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Bush Administration Drops Plan To Channel Campaign Funds To Nicaraguan Opposition Candidate Via N.e.d.

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Sept. 15, the State Department announced that the Bush administration had dropped a plan to channel campaign funds to Nicaraguan opposition presidential candidate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro via the government-funded National Endowment for Democracy. Spokesperson Richard Boucher said the administration was considering "other options" for contributing to Barrios' campaign, such as passing US funds through private organizations, and encouraging European, Latin American and other foreign political parties and private groups to make direct contributions. Sen. Christopher Dodd, chairperson of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, said that Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega "is not Marcos or Noriega. He has a real popular base in his country. It would have been a mistake for the administration to give him an issue that would have had wide resonance in his country, such as direct United States political intervention in Nicaraguan elections. Dodd added, "There are parties in Europe and parties in Latin America that can be supportive for the opposition, as well as certain foundations and groups in other parts of the world that support democratic processes and make direct grants." (Basic data from AFP, 09/15/89; New York Times, 09/16/89)

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