



International studies and programs: Nicaragua.

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From the University of Wisconsin-Madison / News Service, Bascom Hall, 500 Lincoln Drive, Madison 53706 / Telephone: 608/262-3571

Release: Immediately

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(NOTE: Alejandro Bendana will hold a news conference Friday, July 17, at 10:30 a.m. in the Wisconsin Center's Robert P. Lee Lounge. Parking spaces will be reserved for news media in the nearby public lot between the Red Armory and Memorial Union.)

ENVOY FROM NICARAGUA TO MAKE MADISON APPEARANCES

MADISON--A Nicaraguan envoy to the United Nations, Alejandro Bendana, will be in Madison Friday, July 17, to take part in observances marking the second anniversary of the revolution in his Central American nation.

Wisconsin and Nicaragua are linked under the Partners of the Americas program. Since 1962, Wisconsin has provided aid to her "sister" country including relief from natural disasters, educational development and medical programs.

Bendana, who received his history Ph.D. in 1979 from Harvard University, is Nicaragua's alternate permanent representative to the UN with diplomatic rank of ambassador. He was a Fulbright-Hays scholar in Argentina in 1975-76 and a history teaching assistant at the University of New Orleans in 1971-73. He also attended graduate school at Oxford University, Great Britain.

Student organizations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison have organized a community celebration around Bendana's visit. The festivities will take place from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Union South. Bendana will speak at 8:30. The evening also includes an address by Francisco Aldshul, member of the diplomatic commission to the UN of the Democratic Revolutionary front of El Salvador; a slide show and live music depicting the history of popular struggle in Nicaragua; hymns sung by an international choir and dancing.

Add one--Bendana

The celebration is open to the public. Its organizers, Community Action on Latin America, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Asociacion de Estudiantes Latinoamericanos and Mujeres Latinas Progresivas, request a \$2 donation. (Tickets may be purchased in advance at People's Bookstore, A Room of One's Own, Willy Street Coop, Willy Bear Bar and Cardinal Bar.)

During the day Bendana will meet with community leaders and hold a news conference. He will appear on the WORT radio program "A Public Affair" at noon and on Channel 3's "Live at Five."

The UW-Madison Ibero-American studies department and Community Action on Latin America will host a 6 p.m. reception where he will meet state and local officials, church representatives, University faculty and members of the Partners of the Americas.

Madison is Bendana's second stop on a four-city tour coinciding with the July 19 anniversary of the revolution. He also will meet officials in New York, Boston and Washington to explain aims of the new Nicaraguan government.

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Professor Robert Aubey (608) 263-1789

NICARAGUAN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY NEED HELP, PROFS SAY

MADISON--President Carter this week promised cooperation between the United States and the ruling junta of Nicaragua. That cooperation may include military and agricultural assistance at first, but two University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty members say help for the private business sector of the Central American country is also needed.

Robert Aubey, professor of business and Spanish and Portuguese, along with William Thiesenhusen, agriculture journalism and economics professor, returned last week from a survey of industrial and commercial damage caused by Nicaragua's civil war. The pair will report to the Wisconsin/Nicaraguan Partners of the Americas program which, in turn, will seek public and private aid to help the country's efforts to rebuild.

Estimates have it that up to 20 percent of Managua's industries were destroyed by the strife, 45 percent were heavily damaged and nearly all were ransacked, according to Professor Aubey. In addition, "almost all commercial establishments--stores and shopping centers--were heavily damaged," he said.

The government is in poor position to help its industry and commercial enterprises. The foreign exchange reserves are down to about \$60 million which, said Aubey, is a meager amount considering the needs of the redeveloping country.

The major economic goal now, Aubey said, is to get the agricultural sector back in operation. Agriculture accounts for about 80 percent of Nicaragua's domestic national product and almost all of the country's foreign exchange earnings. The government is now focusing its efforts toward revitalizing agriculture and therefore is unable to devote much money to business and industry. "The private business sector will have to be content with what it can get from other sources," said Aubey.

Noting that the report is not yet finished, Aubey said the survey team's recommendations will probably include a request for hard currency loans for Nicaragua's residents. "While there currently is no starvation, due in part to continuing aid from the U.S. and other countries, money eventually will be needed to purchase food and other essential products for the people of Nicaragua," he said.

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uw news

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By JACK BURKE

MADISON--Thanks to the Wisconsin Partners of the Alliance and a helping hand from the University of Wisconsin, Nicaragua farmers had their first good potato crop in many years.

Last January, Prof. Robert W. Hougas, potato expert at the UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, obtained 10 tons of seed in Oneida County, in northern Wisconsin. These were made available as a contribution to the Partner's efforts to aid the Latin American nation.

Distributed to 33 growers in the Jinotega area of northern Nicaragua, the potato seed was planted at once. It worked out so successfully that another order of 80 tons of Wisconsin seed potatoes, for shipment in late November, is being negotiated at the present time.

According to Alfonso Lovo Cordero, Nicaragua minister of agriculture and livestock, earlier potato crops had supplied only 30 per cent of the demand, the result of a limited area suited to production and inefficient production practices.

Until 1969, there had been only one seed importation--that by the U.S. Marines who brought a supply in the late 1920s. A shipment about 15 months ago, sent from New England, arrived but with a 60 per cent loss in transit.

- more -

Add one--Nicaragua potatoes

Lovo explained:

"Our poor farmers were beside themselves. Even though the 1969 sound seed produced good yields, the total operation still resulted in a loss to the farmers who were unable to service their bank loans.

"This year the results--with UW-provided seeds--were remarkable. Where fertilizer was applied, yields averaged about seven tons per acre and unfertilized fields brought about four tons. This is compared with normal previous yields of about two tons.

"Needless to say, the farmers, as well as the related technical personnel, were overjoyed with the results. The farmers received about \$200 per ton for the potatoes they sold."

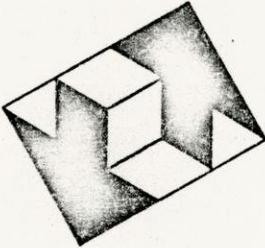
Success of the crop, it was reported, resulted in six producers constructing suitable storage facilities for seed, three others pooling their resources and buying a tractor, and another earning enough to buy a farm.

In a recent letter to Gov. Warren P. Knowles of Wisconsin, Lovo expressed his gratitude to the Partners' program which joins other citizen groups in the U.S. and Latin America to attain the objectives of the Alliance for Progress on a non-governmental grassroots basis of cooperation. The Partners work in the areas of agriculture, cultural exchange, education, health, and trade.

Last year Gov. Knowles led a delegation of Wisconsin businessmen to Latin America on a trade mission. His first stop was in Nicaragua, where the plight of the potato farmers was brought to his attention. He endorsed the idea of assisting in the emergency, and things started happening to reverse the situation in Jinotega.

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WISCONSIN-NICARAGUA PARTNERS

1700 Van Hise Hall
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

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*Int'l. Studies
Programs
Nicaragua*

FORT ATKINSON--Wisconsin may be playing a key role in Nicaraguan relief if plans of a state organization materialize.

The Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners of the Americas announced today at its quarterly meeting in Fort Atkinson that a Partners survey team will leave next week on a fact finding mission in Nicaragua, as a preliminary step to further planning. Dr. Henry Peters, president of the group, said one of the main objectives of the team will be to determine what needs are not now being met by conventional types of relief.

The team is also expected to contact Nicaraguan Partners members, consult with officials and representatives of key relief organizations, and set up two-way radio communications between Managua and Madison.

The team will report to the Partners executive committee and to Governor Lee Dreyfus, who serves as honorary president of the group, with recommendations on implementing an aid program in Nicaragua.

An official representative of the Governor will be a member of the team, Peters said. He is Dr. John B. Ellery, Acting Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and former head of the Central Wisconsin Managua Partners organization. Ellery was present at the meeting and told the group that the Partners have received advice and encouragement from representatives of the U.S. State Department concerning Wisconsin's possible involvement in Nicaraguan relief activities.

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Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners - add one

"Nicaraguans we've been in contact with say the destruction there today is ten times worse than at the time of the earthquake in 1972," Dr. Peters commented. He pointed out that Wisconsin came to the aid of Nicaraguans after the earthquake and that once again Nicaragua is looking to its U.S. Partner for assistance. Peters said Wisconsin's people-to-people partnership with Nicaragua dates back to 1964 and is one of the earliest partnerships developed as a result of the Alliance for Progress initiated by President John F. Kennedy.

According to Peters, the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners is a nonpolitical, private voluntary organization representing Wisconsin in an inter-American good will program. The group has maintained close relationships in Nicaragua through its Partner City programs and its regional development projects on the East Coast. Peters said the group intends to continue its Partnership activities and exchange programs with Nicaragua now and long after relief efforts have ended.

The group is affiliated with the National Partners of the Americas, which has asked other U. S. Partners organizations to channel Nicaraguan relief funds through the Wisconsin Partners office in Madison.

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