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Nicaraguan President Warns U.N.o. May Withdraw From Election As Prelude To Justify More U.S. Aggression

by Deborah Tyroler

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Early Jan. 15, President Daniel Ortega told reporters that he was concerned the National Opposition Union (UNO) may withdraw from the election campaign as part of a plan to justify further US aggression. He accused the 13-party coalition of attempting to create a "situation like Panama." President Ortega said he discussed his concerns with Eliot Richardson, chief of the United Nations election monitoring effort. Richardson refused to confirm whether this had been a topic of his three-hour meeting with Ortega which concluded shortly after midnight. Ortega told reporters: "The main concern that I expressed has to do with the attitude of the North American government, the ongoing contra attacks, and the risks involved should UNO withdraw from the electoral process." Of UNO, he said, "They're not playing fair because they're working so as to create in Nicaragua a situation similar to that of Panama...and drag the United States into it." Jan. 16: During campaign speeches in Malacatoya, Catarina, Tisma and San Juan de Oriente, candidate Ortega reiterated his concerns regarding a potential UNO withdrawal from the elections. He said that UNO knows it will lose the elections and thus will withdraw, followed by Washington's declaration that the elections are fraudulent. Ortega noted that in the 1984 elections the rightist coalition pulled out of the elections late in the campaign at the behest of Washington. If UNO withdraws in 1990, he added, Washington will proclaim with self-righteousness that because the FSLN faced no significant opponents, the US will not recognize the election results. (Basic data from AP, 01/15/90; Notimex, 01/15/90, 01/16/90)

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