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NICARAGUA.

Subject: Report of Trip to Field of Operations.

From: M/A Nicaragua.

Report No. 32.

April 3, 1927.

At 12.15 pm, March 26, 1927, I left Managua by automobile in company with Major D. Rodriguez, U.S.A., retired, and Mr. A. A. Cohen, my clerk, to observe the forces of General Rivers Delgadillo, consisting of 700 men, on the march between Tipitapa and Teustepe enroute to concentration area west of Muymuy and south of the Rio Grande and to inspect positions occupied by General Nogüera Gomez immediately south of Tierra Azul.

At 12.45 pm, March 26 a truck was met about half way between Tipitapa and Managua enroute to the latter place with 20 wounded men from the San Goronimo fight of March 14th, just two weeks after the battle!

#### I. MANAGUA - TIERRA AZUL ROAD.

The distance is 19 miles from Managua to Tipitapa, 17 miles from Tipitapa to Las Banderas, 18-1/2 miles from Las Banderas to Teustepe, 18 from Teustepe to Boaco and 21 from Boaco to Tierra Azul, a total of 93-1/2 miles.

From Managua to Las Banderas is a fair dry season automobile road, with no bad grades. From Las Banderas to Boaco is a bull cart road with 7 river crossings and many bad grades and frequent long

stretches filled with loose rocks and stumps, but it is passable with difficulty for a light automobile. Two hundred men could make it passable for light trucks in ten days. From Boaco to Tierra Azul is a poor pack trail with many bad grades.

The country is fairly open from Managua to Tipitapa and is dotted with small farms. From Tipitapa to Las Banderas is a cattle country, well watered and covered with excellent grass and only a few farms. The woods and brush off the road are quite dense and in many places it is difficult for a man on horseback to get through. From Las Banderas to Tierra Azul there are no farms and few inhabitants, except in the little towns along the road. The country is rolling, covered with excellent grass, well watered and stocked with fat cattle. The woods and brush are so thick that the country is almost impassable off the road and trails.

There are practically no roads and very few trails. There is a telegraph and telephone line along the road all the way to Tierra Azul. The road becomes impassable during the rainy season for any kind of wheeled transportation and very difficult for pack animals.

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### II. FORCES OF GENERAL RIVERS DELGADILLO ON MARCH.

At 2.15 pm we passed the rear elements of Rivers Delgadillo's command, under General Vidaurre, consisting of 250 men with 6 Browning machine guns at Las Banderas.



At 4.25 pm we passed the main body, 300 men under General Rivers Delgadillo about four miles south of Teustepe, and upon arrival at Teustepe at 5 pm we found his advance guard of 150 men there.

(a) Disposition for the march.

The advance guard of 150 men preceded the main body by about four miles, while the rear element of the command, 250 men, followed one days' march in the rear of the main body. As a command of this size can camp anywhere there is water, and as none of its elements were in supporting distance of each other there appears to be no tactical or other reason for such great dispersion in depth. The advance guard and main body remained all day Sunday in Teustepe waiting for the rear element to catch up, thus losing 24 hours valuable time. Some of the Conservative generals do not seem to have any conception of the value of time, and the procrastination during the past three weeks is almost unbelievable, especially in view of the fact that the rainy season will commence in about six weeks and the campaign must be concluded before then or drag over for another year.

(b) Bivouacs.

The men have no tents; they simply sleep in the open or in the huts of the inhabitants of the little towns where they stop for the night. Usually no outpost, interior guard or patrols are put out.

(c) Medical Attendance.

No medical officer or medical personnel or medical supplies accompanied the command and no provision was made for the evacuation of sick & wounded. No attempt was made at camp sanitation.

(d) Armament.

The men were armed with Springfield rifles, Mod. 1898. The command also had 12 Browning Machine Guns and one light cannon. Men carry 240 rounds of ammunition on their person. A reserve of 300 rounds per man is carried in the train.

(e) Supply & Transportation.

The transportation consisted of 17 bull carts, 50 pack mules and horses. The train carried 15 days rations and 300 rounds of reserve ammunition per man. No forage is carried - the animals subsist by grazing. The grass was fine and the animals were in good condition.

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The ration carried in the trains consists of hardtack (native), rice, beans, brown sugar, coffee and lard. The men usually carry a little hardtack on the person. Fresh meat is supplied locally at the various camp sites. The beef cattle required are rounded up and slaughtered the day the troops arrive.

(f) Communications.

The command had one field telephone, used to tap in on commercial wire.

(g) Discipline & Morale.

The discipline and morale of the men seemed to be good. The General, however, was greatly worried on account of the shortage of oxen or bulls for his carts. He had only two to each cart and four are really required to get them over many parts of the road. He had to use a snatch team to get his carts up many of the steep grades and this caused delay.

The usual number of women (3 or 4 to every 15 or 20 men) accompanied the command as cooks and washwomen. One woman was marching with a rifle in the column with the men. Her husband was one of the soldiers.

III. HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL VIQUEZ AT BOACO.

We arrived at Boaco about 8.30 pm, March 26 and I immediately called on General Viquez, who is commanding all three of

the small armies now operating in the Matagalpa and Chontales districts. The General is about 45 years old, fat and good natured. He has not personally inspected any of his armies recently, not even the one under Nogüera Gomez near Tierra Azul, about 21 miles from Boaco. He discussed very freely the whole situation, giving me the location, strength and composition of his own troops and those of the enemy and his plan of attack, all of which will be discussed later. He stated the morale of his troops was low and desertions too numerous, but that it was no worse than was to be expected under existing conditions and the long time that had elapsed since the men were last paid. He thought the present plan to pay the men five dollars per month on account out of the new million dollar loan, reported in my cable No. 9, March 26th would greatly boost the morale of the troops. He said the government had been urging him to attack the revolutionists at Tierra Azul, but that he had avoided doing so because the enemy occupied a very strong natural position there and he felt sure the attack would fail. His plan is to make simultaneous attacks on Muymuy and Matiguas and a feint against Tierra Azul as soon as Rivers Delgadillo makes his junction with Reyes. I do not believe General Viquez will attack unless the President forces him to do it.

#### IV. THE GOVERNMENT FORCES NEAR TIERRA AZUL.

We left Boaco on mule back for Tierra Azul at 9.30 pm, Sunday the 27th and arrived at General Nogüera Gomez' headquarters at 5.00 pm the same day. General Gomez is about 40 years old, quiet and modest. He was educated at the former Nicaraguan military academy. He

made a very favorable impression on me, as also did General Mayorga.

General Nogüera Gomez' forces total 1730 men on paper with 39 machine guns and two 76 mm cannon, but the general told me his actual strength did not exceed 1600 men. His forces occupy the high ground south of the Olama River, on a front of about 8 miles. His troops are disposed from right to left as follows:



250 men with 7 machine guns under General Sanchez. Sanchez has established a detached post, consisting of 50 mounted men with one machine gun about 1 mile from his position on a trail leading to the N.W. toward Matiguas.

500 men with 4 machine guns under General A. Cruz Hurtado on high ground two miles west of Sanchez. Hurtado has a detached post, consisting of 50 mounted men with 1 machine gun, on a trail at Buena Vista 3 miles east of his position. (Note: This post should be furnished by Sanchez, but is not.)

180 men with 3 machine guns, under General José María Mayorga on the high ground west of the Puerta river and 3 miles west of Hurtado's position.

300 men with 12 machine guns and two 76 mm cannon (obsolete), under Nogüera Gomez, on high ground 1,000 yards west of Mayorga's position.

500 men with 13 machine guns, under General Marcos A. Benavente, on Zanás hill, 2 miles west of Gomez' position. Zanás hill is high, naturally strong and dominates the trail to Boaco and the left flank of the position. It is on the north bank of the Olama river, about 3,000 yards southwest of Tierra Azul and about 2,000 yards south and slightly west of Caballo hill.

(a) Entrenchments.

The positions of Gomez and Mayorga are entrenched for all around defense, as are also those of most of the generals under him. Gomez and Mayorga have located their firing lines generally on the military crest, but some of the others have theirs on the geographical crest.

The tendency of all the generals seems to be to get as high upon the hill as possible. Gomez has some lines of trenches about 50 yards in the rear of the firing line, but I don't consider this wrong as the enemy has only two obsolete cannon opposing him.

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The trenches are really "fox holes". They are constructed for either one of two men and are placed from 5 to 10 yards apart. Some are dug in, others are constructed by piling up loose stones, and still others by a combination of digging and stones. No wire entanglements are constructed. The principle of counter attack is not understood.



(b) Machine guns.

The machine guns and cannon are placed in the front line and but little effort has been made to clear a field of fire or to obtain flanking fire. Of course overhead fire is not attempted. Direct fire alone is employed. Most of the machine gunners are from the National Guard and they understand how to fire and manipulate the guns but know very little about their tactical employment.

(c) Communications.

Communications within the position are very difficult. There are no roads and but few trails. There is no wire communication between the various

elements of the command.

(d) Security and Information.

A force of 800 revolutionists with 20 machine guns and 2 obsolete cannon under General Beltran Sandoval, hold Caballo hill and the high ground east thereof and north of the Olama River. They have a front of four or five miles. The contending forces are about 3,000 yards apart on the west flank and about 5,000 yards on the east flank. The Olama river flows between them. The terrain between the two forces is almost level and is covered by a dense undergrowth, a jungle, with no known trails except the one from Boaco to Tierra Azul and one along the Puerta river. Tierra Azul is no man's land, as it were. Sandoval's headquarters, however, are in a farm house about 2,000 yards east of the outskirts of Tierra Azul.

Neither side either outposts or patrols no man's land, and neither makes any attempt to maintain actual contact with the other by means of patrols. Both sides rely solely upon information obtained through spies and from local inhabitants. Gomez gets some information from Brooks & Mason, the two American aviators.

Some of the men in the front line remain on the alert at night and they afford the sole means of protection. They get away with this kind of criminal negligence because the intervening terrain is almost impassable and because both sides employ the same tactics. Either force could withdraw from its position and be gone several days before the other would discover it was gone. Either force could march through the position of the other most any night, or day for that matter, without being detected.



(e) Morale & Discipline.

Morale and discipline are pretty good under the circumstances. Gomez says the payment to the men of \$3.00 on account will greatly boost their morale. He has had a high rate of desertion, but thinks most of those who wanted to desert have already done so. They desert with their rifles and ammunition and throw them away and go home. There is very little desertion from one side to the other. There are several women soldiers with Gomez' army. His cook has her 6 weeks old baby in camp with her.



(f) Hospitalization.

One medical officer is with Gomez' 1,600 men. He has no medicine and no surgical equipment, save a small kit of his private instruments, no bandages, dressings, etc. Of course he has no assistants. I am told the armies of Reyes and Rivers D. are in the same fix. General Mayorga is a doctor and carries a small supply of bandages, etc.

(g) Evacuation.

No provision whatever has been made for the care and evacuation of the wounded. As it is about 21 miles from Tierra Azul to Boaco over a pack trail, all seriously wounded men will surely die. It is possible, however, to get bull carts from Tierra Azul to Boaco by making long detours, but it takes five days to make the trip. And as no adequate facilities for caring for the wounded exist at Boaco, they will not be much better off when they reach there. It will take at least eight days to bring a wounded man (a liar) from Tierra Azul to Managua.

(h) Sanitation.

No attempt whatever is made at camp

sanitation. The troops have been in position over two weeks and the ground is covered with decayed beef and bones and the stench is very noticeable.

(i) Health.

Strange to relate, the health of the command is very good. This is probably due to the fact that sanitary conditions at the front are not much worse than they are at home.

(j) Supply.

On March 28th Gomez' army had had no subsistence supplies, except fresh beef, for two days and was not due to receive any for another day. I met a pack train of bulls and mules with supplies for him between Boaco and Tierra Azul about 2 pm on the 28th and it probably reached the troops early on the 29th. It takes four days for supplies to reach him from Managua.

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They are sent by truck from Managua to Las Banderas, from Las Banderas to Boaco by bull cart, and from Boaco to Tierra Azul by pack train. General Gomez has about 500 rounds of ammunition per man and about 3,000 per machine gun. A convoy of 40,000 rounds was met between Las Banderas and Teustepe on the way to him.



Two hundred men could make the road from Las Banderas to Boaco passable for light trucks during the dry season and cut down the time between Managua and Tierra Azul from 4 to 2 days. But for some reason Nicaraguan soldiers are never used for any kind of road work.

(k) Transportation.

Bull carts and pack oxen, bulls, mules and horses.

(l) Communications.

Gomez has direct communication with Viquez at Boaco by telephone and telegraph, and with Reyes at Mina Verde and Rivers D. at Esquipulas by telegraph. He can communicate with the two latter by phone through Managua.

(m) Photographs.

Thirty-two kodak pictures taken on my visit to Gomez which may be of interest are analyzed. The panorama was taken from a point about the center of Gomez' position, 3,000 yards south of Tierra Azul. It shows about 5 miles of enemy position, including Caballo hill and also Zanás hill occupied by Benavento.

The enclosed rough sketch was furnished me by Gen. Gomez' aid, Colonel Chamorro. It is not drawn to scale, and is quite inaccurate, but it does furnish some useful information to one on the ground. It is thought it may be of interest.

(n) Plan of operations.

The present plan is for Reyes and Rivers D. to make a joint attack with about 1,700 men against Muymuy, while Gomez makes a holding attack or feint against Tierra Azul with about 1,000 men and attacks General Zamora near Matiguas with the balance of forces.

(o) General officers.

My personal opinion of five of the generals commanding the troops in the field is as follows:

General Bartolomé Viquez, 45 years of age. Fat, well educated, good natured and slow; has little initiative and no particular training or qualifications for a general officer. Will fight if forced to. General Viquez is the first designate to the presidency.

General Alfredo Nogüera Gomez; 40 years of age, well educated, has had military training in the former Nicaraguan

military academy; modest and retiring; has initiative, determination and good judgment and possesses above average military ability. He is both a fighter and a leader.

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General Carlos Rivers Delgadillo. About 35 years of age, fair education. Military training acquired in present revolution. Although he is a popular here, he is inclined to procrastinate and impresses me as being weak and vacillating and not possessed of any particular military ability.



General Salvador Reyes. I have not met General Reyes, but Americans who knew him say he is a man of action, a leader and a fighter. He rules the generals and other officers of his command with an iron hand. He has participated in several important engagements during the present revolution, always giving a good account of himself. He is a young man and is said to be half Indian and half negro.

General José María Mayorga is about 40 years old. He is an educated gentleman, a physician by profession and impressed me as an able man

(p) Distribution and armament.

(1) Government Forces as of March 29, 1927.

Boaco, G.H.Q., 400 men, General Viquez.

2 miles south of Tierra Azul, 1,600 men, 39 machine guns, 2 cannon, General Nogüera Gomez.

Tipitapa, 350 men, 4 machine guns, enroute to Gomez.

Mina Verde, 1,000 men, 30 machine guns, 1 cannon, General Reyes.

Esquipulas, 700 men, 12 machine guns, 1 cannon, General Rivers Delgadillo.

Total 3,650 men, 85 machine guns and 4 cannon.

(2) Revolutionary Forces as of March 29, 1927.

(aa) 1,000 yards north of Tierra Azul, 200 men, 20 machine guns, 2 cannon under generals Sandoval, Mena and Plata.

Muymuy, 500 men, ? machine guns, 1 cannon, under General Miller, a German.

3 miles S.E. of Matiguas, 300 men, ? machine guns, General Zamora.

(bb) General Moncada is in command of the revolutionary forces. His headquarters are in a ranch house 3 miles S.E. of Matiguas. The number of machine guns with Miller and Zamora is not accurately known, but estimated to be about 14 or 15.

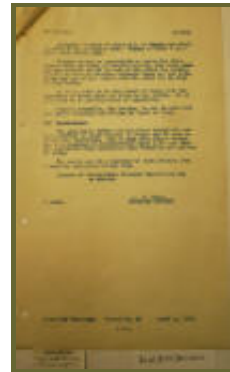
(cc) It will be seen Moncada has at the outside hut 1,800 men and 35 machine guns. His forces probably will not total over 1,200 men with 25 or 30 machine guns.

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Matiguas is about 12 miles N.E. of Muymuy and about 15 miles N.E. of Tierra Azul. Muymuy is about 8 or 9 miles from Tierra Azul.

Moncada maintains communications among his three forces daily by means of mounted patrols, each force sending one mounted patrol to each of the other two forces. As will be seen he occupies interior lines and can reinforce any one of his armies with the other two in four or five hours.

He is reported to be very short of food, with the exception of fresh beef, of



which he has plenty. He is also said to be getting short of ammunition.

General Escamilla, the Mexican, is now charged with conducting foraging expeditions in quest of food.

(q) Conclusions.

The government forces are now large enough and are in a position to crush Moncada if Viquez can be made to attack him vigorously. But so much time (three weeks) has been consumed in concentrating about 3,500 men that one can hardly help concluding that Viquez is not anxious to fight.

The armies are in a position to force Moncada into a decisive engagement at any time.

Sources of information: Personal observation and as stated.

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