

Chronological: Exchange Club of Honolulu, 1st U.S. Intervention, 1983-09-01

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers

Speeches, Box SP6, Folder 2

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2 Presidential Scholars Picked

Two Hawaii high school seniors have been named Presidential Scholars and will receive expense-paid trips to Washington, D.C., next month.

They are Iolani School senior Edwin N. Sasaki, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas I. Sasaki of Honolulu; and Damien High School senior John M. Freymann, son of Maria and David Freymann of Honolulu.

Each year the President's Commission on Presidential Scholars selects 141 students as scholars from a group of 1,000 finalists.

REVISED VERSION USED IN SPEECH TO
EXCHANGE CLUB OF HONOLULU

7/1/83

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The First U.S. Intervention, 1909-1925

- In 1909, U.S. Marines were landed in Bluefields, ostensibly to protect American lives and property in a revolt involving the Conservative opposition to President Zelaya. The intervention of the Marines also protected the Conservative forces, however, and led to the fall of Zelaya's Liberal government.
- In 1912, U.S. Marines were again landed, at Bluefields and Corinto, to protect the Conservative government from an insurrection led by a Liberal, General Mena. Not content with driving Mena into exile, the Marines finally routed the Liberal forces in the battle of Coyotepe Hill.
- With the exception of a brief (9 month) period in 1925-26, the U.S. maintained troops in Nicaragua from 1912 to 1933. These ranged from a 100-man legation guard to the 2,700 sailors and marines who took part in the 1912 intervention.
- After U.S. interest in building a canal in Nicaragua waned, it concluded the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty with Nicaragua in 1914, virtually transforming the country into a protectorate of the U.S. -- to exclude a foreign rival from perhaps constructing a canal there.
- The Standard Fruit Company, later to become the largest foreigner investor, began its operations in the 1920's.

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The Second U.S. Intervention, 1926-1933

- In 1926, the second major American intervention began in the context of continuing rivalry between the Liberal and Conservative factions. Naval forces were sent to establish neutral areas, and later troops were landed, but the conflict continued. A major loan had to be arranged to stabilize the government's financial situation. The U.S. sent a special representative, War Secretary Henry Stimson, to mediate between the factions, with an implicit threat of force; there was a partial political resolution.
- One Liberal general, Augusto Cesar Sandino, refused to accept the mediated settlement and moved into the mountains, vowing to drive the U.S. out of Nicaragua. He called for cooperative Latin American construction of a canal. Sandino's guerrilla campaign continued until 1933.
- There were elections in Nicaragua in 1928 and 1932, during the U.S. military intervention. The Depression and a major earthquake in Managua in 1931, along with continuing political difficulties, combined to ensure that little economic or social progress was made.
- In 1932, Anastacio Somoza-Garcia was selected, with U.S. support, as chief of the U.S.-trained National Guard by President-elect Sacasa. After withdrawal of the U.S. Marines in 1933, the Guard became increasingly unhappy with the government's failure to end the Sandino insurgency. In 1934, when the government invited Sandino to Managua for talks, Somoza ordered him killed.

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The Somoza Dynasty

- Somoza-Garcia assumed the Presidency in 1936, and continued to build his power base by bestowing favors on the members of his National Guard. He visited President Roosevelt in 1939, thereby enhancing his image.
- Somoza-Garcia continued as president through World War II but was then pressured to step down by the United States. Three weeks after election of a new president, Somoza staged a coup, installed a temporary leader, and was himself re-elected in 1950.
- Somoza-Garcia's last term was relatively quiet. He cooperated with the U.S. in bringing down the Arbenz government in Guatemala. Shortly after being renominated in 1956 by his Liberal party, he was assassinated.
- Luis Somoza, the former president's elder son, took over the presidency. He repressed the political opposition and imposed press censorship. In 1959, he accused Castro of trying to topple his government, through student demonstrations. The Nicaraguan government supported the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961; part of the invasion force was launched from the Nicaraguan coast.
- In 1961, Castro supported the formation of the Sandinist National Liberation Front in Nicaragua.
- In 1963, Luis Somoza stepped down as promised, and gave the presidency to a pliable cabinet member, Rene Shick, who soon died and was replaced by another cabinet member.
- When the Political opposition combined in support of another presidential candidate in 1967, they were imprisoned on the day of the election -- and it was announced that Somoza-Garcia's younger son, Anastasio Somoza-Debayle was elected.
- After his elder brother's (Luis) death in 1967, Anastasio Somoza relied increasingly on force, corruption, and personal loyalty to maintain the political system. Slow economic growth in the 1970's forced him to yield to an administrative junta in 1972, but it was clear that Somoza remained in charge. The Church and other progressive forces began to be more critical of economic and social conditions. In 1972, a massive earthquake destroyed much of Managua; the regime's failure to respond to the needs of the victims set the stage for its loss of control.

(The remainder of the history of the Somoza regime is given in the following Part.)

Aftermath of 1972 Earthquake; Increased Corruption

After the 1972 earthquake in Managua, it became clear both domestically and internationally that Somoza remained firmly in charge of the government, despite the existence of an administrative junta. In the confusion of the aftermath of the earthquake, Somoza family members and affiliates moved to take control of an even greater share of the national wealth, including various public services that had to be reconstituted after the disaster. There were serious problems with corruption in the distribution of relief supplies. Even more, the planning and execution of the relief effort made clear the class biases and true interests of the regime. Somoza's son was put in charge of relief services; other family members were placed in charge of lucrative service sectors.

At the time of the death of the first Somoza, the family wealth was perhaps some \$60-300 million. By the end of the third Somoza's regime, the family controlled perhaps 1/4 of the national wealth, or over \$1 billion. Nepotism and corruption reached new heights during the regime of the younger Somoza.

Fall of the Somoza Regime

Soon after the Chamorro assassination in 1978, political links between the progressive middle class and the insurgents began to be forged; a general strike was conducted in 1979. The U.S. Administration also appeared to turn against Somoza at this time. As a result, there was a much greater level of active support for the anti-Somocist forces in the region. After 1979, the Sandinists profited from increased military backing from not only Cuba but also Venezuela and Panama, and from the political support of Mexico.

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In late 1978, in the context of denials of international lending assistance and human rights accusations (both supported by the Carter Administration), the U.S. government sent representatives to encourage Somoza to depart in favor of a coalition government. After Somoza's refusal, the Administration withdrew its remaining military support for his regime. U.S. representative Lawrence Pezzulo was instructed not to present his credentials to the Somoza regime.

As chaos reached the neighborhoods of Managua, Somoza finally agreed to resign. The Sandinists had proposed a broad-based cabinet that included several moderates, including even a former National Guard officer as minister of defense. Somoza fled to Miami on June 17, 1979, and the National Guard collapsed in only two days, with many withdrawing with their equipment into neighboring countries.

After the departure of Somoza, the country was in economic ruin, with massive foreign debts and virtually no foreign reserves. Large numbers of people had been killed in the civil conflict -- some 30-50,000 -- or 1% of the entire population. Perhaps another 100,000 were injured and 150,000 left homeless.

Somoza himself ultimately went into exile in Paraguay. He was assassinated by Argentine terrorists in September 1980.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE SANDINIST REGIME IN NICARAGUA

The month before the fall of Somoza, the Organization of American States (OAS) called for the "immediate and definitive replacement" of his regime; the United States supported this resolution. The next month, the Sandinist junta -- formed of the various factions of the insurgents plus a representation of more moderate elements -- pledged formally to the OAS that its goals were democratic and peaceful.

From its beginning in 1979, the Sandinist regime has had difficulty reconciling its moderate and revolutionary components, both of which had cooperated in overthrowing Somoza. This resulted from both the severe economic strains faced by the new government and from its internal contradictions. More and more, however, the government became subject to the directives of the radicals. Indeed the governing junta, or Government of National Reconstruction, is subject to political direction of the Sandinist National Directorate, which has direct political ties to the army and to mass organizations.

The Leninist character of the regime became increasingly clear as it came under pressure from both outside (primarily economic) and inside forces:

- During the first year of the government, non-leftist groups became increasingly critical of the Sandinists as they consolidated their control in the junta and other organizations. On the first anniversary of Somoza's fall, junta coordinator Daniel Ortega announced that national elections would be postponed until 1985. In November, 1980 security forces shot a prominent business leader.

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- During the second year, private sector organizations, including the Superior Counsel for Private Enterprise (COSEP), and the Church, claimed that the government was preparing to establish a totalitarian state. Non-leftist politicians and the private sector pushed for guarantees of political freedom, including political pluralism, freedom of speech, trade union affiliation, and a mixed economy.

The government responded by accusing the private sector of calculated economic sabotage and enacting repressive economic laws. In October, 1981, it sentenced three businessmen to seven months in jail for criticizing government economic policy.

- During the third year, several Sandinists and other members of the government went into exile. In September, 1981, the largest faction in the junta, led by the Ortega brothers, purged itself of 12 moderate members, who also left the country when they were released from detention.

During the third year of the new government there was also a rapid build-up of the armed forces and development of mass organizations sympathetic to Sandinist rule. The most important mass organizations are the Sandinist Defense Committees, the "eyes and ears of the revolution", similar to the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. There are also Sandinist labor organizations.

- The year 1981 also saw increased political repression. The newspaper La Prensa was briefly closed in July. It later became subject to continual censorship as successive states of national emergency were declared.

Notes for speech to The Exchange Club of

Honolulu;

Sept. 1, 1983

9/7/83

GREGG/SALLY

THE ATTACHED IS THE TEXT USED BY SENATOR
FOR HIS SPEECH TO THE:

EXCHANGE CLUB OF HONOLULU
on SEPTEMBER 1, 1983
at the Pacific Club

mlj

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