

'All must send aid'—Fidel Castro

On July 26, the anniversary of the Cuban revolution, a delegation from the Government of National Reconstruction arrived in Havana, little more than a week after the success of their own revolution in Nicaragua. Here are excerpts from the speech given by Fidel Castro on the topic of the Nicaraguan revolution.

... They (the Sandinistas—ed.) don't harbor prejudices because they aren't afraid that the Nicaraguan Revolution will be mistaken for the Cuban Revolution; they're beyond such prejudices. And therefore on no account are they going to say that the two revolutions are exactly the same. They are two profound revolutions, in many ways similar and in many ways different, as all real revolutions must be.

This is important for our people, and important as well for world opinion. Every country has its way, its own problems, its own style, its methods, and its goals. ... We did it one way, our way; they will do it in their way....

The Nicaraguans have given a magnificent reply to the statements and fears expressed by some people with concerns whether Nicaragua is going to become a new Cuba: No! Nicaragua is going to become a new Nicaragua! That's a very different thing....

We hope that imperialist adventures of invasion and support for counterrevolution will not be repeated against Nicaragua. Of course, we can't have illusions. We are not going to believe that the reaction is going to leave the Nicaraguan revolution in peace, despite the revolution's magnanimity, its

openness, its democratic goals.

They have said: 'if an election is needed, let's have an election!' Any election that takes place in Nicaragua will be won by a wide majority by the Sandinistas regardless of the resources that the reactionary groups can bring to bear....

Even the United States has expressed a willingness to send food and to facilitate different kinds of aid. It makes us happy ... They said they will establish an airlift (to Nicaragua) and send 300 tons of food a day. This sounds good to us....

... a U.S. intervention into Nicaragua would have been a really suicidal act for United States policy in the hemisphere, because we don't have the slightest doubt that the Sandinistas would have continued fighting even though it provoked a Yankee invasion. ... And not only that, but a gigantic Vietnam could have developed throughout Central America and the rest of Latin America, a gigantic Vietnam....

I repeat. It makes us happy that the United States and everyone else are helping. What's more, we would like to begin a friendly competition with the United States, a contest to see who can do more for Nicaragua. We invite the United States, all of the countries of Latin America, Europe, the Third World, and our brothers of the socialist countries to compete in aiding Nicaragua. This is our position for carrying out a really human, really constructive effort in this spirit. ...

aid from Western nations, OPEC countries, and the socialist sector be channeled.

Washington is coordinating its aid blackmail policy with and through its allies in Latin America, primarily the Venezuelan government of president Luis Herrera Campins. Oil-rich Venezuela granted Nicaragua a \$20 million short-term credit—repayable in six months at 10.5 percent interest—on condition that the Nicaraguan government appoint "Social Christians" to ministries and public posts as "insurance" that Nicaragua follows a "moderate" course. This "conditionality" was denounced publicly by Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge, who stated emphatically that "we are ready to die of hunger before accepting conditions from anybody ... Revolutions are not made in jest."

While the Government of National Reconstruction has been extremely careful to keep negotiations open with all parties, including the IMF, and has assured Washington that it has no intent to "align" with the

Soviet Union, it has stated with insistence that it will not accept any conditions on aid which would betray the development goals of the revolution.

What does Washington want?

Why would Washington, which proclaims concern for Nicaragua's democratic future, knowingly provoke radicalization of the regime? What does the U.S. have to gain? "Radicalization" of Nicaragua would not only provide the justification for U.S. political—or military—intervention to destroy the new government, but would provoke a strategic confrontation with Cuba, and the Soviet Union, in the Western Hemisphere—a showdown which Washington believes it can "win." U.S. policymakers do not believe their own red-scare rhetoric, but are more concerned about the "model" Nicaragua represents as a challenge to the rule of IMF austerity.

—Mary Goldstein