

Ortega claims Sandinista win

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — Daniel Ortega, leader of the leftist Sandinista government and the party's presidential candidate, claimed victory Monday in presidential elections and said the party is leading by "an ample majority and an ample margin."

"This has been a vote for peace," Ortega told a cheering, dancing crowd of thousands in Managua's Plaza of Heroes and

Martyrs on Sunday night. "We feel very contented and have a great confidence in the future."

Before any of the votes from Sunday's election had been tabulated, the government-controlled newspaper Barricada proclaimed "Victory for Sandino in Free Elections" in a banner headline Monday morning.

At midmorning Monday, the Supreme Electoral Council said that with votes from 16 percent of the polling places counted, Ortega was leading with 68.1 percent of the vote. The re-

mainder was split among candidates of five small opposition parties.

Despite a slow count, the leftist Sandinista government announced a higher election turnout than expected and called it "a resounding 'no' to reaction and imperialism."

Mariano Fiallos, president of the Supreme Electoral Council, said early returns indicated a turnout of 82 percent, slightly higher than the 80 percent Sandinista officials had predicted would go to the polls.

"The election has been a triumph of the Nicaraguan people," declared Fiallos. "The people have responded more than satisfactorily."

The Sandinistas had counted on a massive turnout to counter charges that the election would be, as President Ronald Reagan suggested, "a Soviet-style sham" — that is, conducted without meaningful opposition after a campaign that was less than open.

In Washington D.C., the State Department denounced Nicaragua's election results as a "farce" because the Sandinistas had no credible opposition.

Spokesman John Hughes said the Nicaraguan people were not allowed to participate in "any real sense of the word. The Sandinista electoral farce, without any meaningful political opposition, leaves the situation essentially unchanged."

The country's first election in a decade was conducted with few problems, and even critics acknowledged that the voting process itself appeared to be fair.

"The actual voting seems to be a fine, workable system," said one Western diplomat, speaking on condition he not be identified. "But the things leading up to the election, those are the sort of things that cast doubt."

Fiallos said 11 of the coun-

try's 3,892 polling places had to be closed because of attacks by the guerrillas who have been fighting the Sandinista government for more than two years.

He said all of the attacks were near Nicaragua's border with Honduras, nine in the northeastern part of the country and two in the northwest.

The Electoral Council said percentages in voting for the national assembly were running at about the same percentage in favor of the Sandinistas as those for president.

Ortega told a news conference in Managua: "We take for a fact the victory of the FSLN in these elections." He used the initials of the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front.

The main opposition coalition boycotted the election, complaining of harassment and restrictions on campaigning and press coverage. In addition to the Sandinistas, five minor parties took part in the election.

The regime's best-known opponent, Arturo Jose Cruz, said the election was merely "a referendum to consolidate the Sandinista front in power."

Cruz, who heads a coalition of four centrist political parties, two labor unions and the country's most influential organization of businessmen, returned to Managua from Washington on Sunday night.

Although nominated by his coalition, Cruz refused to register his presidential candidacy, saying the Sandinistas had stacked the deck against an open, fair election by imposing restrictions on campaigning and press coverage. The government insisted that policy was necessary in the face of continuing U.S. "aggression" through its support of anti-Sandinista rebels.

In addition to a president, voters elected a vice president and 90 members of a new national assembly, all for six-year terms. They will take office on Jan. 10.

Campaign '84: End of the trail

President Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale played out the final scenes Monday of a year-long campaign drama, the president saying his work in Washington has "only just begun" and the Democratic challenger charging that if victorious, Republicans would claim a "historic mandate" to raise taxes and send combat troops to Central America.

The president, ending his final campaign with a nostalgic tour of California, said the conservative "prairie fire" he pro-

mised to ignite two decades ago had now swept the nation.

"It was the second American Revolution, and it's only just begun," he said. Listing his goals for a second term, he said, "No. 1 of all is peace, disarmament and the reduction of world nuclear weapons."

His challenger implored a crowd in Los Angeles to provide the votes for "the biggest upset ever. . . We can prove that a president who insults our intelligence every day will pay the price on Election Day," he said.

The polls showed Mondale gaining in the campaign's final hours, but despite that, and for all the crowds he drew along his way, he trailed Reagan by runaway margins in nearly every reckoning save his own.

"We're gonna win," he claimed, with vice presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro virtually the only voice seconding him.

A political pioneer, Ferraro was in the final hours of her campaign, as well, racing from Ohio to Pennsylvania to New Jersey to New York with her message: "Stand up and fight for Fritz Mondale."

Vice Pres. George Bush wrapped up his 37,000-mile campaign for a second term with a flying tour of Texas, where he sought to help GOP congressional candidates.

"Keep America on the move. Help us keep the peace. Help us keep the prosperity," he said, his voice hoarse from weeks of campaigning.

The race for the White House was the main event by far, but the political parties were pouring millions of dollars, as well, into the race for 33 Senate seats and a new 435-member House of Representatives. In 13 states an election for governor was on the ballot, as well.

Democrats looked for gains of two or three seats in the Senate, not enough to regain control after four years of a Republican majority.

In the House, the Republicans conceded they could not crack the numerical majority held by Democrats. But they aimed for a pickup of 25 seats or so that they said would remake the coalition with conservative Democrats that handed the president his greatest legislative triumphs of 1981.

In Oregon, political candidates wrapped up their campaigns Monday, but party workers involved in get-out-the-vote efforts were gearing up for one of the most comprehensive attempts in state history to bring voters to the polls.

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