

July 29, 1987

To: Dick Schifter

Subject: Chile-Nicaragua

Last night you asked what happened in Nicaragua and whether we are repeating our errors in Chile. Twenty years ago I saved the attached because I knew it was a blunder and the chances were good we would have to pay for it (along with the Nicaraguan people, of course). The article is an accurate reflection of the smug provincialism of our ARA policy makers at the time.

In contrast we have had a politically sophisticated policy in Chile since the departure of Ambassador Theberge (former Ambassador to Nicaragua) and since Shultz began supporting HA against ARA three or four years ago. We are no longer identified with the Pinochet regime, despite all our efforts by Moscow to continue to so portray us. That does not mean of course that we are out of the woods in Chile. We should maintain a healthy respect for the political potential of the Chilean Communist Party.

I am sure we could not have changed our Chile strategy without our human rights policy. That is one example of why anti-Communist Irving Kristel is so absurdly wrong.

George Lister

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cc: BF

Somoza Victory Greeted With Quiet Satisfaction

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY

Latin America Editor of The Star

The surprising Nicaraguan presidential election victory of Gen. Anastasio Somoza Jr. is privately viewed in Washington with sentiments that he somewhere between quiet satisfaction and real pleasure.

This is not to say that there was ever any doubt about the outcome. "Handsome" West Point-trained "Tachito" Somoza could have rigged the election had he felt the need. The probability is that he defeated Dr. Fernando Aguirre Rocha pretty much on the square.

U.S. policymakers and the majority of Nicaraguans apparently share a common viewpoint toward the Somoza dynasty—both are accustomed to it and know what to expect from it. This common factor is enhanced by two hallmarks of the regime—stability and, in Central American terms, program.

Loyalty a Key Point

To Washington, the Somozas have been for more than 30 years as loyal as a big nation can ever hope from a small one in terms of international issues. No matter how plainly it may be denied, Latin America is a sphere of influence in which the United States is paramount and the Somozas, father and sons, have taken Nicaragua consistently down the line with Washington.

It is beside the point that the family finds it both personally and nationally profitable to walk hand in hand with the United States and it is of only secondary interest that the Somozas have their own good reasons for being anti-Castro and anti-Communist.

The tough-minded Washington policymakers have it very much in mind that Nicaragua was among the first of the hemisphere nations to send troops to support the U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic. And it was from a base in Nicaragua that the Bay of Pigs invasion was launched.

To the rank-and-file Nicaraguans, the Somozas are an institution and it is not really offensive to the majority that the family has grown fabulously rich over the years. They also have had to wit to permit their opposition to prosper.

The voters actually didn't have too much of a choice between "Tachito" and Aguirre. It was quite literally a contest between two powerful families, since the losing

candidate belongs to the Chamorro clan, which has held the reins in Nicaragua more than once in the country's stormy history. Like "Tachito," Aguirre is young, sophisticated, attractive and articulate. Labeled a conservative, he hardly differs from Somoza except that he is not and Somoza is in.

The Predictable Preferred

In the eyes of Washington, the main difference is that Somoza is utterly predictable while Aguirre is somewhat less so. At a time when the unspoken policy of the administration toward the Caribbean basin is not to rock the boat, the predictable is preferred to the unpredictable. This attitude in general even applies to Haiti's Francois Duvalier.

When the Somozas are as disposed, they may end the Somoza family with bullets or ballots, but Sunday's election indicates that this time has not yet come.

Somoza is expected to continue to follow Washington's lead in the Organization of American States and the United Nations and will be treated as a friend in terms of aid and technical assistance.

He will provide over a nation where the triggerhappy, cops are no better and no worse than the turbulent youths with whom they occasionally clash. And he will continue to operate on the theory that whatever is good for Somoza is good for Nicaragua.

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