

states. This tendency has been reinforced by a deep concern among the leadership — a concern based on the US intervention in Nicaragua in the 1920s, the American role in placing the first member of the Somoza dynasty in a position to eliminate Sandino himself and subsequently to assume power at the expense of the civilian government in the 1930s, and sustained American sponsorship of the Somoza dictatorship — that the United States would intervene in Nicaragua to prevent or crush the revolution or direct it along more amenable lines.

Indeed, this concern was not so far-fetched. In the last months of Somoza's rule, the United States attempted to set up an Organization of American States (OAS) peacekeeping force which would be introduced into Nicaragua to stabilize the situation there while a compromise solution was worked out by *all* political forces in the country, including the "Somocistas". This initiative foundered owing to lack of enthusiasm, if not active hostility, on the part of the United States' Latin American allies. If anything, Sandinista concern over possible US military action has grown with the passage of time, for reasons noted below. It is natural in this context that the Nicaraguans should have sought to establish security relationships with rivals of the United States. For all of these reasons, US concerns about the broader regional and global implications of the Sandinista seizure of power were well-founded.

But the degree to which the Nicaraguan-American relationship has deteriorated and to which the Soviets have managed to implant themselves in Nicaragua at the expense of the United States was not pre-determined and is to a considerable extent the product of US policy. As in the case of Cuba, US actions have had the effect of driving Nicaragua into the arms of the Soviet Union. Although this is particularly true since the inauguration of the Reagan Administration, many of the actions of the Carter Administration had a similar effect.

When the Sandinistas came to power, they were counselled by Castro to avoid alienating the United States in order to retain access to US markets and assistance.<sup>55</sup> The Nicaraguans took this advice, perhaps in large part because of the monumental task of postwar reconstruction facing them<sup>56</sup>, but also because they had not yet

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<sup>55</sup> H. Sims, "Revolutionary Nicaragua", in Adelman and Reading, *op. cit.* (note 37), p. 60.

<sup>56</sup> It was estimated that the physical losses during the war amounted to some \$1.3 billion, *ibid.*, p. 59.