

Nicaraguans vote against communism, IMF austerity

by Mark Sonnenblick

The Nicaraguan people surprised the world Feb. 25 by voting against tyranny, satanism, pornography, and International Monetary Fund-style austerity. United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) candidate, Mrs. Violeta Chamorro, defeated incumbent Sandinista Daniel Ortega by a landslide of 55% to 41%.

In the course of the campaign, the Sandinistas abandoned the ideals they had once professed—for public orgies. In the past, concepts such as social justice, land-for-the-tiller, and defense of the fatherland had been capable of persuading many Nicaraguans to forgo freedom and endure great sacrifices in the hope of a better future. That image of moral purpose was thrown out in favor of maudlin dancing in the streets and glossy posters showing two pairs of naked thighs pressed together, jeans, and a rose crumpled on the floor. The poster reads: “The first time is beautiful when you do it with love; vote for the Sandinistas.”

Bush thought Ortega would win

When this degradation was rejected by Nicaraguan voters, U.S. President George Bush was among those shocked by the outcome. Bush’s public posture, of course, was to back opposition candidate Violeta Chamorro. But, secretly, the Bush administration anticipated the Sandinistas would win a free election. A Bush adviser confirmed that the administration has been holding backroom meetings over the past few months with the Sandinistas, to map out future relations. The adviser, from the “conservative” Heritage Foundation, said Bush had been “totally” surprised by the defeat of Sandinista President Daniel Ortega. “Now, they have to start from ground zero,” he moaned. Exactly what deals were hatched between the Sandinistas and the Bushmen have not yet been made public.

Bush himself, on election day, said he wanted “improved relations” with the flamboyant jive dictator after Ortega’s reelection. George Bush, after all, has gotten along famously with the Chinese Communist butchers and with Soviet dictator Mikhail Gorbachov. And, the professionally orchestrated, banal, pornographic circus with which Ortega conducted the final weeks of his campaign reminded observers of the fantasy-ridden clown-shows at the U.S. Republican and Democratic Party conventions.

Two thousand five hundred “international observers” overran every nook and cranny of the Central American country during the campaign and the elections. Jimmy Carter served—flanked by blue-blood Eastern Establishment hatchet-man Elliot Richardson—as the Great White Father of the motley crew of “observers” from United Nations, the Organization of American States, the U.S. government, and a dozen groups responsible to nobody. Carter is undeniably an expert on vote-fraud, having been elected President of the United States in 1976 by a process which his running mate, Walter Mondale, exalted as “Vote early; vote often.”

The Kissinger-Soviet ‘bargains’

Such an outrageous violation of sovereignty sets a dangerous precedent of one-world government running national elections. It could not have taken place except with the connivance of the Soviet Union. “The Soviet Union played a constructive role in encouraging the Sandinista government to hold these elections,” a senior State Department official briefed reporters on Feb. 28. The official brazenly confirmed that the two superpowers have made “bargains” in which they jointly decide the fate of nation-states in their respective empires. He declared, “I think in an unprecedented way, both sides have been keeping their side of the bargain . . .

to use our respective influence with our respective friends in the world to try to press the Central American peace process forward.”

He spoke just after Bush had given Gorbachov a 40-minute phone call on their hot-line. Bush said the two had had “a very good talk . . . on matters relating to Nicaragua and Central America but also on matters relating to changes in Europe.”

The condominium between two world empires long envisioned by Henry Kissinger is taking shape. In April 1983, Soviet KGB boss and supreme dictator Andropov proposed, in an interview with the West German *Der Spiegel* magazine, a bargain under which the United States would let the Russians perform whatever butchery they pleased in their part of the world, while the Russians would let the United States do as it pleased in the Americas. He specifically equated Afghanistan and Nicaragua.

The Soviets told their assets in the Americas not to respond when the United States invaded Panama in December. A few days later, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker III openly authorized the Red Army to invade Romania. The Soviets did not need to do that, but it served as yet another signal the Bush administration would tolerate the Evil Empire using barbarism to keep itself intact.

The Soviets, at least for the moment, do seem to be keeping their part of the condominium deal. They have reacted with cool equanimity to the defeat of their puppet dictator. Their Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Feb. 27 saying, “Regardless of who won, the Nicaraguans made their choice. . . . They voted for peace, freedom, democracy, national reconciliation and consent, and the country’s revival and social progress.” The Soviets pointedly reminded their Sandinista assets that the bargain was that they would turn over power if they lost. A State Department official explained, “The Soviets made clear publicly that they support the outcome and believe that transfer of power should take place.”

Can Nicaragua rebuild?

Despite the condominium partners’ perverse geopolitical strategies, the Nicaraguan people followed their brethren in Eastern Europe in voting to free themselves of Communist tyranny. That victory can now be concretized—or it can be squandered.

One challenge Mrs. Chamorro faces comes from the hard-liners tied to Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, in the mammoth military and police apparatus which justified its existence by the existence of the 12,000 Contras and the permanent threat of a U.S. invasion. Mrs. Chamorro, on Feb. 28, called for the liquidation of the Contras and insisted that her nation needs only one army and “It will be me who gives the orders.”

But Interior Minister Tomás Borge, one of the Cuban assets, and other military leaders have always seen outgoing President Danny Ortega as a self-inflated showman, capable

of serving many masters. Any promises he makes are not likely to bind them. And Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez made a comment on the electoral outcome on Feb. 27 that amounted to a threat: “Thousands who should have supported Sandinism thought they would find in peace the solution to their problems. Life will teach them a bitter lesson.”

Mrs. Chamorro wisely calls for “national reconciliation.” That is a difficult challenge in a small country in which 30,000 friends and relatives have just died in a brutal civil war. A few false steps and the country will fall back into war. One such false step would be the installation of “U.S. advisers” to run a purge of Sandinistas from the Sandinista Army, as demanded by the Feb. 28 *Washington Times*. This would be used by the pro-Cuban faction to justify its refusal to hand over anything.

The biggest trap is the “free enterprise” economics package the United States is determined to impose on the new democratic government. The Sandinistas drove their own supporters into the opposition with a year of sharp economic austerity very similar to what Washington is forcing on all U.S. allies in the Third World. Official Sandinista data show that private consumption has now been cut 70% from what it was when they took power in 1979. Nicaragua now has the dubious honor of passing even Haiti in the race to become the poorest country in the continent.

No big bucks

The political initiative swung to Mrs. Chamorro in the final days of the race, when \$9 million in U.S. government funding belatedly poured in to help her win. It wasn’t that Latin Americans love U.S. intervention, as former Assistant Secretary of State and maniacal Contra supporter Elliott Abrams claimed in the *Los Angeles Times* Feb. 27. Rather, many voters “appeared to believe that a UNO victory offered the best prospect of securing U.S. funds to end the country’s economic misery,” as the *Financial Times* noted.

The Sandinista labor unions are giving Mrs. Chamorro 100 days to meet expectations of higher living standards. But her economic advisers call for savage IMF austerity, including firing tens of thousands of state employees. That, plus the demobilization of Sandinista and Contra soldiers, will create explosive conditions, unless foreign capital funds a rapid reconstruction of the country.

U.S. Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) urged “big bucks” for Nicaragua. But a senior administration official was quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* Feb. 27, “Panama wants \$2 billion. Colombia wants \$2 billion, everyone in Eastern Europe wants \$2 billion. We can’t do it.” Apparently, there were billions of U.S. dollars available to slaughter Panamanians in the illegal military invasion carried out by the United States last Dec. 20—but none to spend saving lives and fostering freedom, now that Nicaraguans have voiced their desire for a better life.