

Fall 1985

Nicaraguan Relations with the Nonaligned Movement

Harry E. Vanden

University of South Florida, vanden@usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gia_facpub

Scholar Commons Citation

Vanden, Harry E., "Nicaraguan Relations with the Nonaligned Movement" (1985). *Government and International Affairs Faculty Publications*. 75.

https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gia_facpub/75

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the Government and International Affairs at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Government and International Affairs Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

NICARAGUAN RELATIONS WITH THE NONALIGNED MOVEMENT

by HARRY E. VANDEN
and
WALTRAUD QUEISER MORALES

PRONOUNCEMENTS BY THE Reagan Administration not withstanding, the oft repeated accusation that Nicaragua is but a Soviet or Cuban pawn does not appear consistent with a closer examination of the facts (see NACLA, 1985). Beginning with the original 1969 FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) Program, the Sandinista leadership which now rules Nicaragua has steadfastly maintained its nonaligned orientation. In fact, since coming to power, the Sandinistas have not only become active members of the Nonaligned Movement, but have also used their ties with the Nonaligned to explain their policies and to garner much needed international support for their actions. In the process, they appear to have taken full advantage of policy options created by the development of the Nonaligned Movement and only recently available to Latin American nations.

The nonaligned movement itself was born in the post-colonial period as increasing numbers of Third World nations sought to establish a direction in foreign policy which would allow them to ensure a political, if not economic, independence in a world increasingly dominated by two great powers. Roots of the movement extend back to 1955 when a group of Afro-Asian states met as a group to denounce colonialism, promote economic development, and call for relaxation in world tensions. Josip Broz Tito, an early founder of the movement, aligned Yugoslavia with the new group, attacking the di-

Harry E. Vanden is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of South Florida, Tampa. He is the author of *José Carlos Mariátegui: Influencias en su Formación Ideológica* and he is currently completing a bibliography of Latin American Marxism and conducting research for a book on Nicaragua.

Waltraud Queiser Morales is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Central Florida, Orlando. She is the author of *Social Revolution: Theory and Historical Application* and of *Bolivia; Land of Struggle*.

The authors wish to thank Mary K. Meyer for assisting with initial research for this article; and Harry E. Vanden wishes to acknowledge the support of the Division of Sponsored Research of the University of South Florida for the previous field research. The article is based upon the chapter entitled "Relations with the Nonaligned Movement," which appears in Thomas W. Walker (ed.) *Nicaragua: The First Five Years*, Praeger Publishers, 1985.

vision of the world into two hostile camps. At the first formal meeting of the Nonaligned, twenty-five nations gathered in Belgrade in 1961 and focused on the need for world peace. Subsequent nonaligned summit conferences (Cairo in 1964, Lusaka in 1970, Algiers in 1973, Colombo in 1976, Havana in 1979, and New Delhi in 1983) continued to mention the importance of an independent foreign policy and to advocate non-participation in cold war military pacts (despite Pakistan's alignment with the United States, and Cuba's eventual ties with the Soviet Union).

As Nicaragua would do later, Yugoslavia and a growing number of Third World nations used the new group as a mechanism to chart their own course in foreign policy and development. Evolution of the movement witnessed increasing concern over political hegemony and economic domination, particularly by Western powers. Thus, as the focus shifted from world peace and maintaining scrupulous equidistance between East and West, the new emphasis became one of expressing solidarity with anti-colonial struggles, supporting the political economy of the New International Economic Order (NIEO), and openly criticizing perceived Western domination in political or economic areas (LeoGrande, 1980: 38, 39). Support for liberation movements gradually became the primary focus of the movement with some nations, like Yugoslavia and Algeria, warning of US and Soviet imperialism (the two imperialisms thesis) with another, Cuba, arguing that the Socialist countries were natural allies.¹

THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM

If conditions proceeded to change rapidly in Africa and Asia, the traditional Inter-American system made nonalignment a different story in the Western Hemisphere, where, from the (1823) Monroe Doctrine onward, the United States had reserved for itself a hegemonic position. The United States was to be the first among equals and, as such, to enjoy certain rights and responsibilities foreclosed to lesser states. As industrial growth in the North economically outstripped the rural agrarianism of the South, the Latin American nations witnessed a variety of policy instruments: the big stick, gunboat and dollar diplomacy and, finally, the good neighbor policy. Though methods might vary, the end result was always the same, i.e. to convince the Latin American states to follow the US lead. When subtle methods failed, American presidents often sent in the Marines to secure the North American interest. Such was the case in Nicaragua, where Marines intervened from 1910 to 1925 and from 1926 to 1933. The

last occupation was in response to an indigenous guerrilla movement, Augusto César Sandino's Army in Defense of Nicaraguan National Sovereignty.

After Sandino was assassinated in 1934 and his army disbanded by the US-organized National Guard, the resulting Somoza family dictatorship remained in power until July of 1979 and was characterized by almost total subservience to North American policy interests. A Somoza could always deliver the Nicaraguan vote in crucial meetings of the United Nations (UN) or the Organization of American States (OAS). Nicaragua, like most of her sister republics, remained closely allied to the United States through the thirties, forties, fifties, and sixties.

Led by the post-revolutionary independence of Mexican foreign policy, other Latin American states pushed to enlarge their parameters of action in foreign affairs. Argentina, under Perón, remained neutral during most of the Second World War and pursued an independent course in the postwar period. Buenos Aires asserted its independence by recognizing the Soviet Union in 1946 and developing trade relations with both East and West. Years before the Colombo Conference, Peronist foreign policy called for a Third Force not aligned with either of the emerging power blocs.

Peronism appeared to insulate Argentina from the Cold War preoccupation that increasingly colored US relations with its Latin neighbors. In 1954 Guatemalan attempts at internal structural change and a foreign policy involving minimal relations with Eastern Europe became the basis for a US campaign characterizing the regime as a beachhead for international communism. The subsequent CIA-sponsored (US Central Intelligence Agency) coup terminated Guatemala's experiment with an independent foreign policy. Bolivia's attempts at structural change, following its 1952 revolution, lasted only a few years until US-induced economic pressure served to moderate the course of revolution (see Blasier, 1971; and Whitehead, 1969).

Interjection of the Cold War into the hemispheric system undercut attempts at maneuverability on the part of the Latin American nations, since it was assumed that common cultural, historic, economic, and political ties inextricably bound them to the West in the North American "cold war" with Eastern Communism. The Cuban case illustrates how the US reacted (or overreacted) to nationalist changes in internal or external economic and political relationships. Deviation from Western policies was perceived as both unwarranted and

active movement toward communism. The kind of foreign policy initiatives that characterized India's relations with the superpowers were tolerated in Asia but prohibited in neighboring Latin America.

In 1961 twenty-five nations convened in Belgrade for the first conference of nonaligned nations. Cuba's was the only Latin American delegation. "Havana's presence signalled that Cuba's international perspective was undergoing change; the hemispheric parameters that historically had defined its sphere of concern were being replaced with a vision of itself operating in concert with kindred Afro-Asian states on the larger world stage" (Erisman, 1983: 150). The United States reacted negatively. As Cuba sought new external alignments, US displeasure increased and was ultimately expressed by the CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion. At North American initiative, Cuba was excluded from full participation in the Inter-American system in 1962. Not only did this act strain the system, but it encouraged Cuba to offset its diplomatic isolation through more committed integration into the Nonaligned Movement, and (at different times) through strengthening ties with the Soviet Union and China.

The economic and political realities of the sixties, the example of Cuba, and a general increase in Third World independence and assertiveness combined to encourage other Latin American nations to re-evaluate foreign policy options. By the late 1970's an increasing number of Latin Americans experienced a growing affinity with the kind of Third World nationalism emanating from meetings of the Nonaligned Movement. In the years that followed, the movement came to include several Latin American nations, not only Cuba, Nicaragua and Peru but also Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Panama. Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, and Mexico attended conferences as observers. The once-small group of twenty-five had expanded to nearly one hundred nations by the time the FSLN defeated Somoza's forces in July of 1979.

NICARAGUA AND THE HISTORIC ROOTS OF NONALIGNMENT

In *Beyond Cuba: Latin America Takes Charge of Its Future*, Luigi Einaudi (1974:32) notes that "Latin American nationalism remains opposed to any form of dependence on Capitalist or Communist powers;" and, further, "most Latin American radicals envisage a form of neutralism in world politics, hoping . . . the sardines can find room between the sharks to swim safely." Revolutionary leaders who

emerged in Nicaragua were both radical and nationalistic and hoped to chart an independent course as the nation experienced its second revolution for national sovereignty. Indeed, it would appear that the Cubans had warned them of the dangers inherent in alienating one shark only to be forced to swim in the wake of another.

Less than two months after the new government was established in Managua, Nicaragua decided to become a member of the Non-aligned Movement and to send a delegation to the Sixth Nonaligned Summit, scheduled to convene in Havana early in September 1979. Declaring that the Sandinistas favored a restructuring of international relations on the basis of justice together with a new international economic order, junta member Daniel Ortega (1982:320) explained that the Nicaraguans were joining the Nonaligned Movement because they saw it as "the broadest organization of the Third World states that play an important role and exercise increasing influence in the international arena and in the people's struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism . . ." Nicaragua was clearly taking a different tack from the days when Somoza had declared he was the best friend the US ever had. Subsequently, it would seek to diversify its diplomatic and economic relations even more.

To understand reasons for such a shift in Nicaraguan foreign policy one needs to examine evolution of the Sandinista movement. The object of the nationalism of the original Sandino was to affirm the principle of national sovereignty and independence. He identified his struggle with that of an oppressed people and believed that all those who suffered oppression should unite in a common struggle (Barricada Internacional, 1984:2). His nationalism sought to liberate Nicaragua from direct military intervention by, and the political and economic dominance of, the United States. Sandino's definition of sovereignty was fundamentally anti-hegemonic. Although he antedated the nonaligned movement, Sandino's appeal to continental and global opinion demonstrated the principle of popular solidarity and national self-determination which would become the hallmark of the Third World movement in Asia and Africa. Characteristically anti-colonial, his manifestoes were addressed to struggling peoples everywhere: to the Nicaraguan people, the people of America, the Indo-Latin American continent, and to all progressive forces (see Ramirez, 1980). His anti-colonial sentiment grew out of Nicaraguan historical experience and was later to be developed by the FSLN as the basis of contemporary Sandinista foreign policy. Thus the Non-aligned Movement provided a "natural, friendly" forum in which to

express the new policy goals of political pluralism, mixed economy and international nonalignment. The September 1979 Sixth Summit of the Non-Aligned countries in Havana provided an ideal occasion to announce the new Nicaraguan foreign policy (Tinoco, 1984). Through the Nonaligned Movement, Nicaragua began to seek support outside the Inter-American System.

As was true of other Third World countries, the historical roots of Sandinista nonalignment were also socio-economic. The new foreign policy which emerged in 1979 was but the external reflection of an internal realignment of class and economic forces destined to revolutionize both domestic and foreign policies. When the Somocista system of economic and political domination was broken, with it went its "captive" foreign policy. Pre-revolutionary dependencies were challenged; the national interest was defined on Nicaraguan (not US) terms. Greater diversification in diplomatic and economic relations was sought as a way to achieve the new national goals. Nicaragua would no longer automatically follow the US (or Western) lead on policy issues. Rather, it would pursue a foreign policy based on its redefined interests. Specific goals might change, but fundamental tenets would include nonalignment, anti-colonialism, and pluralism in internal politics and international relations.

Nonalignment came to express a newfound independence. From a foreign policy which had faithfully "echoed" the opposition of the United States in international and regional forums, like the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) (Nicaragua had endorsed the intervention in Guatemala in 1954, and had permitted the use of Puerto Cabezas for the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba), Nicaraguan foreign policy became fiercely independent. Nonalignment seemed the most effective way to protect its new autonomy. Unlike its past subservience to US interests, Nicaraguan nonalignment might in future mean criticism of the North American position in Latin America and the Third World. However, this would not necessarily mean that Nicaraguan foreign policy was categorically hostile to that of the United States, but that the new regime reserved the right to judge other nations' actions according to its own criteria. Nicaraguan nonalignment must, therefore, be understood within the context of the country's revolutionary experience.

The struggle from Sandino to the present imposed a psychological, moral, and even political commitment to support other liberation efforts. A basic condition of membership in the Nonaligned Movement was support for anti-colonial liberation movements.

Clearly there was a natural convergence between the goals of the movement and the historical/philosophical base upon which Nicaraguan foreign policy rested. Thus it would be unreasonable for Nicaraguan foreign policy to ignore other revolutionary struggles, whether in Central America or other regions of the Third World, simply to demonstrate a nonalignment defined by the United States. Because of its history, the "natural" foreign policy direction of Nicaragua sometimes took positions viewed as anti-American. This was due as much to the way in which the US defined its foreign policy, as to the way in which the Nicaraguans conceptualized theirs. Indeed, it may be next to impossible for Nicaragua to define a nonalignment sufficiently consonant with that of the United States since to do so would suggest continuation of a dependent foreign policy, even the "Finlandization" of Nicaragua's external aspirations.

THE BIRTH OF A NON-ALIGNED POLICY: THE SIXTH SUMMIT

"The Nicaraguan people have earned the right to be here today with their own blood. In this way they have broken with their past history of servility to imperialist politics (Ortega, 1983:14)

Daniel Ortega, Sixth Summit of the Nonaligned Movement

Nicaragua's entry into the ranks of the Nonaligned implied adoption of an anti-imperial policy; it sought to amplify the role of Third World countries in world affairs and, by extension perhaps, to announce its own new activist role. Daniel Ortega justified membership specifically in terms of the struggle of peoples against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, apartheid, racism, Zionism, and other forms of oppression. He declared Nicaragua's support for the principles of peaceful coexistence, the absence of blocs and military alliance systems, justice in international relations, and establishment of a new international economic order (Ortega, 1983:17).

Ortega argued that "in the Sandinista revolution there is not any alignment; but an absolute and consistent support for the aspirations of peoples who have achieved independence or are struggling to do so. That is why we are nonaligned" (Ortega, 1983:17). This reasoning helps to explain Nicaragua's subsequent endorsement of SWAPO in Namibia, the PLO, the Polisario in the Spanish Sahara, East Timor's independence, Cuba, and Puerto Rican nationalism during the meeting. Nicaragua thereby assumed a position consistent with that of the Nonaligned Movement. Meetings of the nonaligned group from the Foreign Ministers Conference in Georgetown, in August 1972, to the

1979 Havana Summit meeting had all passed resolutions extending solidarity and support to these groups. Nicaragua's support, therefore, was not unusual for the movement but represented its mainstream thinking.

Previously the Nicaraguans had received backing in their liberation struggle; now they would support similar struggles elsewhere. At the foreign ministers meeting held in New York, on 2 October 1978, the Nonaligned Movement had supported the ongoing revolution in Nicaragua by issuing a resolution criticizing the Somoza government (Nicaragua. Ministerio del Exterior, n.d.). Subsequent ministerial meetings (New Delhi, February 9-13, 1981; Havana, May 31-June 5, 1982; and October 4-9, 1982) of the Nonaligned countries continued to follow post-revolutionary developments in Nicaragua, focusing global attention on Central American instability, growing political and economic pressure on Nicaragua, and the interventionist role of the United States in El Salvador (Nicaragua. Ministerio del Exterior, n.d.). For example, the ministerial meeting at New Delhi "condemned the political and economic aggression, both direct or through certain international financial organizations, which was being exercised or attempted against Nicaragua in order to interfere with the revolutionary process" (Nicaragua. Ministerio del Exterior, n.d.). By the early 1980's, the meetings of the Nonaligned Movement had become the principal place where Nicaragua's foreign policy position could be explained and understood. As Nicaragua supported other liberation movements, so would others support its revolution. Doing so became a matter of diplomatic survival. That was why the "Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries on Latin American and the Caribbean," in Managua, from January 10 to 14, 1983, was so important.

NONALIGNMENT AND DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTION

This special ministerial meeting served as something of a diplomatic "coup" for Nicaragua. First of all world attention was attracted to the small nation as delegates from 89 countries, liberation groups, and international institutions, all converged as both members and observers. Locating the meeting in Managua also contributed to the diplomatic (as well as economic and political) survival of the Sandinista government for, as Alan Riding observed, "by acting as host at the meeting . . . Nicaragua appeared to have succeeded in focusing

(attention) on the growing number of attacks by Honduras-based anti-Sandinista rebels into northern Nicaragua" (Riding, 1983a:7).

Initially, the declaration prepared by Nicaragua and Cuba "called specifically for condemnation of US support for anti-Sandinista groups based in Honduras" (Riding, 1983b:4). Subsequently, however, some of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) moderates sympathetic to the United States (such as Jamaica, Egypt, and Singapore) were able to "soften" the final draft,² so that it called merely for peaceful resolution of the differences between the warring groups in El Salvador, and for negotiations to take place between the United States and Nicaragua. It was significant, though, that the meeting concentrated primarily upon the situation in Central America, the first time the NAM had devoted so much of its attention to one region of the world, and particularly to Latin America (Tinoco, 1984). Henceforth Latin American problems would no longer be the exclusive province of the OAS, so often dominated by the US, nor would Nicaragua be isolated from the world movement it had helped to develop.

The Managua meeting also served two other functions: (1) it set the stage to continue discussion of the Central American situation at the upcoming summit conference scheduled to be held in New Delhi two months later (7-12 March, 1983); and (2) it contributed to a marshalling of diplomatic support when, also in March 1983, Nicaragua brought complaints of acts of aggression directed against itself before the Security Council.

Nicaragua had already reaped some rewards from its new internationalized foreign policy the previous Fall, when it had been elected as one of the non-permanent members of the Security Council on 19 October 1982. At the time the United States had lobbied vigorously against Nicaragua for this position, preferring to support the nomination of the Dominican Republic instead. Despite this powerful opponent Nicaragua had succeeded in mustering the 104 country votes needed to acquire the two-thirds majority. Nicaragua's election was widely perceived as a major defeat for the United States (Keesing's, 1983: 31933).³ The election was significant in that it also provided Nicaragua with immediate access to the Security Council in the event of a threat to its national security.⁴

Six months later, on 23 March 1983, Nicaragua took advantage of this status and requested that the Security Council convene to hear such a charge. Nicaragua denounced US aggression in the form of increasing counter-revolutionary attacks from Honduras, suggest-

ing they were just the most recent examples of the Reagan Administration's CIA-orchestrated secret war (UN Chronicle, 1983b: 3-22). As had been the case at the New Delhi summit of the NAM, Nicaragua's position was reaffirmed by the UN.⁵ "After four days of occasionally heated debate on the fighting in Nicaragua, the US [became] virtually isolated in the Security Council in its attempts to portray the conflict as an internal Nicaraguan affair" (Nossiter, 1983:I, 1).

Countries frequently allied with the United States in the past were now either skeptical or openly critical of US policy in Central America, specifically as it affected Nicaragua. Among them were Mexico, Venezuela, Spain, Pakistan, India, the Netherlands, Panama, and France. Support for Nicaragua was even stronger among sympathetic nonaligned nations like Tanzania, Zaire and Algeria. Jeane Kirkpatrick was so annoyed at their attitude that she was quoted as having roundly condemned the "systematic bias, systematic lies, systematic redefinition of key political values and distortion of key political processes" (U.N. Chronicle, 1983b:18).⁶ This development certainly validated Nicaragua's policy of nonalignment which had intended to use the Third World movement not just as a forum for dissemination of objective, sympathetic information on the Nicaraguan revolution, but as a medium for diplomatic defense and initiative. Tellingly, only Honduras and El Salvador sided strongly with the United States in the UN debates. The Nonaligned Movement, and through it, other nonaligned Third World countries in the United Nations, came to the defense of the Nicaraguan revolution. Unlike Guatemala in 1954, Nicaragua was not isolated and overthrown by a CIA-backed invasion. Nicaraguan diplomacy had guaranteed its access to Third World countries and extra-hemispheric organizations not subordinated to policy constraints imposed by regional US hegemony.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE REVOLUTION: THE SEVENTH SUMMIT AND AFTER

At the very first meeting of the NAM attended by Nicaragua, in 1979, Daniel Ortega had linked consolidation of the Nicaraguan Revolution with strengthening the struggle of other underdeveloped nations. At the Seventh Summit he made it clear that the struggle for liberation in Nicaragua continued, and that Nicaragua "needed the disinterested assistance of the nonaligned nations" more than ever (U.N. Chronicle, 1983b:25). Both these and subsequent declara-

tions indicated two important aspects of Nicaraguan foreign policy in its relations with the Third World. Like Guatemala and Cuba at an earlier time, Nicaragua was totally occupied with the security threat posed by the US, and feared for consolidation of its revolution. Unlike Cuba between 1959 and 1962, however, Nicaragua decided to create the appropriate international climate for revolutionary consolidation by establishing close solidarity with the Third World, rather than with the Soviet Union.⁷ Internationalism, but of a somewhat different variety than the internationalism of Cuba, was seen as a major weapon for national self-defense. Through a "diversified dependence" on many different nations, but with special ties to the non-aligned countries, Nicaragua hoped to fend off aggressive actions by the US.⁸ Unlike Cuba, Nicaragua was able to avoid a hemispheric diplomatic isolation imposed by the United States. As more and more Latin American countries joined the Nonaligned Movement (at New Delhi membership increased to 101 countries including 10 Latin American and Caribbean members) it became more difficult to isolate Nicaragua in the same way as had been done with Cuba. The new arena was broader, the national actors more independent.

Nicaragua attempted to act as a bridge between the positions of the radical members of the Nonaligned Movement and the pro-Western countries. It accepted neither the "natural ally" thesis of Cuba, which saw in the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, a natural alliance of dependent, developing countries; nor had Nicaragua espoused the "two imperialisms" thesis of Algeria, who feared domination of both advanced capitalist and advanced socialist systems over dependent countries (Erisman, 1983:157-164 and Envío, 1983:10). Nicaragua's preferred position in previous summits appeared to be with the "pivotal" states (like Tanzania). These were not as radical as the Cubans but more radical than the Yugoslavs: they were in the middle of the nonaligned group.⁹ This "middle group" practiced true "flexible nonalignment," at times siding with the radicals and at others with the moderates, depending upon issue and circumstance. Nicaragua, in confronting the military and economic opposition of the United States, and the extensive needs of revolutionary reconstruction, could not afford ideological, or any other form of, exclusivity. Moreover, its policy in action, as well as in philosophy, proved to be genuinely "more" nonaligned than that of Cuba.

A major issue confronted Nicaragua shortly after its revolution, and after its delegation had been seated in the United Nations: the

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Nicaraguan vote on Afghanistan has been repeatedly cited as an example of Nicaragua's support of the Soviet Union and of its incorporation into the Soviet bloc, to paraphrase US Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick (U.N. Chronicle, 1983b:14). US pronouncements aside, Nicaragua did not vote with the Soviet bloc nations. On 14 January 1980, in the Sixth Emergency Special Session of the United Nations, under the "uniting for peace resolution," the members voted 104 in favor, 18 opposed (with 18 abstentions) on a resolution calling for immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

The question of Afghanistan proved to be a difficult one for Nicaraguan foreign policy. On the one hand there was clear sympathy for a small Third World nation caught in the hegemonic embrace of a superpower who considered military intervention a policy option. On the other hand, the Afghan guerrillas were opposed to policies to which the Sandinistas were fundamentally committed: literacy campaigns; mass education; equality for women; and social change. While the Nicaraguans wanted to adhere to their stated policy of nonintervention, at the same time prudence advised that they not alienate themselves from a potential supporter (the USSR) or from those who might become (if the US imposed the same constraints it had on Cuba) a potential economic lifeline (the Eastern bloc).

Both superpowers made the Afghan vote a test of support, if not a *sine qua non* for further friendly relations. The USSR put considerable pressure on friendly regimes to vote against the resolution. This was reflected in the final vote; those voting against included both Soviet-bloc nations and those Nonaligned countries sympathetic to the Soviet Union: Cuba, Angola, Grenada, Ethiopia and Mozambique. During the debate, Nicaragua included "the presence of Soviet forces" in Afghanistan among the events which threatened world peace (U.N. Chronicle, 1980:5-7), which may have led some Western nations to believe that Nicaragua would vote for the solution to withdraw. Such was not the case. Nicaragua did not vote with the majority of Nonaligned; rather, it opted for the studiously neutral position of nonaligned nations like India, Algeria, Cyprus and Finland by abstaining. It followed the same course on the second Afghan vote in 1984. Similarly, in the September 1983 Security Council resolution criticizing the Soviet downing of the Korean airliner, in which 269 died, Nicaragua again abstained, as did China, Guyana, and Zimbabwe, on grounds that doubts as to the facts existed (U.N. Chronicle, 1983a:19).

Nicaragua's interpretation of nonalignment was not always one of neutrality, as illustrated by the Nicaraguan position on the US invasion of Grenada. In October 1983, Nicaragua initiated a resolution in the Security Council to end armed intervention in Grenada and to begin immediate withdrawal of troops, deploring this as a violation of international law by the US. When the resolution was vetoed by the US, in the Security Council, Nicaragua then reintroduced it in the General Assembly in November, where the US action was deplored by a vote of 108 for and 9 against, with 27 abstaining. Nicaragua not only supported the resolution but was its author and promoter. In the debate Nicaragua described the US intervention as "naked armed aggression" (U.N. Chronicle, 1983a:15). Some observers interpreted the Grenada vote as proof of Nicaragua's anti-American (and, by implication, pro-Soviet) alignment. An alternative explanation flows from an appreciation of the geographical proximity of Grenada to Nicaragua and the comparisons that had previously been made between Grenada and Nicaragua by the Reagan Administration and by the Nicaraguans themselves, in which the Grenadian intervention had been described as a "dry run" for Nicaragua. Faced with an apparent threat to its security, the Nicaraguans reasoned that the Grenadian intervention was a precedent which had to be forcefully condemned both to uphold the principle of non-intervention and to protect the Nicaraguan revolution.

If the United States interpreted the Nicaraguan votes on Afghanistan and Grenada in terms of "he who is not with us is against us,"¹⁰ the nonaligned nations did not. Nicaragua's election to the Security Council, in contrast to the earlier failure of Cuba to be so elected, indicated that Nicaragua had been accepted by the Nonaligned nations as one of them. In contrast to Nicaragua's election to the Security Council, Cuba's 1980 bid for a council seat had been blocked by India and Nigeria, and the election deadlocked after 156 ballots. Although Cuba chaired the Nonaligned Movement at the time, it was viewed by many in the movement as too radical and not truly nonaligned (LeoGrande, 1980:50). The support for Nicaragua's charges of US aggression at the March 1983 New Delhi Seventh Summit of Nonaligned nations and in the United Nations in March, May, and September of the same year, all evidenced the growing acceptance of Nicaragua among members of the NAM and the world community at large. At the 38th General Assembly Daniel Ortega emphasized this point: "There is agreement among very different ideological positions throughout the world in condemning the aggressive and bel-

licose escalation occurring in the Central American region and in demanding that dialogue be the means for resolving these problems" (U.N. Chronicle, 1984a:12).

In the Nonaligned Movement, as in the United Nations, Nicaragua avoided siding with either the most radical or the most conservative blocs. Unless its national interest or foreign policy goals were directly involved, Nicaragua has tried to establish a position both flexible and conciliatory, strongly affirming the principle of non-alignment while emphasizing opposition to imperialism and support for liberation struggles. Nicaragua perceives unity as the movement's greatest strength and exerting leverage in the international forum, especially in the reform of the international economic system, a major Nicaraguan goal.

In the first UN session in which the Sandinista government was represented, Daniel Ortega employed the term "the unity of the weak," and, at the 1983 Managua NAM ministerial meeting, he explained the Nicaraguan position:

It is true that ours are countries with their own characteristics and even with diverse ideological and political positions, but they are also countries with shared problems and objectives. Ours are poor, dependent countries in an unfair economic order that are exposed to political, military and economic attacks and pressures; countries that cannot win the battle for justice and freedom individually; countries that need large-scale solidarity in order to stand up against the oppression that the colonial, industrial, and technological metropolises have institutionalized, bringing pain and poverty to our peoples.

Therefore, the most important thing to preserve is the unity of this Movement. Our enemy knows of our differences and will try to play on them in order to divide, fragment and destroy us (NAM, 1983:37-38).

The Seventh Summit of the Movement highlighted the convergence of Third World interests and goals with those of Nicaraguan foreign policy. Defense of the Nicaraguan revolution and its consolidation by means of Third World solidarity would benefit both Nicaragua and the Nonaligned Movement, Nicaragua argued. Daniel Ortega even termed Nicaragua as the "strategic reserve of the Nonaligned Countries Movement" (Nicaragua. Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting, 1983:42). The 7th summit (March 1983) issued the strongest denunciation to that date of *contra* and US acts of aggression against Nicaragua, described there as "a deliberate plan to harass and destabilize that country" (CIC, 1983:15).

Continued attacks on Nicaraguan territory, mining of its harbors, and several naval attacks prompted Nicaragua's foreign ministry

to intensify its diplomatic activities in the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Contadora Group, before the International Court of Justice, and especially in the Nonaligned Movement, as measures designed to ease the critical situation in Central America. In March 1984 Nicaragua denounced external attacks on its territory in the UN Security Council and also succeeded in convening an emergency session of the Coordinating Bureau of the Nonaligned Movement (Barricada, 1984:5). The diplomatic offensive was particularly urgent to counteract approval by the US Senate of \$21 million to fund (a) covert CIA operations in the region, (b) US military aid to Honduras and (c) escalation of US troop and naval maneuvers in the region. Nicaragua denounced the US attempt to "create the political, propagandistic, and international psychological conditions for the acceptance of the presence of permanent North American combat troops in Central America" (El Nuevo Diario, 1984a:9). Other initiatives included obtaining a decision by the Geneva-based General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that reduction of the US sugar quota from 58,000 short tons to 6,000 had been discriminatory and politically motivated (Barricada, 1984b:21 and El Nuevo Diario, 1984b:1 and 10).

Like many small nonaligned nations, Nicaragua looked to international law and the World Court to protect its sovereignty. As the full dimension of the Reagan Administration's involvement with the counterrevolutionaries (*contras*) emerged, the Nicaraguan Government decided to take its well-documented case of US intervention before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), where the Sandinistas achieved another diplomatic victory. In May of 1984, the ICJ unanimously called upon the US to "immediately cease and refrain from any actions restricting, blocking or endangering access to or from Nicaraguan ports, and in particular, the laying of mines" while a final decision on the Nicaraguan complaint was being considered. On 26 November 1984 the World Court denied the US claim that the Court lacked standing to hear the complaint and ruled that it did indeed have jurisdiction in the case, which Nicaragua, with the help of the US law firm of Reichter and Applebaum, had brought before it (New York Times:1984). Reagan Administration attempts to question the jurisdiction of the court clearly cost it international and domestic support and helped to underline the illegality of US actions supporting the *contras*. Revelations regarding the CIA Manual plus documented atrocities by the *contras* proved to be major factors in the initial refusal of the US Congress to continue to fund the *contras*, and

they further buttressed Nicaragua's credibility with the Nonaligned Movement.¹¹

CONCLUSION

Nicaragua's active and successful participation in the Nonaligned Movement demonstrates a close affinity between its historical experience and philosophical foundations and those of other anti-colonial, developing nations. Nicaragua's stature in the movement is largely the consequence of a foreign policy of greater diversity and flexibility than that of Cuba, that is, it is a truly nonaligned foreign policy. The world, despite repeated assertions to the contrary by the Reagan Administration, is not clearly divided into East and West. This reality has given Nicaragua more alternatives than were open to Cuba earlier. Nicaragua has managed to break the hemispheric mold by not limiting its foreign policy options. Diversity in foreign policy has been expressed by establishing relations across a broad front encompassing Western European countries, the Nonaligned nations, Latin America, and the Socialist bloc. The international assistance received, patterns of international trade, and voting records in international organizations demonstrate both diversity and nonalignment.¹²

Since 1979, the Sandinista regime has charted a new, highly independent foreign policy course. In so doing, it not only placed itself squarely within the Nonaligned Movement but was able to bring the Movement's perspectives and politics to bear on Nicaragua's position as an independent state in a region traditionally dominated by assumptions of US hegemony. This new foreign policy has maximized the decisionmaking latitude of Nicaragua and made nonalignment much more possible for other Latin American states. When the Reagan regime was unsympathetic to Nicaragua, through initiatives at Nonaligned Summit meetings and in the UN, the Sandinista government achieved a series of diplomatic successes and foreign policy firsts, and, on at least one occasion even managed to isolate the US in the United Nations on the basis of the latter's aggressive actions toward Nicaragua.

True to its origins and to its nonaligned foreign policy, Nicaragua has carefully cultivated relations with the Nonaligned Movement and has used these ties to acquire support at a crucial time in the development of its revolution. Thus, at the very time that the US was increasing external pressure on Nicaragua in early 1983, the Nicaraguan government succeeded in hosting a special meeting of

Nonaligned ministers. The resulting "Managua Communique" supported the Nicaraguan position and criticized US policy in the region (Keesing's, 1983:32349-55). The public attention forced the US and Honduras to proceed much more carefully than before, thus minimizing the possibility of direct invasion of Nicaraguan territory.

The Nonaligned Movement has maximized decision autonomy; it has provided a true third alternative by which a small dependent nation like Nicaragua can exert influence and achieve foreign policy goals. As a forum to disseminate information to the peoples of the world, the Nonaligned Movement has served as a natural instrument of denunciation of US actions against the Nicaraguan government. Membership in the Nonaligned Movement has permitted Nicaragua to marshal extracontinental support for its policies and the necessary votes to counteract US influence in the OAS and the United Nations. From a Nicaraguan perspective, the Movement has been central to its foreign policy priorities of self-defense, internationalism, and autonomy.

The revolutionary government carefully cultivated good relations with all segments of the Nonaligned Movement (and other nations who respect nonalignment) and utilized those ties successfully to achieve its policy objectives. By doing so, Nicaragua was able to restrain the type of CIA-organized, externally-based aggressive action that had overthrown the Arbenz Government in Guatemala in 1954. Likewise, it was able to forestall the type of diplomatic and economic isolation which had forced Cuba to rely ever more heavily on the Soviet Union. Finally, a small Central American state has been able to show that there are indeed many schools of fish in the oceans of the world and that one need not swim in the wake of any one large fish for fear of being eaten by another (see Arévalo, 1961).

NOTES

1. Radicalization of the Nonaligned Movement strained the definition of nonalignment. More than rhetorical battles, the success and solidarity of the movement involved its self-definition. Critics of the nonaligned have focused upon the movement's confusion as deviations from true neutralism. Members of the movement have themselves disputed non-consensual interpretations of non-alignment, witness the 1979 Havana Summit Meeting.

One interpretation of nonalignment was given by Nigeria's UN ambassador, Akporode Clark: "there are no natural allies" for the nonaligned. That is, nonalignment requires flexibility in alignment, a tendency which

may shift over time and with circumstance, according to a nation's interests, and not be locked into any particular camp. (LeoGrande, 1980:51.)

2. Egypt had been critical of the Cuban position in the Movement ever since the 1978 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Belgrade, and had challenged Cuba's credentials as a nonaligned nation. In turn, at the 1979 Havana summit, Cuba succeeded in obtaining an 18-month suspension of Egypt from the Movement because of the Camp David accords. Singapore, also unsympathetic to the Cuban position in the movement (along with Sri Lanka, Malaysia, India, and Yugoslavia), opposed Cuban and Vietnamese support of the pro-Soviet Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea (Cambodia) against the pro-Chinese Pol Pot regime. (LeoGrande, 1980:45, 48, and 49.)

3. Nicaragua was elected as one of 54 members of ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council) until January 1984. For further interpretation of the UN events also see the New York Times (1983) and the UN Chronicle (1983b). The Nicaraguan address and charges of US aggression were debated on 23-25 and 28-29 March, 1983.

4. As an historical note, it should be pointed out that Guatemala was denied access to the UN Security Council in 1954 when the US representative, who served as president for that month, refused to place the Guatemalan charges on the agenda, referring the issue to the US-dominated OAS. See *inter alia*, Immerman (1982).

5. Panama, for example, interpreted the Nicaraguan action in the UN as confirming the assessment of the situation in Central America made by the New Delhi summit meeting of Nonaligned countries (UN Chronicle, 1983b:16).

6. Algeria, for example, was outspoken in its support: "The Sandinist Revolution represented the ultimate rehabilitation of peoples through the triumph of freedom and justice over oppression and repression. That was why it had won deep sympathy and broad support throughout the world, which was reflected in Nicaragua being accorded a seat in the Council and being welcomed to the Nonaligned Movement as a democratic force. Algeria hoped the Council would deter all aggressive and destabilizing attempts against Nicaragua" (UN Chronicle, 1983b:18).

7. To compare with Cuba, see Erisman (1983:150).

8. Term used in Envío (1983:12). This was also the thesis of Xavier Gorostiaga, who described "the diversification of economic and political dependence" as a way to maintain geopolitical and geostrategic balance with the US and forge a new regional, geopolitical solution to the Central American crisis (Gorostiaga, 1984:34 & 47-48).

9. LeoGrande (1980:50) used these phrases and concepts, although not in reference to Nicaragua.

10. Term used by Jordan in support of Nicaragua in the UN debate of March 1983, see UN Chronicle (1983b:19).

11. See, *inter alia*, Americas Watch Report (1985), to wit, "In combination, the *contra* forces have systematically violated the applicable laws of war throughout the conflict. They have attacked civilians indiscriminately; they have tortured and mutilated prisoners; they have murdered

those placed *hors de combat* by their wounds; they have taken hostages; and they have committed outrages against personal dignity" (p. 6). This report also, however, noted same abuses by the Nicaraguan government in 1981 and 1982 but noted that they ceased after 1982 (p. 4).

12. Aid and trade figures vary. An *Envío* (1983:12-13) study, based on the work of Gorostiaga and others, noted international loans to Nicaragua in these percentages: 49.4% from Third World countries; 32% from capitalist countries, and 18.5% from Socialist bloc countries (including Cuba). From 1979-1982 Western Europe provided 33% of Nicaraguan loans. The Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry did not provide exact figures but indicated that the primary source of economic assistance to Nicaragua was from Latin America, particularly Mexico, Venezuela, and Cuba; Argentina, Colombia and Brazil had also extended credits. The assistance of the Arab countries, particularly Libya and Algeria, had been essential as a major source of liquid assets as opposed to credit lines. Trade statistics indicated that 31% of Nicaraguan exports were with the US, 29% with Central and South America; imports were 55% from Central and South America, 27% from the US, 10% from Western Europe, and 2% from Socialist countries. In *Barricada Internacional* (Archives Barricada, 1983: 3) trade for 1983 was given as 47% of imports from the Third World, 19% from the United States, and 12% from Socialist countries. Since 1979, Nicaraguan leaders have traveled widely around the world: Daniel Ortega to the United Nations (US), India, Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, and many Asian countries; Sergio Ramírez throughout Western Europe, the Socialist countries and Asia; Tomás Borge to France, Spain, West Germany, Italy, Portugal, Greece, The Netherlands, and Libya; and other leaders to Costa Rica, Mexico, Belgium, and so on (also see Malley, 1985; and Schwab and Sims, 1985). Foreign Ministry views are based on an interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco (1984).

REFERENCES

- Americas Watch Report (1985) *Violations of the Laws of War by Both Sides in Nicaragua 1981-1985*. New York, NY: Americas Watch Committee.
- Archives Barricada Internacional (1983) Supplement to *Barricada Internacional*. 26 December. Managua, Nicaragua.
- ARÉVALO, J. (1961) *The Shark and the Sardines*. New York, NY: L. Stuart.
- Barricada (1984a) "Nicaragua denuncia en la ONU y NOAL." 14 March: 5.
- ____ (1984b) "Ante el boicot asucarero de EU, GATT respalda a Nicaragua." 14 March: 2.
- Barricada Internacional (1984) 20 February: 7.

- BLASIER, C. (1971) "The United States and the Revolution," pp. 53-109 in J. M. Malloy and R. S. Thorn (eds.) *Beyond the Revolution: Bolivia Since 1952*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Center for International Communications (CIC). (1983) *7 Cumbre de los NOAL, New Deli, Recomendaciones y Conclusiones sobre Asuntos Latinoamericans y del Caribe*. Managua, Nicaragua: Center for International Communications.
- EINAUDI, L. (1974) *Beyond Cuba: Latin America Takes Charge of Its Future*. New York, NY: Crane-Russak Co.
- Envío (1983) "Nicaragua's Foreign Policy." (January): 7-18.
- ERISMAN, H. (1983) "Cuba and the Third World: The Nonaligned Nations Movement," pp. 149-170 in Barry Levine (ed.) *The New Cuban Presence in the Caribbean*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- GOROSTIAGA, X. (1984) *Geopolítica de la Crisis Regional*. Managua, Nicaragua: Cuadernos de Pensamiento Propio, INIES (Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales) and CRIES (Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales).
- IMMERMAN, R. (1982) *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press.
- Keesings Contemporary Archives (1983) 29, 1 (January): 31933-34. London, England: Keesing Publishers Ltd.
- LeoGRANDE, W. (1980) "Evolution of the Nonaligned Movement." *Problems of Communism* (January-February): 35-52.
- MALLEY, N. (1985) "Relations with Western Europe and the Socialist International," pp. 485-498 in T. Walker (ed.) *Nicaragua: The First Five Years*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.
- North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) (1985) "Sandinista Foreign Policy." *NACLA Report on the Americas XIX*, 3 (May/June): 13-56.
- New York Times (1984) 11 May: 1, 9.
- (1983) "Third World Nations Expected to Assail U.S. . ." 9 January.
- Nicaragua. Ministerio del Exterior. (Nicaragua-MinE) (n.d.) *Pronunciamientos Referentes a América Latina Extraídos de Documentos de Conferencias y Reuniones Ministeriales Habidas desde 1961 a 1982*. Working Paper. Managua, Nicaragua: Ministerio del Exterior.
- Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (1983) *Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Nonaligned Countries on Latin America and the Caribbean, Final Communique*. Managua, Nicaragua:
- NOSSITER, B. (1983) "US Finds Itself Virtually Isolated in UN over Nicaraguan Crisis." *New York Times*, 29 March: 1, 1.

- (El) Nuevo Diario (1984a) "Comité pro Reconstrucción de Nicaragua, Reunido Aquí." 16 March: 9.
- ____ (1984b) "Consejo del GATT aprueba condena a Estados Unidos." 14 March: 1 and 10.
- ORTEGA, D. (1983) "Discurso ante el plenario de la Sexta Cumbre del Movimiento de Países no Alineados, La Habana, 6 de septiembre de 1979," in *El Acero de guerra o el olivo de paz*. Managua, Nicaragua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua.
- ____ (1982) Speech to 1979 Nonaligned Conference as quoted in article by A. Bendana, "The Foreign Policy of the Nicaraguan Revolution," pp. 319-327 in T. Walker (ed.) *Nicaragua in Revolution*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.
- RAMIREZ, S. (ed.) (1980) *El Pensamiento Vivo de Sandino*. San José, Costa Rica: EDUCA (Editorial Universitaria de Central America)
- RIDING, A. (1983a) "Nonaligned Bloc Backs Nicaragua; 'Systematic Attacks' against Sandinistas are Denounced." *New York Times*, 15 January.
- ____ (1983b) "US Target at Nicaragua Talks." *New York Times*, 11 January.
- SCHWAB, T. and H. SIMS (1985) "Relations with the Nonaligned Movement," pp. 447-466 in T. Walker (ed.) *Nicaragua: The First Five Years*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.
- TINOCO, V. (1984) Author interview with Deputy Foreign Minister of Nicaragua. Managua, Nicaragua; 14 March.
- U.N. Chronicle (1984a) Special Supplement: The Nations Speak. (March): 5-17.
- ____ (1984b) Issue 21,1 (January): 4-8.
- ____ (1983a) Issue 20,1 (December): 15-22.
- ____ (1983b) Issue 20,5 (May): 3-22.
- ____ (1980) Issue 17,2 (March): 5-16.
- WHITEHEAD, L. (1969) *The United States and Bolivia, A Case of Neo-Colonialism*. London, England: The Haslemere Group.