

Why is the U.S. government targeting Nicaragua?

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Nicaraguans celebrate the 42nd anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution, July 19.

After learning that outright military invasions, which cost the lives of U.S. soldiers, are unpopular at home, the strategists of U.S. empire now prefer regime change

through hybrid warfare: manipulation of mainstream and social media to spread disinformation; the use of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to carry out work previously done by the CIA; and when those tactics fail, all-out economic warfare.

In Latin America, Cuba and Venezuela have borne the brunt of these efforts. But since 2018, so has Nicaragua.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) led the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979. In the 1980s, it brought important reforms to this impoverished country, despite the Reagan administration's counterrevolutionary war. Since returning to office in 2007, the FSLN has brought more prosperity to more Nicaraguans than at any time in the country's history, with massive poverty reduction and health improvements, free education, land reform, vast infrastructure projects, and newly-respected rights for women, youth, Afro-descendants and Indigenous peoples.

However, covert and overt funding by U.S. regime-change outfits for opposition media and NGOs created a small but powerful network of enemies. These sprang to action with an attempted coup in April 2018 that interrupted the peace in one of Latin America's safest countries.

The trigger was student protests over the unlikely issue of pension reform. The protests soon became violent as a cadre of NGO- and U.S. Embassy-trained social media influencers continued to spread fake news and bring more protesters into the streets, where they were sometimes targeted by anonymous snipers.

This tactic had been used previously in Ukraine in 2014 and in the Venezuelan guarimbas of 2014 and 2017. The Nicaraguan opposition and international corporate media narrative was that the National Police were violently repressing the people.

U.S.-funded NGOs spurred "spontaneous" but eerily identical uprisings in several cities simultaneously, while the country was bombarded with messages from social

media bots (a tactic that was recently replicated in the July 2021 protests in Cuba).

Government supporters were publicly tortured and murdered, and over 200 people died in three months of violence that damaged the country's economy, before peace was reinstated in July 2018. To preserve social peace, all those implicated in the violence benefited from an amnesty in 2019.

Since then, despite the sanctions imposed by the U.S. Congress at the end of 2018, the COVID-19 pandemic, and two powerful hurricanes that landed in Nicaragua last November, the country has been on the path to economic recovery. But now the U.S. government is planning to ratchet up the economic warfare with a packet of sanctions that "targets" over half of the population.

It is important to call out this RENACER Act as a significant escalation of economic warfare that could plunge the stable Nicaraguan economy into a long-term crisis, bringing death and deprivation to the population—especially the most vulnerable, such as children, the elderly and those with chronic health conditions—as we have seen in the 39 countries targeted by U.S. unilateral coercive measures.

More U.S. election interference

Additionally, a USAID plot targeting Nicaragua's November 2021 elections was leaked from the U.S. Embassy in Managua last year. It acknowledges that the FSLN may win in a fair election, in which case a "sudden transition" (coup) would have to take place.

Aware of the havoc that could be caused by the U.S.-funded NGO and media apparatus, Nicaragua's legislature beefed up laws to protect national sovereignty from foreign interference, adding that calling for sanctions to be imposed on the country constitutes treason.

Starting in June, about two dozen opposition activists have been jailed while under

investigation, many of them for repeating violations for which they had earlier received amnesty, others for money laundering of regime-change funds, and some for publicly calling for sanctions on their homeland.

Although the corporate media claims that these are presidential candidates targeted because they could defeat President Daniel Ortega in November, the fact is that none of them had a serious following or political movement behind them, and many do not even have a political party or qualify to be candidates.

There has been no outrage at their arrests among the Nicaraguan masses, who seem rather relieved that these individuals will not be allowed to repeat the chaos and violence of 2018.

Opinion polls consistently show that the FSLN enjoys more than 60% popular support. People demonstrated this by turning out in large numbers to celebrate the 42nd anniversary of the Revolution on July 19, despite the fact that no official gatherings were held due to pandemic health measures.

It seems more than likely that the Nicaraguan Revolution's progress will continue after the Nov. 7 elections. However, those of us in the U.S. must help it flourish by stopping Washington from inflicting economic warfare on the Nicaraguan people with new sanctions.

No coup! No sanctions! No war!

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