

1-17-1990

Mexican Social Scientist: Not All Panamanians Support U.S. Invasion

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen>

Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Mexican Social Scientist: Not All Panamanians Support U.S. Invasion." (1990). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/3638>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Mexican Social Scientist: Not All Panamanians Support U.S. Invasion

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Wednesday, January 17, 1990

In an interview with Notimex on Jan. 8, Central America specialist at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM), Raul Benitez Manaut, said not all Panamanians are supportive of the US invasion. According to Benitez, the strongest supporters of the invasion are sectors of the middle class most negatively affected by the economic embargo. He added that in Panama, the upper middle class and middle class are relatively large, due to the country's peculiar economic structure. The academic said that since 1987, the middle classes who enjoyed the highest average incomes in the region have been impacted by the US embargo. They were supporters of the Civic Crusade. The Crusade, when transformed into a political party, was perceived as capable of restoring the income levels enjoyed by these people in past decades. Benitez Manaut said that Panamanians who oppose the military intervention do not parade in the streets because of the presence of the army of occupation, and because a witch hunt is underway. Those who oppose the exercise of US force in their country, he added, are understandably afraid. Next, the professor described the US invasion of Panama as one of the most serious developments of contemporary Latin American history, or that of the second half of the 20th century. "This act of barbarism," he said, "is comparable...only to the US invasion of Guatemala in 1954 and of the Dominican Republic in 1965." While many observers have sought to characterize 1989 and the 1990s as the era of political openings on a global scale, said Benitez. "The United States is not behaving like the USSR," he said. "Moscow has acted with respect for the political processes of the Eastern European countries, even for 'anti-socialist' politics, as in the case of Rumania." The most important difference between the two superpowers, said Benitez, is that the Soviet Union has not employed military force in its "area of influence," while the United States has clearly opted in favor of force in Latin America, part of Washington's so-called area of influence. Benitez told Notimex that among the most important implications of the US invasion of Panama is that Washington intends to militarize its policy toward Central America and the Caribbean with the intent of guaranteeing its continued control of Southern Command military installations after the year 2000. The fact that a regular army no longer exists in Panama permits the US to become the only military force in custody of the Panama Canal. (Basic data from Notimex, 01/08/90)

-- End --