

Is Bush Danny Ortega's campaign manager?

by Mark Sonnenblick

When George Bush invaded Panama and installed a bunch of drug-money launderers willing to pay the foreign debt, did he know he was helping Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega become the first communist president in the hemisphere to be reelected in democratic elections? The Sandinista government has so horribly botched economic management of Nicaragua that any opposition offering a program for rebuilding the country would easily defeat them.

On Jan. 13-19, the Greenberg-Lake polling firm survey found that 51% of Nicaraguans said they would vote for Ortega and 24% for U.S.-backed Violeta Chamorro. Its previous survey, in November, had found Ortega holding only a 44-27% lead. Pollster Stanley Greenberg said the major factor in the shift was the U.S. invasion of Panama, judged "bad" or "very bad" by 64% of Nicaraguan voters. Only 18% approved. Greenberg said that after the Panama invasion, voters were more likely to believe that the U.S.-funded Contras, rather than the government, were responsible for Nicaragua's problems.

On Jan. 18, the Sandinista Television System broadcast a 75-minute economic debate between the National Opposition Union (ONU) economic adviser Francisco Mayorga and Sandinista candidates. Mayorga charged that the Sandinista government "has brought national production per capita to the levels it had 40 or 50 years ago. For most Nicaraguans, the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front] has meant the loss of over 50% of the living standard during the shameful Somoza regime." No impartial observer would dispute that. Even Ortega admits everybody is angry about the economy.

Bush makes Sandinistas look like patriots

Even the pro-Contra *Washington Times* reported Jan. 1, "the Sandinistas are making potent political points from the U.S. strike on Panama, equating the UNO opposition with the U.S.-installed government of Guillermo Endara." The Sandinista daily *Barricada* wrote, "Nicaraguans have been reminded that here also, in UNO, there are traitors like Endara who want to come to power by means of a bloodbath provoked by a Yankee invasion."

Henry Kissinger's minions think they were oh-so-clever to make Daniel Ortega fear the U.S. could invade Nicaragua after the Feb. 25 elections, if the United Nicaragua Opposition does not win. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleberger, the former head of Kissinger Associates, Inc. said on

"Meet the Press" Jan. 7 that that was "a good point." The U.S. Army's ransacking of the Nicaraguan ambassador's residence in Panama City brought the majority of the United Nations Security Council to vote that the United States was violating international law. Such sabre-rattling provides a cover for stepped-up Soviet arming of Nicaragua.

By ambushing and killing two nuns, including an American, on New Year's Day, the Contras hardly helped their image as defenders of Western Christian values. The Contra resurgence, intended to prod people wanting peace to vote for the opposition, is backfiring, according to CIA-linked sources.

It also made it difficult for the legal opposition to win votes on the basis of Danny Ortega's wife's sponsoring a national Witch Doctors' Congress in March. His wife, the head of the culture institute, said psychologists, theologians, and experts in occult sciences had been invited to study natural medicine, fortune-telling and palm-reading—widely practiced in Nicaragua. Several Protestant ministers asked Ortega to ban the "Satanic Congress." The President said banning it would violate Constitutional "freedom of religion."

Opposition wants IMF economic austerity

While the Sandinistas have been campaigning like crazy in every village, UNO candidate Violeta Chamorro has devoted herself to helping Jeb Bush (George's son) at fundraising affairs. A Democratic Party official said the ONU campaign was "almost invisible once you get a short distance away from Managua." The ONU has been sitting around complaining that the \$9 million in U.S. taxpayer funds Congress voted last year to help it win have been slow to arrive. Colombian ex-President Alfonso López Michelsen, the political partner of Medellín Cartel chief Pablo Escobar, and Jimmy Carter went down and got the Sandinistas to be super-nice to the ONU and to let them overrun the country with foreign election observers.

The ONU's Achilles' heel is that its economic alternative is the genocidal International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies Washington has imposed on almost every country in Ibero-America. Mayorga, the Yale economics Ph.D. who makes the ONU's economic policy, said in the TV debate, "Mexico managed to curb inflation in a few weeks and achieve major price stability." He wanted to apply in Nicaragua the IMF policies which have cut Mexican living standards by 50%.

Daniel Ortega countered in a Jan. 22 speech, "All that has to be done to implement a policy that wipes out the majority of the people and producers is to place oneself under the control of the IMF." He said that an IMF-style program would mean a 65% cut in defense spending, "a reduction of more than 55% of the education budget, a reduction of more than 55% of the social welfare budget." He concluded, "This is what a government subservient to U.S. policy and, therefore, to the IMF would do."