

**Puppet Wars:
The Nicaraguan Revolution in a Cold War Context**

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Since the early twentieth century Nicaragua, together with much of Latin America, has been the focus of the political influence of the United States. However, during the Cold War the Soviet Union, a new political power of the world, demonstrated its influential politics in Latin America. The Soviet Union was concentrating political power in Latin American countries to spread Marxist ideals. This was to combat the influence of the United States and its imperialist goals in the region. Nicaragua was a country that was on the verge of revolution. The Soviet Union knew that if Nicaragua was politically weak from a revolution it could use the idea of communism to influence the state. The Soviet Union believed that through Cuba it could support the revolution of the Sandinista Party. Cuba was known for its communist beliefs, which the Soviet Union wanted to spread to Nicaragua.

What influences impacted the Sandinista Revolution? Was the Sandinista Revolution the manifestation of a puppet war taking place among multiple forces outside and inside of the country itself? Did the United States use its relations with Anastasio Somoza Debayle to attempt to cripple Fidel Castro's communist Cuba? Also was the Russia-friendly government in Cuba using the Sandinista Party, and

its struggles, to gain a stronger foothold in the area? This paper will show that the Sandinista Party incorporated the Sandino name to gain more support for its cause.

There are many questions as to the causes of the Nicaraguan Revolution, yet none are as important as that of the role the United States played in the conflict, specifically, its involvement in the politics and economic matters of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan government. The United States' involvement allowed for the survival of particular parties in Nicaragua. In this paper the discussion of the causes leading up to the Nicaraguan Revolution will indicate that the United States decided the fate of the country and those who fought for it.

The collapse of the Central American Federation, in 1838¹, was the starting point for outside control of Nicaragua. This collapse left Nicaragua vulnerable because it no longer had the support of neighboring countries. Since Nicaragua was vulnerable the country suffered from internal strife as well as fear of an outside takeover. The main struggle within Nicaragua was a battle between conservatives and liberals to maintain political power. With the coming of the twentieth century the liberal party

¹ Benjamin Keen, and Keith Haynes. A History of Latin America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000, 469.

of Nicaragua came into power and installed Jose Santos Zelaya as the country's president. Zelaya was a progressive president who felt that the modernization of Nicaragua must be accomplished to ensure its success. Zelaya believed that outside investment was the only way to get the process of modernization started.² Although Zelaya knew the risk of an outside takeover, he saw no other way to save the Nicaraguan economy without the support of outside investors. Therefore, Zelaya encouraged foreign investment into Nicaragua. The United States quickly dominated a large number of firms and companies within Nicaragua. This control allowed the United States to monopolize much of the resources in Nicaragua by the early twentieth century.

Zelaya, feeling the effects of his foreign investors, began to fear a growing American imperial takeover, and began to stake his country's claim on its own resources.³ This reclaiming of control from the United States, by President Zelaya, came to a boil when Zelaya blocked a local canal proposed by the United States. At this point, the United States found that it would need to remove the existing liberal government and replace it with a friendlier conservative government.

² Benjamin Keen, 470.

³ Benjamin Keen, 470.

In 1909, with American encouragement, a revolt of conservatives broke out in Nicaragua.⁴ The United States Marines protected this conservative group in order to further the revolt. With the fear of nothing less than full scale war Zelaya was forced to resign and conservative Adolfo Diaz replaced Zelaya him as president. Diaz, a former employee of an American-run firm was given his position by the Conservative Party.⁵ The party chose Diaz because of the strong support the United States showed toward him.

President Diaz and his new government officials were seen by many as a United States puppet regime and they were very unpopular with the majority of the Nicaraguan people. This lack of support led to several uprisings which were resolved by the intervention of United States Marines. In return for the protection of the conservative government, concessions were made to the United States, the most important of these concessions was the Treaty of Bryan-Chamorro of 1916.⁶ This treaty gave the United States sole possession of the rights to build a canal through Nicaragua. The goal of this treaty was not for the United States to build the canal but to keep other countries from

⁴ Benjamin Keen, 470.

⁵ Benjamin Keen, 470.

⁶ Benjamin Keen, 470.

stepping in and building it. The United States did not want other countries to build a canal through Nicaragua because it felt that it would take away from some of its power and control in Nicaragua. The reason that the United States did not build the canal was because of the prior existence of the Panama Canal.

The United States policy makers finally decided to develop a new political strategy towards Nicaragua. So in 1927 conservatives and liberals signed an agreement to provide Nicaragua with presidential elections.⁷ These elections protected an image; they made the Nicaraguan people feel as if they were in control of their country's politics. The elections would, of course, be held under United States supervision. Even though the liberal party won back its power with the 1927 elections, the real power of Nicaragua was still in the hands of the Americans.⁸ The power remained with the United States because of its heavy political, economic, and military influence in the state.

This did not sit well with many Nicaraguans, especially one in particular. Augusto Cesar Sandino was a liberal officer, born to a liberal landowner; his mother was a servant of Indian descent.⁹ Sandino worked for several

⁷ Benjamin Keen, 470.

⁸ Benjamin Keen, 470.

⁹ Benjamin Keen, 471.

companies in Mexico that were American owned following the Mexican Revolution. In working for these American companies, and seeing their imperialist control in Mexico, Sandino decided that he would not sit idly by and watch his country be taken over by an imposing American nation. In addition to his experience through his employment, Sandino was also influenced by the growing radical ideals from post revolutionary Mexico.¹⁰

After Sandino's time in Mexico, he returned to Nicaragua to join in the rebellion against the puppet government in place in Nicaragua. After being unable to convince the other liberal officers to give him command of the liberal army, Sandino decided to form his own army.¹¹ Sandino's army was composed mainly of poor workers and farmers. After seven years of guerilla warfare with the Marines, Sandino and his army finally forced the United States out of Nicaragua.

Prior to Sandino's successful uprising, the United States government created the Nicaraguan National Guard. This guard was designed to maintain a political and military foothold for the United States in Nicaragua. After the withdrawal of the Marines, President Diaz ran against

¹⁰ Benjamin Keen, 471.

¹¹ Benjamin Keen, 471.

liberal candidate Juan Sacasa in the 1932 election for president.¹² This election was won by Sacasa and was thought to have a calming effect in Nicaragua. The United States, at the same time, placed in power its pick for the leader of the Nicaraguan National Guard, who was a man named Anastacio Somoza Garcia.

Following the withdrawal of the United States Marines, Sacasa demanded that Sandino disarm. However, Sandino distrusted both Sacasa and Somoza and refused to give up his army. The three men met twice to try to come to an agreement for the disarmament of the Sandino-led army. After the second meeting, a dinner at the Presidential Palace, Somoza reportedly ordered his men to arrest Sandino and the officers that had accompanied him. Rather than an arrest Sandino, he and the other officers were shot.¹³ Somoza denied responsibility for the murders. After Somoza used his power as leader of the National Guard to overthrow Sacasa he took full responsibility for the murders.¹⁴ As Somoza gained control of Nicaragua in 1934 he laid the groundwork for the dynasty that he and his sons would rule over until 1979.

¹² Benjamin Keen, 472.

¹³ Benjamin Keen, 472.

¹⁴ Benjamin Keen, 472.

The United States did not fight the Somoza Dynasty, mainly because its interests in Nicaragua were safe while the Somozas were in power. As the Somoza family ruled, Anastasio Somoza Garcia had his two sons training to take over the country when he was gone. Somoza's youngest son Anastasio Somoza Debayle graduated from West Point Academy, one of the United States' most prestigious military schools. Luis, the older son, was forced to take command of the country after his father's assassination in 1956.¹⁵ Due to Somoza sending his son to West Point and maintaining friendly relations with the United States, the United States did not did not fear Somoza taking control of Nicaragua.

Luis and Anastasio controlled power both directly and indirectly through puppet presidents that they placed into power. Throughout the Somoza rule both of the brothers kept a friendly relationship with the United States, which allowed both sides to continue making money.¹⁶ The Somozas were notorious for funneling large amounts of Nicaragua's capital into their private accounts. This funneling demonstrated the Somoza's complete lack of any presidential leadership skills. The majority of the Nicaraguan citizens

¹⁵ Benjamin Keen, 472.

¹⁶ Benjamin Keen, 473.

began to organize a rebellion against the dictatorship that had overtaken their country. Nicaraguan citizens were in need of non-United States dominated aid and political assistance. They needed new ideas and philosophies, ideas like those that the Soviet Union had shared with Cuba.

The Soviet Union came to Nicaragua with philosophies and political ideas that would help to lead Nicaragua to a revolution against the United States dominated regime. Soviet influence in Latin America and the Western Hemisphere started as early as 1920 gaining power and momentum with each country that supported its ideals. Some Latin American leaders believed in the ideas promoted by the Russian Socialist Party, which specifically influenced Nicaragua and its communist ideology. Through reading Lenin's "Utopian Socialist Society" many Latin American citizens became further supporters of this Russian philosophy.¹⁷ As political leaders of the Soviet Union began to hear rumors of Latin America supporting its ideologies they worked to increase its level of involvement in this region. The first parties to openly show their Soviet connections were, the Socialist Worker's Parties in

¹⁷ Danuta Paszyn . The Soviet Attitude to Political and Social Change in Central America, 1979-90. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, 10

Argentina (1921) and Uruguay (1920).¹⁸ As time went by more and more socialist parties sprang up, and, as stated by Danuta Paszyn, "by 1930 some form of Communist Party was functioning in all of the Latin American countries."¹⁹ This infiltration of Soviet doctrine soon would lead to a full scale revolution throughout the region.

With the coming of the 1930's the intensity of the Soviet policy toward Latin American revolutions had taken a huge step. Joseph Stalin urged many communists to take up arms and fight for their own socialist ideals. Stalin wanted to encourage, and support, those who were following the socialist theory. Soon after, Farabundo Augustin Martí, the leader of the Salvadoran Communist Party, started an armed uprising in 1932 in El Salvador. In El Salvador there was an extreme divide between the wealthy and the poor. This set up the perfect conditions for a socialist doctrine to thrive. Paszyn shows in the following the extremes that lead to the uprising;

In El Salvador a small elite group of land owners, 30 to 40 families, controlled nearly all the arable soil, which constituted 60 percent of all of the land, and dominated all spheres of Salvadoran society.²⁰

¹⁸ Danuta Paszyn, 11

¹⁹ Danuta Paszyn., 12

²⁰ Danuta Paszyn, 14

With the conditions of most Latin American countries becoming closer and closer to that of El Salvador an uprising in Nicaragua was sure to occur. However, little could happen in Nicaragua until 27 years later when the Cuban Revolution was achieved.

The Cuban Revolution overthrew the Batista regime in 1959. This was the first successful communist revolution achieved in Latin America. It was this revolution that allowed the Soviet Union to gain an important ally in its efforts to its spread socialist ideals. Castro, the president of Cuba, by this time had made Cuba a political weapon for the Soviet Union. The two countries set their eyes on Nicaragua as the next place for a revolution. There were two main goals to be achieved in Nicaragua. The first goal was for the Soviet Union to establish a base for further economic and geopolitical expansion into the region. The second goal was to create a successful revolution in Nicaragua to open the door to further export revolution into the Central American isthmus.²¹ In order for a revolution to be sparked in Nicaragua the Soviet Union knew that a rebellious group would first need to be formed and start a movement. The movement would need to lead

²¹ G.W. Sand. Soviet Aims in Central America: the Case of Nicaragua. New York: Praeger publishers, 1989, 20

uprisings against those currently in power, and show a strong support for socialist ideology.

The Sandinista movement was exactly what the Soviet Union wanted it started as a product of anti-Somoza movements conducted by students in 1944-48.²² The Sandinista Party was also known as the Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN. The primary member and founder of the FSLN was Carlos Fonseca Amador, who during his time in high school, in Matagalpa, was introduced to Marxism. He joined the Nicaraguan Socialist party (PSN) in the 1950s, showing his support for communism. After high school Carlos Fonseca traveled to Managua to study at the National Autonomous University.²³ Fonseca became a leading member of the student government, and was also one of the editors of the school paper. Fonseca wrote about socialist ideology and openly showed his lack of support for the Somoza Regime. Because of his blatant articles, Fonseca was targeted and arrested after the assassination of President Somoza Garcia in 1956. In addition to Fonseca's arrest, many other student leftists were arrested. Fonseca was released after a month in prison. Following his release, "The PSN sent Fonseca to the Soviet Union in 1957, after which he wrote a pamphlet

²² John A. Booth. The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985, 138.

²³ John A. Booth, 138

extolling socialism."²⁴ Upon returning to Nicaragua, Fonseca continued his protests on behalf of those who were still imprisoned, and was arrested on several accounts. Despite these arrests Fonseca continued to fight against what he believed to be a puppet regime, United States-controlled government.

The Nicaraguan government deported Carlos Fonseca in 1958 by the Nicaraguan Government and sent him to Guatemala. From Guatemala Fonseca eventually traveled to Cuba where he became "entranced with Castro's revolution."²⁵ Fonseca felt that he could organize a revolution like that of Cuba to oust the Somoza dynasty. The PSN, with its conservative nature, rejected Fonseca's attempts at a revolution. This led to Fonseca quitting the PSN. Fonseca continued to support and carry out activist movements, but he found them to be radical and most failed. In support of Fonseca's efforts, John Booth writes, "Carlos Fonseca Amador, however, pressed on; he organized a clandestine revolutionary network and cultivated Cuban Support." In 1961, along with Tomas Borge and Silvo Mayorga, Fonseca formed the FLSN, which would become the revolutionary power in Nicaragua for the next eighteen years. This was one of

²⁴ John A Booth, 138.

²⁵ John A Booth, 138.

Fonseca's greatest revolutionary successes, and it allowed him to continue the fight against Somoza and a government that had imprisoned him.

The FSLN gained power and the support of many Nicaraguan citizens. However, Somoza was able to hold on to the political support of the United States. The United States kept on a course and did not waver in its support of the Somoza family until the presidency of Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s. The United States aid to the Somoza brothers was, from the United States' point of view, a way to promote pro-United States political stability in Nicaragua. As John Booth states in his study of the revolution,

The theory was that aid could promote non-Communism, pro-Americanism, and stability, which were viewed as conducive to American security in the context of the Cold War.²⁶

The United States' support of the Somoza Dynasty was a means to justify its part in training and supporting a system of government that was far from democratic, but was rather a dictatorship. The United States fear of communism benefited the Somoza government.

²⁶, John A. Booth., 75.

In the end Somoza tied his arms behind his back in terms of keeping his family's hold on Nicaragua. In addition to the problems brought by a Russia-backed Cuba, there was internal strife caused by the Sandinista rebels. The Sandinista Party began using Augusto Sandino's name as a weapon against Somoza. This name represented a lack of support for the United States companies in Nicaragua and became a means for showing disgust for the puppet role that the Somozas were playing. The party was further strengthened by the ideas that Sandino had brought to battle. The battle cry of Sandino not only went against Somoza, but also Somoza's largest backer, the United States of America. These two reminders of Sandino brought difficulties to Somoza because they brought back a past that Somoza preferred be forgotten.

It was clear to Somoza that the Sandinista Party was a Communist Party. Somoza believed that the communists were trying to grab hold of another country, like Cuba, and secure a communist foothold in Central America. He stated his displeasure for this in the following,

In 1971, Carlos Fonseca Amador sent a message to the Communist Party Congress in Moscow. He wanted to be certain that the Communist Party knew of his loyalty and devotion.²⁷

²⁷ Anastasio Somoza. *Nicaragua Betrayed*. Boston: Western Islands Publishers, 1980, 90.

This quote shows that Somoza was aware of the Sandinista's ties to communism. Somoza furthered this tie by stating that the Sandinistas as were the "successor(s) to the Bolshevik Revolution," and that Fonseca was led only by Lenin's ideas.²⁸ Throughout Somoza's book he painted the FSLN as a puppet party (especially after Fonseca's death), that was manipulated by not only the Soviet Union but more directly by Castro's Cuba.

By this point in history many of the Nicaraguan people began to follow the propaganda of the FSLN. Due to the negative economic and political conditions in Nicaragua the citizens wanted a new leader and the FSLN was ready to lead them to one. The farmers of the northern hills saw no aid from the Somozan government and knew that their economic situation would soon collapse completely. The farmers of Nicaragua heard the stories of roads that Somoza had paved to his beaches while, they traveled down homemade paths and dreamed of a day when they would reap the same benefits as their leader. In 1969, the FSLN released a statement that called for the confiscation of capitalist and agricultural holdings, it also called for the nationalization of all of Somoza's properties; which in turn would cancel the Bryan-

²⁸ Anastasio Somoza, 90.

Chamorro Treaty of 1916.²⁹ This demonstrated the power of the FSLN and increased the level of fear Somoza had in regards to his control over Nicaragua.

In David Nolan's, The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution³⁰ he examines primary documents of the FSLN to better understand what the party wanted to accomplish in its war against the Somoza government. He states the following,

... that the FSLN has sought to bring about major change in Nicaragua and that this goal has been in large part ideologically motivated.³¹

He showed this throughout his study of the FSLN and its members.

Nolan's work focused primarily on Fonseca and his ideological influences that led him to be the head of the party. The main influence for Fonseca was his socialist background. Fonseca felt that the use of Augusto Sandino would give Fonseca, and the FLSN, a better base from which to draw upon. Fonseca saw Sandino as a "true anti-imperialist, whose ideology held the seeds of revolutionary class consciousness."³² As Fonseca's movement continued, he

²⁹ G.W. Sand, 20

³⁰ David Nolan. The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution. Coral Gables: University of Miami, 1984.

³¹ David Nolan, 8.

³² David Nolan, 17.

used of the communist banner and the image of Sandino. This began to prove harder to fit into the growing ideology of the FSLN because Sandino was not a communist. To dismiss this conflict, Fonseca, and later his successor Humberto Ortega, simply omitted the fact that Sandino was not a communist. As Nolan wrote, "Ortega claimed Sandino as an anti-bourgeois, a class revolutionary dedicated to the same goal of social transformation as the FSLN."³³ Fonseca emphasized that this fact should be viewed as the focal point of the organization.

Problems emerged by using Sandino in the FSLN movement, the FLSN began in the 1970s to show signs of fracture. The differences that the party began to show spread into the fractioning of the party into three main groups. The three groups that emerged from, yet still under the FLSN banner, were the Proletarian Wing, the Prolonged People's War Group (GPP), and the Terceristas or Third Force Faction.³⁴ The first two groups were still Marxist in their overall ideology. The difference in the groups was their tactics for fighting the war and their use of propaganda.

³³ David Nolan, 18.

³⁴ John A Booth, 143.

The Proletarian Wing, however, was trying to increase the overall mass of the revolution by organizing factory unions. They wanted to use the new industrialization classes to create these unions. Also the Proletarian Wing was under fire from the other two groups for its use of propaganda. As John Booth writes, "The other factions criticized the Proletarios (Proletarian Wing) for excessive 'propagandism' for adherence to a 'traditional Marxist line...'"³⁵ The GPP on the other hand took a more cautious approach to the war and was criticized for, at times, isolating itself from the people of the country.

The last group that came out of the split was that of the Terceristas who, more than the other groups, took a completely different line on the Marxist ideology of the FLSN. This group included groups such as the Social Democratic, and Social Christian Group.³⁶

With these gaps in the FLSN it was clear the FLSN would crumble because of its own differences. This surprisingly, did not happen, all of the groups of the FLSN stayed united enough to continue on with the mission to dethrone Somoza. Due to the ability of the FSLN to stay intact, the revolution against Somoza was able to continue.

³⁵ John A Booth, 143.

³⁶ John A Booth, 144.

The reason for the continued FLSN front against Somoza was due to miscalculations by President Somoza Debayle in many of his actions. Somoza's biggest error was the killing of Pedro Joaguin Chamorro, who was a much loved journalist of the *La Prensa*.³⁷ Chamorro's death sparked an extreme backlash toward the Somoza Regime from the right.³⁸ Many of the elite in Nicaragua, including Chamorro's parents, were unaffected by Somoza's killing of poor, lower class, Nicaraguans, but they were shocked by the action taken against one of their own.

In addition to the anger sparked by Chamorro's murder, was the anger caused the funneling of international aid to the pocket of the Somoza Regime. The National Guard and Somoza after the 1972 earthquake stole aid money that was designed to help with the rebuilding and reimbursement costs of the earthquake. This selfish act pushed more and more conservatives and elite to oust the Somozan government. As the rest of the country's classes and political parties began to place pressure on Somoza, the FLSN took time to reunite their different groups and push Somoza out while his support was limited.

³⁷ Benjamin Keen, and Keith Haynes, 473.

³⁸ Benjamin Keen, and Keith Haynes, 473.

The United States had supported the Somoza Dynasty for much of the twentieth century in return for the involvement it was playing in Nicaraguan politics and for the aid it was receiving in the fight against communism. United States aid to the Somoza Regime rose from \$1 million annually in 1953 to \$17.3 million annually in 1975.³⁹ This funding was repaid in the eyes of the United States through Nicaragua's willingness to aid the fight against communism in Cuba. As Anastasio Somoza Debayle writes in his book, "My father, my brother, Luis, and I took part directly, indirectly, and openly to defeat Communism in Central America."⁴⁰ This open attack towards communism led the United States to ask the Somoza Regime if they would be willing to help in efforts to overthrow Castro and the Cuban government. This was the path that led Nicaragua to support the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion. This involvement in a United States run military operation demonstrated Somoza's complete support of United States policy on communism.

The election of Jimmy Carter in 1977 was a turning point in the amount of aid the United States would give the Somoza Dynasty. Carter, who had always been an advocate for human rights, began to see Anastasio Somoza Debayle as a

³⁹ John Booth, 75.

⁴⁰ Anastasio Somoza, 169.

threat to his continuation for promoting his human rights policies. Carter slowed the aid to Nicaragua because he wanted to begin distancing the United States. Carter knew that Somoza was losing his foothold with the FSLN, but Carter could not cut the ties completely because of economic constraints. The book Nicaragua: An Ally Under Siege, edited by Belden Bell, documents a decline of United States support under Carter. "The controversial assistance package currently being funneled through A.I.D. amounts to roughly \$6.1 million... in 1978."⁴¹ This amount was close to eleven million less that United States had given the Nicaragua in 1975.

The timing of Carter's policies seemed to be a way for the United States to save face. The United States did not want the Latin American policy makers to blame it for the failing Somoza government. Moreover, the United States diplomatically distanced itself from Somoza in a way that it still had an anti-FLSN stance. This is seen through Carter's praise of Somoza's progress on human rights in President Somoza's visits to the United States in 1978. The irony of this praise was the fact that Somoza was not respecting human rights, yet in order to continue the anti-

⁴¹ Belden Bell., ed. Nicaragua: An Ally Under Siege. Washington D.C.: Council on American Affairs, 1978, 137.

communist ties with Somoza, Carter needed to show some human rights progress countries diplomacy. However, since open violations of human rights by Somoza and the National Guard increased the United States was forced to back off its full support for Somoza. This decline in support would be the undoing of the Somoza Dynasty as it was overthrown by the FSLN, with the United States standing idly by and watching.

The role that the United States played in fostering the revolution was clearly crucial in this series of pawn wars. Because of the United States long history in the region, such as the Monroe Doctrine and later the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, the United States was fully able to use its powers of persuasion on those in power (Somoza Dynasty). The United States was able to accomplish what it felt it needed to do in the Latin American community. With that said, plans for an overthrow of Castro in Cuba were discussed and carried about by the United States with the help of the Somoza government. It is easy to see how the United States tipped the scales of war on the Nicaraguan people. This idea is enhanced in a statement made by the United States Ambassador to Nicaragua, James Theberge,

There are very few unchanging principles governing the relations between nations. Some however do exist, and for the Americans the Monroe Doctrine is one of the most enduring of them all.⁴²

In this statement it is easy to see the thought process of the United States in terms of using its power in the Latin American region.

Even when the United States enacted the "Good Neighbor policy"⁴³ set up in the 1930s, by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the United States did still influenced Nicaragua. Its influence was felt through both military force then by funding. The Good Neighbor Policy stated that the United States of America would not invest direct military action towards Latin American countries but would, "now extract voluntary cooperation from Latin American governments through diplomatic and economic means."⁴⁴ This allowed the United States to help with wars in Nicaragua by helping to fund them rather than sending in troops.

As the Nicaraguan Revolution ended in 1979, it seemed that the FSLN had succeeded. This successful revolution ended the reign of a power hungry dictator. However, the power of the United States in Nicaragua had as much to do with the fall of the Somoza Dynasty as it had to do with

⁴² George Black, Triumph of the People: The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua. London: Zed Press, 1981, 57.

⁴³ Peter H. Smith, Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 63.

⁴⁴ Peter H. Smith, 64.

the creation of the same dynasty. The United States started its involvement in Nicaragua for the sole reason of protecting United States based investments in the country. It continued this attempt to control Nicaragua even as it was forced out by Augusto Sandino and his troops, with the placing of Anastasio Somoza Garcia as head of the National Guard.

The twentieth century progressed and the policies that made intervention possible changed from the Monroe Doctrine to Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy. The United States was forced to battle its growing threat of communism by economic and political support in Latin America. As the United States aid funneled into the pockets of the Somoza Dynasty and the National Guard both groups became far too greedy. This greed soon lead to the growing backlash from both internal (FLSN and other political groups and classes), and the external (with the Soviet Union and Cuba) groups.

The United States, forced by the undeniable human rights violations by Somoza and his National Guard, was forced to distance itself from Somoza. Even with its action of reducing funding from the failed Somoza Dynasty, the United States still attempted to hold on in favor of those whose ideology was against communism, the FSLN. As the

Nicaraguan countryside was leveled and thousands of Nicaraguan people were killed in the final moments of the revolution the United States government was busily trying to figure out how to overthrow the new FLSN government.

The United States government not only was responsible for the Somoza Dynasty's hold in Nicaragua for over thirty years, it was also responsible for the loss of the Nicaraguan government, by not funding Somoza when he had put himself in a lose-lose situation. The policies of the different eras in the United States-Nicaraguan relationship forced the United States to use many different techniques to gain control in the region. Due to the falling of Somoza President Carter was willing to accept defeat at the hand of the FSLN. However, his successor, President Ronald Reagan admittedly opposed the now communist, FSLN, led country.

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