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Nicaragua Refuses To Issue Visas For U.S. Government Election Observer Delegation

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Nov. 30 in a communique, the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry said that it had refused visas to a 20-member delegation appointed by President George Bush to observe the election process. "From the point of view of his credibility before us, the very fact that Mr. Bush has been the one to appoint this commission is enough for it to be totally discredited." The communique said the Nov. 29 vote in the US Congress to continue aid to the contras will permit them to "keep infiltrating their bands into Nicaragua to assassinate our people and create confusion in the electoral process." The ministry also mentioned \$9 million approved by the Congress in October to aid the campaign of presidential candidate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro of the United National Opposition: "There exists a clear incompatibility between pretending to buy the election of a candidate while at the same time pretending to be accepted as impartial observers in our elections." The Nicaraguan government has invited scores of international observers, including teams from the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the European Parliament, and a delegation headed by former President Carter, among many others. The communique said that the organizations and individuals invited by the government of Nicaragua are "experienced, honest and impartial." Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto said, "Nicaragua cannot allow a US presidential commission to come here to stage the farce of observing innocent and impartial elections." The minister continued by stating that it was "totally unacceptable" for the United States, "in the current state of relations," to name officials to supervise Nicaraguan elections...We have not been able to stop the United States from violating our sovereignty, our dignity and our rights. But at least we will not invite them to continue acting this way." In statements to Notimex on Dec. 3, Interior Minister Tomas Borge said the US has no moral authority to act as an observer with the objective of imposing judgment on Nicaragua's elections. Borge pointed out that the Nicaraguan government feels in no way obligated to issue visas to US government representatives appointed for such a mission, since Washington does not permit Nicaraguan officials to visit the US. He added, "We have the right to respond in kind." (Basic data from AP, AFP, 11/30/89; Notimex, 12/03/89)

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