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Nicaragua: U.N.o. Presidential Candidate Barrios De Chamorro In Miami

by Deborah Tyroler

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In several public appearances on Sept. 17-18 in Miami, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro explained her electoral strategy, and asked for financial and political support from the city's large Nicaraguan exile community. She said she would concentrate on persuading Nicaraguan women to vote against President Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista National Liberation Front's likely presidential candidate in February 1990. According to Barrios de Chamorro, the latest opinion polls show that about 20% of some 1.5 million Nicaraguans of voting age are staunch Sandinista supporters; around 30% oppose President Ortega; and the remaining 50% are undecided. The candidate asked that checks be sent to a special account she had just opened at the Miami office of Merrill Lynch & Co. On Sept. 18, Jose Antonio Alvarado, Nicaraguan-born investment banker and a sponsor of Chamorro's Miami trip, said about $20,000 would be collected during her visit. Most of the money, he added, would come from a $100-a-plate fund-raiser organized in cooperation with the anti-Castro Cuban American National Foundation. Silvio Arguello Cardenal, leader of the Nicaraguan Liberal Party, and a former vice president, told the New York Times: "Violeta became opposition candidate because of the pressure of the United States State Department. She is seeking the unity of the exiles but has not made it clear what her government would do." According to Arguello, many exiles in Miami were "victims of Sandinista confiscatory decrees" that Chamorro signed as a member of a five-member Sandinista junta installed after the 1979 overthrow of the Somoza regime. "But if she promises to repudiate those decrees our position would change," he added. The Times pointed out that while many of the Nicaraguan exiles oppose the Sandinistas, they fear deportation in the event the elections are evaluated to be fair by the world community, regardless of who wins. Arguello said only 30,000 Nicaraguans in Miami are permanent US residents. He added that the immigration status of the rest will remain undecided until after the February elections. (Basic data from New York Times, 09/19/89)