Chapter 19

The Costa Rican Role in the Sandinist Victory

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On July 17, 1979, Anastasio Somoza, scion to the dynasty which ruled Nicaragua since 1936, was driven from office. Researchers are only now beginning to investigate systematically the factors which contributed to his downfall. Inquiry is focusing on two central areas: (1) the weaknesses of the Somoza regime, and (2) the strengths of the Sandinista movement. This chapter takes up the latter, dealing with one major strength of the movement, namely the assistance it received from Costa Rica at crucial points in the civil war.[1] Our thesis is that a number of decisions taken by the Costa Rican government in the twilight years of the Somoza regime were taken in the context of deep-seated hostility between the governments of Costa Rica and Nicaragua and that this hostility can be traced back to the early years of Central America's independence from Spain. That these decisions did not consistently favor the Sandinistas can be traced to a concern on the part of Costa Rica over the impact that a guerrilla victory ultimately might have upon it, particularly insofar as the Sandinistas were perceived as a communist-led movement.

Historical Roots of Hostility: 1824-1927

As early as 1824, Costa Rica and Nicaragua came into conflict. In that year, the Nicaraguan province of Nicoya was annexed to Costa Rica, becoming what is today the province of Guanacaste. The loss of this region has been a bone of perpetual contention between the two countries. Some years later, in 1842, Costa Rica revealed its distaste for dealing with other countries in the Central American region and its particular lack of affinity for Nicaragua by refusing to send representatives to the Central American confederation talks being held in that country. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, Thomas L. Karnes notes, "Costa Rica reinforced its tendencies of late colonial times toward localism, neutrality, and a realization that it was better to be separated from the quarrels of the other four."[2]

Despite its efforts to remain aloof from her neighbors, Costa Rica's first violent international dispute found it in conflict with Nicaragua. In 1856,

Costa Rica invaded Nicaragua in an effort to put an end to William Walker's unappreciated intervention in Central American affairs. However, since Costa Rican troops crossed the Nicaraguan border without a declaration of war, Nicaragua's President Rivas was prompted to call "on the entire civilized world to note that his country was being attacked without provocation" and to declare war on Costa Rica. Costa Rica suffered a bitter defeat and heavy losses at the hands of the combined forces of Walker's North American mercenaries and Nicaraguan troops, and was forced to withdraw.

By 1858, the two neighboring nations were again on the verge of war, this time in a dispute over possession rights to the San Juan River, long believed to offer a possible transisthmian route. Open warfare was averted only by the timely intervention of El Salvador and Guatemala, who pressured Costa Rica into signing the Jérez-Cañas Treaty.

The remaining years of the nineteenth century were much calmer, although difficulties did emerge during the period of 1893-1909, during the rule of José Santos Zelaya. During this period, Nicaragua's frequent military incursions into neighboring republics only served to reinforce the antipathy between the two countries.

The first indications of Costa Rican support for the Sandinistas came during Augusto C. Sandino's struggle against the U.S. Marines' occupation of Nicaragua. During this period, Costa Rica frequently served as a jumping-off point for armed incursions northward. The failure of the Costa Rican government to prevent such activity was attributed to problems of effectively patrolling the difficult terrain along its northern border. No doubt there is an element of truth to this claim, but in the context of the historically strained relations between the two countries, it is difficult to accept it as the complete explanation. Nicaragua was able to repay Costa Rica for its failure to stop the Sandinista raids of the 1927-1933 period through its open support for ex-Costa Rican president Calderón Guardia's attempt to regain control of Costa Rica. He had been granted asylum in Nicaragua after the 1948 civil war, during which José "Pepe" Figueres took control. In December 1948, Calderonistas, armed and supported by Nicaragua, invaded Costa Rica. Action by the Organization of American States (OAS) helped avert a full-scale war between the two nations.

Costa Rica was to repay Nicaragua's action of 1948 in 1959. That year, a key antagonist of the Somozas, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, later editor of the opposition newspaper "La Prensa," haunted the dynasty from Costa Rica. Chamorro and approximately 150 rebels invaded Nicarargua from a base in Punto de Llorones in Costa Rica. This invasion was the opening volley in a battle which was to last until the downfall of the Somoza regime. By the late 1960s, clashes between the Nicaraguan National Guard and Sandinista units became frequent along the Costa Rican border. Civilians in the border region often claimed that the Nicaraguans were being overly zealous and were illegally crossing the border into Costa Rica. Then Nicaragua

began harrassing truckers crossing the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border, and tension mounted.

Renewed conflict arose once again in late 1976, when President Anastasio Somoza accused Costa Rica of diverting water from the San Juan River and thus violating stipulations of the Jérez-Cañas Treaty. Relations worsened considerably when, a short time later, Costa Rica seized three Nicaraguan tuna boats and their crews for fishing inside territorial waters. Not to be outdone, Nicaragua responded by impounding two Costa Rican boats.

Then in October 1977, after a lull of almost a year following the combat deaths of two of its principle leaders, the FSLN went on the offensive, attacking the National Guard barracks in the remote San Juan river town of San Carlos, near the Costa Rican frontier. National Guard reinforcements already in the area were able to force the Sandinistas to retreat across the border, but not before a much more serious incident took place. Claiming "hot pursuit," the Nicaraguan air force strafed three Costa Rican boats inside the latter's national territory. Aboard one of the boats was Costa Rican security minister Mario Charpentier, accompanied by a group of journalists. The hostile act immediately received wide media coverage and led to a vigorous protest by Costa Rica, which further strained the worsening relations between the two countries.

Costa Rican Policy toward the Insurrection: 1977-1979

Following the San Carlos raid, the Costa Rican government granted asylum to eleven members of the FSLN who had participated in the operation and had escaped to Costa Rica. While such a humanitarian gesture on the part of Costa Rica was not unprecedented, the action brought immediate charges from Nicaragua that its southern neighbor was providing sanctuary for Sandinista guerrillas. The Somoza newspaper, *Novedades*, claimed that the invasion of San Carlos occurred with the knowledge and acquiescence of the Costa Rican authorities. The situation failed to improve when a meeting of Central American heads of state in Guatemala City, called on October 31 to discuss the border conflict and other topics, was conspicuously not attended by Costa Rica's president Daniel Oduber.

As Oduber's term in office drew to a close in May 1978, the FSLN guerrillas began to have doubts about the availability of Costa Rica as a safe haven under his successor, Rodrigo Carazo Odio. As a candidate for office, the firm anticommunist Carazo had pledged to recall the Costa Rican ambassador to Moscow. Later, as President-Elect, it was reported that he promised the Nicaraguan foreign minister that he would take action against those FSLN elements operating in Costa Rica.[3] Once in office, however, Carazo seemed to have a change of mind, granting asylum to a high-ranking FSLN leader in June 1978. He may have begun to have second thoughts, though, when Somoza responded to this action by sending reinforcements to the Costa Rica border in a show of strength.

As the year wore on, the strategic importance of Costa Rica as a nearby sanctuary for continuing the struggle against Somoza was further underscored by the return of influential Nicaraguans who had been exiled there. "*Los Doce,* "a group of prominent and well-respected intellectualls and professionals, arrived in Managua from San José in July, having been allowed back by Somoza who hoped "to improve his image in the United States."[4] However, matters did not improve for Somoza since the group immediately called for an antigovernmental front to include the *Sandinista* guerrillas, causing popular outbreaks of violence in major cities. But perhaps the most significant exile to return was Edén Pastora Gómez, who as "Comandante Zero" led a force of twenty-five guerrillas in atacking and holding the Nicaraguan National Palace for forty-eight hours in late August. Costa Rica acted at this time in a somewhat ambiguous role as it offered to have its ambassador in Managua mediate between Somoza and the guerrillas, while publicly announcing that Pastora Gómez would be free to return to Costa Rica whenever he wished.

Costa Rica's concern that a total Sandinista victory in Nicaragua could have a decidedly destabilizing effect on its welfare, and that instability along the northern border would grow, resulted in offers from Costa Rica in September 1978 to mediate the Nicaraguan crisis. This diplomatic effort had little chance to unfold, however, as the gesture was withdrawn by mid-month following new violations of Costa Rican territory by Nicaraguan aircraft in "hot pursuit" of suspected guerrillas. The fact that Somoza denied these violations to the news media did not prevent Costa Rica from calling for an OAS team to investigate its complaint . Concurrently, as the mood in Costa Rica swung away from efforts at mediation, the opinion that Somoza must go at any cost became more prevalent. This increased hostility is illustrated by the official Costa Rican decision at the time to expropriate a 15,000-hectare Somoza estate in Guanacaste, and by ex-President Figueres's call for arms to be shipped to the Sandinistas.

Costa Rican fears of a communist takeover in Nicaragua again surfaced in November 1978. Official policy towards the guerrillas became at best ambivalent as the government in San José initiated cleanup operations to rid the northern border areas of the FSLN. The operation netted about fifty suspected insurgents, some of whom were actually deported to Panama. In addition, a force of some 200-300 Sandinistas marshaled in Panama was denied passage through Costa Rica. Significantly, the change in policy by San José was seen to damage the chances of the FSLN unleasing a planned new offensive against Somoza from the Guanacaste region. Yet during this same period, Costa Rica's official line regarding the guerrillas became even more ambiguous as Costa Rica broke off diplomatic relations with Nicaragua in response to a serious armed conflict between Costa Rica and Somoza forces at the border.

As the year 1978 waned, the final offensive hinted at by the FSLN still failed to materialize. There is sufficient information to suggest that this in-

action was due in large part to the intermittent cleanup operations Costa Rica continued to conduct in the border regions. The policy at this time, however, may not have been entirely of Costa Rica's own choosing. On December 26, angered by increased cross-border attacks, Somoza closed the frontier with Costa Rica, threatening to invade the country unless the government in San José stepped up its anti-Sandinista operations. This action precipitated a Costa Rican call to the OAS asking for protection against Nicaraguan invasion. It also led to serious discussions in San José as to whether or not the country should build up its armed forces. Its realization that the Civil Guard was no match for an armed attack begs the question of how the Carazo administration realistically expected these same forces to contain or eradicate an ever-growing and more professionally organized guerrilla force. The policy of rounding up suspected FSLN members was at best never intended to be more than a safety-valve measure to keep Somoza's National Guard at arm's length. The notion becomes even more plausible when threats of a surgical strike into Costa Rica by the National Guard are taken into account.

The ambivalent nature of Costa Rican priorities concerning the Somoza crisis continued on into 1979. Early in the year, "Operación Jaque Mate," aimed at ridding the frontier environs of the FSLN, was launched by San José. But like those that preceded it, the action lacked serious content and was largely ineffective and symbolic. For Costa Rica, the real concern was still the disruption which the continued presence of Somoza brought to the entire region. Short of the unlikely event that mediation would force the dictator out, the Carazo administration realistically concluded that the FSLN was the only viable means of terminating the dynasty.

By never effectively eliminating the Sandinista presence along the border with Nicaragua, whether by design or inability, Costa Rica did provide a valuable asset to the guerrillas in the final takeover of the country. Because he could never be certain that a new and larger offensive was not about to break over the southern border, Somoza found it impossible to concentrate entirely on retaking the cities captured by the guerrillas. He could no longer collect and employ his forces against the rebel centers one by one, as he had done so successfully during the rebellion of the previous September. Whenever this strategy was attempted, FSLN units would invade from Costa Rica, obliging Somoza to detach his special 3,000-man force to prevent the loss of the southern provincial capital of Rivas.

One large guerrilla column of about 300 troops, which crossed over from Costa Rica in May 1979, caused Somoza to call for an emergency meeting of the OAS. Angered by the continued transgressions, and by Carazo's attempts to persuade other Latin American nations to break all ties with Managua, Somoza threatened to invoke the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance in order to obtain military help from other OAS members. Pressure originating from within his own cabinet as well as from segments of the private sector encouraged Carazo to back off from his self-

appointed diplomatic initiative; these elements feared the possibility of Somoza lashing out against Costa Rica in retaliation.

By June, as matters rapidly deteriorated for Somoza, the FSLN was allowed to set up a governmental Junta-in-Exile in San José. What normally would have been a diplomatically deplorable manoeuvre by Costa Rica, that of openly fomenting the downfall of a sitting government outside its own territory, now brought immediate recognition for the Junta by various nations, so low was the international public opinon of the Somoza regime. Costa Rica was among the first to extend formal recognition to the Junta, first as a belligerent force to be considered on an equal par with the Somoza government, then as the rightful representative of the Nicaraguan people. Until the final FLSN military victory however, Costa Rica never forgot its underlying preoccupation that a communist power might fill the vacuum which an ouster of Somoza would create. As late as the downfall itself, on July 17, the Carazo administration still pursued the ambiguous policy of providing a public base of operations for the rebel Nicarguan government while trying to convince the Junta that it should toe the official Washington line and broaden its base to include conservatives.

Once Somoza was out, Costa Rica no longer had a hostile force threatening to invade across its northern frontier. Attention could be turned from matters of armed strength to more pressing political and economic considerations. Despite the internal criticism Carazo faced because of his handling of the Nicaraguan crisis, Costa Rica could be content that it had played an important role in removing the hated Somozas from the region. Without the continued use of sanctuaries along the border, and the moral support of the majority of the Costa Rican people, the FSLN might have been denied victory altogether.

Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

An historical deterministic position could well read the events of the past 100 years as making inevitable the Carazo government's "tilt" in favor of the Sandinistas. The complex and harsh realities of political life, however, make such reasoning unacceptable. Carazo had to have more than history behind him when the decided to conduct his foreign policy in the manner outlined above. Since it involved the stability of the Isthmus, the real possibility of outside intervention (from the United States, or from Venezuela and(or) Panama), and, perhaps most important, the distinct possibility that Costa Rica might eventually find itself at war with a militarily far more powerful adversary, President Carazo needed to be sure that public opinion was squarely in his corner. Overwhelming public support for a strong stand on Costa Rica's part undoubtedly would have encouraged a firm, even strident foreign policy vis-á-vis Somoza. On the other hand, ambivalence in public opinion almost certainly would have encouraged a far more moderate approach. We do not claim, however, that

there was a one-to one correspondence between public opinion and Carazo's foreign policy. Rather, our view is that public opinion was fraught with ambivalence, and that this ambivalence was reflected in Carazo's actions.

It is clear that serious cross-pressures were influencing public opinion. Indeed, it would be appropriate to characterize the Costa Rican people as caught in an "approach-avoidance dilemma." On the one hand, the long history of tension-filled relations with Nicaragua, along with a more general distaste for antidemocratic regimes, served to stimulate pro-Sandinista sentiment. On the other hand, many Costa Ricans clearly were concerned about the eventual impact of a possible Sandinista victory. Costa Rica itself had suffered a civil war in 1948 in which a central issue was communist influence in the government. Since the international mass media unceasingly spoke of Sandinista links to communism and Cuba, fears of the eventual establishment of a communist state to the north were not by any means irrational.

These cross-pressures were clearly evident in the fall of 1978. At that time, a survey of urban Costa Rican public opinion was taken. The sample, consisting of 201 respondents, was designed to represent opinion in metropolitan San José, as well as in the provincial capitals of Cartago, Heredia, and Alajuela. Approximately 36 percent of the country's population, and most of its urban population, are located in these areas.

Costa Ricans strongly believed in the justice of the Sandinista cause. As is shown in Table 19.1, 96 percent (adjusted) of all respondents who had an opinion believed that the Sandinistas were fighting for a just cause. It should not be assumed, however, that this overwhelming belief in the justice of the Sandinista cause translated into a demand for pro-Sandinista action, either on the part of the government or the citizens.

TABLE 19.1

JUSTICE OF SANDINISTA CAUSE

Question: In your opinion, are the Sandinistas fighting for a just cause or are they not fighting for a just cause?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Just cause	87.1	96.2	(175)
Not just cause	3.5	3.8	(7)
Don't know	9.5	---	(19)
	100.0	100.0	(201)

We see in Tables 19.2a and 19.2b that the demand for action was considerably lower than the belief that the Sandinista cause was just. About two-thirds (65 percent) of the respondents believed that the Costa Rican people ought to help the Sandinistas. Only a little more than a majority (54

percent), however, believed that the government should take any action. Nearly 9 percent of the respondents offered no opinion on these items. If these individuals had sided with the "no action" position, then a majority would have been opposed to the government taking any action. Support for the justice of the Sandinista cause, therefore, did not translate into a mandate for government action.

TABLE 19.2

HELP FOR SANDINISTAS

Question 2a: In your opinion, the Costa Rican *people* ought to help the Sandinistas or ought not to help them?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Help	59.2	64.7	(119)
Not help	32.3	35.3	(65)
Don't know	8.5	—	(17)
	100.0	100.0	(201)

Question 2b: In your opinion, the *government* of Costa Rica ought to help the Sandinistas or ought not to help?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Help	49.3	53.8	(99)
Not help	42.3	46.2	(85)
Don't know	8.5	—	(17)
	100.0	100.0	(201)

Why were the "Ticos" reluctant to come to the aid of the "Nicas" in the latter's hour of need? One reason, as is shown in Table 19.3, is that 40 percent did not believe that armed struggle was the only way to resolve the problem. Costa Rican repugnance for violent solutions to conflicts obvious-

TABLE 19.3

JUSTIFICATION OF SANDINISTA VIOLENCE

Question: In your opinion, armed struggle is the only way to resolve the problems of Nicaragua, or is it not the only way?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Armed struggle the only way	54.7	60.4	(110)
Armed struggle not the only way	35.8	39.6	(72)
Don't know	9.5	—	(19)
	100.0	100.0	(201)

ly played a role in forming this opinion. But we can also conjecture that there was some fear that violence in Nicaragua would ultimately affect Costa Rica, as indeed it did.

When it came to discussing specific actions the government of Costa Rica might take against Somoza, even the mildest was rejected by most citizens. In Table 19.4a, we see that only a little more than one-quarter (28 percent) of the sample was willing to break relations with Nicaragua in October 1978. Interestingly, and as an aside, there was much more support for having Costa Rica withdraw from the OAS if that organization did not impose sanctions on Nicaragua for violation of Costa Rican national territory, than there was for breaking relations with Somoza. In Table 19.4b, we see that just over half of the Costa Ricans interviewed would have wanted to withdraw from the OAS under those circumstances.

TABLE 19.4

SUGGESTED DIPLOMATIC SANCTIONS

Question 4a: In your opinion, Costa Rica ought to break relations with Nicaragua or should not break them?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Break relations	23.9	27.6	(48)
Not break relations	62.7	72.4	(126)
Don't know	13.4	—	(27)
	100.0	100.0	(201)

Question 4b: Do you believe that if the OAS does not impose sanctions on Nicaragua (for violation of national territory), Costa Rica ought to get out of that organization?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Get out	40.8	50.3	(82)
Not get out	40.3	49.7	(81)
Don't know	18.9	—	(38)
	100.0	100.0	(201)

Carazo evidently was quite successful in tailoring his foreign policy on this issue to the desires of the citizenry. As is shown in Table 19.5, 75 percent of the people thought that the government had acted "very well" or "well" in the conflict with Nicaragua.

What lay behind the fears of Costa Ricans which might have mitigated their support for the overthrow of a regime they obviously detested? A fear of communism was certainly one factor. In Table 19.6, we see that nearly one-third of the respondents thought that communism would follow a Sandinista victory in Nicaragua. It is also important to note that almost one-

TABLE 19.5

EVALUATION OF COSTA RICAN GOVERNMENTAL POLICY TOWARD NICARAGUA

Question: Overall, would you say that the government (of Costa Rica) acted very well, well, fair, poorly, or very poorly in the recent conflict with Nicaragua?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Very well	20.4	20.8	(41)
Well	53.7	54.8	(108)
Fair	13.4	13.7	(27)
Poorly	8.5	8.6	(17)
Very poorly	2.0	2.0	(4)
Don't know	2.0	--	(4)
	100.0	100.0	(201)

third also had no opinion on this item, over three times the nonresponse rate of the other items. Obviously, many were unsure about the nature of the Sandinista movement (an uncertainty by no means confined to Costa Ricans). Likewise, as is shown in Table 19.7, although nearly one-fourth (24 percent) of those who held an opinion were willing to label the Sandinista movement as communist, over one-third had no opinion. It was obviously of crucial importance for the outcome of the revolution that for the most part, Costa Rican public opinion viewed the Sandinistas as either noncommunist or were uncertain as to what the movement really was.

TABLE 19.6

WILL COMMUNISM FOLLOW DOWNFALL OF SOMOZA?

Question: In your opinion, if Somoza falls, will communism follow (*se meterá el comunismo*) or not?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Communism will follow	21.4	31.6	(43)
Communism will not follow	46.3	68.4	(93)
Don't know	32.3	—	(65)
	100	100	(201)

TABLE 19.7

PERCEIVED LINK BETWEEN COMMUNISM AND SANDINISTA MOVEMENT

Question: In your opinion, is the Sandinista movement communist or is it not communist?

	Relative Percent	Adjusted Percent	(N)
Is communist	16.4	23.5	(31)
Is not Communist	50.2	76.5	(101)
Don't know	34.3	—	(69)
	100	100	(201)

Had the movement been perceived as a communist movement by the bulk of the Costa Ricans, there would have been less support for it. Such a decline in support could have made a critical difference in the outcome of the revolution, perhaps leaving Nicaragua to follow what was purported to be the United States-backed plan of "*Somocismo* without Somoza."

Evidence for this contention is presented in Table 19.8. Looking at Table 19.8a, we see that those who perceived the Sandinista movement as linked to communism were much less willing to extend help to the Sandinistas. Whereas 56.4 percent of those who thought the movement was communist would have given either government or citizen assistance, over four-fifths (81 percent) of those who perceived the movement as noncommunist would have extended such help. We suspect that controlling for the respondent's attitude toward communism would have influenced his or her impression of the Sandinista movement being linked to communism, and this in turn would have affected levels of support for pro-Sandinista action. Such a contention is supported. As can be seen in Table 19.8b, the proportion of respondents who would give help to the Sandinistas steadily increased from 50 percent among those who believed that the Sandinistas were linked to communism and who held a negative evaluation of Costa Rican communism to 89 percent among those who believed that the Sandinistas were not communist-linked and who had a positive evaluation of communism. Of the two variables shown in Table 19.8b to have had an influence on the respondent's willingness to help the Sandinistas, the perceived linkage to communism was by far the more important. Hence, while the respondent's evaluation of Costa Rican communism only increased the likelihood of his or her willing to give help to the Sandinistas by an average of 12 percent, the respondent's perception of Sandinista links to communism increased the likelihood of willingness to give help by 26 percent. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that even among those who believe the Sandinistas were communist-linked and who held a negative evaluation of Costa Rican communism, 50 percent were still willing to give aid. We should caution, however, that the cell size in this table is quite small, and care needs to be exercised in drawing firm conclusions.

One final examination of the data permits us to study the linkage between socio-economic status and support for the Sandinistas. As we see in Table 19.8c, nearly four-fifths of the respondents who were classified as poorer in a dichotomization of an index of wealth (see note to this Table 19.8c) approved giving support to the Sandinistas, whereas, only 59 percent of those who are categorized as richer on our index approved giving such support. Such a finding is to be expected since many of the richer Costa Ricans probably identified with business interests which had benefited from the Somoza rule, although such support was tempered by the knowledge that even those Nicaraguan interests eventually withdrew their support for Somoza. The poorer Costa Ricans, on the other hand, could easily identify with the oppressed and impoverished majority of Nicaraguans.

TABLE 19.8

PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SANDINISTAS

8a. *Cross-tabulation of Perception of Sandinistas Linkage to Communism with Approval of Help for Sandinistas.*

	Perception of Sandinista Linkage to Communism	
	Communist	**Not Communist**
Give help	56.4 (22)	80.6 (58)
Withhold help	43.6 (17)	19.4 (14)
	100% (39)	100% (72)

Tau b = .26 Sig. = .01 (X^2)

Note: Perception of Sandinista Linkage to Communism is the sum of the questions presented in Tables 19.6 and 19.7, collapsing the intermediate category with the "communist" category, the smallest of the three.

8b: *Cross-tabulation of Perception of Sandinista Linkage to Communism with Approval of Help for Sandinistas Controlling for Evaluation of Costa Rican Communism.*

	Linkage of Sandinistas to Communism			
	Linked		**Not Linked**	
	Evaluation of Communism		Evaluation of Communism	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
Give help	50.0 (8)	61.9 (13)	75.(27)	88.6 (31)
Withhold help	50.0 (8)	38.1 (8)	25.0 (9)	11.4 (4)
	100% (16)	100% (21)	100% (36)	100% (33)

Zero-order Gamma = .28 Partial Gamma = .38

Note: Evaluation of Costa Rican Communism is an index based upon a four-item semantic differential scale, in which the adjective pairs "good-bad," "just-unjust," "safe-unsafe," and "honest-dishonest," were employed. Each adjective pair was scored on a seven-point scale, and the scores for each item were summed and then dichotomized at the mid-point.

TABLE 19.8

PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SANDINISTAS

8c. *Cross-tabulation of Wealth with Approval of Help for Sandinistas.*

	Wealth	
	Poorer	Richer
Give help	79.0 (64)	58.8 (57)
Withhold help	21.0 (17)	41.2 (40)

Tau b = .22 Sig. = .007 (X^2)

Note: Wealth is defined as a summated unweighted index of artifacts (television, refrigerator, electric iron, washing machine, floor polisher, hot water heater, telephone, sewing machine, automobile) owned by respondent. The index was dichotomized to divide the sample approximately in half.

Help for the Sandinistas was the sum of the questions used in Table 19.2 of this chapter. The intermediate category, containing the smallest number of respondents, was combined with the "give help" category. When left as a trichotomy, the Tau statistic does not change appreciably.

Conclusion

Scholars will long debate the causes of the Nicaraguan Revolution, as they have done for the several other major social revolutions of this century. Equally important, however, are the factors which led to the success of the insurrectionary phase of that Revolution. The long standing antipathy between Costa Rica and Nicaragua set the stage for the important role the former was to play in the success of the insurrection. Not only did Costa Rica provide a relatively safe haven for the guerrillas, but it also provided an important forum for the Junta-in-Exile in the last months of the war. However, more vigorous support was precluded by an ambivalence in Costa Rican opinion towards the Sandinistas, which, while supporting Sandinista goals, feared the revolutionaries' possible communist sympathies.

Notes

[1] This chapter is a revised version of a paper delivered at the Conference on "Central America in the 1980s: Options for U.S. Policy," held in El Paso, Texas, November 16-17, 1979. The public opinion data reported in the chapter were gathered by Miguel Gómez B. of the Universidad de Costa Rica as part of his ongoing assessment of Costa Rican public opinion. We would like to thank John Booth, Steve Ropp, Thomas W. Walker, and Robert Woodward for their helpful comments on the earlier version.

[2] Thomas L. Karnes, *The Failure of Union: Central America 1824-1975*, Rev. Ed. (Tempe: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1976), pp. 34-35.

[3] *Latin American Political Report*, Vol. 12, No. 10, (1978), p. 76.

[4] *Latin American Political Report*, Vol. 12, No. 28, (1978), p. 222.