous responses, Indigenous peoples in Central America stand to sustain major setbacks and continued exploitation.

Demographics of the Reserve Territory of the Miskitos:

The boundaries of the so called Miskito Reserve Territory are the same as the Department of Zelaya, which comprises two-thirds of the entire area of Nicaragua's claimed territory. Nicaragua claims a territory with an area of 57,143 square miles. Miskito, Sumu and Rama territory (not including parts of Honduras) contains about 38,000 square miles -- an area about the size of the state of Indiana. The Reserve Territory has a population of about 200,000 people. Of the total sixty percent or 120,000 are Miskitos; five percent or 10,000 are Sumus; $\frac{1}{2}\%$ or 1,000 are Ramas; 19% or 38,000 are descendants of Arawaks, Africans and Antillians; and, 15% or 30,000 are mestizos (descendants of Indian and European marriages). The Indigenous populations live in 250 communities all along the coastal strip and toward the interior up to the mountains.

According to MISURASATA statistics provided in 1981 13% of the indigenous population is literate in European languages. Native languages are spoken within each group though the majority speak English, Spanish or both. Most of the Indigenous communities have subsistence economies dependent on agriculture and fishing.

The principle export agricultural products are bananas, cotton, fruit and jucca. Shellfish, turtles, and assorted ocean-going and fresh-

water fish are taken. Large deposits of gold, silver, and oil are located in the northern part of the territory, while soft and hard wood forests cover the tropical plains.

Community Organization:

While the Indigenous peoples of the Reserve Territory have a tradition of governance embodied in a "king" this role has always been largely ceremonial. The notion of a king originated with early relations with the British when a "treaty" of commitment was signed in Jamaica in 1687 when Britain claimed Miskito territory as a protectorate. The actual pattern of governance (which continues to the present) has been decentralized authority vested in community elders and family heads. This pattern is reflected in the formation of indigenous community organizations established in the 1960's for the purpose of promoting and advocating indigenous land rights and natural resource rights. It is the older people who hold the principle decision-making power at the community level. The influence of these people over community affairs is both significant and wide ranging.

In 1967, local community organizations were joined together under a "national" umbrella organization called ALPROMISU. This "inter-community" organization was established to promote and advocate indigenous land and natural resource rights in relations with the Samozá Government in Managua. With the overthrow of Samozá in 1979, ALPROMISU's name and organization was "reformed" into the present-day MISURASATA organization which has maintained the local community organizational links, but divided the Reserve Territory into five "administrative" regions. MISURASATA has one delegate who sits as the representative of the Miskito, Sumu and Rama peoples in the Council of State in the Sandinista Government.

The younger "educated" members of indigenous communities tend to dominate the "national" organization and its regional administrative components. Local governance remains pretty-much in the control of the elders. The younger, educated members of communities have tended to play an active role in the "left/right" or "liberal/conservative" western style politics of the Nicaraguans while the older, more traditional people have tended to occupy themselves with community and family politics.

MISURASATA: Its Relationship to Communities and the Sandinista Regime

Following the assumption of power by the Sandinista Junta on July 20, 1979 the Miskito, Sumu and Rama leadership demanded a political role in the new government. This demand was in keeping with earlier understandings made between Sandinista (FSLN) organizers and ALPROMISU activists in the years before the overthrow of the Anastasio Samozá Regime. Within months after assumption of governmental control, the Sandinista leadership agreed to authorize the creation of a Miskito, Sumu and Rama coalition organization (MISURASATA) which would have one representative who would sit in the legislative assembly of the new government. MISURASATA would function as the social, economic and political link between the new government and the indigenous communities of the Reserved Territory. MISURASATA announced its goals to include social, economic and cultural development of the indigenous

peoples of the Department of Zelaya. MISURASATA was structured to include five administrative regions as follows: Northeast Region, headquartered in Puerto Cabezas; Rio Coco Region, headquartered in Bluefields; Waspan; Mine Region, headquartered in Rosita; South Region, headquartered in Raiti. Representatives from each of the 250 communities would participate in MISURASATA through community organizations and the regional administrative units.

Until February 1981, Stedmean Fagoth Muller was the principle leader of the national organization. Norman Cambell Smith was the international relations coordinator and Armondo Rojas Smith was the representative from Miskito Territory to the Central American Regional Council (CORPI) of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples.

The roots of MISURASATA can be found in the establishment of local indigenous organizations along the Coco River in the early 1960s. The need for such community organizations was sparked by efforts of the Anastasio Somoza Regime to "nationalize" Miskito lands and forests in the northeastern part of the Reserve territory. Before the 1960s the principle external presence in the Atlantic coastal strip was United States timber and mining companies. Though these companies operated in Miskito Territory under Nicaraguan governmental jurisdiction and paid taxes to the Managua government no effort was made to impose political control over Miskito territory until US companies began to withdraw from the region. The most recent companies to work in the Miskito area was the U.S. Nicaragua Longleaf Pine Lumber Company (NIPCO), which opened largescale lumbering activities on extensive pine forests in northeast Reserve Territory. Within a few short years the pine forests were completely depleted and plans for reforestation were dropped by the company in favor of paying a higher export tax to the Somoza Regime. When this company withdrew from the area, the Somoza Regime "nationalized" the former company lands and forests. Somoza removed the Miskito peoples from the area; an act which gave rise to complaints against the Somoza Regime from community leaders. It was this act which caused the Miskito population to establish community indigenous rights organizations.

In 1967 the first "national" indigenous organization was formed to "protect the Indians' right to land and natural resources." ALPROMISU was an independent indigenous organization established to promote indigenous interests against the Somoza Regime's further moves to place indigenous lands and natural resources under his government's control. Charging ALPROMISU with anti-government activities, separatism, regionalism and associating with foreign enemies; Somoza's guardia frequently disrupted ALPROMISU meetings and frequently jailed indigenous leaders. During the intervening years until 1979, Indigenous leaders continued to demand that Indian land natural resource rights be preserved, and that the Somoza Regime not attempt to extend its economic and political authority over Indigenous territories.

After July 20, 1979 Miskito, Sumu and Rama leaders were unwilling to give up their local organizations so they replaced ALPROMISU with a new "national" organization called MISURASATA (which means: Miskito, Sumu and Rama and Sandinistas working together). Through MISURASATA THE Sandinista Government began to promote opportunities for bilingual education, agricultural assistance and representation within the

Council of State.

In August of 1980 the Sandinista Regime announced new plans for nationalizing lands on the Atlantic Coast. These plans were born from the realization within the Sandinista Junta that major exportable raw materials located in Miskito Territory should be harnessed to fill the economic development needs of Nicaragua. MISURASATA quickly obtained the Council of State's approval to postpone any nationalization until Indigenous land claims were settled. In September of 1980, MISURASATA obtained a grant of funds from the U.S. based organization, Cultural Survival, for a study of Indian community land rights on the Atlantic Coast. The research was completed in January 1981 and was submitted to the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), the National Institute of Natural Resources and the Environment (IRENA), the National Forestry Institute (CORFOB) and the Nicaraguan Institute of Mines (CONDEMINA). These organizations were responsible for helping to determining the nature and extent of the Indian communities' rights to natural resources and lands.

MISURASATA's efforts to protect Indian land rights and a degree of community control have been interpreted by non-Indigenous Nicaraguans as evidence of the "historic antipathy of the Miskitos toward Nicaragua's Spanish speaking population." Nicaraguans have charged the Indigenous leaders as being racist and separatist and, therefore, a threat to the revolution. As some indigenous observers and others have noted: the Miskito reaction to the proposed nationalization of their lands and resources was not a product of some historic opposition to "Spaniards", but rather, "it was a response to a perceived threat against their subsistence security and their status as equals in relations with nation-states." Put another way, Indigenous leaders saw this most recent attempt at Nicaraguan nationalization as an encroachment by one sovereign on the sovereignty of the Miskitos, Sumus and Ramas.

As MISURASATA worked to ensure Indian community rights to land and natural resources in January of 1981, accusations of racism, separatism and incipient regional revolt became more widely heard. In February 1981, such accusations led to the arrest of 33 MISURASATA leaders by the Nicaraguan Security forces.

In mid-May 1981 Steadman Fagoth Muller, who was arrested along with other MISURASATA officials, was released from prison and fled to Honduras where he was joined by an estimated 3,000 Miskitos. During the Summer of 1981, the Sandinista Government declared the "integration of the Atlantic Coast a priority." The Sandinistas subsequently made new efforts to secure a working relationship with the new provisional leadership of MISURASATA. In December 1981 the Sandinista Junta made efforts to secure international indigenous support for their efforts with the Miskitos by requesting support for their revolution from organizations like the International Indian Treaty Council and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. The ITC announced its public support for the Sandinista Government while the WCIP offered no public comment either in opposition or support. In late December 1981, reports were circulated IN THE INTERNATIONAL

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PRESS stating that the Sandinista government had sent troops across the border into Honduras to disrupt "anti-revolutionary" training camps set up by former members of Somoza's guardia. Some of the reports indicated, though not confirmed, that five hundred Miskitos in exile were killed before the Sandinista forces withdrew.

Newspaper accounts in January and February of 1982 showed increased interest in relations between the Miskitos and the Sandinista Junta. This interest was in part due to two stories developing in Nicaragua and in the United States. On February 10 there was a report that the Sandinista Regime "resettled" between 8,500 and 10,000 Miskitos from the northeastern part of Zelaya Department (in the area of Puerto Cabezas) to camps toward the interior. The Sandinistas released a statement saying that resettlement was necessary to protect the tribal members from raids and assaults being initiated by former Somoza Guards located across the border in Honduras. Reports that the MISURASATA Organization released a communique on February 14 stating that the Indians had been subjected to "armed aggressions by counter-revolutionary bands" and that 31 communities had been burned have not been confirmed.

On February 26 newspaper accounts described Steadman Fagoth Muller as having traveled to Washington D.C. to conferr with U.S. State Department officials and present testimony before a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee and the House International Affairs subcommittee. Fagoth charged the Sandinista government with committing grave human rights violations against the Miskitos, saying in part that, Indians are being "murdered, burned and buried alive" by government troops. He further stated to a Senate Appropriations Committee on Foreign Operations that Miskito anti-government activity had "started when the Sandnistas first took power."

Elliot Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights stated on February 25 that troops of the Sandinista Regime have "viciously attacked these Indian tribes, killing many." Abrams was quoted as having agreed with Fagoths reports in news conferences on the 26th of February.

Upon the occassion of a meeting with Nicaragua's new ambassador to the United States, Francisco Fiallos Navarro, Ronald Reagan condemned Nicaraguan policies toward the Miskitos and scolded the Sandinistas for "inviting alien influences and phikosophies into the hemisphere." Secretary of State Haig, the U.S. President and Assistant Secretary Abrams have become increasingly vocal about the situation of the Miskitos -- largely based on remarks made by Fagoth. All of these reports have been broadcast into Miskito, Sumu and Rama territory through the U.S. Voice of America.

Upto March 8th both Sandinista representatives and representatives of the U.S. government have simply repeated their charges and counter charges regarding Miskitos.

Analysis and Comment:

The "localized" conflict between the Sandinista government and the indigenous populations is symptomatic of the historic conflict between the state governments and indigenous populations throughout Central America and Mexico. These conflicts date back to the 16th century when Spain and Britain colonized the region. The central issue that motivates popular indigenous political activity in the Reserved Territory of the Miskitos is the same issue that dominates indigenous activities in Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize and Mexico: Indigenous land and natural resource rights. All of the governments, whether controlled by an oligarchy, military junta, coalition government; politically "leftist or right wing" regimes have historically taken the same political position as regards indigenous populations: isolation of the population from the political system, political annexation or assimilation of indigenous lands and natural resources and isolation of the indigenous population from the benefits of the prevailing economic system. The Indigenous populations, for their part, have sought to maintain their distance from the ruling governments by not engaging in the political system and process; they have maintained organizations internally, but have had little success maintaining inter-group organizations which have functioned as a political force in competition with the ruling non-indigenous organizations.

Though the Indigenous population is the majority population in specific parts of the region, they have not used their popular strength to counter (the sometimes minority) non-indigenous encroachments. Independent Indigenous organizations are operating throughout the region and most of them are connected with the Central American Indigenous Council (WCIP) (CORPI). Despite the fact that the indigenous populations have such organizations they have not been seriously considered as a significant political force by either the left or the right. During a meeting of the CORPI in Chirán Astico, México a year ago delegates from tribes located throughout Mexico and Central America established the principle that indigenous political organization was necessary to defend indigenous populations, but that indigenous organized efforts must "not be aligned with either the left or right" political ideologies of the non-indigenous peoples." The frank conclusion of that meeting was that Central American Indigenous peoples must organize a "separate" political force to represent indigenous political interests. When left and right political factions from the non-Indigenous population have battled each other, the indigenous populations have consistently been caught in the cross-fire. No matter which political faction controls the government indigenous populations have suffered loss of life, property and territory.

Because of its involvement with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and because it is the oldest and most respected Indian organization located in the United States the National Congress of American Indians has assumed new responsibilities to aid other Indigenous populations whose right of self-determination is threatened by the actions of nation-state governments. NCAI has become a participant in the conflicts in Central America because of requests for support from Indigenous groups in Central America and because the United States government policies in that region are damaging

IDCOD	MAINTITLE	AUTHOR
	"Dream Time Stories of the Yuin Tribe"	Gubbo
	"Africa's First Nations"	Percy C. Howell
AMC28	"War in Wan Tasbia"	Stephen Tullberg
AMC28	"Central America Becomes Central"	Bernard Q. Nietschmann
AMC28	"Paper Autonomy and Indian Rights"	Tunki Quin
AMN28	Indian Self-Governance	
AMN28	"Governance and the Natural Society	Wilson Manyfingers
AMN28	"Discipline and Sharing"	Jeannette Armstrong
AMN28	"U.S. Policy: Break Up the Tribal Mass"	Rudolph C. Ryser
AMN28	"Cultural Patrimony"	Grand Council of Chiefs
AMN28	"Etinohah and Natural Law"	Elders of Stolo Nation
AMN28	"Kwi'Nail at Taholah"	Natalie Charley
ASS28	"Bangladesh's Genocidal Crimes"	Dr. Ramendu S. Dewan
ASS28	"The Igorot of the Cordillera"	William F. Claver
ASS28	"The New Situation"	Jocelyn Carino
EUR28	"Soviet Union or Soviet Russia"	Joseph E. Fallon
GLB28	"Rules of War and Fourth World Nations	Rudolph C. Ryser
GLB28	"GENOCIDE"	Rudolph C. Ryser
MEL28	"Indonesia, Bangladesh: Disguised Invasion of Indigenous Nations	Bernard Nietschmann
PAC28	"Pacific Island Independence"	Sione Tupouniua
PAC28	"Kanakia or New Caledonia?"	Rudolph C. Ryser

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Dear &fname&:

On March 4 of this year, the Center for World Indigenous Studies marked its sixth year anniversary. In those six years, C.W.I.S. played a major role in the advancement of Fourth World nations. We played a central role in the elevation of discussion and debate between indigenous nations on subjects ranging from strategies for conflict resolution between nations and states to formulation of "nation specific" educational systems. And, CWIS has played a direct role in the formulation of new international instruments for elevating the political status of indigenous nations to a position of equality with states.

Through publications like the Fourth World Journal, Fourth World Papers Series, Northwest Monitor and Occasional Papers, CWIS expanded the dialogue between indigenous peoples and their neighbors in an effort to promote wider understanding and mutual cooperation. CWIS publications are now used in at least five universities in the United States, two in Canada and one in Australia. Our publications are regularly placed in dozens of libraries (national and state) from Berlin to Nisqually and Berkely to Port Via in Vanuatu.

CWIS has also organized symposia, colloquys and conferences ranging in subjects from self-government to countering bigotry. Research organized and promoted by CWIS is now being conducted on "Mapping the Fourth World," Rightwing Extremism and Anti-Indian Activities on and near Indian reservations, alternative food and economic strategies in the Fourth World, genocide in South Asia and Central America and conflict resolution in West Papua and the Chittigong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.

CWIS has helped make the world a little more understandable and manageable for thousands of indigenous people through our publications and through the distribution of hundreds of thousands of books through our Indian Book Center in Seattle.

indigenous populations which share the same interests as the tribes inside the U.S. Finally, NCAI has the duty to aid indigenous peoples in Central America because it may have the greatest potential for influencing U.S. policies, and in conjunction with the WCIP Central American government policies.

NCAI may be a positive influence in the efforts to reduce violence against indigenous populations in Central America by taking some or all of the following initiatives:

In accordance with policy objectives mandated by the NCAI convention of 1980 in Tribal/Global Relations: Action Plan and Policies for the 80's:

1. Conduct a fact-finding mission focusing on the Miskito situation by consulting with the Sandinista government and indigenous leaders in the Reserve Territory.
2. Prepare a draft assessment of the situation and transmit that report to the World Council of Indigenous Peoples.
3. Conduct a briefing with CORPI officials in Costa Rica.
4. Open channels of communications with the U.S. House international relations subcommittee, Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Operations, Assistant Secretary Elliot Abrams to discuss Indigenous policies and concerns.
5. Open channels of communications with the Jose Portillo government in Mexico regarding pending efforts to arrange negotiations in Central America.
6. Open channels of communications with former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt (now head of Socialist International) to request his support for the indigenous position in Central American talks.
7. Through the World Council of Indigenous Peoples initiate a series of releases describing the situations of indigenous peoples in Central America -- call for Indigenous participation in conflict settlement talks. The focus is primarily on Miskito/Sandinista relations but includes discussion of indigenous populations in El-Salvador and Guatamala.

NCAI: Policy Recommendations re: Miskito/Sandinista conflict.

NCAI advocates and endorses Miskito, Sumu and Rama claims to lands and natural resources but urges the Sandinista Regime to recognize and respect indigenous sovereignty in the Atlantic Coastal Strip. Ncai does not oppose the right of Sandinistas to govern and control their own territory as a free and independent nation, but believes the Nicaraguan Regime should not oppose Miskito, Sumu and Rama claims to their territory.

NCAI reminds the United States that it has failed to protect tribes within US boundaries and demands that it withhold its condemnation of the Sandinista Regime until it has respected the rights and sovereignty of U.S. tribes.

NCAI demands that both the United States and the Sandinistas respect tribal rights to self-determination.