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## Nicaragua: Summary Of Recent Polls (s/s)

by Deborah Tyroler

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\* According to an Opinion Studies and Consulting (ECO) survey conducted for Managua's Jesuit-run Central American University between Dec. 18 and 22, 47.7% of respondents said they will vote for the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), 14.5% for the United National Opposition (UNO), and 2.8% for other parties. The sample was comprised of 4,540 voters in 35 municipalities in the country's northern, central and Pacific regions. In ECO's November poll, the FSLN led UNO by 42.8% to 19.9%. [Basic data from 01/06/89 Nicaline Bulletin (Nicaline News Network, Managua, Nicaragua)] \* Hemisphere Initiatives sponsored a national election survey in Nicaragua from Nov. 25 to Dec. 3. HI has hired pollster Stanley Greenberg of Greenberg-Lake: The Analysis Group, based in Washington, D.C. to conduct three surveys during the election campaign. Greenberg-Lake is working with the ITZANI polling organization in Managua. Greenberg-Lake's poll results in the recent Salvadoran elections predicted the outcome within a point margin. In Paraguay, Greenberg-Lake was within three points of the election results. The first Nicaragua election poll, released in mid-December, showed Daniel Ortega and the FSLN maintaining a firm lead in the race for president of Nicaragua. A total of 44% of respondents said they plan to vote for Ortega; 27% for Violeta Barrios de Chamorro; and, 5% for other parties' candidates. The remainder, 23%, said they were undecided. Undecided voters somewhat older, less educated and more likely to live on the Atlantic Coast lean toward the opposition: 34% said UNO is for "the good of the people" compared to 27% who said the FSLN. If the undecided are categorized by leanings, the FSLN's lead would be 50% to 35%. Survey results indicated that the FSLN bloc is solid and will not be easily eroded during the course of the campaign. Nearly all the Ortega/FSLN voters say they are "very certain" of their preference: 37%, compared to just 6% uncertain. The FSLN bloc relies on media nearly wholly aligned with the party: 63% read newspapers aligned with the government and only 5% opposition papers; 71% listen to pro-government radio and 4% tune in opposition radio stations. The table below shows that large segments of the electorate are closely linked to the government, and that the majority of these groups support the FSLN.

% of Electorate	% FSLN support
Government employees	15
66 Army (past six years- reserves/militia)	10
23 Recipients, government benefits or land	33
66 13 Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents said they believe Ortega deserves re-election, 55% hold a positive opinion of the president, and 61% said they believe Ortega is doing an excellent or good job as president. Meanwhile, 41% of respondents said they think "it is time for new people" to run the country; and, 45% believe the Sandinista government has made such a mess of things that "almost any change in government would be an improvement." However, this disgruntlement does not translate into support for UNO: 34% said they have a good opinion of Barrios Chamorro, and only 27% said they plan to vote for her Feb. 25. Survey analysts pointed out that the UNO bloc is not as solid as the FSLN's: 19% said they were certain they would vote for UNO, and 8% were uncertain. In addition, the self-proclaimed UNO voters are more likely to be aware of the other side's perspectives: 35%, for example, listen to pro-government radio. An extraordinary 77% of all respondents said they believe that parties are free to make their case to the people; 72% say they feel "personally free to join rallies" and express their point of view. Almost three-quarters (72%) believe the election results will be "honestly and accurately reported," while only 7% expect fraud. Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents said	

that ending the war is the "most important problem for the new president to work on," compared to 20% who said economic reconstruction or increasing wages/standard of living had priority. On the war issue, voters are much more likely to trust the FSLN than the opposition (56% to 26%). Those concerned with the economy are concerned, above all, with "rising prices for necessities" (51%), and these voters are more apt to turn to the opposition (44% to 35%). Only 10% of respondents had a positive opinion of the Resistencia Nicaraguense (contras), compared to 57% who held a negative opinion. UNO's perceived association with the contras constitutes the single most serious problem for the opposition: 62% said UNO is "too close to the contras." According to 47% of respondents, responsibility for continuity of the war lies with the US, or with the opposition for allying with the US and the contras. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents blamed the government for continuity of the war because it resisted a peaceful solution, or for allying itself with the Soviet Union. For 31% of respondents, UNO's position was enhanced by President Bush's support for Barrios de Chamorro, compared to 43% who believed that the opposition was worse off result of overt US support. Nonetheless, 48% of respondents said they Ortega and the FSLN are "too hostile to the United States," compared to 36% who disagree. Forty-five percent (45%) said the "FSLN government is so hostile to the US that it cannot bring peace and economic security," compared to 40% who reject this statement. Even a third of respondents who said they plan to vote for Ortega and the FSLN said they believe the government's hostility to the US impedes peace and economic progress. The Resistencia Nicaraguense (contras) had a negative image for 57% of respondents, and a positive one for 10%. A total of 62% of respondents said UNO "is too [closely] identified with the armed resistance." [Basic data from 01/03/90 report by Institute for Media Analysis (Washington, DC); 01/03/90 report by Hemisphere Initiatives (Boston, MA)]

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