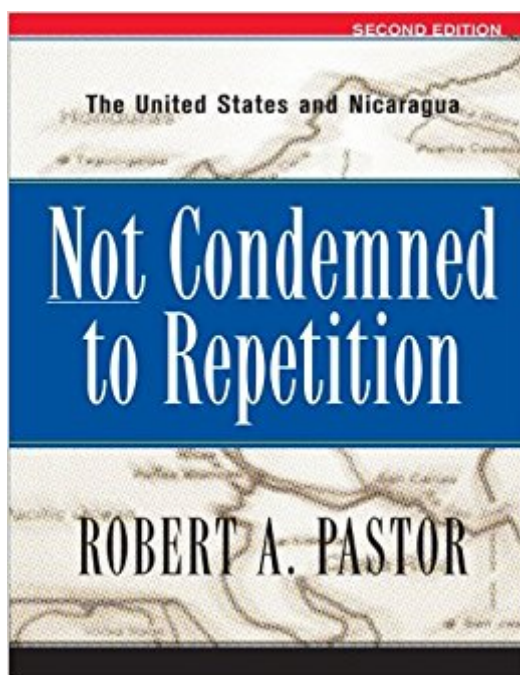


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Not Condemned To Repetition: The United States And Nicaragua, Second Edition



Synopsis

Through the fall of Anastasio Somoza, the rise of the Sandinistas, and the contra war, the United States and Nicaragua seemed destined to repeat the mistakes made by the U.S. and Cuba forty years before. The 1990 election in Nicaragua broke the pattern. Robert Pastor was a major US policymaker in the critical period leading up to and following the Sandinista Revolution of 1979. A decade later after writing the first edition of this book, he organized the International Mission led by Jimmy Carter that mediated the first free election in Nicaragua's history. From his unique vantage point, and utilizing a wealth of original material from classified government documents and from personal interviews with U.S. and Nicaraguan leaders, Pastor shows how Nicaragua and the United States were prisoners of a tragic history and how they finally escaped. This revised and updated edition covers the events of the democratic transition, and it extracts the lessons to be learned from the past.

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Robert A. Pastor is the Vice President of International Affairs at American University. He has served as the Goodrich C. White Professor of Political Science at Emory University, and he is the former director of Latin American and Caribbean Affairs, National Security Council. Dr. Pastor was a Visiting Professor at Harvard University and from 1985-98, he was Fellow and Founding Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Program and the Democracy project at the Carter Center.

- as an appraisal of US-Nicaraguan relations, and for US attitudes on Latin America. Pastor was a staff member of Jimmy Carter's National Security Council and provides a wealth of insider policy information on American responses to, and shaping of, the dynamics of Nicaraguan society under Somoza and the Sandinistas. As a liberal Democrat he stood opposed to the ideological bully-boy approach of the Reagan era, which sought a return to the Somoza system through the contras. Pastor reveals an interesting fact in that the pro-Somoza crowd, who tripped up Carter's steps in dealing with the crisis of 1978-79, was led in Congress by none other than Charlie Wilson of Texas - not only Somoza's long-time lobbyist-friend, but later the cut-out man for the Afghan mujahadin and "immortalized" in Tom Hanks' bogus screen version. Pastor's account, however, is seriously marred by his insistence that the Chamorro UNO victory of 1990 was the final triumph of democratic civil society in Nicaragua, thus reversing his predictions in the book's first edition ("Condemned to Repetition.") In fact, as William Robinson amply demonstrated in "A Faustian Bargain," the UNO victory was based on direct US intervention, through manipulation and subsidy of the UNO movement and its candidates. The whole organization was knocked together by US-based NGOs, and its platform ghost-written by the same. The contras are also slighted in Pastor's account. Without the drain of a 10-year-civil war, fueled by the US, and continuing contra actions right up to election day, the elections could not have resulted in such a clear-cut victory for UNO, if not an outright victory for the Sandinistas. Despite the scrupulous oversight of Carter and Pastor as part of the election monitoring team, the elections were held in a context that was far from free and fair. The onus of this falls on the backroom manipulations in Washington and the contra gun still cocked at the electorate. Despite this glaring divergence from reality in the book's final three chapters, it is

still recommended for its insider's view of US-Nicaraguan relations in the Carter years, the Reagan period, and the ideological wishes of liberal Americans.

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