

**February 17, 1990**

**Excerpt from Protocol No. 179 of the Meeting of the  
Politburo CC CPSU, 'On the Upcoming Elections in  
Nicaragua'**

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**Summary:**

The CC CPSU approves of the analysis made by E. A. Shevardnadze and A.N. Yakovlev on the upcoming elections in Nicaragua and the position of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Communist Party of the Soviet Union. CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
COMPLETELY SECRET

No. P179/20

To comrade Gorbachev, Ryzhkov, Kriuchkov, Medvedev, Shevardnadze, Yakovlev, Kapto, Falin.

Excerpt from protocol No. 179 of the meeting of the Politburo CC CPSU on 17 February 1990

On our line in regard to the upcoming elections in Nicaragua.

□To agree with the thoughts set out in the report of comrades E.A. Shevardnadze and A.N. Yakovlev of on 13 February 1990 (proposed).

SECRETARY CC

[Attachment]

□As per point 20 of Protocol No. 179

Secret

CC CPSU

On our line in regard to the upcoming elections in Nicaragua

□General elections are planned for 25 February 1990 in Nicaragua in the course of which the President of the Republic and members of parliament and local organs of power are to be chosen. This event is an important stage in the life of the country and will define its development in the future and influence its international position. Democratization in Nicaragua is one of the main conditions for the continuation of the process of a peaceful settlement of the Central American conflict, which has introduced complicating elements into Soviet-American relations. To a large extent, the approach of the Washington administration to Nicaragua and the chances for normalizing relations with it, in which the Sandinistas are vitally interested, will depend on the outcomes of the elections.

□The logic of internal development, changes in the world arena and in the region, as well as our determined work with our friends, have induced them to add a policy of national peacemaking to their armament and to proceed ahead of time with elections under international observation.

□As a result of the measures that the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front] has implemented in order to reduce the rate of inflation, increase exports, stimulate the private sector and make wider use of market mechanisms, it has been possible to avert the impending collapse of the economy and as a consequence, reduce the intensity [nakal] of social tensions. In the political sphere, the Sandinistas have gone as far as reducing the obstacles to the activities of the opposition forces, creating the conditions for reintegration of the Contras, [granting] amnesty for political prisoners, and drawing the Catholic church into participation in the general national dialog. Foreign policy has become more flexible and pragmatic. Our friends have come to the understanding that lowering the level of military confrontation in the world and finding political solutions to conflicts on the basis of a balance of interests corresponds to their strategic goals. This is reflected in major concessions in the matter of the Central American settlement, including in relation to further support for

the Salvadorian insurgents. A positive transformation in the foreign and domestic policies of the Sandinista regime would assist a certain removal of the acuity of the situation around Nicaragua.

□An analysis of the relation of forces in Nicaragua on the threshold of the elections gives basis for assuming that their outcome will on the whole be favorable to the FSLN, although one should not overlook the strengthening of the position of opposition parties in the National Assembly and municipalities. Such a prospect might induce the opposition to renounce participation in the elections at the last minute under pretext of violations of democratic procedure on the part of the government. In such a case, the United States would probably not recognize the election results, with the consequences that would then ensue. In our work with the Sandinistas, we should hold back our friends from taking actions which could give the opposition a pretext to take such a step and should encourage them to confirm publicly their readiness to recognize the election results, whatever they may be. We also intend to continue our efforts to ensure favorable external conditions for the conduct of the election process in Nicaragua, making maximum use of the capabilities of the UN and the OAS [Organization of American States] and other international organizations for these ends.

□In the framework of the Soviet-American dialog, [we should] push for the US administration to publicly announce its readiness to recognize a Sandinista victory in the elections if it is verified by the mission of international observers. To obtain a confirmation of its stated readiness to normalize relations with Nicaragua and to renounce the economic blockade after conducting free and democratic elections. In consideration of our principled approach based on the respect for the rights of peoples to free choice, it would be desirable regardless of Washington's position to make a statement to the effect that the Soviet Union recognizes the objective conclusions of the elections in Nicaragua, whoever wins a victory in them. In work with the West European and Latin American countries, the Socialist International and the anti-unification movement, to urge them to render assistance to the Washington administration in the same direction.

□It is also important to nudge the leadership of the FSLN toward the idea of the necessity of continuing the policy of national peacemaking after 25 February as well, right up to the creation of a coalition government, even under an election outcome which suits the Sandinistas. This would help strengthen the international positions of the new Nicaraguan administration, would assist the receipt of the economic assistance that is necessary to the country.

□The twenty-fifth of February, without a doubt, signifies a new stage in our relations with Nicaragua. As of yet, defining precisely which correctives will have to be introduced into our bilateral cooperation is an awkward matter. Nonetheless, it is clear that we will have to be guided by the following principled thoughts:

□First. Our relations with Nicaragua will have to acquire an ever more pragmatic, de-ideologized character while keeping under consideration, of course, the fact that the preservation of Nicaragua in the capacity of a non-aligned, friendly state which actively carries out a policy of peace and international cooperation suits the interests of the Soviet Union.

□Second. To continue to cooperate actively with Nicaragua in the interests of very rapidly de-aligning [razblokirovanie] the conflict in Central American and turning it into a zone of stable peace.

□Third. To work to lend bilateral trade-economic ties a balanced and mutually beneficial character, to end gratuitous aid, and gradually to orient Nicaragua's economic cooperation along the lines of international organizations and on a

multilateral basis.

□Fourth. In the area of military cooperation, depending on the US's position and the circumstances as a whole, to extend the moratorium on the supply of Soviet arms for Nicaragua. To intensify the efforts of all of the sides involved in the Central American conflict which are directed toward limiting armed forces and armaments in the region to a level of sensible defensive sufficiency.

□Fifth. To continue to develop relations with the FSLN as a progressively oriented party. At the same time, according to agreement with the Sandinistas, to make contacts with other Nicaraguan political organizations, elevating them to an official level.

□Sixth. In informational-propaganda work, to illuminate the processes taking place in the country from a balanced and objective position, supporting the course toward democratization and national peace-making. To oppose efforts to interfere in Nicaragua's domestic affairs.

□It is necessary to bear in mind that the line on Nicaragua's internal democratization and the evolution of its foreign policy is being received guardedly by the Cubans on the strength of the known details of their approach toward the evolution of the situation in the region and in Nicaragua. In this regard, it is advisable, while showing flexibility and the necessary tact in relation to Cuba, nevertheless to operate on the assumption that a rapid undoing of the knot of tension in Central America is the first priority and also corresponds to the interests of the Sandinistas themselves.

□Concrete proposals on further steps by us in relation to Nicaragua will be presented in consideration of the results of the general elections.

□E. Shevardnadze

A. Yakovlev

13 February 1990

No. 124/OS