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Nicaraguan Opposition Leaders Support End Of U.S. Embargo

by Deborah Tyroler

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According to an article by Steven Kinzer in the New York Times (01/12/89), Nicaraguan opposition leaders share the opinion that the US should terminate its trade embargo. Carlos Huembes, head of the Democratic Coordinator, said: "The embargo was a mistake from the beginning. The new administration in Washington should dump it." Gilberto Cuadro, head of the business federation COSEP, said,"The embargo has had no practical effect. I don't even know if there really is an embargo. Everything seems to get through; it just costs more." Under the embargo imposed four years ago by the Reagan administration, no US goods, with the exception of medicine and other humanitarian goods, can be shipped to Nicaragua. In addition, goods from Nicaragua cannot be imported by the US. In 1984, the last year before the trade embargo was imposed, 17% of Nicaragua's foreign trade was with the US. Some economists say the real impact of the embargo has been quite modest. Many spare parts for machinery and vehicles formerly imported from the US can be purchased from other countries, and items available only in the US are imported through companies in Panama and elsewhere. The US is the only nation with a trade embargo against Nicaragua. Much business formerly conducted by US companies is currently carried out by companies based in Brazil, Canada, Japan and other nations. Some products once sold to the US are currently exported to Europe and elsewhere. Others, such as frozen seafood, are consumed in the US, imported direct from Honduras.

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