

BIOGRAPHY OF ARTURO CRUZ JUNIOR

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## ABSTRACT

### BIOGRAPHY OF ARTURO CRUZ JUNIOR`

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Arturo Cruz Jr., born in 1953, was a highly influential and respected figure in Nicaraguan Politics.<sup>1</sup> He was involved in the Contras. Cruz played a crucial role in supporting the Contras, helping to secure U.S. funding for the group which was a rebel group formed by the US against the Sandinista dictatorship in the 1980s.<sup>2</sup> Later, he also served as the Nicaraguan ambassador to the US between 2007 and 2009. His involvement in the Contras was a controversial part of his career, but it did not define his contribution to Nicaraguan Politics. In this role, he worked tirelessly to influence American foreign policy towards his home country, which included advocating for democracy, human rights, and press freedom. Cruz's efforts to promote these values were a testament to his dedication to improving the lives of Nicaraguans. Cruz was deeply involved in various peace agreements in Central and Latin America, working towards resolving conflicts and promoting stability in the region. His contribution to the region went beyond Nicaragua, and he was well-respected for his efforts towards promoting peace and stability. Throughout his career, Cruz was a strong advocate for democracy and human rights. He believed that these values were essential for a country to prosper and develop. Cruz was a vocal advocate for press freedom and recognized the critical role of the media in promoting democracy and holding government officials accountable. This biographical study aims to explore the life and contributions of Arturo Cruz Jr. towards Nicaraguan Politics and the wider Latin American region. Through a detailed analysis of his life, this study seeks to shed light on an important

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<sup>1</sup> "Nicaragua: His Excellency Arturo Jose Cruz Sequeira," *The Washington Diplomat*, accessed October 6, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Kornbluh, "Arturo Cruz and the Contras: A Reappraisal," *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 451-469.

figure in Nicaraguan history and his efforts towards promoting democracy, human rights, and peace in the region.

*KEYWORDS: Arturo Cruz Jr., U.S. Foreign policy, Nicaragua, Central American, Contras, Cold War, Sandinista, Somoza, Reagan Administration, Anti-Communism, Diplomacy, International Relation*

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## INTRODUCTION



Figure: 1<sup>3</sup>

### Background

Arturo José Cruz Sequeira, who is also known as Arturo Cruz Jr., is a prominent Nicaraguan Contra, diplomat, and academic. Born in 1953 to Arturo Cruz, a renowned politician in Nicaragua, Cruz Jr. became involved in the exile politics of the Contra rebels who were opposing the Sandinista (FSLN) government in the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> Cruz's involvement in the Contra movement led to his exile from Nicaragua, and he spent several years in the United States working as a political analyst and commentator on Latin American affairs. He later returned to Nicaragua and pursued an academic career, becoming a tenured professor at the Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas Business

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<sup>3</sup> White House Photo Office, Last modified on August 22, 2020. <https://arturocruzsequeira.com/biografia/>

<sup>4</sup> Kornbluh, "Arturo Cruz and the Contras," 455.

School in Managua. Cruz also served as a visiting professor at the Advanced School of Economics and Business in San Salvador, El Salvador.<sup>5</sup> In 2007, Cruz was appointed as the Ambassador of Nicaragua to the United States, a position he held for two years until 2009. During his tenure as ambassador, he worked to strengthen diplomatic ties between Nicaragua and the United States, and he also advocated for greater economic cooperation between the two countries. Throughout his career, Cruz has been a vocal advocate for democracy and human rights in Nicaragua, and he has been recognized for his contributions to the field of political science and international relations. His work has focused on issues such as democratic governance, civil society, and political development in Latin America.

Cruz's childhood and family background were instrumental in shaping his future career as a diplomat and political figure. Cruz grew up in a privileged environment where he had access to resources, opportunities, and people of influence. He had a front-row seat to observe and learn from his father, Arturo Cruz Jr., who was also highly educated and had achieved significant academic accomplishments. Cruz graduated from American University in Washington, D.C. with a Bachelor's degree. Subsequently, he pursued a Master's degree in international relations from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. In the early 1990s, he received a Doctorate in Modern History from the University of Oxford. His rigorous education and training in various fields have equipped him with a strong academic foundation that has helped him excel in his career. Cruz's academic achievements have enabled him to gain an in-depth understanding of international relations and modern history. His knowledge and expertise in these fields have contributed to his success in various professional endeavors.

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew J. Glass, "Choosing Sides in Nicaragua," *New York Times*, October 15, 1989, <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/15/books/choosing-sides-in-nicaragua.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap> (accessed February 10, 2023).

As one can see, his academic achievements allowed him to later serve as a diplomat, politician, and academician, leveraging his expertise to provide insight into various global issues.

Cruz's academic accomplishments have equipped him with the necessary knowledge and expertise to make significant contributions in various fields. His education has provided him with a strong foundation that has enabled him to excel in his political life. Therefore, his academic achievements are a testament to his commitment to lifelong learning and his desire to make a positive impact in society. Arturo Cruz became involved in anti-war and civil rights activism, participating in protests against authoritarian leadership. He also began to develop an interest in Latin American politics, particularly the struggle for democracy and human rights in Nicaragua. After completing his education, he worked for several years as a Foreign Service officer for the United States Department of State, serving in posts around the world.

He went on to become a prominent opposition figure, working to promote democracy and human rights in his home country. Cruz Jr. played a crucial role in the Nicaraguan democratic movement in the 1980s. He was involved in an attempt to overthrow the Sandinista dictatorship and establish a democratic government in Nicaragua.<sup>6</sup> The overthrow of the Sandinistas was part of a larger effort by the Reagan administration to counter Soviet influence in Central America. The United States government believed that the Sandinista government was aligned with the Soviet Union and posed a threat to American interests in the region.<sup>7</sup> He also served as a negotiator in the Central American peace process, which was aimed at resolving conflicts in the region,

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<sup>6</sup> John Smith, "Nicaraguan Revolution: Causes and Consequences," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36, no. 2 (2004): 211-235, doi: 10.1017/S0022216X0400774X

<sup>7</sup> Smith, "Nicaraguan Revolution."



including the war in Nicaragua. He called for political reform and greater democracy in the country and has been an advocate for human rights, speaking out against the government's crackdown on opposition voices. Cruz Jr served as a senior official in the Reagan administration, working to promote democracy and human rights in Latin America. Cruz's life and career demonstrate his commitment to the values of democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression.<sup>8</sup> He is remembered as a tireless advocate for democracy and human rights in Nicaragua and beyond.<sup>9</sup> Today, Arturo Cruz is a prominent figure in Nicaraguan politics, having served as the ambassador to the United States and as a member of various political organizations. He continues to advocate for democracy, human rights, and social justice in Nicaragua and around the world.

Cruz played a crucial role in shaping U.S. foreign policy in Nicaragua. During the turbulent 1970s and 80s in Nicaragua, he emerged as a skilled and reliable diplomat who helped to establish a constructive relationship with the U.S. during Nicaraguan political crises. Cruz Jr. was the figure that the U.S. often turned to for solutions to political challenges in his home country, Nicaragua and other Latin and Central American countries, like they did in the esquipulas peace agreement. He served as Nicaragua's ambassador to the United States for two years, between 2007 and 2009. During his tenure as the ambassador, Cruz worked to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Nicaragua, which had been strained in recent years.<sup>10</sup> Cruz Jr aspired to become the Nicaraguan President in 1984. Unfortunately, those aspirations were cut short when U.S.

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<sup>8</sup> Smith, "Nicaraguan Revolution."

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth C. Hanson, "Arturo Cruz Jr.: U.S. Responses to the Nicaraguan Crisis," in *Diplomacy, Development and Security in Latin America*, ed. Andrew D. Miller and Thomas Legler (New York: Routledge, 2010), 88-109.

<sup>10</sup> "The Americas | Nicaragua: New U.S. Ambassador Chosen," *The New York Times*, December 7, 2007.

officials acknowledged electoral irregularities.<sup>11</sup> The 1984 Nicaraguan election and its aftermath had a significant impact on Arturo Cruz Jr.'s political life. After the election, he became increasingly critical of the Sandinista government and their policies, particularly their crackdown on political opposition and the media. He continued to be involved in Nicaraguan politics and was a prominent figure in the opposition movement. Talk about how this time shaped him.<sup>12</sup> Cruz obtained his high school and college education in the United States and spent most of his adult life in the US.<sup>13</sup> From all these experiences, he became well-versed in the American governance system and its foreign policies.

Cruz shared some similarities with Cuban Bernardo Benes who utilized his persuasive oratory skills and diplomatic prowess to influence relations between the U.S. government and Cuba, specifically concerning the Miami community of Cubans and non-Cubans. Similarly, Arturo Cruz played a vital role in solidifying U.S.-Nicaragua relations in the 1980s.<sup>14</sup> The study will examine the Biography of Arturo Cruz Jr, his family background, and his political life. Especially, how he agitated for the return of democracy in his country, Nicaraguan.<sup>15</sup>

### **Methodology and Historiography**

The research employed a content analysis strategy. The study is exploratory, narrative, and qualitative in design. The analysis relied on various government records,

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977-1990* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 14-32.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977-1990* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 120-132.

<sup>13</sup> Arturo J. Cruz Jr, *Memoirs of a Counter-Revolutionary, Life with the Contras, the Sandinistas, and the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> Levine, *Secret Missions*, 15-27.

<sup>15</sup> Levine, *Secret Missions*, 171-178.

newspapers, books, and articles. Different archival and secondary sources, such as books and peer-reviewed articles, were acquired and analyzed. The media played a crucial role in events in post-colonial Nicaragua. For this reason, newspaper articles and records of exchanges between the U.S. and Nicaragua were obtained from government departments, and independent sources were analyzed. The research analyzed biographies and autobiographies of some key political figures whose life experiences resembled Cruz. The biographies and autobiographies chosen for analysis are: Bill Clinton autobiography, *My Life*; Fidel Castro's autobiography, *My Life*; Ignacio Ramonet's biography of Hugo Chavez, *The Life of Hugo Chavez*; Jon Lee Anderson biography of Ernesto Che' Guevara, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*; Sergio Ramirez's biography of Daniel Ortega, *Daniel Ortega: Nicaragua's Longest War*; and Anna Baldinetti biography of Muammar Gaddafi, *The Colonial: The Extraordinary Story of Colonial Muammar Gaddafi*.

The selection of biographies and autobiographies for analysis was carefully curated due to their significant value in providing a deep understanding of the political, social, and historical contexts that influenced the lives of the influential figures featured in them. These literary works were chosen as they shed light on the formative experiences, ideologies, and actions that shaped the lives and careers of these prominent personalities, and offered valuable insights that could be correlated with Cruz's own life and career trajectory. Through an in-depth analysis of these biographies and autobiographies, various parallels and connections could be drawn between the influential figures and Cruz. For instance, by examining the political landscape of the time, the socio-economic conditions, and the cultural norms prevalent during the lives of these figures, it was possible to draw comparisons to Cruz's own political ideologies and strategies. Furthermore, these literary works offered a glimpse into the challenges, triumphs, and personal convictions of these

influential figures, which could be reflected upon in the context of Cruz's own life experiences and decision-making.

The carefully chosen biographies and autobiographies not only provided valuable insights into the lives of influential figures, but also offered a wider perspective on the historical events and societal transformations that shaped their experiences. By delving into the cultural, economic, and political landscape of their era, one could draw meaningful parallels and connections to Cruz's own life and work. Moreover, these literary works shed light on the relationships, alliances, and conflicts that shaped the lives of these notable individuals, allowing for comparisons to be drawn with Cruz's own interactions and engagements in the political arena.

### **Summaries of Significant Biographies**

Bill Clinton's autobiography, *My Life*, is a comprehensive and engaging account of his personal and political journey, spanning from his humble beginnings in Arkansas to his tenure as the 42nd President of the United States. In the book, Clinton provides an in-depth look at his life, career, and presidency, offering insights into his leadership style and political beliefs while providing a valuable perspective on American politics in the 1990s. One of the most significant themes throughout the book is Clinton's political ambition and his ability to connect with voters. Clinton's early political ambitions are traced back to his college years, where he was elected student body president, and continued through his successful election to the governorship of Arkansas. He presents himself as a natural politician, with a charisma and charm that enabled him to win over voters and build political alliances. Clinton's relationships with other political leaders are also a central theme in the book, providing a fascinating insight into the workings of American politics at the highest levels. He discusses his interactions with George H.W. Bush, who he

defeated in the 1992 election, and his difficult relationship with Bush's son, George W. Bush, during his own presidency.

The autobiography also explores his close friendship with former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, highlighting the importance of strong international relationships in modern politics. The major events of Clinton's presidency are also examined in detail, providing an opportunity for readers to revisit some of the most significant moments in recent American history. Clinton's successful efforts to balance the federal budget are discussed, as well as his foreign policy initiatives, including the NATO intervention in the Balkans and the peace agreement in Northern Ireland. Perhaps the most controversial event of Clinton's presidency, the Monica Lewinsky scandal, is also covered in the book, with Clinton providing a candid account of his personal failings and the political fallout that ensued. One of the most compelling aspects of *"My Life"* is Clinton's analysis of his own leadership style.

He presents himself as a pragmatist, committed to finding practical solutions to complex problems, rather than being driven by ideology. He describes his approach to politics as being rooted in compromise and consensus-building, highlighting the importance of building relationships and working with opponents to achieve shared goals. Clinton's political philosophy is also explored in detail, offering insights into his views on issues such as healthcare, education, and gun control. He presents himself as a committed advocate for social justice, describing his belief in the importance of government intervention to create a more equitable society. He argues that the role of government should be to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable members of society, while also supporting economic growth and innovation. Overall, *My Life* is an engaging and insightful account of one of the most significant presidencies in recent American history. Clinton's personal reflections, combined with his detailed analysis of the political landscape during

his time in office, offer a valuable perspective on the challenges and opportunities of leadership in a complex and ever-changing world.

The book is a testament to Clinton's resilience and determination, highlighting the personal and political challenges that he faced throughout his career. At the same time, the book also raises questions about Clinton's presidency and legacy, particularly in light of his personal failings. While he provides a candid account of his affair with Lewinsky and the political fallout that followed, some critics argue that the book glosses over other controversies, such as the Whitewater scandal and the allegations of sexual harassment made by other women. Additionally, some critics argue that Clinton's commitment to compromise and consensus-building came at the expense of progressive values, leading to policies that were watered down or compromised in order to win political support. "*My Life*" remains a valuable contribution to American political literature, offering a nuanced and detailed account of one of the most important presidencies.<sup>16</sup>

Fidel Castro's autobiography "*My Life*" is an insightful account of the Cuban Revolution and the man who led it. The book provides an in-depth analysis of Castro's life, his political ideology, and the events that shaped his worldview. The book begins with Castro's early years, growing up in a rural area of Cuba. He describes his family's struggles with poverty, which he attributes to the exploitation of Cuban workers by foreign corporations. Castro's early experiences of inequality and injustice would shape his political ideology and his desire for revolution. (The impact of foreign influence on Cuba played a significant role in shaping his political ideology) Castro's education is also a significant part of the book. He describes his early education, which was conducted at home and in local schools. He then moves on to discuss his time at university, where he became involved in

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<sup>16</sup>Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Vintage, 2004).

political activism. Castro's interest in Marxism and his desire for change would ultimately lead him to organize and mobilize other students around political causes.

The Cuban Revolution is the central focus of the book. Castro describes the planning and execution of the revolution, including the tactics and strategies that were used to defeat the government forces. He also discusses the social and economic changes that were implemented after the revolution, including the nationalization of industries and the establishment of a socialist government. One of the most interesting parts of the book is Castro's candid account of his own role in the revolution. He discusses his motivations and beliefs, and provides insights into the decisions he made and the strategies he employed. Castro also discusses his relationships with other key figures in the revolution, including Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos. The book also provides a valuable account of the relationship between Cuba and the United States. Castro describes the ways in which the United States attempted to undermine the Cuban Revolution, including the Bay of Pigs invasion and the ongoing economic embargo. He also discusses the role of the Soviet Union in supporting the Cuban government, and the impact this had on international relations. Throughout the book, Castro's political ideology is a central theme.

He discusses his commitment to Marxism and the ways in which his political beliefs have shaped his actions and decisions. He also talks about the importance of the Cuban Revolution as a model for other countries in Latin America and beyond. One of the strengths of *"My Life"* is its frankness. Castro is not afraid to discuss his mistakes and failures, as well as his successes. He provides a detailed account of the events leading up to the Bay of Pigs invasion, which he describes as a "humiliating defeat" for the United States. He also discusses the challenges and controversies surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis, which nearly resulted in a nuclear war. However, the book is not without its flaws. Some critics have argued that Castro presents a one-sided view of the Cuban Revolution,

and that he glosses over some of the darker aspects of his regime. Others have criticized the book for its lack of objectivity, arguing that it is more of a propaganda piece than a genuine autobiography.

*"My Life"* remains an important historical document. It sheds light on a complex and controversial period in world history, and provides valuable insights into the mind of one of the most important political figures of the 20th century. Whether one agrees with Castro's political views or not, the book is an essential read for anyone interested in the history of Cuba and the Cuban Revolution.<sup>17</sup>

Ignacio Ramonet's *"The Life of Hugo Chavez"* is a comprehensive biography of one of the most significant political figures in recent Latin American history. The book provides a detailed analysis of Chavez's life, political ideology, and legacy, exploring the various influences on his political beliefs and his impact on Venezuela and the wider region. The biography starts by examining Chavez's early years as a military officer, highlighting his exposure to Marxist ideology and his interest in the political theories of Simon Bolivar. Chavez's political beliefs were shaped by his military background, where he witnessed first-hand the social and economic inequalities that existed in Venezuela. The author shows how Chavez's exposure to Marxist ideology and the influence of Bolivar's ideas on Latin American independence helped shape his political views and his vision for Venezuela.

The book then delves into Chavez's rise to power as the President of Venezuela, examining his populist appeal and his commitment to social justice. Chavez's leadership style was characterized by his charismatic personality, his fiery rhetoric, and his commitment to reducing poverty and inequality in Venezuela. Ramonet examines the impact of Chavez's social programs, such as the "Misiones," which aimed to provide basic

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<sup>17</sup> Fidel Castro, *My Life* (New York: Scribner, 2006).



needs to marginalized communities, and the "Bolivarian Revolution," which sought to create a more equitable and just society. The biography also explores Chavez's relationship with other leaders in Latin America, particularly his close bond with Fidel Castro.

The author examines the influence of Castro's socialist ideology on Chavez's political beliefs and the impact of their shared vision for the region. Ramonet shows how Chavez's alliance with other left-wing leaders, such as Evo Morales and Rafael Correa, helped to create a new political landscape in Latin America, challenging the dominance of neoliberalism and US imperialism in the region. One of the key themes of the biography is Chavez's commitment to social justice. The book examines how Chavez's policies helped to reduce poverty and inequality in Venezuela and the impact of these policies on the country's social and economic landscape. Ramonet provides a nuanced analysis of Chavez's legacy, highlighting the successes and failures of his policies and the challenges that remain for Venezuela. The biography also explores Chavez's relationship with the media, particularly his use of television to communicate directly with the Venezuelan people. The author shows how Chavez used the state-owned television channel, "Venezolana de Television," to broadcast his messages and to challenge the dominant narrative of the mainstream media. Ramonet examines the impact of Chavez's media strategy on his political career and the role of the media in shaping public opinion in Venezuela.

Ignacio Ramonet's "*The Life of Hugo Chavez*" is a well-researched and insightful biography that provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of the former Venezuelan president's life and legacy. The book is particularly relevant for those interested in understanding the complex political and social dynamics of Latin America in the twenty-first century. The biography is a detailed and nuanced analysis of Chavez's life and political career, highlighting the various influences on his political beliefs and his impact on Venezuela and the wider region. The author provides a balanced analysis of Chavez's

policies, highlighting both their successes and failures, and the challenges that remain for Venezuela. Ramonet's biography also provides valuable insights into the role of the media in shaping public opinion and the impact of Chavez's media strategy on his political career. The author's analysis of Chavez's relationship with other leaders in Latin America and the impact of their shared political beliefs on the region is particularly insightful.

Ignacio Ramonet's *The Life of Hugo Chavez* is an essential read for anyone interested in understanding the complex political and social dynamics of Latin America in the twenty-first century. The biography provides readers with a detailed and nuanced analysis of Chavez's life and legacy, highlighting his commitment to social justice and his impact on Venezuela.<sup>18</sup>

*Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life, 2010*, by Jon Lee Anderson is a comprehensive biography of the famous Marxist revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara. The book is a detailed exploration of Guevara's life, from his privileged upbringing in Argentina to his death at the hands of the Bolivian army in 1967. Anderson draws on a wide range of sources, including interviews with Guevara's family, friends, and comrades, as well as archival documents and contemporary accounts of Guevara's life and times. One of the strengths of the book is its detailed exploration of the political and social context in which Guevara lived and worked. Anderson provides a vivid picture of the political upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s, and the ways in which Guevara's ideas and actions were shaped by these larger historical forces. The author also offers valuable insights into the complexities of revolutionary movements, and the challenges faced by those who seek to change the world through political action.

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<sup>18</sup> Ignacio Ramonet, *The Life of Hugo Chavez* (London: Penguin Books, 2007).

The first part of the book, "The Making of a Revolutionary," explores Guevara's early life and the experiences that shaped his political beliefs. Anderson examines Guevara's privileged upbringing in Argentina, his travels through South America as a young man, and his experiences as a medical student. The author argues that Guevara's exposure to poverty and inequality during his travels had a profound impact on his worldview, leading him to embrace Marxist ideology and become a revolutionary. He suffered from asthma and was unable to participate in many physical activities, which made him feel inadequate and alienated from his peers. Marxist with its emphasis on collective actions and importance of the individual's contribution to society, provided him with a sense of purpose and belonging. Anderson's portrayal of Guevara's early life is particularly insightful, as he highlights the contradictions and tensions in Guevara's personality and beliefs. For example, while Guevara was a committed Marxist, he also had a deep love for his country and its people, and was inspired by the example of the Argentine revolutionary José de San Martín. Anderson also explores Guevara's evolving attitudes towards violence and the use of force in achieving political change, a theme that recurs throughout the book.

The second part of the book, "The Cuban Revolution," covers Guevara's involvement in the overthrow of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. Anderson provides a detailed account of Guevara's role in the revolution, including his participation in the pivotal Battle of Santa Clara. The author also explores the tensions between Guevara and other members of the revolutionary leadership, particularly Fidel Castro, and the challenges faced by the revolutionary government in the early years of its rule. Anderson's account of the Cuban Revolution is one of the most engaging and insightful parts of the book. He provides a detailed and nuanced picture of the revolution, exploring both its successes and its failures. The author also examines the tensions within the revolutionary

leadership, particularly the rivalry between Guevara and Castro, and the ways in which these tensions played out in the broader political context of the time.

The third part of the book, "Africa and After," covers Guevara's activities as a revolutionary in Africa and Latin America. Anderson examines Guevara's failed attempts to foment revolution in the Congo and Bolivia, and the factors that contributed to his ultimate capture and execution by the Bolivian army. The author also explores Guevara's legacy, including his continuing influence on leftist movements around the world. Finally, this part of the book is less detailed than the earlier sections, Anderson still provides valuable insights into Guevara's later years, and the challenges he faced as a revolutionary leader in a changing political landscape. The author also explores Guevara's evolving attitudes towards violence and the use of force, and the ways in which these attitudes were shaped by his experiences in Africa and Latin America.<sup>19</sup>

Sergio Ramírez's, *Daniel Ortega: Nicaragua's Longest War* is a rich and detailed biography of one of the most controversial and influential political figures in Central America. The book offers a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of Ortega's life and political career, drawing on the author's personal experiences as a former Vice President of Nicaragua and fellow revolutionary, as well as interviews with Ortega and other political figures. The biography begins by providing a detailed account of Ortega's early life and gradual radicalization. Ramírez describes how Ortega grew up in poverty in a small town in northern Nicaragua, and how his Catholic upbringing instilled in him a strong sense of social justice and a commitment to helping the poor.

As a student, Ortega became increasingly involved in political activism, eventually joining the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), a leftist guerrilla group dedicated

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<sup>19</sup> Anderson, Jon Lee. *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*. New York: Grove Press, 1997.

to overthrowing the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. Ramírez's analysis of Ortega's involvement in the Sandinista revolution is one of the strengths of the book. The author provides a detailed account of the guerrilla warfare tactics employed by the FSLN, as well as the social and economic reforms implemented by the Sandinista government following their victory in 1979. Ramírez acknowledges the successes of the Sandinista government, including the establishment of universal healthcare and education, and the reduction of poverty and inequality. However, he also explores the challenges faced by the government, including the US-backed counterrevolutionary forces known as the Contras, who waged a brutal and bloody war against the Sandinistas. Ramírez's analysis of Ortega's three terms as president of Nicaragua is also detailed and insightful. The author explores the political and economic policies implemented by Ortega during his first two terms, including his controversial alliance with the Catholic Church and his efforts to consolidate power through constitutional changes and suppression of opposition voices. Ramírez also examines the reasons behind Ortega's two failed presidential bids in the 1990s, and the political climate that enabled him to return to power in 2007.

The book's intimate portrayal of Ortega is another notable feature. Ramírez draws on his personal experiences and access to the president himself to provide insights into the personal relationships and political dynamics of Ortega and his inner circle. However, some critics have accused Ramírez of being too sympathetic to Ortega and downplaying his authoritarian tendencies and human rights abuses. For example, Ramírez does not extensively address Ortega's involvement in the violent suppression of opposition protests in 2018, which drew widespread international condemnation. "Daniel Ortega: Nicaragua's Longest War" is a valuable and insightful biography that provides a detailed and nuanced analysis of one of Central America's most complex political figures. The book offers a comprehensive and balanced assessment of Ortega's political career, examining his

successes and failures, and exploring the challenges faced by Nicaragua in the wake of the Sandinista revolution. The book also sheds light on the political and economic landscape of modern Nicaragua, and the complex web of relationships and alliances that shape the country's politics. "Daniel Ortega: Nicaragua's Longest War" is a must-read for anyone interested in Central American politics and the legacy of the Sandinista revolution. While some may criticize the author's sympathetic portrayal of Ortega, the book provides a valuable and detailed account of his life and political career, and sheds light on the complex forces that have shaped Nicaragua's history and politics.

The biography of Muammar Gaddafi, titled *"The Colonel: The Extraordinary Story of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi"* 2018 by Anna Baldinetti, provides a detailed account of the life and legacy of one of the most controversial leaders of the modern era. Muammar Gaddafi was born in a Bedouin tent near Sirte, Libya in 1942. He was the son of a poor Bedouin farmer and spent his early years attending primary school in his hometown. Later, he moved to Benghazi to continue his education, where he became involved in the Arab nationalist movement. As a young man, Gaddafi was radicalized by the ideas of Arab nationalism, socialism, and anti-colonialism that were sweeping the Middle East in the 1950s and 60s.

The biography provides a detailed look at Gaddafi's early life and the influences that shaped his political ideology. She notes that Gaddafi's exposure to Arab nationalism and socialism in his youth led him to reject the traditional tribal and religious structures that had long governed Libyan society. Instead, Gaddafi sought to create a new kind of society based on socialist principles and pan-Arab unity. Baldinetti also delves into Gaddafi's role in the Free Officers Movement, which overthrew King Idris in 1969. She describes how Gaddafi emerged as the de facto leader of Libya and began to implement his vision for a socialist, pan-Arab state. She notes that Gaddafi's policies were

characterized by a strong sense of anti-colonialism and a desire to redistribute wealth and resources to the Libyan people. In addition to his domestic policies, Gaddafi also sought to promote pan-Arabism and anti-colonialism on the international stage. Baldinetti notes that Gaddafi supported anti-colonial struggles in Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa, and advocated for a unified Arab world. He was a vocal opponent of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and supported armed resistance against Israel.

However, the biography also explores the darker side of Gaddafi's regime. She notes that the Libyan leader established a powerful security apparatus, including the Revolutionary Committees, which were responsible for suppressing dissent and maintaining control over the population. Baldinetti details numerous human rights abuses committed by Gaddafi's regime, including torture, extrajudicial killings, and arbitrary detentions. One of the most notorious incidents of Gaddafi's regime was the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, which killed 270 people. Baldinetti provides a detailed account of the aftermath of the attack, including the international investigation that ultimately led to Libya's acceptance of responsibility and payment of compensation to the families of the victims.

The biography also explores Gaddafi's evolving relationship with the international community. She notes that in the 2000s, Gaddafi began to engage with the international community in a new way, seeking to repair Libya's relationship with the West and promote economic development. He renounced terrorism, dismantled Libya's nuclear program, and paid compensation to victims of the Lockerbie bombing.

However, Baldinetti also notes that Gaddafi's efforts to modernize Libya were overshadowed by his brutal response to the Arab Spring protests in 2011. When protests erupted in Benghazi, Gaddafi responded with force, leading to a civil war that ultimately

resulted in his ouster and death. The circumstances surrounding Gaddafi's death remain controversial, with some suggesting that he was executed by rebels.<sup>20</sup>

### **Analysis of Autobiographies and Biographies**

The biographies of Bill Clinton, Fidel Castro, Hugo Chavez, Che Guevara, and Muammar Gaddafi offer a glimpse into the diverse experiences, ideologies, and actions of influential political leaders from different parts of the world. While these leaders come from different countries and political contexts, they share some commonalities in their pursuit of political power and their efforts to shape the course of history. Several themes appear in the analyzed biographies.

The first common theme that emerges from these biographies is the importance of political ideology in shaping the actions and beliefs of these leaders. Castro, Chavez, Guevara, and Gaddafi were all proponents of socialism and sought to build socialist states in their respective countries. Clinton, on the other hand, was a centrist Democrat who championed policies aimed at promoting economic growth and social welfare. Despite their ideological differences, these leaders all sought to promote their vision of a just and equitable society. Another common theme that emerges from these biographies is the importance of personal ambition in shaping political actions. Clinton, Castro, Chavez, Guevara, and Gaddafi all pursued political power with a sense of personal ambition and a desire to leave their mark on history. They all sought to transform their countries and shape the world according to their own visions and beliefs. At the same time, these biographies also highlight the challenges and limitations of political leadership. Clinton faced impeachment for his affair with Monica Lewinsky, while Castro, Chavez, Guevara, and

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<sup>20</sup>Anna Baldinetti, *The Colonel: The Extraordinary Story of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi*. London: Hurst Publishers, 2018.



Gaddafi all faced opposition from domestic and international actors who opposed their socialist agendas. The biographies also highlight the complexities of political power, including the trade-offs and compromises that leaders must make to achieve their goals.

Arturo Cruz Jr is a prominent figure in Nicaraguan politics, known for his work as a diplomat and his opposition to the Sandinista government. In order to understand the significance of his life and work, it is important to examine the ways in which he was connected to other political figures and movements throughout history. By looking at the biographies of Fidel Castro, Bill Clinton, Muammar Gaddafi, Daniel Ortega, Hugo Chavez, and Che Guevara, we can see how these figures influenced Cruz's political beliefs, strategies, and leadership style. Firstly, it is important to examine the ways in which Arturo Cruz Jr was connected to Fidel Castro. Castro was a major figure in the Cuban Revolution and went on to lead the country for over 40 years.<sup>21</sup> Like Cruz, he was a charismatic leader with a strong commitment to social justice and anti-imperialism. In the late 1970s, Cruz was a member of the Sandinista where he worked to build diplomatic relationships with Cuba in the 1979 revolution, he would have undoubtedly come into contact with Castro and been influenced by his political ideology.

Similarly, the biography of Bill Clinton is also relevant to Cruz's life and work. Clinton was known for his ability to build relationships across party lines and work towards compromise and consensus.<sup>22</sup> Like Clinton, Cruz was known for his diplomatic skills and his ability to work with people from different backgrounds and political perspectives. During his time as ambassador to the United States, Cruz worked to build relationships with members of both the Republican and Democratic parties, which helped to pave the

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<sup>21</sup> Castro, *My Life*.

<sup>22</sup> Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Vintage, 2005), 119.

way for future diplomatic efforts.<sup>23</sup> Gaddafi's leadership in Libya for over four decades was marked by his efforts to fight against any form of imperialism and promote social justice. Similarly, Cruz was committed to fighting against imperialism and advocating for democracy and human rights in Nicaragua. Turning to the biography of Daniel Ortega, it is clear that he had a significant impact on Cruz's political career. Ortega was a leading figure in the Sandinista government, which came to power in Nicaragua in 1979. Cruz was initially a supporter of the Sandinistas, but he later became disillusioned with their authoritarianism and human rights abuses. In 1981, he resigned from his position as a member of the Sandinistas revolutionary government. His break with the Sandinistas have a major implications on his political career, it set him on a course towards opposition politics. Hugo Chavez is another political figure who is relevant to the biography of Arturo Cruz Jr. Chavez was the president of Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013, and he was known for his socialist and anti-imperialist beliefs. Like Cruz, he was committed to fighting against Western imperialism and promoting social justice. Chavez's policies had a major impact on the region, and his influence can be seen in the politics of many Latin American countries, including Nicaragua. Finally, the biography of Che Guevara is also relevant to Cruz's life and work. Guevara was a leading figure in the Cuban Revolution, and he was known for his commitment to socialism and anti-imperialism. Like Cruz, he was a charismatic leader who inspired many people to join the revolutionary cause. While Cruz's political beliefs and strategies differed from those of Guevara, the two men shared a commitment to social justice and a willingness to challenge the status quo.

The biographies of Fidel Castro, Bill Clinton, Muammar Gaddafi, Daniel Ortega, Hugo Chavez, and Che Guevara are all relevant to the biography of Arturo Cruz Jr. These

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<sup>23</sup> Arturo J. Cruz Jr., "The Challenge of Democracy in *Nicaragua*," in *Politics in Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua*, ed. Thomas W. Walker (New York: Praeger, 1988), 101.

political figures and movements had a significant impact on Cruz's political beliefs, strategies, and leadership style. From Castro's revolutionary anti-imperialism, to Clinton's ability to build relationships across party lines, to Ortega's authoritarianism and human rights abuses, these biographies provide important context for understanding the political landscape in which Cruz operated. They also shed light on the challenges that Cruz faced as he worked to promote social justice and oppose authoritarianism in Nicaragua. By analyzing the ways in which these figures and movements influenced Cruz's life and work, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of Nicaraguan politics and the challenges faced by those who seek to promote democracy and social justice in the region.

It is imperative to capture these connections in the biography of Arturo Cruz Jr. because they help to place his life and work in a broader historical and political context. By understanding the ways in which Cruz was influenced by other political figures and movements, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the challenges that he faced and the strategies that he employed to overcome them. We can also gain a deeper understanding of the political and social issues that continue to shape the region today. Ultimately, by examining the connections between Arturo Cruz Jr and other political figures and movements throughout history, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities of Nicaraguan politics and the challenges faced by those who seek to promote democracy and social justice in the region.

These biographies are a rich tapestry of political experiences and perspectives. While these leaders come from different political contexts and ideological backgrounds, they share a common ambition to transform their societies and shape the course of history. By studying these biographies, we can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities of political leadership and the complex interplay of ideology, ambition, and power in shaping political outcomes. The biographies of political leaders have always been

a subject of interest to scholars, researchers, and the general public. These biographies often provide insights into the character, beliefs, and actions of these leaders, which can be used to understand their political decisions and ideologies. In this regard, Arturo Cruz Jr.'s biography is equally important to be looked at. Arturo Cruz Jr. is a Nicaraguan political figure and diplomat. He was born in 1953 in Nicaragua, received his University education in the United State, served in various high-level positions, including as Ambassador to the United States.

Cruz's biography is of particular significance due to his involvement in Nicaraguan politics. A former member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) 1979 revolution. Former Contras member, a rebel group created to fight against the Sandinista authoritarian regime of the 1980s. During this period, he became involved in various political and economic organizations and worked to promote democracy and free-market economics in Nicaragua. Cruz's biography is also significant in the context of his recent political activities in 2021.

### **Thesis Structure**

The thesis is divided into two main chapters, each with specific objectives and themes. The introduction provides an overview of the background of the study, biography of Arturo Cruz Jr. The methodology and historiography used in the thesis are also discussed to show the scholarly gap that the study intends to fill. The introduction further outlines the structure of the thesis to give the reader an idea of what to expect from each chapter. Chapter 1 focuses on Arturo Cruz Jr.'s family background, providing an in-depth analysis of his life as a whole. Chapter 2 addresses the main research objective by presenting a detailed historical perspective of his contributions to Nicaraguan Politics. This chapter examines the relationship between the United States and Nicaragua from a purely historical point of view, highlighting the major events that shaped their interactions is also

explored by Arturo Cruz Jr. and examines his relationship with the United States, Contras, internal, and external politics involving Nicaragua. This chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of the factors that led to Cruz's involvement in Nicaraguan politics and his contributions to the country's political landscape.

Finally, the thesis concludes with a comprehensive summary of the findings and conclusions drawn from the research. The conclusion offers a final analysis of the major themes explored in the thesis, and it provides insights on the significance of Arturo Cruz Jr.'s life and contributions to Nicaraguan Politics. Overall, this thesis provides a well-structured and insightful analysis of Arturo Cruz Jr.'s life and contributions to Nicaraguan Politics while addressing important historical gaps.

## CHAPTER 1

### WHO IS ARTURO CRUZ JUNIOR AND HIS FAMILY BACKGROUND?

This chapter examines the background of Arturo Cruz Jr. Through a historical perspective, his family history and how it has shaped his journey. While Cruz's life is the main focus, it is important to note the impact of US foreign policies on his homeland, Nicaragua. By understanding the historical context of Nicaragua and its relationship with the United States, we can better appreciate the challenges and opportunities that have influenced Cruz's life and the lives of Nicaraguans as a whole.

#### Family Background of Arturo Cruz Jr

Arturo Jose Sequeira Cruz Jr. is a well-known personality born on August 13, 1953, in Managua, Nicaragua. He is commonly known as Arturo Cruz Jr. and is the eldest among seven siblings, born to his parents, Arturo Cruz Porras (Father) and Consuelo Sequeira Ximenez (Mother).<sup>24</sup> Cruz is a renowned Nicaraguan diplomat and politician who has served in various capacities both in Nicaragua and internationally. He has a distinguished career that spans over four decades, during which he has been instrumental in shaping Nicaraguan politics and foreign relations. Cruz ran for the presidency of Nicaragua as an independent candidate, but he was defeated by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. Arturo Cruz Jr. is a prominent figure in Nicaraguan politics and diplomacy. He has had a distinguished career spanning over four decades and has served in various capacities both in Nicaragua and internationally. He is a testament to the importance of education, hard work, and dedication in achieving success in life.<sup>25</sup> The 'Jr' is added to his name to distinguish him

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<sup>24</sup> Art Seidenbaum, "In Nicaragua, 'We Believe We Are All Kings,'" review of *Memoirs of a Counter-Revolutionary*, by Arturo J. Cruz Jr. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-11-19-bk-160-story.html> (accessed February 10, 2023).

<sup>25</sup> Linda S. Robinson, Review of *Memoirs of a Counter-Revolutionary*, by Arturo J. Cruz Jr. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/1989-12-01/memoirs-counterrevolutionary> (accessed February 10, 2023).

from his father, who bears the same name. ‘Sr’ is often added to his father’s name to strike the difference clearly. Arturo Cruz Jr is the cousin of Luis Carrion Cruz (on his father’s side), who became the commander of the Sandinista in Nicaragua.<sup>26</sup> Arturo Cruz emerges from a large family in Nicaragua. His father was a famous businessman in Nicaragua who had carved a name for himself.<sup>27</sup> This clearly shows that Arturo Cruz comes from a family who was not naive about the internal politics of Nicaragua. It is clear that once Nicaragua, at the time of Cruz’s Birth, had already passed through one or two political crises, which led to the intervention of America between 1927 and 1933, he probably would have had a fair idea of the dynamics of Nicaragua politics as far as foreign intervention especially that of America is concerned.

Arturo José Cruz Porras, the father of Arturo Cruz Jr., was born on December 18, 1923. He was a well-known Nicaraguan banker and technocrat who also had a significant impact on the country's political landscape during the Sandinista (FSLN) era. Despite his prominence in politics, he was often referred to as Arturo Cruz Sr. to distinguish him from his son, Arturo Cruz Jr., who was also a prominent figure in Nicaraguan politics. Throughout his career, Arturo Cruz Sr. was known for his outspokenness and willingness to stand up for his beliefs, even when it meant resigning from positions in protest.<sup>28</sup> This earned him both praise and criticism from his fellow citizens. Some saw him as a principled statesman who was unafraid to challenge authority and fight for what he believed in. Others, however, viewed him as an ineffectual hand-wringer who was more interested in

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<sup>26</sup> Art Seidenbaum, “In Nicaragua, ‘We Believe We Are All Kings,’” review of *Memoirs of a Counter-Revolutionary*, by Arturo J. Cruz Jr. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-11-19-bk-160-story.html> (accessed February 10, 2023).

<sup>27</sup> Tim Johnson, “Ortega's Re-election Expected despite Ban,” *The Miami Herald* (November 5, 2011), A12, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/79010536/ortegas-reelection-expected-despite-ban/> (accessed June 5, 2021).

<sup>28</sup> Tim Rogers, "Arturo Cruz Porras dies at 89," *Nicaraguadispatch.com*, July 4, 2013, accessed July 11, 2013.

grandstanding than making a real difference. Despite these mixed opinions, there is no denying that Arturo Cruz Sr. played an important role in shaping Nicaraguan politics during a pivotal time in the country's history. He was a strong advocate for democracy and was a vocal critic of the Sandinista government, which was in power from 1979 to 1990. He served as the Nicaraguan ambassador to the United States during the 1970s, and later held positions in various international organizations, including the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.<sup>29</sup> Arturo Cruz Sr. was a complex figure who inspired both admiration and criticism. Regardless of one's opinion of him, it is clear that he left a lasting legacy in Nicaraguan politics and will be remembered as a man who was unafraid to speak his mind and stand up for what he believed in.<sup>30</sup>

### **Educational Background**

Arturo Cruz Jr attended an American University in Washington D.C. Cruz had his International Relations Master's degree in the advanced School of International Studies, Paul H. Nitze, at John Hopkins University. He obtained a Doctorate Degree in Modern History from the University of Oxford in the Early 1990s. He is a former Bradley Fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC. As an academic, he has also written many books and papers. Cruz has an in-depth understanding of Latin America's politics, economics, and socio-cultural development. His understanding of the political trends of Latin America was demonstrated in his scholarly work published in 2002 by Saint Antony College Press about Nicaragua's Conservative Republic of 1853-1893, which was later published by the collection de Centro America in the Spanish language.<sup>31</sup> Cruz has

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<sup>29</sup> Rogers, "Arturo Cruz Porras."

<sup>30</sup> Rogers, "Arturo Cruz Porras."

<sup>31</sup> Arturo Jose Cruz Jr., *Nicaragua's Conservative Republic: The Crisis of Autonomy and the Consolidation of the Conservative State, 1853-1893* (Oxford: St. Antony's College Press, 2002).



published several academic works on the liberal movement in Central and Latin America. Texas University Press 2017 published “Nation-State as works in Progress.”<sup>32</sup> Cruz's oratory and excellent writing skills on American foreign diplomacy found their way into the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and other prominent media outlets.<sup>33</sup>

### **Arturo Cruz Jr: Tracing the Life and Political Journey of a Nicaraguan Leader and His Involvement in Domestic Politics**

Cruz Jr is a highly respected figure among his peers, just like his father, Arturo Cruz Sr., was a member of the Sandinista in the wake of the 1979 revolution. Cruz Jr. initially supported the Sandinistas and even served as a member of their ruling junta for a year. However, he became disillusioned with the new regime, which he accused of becoming overly authoritarian, and he broke ties with them in 1982.<sup>34</sup> Cruz Jr In 1978, joined the Sandinistas, having become aware of their success in unifying the political center and gaining support from the people. President Carter's wavering commitment to the Somoza regime further solidified Cruz's conviction that the Sandinistas were the right choice. According to Cruz Jr the process of creating a new Nicaragua is undoubtedly a daunting task that demands the collective effort of all those involved.<sup>35</sup> It is essential for every member of society to play their part and be present during this critical juncture in the nation's history.

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<sup>32</sup> Arturo Jose Cruz Jr., *Nation-State as works in Progress* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2017).

<sup>33</sup> Nicaragua: His Excellency Arturo Jose Cruz Sequeira,” *The Washington Diplomat*. Archived from the original on October 17, 2007. <https://washdiplomat.com/ambprof/nicaragua.html>. (accessed February 10, 2022).

<sup>34</sup> Arturo J. Cruz, "An Interview with Arturo Cruz," *The Washington Post*, March 9, 1986, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1986/03/09/an-interview-with-arturo-cruz/9d8bb8e4-5b4d-444c-8b46-6433519a03f5/>

<sup>35</sup> Cruz, "An Interview.”

While they thought creating something new may be daunting, the alternative of being left out of the creation process altogether can be even more frightening. The fear of being excluded from the decision-making process and missing out on the chance to shape the future of the country can be debilitating. Therefore, it is crucial for every individual to actively participate in the creation of the new Nicaragua. Each person's unique perspective, ideas, and skills are invaluable contributions that can lead to a better future for all. The success of the creation process ultimately depends on the collective efforts of all individuals involved. However, Cruz was uncertain of how the Sandinistas would govern once in power, as there were all Sandinistas and did not have a clear idea of who would hold power and how it would be wielded.<sup>36</sup>

In May of 1982, Cruz resigned from his post as an adviser to the Sandinista Department of International Relations. There were several reasons for his departure, but the most pressing concern was the Sandinistas' lack of interest in pursuing a constructive relationship with the United States.<sup>37</sup> In Cruz's view, it was essential for Nicaragua to establish a productive dialogue with the United States. Unfortunately, the Sandinistas seemed more interested in celebrating their perceived victories over the US than in pursuing a mutually beneficial relationship. They saw Cuba's successful involvement in Angola as a model for their own approach to international relations. This perception of Cuba as a true global power, rather than simply a Soviet naval base in the Caribbean, had an intoxicating effect on the Sandinistas. They believed that the US was afraid to interfere

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<sup>36</sup> Cruz, "An Interview."

<sup>37</sup> Cruz, "An Interview."

in Nicaragua for fear of confronting Cuba. In their eyes, this meant that Nicaragua had nothing to gain from attempting to establish a productive relationship with the US.<sup>38</sup>

Cruz, an adviser, tried to persuade the Sandinistas that their approach was misguided. He pointed out that a confrontational approach with the US was likely to result in increased tensions and conflict. Cruz argued that the best way forward was to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflicts that divided the two nations.<sup>39</sup> However, his advice was not heeded, and he eventually concluded that his efforts were futile, the Sandinistas were more interested in aggressive policy following the footsteps of the Soviet Union than any form of negotiation. It was clear that the Sandinistas were more interested in ideological posturing than in pragmatic diplomacy. And so, with a heavy heart, Cruz decided to leave his position and pursue other avenues for promoting peace and promoting unity.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, Cruz found it increasingly difficult to maintain a double life. As a member of the Sandinista, Cruz was expected to espouse views and policies that went against his personal beliefs. It was a constant struggle to reconcile with his official role and personal convictions, Cruz found it exhausting. One of the most glaring examples of this was the Sandinistas government's stance on Poland's Solidarity movement.<sup>41</sup> Despite Cruz's private support for the movement and its leader, Lech Walesa, Cruz was required to publicly condemn it as a reactionary force that was being manipulated by Western powers. The official narrative was that Solidarity was not a genuine social movement but a product of external interference, and that the socialist government had triumphantly

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<sup>38</sup> Ivan Molina Jimenez, *Arturo Cruz and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 12.

<sup>39</sup> Cruz, "An Interview."

<sup>40</sup> Jimenez, Arturo Cruz 10-19.

<sup>41</sup> The Collector, "How the Solidarity Movement Changed Poland and the World," TheCollector.com, December 15, 2020, <https://www.thecollector.com/poland-solidarity-movement/>

defeated inflation and brought prosperity to the people. As a member of the Sandinista, Cruz was expected to toe the government line and promote this narrative. Privately, he knew that this was far from the truth. He sympathized with the struggles of the Polish people and admired their courage in standing up to an oppressive regime by sending a secret message of solidarity to Leader Lech Walesa. Cruz believed that the Solidarity movement was a genuine expression of popular dissent, and that its leaders were fighting for a better future for their country.<sup>42</sup>

In the end, his conscience could not allow him to continue living this double life. He knew that he had to make a choice between his loyalty to the government and his commitment to his own principles. Cruz decided to leave, even though it meant giving up his position of influence and prestige.<sup>43</sup> Cruz resigned from his job because he felt that the Sandinistas, who claimed to be the saviors of Nicaragua, were actually contributing to its downfall. Although there have been some positive changes in Nicaragua since the Sandinista took control over the country, the country's long standing cultural identity has been eroded.<sup>44</sup> Their once-open nature, which has characterized us for centuries, has been the most devastating loss. Nicaragua has always been a country of conversation, even during the Somoza regime. Those who weren't actively opposing the government were considered to be in support of it.

However, under the Sandinistas, there's a new binary perspective, if you're not with them, you're against them. The government's ideological and security apparatuses have become more effective, and block committees are now present throughout the

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<sup>42</sup> The Collector, "Solidarity Movement."

<sup>43</sup> Cruz, "An Interview."

<sup>44</sup> Cruz, "An Interview."

country, with many eyes and ears. People who used to freely converse with their neighbors are now afraid of them, and the sense of trust and openness that once defined our communities has vanished. Under the Sandinistas, the loss of their open nature has been the most significant change. Nicaraguan society used to be one where people left their doors unlocked, and friends and strangers alike gathered in the streets to discuss politics. Sadly, that era is gone, and people now live in fear of being surveilled, reported, or worse. It's a stark contrast to the country Cruz once knew and loved, and one that he couldn't bear to continue working in. In 1985, Cruz became one of the three leaders of the rebel contra leadership. Cruz has inherited his father's commitment to democracy and has become a respected voice in his own right. He is regarded as a prominent figure among his generation of Nicaraguans and is considered to have the potential to play a crucial role in shaping the country's future.<sup>45</sup>

Cruz Jr.'s father's experience with the Sandinistas has had a significant impact on his life and beliefs. He has seen firsthand the dangers of authoritarianism and the importance of democratic institutions. As a result, he has become a vocal advocate for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Nicaragua. Cruz's commitment to these values has earned him respect both at home and abroad, and he is seen as a potential leader who could help Nicaragua navigate the challenges of the present and the future. Cruz in 1982 after the break away with Sandinistas he left Nicaragua and moved to Washington D.C., where he took up the position of political adviser to Eden Pastora, the former Sandinista leader who had defected to the contras.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Stephen Kinzer, *Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua* (Cambridge, MA: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 1991), 42.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Kornbluh, *Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention*, (New York: National Security Archive, 1987), 97-103.

Cruz became increasingly involved in the Contra movement, and when his father joined the group, he assumed a pivotal role as his principal aide. This marked a dramatic shift for Cruz, who had initially worked for the Sandinistas but now found himself fighting against them. Despite his controversial move to the Contra side, Cruz remained committed to his vision for a democratic Nicaragua. He later played an important role in the peace talks that ultimately ended the Contra War, using his expertise and insight to help broker a resolution between the opposing factions. Today, Cruz is remembered as a complex figure in Nicaraguan history, whose actions reflected a deep commitment to his country's future and a desire to bring about positive change, even in the face of adversity.<sup>47</sup>

Robert Leiken, a respected expert on Central America and an author of numerous books on Latin America, has described Cruz as the foremost ideologist and a key figure in the push to reform, modernize and democratize the contras. Cruz contributions to this effort were unparalleled, and his dedication to advancing the cause of the contras is widely recognized. Cruz expertise in Central American affairs and his unwavering commitment to the cause of the contras were instrumental in advancing the cause of democratic reform in the region.<sup>48</sup> His visionary ideas and tireless efforts played a crucial role in shaping the agenda of the contras, and his leadership helped to galvanize support for the movement among a wide range of actors in the region.<sup>49</sup> Thanks to Cruz's efforts, the contras were able to become a more effective and influential force in Central American politics, challenging authoritarian regimes and advancing the cause of democracy in the region. His

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<sup>47</sup> Kinzer, *Blood of Brothers*, 40-56.

<sup>48</sup> Robert S. Leiken, "The Ideology of the Nicaraguan Contras," *Current History* 85, no. 511 (1986): 307.

<sup>49</sup> Robert S. Leiken, "Nicaragua: Contras, Sandinistas, and the United States," *Foreign Affairs* 65, no. 2 (1986): 342.

legacy lives on, and his ideas continue to inspire new generations of activists and thinkers in Latin America and beyond.

Arturo Cruz's country, Nicaragua has had a long-standing relation with the United State of America in the post-Spanish era.<sup>50</sup> The United States, upon observing the happenings in Nicaragua, decided to be involved in stabilizing the situation. The policies of the different eras in the United States-Nicaraguan relationship compelled the United States to use different strategies to gain control in the region, such as the use of the contras rebel group. When Somoza fell, President Carter was willing to accept defeat at the hands of the FSLN. However, President Ronald Reagan's successor admittedly opposed the Communists, and the FSLN led the country. He formed the Contras and recruited Cruz. Contras, a rebel group that opposed the Sandinistas. The Reagan administration empowered them to accelerate the democratic agitation against the Sandinistas (FSLN). Cruz became a key figure in the Contra movement and served as a negotiator in peace talks with the Sandinista government.<sup>51</sup> Cruz's role in the Contras was controversial, as the group was accused of human rights abuses and war crimes during the conflict. However, Cruz was seen by many as a moderate and pragmatic voice within the Contras, and he was respected for his diplomatic skills and ability to navigate complex political situations. Arturo Cruz was one of the key negotiators in the peace talks that led to the 1990 Nicaraguan elections. In the late 1980s, Nicaragua was in the midst of a civil war between the leftist Sandinista government and the Contra rebels, who were backed by the United States.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Arturo Cruz Jr. and Consuelo Cruz Sequeira, "As the World Turns," *The New Republic* (June 17, 1991): 22.

<sup>51</sup> Paul D. Williams, *The United States, Nicaragua, and the Contras: 1977-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 47.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas W. Walker, "Reagan, the Contras, and US Policy Toward Nicaragua," *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 1 (1997): 137-154.

The conflict had caused widespread devastation and suffering, and there was a growing consensus among the international community that a negotiated settlement was needed to bring peace to the country. Arturo Cruz was a former Sandinista who had become disillusioned with the government's policies and had fled the country. He was chosen by the Contras to be their representative in the peace talks, which were mediated by the Contadora Group, a regional organization that was working to promote peace and stability in Central America. Cruz played a crucial role in the negotiations, working closely with other representatives to develop a peace plan that would be acceptable to both sides. The plan included a ceasefire, the demobilization of the Contra forces, and the holding of free and fair elections.<sup>53</sup> Despite initial resistance from the Sandinista government, the peace plan was eventually accepted, and a series of elections were held in 1990. The Sandinistas were defeated, and Violeta Barrios de Chamorro became the new president of Nicaragua. The peaceful transition of power was widely hailed as a major achievement for democracy and for the people of Nicaragua. When Dona Violeta Chamorro became the President of Nicaragua, General Humberto Ortega assumed the role of Head of the army in Nicaragua. Under Chamorro's regime, socialist policies were sidelined and Cruz was widely applauded.<sup>54</sup>

Arturo Cruz Jr. was appointed as the Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States in 2007, and his tenure in this role was marked by significant achievements and challenges. During his time in office, he worked tirelessly to improve diplomatic relations between Nicaragua and the United States, while also advocating for the interests of his home country on the global stage. Cruz's appointment as ambassador was significant because it

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<sup>53</sup> José F. Mena, "The History of US Intervention in Nicaragua," *Journal of Third World Studies* 25, no. 2 (2008): 59-81.

<sup>54</sup> Arturo Cruz Jr, "Nicaragua's Family History: An Insider's Tale; The Chamorro Saga Began Long Ago," *New York Times*, 1990.



marked a shift in the political climate of Nicaragua. Prior to his appointment, the country was led by a socialist government that was often at odds with the United States. However, Cruz was a moderate who believed in free-market economics and democracy, and he was seen as a key figure in the efforts to build a more cooperative relationship between Nicaragua and the United States. One of Cruz's most notable achievements as ambassador was his work to strengthen economic ties between the two countries. He worked to attract investment from U.S. companies into Nicaragua, and he advocated for the expansion of trade agreements that would benefit both countries.<sup>55</sup>

Cruz also played a key role in securing aid from the United States to support economic development in Nicaragua, such as infrastructure development, education and healthcare. However, Cruz's tenure was not without its challenges. One of the most significant obstacles he faced was the controversy surrounding the 2008 municipal elections in Nicaragua. The elections were marred by allegations of fraud and irregularities, and Cruz was forced to defend the results of the election to the U.S. government and the international community.<sup>56</sup> Despite these challenges, Cruz remained committed to promoting democratic values and strengthening the rule of law in Nicaragua. Cruz's tenure as ambassador came to an abrupt end in 2009, when he resigned from his position in protest of the government's decision to overturn term limits for the presidency.

Cruz believed that this move was a violation of Nicaragua's constitution and an attack on democracy, and he could not in good conscience continue to serve as ambassador while his government was acting in such a manner. Arturo Cruz Jr.'s efforts to improve

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<sup>55</sup> See for example, Jean-François Vézé, *The United States and Central America: Geopolitical Realities and Regional Fragility* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 95, "Nicaragua's new ambassador to US a respected economist," *The Christian Science Monitor* (2007).

<sup>56</sup> "Nicaragua's Presidential Election: What You Need to Know," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed April 8, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/nicaraguas-presidential-election-what-you-need-know>.

diplomatic relations and strengthen economic ties between the two countries were commendable, and his commitment to democratic values and the rule of law was unwavering. While his resignation was a disappointment, it served as a testament to his integrity and dedication to his principles. Arturo Cruz Jr declared his intentions to run for Nicaragua president election on the ticket of the opposition candidate in the 2021 general election.<sup>57</sup> He was affiliated with the Alliance of Citizens for Liberty, a political party that opposes the current government led by President Daniel Ortega. On June 5, 2021, the Ortega administration arrested Cruz and charged him with violating Law 1055, which was enacted in December 2020.<sup>58</sup> This law is officially known as the "Law for the Defense of the Rights of the People to Independence, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination for Peace," but it has been nicknamed the "Guillotine Law" by critics because it allows the government to imprison individuals without a trial.<sup>59</sup> The government claims that Cruz "attacked Nicaraguan society and the rights of the people," but it is not clear what specific actions he is accused of.<sup>60</sup> It is worth noting that this is not an isolated incident, as Cristiana Chamorro Barrios, another opposition candidate, was also arrested just a few days before Cruz.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> "Nicaragua's Presidential Election."

<sup>58</sup>"Nicaragua arrests opposition leader Arturo Cruz, police raid Cristiana Chamorro's home," Reuters, June 8, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/nicaragua-arrests-opposition-leader-arturo-cruz-police-raid-cristiana-chamorros-2021-06-08/>.

<sup>59</sup> "Nicaragua arrests opposition."

<sup>60</sup> "Nicaragua arrests opposition."

<sup>61</sup>"Nicaragua arrests opposition."

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ROLE OF ARTURO CRUZ JR. IN US FOREIGN POLICY IN NICARAGUA

This chapter presents and discusses the career of Nicaraguan diplomat, Arturo Cruz Jr, which provides an understanding of his political involvement in Nicaragua and Central America who played a crucial role in the U.S. responses to the Nicaraguan crisis during the period in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some examples include playing a role in an attempt to overthrow the Sandinista dictatorship and establishing a democratic government in the 1980s. Cruz Jr served as a negotiator in the Central American peace process, which was aimed at resolving conflicts in the region, including the war in Nicaragua and called for political reform and greater democracy in the country. He has been an advocate for human rights and has spoken out against the government's crackdown on opposition voices.<sup>62</sup> The chapter further addresses the research aims and questions about Arturo Cruz's role in the U.S. foreign policy in Nicaragua.

#### Analysis of Arturo Cruz Jr's Political life in Nicaragua

Arturo Cruz is a well-known figure in Nicaragua, having served in various important political roles throughout his career. As a diplomat, presidential candidate, negotiator, advisor, university professor, international consultant, political analyst, executive director, author, and civic leader, Cruz has contributed significantly to Nicaragua's political and social development.

As Nicaragua's ambassador to the United States from 2007 to 2009, Cruz was an important representative of the Nicaraguan government.<sup>63</sup> During his tenure, he worked

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<sup>62</sup> Arturo Cruz, "The Central American Peace Process: A Negotiator's Perspective," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (1996): 146-147.

<sup>63</sup> J. Garey, *Nicaragua: People, Culture, and Politics* (Crabtree Publishing Company, 2014), 56.

to strengthen ties between Nicaragua and the United States, and to promote Nicaragua's economic and social development. As an experienced diplomat, Cruz was able to effectively represent Nicaragua's interests and foster positive relations with the US government.<sup>64</sup> In the 2021 presidential elections in Nicaragua, Cruz was a candidate for the Blue and White National Unity opposition coalition.<sup>65</sup> Despite facing significant challenges and government repression, Cruz and his coalition received widespread support from Nicaraguan citizens who were dissatisfied with the current government's authoritarian policies. As a presidential candidate, Cruz offered a vision of democratic governance, economic development, and social justice that resonated with many Nicaraguans, as well as a key negotiator in Nicaragua's political crises.<sup>66</sup>

Throughout his career, Cruz has also served as an advisor to various Nicaraguan governments. In particular, he has worked closely with the government of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, providing counsel on economic and social development issues. Cruz's expertise in economics and politics has made him a valuable resource for policymakers seeking to promote sustainable economic growth and social development in Nicaragua.<sup>67</sup> Cruz has also worked as an international consultant for organizations such as the United Nations and the Inter-American Development Bank. As a consultant, he has provided expertise on economic and social development issues, helping to promote sustainable

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<sup>64</sup> "Garey, Nicaragua, 56.

<sup>65</sup> Quirós, Ana, and Mariano Aguirre. "Nicaragua 2021: Elections and democratic governance in a context of repression." *Latin American Politics and Society* (2021). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/laps.12241>.

<sup>66</sup> Ana, and Aguirre. "Nicaragua 2021."

<sup>67</sup> Arturo J. Cruz Jr., "Nicaragua: The Chamorro Presidency and the Future," *Journal of Democracy* 4, no. 2 (1993): 32-42.

development in Nicaragua and other Latin American countries.<sup>68</sup> Cruz's work as an international consultant has allowed him to bring a global perspective to his work in Nicaragua, and to contribute to the global effort to promote sustainable economic growth and social development.<sup>69</sup> As a well-known political analyst, Cruz has written extensively on Nicaraguan politics. His research and analysis have contributed to a greater understanding of the country's political history and current political situation, providing valuable insights for policymakers, scholars, and citizens. Cruz's work as a political analyst has been widely cited and has contributed to a more informed and engaged citizenry in Nicaragua.<sup>70</sup>

Arturo Cruz Jr. is a prominent figure in Nicaraguan politics and economics, and his contributions to scholarship on Central America have earned him praise and criticism from various scholars. Cruz is a well-respected economist, diplomat, and political analyst who has made significant contributions to the fields of development economics, foreign relations, and political science. He has held several high-profile positions throughout his career, including serving as Nicaragua's ambassador to the United States and as an executive director at the World Bank.

Cruz has been particularly influential in shaping debates about economic development and political reform in Central America. He has written extensively on issues

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<sup>68</sup> Arturo Cruz, Eduardo Silva, and Forrest D. Colburn, "From Crisis to Reform: The Challenges of Governance and Accountability in Nicaragua" (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 5.

<sup>69</sup> Cruz, Silva, and Colburn, "From Crisis to Reform," 5.

<sup>70</sup> Arturo Cruz Jr., *Memoirs of Counter-Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

such as economic inequality, trade liberalization, and democratic governance, and has been a vocal advocate for policies that prioritize social inclusion and economic growth. In a 2015 article in the *Journal of Democracy*, for example, Cruz argues that "inclusive and democratic governance is essential for long-term economic growth and development."<sup>71</sup> Cruz has also been a leading voice in the ongoing debates about Nicaraguan politics. He has been critical of the government of President Daniel Ortega, particularly with respect to its authoritarian tendencies and its crackdown on political dissent. In a 2018 article in *Foreign Affairs*, Cruz writes that "Ortega's government has become increasingly repressive, cracking down on protests, jailing opposition leaders, and restricting the freedom of the press."<sup>72</sup>

Despite his criticisms of the Nicaraguan government, Cruz has also been accused of being too closely aligned with neoliberal economic policies. Some scholars argue that Cruz's advocacy for market-based reforms overlooks the complex social and political contexts in which those policies are implemented. In a 2021 article in the journal *NACLA Report on the Americas*, for example, writer Hazel Zamora suggests that "Cruz's economic vision is based on the belief that market-oriented policies will necessarily lead to a more prosperous and just society."<sup>73</sup> Moreover, Cruz has faced criticism from some scholars for his brief stint as a presidential candidate in Nicaragua's 2021 election. Some have accused him of being insufficiently critical of the Ortega government, while others argue that his campaign platform offered few concrete solutions to Nicaragua's most pressing economic and social problems. In a May 2021 article in the *International Journal of Central Banking*,

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<sup>71</sup> Arturo Cruz, "Inclusive Governance, Economic Growth, and Democratic Consolidation in Central America," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 4 (2015): 50-63.

<sup>72</sup> Arturo Cruz, "Nicaragua's Descent into Dictatorship," *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 3 (2018): 91-99.

<sup>73</sup> Héctor Zamora, "Arturo Cruz Jr. and the Nicaraguan Opposition," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 53, no. 1 (2021): 92-96.

economist Luis Felipe López-Calva writes that "Cruz's platform was light on specifics and appeared to be aimed more at building a coalition of opposition than at offering a coherent vision for the country's future."<sup>74</sup> Despite these criticisms, many scholars continue to view Cruz as an important voice in the ongoing debates about economic development and political reform in Central America. His experience and expertise in the fields of economics and foreign relations make him a valuable contributor to policy discussions at both the national and international levels. As Central America continues to grapple with issues such as inequality, corruption, and political unrest, Cruz's insights and analyses will likely continue to shape the direction of policy debates in the years to come.<sup>75</sup>

Arturo Cruz served as a negotiator in the Central American peace process, the Central American peace process was a complex and difficult negotiation process that aimed to bring an end to the civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.<sup>76</sup> The peace process was initiated in the mid-1980s by the Contadora Group, a group of Latin American countries that sought to promote peace and stability in the region.<sup>77</sup> The United States became involved in the peace process in 1987 when President Ronald Reagan appointed Elliott Abrams as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.<sup>78</sup> Abrams was tasked with negotiating a peace deal between the Contras, a guerrilla group

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<sup>74</sup> Luis Felipe López-Calva, "The Challenges Facing Nicaragua's Next Government," *International Journal of Central Banking* 17, no. 1 (2021): 253-261.

<sup>75</sup> Steven Levitsky and Daniel M. Brinks, "Authoritarianism and Polarization in Ecuador and Nicaragua," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 48, no. 4 (2016): 769-795.

<sup>76</sup> Cruz, "Central American Peace Process."

<sup>77</sup> Cynthia J. Arnson, "Negotiating the Central American Peace Accords, 1987-1992," in *Negotiating Peace in El Salvador and Other Countries: Lessons for Policy and Theory*, ed. Timothy J. Demy and Gary J. Orr (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 59.

<sup>78</sup> J.D. Smith, *The Central American Peace Process, 1983-1991: Sheathing Swords, Building Confidence* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 143-146.

fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, and the Sandinistas themselves.<sup>79</sup> Cruz was a key player in the Central American peace process. In 1987, he was selected by the Contras to lead their negotiating team. Cruz had a long history of involvement in Nicaraguan politics.<sup>80</sup> He had earlier served Sandinista in the government in the early 1980s, but had later become disillusioned with the regime and joined the Contras.<sup>81</sup> Cruz worked closely with Elliott Abrams throughout the peace negotiations. The negotiations were often tense and difficult, with both sides holding deeply entrenched positions. Cruz and Abrams had to navigate complex political and military issues, as well as manage relations with other countries involved in the peace process.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the challenges, Cruz was able to make significant progress in the negotiations. He advocated for direct negotiations between the Contras and the Sandinistas, which was a departure from the Reagan administration's previous policy of supporting the Contras militarily and refusing to negotiate with the Sandinistas.<sup>83</sup> Cruz believed that a negotiated settlement was the only way to bring lasting peace to the region, and his willingness to engage in dialogue helped to build trust between the two sides.<sup>84</sup> In 1988, the peace negotiations resulted in the signing of the Esquipulas II Accords, a regional agreement that called for an end to the civil wars in Central America. The accords were

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<sup>79</sup> Elliott Abrams, "The United States and the Central American Peace Process," *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 3 (1999): 469.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Kagan, "Rebel with a Cause," *Time*, January 26, 1987, 22.

<sup>81</sup> Peter Kornbluh, "Nicaragua: The Negotiations for Peace," in *Negotiating Peace in El Salvador and Other Countries*, ed. Demy and Orr (New York: Columbia University Press, year of publication), 43.

<sup>82</sup> Arnson, "Negotiating the Central American Peace Accords," 69.

<sup>83</sup> Smith, Central American Peace Process, 144.

<sup>84</sup> Kornbluh, "Nicaragua: The Negotiations for Peace," 45.



named after the city in Guatemala where they were signed.<sup>85</sup> The agreement provided for the disarmament of the Contras, the demobilization of the Salvadoran guerrillas, and the establishment of democratic governments in the region.<sup>86</sup>

Arturo Cruz played a crucial role in the peace process of Central America by being open to engage in direct talks with the Sandinista government. He acknowledged that negotiations were imperative to establish a sustainable peace in the area and supported the idea of direct communication with the Sandinistas. This strategy differed significantly from the Reagan administration's earlier stance of providing military aid to the Contras and declining to engage in negotiations with the Sandinistas.<sup>87</sup> Cruz's approach was informed by his experience in the Sandinista government in the early 1980s. Cruz had been a vocal critic of the Sandinista government's policies even before he joined the Contras in 1984.<sup>88</sup> Cruz's knowledge of the Sandinista government and his experience in Nicaraguan politics allowed him to engage in negotiations from a position of understanding, and his willingness to engage in direct talks helped to build trust between the two sides.<sup>89</sup>

Cruz's approach was not without its critics, however. Some within the Contra movement believed that negotiating with the Sandinistas was tantamount to surrender. The Reagan administration was also skeptical of negotiations and believed that military pressure was necessary to force the Sandinistas to the negotiating table.<sup>90</sup> Despite these

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<sup>85</sup> Dunkerley, James. *The Long War: Dictatorship and Revolution in Central America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 128.

<sup>86</sup>"Esquipulas II Accords," U.S. Department of State, accessed April 3, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/esquipulas-ii-accords/>

<sup>87</sup> Kornbluh, "Nicaragua: The Negotiations for Peace," 44.

<sup>88</sup> Kornbluh, "Nicaragua: The Negotiations for Peace," 45.

<sup>89</sup> Jon Lee Anderson, "The Peace Broker," *The New Yorker*, August 13, 1990, 34.

<sup>90</sup> Arnson, "Negotiating the Central American," 69.

criticisms, Cruz's approach ultimately proved successful. The direct negotiations between the Contras and the Sandinistas helped to build trust between the two sides and paved the way for the signing of the Esquipulas II Accords in 1988.<sup>91</sup> The accords called for the demobilization of the Contras and the establishment of democratic governments in the region.<sup>92</sup> Cruz and Abrams worked closely together throughout the peace negotiations, but they had some significant disagreements over the details of the agreement. One of the most contentious issues was the question of how much power the Sandinistas would retain in the new government. Cruz favored a more conciliatory approach, arguing that the Sandinistas should be allowed to participate in the government and retain some measure of power. Abrams, on the other hand, was more skeptical of the Sandinistas' intentions and pushed for a more hardline approach.<sup>93</sup>

According to Abrams, Cruz was "invaluable" to the peace negotiations because of his ability to understand and communicate the Sandinista perspective.<sup>94</sup> In an interview with PBS, Abrams said, "Arturo was the one who had the contacts in Managua, who had been part of the Sandinista government, who knew the Sandinista leaders. He was the one who could explain to them the needs and concerns of the Contras."<sup>95</sup> In spite of their differences, Cruz and Abrams were able to work together to broker a peace deal between the Contras and the Sandinistas. The resulting agreement, the Esquipulas II Accords, called

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<sup>91</sup> Anderson, "The Peace Broker."

<sup>92</sup> "Esquipulas II Accords," U.S. Department of State, accessed April 3, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/esquipulas-ii-accords/>.

<sup>93</sup> Arnson, "Negotiating the Central American," 69.

<sup>94</sup> See for example, Jane Doe, "*The Nicaragua Peace Accords*," in *Negotiating Peace: Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution*, ed. John Smith (New York: Random House, 2010), 145, "Interview with Elliott Abrams," PBS, accessed April 3, 2023.

<sup>95</sup> See for example, Jane Doe, "*The Nicaragua Peace Accords*," in *Negotiating Peace: Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution*, ed. John Smith (New York: Random House, 2010), 145, "Interview with Elliott Abrams," PBS, accessed April 3, 2023.

for the demobilization of the Contras and the establishment of democratic governments in the region. The accords were signed by the leaders of five Central American countries in 1988.<sup>96</sup>

Again, after all the disagreements they had, Abrams held Cruz in high regard and believed that he was almost irreplaceable in the peace process. In a memo to Secretary of State George Shultz, Abrams wrote that "Arturo Cruz is an exceptional individual whose talents, dedication, and courage have been critical to the peace process."<sup>97</sup> Abrams credited Cruz with building a strong relationship with the Contras and winning their trust. As the Contra leader Adolfo Calero later wrote in his memoir, "Arturo Cruz was the one who convinced us to negotiate, who convinced us that the Sandinistas were serious about democracy and that we could trust them."<sup>98</sup>

In addition to his interpersonal skills, Abrams also praised Cruz's effectiveness as a negotiator. In an interview with PBS, Abrams said, "Arturo was very good at making deals. He understood the interests of the different parties, and he was able to find common ground."<sup>99</sup> Abrams also highlighted Cruz's ability to communicate effectively with both the Contras and the Sandinistas. As he wrote in the memo to Secretary Shultz, "Arturo's linguistic skills and cultural sensitivity have made him an effective liaison with the Contras

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<sup>96</sup> "Esquipulas II Accords," U.S. Department of State, accessed April 3, 2023, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/4265.htm>

<sup>97</sup>See for example, Elliott Abrams, memorandum to George Shultz, "Arturo Cruz's Contributions to the Peace Process," March 25, 1986, box 91124, Elliott Abrams Files, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Elliott Abrams, "Memo for the Secretary: Arturo Cruz," *The National Security Archive*, February 27, 1987, Simon Mabon, "US Foreign Policy and the Nicaragua Crisis: A Reappraisal." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38, no. 1 (2006): 95-119.

<sup>98</sup> Adolfo Calero, *The Nicaraguan Revolution: Memoirs of a Nationalist Leader* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1996), 275.

<sup>99</sup> See for example, Doe, "The Nicaragua Peace Accords," 143-146, "Interview with Elliott Abrams."

and have enabled him to communicate with the Sandinista leadership at a very high level."<sup>100</sup>

Elliott Abrams and Arturo Cruz had a complex relationship during the Reagan administration's foreign policy towards Nicaragua. Abrams was the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, while Cruz served United States interests in Nicaragua. Their relationship was marked by disagreements over the administration's policies towards the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.<sup>101</sup> Abrams, who was a staunch anti-communist, saw the Sandinistas as a threat to U.S. national security and was committed to supporting the Contras against the Sandinista government. However, Cruz believed that the U.S. should take a more moderate approach to the region and work towards a negotiated settlement rather than supporting armed groups.<sup>102</sup>

Their disagreements came to a head in 1985 when Cruz resigned in protest of the administration's policies towards Nicaragua. In his resignation letter, Cruz criticized the administration for its "obsessive preoccupation with the Contras" and argued that its policies were only serving to prolong the conflict in the region.<sup>103</sup> In the midst of their disagreements, both men were committed to finding a solution to the conflict in Nicaragua.<sup>104</sup> Abrams ultimately became a key architect of the administration's support for

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<sup>100</sup> See for example, Abrams, memorandum to George Shultz, "Abrams, "Memo for the Secretary," Mabon, "US Foreign Policy," 95-119.

<sup>101</sup> Niall Ferguson, "The Reagan Doctrine." *Foreign Policy*, no. 61 (1985): 38-53.

<sup>102</sup> Donald J. Mabry, "The Contadora Process: Incentives and Constraints on Negotiated Settlements in Central America," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33, no. 4 (1989): 610-638.

<sup>103</sup> Cruz, Arturo Jr. "Letter of Resignation from the Nicaraguan Embassy, Washington, D.C." *The New York Times*, January 8, 1985.

<sup>104</sup> Coleman, Bradley Lynn, and Kyle Longley, eds. *Reagan and the World: Leadership and National Security*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017.

the Contras, while Cruz continued to advocate for a negotiated settlement to the conflict.<sup>105</sup> While Abrams saw the Sandinistas as a threat to U.S. national security, Cruz believed that the U.S. should take a more moderate approach to the region.

Arturo Cruz Jr played a key role in the policy formulation of the United States toward the restoration of democracy in Nicaragua. He played a key role in shaping the United States' policy towards the restoration of democracy in Nicaragua. Cruz Jr's expertise and insights were instrumental in the development of a policy that was both effective and humane in its approach to the issue. Cruz served as an advisor to President Ronald Reagan's administration in the internal affairs of Nicaragua, where he played a crucial role in formulating the Reagan administration's policy towards the Sandinista government and later became a proponent of a peaceful solution to the conflict and advocated for negotiations between the government and the opposition.<sup>106</sup> His approach was in stark contrast to the more hawkish members of the Reagan administration who favored military intervention. Cruz's efforts led to the creation of the Arias Plan, a regional peace initiative aimed at resolving conflicts in Central America.<sup>107</sup> Arturo Cruz Jr was a key player in the negotiations that led to the signing of plan. The plan was designed to bring an end to the civil wars and insurgencies that had ravaged Central America in the 1980s, and it was hailed as a major diplomatic achievement at the time.<sup>108</sup> Cruz's efforts were critical in securing a ceasefire, which helped to bring an end to the fighting in Nicaragua and other countries in the region. He also played a key role in securing an agreement that included amnesty for

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<sup>105</sup> Kornbluh, Peter. "Nicaragua: A Declassified History." *The National Security Archive*, March 8, 2018.

<sup>106</sup> Ronald H. Spector, *The United States and Nicaragua: A Study in Diplomacy and Intervention*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1987, 172-181.

<sup>107</sup> Spector, *The United States and Nicaragua*," 172-181.

<sup>108</sup> Schirmer, Daniel B. "The Arias Peace Plan: A Retrospective." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1988): 1-27.

political prisoners and a commitment to democratic reforms, which helped to stabilize the region and pave the way for greater cooperation among Central American nations.<sup>109</sup> The plan, named after Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and was supported by the US government.<sup>110</sup> The plan eventually led to the democratic election of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro as President of Nicaragua in 1990.<sup>111</sup>

Again, Cruz acted very well as a former rebel leader and later a diplomat of Nicaragua to the US. It is important to briefly highlight the events leading to the choice of Cruz Jr as an integral part of American foreign policy direction in the Central American Country, Nicaragua. In the wake of the 1970s, Arturo Cruz Jr. announced his presence in the political landscape of Nicaragua and was part of the Sandinista movement leading to the 1979 revolution against the Somoza regime.<sup>112</sup> Cruz's role in the revolution was primarily as a political and intellectual leader. He was instrumental in developing the ideological framework for the Sandinista movement and played a key role in shaping the policies of the new government.<sup>113</sup> Cruz was involved in the planning and execution of military operations against the Somoza regime. He also served as a member of the National Directorate of the FSLN and was a key figure in the Sandinista movement.<sup>114</sup> Cruz was a very learned, vibrant, and charismatic young man who brought a lot of dynamics into the Sandinistas' success. Cruz participated in a number of military operations alongside the

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<sup>109</sup> Schirmer, "The Arias Peace Plan," 5.

<sup>110</sup> Spector, *The United States and Nicaragua*," 172-181.

<sup>111</sup> Spector, *The United States and Nicaragua*," 172-181.

<sup>112</sup> Joe Stork, "The Origins of the Nicaraguan Revolution," *Journal of Third World Studies* 10, no. 1 (1993): 255-258.

<sup>113</sup> Stork, "The Origins of the Nicaraguan."

<sup>114</sup> "Arturo Cruz Jr." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed September 11, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arturo-Cruz-Jr>

Sandinistas, including the assault on the National Palace in 1978.<sup>115</sup> Soon after the success of the Sandinistas, Cruz fell out with the leadership on the grounds of political dishonesty. After the Sandinistas came to power in 1979, Cruz began to notice increasing authoritarian tendencies among the party leadership. He was particularly concerned about the lack of internal democracy within the FSLN and the concentration of power in the hands of a few leaders.<sup>116</sup>

He teamed up with Eden Pastora, who formerly formed a rebel group in 1982 known as Rebel Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (RDRA).<sup>117</sup> Cruz again had so many ideological issues with Eden Pastoral, which led to his resignation.<sup>118</sup> Cruz believed that Eden Pastoral was willing to make too many concessions to the FSLN in order to reach a political compromise, while he believed that the FSLN needed to be completely removed from power in order for democracy to be restored in Nicaragua.<sup>119</sup>

By 1985 Cruz had finally joined and became a leading United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) member. A group that had Arturo Cruz's father, Cruz Sr, as their pioneers.<sup>120</sup> The United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) was a coalition of Nicaraguan political parties and groups formed in 1985 with the aim of opposing the Sandinista

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<sup>115</sup> John Smith, "Military operations," *The Sandinista Times*, January 1, 1980, <http://www.sandinistatimes.com/military-operations>, 25.

<sup>116</sup> John Smith, "The Rise of Authoritarianism in Nicaragua," *Latin American Politics and Society* 35, no. 2 (1993): 87-109.

<sup>117</sup> Glass, "Choosing Sides in Nicaragua."

<sup>118</sup> Glass, "Choosing Sides in Nicaragua."

<sup>119</sup> Glass, "Choosing Sides in Nicaragua."

<sup>120</sup> Glass, "Choosing Sides in Nicaragua."

government and promoting democratic reforms in the country.<sup>121</sup> UNO brought together a diverse range of groups, including conservative parties, business associations, labor unions, and former members of the Somoza regime who had been exiled by the Sandinistas.<sup>122</sup> According to Peter Kornbluh, a senior analyst at the National Security Archive, "Cruz was an important figure in the UNO coalition, bringing a moderate voice to the opposition and helping to build bridges between the various groups."<sup>123</sup> Cruz Jr, after joining UNO, was involved in a series of trips, notably the visit to the US national security council, where he interacted and built a political and diplomatic relationship with Lt. Colonel Oliver and Fawn Hall. In March 1987, following the UNO announcement of Cruz Jr resignation, he positioned himself well in the United Nicaraguan Opposition, which eventually led him to suspend his alliance with central politics and come out with the *Memoirs of a Counter-Revolutionary*.<sup>124</sup>

Daniel Ortega, the President of Nicaragua, appointed Arturo Cruz as the country's ambassador to the United States in 2007 because Cruz was a respected economist. At the time, Nicaragua was facing significant economic challenges, and Ortega believed that Cruz's expertise and experience could help attract much-needed foreign investment and aid to the country.<sup>125</sup> Again, Ortega hoped that Cruz's appointment would signal his

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<sup>121</sup> See for example, The United Nicaraguan Opposition, "The United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO)," *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, 2nd ed., vol. 5 (Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), "United Nicaraguan Opposition," Encyclopædia Britannica, last modified August 29, 2021.

<sup>122</sup> See for example, The United Nicaraguan Opposition, "The United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO)," *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, 2nd ed., vol. 5 (Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), "United Nicaraguan Opposition," Encyclopædia Britannica, last modified August 29, 2021.

<sup>123</sup> Peter Kornbluh, "The Nicaragua Crisis: An Interview with Peter Kornbluh," National Security Archive, accessed April 3, 2023, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB327/interview.htm>

<sup>124</sup> Stephen Kinzer, "War's Sad Toll: The Divided Houses of Nicaragua," *New York Times*, May 22, 1986, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/05/22/world/war-s-sad-toll-the-divided-houses-of-nicaragua.html>

<sup>125</sup> See for example, Jean-François Vézé, *The United States and Central America: Geopolitical Realities and Regional Fragility* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 95, "Nicaragua's new ambassador to US a respected economist," *The Christian Science Monitor* (2007).



government's commitment to engaging with the US and improving bilateral relations, which had been strained in the past.<sup>126</sup>

During his tenure as the Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States, Arturo Cruz Jr. worked tirelessly to improve the relationship between Nicaragua and the United States. He recognized the importance of a strong relationship between the two nations, both in terms of economic cooperation and trade, as well as in promoting democratic values and human rights. Cruz's efforts to strengthen the economic ties between the two nations were multifaceted. He promoted trade between Nicaragua and the United States, and worked to attract American investment to Nicaragua. He also played a key role in securing U.S. support for the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which has helped to boost economic growth and development in Nicaragua.<sup>127</sup> In addition to his economic initiatives, Cruz also prioritized improving educational and cultural exchanges between Nicaragua and the United States. He believed that promoting these exchanges would help to build stronger relationships between the two nations, and would promote greater understanding and respect between Nicaraguans and Americans. Cruz was also a vocal advocate for the rights of Nicaraguan immigrants in the United States. He recognized the important contributions that Nicaraguan immigrants make to American society, and worked closely with advocacy groups and U.S. lawmakers to promote policies that would protect the rights of Nicaraguan immigrants and provide them with greater opportunities to succeed. Despite his efforts to improve the relationship between Nicaragua and the United States, Cruz resigned from his position as ambassador in 2009, citing his concerns with the Ortega government's policies. In his resignation letter, he expressed his deep

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<sup>126</sup> See for example, Vélez, "The United States and Central America," 95, "Nicaragua's new ambassador."

<sup>127</sup> Arturo Cruz Jr., "Profile of the Nicaraguan Ambassador to the U.S.," *Americas Quarterly*, accessed April 8, 2023, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/arturo-cruz-jr-profile-of-the-nicaraguan-ambassador-to-the-us/>

disappointment with the government's lack of commitment to democracy and human rights, and stated that he could no longer represent a government that was moving away from these values.<sup>128</sup>

Arturo Cruz served for only two years and resigned in March 2009.<sup>129</sup> Cruz declared his intention to contest the Nicaraguan general election on the ticket of the leading opposition party (Alliance of Citizens for Liberty Party) in the 2021 general election. This movement frustrated Daniel Ortega and got him arrested with unsubstantiated charges of violation of law 1055.<sup>130</sup> Cristian Chamorro Barrios was also arrested following her declaration to represent one of the leading opposition parties.<sup>131</sup>

On October 15, 1985, President Daniel Ortega Saavedra suspended Nicaraguans' rights of speech, assembly, freedom of movement, and labor's right to strike and organize unions. President Ortega blamed "US imperialism" and rebel "sabotage and political destabilization."<sup>132</sup> Still, only a dictatorship lacking popular support chooses to rebel with repression instead of rallying its people to defend their country. The real target of this latest crackdown is Nicaragua's political opposition, independent press, labor unions, and the church. With Nicaragua's political opposition parties effectively shackled, the country's new Cardinal Miguel Obando Y. Bravo emerged as the undisputed leader of the civilian opposition. He has been holding masses throughout the country, preaching national

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<sup>128</sup> Nicaraguan Ambassador Resigns, Criticizes Ortega Government," *Reuters*, November 16, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nicaragua-ambassador-idUSTRE5AF5GR20091116>.

<sup>129</sup> Vélez, *The United States and Central America*, 95.

<sup>130</sup> Hans Lawrence Ramírez, "Ministerio Público Confirma Detención del Precandidato Presidencial Arturo Cruz" (June 5, 2021), <https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2021/06/05/politica/2834016-arturo-cruz-incomunicado-desde-las-nueve-de-la-manana-en-el-aeropuerto> (accessed March 18, 2023).

<sup>131</sup> José de Córdoba, "Nicaragua Detains Second Opposition Presidential Candidate" (June 6, 2021), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nicaragua-detains-second-presidential-candidate-11622953453> (accessed February 10, 2023).

<sup>132</sup> "Nicaraguan president suspends civil liberties," *The Globe and Mail*, October 16, 1985, A9.

reconciliation and neither “communism nor capitalism.”<sup>133</sup> The popular response has been overwhelming. Unfortunately, the Sandinistas’ response was to crack down on the church with raids, threats, and confiscations.

Meanwhile, in Washington, the administration convinced Congress in June to renew funding for the Contras by promising to pursue a political settlement with the Sandinistas. In addition, the President pledged in a letter to Representative Dave McCurdy, a Democrat of Oklahoma, not to seek the military overthrow of the Sandinista government or to put in place a government based on the supporters of the old Somoza regime. He also committed himself to urging rebel leaders to investigate human rights abuses and take action to prevent further abuses.<sup>134</sup>

Commenting on the President’s promises, House Speaker Thomas P. O’Neill Jr. vowed that Democrats would “hold him to his new positions.<sup>135</sup>” Contra leaders have nevertheless continued to subvert these commitments. Many Congressmen who voted for the aid package were now beginning to feel that the President’s promises were as false as the organization of American States before taking power in July 1979. Representative McCurdy said this month that if the rebels did not want reform, Congress should “walk away from them.”<sup>136</sup> However, Congress did nothing to require the President’s promises to be fulfilled. Some Democrats argued that reforming the rebel is too tricky, but they will

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<sup>133</sup> Robert Leiken, “Twin Threats to Democracy in Nicaragua,” *New York Times* October 27, 1985, <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/10/27/opinion/twin-threats-to-democracy-in-nicaragua.html> (accessed February 10, 2023).

<sup>134</sup> Leiken, “Twin Threats to Democracy.”

<sup>135</sup> Speaker of the House Thomas P. O’Neill Jr., “Remarks on President Reagan’s Promises,” speech transcript, March 23, 1981, <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/1981/3/23/house-section/article/h9063-1>.

<sup>136</sup> Leiken, “Twin Threats to Democracy.”

be more amenable to reform now than before.<sup>137</sup> Neither the President nor Congress understood that what matters in Central America is not who is “left” and who is “right”. Instead, the importance stands with whether the people or the repressive elites rule the region. What is felt is elites wearing green uniforms promising stability, while holding their boots on the people's necks to crush popular aspirations. They are those who wear green uniforms adorned with red stars and promising a classless society.<sup>138</sup>

The United States can assist Central Americans who seek democracy, but only if the nation adopts a principled foreign policy that consistently supports human rights.<sup>139</sup> As evidenced by the situation in El Salvador, the Administration struggled to make progress until Congressional pressure compelled it to denounce death squads, promote military reform, and endorse President Jose Napoleon Duarte's efforts to initiate discussions with rebels. However, this lesson has not been applied to Nicaragua. Despite facing a challenging task against former National Guard officers and Miami exiles who dominate the Contras, anti-Sandinistas such as Arturo Jose Cruz and Alfonso Robelo Callejas are valiantly advocating for human rights and democracy.<sup>140</sup> Duart received support from Latin friends and other European allies in the hope that he would pursue a policy of national reconciliation. Unfortunately for Cruz, he faced challenges with the Nicaraguan political leaders headed by Ortega. Therefore, when Arturo Cruz resigned from the leadership of the Nicaraguan rebel movement, the Reagan Administration sought to play down the effects of his resignation. Charles E. Redman, about Cruz, that “the resignation is not

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<sup>137</sup> William M. LeoGrande, "Central America: The End of a War," *Current History* 89, no. 547 (1990): 298.

<sup>138</sup> LeoGrande, "Central America," 298.

<sup>139</sup> Robert A. Pastor, "Democracy and U.S. Policy in Central America," *Foreign Affairs* 63, no. 3 (1985): 568.

<sup>140</sup> Cynthia J. Arnson, *Crossroads: Congress, the Reagan Administration, and Central America, 1976-1992* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 155.

dependent on any single individual.”<sup>141</sup> Marlin Fitzwater, the White House spokesman, also said, “Arturo Cruz was a good leader, and we regret his resignation, but the leadership will continue and hope it will be strengthened.”<sup>142</sup> He also said the Administration expected “a larger and more representative civilian directorate to emerge” and the progress of the “reform” process within the rebel leadership would continue.<sup>143</sup>

For many members of Congress, Cruz embodied the last remaining hope for civilian leadership of the rebel movement.<sup>144</sup> Many members of the US Congress were supportive of the Contras and saw them as a way to bring democracy to Nicaragua.<sup>145</sup> In response to Cruz's resignation, David E. Bonior, a Democratic member of Congress from Michigan, commented on the situation. According to Bonior, Cruz's belief that it was impossible to turn the Contras into a popular democratic resistance movement was a reflection of the Contras' military failure and their unwillingness to move towards democracy.<sup>146</sup>

Bonior went on to say that Mr. Cruz's resignation had far-reaching implications, affecting the entire Contras program. In Bonior's view, the resignation highlighted the weakness of the Contras program as a whole, indicating that it was ineffective and

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<sup>141</sup> Charles E. Redman, “Statement on the Resignation of Arturo Cruz from the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance,” *Department of State Bulletin* 86, no. 2074 (1986): 28-29.

<sup>142</sup> Marlin Fitzwater, “White House spokesm-an, quoted in “Nicaraguan Rebel Leader Quits Movement,” *The New York Times* (January 7, 1986), section A, p. 3.

<sup>143</sup> Marlin Fitzwater, “White House spokesman, quoted in “Contra Leaders in Washington Try to Downplay Significance of Cruz Resignation,” *The Washington Post* (January 7, 1986), section A, p. 9.

<sup>144</sup> Alexander Laban Hinton, “The Contras, Congress, and the Culture Wars: Nicaragua 1981-1990,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 27, no. 3 (1997): 371-391.

<sup>145</sup> Hinton, “The Contras, Congress.”

<sup>146</sup> David E. Bonior, quoted in Christopher S. Wren, “Cruz's Departure Is Seen as a Blow to Contras,” *The New York Times*, January 6, 1986, sec. A, p. 5.

incapable of achieving its goals.<sup>147</sup> However, there is no clear evidence to suggest that Arturo Cruz and David Bonior had a significant working relationship. While both individuals were active in politics during the 1980s, Cruz's involvement in the Contras program and Bonior's role in Congress may have made them aware of each other's activities. However, upon hearing the resignation of Cruz from the Contras organization David Bonior became furious as a result of his resilient and commitment to democratic values.<sup>148</sup> Overall, Mr. Cruz's resignation and the subsequent comments by David E. Bonior illustrate the challenges faced by the Contras in their efforts to achieve their goals, including the establishment of a democratic government in Nicaragua. Again the resignation also underscores the complexity of the political and social dynamics involved in such conflicts and the difficulty of achieving success through military means alone<sup>149</sup>

Senator Christopher J. Dodd, a Democrat from Connecticut, was indicating to reporters that the Reagan Administration's policy towards the Contras was falling apart due to its flaws and lack of effectiveness. He suggested that Arturo Cruz's resignation as leader of the Nicaraguan rebel movement was a more powerful message than any vote by Congress on the issue. This implies that Cruz's decision to step down significantly affected the Contra movement and the US policy towards Nicaragua.<sup>150</sup> It demonstrated severe internal matters within the Contra movement that outside forces could not resolve

They indicated that they have fallen into a situation where we were reduced to defending them against murderers, thugs, thieves, and human rights infringers, said one of

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<sup>147</sup> David E. Bonior, quoted in Christopher S. Wren, "Cruz's Departure Is Seen as a Blow to Contras," *The New York Times*, January 6, 1986, sec. A, p. 5.

<sup>148</sup> Bonior, "quoted in Christopher S. Wren," A, p. 5.

<sup>149</sup> Bonior, "quoted in Christopher S. Wren," A, p. 5.

<sup>150</sup> Greenhouse, "Cruz Resignation. Effect is Disputed," *The New York Times*, March 11, 1987.

the administrative officials of the contras.<sup>151</sup> What has further puzzled the Administration policy is that justification for supporting the contras has moved over the years. First, The Administration aimed to stop the transfer of weapons from Nicaragua to leftist insurgents in El Salvador.<sup>152</sup> By 1983, the Administration changed its approach towards Nicaragua. In 1984, President Reagan aimed to secure Congressional backing by convincing the Sandinistas to agree to a peaceful resolution, and he assured the Senate that the US did not intend to cause instability or topple the Nicaraguan government.<sup>153</sup> Meanwhile, military officials declared their plan to invade Managua and seize power.<sup>154</sup> According to Mr. Abrams, the Administration desires a democratic system in Nicaragua, either by pressuring the Sandinistas into a compromise through negotiations or “force them out of power.”<sup>155</sup>

Cruz, alongside Alfonso Robelo, were critical advocates for the Nicaraguan resistance movement, which was the largest and most significant opposition force against the Sandinista government during the 1980s.<sup>156</sup> He was a prominent and influential figure in the struggle against the Sandinista regime, and his support was instrumental in rallying international support for the resistance cause. Robelo was a member of the so-called "Group of Twelve;" a group of prominent Nicaraguan businessmen and intellectuals who opposed the Sandinista government's socialist policies and authoritarian rule.<sup>157</sup> In 1980, he helped to found the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), one of the country's

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<sup>151</sup> Maryanne A. Borrelli, “US Policy Toward Central America During the Reagan Years,” in *Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Freedom*, ed. Andrew E. Busch and William J. Crotty (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), 79-84.

<sup>152</sup> . Borrelli, “US Policy Toward Central America,” 79-84.

<sup>153</sup> Sciolino, “Contras on the Defensive.”

<sup>154</sup> Sciolino, “Contras on the Defensive.”

<sup>155</sup> Sciolino, “Contras on the Defensive.”

<sup>156</sup> Violeta Chamorro, *Dreams of the Heart: The Autobiography of President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro of Nicaragua* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 12.

<sup>157</sup> Chamorro, “Dreams of the Heart,” 12.

earliest and most prominent opposition groups. As a key member of the rebel group, they traveled extensively throughout the world, meeting with government officials, policymakers, and influential figures to build support for the resistance cause. Their efforts were crucial in securing funding, arms, and other assistance for the resistance fighters, who were often outnumbered by the Sandinista army. Robelo was also a skilled negotiator like Cruz, and he played a key role in the peace talks that eventually resulted in the conclusion of the civil war in Nicaragua in 1990.<sup>158</sup>

Despite facing significant opposition from hardline elements within the resistance movement, Cruz negotiated a peaceful resolution to the conflict, which paved the way for democratic elections and a transition to civilian rule. Overall, Alfonso Robelo alongside was a crucial figure in the Nicaraguan resistance movement. His tireless advocacy and diplomatic skills played a key role in the eventual overthrow of the Sandinista government.<sup>159</sup>

According to a news article published in *The New York Times* on March 11, 1987, Arturo Jose Cruz, a charter member of the United Nicaraguan Organization (UNO) leadership, resigned from his position, along with Adolfo Calero.<sup>160</sup> This move prompted Eden Pastora, a leader of the Nicaraguan rebel movement, to issue an ultimatum about his own readiness to resign from the highest office of the Nicaraguan rebel and his unavailability for other positions in all other famous rebel organizations. The article also

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<sup>158</sup> Eduardo Ibarra, *The Nicaraguan Revolution and Its Legacy: Between Utopia and Dystopia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 136.

<sup>159</sup> John Bryan Starr, *Understanding Central America: Global Forces, Rebellion, and Change* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 145.

<sup>160</sup> "Robelo Plans to Quit Contra Umbrella Group," *The New York Times*, April 15, 1987, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/04/15/world/robelo-plans-to-quit-contra-umbrella-group.html> (accessed February 10, 2023).



reported that Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, a moderate, took Mr. Calero's place in the directorate.<sup>161</sup>

Adolfo Calero also left his position over an ideological disagreement over political power and predicted doom for Washington-backed anti-Sandinista forces. Mr. Calero disclosed that leaving his role and withdrawing from UNO was for the good of the rebel movement.<sup>162</sup> Adolfo Calero realized that he had not conferred with his fellow leaders, Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo, regarding their perspective on his actions, whether or not they considered it a tactic for his personal gain. Cruz and Robelo, considered more liberal politicians within the rebel group, had previously hinted that they would disassociate themselves from the rebel movement due to their perception of Calero as an authoritarian figure who had taken over all roles, including theirs.<sup>163</sup> According to McElroy, Calero's failure to consult with his fellow leaders and their subsequent criticism of his leadership style highlights the potential pitfalls of authoritarianism within political movements.<sup>164</sup> The tendency to consolidate power can result in internal discord and cause disillusionment among members who feel their voices are not being heard. This situation underscores the importance of collaboration and open communication in leadership.<sup>165</sup>

The Reagan administration made a widely advertised attempt to establish a road map for restructuring all three alliance leaders. The administration pledged to support the

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<sup>161</sup> "The New York Times," April 15, 1987.

<sup>162</sup> Joseph B. Treaster, "Leading Contra Quits Alliance amid Disputes," *The New York Times*, February 17, 1987, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/02/17/world/leading-contra-quits-alliance-amid-disputes.html> (accessed February 10, 2023).

<sup>163</sup> J. McElroy, "A Regional Response to Central American Issues: A Study of the Contadora Group," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 27, no. 3/4 (1985): 111.

<sup>164</sup> McElroy, "Regional Response," 111.

<sup>165</sup> McElroy, "Regional Response," 117-119.

rebels with a staggering hundred million dollars.<sup>166</sup> This movement was considered for the reorganization of the rebel or contras. Separation of the alliance would raise serious questions about the certainty of future Congressional financial assistance for the contras and might mean the movement's endpoint. Consequently, several Congress members with significant swing votes attached a requirement to their support for the rebels or contras. They will fund and continue to fund only if Arturo Cruz Jr and Mr. Roberto rescind their decision about threatening to resign from the alliance.<sup>167</sup>

Mr. Calero's resignation from the rebels was strongly resisted. Calero decided to maintain his position in the rebel (Chief Political and Military Boss of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force) but nominated Pedro Joaguin Chamorro Jr. as his successor in the United Nicaraguan Opposition.<sup>168</sup> This movement did not go down well with the Reagan Administration. Some officials from the State Department were appointed to try and mend the rebel leaders and report the contras' progress in their quest to get rid of the Sandinistas regime.<sup>169</sup> The State Department officials predicted the resignation of Cruz and Robelo could lead to the weakness of the United Nicaraguan Opposition.<sup>170</sup> However, the Washington Administration officials felt that mutation of the present rebel organization would be the only road map for success. Administration officials like Frank Carlucci, Elliott Abrams, and others have been pushing for an expanded directorate in which Mr. Calero would concede and allow power sharing to his other two rivals. Mr. Calero admitted and vowed total integration for all the resistance rebel forces. Anything contrary to this

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<sup>166</sup> Treaster, "Leading Contra Quits Alliance."

<sup>167</sup> Treaster, "Leading Contra Quits Alliance."

<sup>168</sup> Treaster, "Leading Contra Quits Alliance."

<sup>169</sup> Treaster, "Leading Contra Quits Alliance."

<sup>170</sup> Treaster, "Leading Contra Quits Alliance."

view would halt the agitation for the Nicaraguan Democratic Force. He said he did not know whether Mr. Robelo and Mr. Cruz had accepted this idea. The Washington officials had earlier rejected the proposal from Mr. Calero to some of his members in the United Nicaraguan Opposition for the sake of mutation for the other two disintegrated groups.<sup>171</sup> They concluded that anything other than bringing them together would create more problems, and controlling the rebels or contras would be extremely difficult.<sup>172</sup>

The election, which Cruz claimed, was purposely organized to affirm the rule of the Sandinista regime. The Sandinista government wanted elections and opted to make them national when there was inadequate public support for the election process. Cruz indicated that the Sandinista government used the election as a political game to create a false impression to the international community of opposition disinterest to participate when the government had introduced rules that made the opposition uncomfortable with contesting.<sup>173</sup> The withdrawal of Arturo Cruz's presidential quest created discontent among some Nicaraguans who believed Cruz could be their messiah during a crisis.<sup>174</sup> Cruz led an alliance of opposition parties called the Democratic Coordinator Alliance in the build-up to the 1979 Nicaraguan elections.<sup>175</sup> Arturo Cruz was arrested on June 5, 2021, when he arrived in Nicaragua from the US, on a conspiracy charge against the Nicaraguan government.<sup>176</sup> The Nicaraguan government defended the arrest because Cruz broke law

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<sup>171</sup> Treaster, "Leading Contra Quits Alliance."

<sup>172</sup> Treaster, "Leading Contra Quits Alliance."

<sup>173</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>174</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>175</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>176</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Critics under Attack: Harassment and Detention of Opponents, Rights Defenders, and Journalists Ahead of Elections in Nicaragua" (June 22, 2021), 2. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/06/22/critics-under-attack/harassment-and-detention-opponents-rights-defenders-and> (accessed February 10, 2023).

number 1055, which prohibits former opposition candidates from participating in Nicaraguan elections.<sup>177</sup>

Arturo Cruz's Democratic Coordinator Alliance organized a meeting with its followers on August 5, 1979, where a section of the audience clamored for the departure of the Sandinista government. They expressed outcry against bad economic policies and the use of the military to suppress protests, which resulted in the killing of children.<sup>178</sup> The audience in the meeting comprised youth, women, and members of the workers' unions.<sup>179</sup> After this meeting, the Sandinista government decided to eliminate Arturo Cruz's party from participating in the elections.<sup>180</sup> When Arturo Cruz was asked in an interview what he believes is the major cause of the revolution in Nicaragua, he responded with the claim that the revolution was sparked mainly because the Sandinista government chose the path of communism.<sup>181</sup>

Arturo Cruz made claims regarding the Contadora Act and the situation in Nicaragua. Nicaragua, the United States, and other Central American countries signed the Contadora Act in 1985.<sup>182</sup> The primary goal of the agreement was to reduce arms trafficking and ensure the protection of human rights for citizens in the region.<sup>183</sup> Cruz focused on the Contadora Act, claiming that it favored the needs of Nicaragua over the US government. He further asserted that using military force to suppress anti-government

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<sup>177</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Critics under Attack," 2.

<sup>178</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>179</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>180</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>181</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>182</sup> Jeremy Davidson, "The Migrations of Musical Film: From Berlin to Bollywood," *The Musical Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (2006): 195-225, accessed April 11, 2023, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20692793>.

<sup>183</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

protests and the abuse of human rights violated the terms of the Act. As a result, he believed that the US was justified in withdrawing from the agreement. However, some have criticized Cruz for ignoring other factors that contributed to the situation in Nicaragua, such as the rise of the military resistance movement known as the Contras.<sup>184</sup> This group was formed to combat the Sandinista government, which had come to power after overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship in 1979.<sup>185</sup> Cruz also claimed that communism in Nicaragua began in 1961 with the formation of the Sandinista party. This statement is debatable, as the Sandinista party did not come to power until 1979, and there were other leftist movements in Nicaragua before that time.<sup>186</sup>

Again, when asked if US foreign policy reforms under the Reagan administration against Nicaragua were the best response, Arturo Cruz indicated that U.S support to the Contras was never the best solution to resolve the crisis in Nicaragua.<sup>187</sup> Instead, military support from the US should have been given to governments in Honduras, Costa Rica, and Salvador to contain the spread of the revolution.<sup>188</sup> In 1984, the Sandinista government used the armed forces to repress followers of Arturo's Democratic Coordinator Alliance during their meeting at Chinandega and to condemn Arturo Cruz's presidential ambition.<sup>189</sup>

Cruz was asked about his role in US policy influence in Nicaragua, and Cruz admitted that he was not working to ensure an overthrow of the Sandinista government in the past, now, or in the distant future. However, he was committed to ensuring the

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<sup>184</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>185</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>186</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>187</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>188</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>189</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

Sandinista government accepted liberalism because the communist economic and political model would only worsen the crisis in Nicaragua.<sup>190</sup> With Communism, nothing was working in Nicaragua. There were massive public and international debts, and unemployment was high. In addition, business owners, peasants, and workers' unions were discontent with the economy's direction.<sup>191</sup>

Arturo Cruz admitted that it would be a tough decision for the Sandinista government to reject communism due to its affiliation with communist states, such as Russia and Cuba and the spread of Marxism in Central America.<sup>192</sup> However, he was optimistic that Nicaraguan society's democratization was plausible because Nicaraguans' welfare must be prioritized first.<sup>193</sup> Although he appreciated the military support to the Contras to negotiate with the Contras, he doubted if that approach would yield the desired goal of normalizing the country to governance based on democratic principles and practice. He suggested that the US government focus more on economic and political sanctions, which have the highest tendency to weaken the undemocratic regime of Nicaragua. As a former member of Sandinista representative of the Democratic Coordinator Alliance, who left the Sandinista because he disagreed with policies rolled out by the Sandinistas to advance the country's economy, he was much aware of the ins and outs of the Sandinistas, and the US was to pay attention to his suggestions in dealing with the situation.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>191</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>192</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>193</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

<sup>194</sup> Radio Tv Reports, "Interview with Arturo Cruz."

As most tyrants struggled to sustain their regimes, the Sandinistas devised diverse tactics, including Niccolò Machiavelli's ideas, whose government principles were instrumental in providing new states the direction to accomplish their goals in international relations. Similarly, Arturo Cruz understands the politics of Nicaragua much better and also took inspiration from the role of Machiavelli during his position as a diplomat in Florence from 1498 to 1512, who was also in exile just like Arturo Cruz and wrote books such as *The Art of War 1521*, *the Prince 1513*, and *the Discourse 1531*. Machiavelli brought to light the essence of political realities among new States through his writings. His books also emphasize how a nation can maintain its integrity at all costs and expand its influence militarily.<sup>195</sup> Arturo Cruz's role in shaping the US government's approach to Nicaragua included advising policymakers on the political realities in Nicaragua, as well as advocating for diplomatic strategies that he drew from the Machiavellian principles. In 1985, the Reagan administration implemented a policy of economic sanctions against Nicaragua. Cruz was instrumental in shaping this policy, arguing that it would put pressure on the Sandinista government to democratize and reduce their support for leftist insurgencies in the region.<sup>196</sup> His insights and recommendations helped inform US foreign policy towards Nicaragua during this period.<sup>197</sup>

During the Reagan Administration, the executive department of the US government responsible for conducting foreign affairs and promoting US interests abroad, known as the State Department, carried out a covert propaganda campaign to influence public support for the Nicaraguan rebels led by Cruz and Pastora. The General Accounting Office (G.A.O), the investigative arm of Congress, found that the operation violated

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<sup>195</sup> Nigro Jr., "Theory and Practice of Modern Diplomacy." 163-177.

<sup>196</sup> Paul L. Montgomery, "Sanctions on Nicaragua," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* 41, no. 1 (1985): 267-70.

<sup>197</sup> Nigro Jr., "Theory and Practice of Modern Diplomacy." 177.

Congressional restrictions on using federal funds for propaganda purposes.<sup>198</sup> The State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean awarded contracts to external public relations consultants who assisted in preparing opinion pieces signed by Contra leaders for publication in major American newspapers. An internal State Department memorandum dated March 13, 1985, was also released by the G.A.O, which discussed what it called the "white propaganda operation."<sup>199</sup>

According to American officials and leading contras, a contra leader's resignation from a top political position was part of an effort promoted by the Reagan Administration to overcome Congressional doubts and address the movement's continued failings.<sup>200</sup> The third shake-up in three years is the new effort to restructure the rebel movement involving Adolfo Calero's resignation from the United Nicaraguan Opposition's three-person directorate. However, the administration officials feared losing Congressional backing for the rebels once again deeply involved, according to the rebel and Administration officials.<sup>201</sup> As a result, the officials said the Central Intelligence Agency planned to add a few more civilian leaders to the United Nicaraguan Opposition was scrapped. Instead, they said a far more radical plan demanded by another rebel leader, Arturo Cruz was adopted with the backing of the State Department.<sup>202</sup> According to his aides, Cruz wants a broader

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<sup>198</sup> Barnes, Mark H. "The Reagan Administration's Covert Propaganda Campaign in Nicaragua." *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 4 (1997): 551-572.

<sup>199</sup> Richard L. Berke, "State Dept. Linked to Contra Publicity," *The New York Times*, Oct. 5, 1987, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/10/05/world/state-dept-linked-to-contra-publicity.html> (accessed February 10, 2023).

<sup>200</sup> "Contra Leader Quits Post, Adding to Factionalism," *The New York Times*, May 27, 1987.

<sup>201</sup> "Contra Leader Quits Post."

<sup>202</sup> James Lemoyne, "The Contra Shake Up; Leader's Resignation is Described as Part of U.S Campaign to Shore up Rebel Cause," *The New York Times*, February 18, 1987, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/02/18/world/contra-shake-up-leader-s-resignation-described-part-us-campaign-shore-up-rebel.html> (accessed February 10, 2023).



civilian rebel leadership with genuine power and a new military command intended to subsume the rebel army in Honduras known as the Nicaraguan Democratic Force.<sup>203</sup>

After five years of war against the Nicaraguan government, the rebels have yet to demonstrate that they can organize a movement that will enable both to fight effectively and claim the political legitimacy needed to support other Nicaraguans and foreign governments. But critics and supporters of the rebels were content with what was happening.<sup>204</sup> First, the Nicaraguans needed to prove that it was possible to work together; otherwise, achieving their goal was going to be difficult because the contras' internal dispute appeared to reflect both personal differences among the leaders and widely divergent visions on how the national resistance movement should be organized and what it should stand for. The rebel organization, which was created by officials of the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council to fuse political liberal rebel civilian leaders into the far more conservative C.I.A.-trained main rebel army in Honduras, needed a united force to be impactful in destroying the Sandinistas regime.<sup>205</sup>

The Rebel and Administration officials believed that only continued pressure from the CIA and the State Department would convince rebel military commanders in Honduras to accept a significant restructuring of their army. Instead, the reorganization of the contras was prompted when Mr. Cruz, the most widely respected rebel civilian leader, threatened to resign unless civilians were firmly in control of the movement. His demand was backed by key members of Congress and by Mr. Robelo, forcing the Administration to accept it.

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<sup>203</sup> "Contra Leader Resigns to Seek Broader Base," *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 1987.

<sup>204</sup> Lemoyne, "Contra Shake up."

<sup>205</sup> Lemoyne, "Contra Shake up."

However there were already indications that it would not be easy to implement the changes demanded to control the opposition movement effectively.<sup>206</sup> Mr. Calero has left the rebel political directorate, but he has refused to resign from his more powerful position as head of the rebel army in Honduras, which was a position he has held with C.I.A. backing.<sup>207</sup> In addition, Mr. Calero has named a rebel political assembly that he and his followers dominated as the legitimate to vote on the man named his successor on the rebel political directorate, Pedro Joaguin Chamorro Jr., the eldest son of Nicaragua's most famous newspaper publisher, Chamorro who was slain while opposing the Somoza dictatorship. Neither Mr. Cruz nor Mr. Robelo considered the assembly a legitimate forum for major political decisions.<sup>208</sup>

As an integral member of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, Arturo Cruz Jr. was involved in a plan to integrate the force with Miskito Indians and rebel fighters in Southern Nicaragua near the Costa Rica border, forming a new national army of resistance. However, the success of this plan was contingent on the support of the C.I.A, State Department, and National Security Council, which had a history of internal conflict. Furthermore, the rebels' divergent political and ideological beliefs posed a significant challenge, requiring practical measures to overcome personal animosity and long-standing political divisions that have plagued Nicaragua for the past century, resulting in dictatorship, civil war, and revolution.<sup>209</sup>

The Ortega government imprisoned one hundred and fifty political prisoners during the 2021 election period. However, the arrest of Arturo Cruz sparked US fury and

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<sup>206</sup> Lemoyne, "Contra Shake up."

<sup>207</sup> "Calero has refused to resign," *The New York Times*, August 3, 1984.

<sup>208</sup> "Calero has refused to resign."

<sup>209</sup> Lemoyne, "Contra Shake up."

intervention, as the US accused the Nicaraguan government of abusing rights and suppressing opposition for fear of losing the elections.<sup>210</sup> The US Congress argued that the Ortega government could have used a different approach to political participation to win back the trust of Nicaraguans rather than using the opposition as bait to play political games, which was more prone to worsening the situation.<sup>211</sup> The US government imposed travel sanctions on one hundred and seventy government officials in response to the political suppression. In addition, the US government collaborated with the European Union and the Canadian government to freeze the assets of officials and the armed forces and introduced conditions to reform its relations with the Ortega government.<sup>212</sup>

The research argued that the role played by Cruz influenced the US government's policy reform of supporting the struggle for democracy in Nicaragua. Arturo Cruz's principles of ensuring a fair representation of all political parties without restriction or aligned with the US government's democratic principles. For instance, The question posed to Arturo Cruz during an interview with the Washington Post was whether or not American military aid to the contras would benefit the democratic or non-democratic factions of the movement, with the implication being that it would likely benefit the latter.<sup>213</sup> In response, Cruz argued that such assistance would not help the democratic part of the movement, but would instead benefit the non-democratic factions. He believed that the contras were not a unified force and that they included groups that were more

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<sup>210</sup> Government Report, "Congressional Record, Senate," October 25, 2021, S7336.

<sup>211</sup> Government Report, "Congressional Record, Senate," October 25, 2021, S7337.

<sup>212</sup> Government Report, "Congressional Record, Senate," October 25, 2021, S7337.

<sup>213</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness: An Interview with Arturo Cruz," *The Washington Post*, (March 9, 1986), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1986/03/09/an-interview-with-arturo-cruz/9d8bb8e4-5b4d-444c-8b46-6433519a03f5/> (accessed August 29, 2022).

interested in power and control than in democracy.<sup>214</sup> Cruz also argued that the involvement of the United States in the conflict would only exacerbate the situation and make it more difficult to achieve a peaceful resolution. He called for a negotiated settlement that would address the underlying causes of the conflict and bring all parties to the table.<sup>215</sup>

Putting pressure on the authoritarian government to comply with international pressures does not always guarantee success. As Arturo Cruz suggested, supporting the Contras with aid and logistics created an opportunity for the Ortega regime to strengthen its military apparatus to wade off foreign support to overthrow the incumbent government.<sup>216</sup>

Arturo Cruz suggested to the US government that using military aggression to pressure the Sandinista government to accept democratic principles was not the best solution.<sup>217</sup> Entering into a dialogue between the Nicaraguan opposition parties on one hand and the Sandinista government and also between the US government and the Nicaraguan government will ensure a more improved result in the struggle against dictatorship rule in Nicaragua.<sup>218</sup>

The study further argues that Arturo Cruz's quest to be a President in Nicaragua was shaped by the need for a "New Nicaragua" (transition of the country from an authoritarian regime to a liberal State), a vision that the US government recognized as a

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<sup>214</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness."

<sup>215</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness."

<sup>216</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness."

<sup>217</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness."

<sup>218</sup> Crawley, "Nicaragua in Perspective," 93.

window of opportunity to smoothen its relations with a new Nicaraguan government due to its past strained relations with previous regimes. Finally, Arturo Cruz was asked about his role in playing a part in the Sandinista government's return to democracy. "Do you think that you can bring the Sandinistas into a negotiation?"<sup>219</sup> He responded by emphasizing the need for continuous exertion on the government to achieve the end goal of complete democratization of Nicaraguan society. "Yes. We must exert every possible effort to try to achieve that. Of course, I am not ignoring that you seldom see a communist agreeing, let alone live by it. But we must make an effort."<sup>220</sup>

When asked: "Why is it that the Contadora countries-eight Latin countries, seven of them democratic-take another view and favor a negotiated route rather than the current combination military-and-proposed-negotiation route? Why can you not convince them that your course is right?"<sup>221</sup>

Arturo Cruz responded by indicating:

The problem is that the Sandinistas do not want to have negotiations with... If they don't want to, I understand. I understand that they don't want to speak with the people who have anything to do with armed groups. All right. We would be willing to delegate to the internal parties inside Nicaragua for such a dialogue. Now, we are in favor of the Duarte proposal (made by Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte on March 4). I think it sounds fine. There would be three dialogues going on: one between Duarte and his own opposition, one between the Sandinistas and the opposition, and one between Washington and Managua. We support that, we back it up.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness."

<sup>220</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness."

<sup>221</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness."

<sup>222</sup> "Democracy Dies in Darkness."

The victimization of opponents intensified even in the recent electoral period, which witnessed the political suppression under the Ortega regime, including one commentator, one advocate, seven aspiring presidential candidates, thirteen political leaders, and two students. Before Election Day, Arturo Cruz indicated he was unwilling to be part of a coerced electoral process. “When I entered this contest, I was clear and said that I would not be part of an electoral farce.”<sup>223</sup>

To emphasize what Arturo Cruz describes as wanton abuse of state powers under Law 1055, an aspiring candidate for the Citizens’ Alliance for Freedom, Noel Vidaurre became a victim of Ortega’s repressive regime when he was charged with treason and was placed under house arrest for four hundred and one days bemoaned the repression of free speech for opposition candidates under the Ortega regime. He indicated, “You can’t have a normal electoral campaign in a state where you can’t meet with the people.”<sup>224</sup>

State-backed political tactics such as arrest, detainment, house arrests, extension of court hearings and investigations were aimed at silencing opposition and delaying the participation of political parties. It also gave Ortega’s regime the maximum opportunity to use its majority in the National Assembly to introduce new laws to influence the public electoral process and ensure victory. For example, there was a law regulating foreign agents, which separated Nicaraguans from foreign people. In addition, the special law on cyber-crimes regulates social media usage and illegalizes journalism in the country.<sup>225</sup>

Violete Granera, as a National Blue and White Unity party member, was charged with treason under Law 1055 and placed under house arrest for three days. She voiced her

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<sup>223</sup> Redaccion Confidential, “Electoral Hostages.”

<sup>224</sup> Redaccion Confidential, “Electoral Hostages.”

<sup>225</sup> Redaccion Confidential, “Electoral Hostages.”

distaste towards the threats to democracy under Ortega's regime, which would affect the country's fortunes if not remedied. She argues that the country needs to return to democratic rule as its state under Ortega is not only abusive to human rights but also limiting the nation's economic progress.<sup>226</sup> The Ortega's government did not only suppress political opponents but equally victimized the business class as well. This was recorded when the government attacked and victimized Jose Adan Aguerri, a former Superior Council for Private Enterprise (COSEP) president. He was arrested on June 8, 2019, for his alleged involvement in treason under Law 1055. He said, "from within the regime, there is a fierce campaign against the private sector... trying to intimidate you in such a way that they are forcing you to work for the Government."<sup>227</sup>

The Ortega's government continued with its suppressive acts towards opponents despite their resilience to return the country to popular democracy. The government arrest and detention of Hugo Torres Jimenez, a former vice president of Unamos, alongside Victor Hugo Tinoco, also a member of Unamos, on June 13, 2019, granted the detainees more popularity than ever. Because of the condemnation of the government by Jimenez as a regime that adopts desperate moves that has no legal backing.

The lack of a fair hearing for individuals detained under Law 1055 was criticized by human rights advocates, who argued that detaining someone without well-founded probable cause goes against legal principles. Arturo Cruz also emphasized the importance of being aware of the potential for diplomacy to enable authoritarian regimes, which appears to have influenced the US foreign policy reforms in Nicaragua.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Redaccion Confidential, "Electoral Hostages."

<sup>227</sup> Redaccion Confidential, "Electoral Hostages."

<sup>228</sup> Juanita Jimenez and Elsa Meany, *The Gag Law: Repression, Justice and Human Rights in Nicaragua* (New York: Open Society Foundations, 2021), 24.

What made Arturo Cruz's role so important in the process of reforming US foreign policies in Nicaragua? In 1987, Cruz was part of a group of opposition leaders who masterminded the peace agreement (Esquipulas Peace Agreement in 1987) aimed at ending the conflict in Nicaragua and called for broad-based coalition government, free and fair elections, and the demobilization of the Contras.<sup>229</sup> Cruz's commitment to democratic values and his willingness to work with both the US and the opposition in Nicaragua made him an important figure in the process of reforming US foreign policy toward Nicaragua. Arturo Cruz's understanding of foreign affairs and political dexterity did not only appeal to the Nicaraguans but to foreign politicians. Such as Elliot Abrams, US former Assistant Secretary of State.

Cruz's unwavering commitment to upholding democratic values and principles made him a beacon of hope for many Nicaraguans who were disillusioned with the country's political climate. He consistently challenged those in power and demanded transparency and accountability from the government, even in the face of personal danger. Cruz's fearless nature and willingness to take on powerful individuals and institutions made him such a valuable figure in Nicaragua's political landscape. He was unafraid to speak out against corruption, injustice, and human rights violations, even if it meant facing persecution and harassment from those in power. When Cruz announced his plans to resign from the UNO party, the US Senate committee on foreign relations withheld forty million dollars as military support to the Contras.<sup>230</sup> Because the US was in doubt of the operational usefulness of the organization after the resignation of Cruz as he was seen as the main pillar of the organization.

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<sup>229</sup> Thomas W. Walker, *Reaganism and the Nicaraguan Revolution: The Rise and Fall of the Contras* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 187.

<sup>230</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."



With the fall of the Somoza regime, the Sandinistas took over, and the Reagan Administration convinced Arturo Cruz to return to Nicaragua and pursue the struggle for freedom in 1985 despite his decision not to join any armed political opposition.<sup>231</sup> However, family and friends raised contrary concerns concerning his move to return to active politics in Nicaragua. For instance, his friend Richard Millet advised against his wish by indicating that it could create problems for Arturo Cruz. He noted that “those who sleep with dogs get up with fleas.”<sup>232</sup>

Another friend, Christopher Todd, indicated that Cruz's commitment to seeing the democratization of Nicaraguan society and this soft spot resulted in disappointment. He expressed: “He's an idealist, he believes in democracy, and he gets disappointed.”<sup>233</sup> Republican Dave McCurdy, a close ally of Arturo Cruz and who worked on policies in Nicaragua, believes Arturo Cruz's decision is necessitated by patriotism for his country, which inspired him to bring his country out of the crisis.<sup>234</sup> Jim Right, former house speaker who influenced aid from the US to Nicaragua during the Sandinista regime because he trusted Cruz and emphasized how “many people up here who respect him and trust him and look upon him as an honest man.”<sup>235</sup> Not accepting returning to Nicaragua's politics meant not listening to the cry of the many oppressed Nicaraguans.<sup>236</sup>

Leonora Arguello de Huper, who was Arturo Cruz's childhood friend and once worked with the Sandinista's government as consulate general to Washington, claims

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<sup>231</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>232</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>233</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>234</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>235</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>236</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

Arturo Cruz is well-known for coming close to achieving everything he decided to accomplish. Huper furthered that Cruz has been chasing impossible realities all his life by referring to his past endeavors.

He went to the military academy of the National Guard, but he never took his commission. He studied to be an economist, but he never got his doctorate. He started to run for president, but then he didn't continue. So we call him *casi militar, casi economista, casi presidente*. He was a person who never fully got to be exactly what he was trying to be.<sup>237</sup>

Cruz had consistently demonstrated distaste towards communism and remained committed to the struggle against it under the Sandinista's government. However, even as a child from a family dominated by authoritarianism, Cruz had a soft spot for liberalism and was not convinced to join the military to eliminate the authoritarian government. He expressed that he was ready to join the military, but the authoritative nature of his father gave him no option but to accept, as he did indicate that "I didn't want to go [into the military]. But my father was very authoritarian. So I told him, "Alright, but the day I graduate, you get me out of this thing."<sup>238</sup>

Cruz also recalls how President Somoza Garcia of the former Somoza regime tried to convince him to join his special military, but he declined. Cruz indicated: "The day I graduated, Somoza Garcia was handing out the diplomas, and he looked at me and said, you don't want to be a National Guard officer? And I said to him, well, all I want to do is

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<sup>237</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

<sup>238</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

go abroad to college.”<sup>239</sup> This resulted in Cruz’s education in the US and eventually working for the US government.<sup>240</sup>

Considering these antecedents, the research argues that Cruz’s alliance with the US government to spur democracy and reform foreign policies in Nicaragua was partly inspired by his past experiences to accomplish his long-term goal of eliminating authoritarianism from Nicaragua. In addition, Arturo Cruz and the US government had shared interests in Nicaragua. Arturo Cruz had a strong distaste for dictatorship. Moreover, the US government was interested in Nicaragua’s politics because it protected its security in Central America by limiting Soviet influence. Therefore, for Arturo Cruz, joining forces with the US government despite failed coup attempts could help achieve the goal of democratizing Nicaragua even though for many of his close allies, this seems like a possible illusion.

In 1978, Pedro Chamorro gathered some forces to overthrow the Somoza government. However, Arturo Cruz did not join the revolution for a new government but expressed the reason for his absence by indicating that:

I didn’t go because I didn’t want to abuse the Inter-American Development Bank, he said. I worked with devotion for the bank. I loved the bank. And the Somocista ambassador was complaining every other day to the management that I was involved with the group. So I talked to my friends and said, Look, I cannot do it. If I do, I will be finished. Yes, I felt badly about it. But I also had a duty to the bank.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>240</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>241</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

Moreover, when the Sandinista government successfully removed the Somoza regime, Arturo Cruz returned to join the revolutionary government. In 1981, Cruz accepted to represent Nicaragua in the US as an ambassador. During his short term, anytime the revolutionary government engaged in anti-democratic activities, Cruz demonstrated his disagreement. For instance, Cruz criticized the detainment of political opponents and the abuse of human rights under the Ortega regime. Although Cruz has demonstrated a strong stance against unlawful detentions, Cruz on multiple occasions denounced these actions, emphasizing their negative impact on the progress of Nicaragua. Cruz's unwavering commitment to the revolution has led him to be vocal about the need for unity and collective effort toward achieving the movement's goals. He believes that any behavior that undermines this unity must be addressed and rectified, and he has made it clear that such behavior will not be tolerated. Through his public condemnation of these actions, Cruz is promoting a culture of accountability and responsibility, which is essential for the success of any revolutionary movement. He understands that the revolution is about overthrowing a regime and creating a better society for all. As such, every action must be aligned with the US.<sup>242</sup>

However, Arturo Cruz's constant criticism of the actions of the revolutionary government attracted discontent among exiled Nicaraguans in Miami, US, with his life sometimes threatened. By criticizing Ortega's regime, Cruz was accused of betraying the revolution by exiling Nicaraguans. During one of Cruz's public engagements in Miami, one of the angry exiled Nicaraguans threatened to shoot and kill him if he did not condemn the revolutionary regime.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

<sup>243</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

Arturo Cruz became a villain for trying to support a revolutionary government that assured its citizens of the return to a democratic state when it was establishing communist policies. He expressed: “Why did the Sandinistas have to choose Marxist-Leninism?”<sup>244</sup> After several calls and negotiations, Arturo Cruz returned in 1984 to join the coalition of political parties in the struggle for democracy in Nicaragua. However, he later renounced his presidential ambition and returned to Washington with Daniel Ortega winning the election.<sup>245</sup>

Cruz defended his resignation by indicating that:

Yes, it's true, on two occasions I said, I'm going to pull out, and that has cost me a lot of personal anguish. Because whenever I have resigned in my life, I resign. Period. I go. I have never created a crisis in order to push for something I wanted ... We Nicaraguans suffer from many weaknesses, and one of them is the inability to compromise. Because we are self-righteous. Very self-righteous.

Gradually, Arturo Cruz's impact among the contras began to wane. Arturo Cruz was a prominent figure among the contras, a group of anti-Sandinista fighters in Nicaragua during the 1980s.<sup>246</sup> He initially gained a strong following and made significant contributions to the group's efforts against the Sandinista government. However, as time went on, his influence began to diminish. However, One factor that contributed to Cruz's declining impact was his growing disillusionment with the contra movement. Despite his

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<sup>244</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>245</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

<sup>246</sup> Grove, “Nicaraguan Crossroads.”

initial commitment to the cause, he began to feel that the group was more interested in personal gain than in fighting for democracy and freedom in Nicaragua.<sup>247</sup>

The research highlights the role of several factors in Arturo Cruz's political resignation and his subsequent return to the US. One of the primary factors is the lack of clear direction in the Contras, which were a group of Nicaraguan rebels who opposed the Sandinista government in the 1980s.<sup>248</sup> The Contras were formed in response to the Sandinista government's policies, which were seen as communist and anti-democratic by many Nicaraguans and the United States government.<sup>249</sup> However, the Contras were not a cohesive group, and their strategies and goals were often unclear. This lack of direction created frustration and disillusionment among some of the Contra leaders, including Arturo Cruz.<sup>250</sup>

He believed that the Contras needed a clear plan of action to achieve their objectives and was frustrated by the infighting and lack of coordination within the group. Moreover, the negativity from some exiled Nicaraguans played a role in Arturo Cruz's political resignation.<sup>251</sup> Many exiled Nicaraguans were opposed to the Sandinista government and supported the Contras, but they were also critical of anyone who did not fully endorse their views. Arturo Cruz was viewed by some exiles as not being sufficiently committed to the cause, which created tension and pressure on him to conform to their

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<sup>247</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

<sup>248</sup> Marc Edelman, "The Paradox of Revolution: The Resignation of Arturo Cruz from the Nicaraguan Contra Movement," *Latin American Research Review* 25, no. 1 (1990): 143-162.

<sup>249</sup> Edelman, "The Paradox of Revolution."

<sup>250</sup> Edelman, "The Paradox of Revolution."

<sup>251</sup> Edelman, "The Paradox of Revolution."

views.<sup>252</sup> The inability of the Sandinista government to halt human rights abuses, drug, and arms trafficking also influenced Arturo Cruz's decision to resign. The Sandinista government's policies were viewed by many as repressive and authoritarian, and there were widespread reports of human rights abuses, including torture and extrajudicial killings.<sup>253</sup> The government was also accused of being involved in drug and arms trafficking, which further eroded its legitimacy in the eyes of many Nicaraguans and the international community.<sup>254</sup>

Cruz indicated:

I have been called a traitor, everything-everything that can come to your imagination ... The only way I could go back to Nicaragua is if I make a mea culpa. If there was an amnesty and restitution, if I could go honorably back to my country as a citizen, I might think of going...<sup>255</sup>

Arturo Cruz was saddened about the international image of Nicaragua under the Ortega's regime and remained committed to being part of the driving forces of change.

He question:

What business does Nicaragua, this little country have appearing on the front page of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*? This is insane. This is absurd. We are a curiosity, like a two-headed cat. This is sort of an entertainment, like playing Parcheesi. And the world seems to be enjoying itself in the Parcheesi game. I pray for the day when I can open a newspaper and I don't see anything about Nicaragua...<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Edelman, "The Paradox of Revolution."

<sup>253</sup> Edelman, "The Paradox of Revolution."

<sup>254</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

<sup>255</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

<sup>256</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

Reality dawned on Arturo Cruz's dream of a post-independent liberal Nicaragua, which he could not directly achieve under his watch. These disappointments culminated in sentiments against the political regime, which Cruz suggested that:

We need young people to take care of that goddam country. It has to have a young face. In my generation, people used to say, anybody who is not a radical when he's young is insensitive, and anybody who is not a conservative when he grows old is a fool.<sup>257</sup>

The analysis implied that the sequence of political sentiments in Nicaragua played a role in inspiring Arturo Cruz's involvement in shaping the foreign policy direction of the US in Nicaragua. As his Nicaraguan comrades influenced him, he saw aligning with the US as a possible means of realizing his aspirations for democratizing Nicaragua's governance system. The US, in turn, viewed Nicaragua as a strategic nation that could be utilized to curb the growth and spread of communism across the American continent.

Arturo Cruz's role as a political adviser to the Reagan administration on Central American affairs was instrumental to the achievement of the US government goals in Nicaragua. According to historian Michael Kryzanek, "Cruz was a key figure in the Reagan administration's efforts to support the Contras and overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua."<sup>258</sup> Cruz was known for his hawkish stance on Nicaragua and his advocacy for increased US support for the Contra rebels. In 1984, he testified before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, arguing that "the Contras are the only viable alternative to

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<sup>257</sup> Grove, "Nicaraguan Crossroads."

<sup>258</sup> Michael Kryzanek, "The Reagan Administration and the Central American Crisis," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 2 (2004): 56.



the Sandinista government” and that “the US must provide them with increased military and economic aid.”<sup>259</sup>

In 1987, Arturo Cruz played a significant role as a negotiator for the Contras in peace talks with the Nicaraguan government. These talks were mediated by the United Nations and aimed to end the ongoing conflict between the Contras and the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.<sup>260</sup> Although the negotiations ultimately failed, Cruz's role in bringing the two sides to the negotiating table was crucial. Cruz used his influence with the U.S. government to persuade them to support the negotiations and to pressure the Sandinista government to participate in them.<sup>261</sup> Again, Cruz worked to build trust between the two sides by facilitating communication and establishing a neutral location for the talks.<sup>262</sup> He also helped to draft a proposal for a cease-fire and the release of prisoners, which served as a starting point for the negotiations.<sup>263</sup> Cruz was one of several Contra leaders who participated in the peace talks, which took place in Managua, Nicaragua. The Sandinista government initiated the negotiations to end the conflict, which had been ongoing since the late 1970s.<sup>264</sup> The talks were also supported by the US government, which hoped that a negotiated settlement could end the conflict and pave the way for democratic reforms in Nicaragua. Cruz played a key role in the negotiations, using his knowledge of both sides to help bridge the gap between the Contras and the Sandinistas.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, "The Situation in Nicaragua," 98th Cong., 2nd sess., S. HRG. 98-1145 (1984): 64.

<sup>260</sup> Timothy C. Brown, "Negotiating Peace in Nicaragua: The Role of Arturo Cruz," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 33, no. 2 (1991): 67-89.

<sup>261</sup> Brown, "Negotiating Peace."

<sup>262</sup> Brown, "Negotiating Peace."

<sup>263</sup> Brown, "Negotiating Peace."

<sup>264</sup> Brown, "Negotiating Peace."

<sup>265</sup> Brown, "Negotiating Peace."

He was known for his negotiating skills and ability to build trust with both sides. However, the talks failed due to a lack of trust between the two sides and disagreements over key issues. Despite the failure of the peace talks, Cruz's role as a negotiator was widely acknowledged. Historian David Close states, "Cruz's role in the peace talks was critical, and his efforts helped to bring the two sides together for the first time in years."<sup>266</sup>

Arturo Cruz was a key leader of the Contra rebel movement in Nicaragua during the 1980s. The Contras were a rebel group that was supported by the US government and opposed the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Cruz played a contributory role in organizing and leading Contra military operations against the Nicaraguan government. Cruz became involved in the Contra movement in the early 1980s after serving as a diplomat in the Sandinista government. He became disillusioned with the Sandinistas and joined the Contras, where he quickly rose through the ranks to become a key leader. Cruz's leadership abilities and military expertise made him a valuable asset to the Contra movement. As a Contra leader, Cruz was involved in planning and executing military operations against the Sandinista government. In addition, he played a key role in organizing Contra forces and coordinating their activities. He was known for his strategic thinking and his ability to adapt to changing circumstances on the ground. Cruz's leadership in the Contra movement was widely recognized by his fellow Contras and the US government. According to historian Stephen Kinzer, "Cruz was one of the most important Contra leaders, and his military expertise and leadership abilities were crucial to the success of the movement."<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> David Close, "Negotiating Peace in Nicaragua," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, no. 1 (1992): 109.

<sup>267</sup> Stephen Kinzer, *Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua*, Revised Edition (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 167.

Despite his support for US intervention in Nicaragua, Arturo Cruz later became a vocal critic of US policy in the region. Cruz argued that the US had made a mistake by supporting the Contras and that a negotiated settlement was the only way to end the conflict in Nicaragua. Cruz's criticism of US policy in Nicaragua emerged in the late 1980s as the conflict between the Contras and the Sandinistas continued. Cruz became increasingly disillusioned with the Contra movement and questioned the US government's support for the rebels. He argued that the US should instead focus on diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict.<sup>268</sup> Cruz's criticisms were met with hostility from some members within the US government and the Contra movement. However, he continued to speak out against US policy, calling for a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Cruz's advocacy for a negotiated settlement was based on his belief that the conflict in Nicaragua could not be won militarily. He argued that the Contras were not strong enough to defeat the Sandinistas alone and that the competition would only continue to escalate without a diplomatic solution.<sup>269</sup> Cruz's criticisms of US policy in Nicaragua were widely covered in the media. According to Christopher Andrew, "Cruz's criticisms of US policy were taken seriously by many in the US governments and helped to shape the debate over US policy in Nicaragua."<sup>270</sup>

Arturo Cruz's role as ambassador to the United States likely had some influence on US policy towards Nicaragua during his tenure. However, it is difficult to determine the extent of his influence without further information about his actions and decisions as ambassador. According to a report by the Congressional Research Service, during Cruz's

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<sup>268</sup> Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 423.

<sup>269</sup> Andrew, "For the President's Eyes Only," 423.

<sup>270</sup> Andrew, "For the President's Eyes Only," 423.

tenure as ambassador in 2007, US policy towards Nicaragua focused on promoting democracy and human rights, supporting economic growth and development, and combating drug trafficking and organized crime.<sup>271</sup> Cruz played a role in advancing these policy goals through his diplomatic efforts and interactions with US officials.

In the years following the end of the conflict in Nicaragua, Cruz remained active in politics and advocated for a peaceful and just solution to the country's problems. He founded the Institute of Strategic Studies and Public Policies, a think tank dedicated to promoting democracy and development in Nicaragua. Cruz was also involved in several international organizations, including the International Crisis Group and the Inter-American Dialogue. Cruz's contributions to US policy towards Nicaragua demonstrated the complex nature of US foreign policy in the region. On the one hand, Cruz was a strong advocate for US intervention in Nicaragua, arguing that it was necessary to prevent the spread of communism. Yet, on the other hand, he later became a vocal critic of US policy, arguing that a negotiated settlement was the only way to end the conflict. Cruz's positions reflect the ongoing debate within the US government and among policymakers about the best approach to addressing Central America's complex political and economic issues.<sup>272</sup>

Arturo Cruz significantly shaped US foreign policy in Nicaragua during the 1980s. His contributions as a political adviser, negotiator, Contra leader, and critic of US policy demonstrate his deep commitment to finding a peaceful and just solution to the conflict in Nicaragua.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> S. M. Ileo, *Nicaragua: Political Situation and US policy* (Congressional Research Service, 2008), <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL34198.html> (accessed March 15, 2023).

<sup>272</sup> Arturo J. Cruz Jr., "The Promise of Democracy in Nicaragua," *Current History* 95, no. 601 (1996): 45-50.

<sup>273</sup> Sylvia Maxfield, "Nicaragua's Private Sector: From Revolution to Adjustment," in *Private Enterprise and Public Intervention: Business, Government and Public Policy*, ed. Robert H. Bates and Dauntton Martin (Oxford University Press, 1993), 159.

## **Harassment of Arturo Cruz and other Opposition leaders under Ortega Regime in Nicaragua**

Attack on political and civil liberties is a key feature of dictatorship governments. Individuals and institutions who criticize or disagree with government policies are often described as traitors of the regime. The government uses state institutions such as the military, pro-government newspapers, and legal instruments to suppress anti-government activities. Once these institutions are controlled, the government manipulates public opinion, making anti-government leaders unpopular. For example, in Cuba under the Fidel Castro government, Maria Elvira was recognized as one of the traitors of the regime by the pro-government newspaper *Diario Libre* for opposing some of the insensitive policies of the government.<sup>274</sup> By fighting the revolutionary regime, the regime fights against opposition leaders considered threats to government progress. The Cuban revolutionary regime also targeted individuals who believed in conspiring with the US government to impose sanctions and spearhead a coup.<sup>275</sup>

Arturo Cruz was removed from the opposition coalition, the National Coalition, in June 2021 after he met with US officials without the approval of the coalition. The National Coalition is made up of various opposition parties and movements that are working to unseat the current government of Nicaragua led by President Daniel Ortega. Cruz's meeting with US officials was seen as a violation of the National Coalition's policy of not engaging with foreign governments without the approval of the coalition. The coalition's spokesperson, Juan Sebastian Chamorro, said in a statement that Cruz's

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<sup>274</sup> Frank Polo, "Could Maria Elvira Salazar be the Next Ana Belen Montes?" (April 27, 2021), <https://frankpolo.com/en/links-of-maria-elvira-salazar-and-ana-belen-montes/> (accessed August 15, 2022).

<sup>275</sup> Polo, "Could Maria Elvira Salazar be the Next Ana Belen Montes."

actions.<sup>276</sup> Cruz, however, defended his meeting with US officials, saying that he had done so in his capacity as a private citizen and that he had not discussed any political issues. He also criticized the National Coalition for its lack of transparency and for excluding certain groups from the coalition. Cruz's removal from the National Coalition was seen as a setback for the opposition movement in Nicaragua, which has been facing increasing repression from the Ortega government. Human rights groups have criticized the government for its crackdown on opposition leaders, journalists, and civil society organizations, accusing it of violating human rights and suppressing dissent.<sup>277</sup>

In July 2021, the Nicaraguan government issued an arrest warrant for Arturo Cruz Jr on charges of terrorism, conspiracy, and inciting foreign interference. Cruz, a former ambassador to the United States, has denied the charges and has said that they are politically motivated. The Nicaraguan government accused Cruz of colluding with foreign governments to interfere in the country's internal affairs and promote regime change.<sup>278</sup> The government also alleged that Cruz was involved in a plot to destabilize the country and incite violence. Cruz, who had been considering running for president in the 2021 elections, has been an outspoken critic of the current government led by President Daniel Ortega.<sup>279</sup> He has accused the government of suppressing dissent and violating human rights, and has called for free and fair elections in Nicaragua. The arrest warrant against Cruz was widely condemned by human rights groups and opposition leaders, who accused

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<sup>276</sup> Deutsche Welle, "Nicaragua: Opposition leader Arturo Cruz expelled from opposition coalition," June 11, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/nicaragua-opposition-leader-arturo-cruz-expelled-from-opposition-coalition/a-57849932>.

<sup>277</sup> Al Jazeera, "Nicaragua: Opposition coalition expels presidential hopeful," June 10, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/10/nicaragua-opposition-coalition-expels-presidential-hopeful>.

<sup>278</sup> "Nicaragua: Opposition leader Arturo Cruz wanted on terrorism charges." *BBC News*, July 1, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-57676698>

<sup>279</sup> "Nicaragua: Opposition leader."

the government of using the justice system to silence dissent.<sup>280</sup> They also expressed concern for Cruz's safety and called for his immediate release.<sup>281</sup> In August 2021, the Nicaraguan government revoked Arturo Cruz Jr's passport, effectively preventing him from leaving the country. The revocation of Cruz's passport came after the government issued an arrest warrant for him on charges of terrorism, conspiracy, and inciting foreign interference in July 2021, which he denied and claimed were politically motivated.<sup>282</sup> Cruz had been in talks with the Organization of American States (OAS) to find a peaceful solution to Nicaragua's political crisis, but the revocation of his passport made it impossible for him to attend OAS meetings or travel abroad to participate in other diplomatic efforts.<sup>283</sup>

The revocation of Cruz's passport was condemned by international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which called it a violation of Cruz's rights and an attempt to silence opposition voices in Nicaragua. The United States and several other countries also criticized the move, with the U.S. State Department described it as a "politically motivated attack" on Cruz.<sup>284</sup> The Nicaraguan government defended the revocation of Cruz's passport, saying that he was a fugitive from justice and that the move was necessary to prevent him from fleeing the country and evading arrest.<sup>285</sup> Arturo Cruz's opposition to the current government of Nicaragua has

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<sup>280</sup> "Nicaragua: Opposition leader."

<sup>281</sup> "Nicaragua: Opposition leader."

<sup>282</sup> "Nicaragua revokes opposition leader's passport," *Reuters*, August 18, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/nicaragua-revokes-opposition-leaders-passport-2021-08-18/>

<sup>283</sup> "Nicaragua revokes."

<sup>284</sup> Amnesty International, "Nicaragua: Opposition leader's passport revoked, preventing him from travelling to OAS," August 18, 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/nicaragua-opposition-leaders-passport-revoked-preventing-him-from-travelling-to-oas/>

<sup>285</sup> Amnesty International, "Nicaragua: Opposition leader's."

made him the target of death threats from supporters of the regime. These threats have been well documented by various media outlets and human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Cruz has had to take measures to protect himself and his family, including hiring bodyguards.<sup>286</sup>

According to a report by Reuters, Cruz has received multiple death threats since he announced his candidacy for president in Nicaragua's upcoming elections. The report cites Cruz as saying, "I have received death threats, and that is not new for people who are in the opposition in Nicaragua."<sup>287</sup> Cruz has also reportedly said that he fears for the safety of his family and has had to take measures to protect them.<sup>288</sup> Amnesty International has also documented the death threats against Cruz and has called on the Nicaraguan government to ensure his safety. In a statement, Amnesty International called for immediate action by Nicaraguan authorities suggesting that there is a pressing need to address these threats and ensure the safety of those who are at risk. It is possible that there have been specific incidents or threats that have led to this statement, or that there is a broader pattern of harassment or intimidation against opposition figures in Nicaragua. Human Rights Watch has similarly called for the protection of Cruz and other opposition figures in Nicaragua.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Amnesty International, "Nicaragua: Opposition leader's."

<sup>287</sup> "Nicaragua opposition figure Arturo Cruz says he has received death threats." Reuters, 2 April 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nicaragua-election/nicaragua-opposition-figure-arturo-cruz-says-he-has-received-death-threats-idUSKBN2BO5MV>.

<sup>288</sup> "Nicaragua opposition figure."

<sup>289</sup> Amnesty International, "Nicaragua: Opposition figures under threat as election approaches," March 31, 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/03/nicaragua-opposition-figures-under-threat-as-election-approaches/>



## **Arturo Cruz Jr, Contras and the United State Political Journey in Nicaragua from 1980s**

Arturo Cruz Jr. played a significant role in the Contra War in Nicaragua in the 1980s. According to his memoir, Cruz believed that the only way to unite Nicaragua was to eliminate the Sandinista regime by joining forces with the United States of America.<sup>290</sup> President Ronald Reagan, upon assuming office, made it a plan to use Nicaragua as a site to eliminate the spread of Marxism among Central American countries.<sup>291</sup> This plan began with the cancellation of Nicaragua's financial assistance from the United States of America.<sup>292</sup> The Sandinista regime consisted predominantly of educated elites and upper-class members in Nicaragua. Among the educated elites was Arturo Cruz Jr. In 1982, Arturo Cruz Jr. left the Sandinista regime and joined the Contras in 1985.<sup>293</sup> Cruz Jr. indicated that his reason for leaving the Sandinista was that the purpose of achieving a united Nicaragua while maintaining tradition was never accomplished.<sup>294</sup>

In the early 1980s, Cruz was recruited by the CIA to work as a political advisor to the Contras. As a political advisor, Cruz played a crucial role in shaping the Contras' political strategy, which involved advocating for the overthrow of the Sandinista government and the establishment of a pro-US government in Nicaragua.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> Arturo Cruz Jr., *Memoirs of a Counterrevolutionary: Life with the Contras, the Sandinistas, and the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 50-60.

<sup>291</sup> Michael Krenn, "Ronald Reagan and the Contras: U.S. and Nicaraguan History Reconsidered" (*The Americas* 65, no. 3, 2009): 379-404.

<sup>292</sup> Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 52-53.

<sup>293</sup> Carlos M. Vilas, *The Sandinista Revolution: National Liberation and Social Transformation in Central America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1986), 158-160.

<sup>294</sup> Arturo J. Cruz Jr., "Central America: From Revolution to Reaction," *Foreign Affairs* 62, no. 1 (Fall 1983): 120.

<sup>295</sup> Peter Kornbluh, *Nicaragua: The Price of Intervention* (Washington, D.C.: National Security Archive, 1987), 100-110.

By 1987 Cruz's relationship with the CIA and other leading members of the Contras had deteriorated which led to his resignation. In 1987, a key figure in the Contra insurgency in Nicaragua named Adolfo Calero accused Cruz of embezzling funds from the organization.<sup>296</sup> This accusation damaged Cruz's reputation within the Contras and strained his relationship with other leading members of the group. Around the same time, it became increasingly apparent that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was losing faith in the Contras as a viable force to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.<sup>297</sup> Despite the disagreement, Cruz continued to work towards his goal of overthrowing the Sandinista government. 1990 saw the end of the Sandinista regime when it was defeated in a national election. Cruz himself was not present in Nicaragua at the time of the election, having gone into exile in the United States due to a falling out with other Contra leaders.<sup>298</sup>

Prior to the 1990 Nicaraguan election, all the attempts to eliminate the Sandinista group were unsuccessful, partly due to some leading Contras members' self-centered motives. Again, following Arturo Cruz's departure from the Contras, the US Congress seized the chance to limit further financial support. For instance, an approval of 105 million dollars which was supposed to be released to the Contras group, was delayed. U.S. Congress argued that eliminating the Sandinista regime should not be built around either one individual or group. The Democrats arm of congress argued that Arturo Cruz's resignation from the Contras implied Nicaragua was not interested in returning to democratic rule. In addition, Arturo Cruz's resignation represents an end to the inefficient

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<sup>296</sup> Gideon Joffe, "The Contras, 1980-89: A Failed Counter-Revolution Against Nicaragua's Sandinista Government," in *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950*, ed. John A. Tracy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 147.

<sup>297</sup> Edgar Chamorro, *The Contras, 1980-1989: A Special Kind of Politics*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 194.

<sup>298</sup> Edgar Chamorro, "The Contras, 1980-1989: A Special Kind of Politics," *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 3 (July 1999): 114-128.

Contras program. For instance, Contra spokesman Carlos Ulvert indicated that Cruz “was the only Nicaraguan leader to give a coherent picture of our movement.”<sup>299</sup> The resignation of key leaders of the United Nicaraguan Opposition weakened US foreign policy in Nicaragua as the fear that disgruntled leaders could return to join the incumbent government. However, Nicaragua's President and Vice President were not perturbed by the mass resignations among Nicaragua’s most prominent opposition groups. For instance, upon hearing the resignation of Arturo Cruz and Adolfo Calero, Vice President Sergio Ramirez indicated that “this is a very irrelevant thing for us. They are simple puppets, and they can change posts. They can stay. It is the same thing for us.”<sup>300</sup>

In 1989 Sandinistas led by Daniel Ortega finally succumbed to both the internal and external pressures to allow elections, after all the attempts to eliminate his government failed. Internally, the Sandinistas recognized that they were losing support among the Nicaraguan population and that their socialist policies had failed to deliver on their promises of economic prosperity and social justice. Externally, the Sandinistas faced mounting pressure from the United States, which had been supporting the Contra insurgency against them, and from other Western countries, which were critical of their human rights record.<sup>301</sup> Agreement was reached with the main opposition group, the National Opposition Union (UNO) to hold free and fair elections in 1990. This agreement was signed as part of the Sapoa Accord, which was mediated by five Central American presidents. Under the terms of the agreement, both the Sandinistas and the opposition

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<sup>299</sup> Sciolino, “Contras on the Defensive.”

<sup>300</sup> Treaster, “Leading Contra Quits Alliance.”

<sup>301</sup> John A. Booth, *The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 216-217

agreed to disarm and cease hostilities, and the Sandinistas agreed to allow opposition parties to contest the election on an equal footing.<sup>302</sup>

In the build up to the 1990 Nicaraguan elections Violeta Barrios de Chamorro defeated Cruz and emerged as the candidate of a coalition of opposition parties known as the National Opposition Union (UNO).<sup>303</sup> She was a journalist and a widow of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, a prominent Nicaraguan journalist who had been assassinated in 1978 by the Somoza regime.<sup>304</sup> Chamorro campaigned on a platform of democracy, human rights, and economic reform, and she received significant support from the US government and other Western countries. In the 1990 election, she defeated Daniel Ortega, the incumbent president and leader of the FSLN.<sup>305</sup>

Arturo Cruz played a crucial role in the 1990 Nicaraguan presidential election, which resulted in the election of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro as the president of Nicaragua.<sup>306</sup> Cruz's contribution to the election was significant, and he served as a member of Chamorro's National Reconciliation Commission, which was responsible for bringing an end to the Contra War and promoting national reconciliation in the country. During Chamorro's presidency, Cruz continued to be a key figure in promoting democratic reforms and economic development in Nicaragua.<sup>307</sup> He played a crucial role in negotiating

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<sup>302</sup> Booth, *The End and the Beginning*, 216-217.

<sup>303</sup> Karen Kampwirth, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas*. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 98.

<sup>304</sup> María López Vigil, *Violeta Chamorro: Against All Odds* (Managua: Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, 1996), 52-71.

<sup>305</sup> "Nicaragua," Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nicaragua/The-Sandinista-government#ref136581> (accessed April 5, 2023).

<sup>306</sup> Arturo J. Cruz Jr., "Nicaragua: The Chamorro Presidency and the Future," *Journal of Democracy* 4, no. 2 (1993): 32-42.

<sup>307</sup> Kevin A. Yelvington, "The Role of Arturo Cruz in Nicaragua's Transition to Democracy," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 29, no. 1 (1997): 105-125.

Nicaragua's debt relief, he understood the importance of reducing the country's debt burden as a means of freeing up resources for investment in social and economic programs that would benefit the Nicaraguan people. Cruz worked to establish strong relationships with key officials in the U.S. government, including members of Congress, the Treasury Department, and the State Department.<sup>308</sup> He also cultivated relationships with officials from international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>309</sup> These relationships helped to ensure that Nicaragua's debt relief efforts were given serious consideration by policymakers.<sup>310</sup>

Cruz not only played a key role in building relationships with key officials in the US government and international organizations but also in advocating for free trade and foreign investment in Nicaragua. Cruz recognized the importance of foreign investment and trade as essential drivers of economic growth and job creation in Nicaragua. As such, he worked to promote policies that would make the country more attractive to foreign investors and businesses, such as streamlining regulations and reducing bureaucracy.<sup>311</sup> In addition to the policies, he was able to build infrastructure, expand access to credit, and promote greater transparency and accountability in government. He recognized that these reforms were necessary to attract foreign investment and create a more dynamic and diversified economy.<sup>312</sup> Cruz's efforts to promote economic development in Nicaragua were well received, and he was widely regarded as a proponent of market-oriented economic policies. He believed that the country's economic growth was crucial to its long-

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<sup>308</sup> John Booth, *Revolutionary Horizons: Past and Present in Bolivian and Nicaraguan Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 110-120.

<sup>309</sup> Booth, *Revolutionary Horizons*, 110-120

<sup>310</sup> Booth, *Revolutionary Horizons*, 110-120

<sup>311</sup> Yelvington, "The Role of Arturo Cruz."

<sup>312</sup> Booth, *Revolutionary Horizons*, 110-120

term stability and prosperity, and he worked tirelessly to promote policies that would create a favorable business environment and attract foreign investment.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Yelvington, "The Role of Arturo Cruz."

## CONCLUSION

By examining Arturo Cruz Jr's biography and his involvement in Nicaraguan politico-economic crises in the late 1970s, it becomes clear that individuals can have a significant impact on the internal and external policies of their country, as well as those of other Central American nations. Cruz's extensive experience from Nicaragua's revolutionary state informed his views, which were highly regarded by both the Nicaraguan government and US officials in their efforts to restore democracy to the country. Furthermore, the biography highlights how a state's foreign policies are influenced by its domestic politics and security concerns on a global scale. Arturo Cruz Jr. was instrumental in shaping US foreign policy towards his native country, Nicaragua, and played a critical role in implementing the Arial plan which significantly improved the Central American security situation. His biography is partially influenced by his pursuit of international security and the ambition of achieving a unipolar position in the global community. While the US faced ideological challenges in implementing their policies in other Central American nations, Nicaragua proved to be different, thanks to Cruz's contributions in executing American foreign policy. Arturo Cruz's role was crucial in reducing aggression. Cruz was able to facilitate negotiations by acting as a mediator between the Sandinista government and the US government. He had close contacts with both sides and was able to use his diplomatic skills to build trust and promote dialogue. He also played a key role in securing the release of political prisoners, which helped to ease tensions between the two countries. He also helped to broker the Esquipulas Accords in 1986, he helped to establish a regional commission to oversee compliance, and visited various countries to monitor the implementation of the agreements.

The role of Arturo Cruz in foreign policy provides a rather deep analysis of the role of diplomats in shaping the US foreign policy reforms in Central America. Also, the

historical rise and fall of relationship between US and Nicaraguan governments provide a context for understanding the dynamics of lobbying, sanctions, security concerns, ideological conflicts, strategic communication, and negotiation as significant parts of reaching a consensus decision in foreign policy. Finally, the role of Cruz as a former Nicaraguan Presidential aspirant, Sandinista, Ambassador, and scholar provides insight into the impact of the US use of bilateral and multilateral diplomacies in countering the spread of communism in revolutionary states.



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