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## Department of State

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CONFIDENTIAL MANAGUA 03745

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TAGS: FREL NU

SUBJECT: ORTEGA'S PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER CODEL LEAVES  
GIVES A DIFFERENT SLANT TO DEMOCRACY

REF: MANAGUA 3690

1. (U) NICARAGUAN PRESIDENT DANIEL ORTEGA WAITED UNTIL AFTER HIS MEETING WITH CODEL MCCURDY (SEPTEL) TO MAKE SEVERAL UNFLATTERING COMPARISONS BETWEEN NICARAGUAN AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY. AT HIS MEETING WITH THE CODEL, ORTEGA HAD MENTIONED ONLY "COSTA RICAN," OR "OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN" MODELS OF DEMOCRACY. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AFTER THE CODEL LEFT NICARAGUA, WHICH APPEARED IN BARRICADE OF JUNE 3, ORTEGA COMPARED NICARAGUA'S "OPEN DOOR" DEMOCRACY WITH THE MORE LIMITED VERSION EXISTING IN THE U.S., AND SAID, "WE WISH THE UNITED STATES HAD THIS KIND OF DEMOCRACY." ORTEGA ALSO WISHED THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN WOULD MEET WITH MEMBERS OF THE NICARAGUAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND ALLOW THEM "TO QUESTION HIM," THE WAY HE (ORTEGA) HAD MET WITH THE CODEL. ORTEGA ACCUSED THE US OF TRYING TO IMPOSE ITS "MODEL" OF DEMOCRACY ON NICARAGUA, A CHARGE HE HAD LEVELLED ONLY AT HIS CENTRAL AMERICAN NEIGHBORS WHEN TALKING WITH CODEL MCCURDY.

2. (U) ORTEGA RESPONDED TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE NICARAGUAN ACQUISITION OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT, ONE OF THE WEAPONS SYSTEMS HE TOLD THE CODEL NICARAGUA WOULD BE WILLING TO LIMIT, BY SAYING THAT THE CON IS CONTEMPLATING THE ACQUISITION OF SUCH AIRCRAFT, AND THAT THE DECISION AS TO WHAT MODEL TO ACQUIRE "WILL DEPEND ON THE GOVERNMENT THAT SUPPLIES THEM."

3. (U) ON CONTADORA, ORTEGA CLAIMED THAT WHEN THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT PRESENTED "CONCRETE PROPOSALS" ON ARMS, THE US WAS LEFT WEAPONLESS TO CONTINUE OPPOSING THE CONTADORA PROCESS, AND SO TURNED TO THE THEME OF DEMOCRACY IN ORDER TO DISRUPT NEGOTIATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, INSISTED ORTEGA, NICARAGUA IS WILLING TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATING.

4. (C) THIS IS NOT WHAT ORTEGA SAID TO THE CODEL. ORTEGA HAD TOLD THE REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE SPEECH CRITICIZING NICARAGUA GIVEN TO THE CAS BY PRESIDENT AZCONA DID NOT REFLECT HIS (AZCONA'S) TRUE FEELINGS, BUT RATHER HIS NEED TO REMAIN IN THE GOOD GRACES OF THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE EOUCHER, USING ORTEGA'S OWN WORDS, THEN ASKED IF, GIVEN ORTEGA'S NEED TO FLACATE HIS SOVIET AND CUBAN ALLIES, HE WAS TELLING THE CODEL "WHAT WAS IN HIS HEART." ORTEGA DID NOT RESPOND DIRECTLY TO THE QUESTION, BUT JUDGING FROM HIS REMARKS IN BARRICADE, HIS ANSWER SHOULD HAVE BEEN "NO."

5. (C) ORTEGA'S REMARKS ON THE TRADITION OF ONE PARTY STATES,

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MILITARY RULE IN LATIN AMERICAN (SEE REFTEL) AND HIS CRITICISM OF THE US SUGGEST THAT THE SANDINISTAS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT DEMOCRACY, IN THE WESTERN SENSE OF THE WORD, EXISTS ANYWHERE. IT IS A "PHILOSOPHICAL" CONCEPT, NOT SOMETHING TO BE PUT IN PRACTICE. THUS, THEY SEE QUESTIONS ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN NICARAGUA ONLY AS A PLOY TO DERRAIL CONTADORA, RATHER THAN AS A REAL ISSUE OF DISAGREEMENT. THIS COULD PROVE TO BE AN UNBRIDGEABLE GAP BETWEEN NICARAGUA AND THE CORE FOUR, IF IT IS PRESSED AS ARIAS PRESSED IT AT ESCUPULAS.

6. (C) FINALLY IT IS CURIOUS TO HEAR A REVOLUTIONARY LEADER DEFEND HIS MODEL OF DEMOCRACY BY APPEALING TO THE TRADITION OF OLD-STYLE LATIN MILITARY DICTATORS. BERGOLD

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