

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 30, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
The Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W., Room 7327  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

As Nicaragua's presidential election approaches, we are increasingly concerned that its outcome will severely damage the currently constructive U.S.-Nicaragua relationship, and threaten U.S. interests.

As you know, under the unusual election rules of Nicaragua, a presidential candidate may be declared the winner having captured as little as 35 percent of the vote. This low threshold may allow for Daniel Ortega of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional* (FSLN) party to become Nicaragua's next president. We should prepare for this possibility.

When Daniel Ortega previously governed Nicaragua, President Ronald Reagan denounced his regime as "one of the world's principal refuges for international terrorists" and a "partner of Iran, Libya, North Korea, and Cuba in a campaign of international terror." Under Ortega's rule, Nicaraguan passports were issued to international terrorists to facilitate their cross-border movement. In 1993, in connection with the investigation of the first terrorist attack upon the World Trade Center, the FBI uncovered five authentic, but fraudulent, Nicaraguan passports issued in July of 1991 for El Sayyid Nosair and his family. Nosair, an Egyptian, was later convicted for his role in the 1993 bombing.

The FSLN has longstanding ties to designated terrorist groups and is strongly backed by the anti-American regimes of Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro. Terrorist acts sponsored by the FSLN have killed American citizens, including four United States Marines, on June 20, 1985.

A return to power by Daniel Ortega and the FSLN would leave the U.S. government without a reliable Nicaraguan partner to satisfy security issues of mutual concern. We share U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Paul Trivelli's assessment that an Ortega victory would force the United States to fully "re-evaluate" relations with Nicaragua. In anticipation of this development, we encourage the State Department, in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security other appropriate agencies, to begin the process of reviewing this bilateral relationship, including all forms of assistance, as well as the unregulated movement of

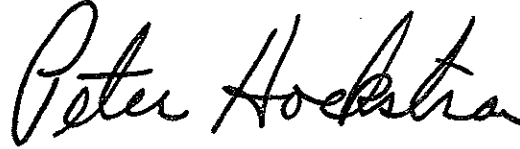
remittances from the United States to Nicaragua. Remittances currently total an estimated \$700 million yearly.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Rep. Ed Royce  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
International Terrorism and Nonproliferation



Rep. Peter Hoekstra  
Chairman, Permanent Select  
Committee on Intelligence

Cc: The Honorable Michael Chertoff  
The Secretary of Homeland Security