

January 31, 1984

To: Elliott Abrams

Subject: IPS: Nicaragua

This afternoon I attended the IPS seminar on "Women in Nicaragua", conducted by Magda Enriquez (ref. attached). Ms. Enriquez is a member of the GRN Council of State and one of the founders of AMLAE, the Nicaraguan women's organization. She appears to be in her mid-forties, speaks good English and is very articulate. Attendance came to about 40. Some of Ms. Enriquez' remarks are summarized below.

The Nicaraguan Revolution has meant a great deal for Nicaraguan women. The Spanish conquest set back women's rights for a long time. But female participation in the fight against Somoza has made many Nicaraguan women realize they were born for more, and that not only are they a part of history - they can make history. AMLAE has made great strides. Women are 48% of the Militia and 45% of the Police. But of course Nicaragua has inherited enormous problems. The USO backed Somoza to the end, was determined to crush the Revolution from the start, and has been applying economic, political and military pressures. The GRN is dedicated to pluralism, a mixed economy and non-alignment. Elections come in 1985. 80% of Nicaragua's commerce is in private hands. The Contras hit and hurt us, but they can't win. The GRN is helping those who had nothing before, emphasizing education and health. Free speech is protected. One can criticize the GRN without worrying, in contrast to El Salvador. Romero was killed but Orlando Brava is free to speak as he pleases. The GRN and the Nicaraguan people hope to live in peace, and dignity, with everyone. They are determined not to return to their historical status of a Yankee colony.

During the question period Ms. Enriquez was asked about the Misakitos, a subject she had omitted. She said the GRN had made some mistakes but now was achieving progress in helping the Indians. She asserted the Contras had recently killed 200 Misakitos returning from Honduras.

As the session ended Jill Gay introduced me to Ms. Enriquez as representing the State Department. Ms. Enriquez thanked me for coming. I then left with Jill the following attachments: 1) the marked statement from the Tsongas-Shannon-Unitarian report on their August, 1983 Central American visit, which I sent you yesterday; and, 2) the Carlos Andres Perez interview with Los Tiempos of Cochabamba. Please read the letter. Also attached is an article on AMGLA, inserted in yesterday's Congressional Record by Cong. Mathias. I believe it is worth reading.

Ms. Enriquez will probably be an effective, persuasive representative of the GRN during her tour in the U.S. (schedule attached). I plan to call Arturo Cruz and inquire whether he can arrange for an ARDE response or debate somewhere along the line.

In my opinion, Ms. Enriquez did very well on women's rights. I fault her presentation on the following points: 1) the USG did not stick with Somoza until the end; I doubt that he would have lost had we continued to back him; 2) the USG was not hostile to the GRN from the beginning; 3) the GRN is not non-aligned; you will recall Pena Gomez told them they had blundered in supporting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; 4) at least most GRN leaders do not wish to permit free speech; and, 5) there was no reference to GRN support for the FMLN.

I plan to mention these points to Jill Gay. She promised to show Ms. Enriquez the attachments I left with her.

George Lister

cc: Bob Snyder

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