

An attack on Nicaragua is an attack on us all

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/f/an-attack-on-nicaragua-is-an-attack-on-us-all>

FRANCISCO DOMINGUEZ contextualises US media attacks on Nicaragua's FSLN government ahead of the presidential elections in November

IT IS an irrefutable fact that the US orchestrated and financed the 2018 violent coup attempt against the democratically elected FSLN government in Nicaragua.

US spokespeople from Donald Trump to extreme right-wing politicians such as national security adviser John Bolton and the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and USAid, repeatedly stated their aim was to bring about “regime change” in Nicaragua.

During the 2018 coup attempt, groups disguised as civil society bodies committed to democracy, civil liberties, human rights, etc which were in fact US-funded proxies entrusted with the task of bringing down the FSLN government by means of violence.

The Nicaraguan people resisted, the coup was defeated and the nation will go to polls this November.

The US paid, organised and trained thousands of the cadres tasked with the coup attempt in 2018. Between 2014-17 the US funded over 50 projects in Nicaragua to the tune of \$4.2 million with USAid and the NED distributing over \$30m to opposition groups which were involved in the violence of 2018.

In addition millions of US taxpayers' money went into financing Nicaraguan coup-plotting media.

Since 2016-17, the US has applied 431 and 243 sanctions against Venezuela and Cuba respectively.

At present the US is piling up sanctions against Nicaragua and FSLN government officials, a strategy complemented by a worldwide media demonisation campaign labelling the government "authoritarian," "dictatorial," and even of being "Somocista" [after the murderous dictator Anastasio Somoza].

Such methods are also being used in the efforts to violently oust the governments of Venezuela and Cuba. US national security adviser John Bolton called Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua "a troika of tyranny" and identified them as target governments to be overthrown. Significantly in a speech in November 2018 Bolton praised Bolsonaro as one of the "positive signs for the future of the region."

US interventions in Latin America have never led to democracy – instead, in most cases such as Chile, to its total destruction.

The 1954 invasion of Guatemala ousted democratically elected president Jacobo Arbenz and was celebrated by US president Dwight Eisenhower as a "magnificent effort" and "devotion to the cause of freedom." Decades of US-supported slaughter of well over 200,000 Guatemalans followed.

In El Salvador in the 1980s, US-funded, trained and armed death squads slaughtered about 80,000, mostly innocent civilians.

The largest US military invasion of Nicaragua in 1926-1933 – resisted by guerillas led by Augusto Cesar Sandino – led to the 43 year-long Somoza dictatorship that ended in 1979, when the Sandinista revolution ushered in democracy for the first time in the country's history.

The US, however, sought to prevent Nicaragua from pursuing a sovereign development path by unleashing a civil war by funding, training and arming its proxies the Contras. The war

resulted in over 40,000 people killed and an electoral defeat of the FSLN (Sandinistas) in 1990.

The Sandinistas respected the election result and did not engage in violent confrontations during the neoliberal governments between 1990-2006. They also accepted the election results in 1996 and 2001 which went against them.

Neoliberalism in Nicaragua was socially and economically disastrous: by 2005, 62 per cent of the population lived in poverty, and 14 per cent in extreme poverty by 2009; 85 per cent had no access to the healthcare system; 64 per cent of the economically active population were in the informal sector with no pension or health cover; illiteracy – eradicated by the Sandinista government between 1979-1990 – grew to 22 per cent, mirroring the neoliberal wreckage elsewhere in the region.

In 2006 the FSLN won the presidency with 38 per cent of the vote; was re-elected in 2011 with 63 per cent of the vote and again in 2016 with 72 per cent . By 2016 poverty was reduced to 24.9 per cent while extreme poverty halved to 7 per cent. Economic economic growth averaged 4.7 per cent, one of the highest in the region.

Nicaragua became 90 per cent self-sufficient in food production, education was expanded as were healthcare and housing provision, gender equality increased, and much more.

So why would the FSLN, enjoying an over 70 per cent electoral approval, turn “viciously” against its own people by becoming a dictatorship overnight in 2018 when the economy was going well and standards of living going up?

The well-orchestrated worldwide demonisation campaign against the FSLN government with allegations of undemocratic behaviour attributed to the Nicaraguan government might have confused many neutral observers.

Psychological warfare and media vilification have precisely the function of alienating general public opinion from progressive governments the US chooses to attack.

Many believed the pre-2016 referendum porky that Evo Morales had fathered an illegitimate child — (The scandalised Guardian, June 24 2016, wrote about a “telenovela of sex, lies, and paternity claims”) and that it might have been a factor in Morales narrowly losing the referendum on extending term limits.

The corrupt intervention of the Organisation of Latin American States (OAS) secretary-general Luis Almagro, with the support of the European Union’s “electoral mission” in Bolivia, falsely reported “irregularities” implying election fraud which led directly to the installation of the Jeanine Anez’s right-wing government.

Argentina’s former right-wing president, Mauricio Macri, sent to Bolivia a war arsenal of thousands of rounds of ammunition, anti-riot cartridges, rubber bullets and weapons, including machine guns.

In Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and his PT party were also subjected to media vilification which persuaded many in Europe and the US of his culpability in the Lava Jato corruption scandal, for which he was eventually tried and convicted on trumped up charges that led to his illegal and unjust imprisonment. Recently all the charges were dropped and Lula was released from prison.

Venezuela’s President Nicolas Maduro has denounced several attempts on his life and in May 2020 his country was subjected to a mercenary attack with the caught perpetrators publicly admitting culpability.

None of these outrages led to media condemnation even though Morales’s removal led to racist and political persecution and even massacres in Bolivia, the Lula smears created propitious conditions for the election of Bolsonaro and the violent attacks

in Venezuela could have led to the president's assassination and a civil war.

The brutal murder of Haiti's president Jovenel Moise by a hit squad of Colombian mercenaries has received a modicum of media condemnation and to some probing into Colombia's involvement.

On November 7 2021 Nicaraguans will elect a president, vice-president and 90 national assembly deputies. The US has orchestrated a stream of media-oriented provocations that may allow it not to recognise the results.

The US extreme right wing's desperation manifests itself in a media-driven effort to influence international progressive public opinion with a narrative of disillusionment with the FSLN (labelled Orteguismo), its isolation and its betrayal of Sandinismo. This is as malicious as it is false.

Under president Daniel Ortega and vice-president Rosario Murillo Nicaragua has successfully defended the nation's sovereignty: restored the 1979-1990 revolution social gains, defeated the 2018 coup attempt, and extended progressive socio-economic measures.

A good gauge of what would have happened had the 2018 coup attempt been victorious are Anez's government actions in Bolivia; Bolsonaro's fascist brutality and recklessness in Brazil, Guaido's criminal "interim presidency" in Venezuela.

Had the coup succeeded, the structural connection between Nicaragua's socio-economic development and national sovereignty would have been demolished, including the repression and possibly even murder of many Sandinistas and social leaders.

The atrocities perpetrated during the 2018 coup attempt (torture, setting on fire people and houses, health centres, radio stations) are irrefutable proof of this.

The FSLN government has the solidarity of the Sao Paulo Forum, a body made up of the Cuban Communist Party, Venezuela's PSUV, Bolivia's MAS, Brazil's Workers Party (PT), Argentina's Frente Grande and Mexico's Morena – to mention the most important – parties that command over 120 million votes and are or have been in government.

The Forum issued on June 16 2021 a statement in support of Nicaragua's sovereignty stating as false the allegations of "arbitrary detention of opposition figures."

The Puebla Group, set up by Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and Alberto Fernandez, presidents of Mexico and Argentina, respectively, issued a manifesto in February 2021 in support of Nicaragua (as well as Cuba and Venezuela) condemning US aggression.

The executive secretary of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-People's Trade Treaty (Alba-TCP), Sacha Llorenti, also condemned US aggression and the illegal sanctions against Nicaragua (and Cuba and Venezuela).

In July on the Sandinista Revolution's 42nd anniversary , Llorenti praised the "lessons of dignity given by the Nicaraguan people" and paid tribute to them for the "achievements [of] the Sandinista Revolution." Alba-TCP includes Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Grenada and the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

In Europe, foreign affairs are dominated by the EU's abject capitulation to US foreign policy. Shamefully, Europe recognised Guaido as Venezuela's "interim president," and the European Parliament has condemned Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Bolivia (the latter for the temerity of bringing Anez to justice).

Since the EU supports violent attacks against democracy in the Americas, it should have supported Trump's inspired assault on Washington's Capitol.

On January 6 2021, the US extreme right applied “regime change” at home in assault was carried out by armed, right-wing thugs, almost identical to US-led efforts in Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Cuba following the pattern of not recognition of election results, incessant spread of fake news, questioning the credibility of state institutions, fanaticisation of supporters, all seeking to prevent the proclamation as president of the real winner.

Supporting any form of US interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation by calling “the international community to act,” or by (un)wittingly parroting US State Department narratives, is tantamount to legitimising US “regime change” initiatives.

Were it not for US aggression and interference, countries such as Nicaragua would have taken off and developed democracy and social progress, as the short national sovereignty intervals of 1979-1990 and 2006-2018 have amply demonstrated.

Cuba, an educational, sport, medical and biotechnological power, due to the US blockade has lost US\$144 billion in the past six decades.

Imagine how Cuba could have developed and multiplied its generous solidarity to the world if it had not had to endure the criminal blockade.

Nicaragua is entitled to embark on its own alternative path of development that, as a matter of sacrosanct moral principle, must be determined by Nicaraguans alone without any external interference, and above all, in peace.

US hands off Latin America, US hands off Nicaragua!

(Abridged version - <https://prruk.org/nicaragua-the-right-to-live-in-peace/>)