



UC Davis delegate Meg England, observer Susan Clark and UC Santa Barbara observer Scott Morse (l-r) spend time with some of the children of Leon in that city's town square.

NICARAGUA: Protocol for Peace

Articles by
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Students Study Political Climate on 10-day Trip

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — A delegation of University of California students and faculty members spent 10 days in Nicaragua to find out firsthand what is really going on in this impoverished, war-torn country.

The tour was organized by both the U.S. State Department and the Sandinista government, a move to insure that the members of the Protocol for Peace delegation obtained a balanced presentation of the opposing viewpoints.

The trip to Nicaragua was the first of a three-part UC systemwide project to explore the conflicts between the U.S. and Nicaragua and to promote negotiations and a peaceful settlement between the two nations.

The delegation arrived here one week before the House vote for the \$100 million *contra* aid package.

Over the course of the trip, students met with Nicaraguan government leaders, opposition parties, human rights organizations, university students, religious organizations, soldiers, peasants, and people on the street.

The group planned to meet with U.S. Ambassador Harold Bergold during the first full day of their visit. Bergold cancelled the meeting so he could meet with a congressional fact-finding delegation.

The U.S. Embassy offered a substitute to Bergold but delegation members were disappointed with Garret Sweeny.

Sweeny, the chief political consultant to the ambassador, called himself "a Latin American expert," but said he had no authority to speak on public record and asked that his comments be attributed to "a Western observer" or a "Western diplomat."

This "Western observer" spoke about human rights violations committed by the Nicaraguan government, including restrictions on the freedom of assembly.

For example, he said: "Outdoor political demonstrations are prohibited, unless the group putting on the event obtains a police permit."

When asked about similar laws for parades and demonstrations in the U.S., this "Western observer" quickly moved onto another example.

"There were a lot of questions that were left unanswered," said UCLA delegate Robin Toma. "If we came away from this trip with more information that supports the Sandinista perspective more so than the opposition groups, it's because the U.S. Embassy didn't put a lot of time in setting up worthwhile meetings for us."

The delegation's second meeting was with Ministry of Foreign Relations spokesman Alejandro Bendana who said that although the delegation would have opportunities to meet with different factions, and gather conflicting information, "you will be branded as a communist sympathizer, a product of the massive Sandinista disinformation campaign, if you question current U.S. policy in Nicaragua."

During a meeting with Haydei Acosta, who represented COSEP, a private-sector organization, she said the economy has continued to worsen since the 1979 revolution, which overthrew the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza.

Using a graph to show production levels, she overlooked the fact that the economy showed some growth from 1980 to 1982.

When asked about the omission, she admitted that there was an increase during those years, but overall, living conditions were worse today than they were before the revolution.

Opposition leader Alvin Guthrie, secretary general of CUS, an independent trade union, spoke of an increase in government repression through intimidation of members who voice

their opposition, evident during the 1984 elections.

Guthrie added that although the day of the elections was "clean" and "legal," government harassment of opposition parties and restrictions on the amount of air time these groups received "made some opposition parties decide not to participate in the elections."

When asked by UC Riverside delegate Shawn Wade whether CUS registered its complaint with the Supreme Electoral Council, which oversees the entire election process and investigates all complaints, Guthrie said he had not done so.

"If Guthrie didn't complain, then those accusations against the government weren't going to be investigated, and those guilty of harassment weren't going to be reprimanded," Wade said.

Of all those interviewed, not one member of the different organizations wanted U.S. military intervention.

"Even if they hated the Sandinista government, they all said that it was a Nicaraguan problem and they could deal with it without the intrusion of the U.S. or the Soviet Union," said UC Davis Delegate Jacqueline Ross.

Since the delegation returned, the students have begun follow-up work, that includes checking questionable information they received and gathering reports on human rights abuses, to better prepare themselves for the negotiation process which begins April 24 at UC Davis.

Four more students from the National University of Nicaragua will join the six UC delegates in Davis to negotiate a peace settlement between the two countries. They hope to send the declaration, in petition form, to universities across the country. The final step will be to deliver the signed declaration to Congress and the Nicaraguan government.

Nicaragua's History: 1821-1985

Roots of Current Strife Seen Throughout Nation's Past

(The following is a comprehensive history of political events in and affecting Nicaragua dating from 1821. If any details are missing it is due to space considerations.)

1821 — Nicaragua declares its independence from Spain and forms as a federation with other Central American countries.

1838 — The federation is dissolved and Nicaragua becomes a republic.

1850 — The U.S. and Great Britain sign the Clayton-Bulwar Treaty, agreeing to share rights to a trans-Nicaragua Canal. The Nicaraguan government was not consulted.

1855 — William Walker and 58 other American adventurers arrive in Nicaragua. Walker declares himself president, reestablishing slavery, and is recognized by U.S. President Franklin Pierce.

1857 — Walker is defeated by a combined Central American force.

1909 — President Zalaya resigns in the face of open U.S. hostility after he cancelled U.S. concessions in

Nicaragua, and turned to other nations for support.

1912 — U.S. troops arrive to end the political turmoil that followed Zelaya's resignation and meet with armed resistance.

1914 — The Nicaraguan government signs the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty giving exclusive canal rights to the U.S.

1925 — U.S. Marines leave, feeling the incumbent government is sufficiently pro-U.S. and stable.

1926 — American troops return as attempts are made to oust pro-U.S. government.

1927 — General Moncada, a leader of rebel forces, agrees to a peace treaty. One of his generals, Augusto Cesar Sandino, rejects the peace pact. Sandino organizes guerrilla forces to oppose American troops.

1933 — U.S. troops leave without defeating Sandino. Their role is taken up by the U.S.-created National Guard headed by Anastasio Somoza Garcia.

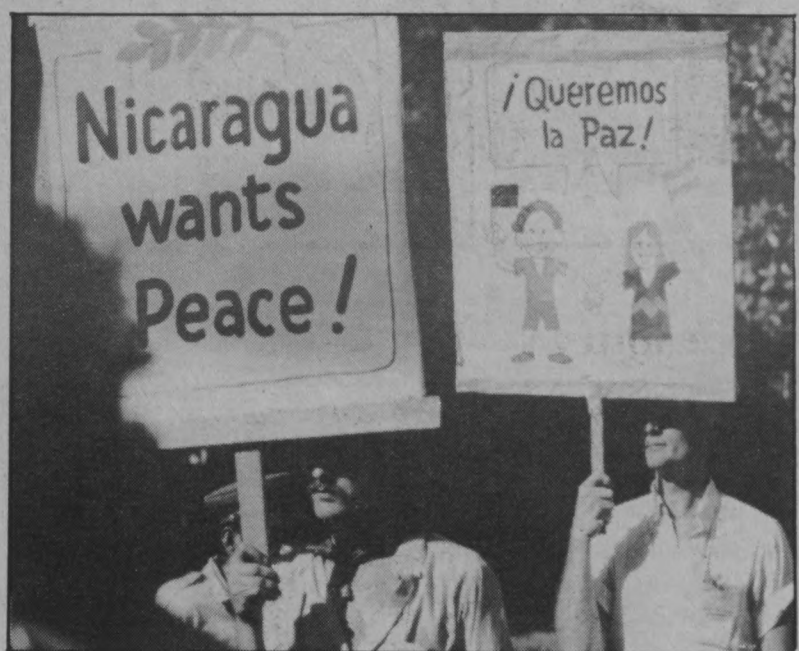
1934 — Sandino is assassinated on orders of Somoza.

1936 — Somoza forces President Sacasa from office and assumes presidency after fraudulent elections.

1954 — Somoza permits use of Nicaragua as a staging area for CIA-sponsored coup against Guatemalan President Arbenz.

1956 — Somoza is assassinated by poet Rigoberto Lopez Perez at a party celebrating Somoza's

(See HISTORY, p.2A)



Two Americans carry signs asking for peace during a weekly demonstration in front of the American Embassy in Nicaragua. The demonstrators are requesting that they not be "rescued" by U.S. troops.

HISTORY

(Continued from p.1A)

renomination. He is succeeded by his eldest son, Luis Somoza.

1961 — President Luis Somoza permits Nicaragua to be used as a staging area for the CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs Cuba invasion.

1961 — Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) founded. Sandinista National Liberation Front.

1963 — Somoza family confidante Rene Schick assumes presidency. Anastacio Somoza Debayle, brother of Luis, serves as head of National Guard.

1964 — Anastacio Somoza Debayle assumes presidency.

1972 — An earthquake destroys much of Managua. President Somoza pockets the international aid.

1974 — The FSLN offensive builds momentum after taking hostages at a party for Managua's elite and exchanging them for ransom and freedom of political prisoners.

1976 Jan. — Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, editor of opposition newspaper *La Prensa*, is assassinated, further isolating Somoza regime.

Aug. — The FSLN seizes the National Palace, taking dozens of congressmen hostage and exchanging them for ransom, freedom of political prisoners and safe conduct to Panama.

1979 — In July, FSLN forces triumphantly enter Managua after flight of Somoza.

(Reprinted from *Nicaraguan Perspectives*, Number 5, Winter 1983.)

1981 Feb. — The U.S. State Department releases a "white paper" depicting Nicaragua as the epicenter for arms traffic to Salvadoran insurgents. The U.S. government begins to cut off all economic loans and credits to Nicaragua.

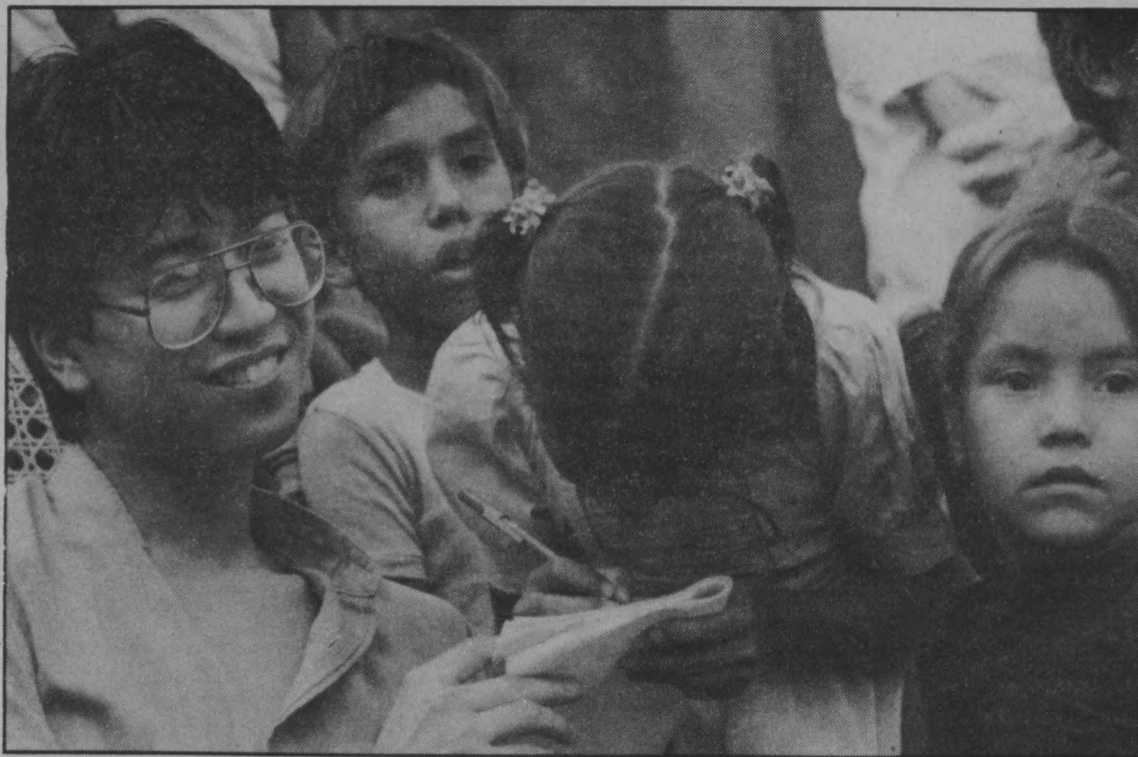
The Nicaraguan government calls for joint Honduran-Nicaraguan border patrols to curb arms flows or suspected arms flows.

March — Parade Magazine discloses that ex-Somoza guardsmen, known as *contras*, are being trained in the U.S. for military attacks on Nicaragua.

April — In an official government communique, Nicaragua protests U.S. aid cuts and the threat of military aggression.

Nicaragua urges the Honduran government to halt military attacks on Nicaragua from that country. Honduran President Policarpo Paz agrees to meet with Sandinista government coordinator Daniel Ortega.

May — Paz and Ortega meet in



UCLA Law School delegate Robin Toma gathers names and addresses from Nicaraguan children. Toma will negotiate with Nicaraguan students in May at UC Davis.

Guasale, Nicaragua, to discuss border tensions. Paz promises to restrain paramilitary supporters in the Honduran army.

June — In response to widespread rejection of U.S. charges against Nicaragua, Secretary of State Alexander Haig raises new charges that Nicaragua received Soviet tanks. Press criticism of the U.S. "white paper" allegations stops.

Aug. — After repeated requests by Nicaragua for talks to improve U.S.-Nicaragua relations, President Reagan sends Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America Thomas Enders for discussions in Managua. Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto expresses a cautious optimism after the meeting.

Honduras grants the U.S. permission to build a military base in the Gulf of Fonseca, a body of water shared by Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Sept. — France and Mexico issue a joint declaration to recognize the FDR/FMLN as a "representative political force" in El Salvador.

FDR President Guillermo Ungo travels to the U.S. to "test international reaction" to the French-Mexican declaration. Ungo declares that "the door is now open" for talks with the U.S.

U.S. State Dept. officials respond that the declaration will not cause the U.S. to reevaluate its opposition to negotiations. Joint U.S.-Honduran military maneuvers are held.

Oct. — Daniel Ortega addresses the United Nations General Assembly in support of a peace plan for El Salvador through negotiations

without preconditions.

Nicaraguan Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Cruz reiterates his country's desire for a "positive and harmonious" relationship with America. Cruz declares that "Nicaragua has not and will not permit its sovereign territory to be used as a staging point for any direct or indirect military intervention in the affairs of El Salvador or of any other country."

Nov. — The Reagan administration intensifies charges and threats against Nicaragua. Secretary of State Haig tells members of Congress that Nicaragua is becoming a powerful totalitarian state which threatens U.S. interests. Haig refuses to rule out military action against Nicaragua.

Regular Honduran troops attack the Nicaragua border post at Guasale on two separate occasions.

Nicaraguan Foreign Minister D'Escoto, in communiques with his Honduran counterpart, protests attacks on Nicaragua, noting that "provocations of this nature only tend to obstruct the efforts made by Nicaragua to lessen the tensions in Central America."

D'Escoto urgently requests Honduran government to honor May 1981 agreements for continued dialog and cooperation.

Dec. — President Reagan authorizes a \$19-million CIA-directed plan for paramilitary and terrorist operations against Nicaragua. In apparent initial implementation of this plan, terrorist attacks, code-named "Red Christmas," are launched in

Nicaragua's remote northeast border area. Other immediate targets of attack are Nicaragua's only oil refinery and cement plant.

1982

Jan. — After meeting with U.S. Undersecretary of State James Buckley in San Jose, Costa Rica, the foreign ministers of Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras announce the "surprise" formation of the "Central American Democratic Community." Nicaragua, Panama and other Central American governments are excluded from the meeting.

Feb. — At a meeting of Latin American political parties, (COPPAL) in Managua, Mexican President Lopez Portillo proposes a regional peace plan with three main points: the U.S. should cease its threats and military actions against Nicaragua; if the paramilitary units operating in Honduras are disbanded, Nicaragua should reduce the size of its armed forces; the affected countries should enter into mutual non-aggression pacts.

The Nicaraguan government welcomes Portillo's proposals; U.S. response is uncertain.

March — U.S. launches a major public relations blitz to demonstrate the threat posed by Nicaragua. The effort fails to show that Nicaraguan military dispositions are anything more than defensive.

The Mexican government announces that U.S.-Nicaraguan negotiations will begin in April in Mexico City; the State Department immediately calls the Mexican announcement "premature."

Speaking before the U.N. Security Council, Daniel Ortega denounces the military attacks on Nicaragua. Ortega tells reporters that Nicaragua would welcome immediate and unconditional negotiations with the U.S.

April — Despite Nicaraguan readiness to negotiate, the U.S. stalls.

May — Mexican officials express pessimism about the likelihood of U.S.-Nicaraguan talks.

July — Military attacks on Nicaragua increase dramatically.

Joint U.S.-Honduran military maneuvers are held near Nicaragua's remote northeast border. U.S. planes move equipment and a battalion of Honduran troops to a new permanent base in the border area.

Aug. — Nicaragua's government reiterates its desire for talks with the U.S.

Sept. — The presidents of Mexico and Venezuela send an appeal to the heads of state of Honduras, Nicaragua, and the U.S. calling for an "exploration of ways that remain open to halt the worrying escalation" of the crisis. One hundred six members of Congress endorse the proposal.

Lt. Col. John Buchanan, USMC (Ret.), briefs a House subcommittee on the border tension between Honduras and Nicaragua. In a detailed analysis of Nicaragua's military capability, Buchanan describes Nicaragua's "military



The director of La Segovia Prison negotiates with the students.

buildup" as defensive in nature. Buchanan also warns of a possible Honduran invasion of Nicaragua in December.

Oct. — In an apparent attempt to blunt the Mexican-Venezuela peace initiative, the Reagan administration backs a forum for peace and democracy in San Jose, Costa Rica. Nicaragua is excluded from the forum. Mexico and Venezuela decline to attend.

Nov. — *Newsweek* reveals extensive details of the U.S. paramilitary war on Nicaragua. U.S. officials confirm that the operation is intended to "keep Managua off balance and apply pressure."

During a visit to Washington, Costa Rican President Monge warns President Reagan of the dangers of current U.S. policies in the region. Reagan responds with a polite silence.

Dec. — Reagan designs his Latin American trip to include visits with leaders of all three countries neighboring Nicaragua. Nicaraguan leader Sergio Ramirez points out that U.S. diplomats continue to refuse to see high-level Sandinista officials. The U.S. has still not responded to Nicaragua's last diplomatic note of Aug. 1982 urging peace talks. The U.S. also continues to oppose peace talks between Honduras and Nicaragua.

1983

Feb. — About 1,600 U.S. military personnel and 4,000 Honduran soldiers participate in war games in Honduras near Nicaraguan border. The U.S. force does not engage in the mock combat, but Nicaragua charges that the games were a training exercise for an invasion.

Nicaragua reports that it put down an attack by 120 exiles who had landed on the coast after embarking in Honduras.

March — Accusations as well as bullets are exchanged as tensions grow in Central America. The defense minister in Nicaragua warns that war with Honduras might result from attacks on Nicaragua. Nicaragua charges that 2,000 U.S.-backed rebels had invaded Nicaragua from Honduras.

At a meeting at the United Nations Security Council, Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Hago Tinoco, also claims that the Honduran army was massing near the border.

U.S. Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick calls fighting the result of a

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A poster that promotes voting displays election ballots that include all seven Nicaraguan political parties.

Nicaraguans Seek Talks with U.S., End to Contra Support

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The cards are on the table.

The Nicaraguan government says it's willing to make concessions that address several of the Reagan administration's concerns in the area, including phasing out the presence of Cuban advisors, reducing the size of its army and guaranteeing not to export revolution to neighboring countries.

What's the catch? Peace. The Sandinistas — after fighting for two decades to overthrow a U.S.-backed dictatorship and now a U.S.-backed rebel force — would like to lay down arms and negotiate as States.

Since 1981, the U.S. and the CIA have supported the anti-Sandinista rebel forces, called *contras*, whose chief objective is to overthrow the Sandinista government.

The Reagan administration says that providing aid to the *contras* will pressure the Nicaraguan government into moving away from a communist state to a democracy.

Since 1983, the Sandinistas have presented the U.S. government with four peace proposals in hopes of reaching an agreement to end the civil war and to recognize Nicaragua's right to self-determination and independence.

The treaties are part of the peace-making process begun by the Contadora countries of Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia in early 1983. The Contadora process aims to resolve, through diplomacy, the current conflicts in Central America.

According to the Contadora Group, the proposals represent significant concessions by Nicaragua and address several concerns raised by the Reagan administration. The contadora peace proposal consists of:

- the withdrawal of foreign military and security advisers and the elimination of all foreign bases in Central America. Currently, the United States has about 50 to 100 military advisers in Honduras. There are about 800 to 1,000 Cuban advisers in Nicaragua.

- a non-aggression agreement between Honduras and Nicaragua. The fighting between the Sandinistas and the *contras* is occurring mainly along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border.

- a ban on all outside support for guerrilla forces fighting the governments of other Central American countries. President Reagan contends that Nicaragua has been supplying arms to the El Salvadoran guerrillas, a charge that has never been proved.

- respect for the Central American people's right to self-determination and noninterference in their

internal affair, which is a provision in the charter of the United Nations.

—a halt to trade embargos and efforts to block foreign economic assistance against any Central American country. Last year, the U.S. imposed a trade embargo against Nicaragua.

Other countries in the hemisphere, including Brazil, Argentina, Peru and Uruguay support the Contadora process and have asked the U.S. government to give the diplomatic efforts a chance to bear fruit.

The Sandinista leadership says that U.S. and Honduras, through the CIA, have chosen a military solution aimed at overthrowing their government and its revolution. In 1979, the Sandinistas overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza, whose family for 50 years killed, tortured, and repressed the people of Nicaragua.

President Reagan says the Sandinistas' growing military strength, its support for the Salvadoran rebels, its increased dependence on Cuba and Eastern Europe, and its growing internal repression are a menace to all of Central America and a threat to the national security of the U.S.

The Sandinistas say that U.S. presence in Honduras and direct support for the *contras* has given the Sandinistas no other choice but to militarize the country. The Sandinista government says the state of emergency which restricted certain freedoms was in response to a very real crisis, consisting of attacks from *contras*, internal sabotage, and economic destabilization.

Nicaragua affirms that once contra aid is halted and a treaty is signed, it will end the state of emergency and grant the *contras* amnesty with full political rights.

"We are willing to discuss legitimate security concerns the U.S. has, but ... within a framework of mutual respect," Ministry of Foreign Relations spokesman Alejandro Bendana said.

The Reagan administration walked out of negotiations with the Nicaraguan officials last year.

According to Bendana and other government officials, the U.S. has only paid lip service to Contadora proposals and the group's efforts to promote negotiations between the nations of the region.

"Reagan's actions seem to undercut the actual negotiating process," Bendana said. Nicaragua is concerned and feels threatened by U.S. advisers and troops in Central America, he said.

The Sandinistas are willing to be flexible during the

negotiations, he explained. But "we're not going to do it (make concessions) unilaterally."

In a telephone interview, Dyke Johnson, legislative aide to Rep. David Dreier, R-Los Angeles, said that "the Reagan administration would like to use the Contadora process as a framework for a negotiated settlement."

If the U.S. agreed to the Contadora proposals, "U.S. influence would be removed from the area," he said.

The Reagan administration says it would conduct talks with the Sandinistas, only if the *contras* were included in the negotiations, a proposal the Nicaraguan government adamantly opposes.

The Reagan administration says there is no reason the Sandinistas should not negotiate with the *contras*, the "freedom fighters," because they are also members of Nicaraguan society.

"If the *contras* had strong popular support, were an autonomous force, were effective militarily, were able to control territories, we would be willing to negotiate," Bendana said.

"But, if we negotiated with them now, it would be giving them legitimacy which they have not earned," he said.

According to the human rights organizations, in the past four years, the *contras* have been responsible for the majority of human-rights violations in Nicaragua. Since the *contra* war began in 1982, more than 13,000 have died and just as many have been wounded and crippled.

The Washington Office of Latin America, a private human rights group sponsored by several religious organizations, reported that in 1985, 139 attacks were committed against Nicaraguan civilians. The reports included that 118 were committed by the *contras* and 21 by members of the Nicaraguan armed forces.

Last month President Reagan told the American public in a televised speech that the U.S. has tried 10 times in the past to negotiate with the Sandinistas and was repudiated.

"In those meetings Mr. Reagan is talking about, the U.S. representatives had a predetermined position when they went into the negotiations, that they knew Nicaragua could not accept," said Bendana.

"We're dependent on Washington," Bendana said, "as to whether there's going to be peace in Central America or not."



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About 100 U.S. soldiers arrive in Honduras to train Salvadoran soldiers to fight left-wing rebels in El Salvador.

Two U.S. journalists die in Honduras near the Nicaraguan border. The Honduran military said that a land mine exploded under their jeep.

July — Reagan reveals plans for U.S. military activity near Nicaragua.

Presidents of the Contadora Group meet in Mexico and call for international border patrols, removal of foreign military bases and advisers from Central America and an end to arms shipments into the area.

Reagan announces that he will create a commission to recommend long-term U.S. policies in Central America, and that it will be headed by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Eleven other members of the bipartisan, but generally conservative, commission are named on July 19.

Nicaragua on July 19 announces it

is ready to join talks on attaining peace in Central America.

On the 30th anniversary of the beginning of his revolution, Cuban President Fidel Castro denounces projected U.S. military activities.

On the same day, Reagan rejects any suggestion that he is planning a war in Central America.

The House votes 228-195 to ban all aid to rebels opposing the Nicaraguan government after many members concluded that the U.S.-backed insurgents had not succeeded in interdicting arms from Nicaragua to Salvadoran rebels.

Castro said that Cuba would withdraw its advisers from Nicaragua as part of a comprehensive withdrawal of other advisers. Reagan said he would give Castro the benefit of the doubt as to his sincerity.

Aug. — The Nicaraguan defense ministry said rebel forces were stepping up attacks and that some 2,000 rebels were entering northern Nicaragua during August.

October — Reagan's commission

on Central America visits the region even as reports grow of CIA involvement in the fighting in Nicaragua.

Reagan's 12-member commission, headed by Dr. Henry Kissinger, arrives in Panama at the beginning of a week-long fact finding tour of the region.

Nicaragua announces that rebels attacked one of its major ports, Puerto Sandino, three days after U.S.-backed rebels attacked another port, Corinto, where large quantities of fuel were destroyed.

Reagan administration officials tell the *New York Times* that recent attacks on Nicaraguan facilities were supported by the CIA.

Members of the Kissinger Commission, concluding their tour, meet with Nicaraguan leaders in Managua.

1984

Jan. — President Reagan's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, headed by Kissinger, calls for a sharp increase in economic aid and endorses



UC Davis delegate Roberto Banchick-Rothchild (left) interprets the words of a cooperative farm president Rendon Cruz and army representative Faustino Altamirano Bladon.

Reagan administration policy.

April — The CIA acknowledges it participated in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors.

Congress adopts a nonbinding resolution condemning U.S. participation in the mining. The Reagan administration said mining had been halted.

Nov. — The first elections are held in Nicaragua since the 1979 revolution. The Sandinista National Liberation Front receives 63 percent of vote, but opposition groups boycott the elections because they believe the elections are not com-

(See HISTORY, p.4A)



La Prensa, the right-wing opposition paper, headlines that President Reagan called himself a contra.

Citizens Keep Faith in a Nation Full of Poverty and War

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — As the bus drove down the main boulevard of the capital city, my first reaction was to laugh. Could this be the same country our president says poses a threat to our national security?

Although it was getting dark, I could see gutted buildings, pocked by the removal of bricks. Squatters, goats, pigs and roosters wandered through the rubble.

These buildings were destroyed by the 1972 earthquake that flattened the city of Managua and were never repaired.

I was on a tour with a University of California delegation. Tour guide Margarita Clarke told the 21-member delegation that international aid had poured into Nicaragua to help rebuild the city, but the money was pocketed by the former dictator, Anastasio Somoza and his cronies.

The Sandinistas, who are in the midst of fending off attacks from U.S.-backed rebels, known as *contras*, have not repaired many of the remaining buildings. However, the government has converted the shells of some buildings. Like the former Grand Hotel, now used as an outdoor stage for cultural events.

We continued our bumpy ride through the city, where the average yearly income is less than \$300 and the inflation rate is more than 300 percent.

After we got off the main street, the cratered roads turned from concrete to dirt. The bus slowly passed people on mules, children pushing wooden carts, horse-drawn wagons, pigs in ditches and shanty towns. According to the government, more than 200,000 Nicaraguans have migrated from the war zones of northern Nicaragua to Managua since the civil war began in 1982. "This has caused many problems because Managua didn't have the resources for the 600,000 people it already had," Clarke said.

Nicaragua is hard-pressed economically. It borrows close to \$600 million in foreign aid annually from other Latin American countries, Soviet bloc and Western European countries just to cover its debts. There has been a collapse in exports, partly the result of a trade embargo imposed by the U.S.

We passed several badly worn public buses packed to the hilt, as people hung onto outside rails and sat on the rooftops. I sensed members of the delegation felt somewhat guilty about being in a bus that could have seated an extra handful, comfortably.

Nicaragua, with a population of just over 3 million, is without water twice a week, has constant shortages of light bulbs, toilet paper and sugar. Many basic foodstuffs, including rice and beans, are rationed.

Goods grown in Nicaragua for the consumption of its people have been destroyed by the war against the *contras*. In the northern border area, agricultural production has declined, in some areas by half due to *contra*-initiated damages, including bombing and burning of storage warehouses and machinery, the government claims.

The bus continued on. There was a huge, pyramid-shaped building to the left of us. It was the Intercontinental Hotel, surrounded by low-cost housing, dirt roads, empty lots and destroyed buildings.

The Intercontinental is important to all Nicaraguans, Clarke said, because the city is without street names and numbers, so Nicaraguans use the luxury hotel as a landmark when giving directions.

President Reagan says this country is the model for exporting communism to other neighboring countries, but Nicaraguan officials say that the country can't even export enough coffee to pay its debts.

Although Nicaragua is a client-state of the

Soviet Union, its treatment of the people is less harsh than in the USSR.

An acquaintance of mine who has traveled there several times told me that foreigners visiting the USSR are not allowed to stay in the homes of its citizens, that all news was government news and that no opposition parties were allowed to voice their opinions.

In Nicaragua, I learned very quickly there is censorship of the press, but little restriction is placed on the freedom of conversation. Most Nicaraguans are friendly and polite and in spite of everything, enjoy talking with Americans.

Nicaraguans passionately and openly talk about their government. Some say they are afraid to talk because of government reprisal, but that did not seem to stop them from voicing their opinions, ideas and hopes.

La Prensa, the opposition newspaper, along with other publications must go through government censorship before it publishes its daily paper. *La Prensa* argues that the censorship is a violation of the freedom of the press and is characteristic of a totalitarian government. But the Sandinistas say the paper's opposition to government policies and inflammatory reporting might destroy the already damaged economy and upset the balance of power within the leadership.

Last year, the government imposed a state of emergency in response to increases in *contra* activities. The right to public assembly, strikes and postal privacy have been suspended.

One day we met with an editor from *La Prensa* who charged the government with reneging on its promises of democracy. "The government is an absolute Marxist-Leninist totalitarian regime," he said.

Nonetheless, the Nicaraguan government allows *La Prensa* to post the uncensored version of its daily paper in front of its office building. But of course not all Nicaraguans can come and see it.

During my trip, I experienced a taste of repression by the Sandinistas. One evening in Managua, a friend and I decided to go to a bar. We got lost. There are no street names and the Intercontinental was not in sight. We came across a park, sat around and talked. It was a little past midnight and the streets were empty. A friendly soldier guarding the army base across from the park started chatting with us.

Suddenly, a car full of military men drove up, thrust open the doors. Men jumped out, rifles in hand, and began to question us. My heart was beating about 100 miles a minute. I began to sweat. I was scared.

After carefully inspecting our passports, they told us to return to our hotel. We did just that. They followed us back.

The next day I asked a government official if this was routine and he said: "There have been a number of *contra* attacks during the last two weeks and the guards get suspicious of people who wander late at night next to an army base."

We were in Nicaragua at a significant time. The House was going to vote on President Reagan's proposed \$100 million *contra* aid package.

The day before the vote, more than 500 people attended a vigil in front of the U.S. Embassy here to protest the aid. Americans, Canadians, Swedes, Australians and Nicaraguans gathered for several hours to mourn those who had lost their lives in the war. They chanted. They sang. Some cried. Others preached. Many remained silent.

The day of the vote, some of the delegation joined U.S. residents here in their weekly demonstrations against U.S. policy in Nicaragua. The ritual of protesting every Thursday in front of the U.S. Embassy began a



UC correspondent Mariko Takayasu (left) reports on the people at a Christian-based community near Esteli.

week after the U.S. invaded Grenada in October 1983. Many Latin Americans feared that Grenada signaled a revival of American armed interventionism and that Nicaragua would be next.

On our first weekend field trip, the delegation went to the town of Esteli, which has been frequently attacked by *contra* forces.

The peasants there talked about the government literacy campaign that began immediately after the revolution. Illiteracy was reduced from 50 percent to less than 13 percent, according to the Ministry of Education. They spoke of health care improvements and the redistribution of property that provided land to more than 70,000 peasants, or *campesinos*.

We left Esteli just in time. The town was attacked by the *contras* the next day. There were reports of 10 casualties and the capture of two of the rebels. When I heard about it, I thought about the young man that members of the delegation met with, who pleaded with us to tell the American people about the high price the Nicaraguan people pay in the war waged against them by the U.S. The price, he said, "human suffering."

These people live in a state of constant war. When talking to Nicaraguans, they act as if it's nothing new. War is the norm. It has been for centuries. They can take it or leave it, although most wish the fighting would end.

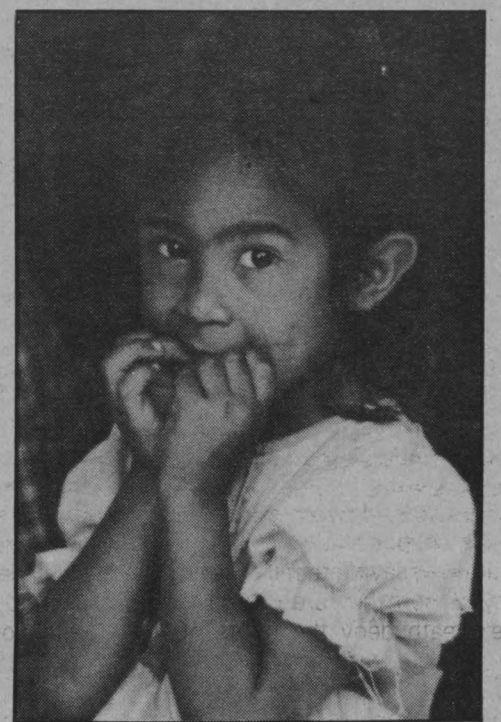
This was evident when the delegation met with Nicaraguan university students.

The Nicaraguan students held a reception and dance for the delegation. Suddenly, a number of Nicaraguans surrounded a classmate, picked him up and threw him up in the air. At that moment, I thought it was his birthday or something thereof.

Tamara, a woman I was sitting next to, asked if I understood what was happening. When I replied "no," she said, "He will be leaving for the front ... to fight against the counterrevolutionaries."

"This is our way of sending him off," Tamara said. She said with sadness in her eyes, "He would have graduated next year." All men between the ages of 18 and 25 must enter active service for up to two years.

During the few hours we spent at the National University of Nicaragua, the young Sandinistas continuously chanted, "Never again, never again."



This child lives at a state-supported cooperative near Esteli.

"Never again," one student said, "will the Sandinistas allow another government to take away our sovereignty."

He was talking about the U.S. government, which has militarily intervened in Nicaragua five times. The last time was in 1933, when the Marines pulled out after being fought to a standstill by the guerrilla leader, Augusto Sandino, for whom the Sandinistas are named.

The Sandinistas admit that they have made their share of mistakes, but have also attempted to improve the conditions of Nicaragua's poor by providing free health care and education, as well as giving people a greater voice in those decisions which affect their lives.

Although many Nicaraguans admit that the government has problems, they would rather live with the Sandinistas than the Somocistas, who ruled before the revolution.

As one Nicaraguan youth said, "Give us a chance to make our own decisions and learn from our mistakes."

HISTORY

(Continued from p.3A)

pletely open and free.

Internal political oppositions of Sandinistas criticize U.S. moves against Nicaragua, arguing that they would push the hand of the hardliners in the government.

A Pentagon Spokesman charged that Nicaragua had "designs" on Honduras and El Salvador. International Court of Justice at the Hague voted 16-0 to accept a suit by Nicaragua demanding that the U.S. end support of military activities against Nicaragua.

1985

Jan. — The U.S. notifies the World Court that it will not participate in proceedings related to Nicaragua's suit. The announcement is a bad omen for relations between the U.S. and the new administration of Daniel Ortega, who was sworn in as president of the country on Jan. 10.

Administration officials announce

that bilateral talks with Sandinistas will be suspended. The U.S. charges that Nicaragua used the World Court for political and propaganda purposes.

Feb. — President Reagan acknowledges he wanted to "remove" the "present structure" of the leftist Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

At a press conference, Reagan restarts his appeal to Congress to renew aid to the *contras*, whom he calls "freedom fighters," and said that he did favor the removal of the government.

General Gorman, the retiring commander of the American Military forces in Central America, said the *contras* were incapable of overthrowing the Nicaraguan government in "the foreseeable future" with or without American aid.

Ortega announces an indefinite moratorium on the acquisition of new arms systems and said Nicaragua would send home 100

Cuban military advisers.

March — At a conference, Reagan calls the *contras* the "moral equal of our founding fathers..." Ortega and Schultz meet in Uruguay.

Nicaraguan opponents to the Sandinista regime, showing newfound unity, meet in Costa Rica and call on the government to open a "national dialogue" to solve the country's problems.

America's Watch, a U.S. human rights organization, asserted in a report that the *contras* had raped, killed and murdered many civilians. The group's report said the Sandinistas had also committed human rights abuses, but that their violations had declined.

April — Congress rejects aid for the *contras*.

Reagan modifies his original appeal for military aid for *contras*, saying if Congress releases \$14 million in aid he would use it only for food, clothing and medicine, at least during the first 60 days. He also calls for a cease-fire and mediation by the

Roman Catholic Church.

Nicaragua rejects Reagan's peace plan, saying it would not negotiate with the *contras*.

Reagan launches a lobbying effort on behalf of the *contras*, denouncing the Sandinistas for "institutionalized cruelty." He runs into trouble when Pope John Paul II and President Belisario Betancur of Columbia deny his claims that they support U.S. military aid to the *contras*.

Reagan rejects a compromise offered by Democrats.

Ortega said his government and an Indian *contra* group had agreed to cease aggression. This was the first accord between the regime and any of its opponents.

The Senate endorses Reagan's request for aid, 53-46, after Reagan writes a letter promising to limit the spending of the \$14 million to food, clothing and other nonlethal uses. But the House then rejects the resolution, 248-80.

By voice vote, the U.S. Senate approves a resolution condemning Ortega's visit.

May — Asserting that Nicaragua's policies and actions pose a threat to U.S. security, Reagan orders an embargo on trade with Nicaragua. Reagan also terminates the U.S.-Nicaragua Treaty of Friends.

Nicaraguan Vice President Sergio Ramirez Mercado said Reagan's actions were illegal and arbitrary.

About 100 Cuban military advisers left Nicaragua, fulfilling a commitment made by Daniel Ortega.

Governments of Mexico, Great Britain, France, and others voice disapproval of the trade embargo, effective May 7.

June — Both houses approve humanitarian aid for *contras*. The Senate votes 55-42 for \$38 million over two years and the House reverses its vote, approving \$27 million, 248-184.

Ortega, in response to the vote lifts a moratorium on the procurement of arms announced in February.