P.S. to the NEWS
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RELEASE: NOVEMBER 7, 1980

THE SANDINISTAS' TAKEOVER OF NICARAGUA

The turnover of Nicaragua to the Sandinistas was one of the foreign policy "achievements" of the Carter Administration. It's pretty clear now that this was an achievement for Communist expansion rather than containment.

The Sandinistas who replaced Somoza have moved deliberately and deviously to consolidate their power. Their attitude toward the press, as well as other tactics and alliances, is characteristically Communist.

Interior Minister Tomas Borge warned on Sept. 20, 1979, that "anything critical of the [Sandinistan] revolution is counterrevolutionary, and, of course, we will fight counterrevolution with political as well as repressive means." FSLN Commander in Chief Humberto Ortego added on Oct. 9, 1979, that "journalism has the right to be free, but it does not have the right to attack the process, even indirectly."

After the Sandinistas took power, journalists were arrested, news stories were censored, and broadcasting licenses were revoked. Tight restrictions were imposed on radio and television.

During half of 1979, only one radio station and one television station were allowed to operate. This year, more radio stations were on the air, but only one was permitted to air anything other than music and pro-government editorials.

When the Sandinistas took over, they proclaimed that foreign investments and private businesses would not be taken over by the state. But all the major industries were nationalized in February 1980, including banks, insurance companies, mining, fishing and forestry. The junta has taken over more than 400 companies.

What about political prisoners in the new anti-Somoza regime? The President of the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights estimates that there were more than 7,000 political prisoners as of the end of 1979. The number grew to 12,000

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by mid-1980, and there are 20 secret detention centers in Nicaragua.

When the political goal was merely to get rid of Somoza, the Sandinistas were joined by a number of prominent businessmen who gave the junta respectability. Their disillusionment has been bitter.

When the junta demanded that the Council of State (the Sandinista pseudo-legislature) be guaranteed a clear majority of revolutionaries over businessmen and farmers, Violetto Chamorro resigned with a blast at Cuban and Soviet interference. A week later, in April 1980, another businessman, Alfonso Robelo, resigned, stating, "What really seems sad to me is that a country destroyed by war, bankrupted by Somoza, could shake the influence of U.S. imperialism to fall under Soviet imperialism." Twelve other resignations followed.

A third business leader, Jose Francisco Cardenal, who was Vice President of the Council of State, fled Nicaragua in fear for his life. He said on May 15, 1980, that "Nicaragua is under a Marxist system, and we hope that the free peoples of the world realize what is going on so that our people will not suffer the same fate that the Cubans are suffering."

Immediately after the 1979 revolution, the Sandinistas imported more than 1,200 Cuban teachers. Hundreds of other Cubans are working in Nicaragua as doctors, paramedics, airport personnel, and technicians. In return, the Sandinistas sent 500 troops to fight alongside of Cubans in Angola plus 1,500 in El Salvador.

Sandinistan Nicaragua signed a pact with the Soviets which allows the Russians to place 300 agents in the Soviet embassy in Managua, to open an Aeroflot Airline office there, and to fish along the Nicaraguan coast, and required Nicaragua to issue a statement of support for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

While the Russians are taking out the benefits, good old Uncle Sucker is sending in the cash. Since the Sandinistas replaced Somoza, they

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have received $50 million in U.S. foreign aid. President Carter asked and got Congress to vote another $75 million to the Sandinistas.

It is obvious that the switchover from Somoza to Sandinista was a net loss for the United States. Carter used U.S. money and pressure to dump a pro-American dictator and replace him with a pro-Communist junta.

Nicaragua is geographically, strategically, and psychologically important to the defense of the Western Hemisphere against Communist aggression. The American people are entitled to an answer to the question: Why is the Carter Administration financing the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, whose record proves that they are Marxist, pro-Soviet, pro-Castro, and anti-American?

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