

Nicaragua Responds to “Unilateral Coercive Measures by a Hostile Foreign Power”

Sandinista Nicaragua, More Dignified and Victorious than Ever

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Nicaragua is in the news again. But not for being one of the countries with the greatest reduction in poverty and social inequality worldwide since 2007 (poverty by half, extreme poverty by a third, and going from being the fourth most unequal country to being the fourth least unequal in Latin America).

Nor is Nicaragua news for being the country with the highest level of direct ownership of the means of production by the working class in the Western Hemisphere (more than 50% of GDP and nearly 80% of economic units); nor for being one of the countries in the world that has most reduced illiteracy in the same period of time (from 35% to 3%); or for being one of the countries with the largest increase in per capita investment in health (from U\$32 to U\$70) and with the largest reduction in infant mortality (from 29 to 11.4 per 1,000 live births).

Nicaragua is not news for being the country in the world that has most reduced the gender gap (from 90th to 12th), the country with the highest presence of women in its cabinet (58.82%), as well as having the fourth highest presence of women in the legislative branch (48.4%) and being the country that most radically applies the criterion of gender equity across its social policies.

Nor is this country in the news for being among the countries that have most increased electricity coverage (from 53% to 99%) and the one that has most increased its renewable energy sources (from 2% to 90%); nor for being the safest country in Central America and one of the safest in Latin America (with a rate of 3.5 homicides per year per 100,000 inhabitants, Costa Rica being the closest with 11.2); nor is Nicaragua news for having one of the governments in the world with the highest sustained popular support for the longest period of time (with rates around 60% in the last eleven years, almost uninterruptedly).

But it is not for any of these achievements that Nicaragua has once again become newsworthy, but because it has applied its laws in a sovereign way, the most recent of these laws having been approved by an overwhelming majority of the people’s

representatives in the legislature and under which the relevant authorities, using their legitimate powers and fulfilling their constitutional duty, have ordered the arrest of various individuals (nineteen at the time of writing) for one or other of the following crimes:

- Actions publicly declared and undertaken by almost all those who have been arrested, aimed at achieving the imposition against Nicaraguan institutions and citizens of unilateral coercive measures by a hostile foreign power, the United States, with the purpose of boycotting public administration and the application of State policies, including the implementation of social programs thanks to which Nicaragua has reached the indices mentioned above via its model of social transformation and improvement in the living conditions of the great majority of its citizens.
- Conspiracy to destabilize the country, in the service of that foreign power, the United States, through the implementation of terrorism and violent actions in general.
- Money laundering in the financial operations of the “Violeta Barrios de Chamorro” Foundation, which also financed journalists, “political analysts” and writers (all of them claiming to be “independent”) with money coming from agencies known for their role in destabilizing governments not aligned with the interests of the United States, some of those agencies being the US government bodies like USAID and NED, but also others like the Soros foundations, and also European agencies such as OXFAM. That funding has been acknowledged by the people concerned. It is worth noting that when Nicaragua’s Foreign Agents Law was created, which obliges those who receive donations from other countries to report them and inform about their final use, this foundation formally closed its operations to evade complying with the law, in spite of which it continued receiving funds from the foreign agencies cited above as well as others. The specific operations of this criminal network are still under investigation by the competent authorities, who will explain the results of the investigation in due course.
- Serious anomalies in the administration by a banking entity of financial resources used to support illicit activities linked to finance from the aforementioned agencies.

Nicaragua is not obliged to justify to foreigners what it does or does not do in full and legitimate exercise of its sovereignty and self-determination, and in the defense of those principles, but in the face of the campaign of lies against the country that flood the news media daily, it is right and proper to defend it, just as the Sandinista Revolution has the right and duty to defend itself in any context, including of course, the battle of ideas.

The laws being applied by the Nicaraguan authorities to the people detained and who are receiving due process in accordance with the current legal norms, are similar to those that exist in most countries whose governments, brazen in their interference, have condemned the approval and application of those laws in Nicaragua for crimes committed after their entry into force, not for crimes prior to their entry into force, but for crimes committed subsequently, in compliance with the principle of laws being non-retroactive since the illegalities and crimes committed and promoted by most of these people during the attempted coup d’état in 2018 have already been judged, and for which those convicted were subsequently granted pardon, for the sake of peace and stability of the country.

When we talk about the crimes committed in 2018, during the coup attempt, they include murder and other crimes that caused dozens of deaths of Nicaraguans, about which it is worth remembering that, of the total of something over two hundred dead caused by the coup attempt, most of them were Sandinistas, of which, in turn, the majority died as a result of cold-blooded murders, after being kidnapped and subjected to torture, many of them documented by the perpetrators themselves in videos, circulated in social media, while in contrast, all the deaths in the opposition ranks were the result of street fighting, generally provoked by them.

But that atmosphere of instability and chaos lasted just three months (from April 18th to July 18th 2018), because the country very soon recovered tranquility and peace, thanks to the massive and organized participation of the people defending their nation and their revolution, as also happened during the war of aggression imposed on Nicaragua by Ronald Reagan's government in the 1980s, in which the Sandinista Revolution was also victorious, although in that case only after several years of intense struggle.

Turning now to the current situation, as is well known, at different times some of those recently detained by the Nicaraguan authorities had expressed presidential aspirations in the context of the upcoming elections to be held on November 7 of this year. Specifically, of the nineteen against whom an arrest warrant has been issued and of which there are seventeen under arrest, five had expressed that they wanted to run for the presidency, and two of them had submitted requests to the political party of their choice to do so, but there are six other presidential aspirants among the extreme right wing coup plotters, who are at liberty and for whom no arrest warrant has been issued and no indictment has been initiated; of them, there are also two who have submitted requests to be considered as presidential candidates by the political party of their choice. Not to mention the other sectors of the right wing that are likely participate in the elections.

The presence of presidential aspirants among those detained has led detractors of Nicaragua's Sandinista government to argue, abandoning all logic, that the investigative processes and the arrests made out are irrational, given that they self-evidently harm the political image of the government. That is to say, according to these "analysts", presidential aspirations should endow impunity and even worse, that the impunity should result from the government acting out of political convenience, obstructing the relevant institutions from fulfilling their role and applying the relevant legal norms, in strict compliance with the rule of law. In one opinion article, the writer even appeared scandalized because one of those implicated as a beneficiary of funding from the aforementioned agencies, who is not under arrest and was only called to testify before the Public Prosecutor's Office, is a winner of the Cervantes Literature Prize, as if this were a license to commit crimes.

Yes, it is indeed the case, from the electoral perspective, that the application of the law to these individuals has a political cost for Sandinismo, but the institutions of the Nicaraguan State would be very wrong to act on the basis of political criteria derived from electoral calculations, since the country's self-determination and sovereignty are imperative and are, moreover, inalienable principles of Sandinismo. This should serve as a lesson to the demagogues who spend their lives demanding that Nicaragua respect the rule of law and the subordination of institutions to the established legal order. This is, furthermore, the best demonstration that the reason for the arrests are not because the people concerned are political opponents or because they have aspirations to the presidency of the Republic.

Moreover, in all the opinion polls, including those conducted by the opposition, none of those detained even comes close to having the popular support of Sandinismo and in particular, the level of popular support for the President of the Republic, Comandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra, thus confirming that the arrests have been made using the strictest and most transparent application of the laws that govern the Nicaraguan State. And it is worth reiterating that these laws are very similar to those in force in the very same countries whose governments have condemned Nicaragua for the arrests.

A situation of particular concern in some sectors outside Nicaragua, in certain cases due to disinformation and in others due to lack of political awareness, has been that among the nineteen individuals against whom arrest warrants have been issued of whom seventeen have been detained, six of them belong to a political group created in the nineties by former Sandinistas, and among these six are three who held high positions in the Sandinista government of the 1980s and participated in the liberation war against the Somoza dictatorship.

First of all, it should be clear that none of that history should be a reason for impunity for anyone, but in the case of the former Sandinistas, the fact that they are no longer Sandinistas is not the reason for their arrest, since it does not constitute a crime, unlike treason which is one of the crimes for which they have been arrested, as is the case with the other people under arrest, all on the strictest legal basis. But there are things that very few people know among the ranks of the international Left outside Nicaragua, and this makes some people defend the individuals mentioned here as if they were the same revolutionaries they were earlier in their careers, and nothing is further from the truth.

These former Sandinistas joined the right wing early in the 1990s, when, while still militants of the FSLN, they publicly renounced socialism, anti-imperialism, the popular struggle and the vanguard character of the FSLN. In the end, they were defeated internally in the FSLN's Extraordinary Congress of May 1994 and they chose to abandon the FSLN and found a party in which they continued calling themselves Sandinistas, and which they also finally ended up renouncing, as was to be expected. Such that those people who continue to call them Sandinistas, if they are so fond of them, should respect them a little more and not call them something they themselves now reject. By the way, one of the individuals detained, of those who were linked to the Revolution and then took the path of the right, a while ago complained, using a good Nicaraguan term, that the name "Sandinista" caused her revulsion. So their admirers should think twice before continuing to describe them in that way.

It would take far too long and, anyway, is beyond the scope of this article to narrate here the history of this betrayal of Sandinismo. But it is worth mentioning some fundamental facts. Although these people were a minority in the FSLN Congress in 1994, since they were also a minority in the party's rank and file, they were nevertheless a majority among those who had held senior government and party posts in the 1980s. They were also a majority among those who had been elected to the legislature in the 1990 elections, so they exploited these advantages and shortly after the defeat suffered by Sandinismo in those elections they appropriated the material patrimony of the FSLN, and then in 1995 proceeded to reform the Constitution via a pact with the right wing. As a result, they eliminated the right to free health care and education, legitimized the privatization of public services, created a second round of voting so as to prevent the FSLN from winning the elections and imposed limits on presidential re-election to prevent Comandante Daniel Ortega from running again as a candidate, and they even established the qualified vote to elect

magistrates in the different institutions, with the hope that they themselves might be elected.

But after the disastrous electoral results of 1996 for the parties promoting those reforms, the only way to secure a qualified vote, a requirement imposed by those same parties to elect the positions in question, was an agreement between the two main parties of the time, the FSLN and the PLC, which the ex Sandinistas manipulated to accuse the FSLN of doing exactly what they themselves had already done when no law obliged them to do so, namely make a pact with the right wing, in their case for purposes harmful to the people's interests. But nothing they did then compares to what the ex Sandinistas would end up doing in the elections of 2008, 2011, 2012 and 2016, when they supported candidates of Nicaragua's most recalcitrant and fundamentalist right wing, which had the support of the United States. It is as if, for example, in Argentina, former guerrillas who had fought against the military dictatorships in that country had supported Macri in the presidential elections there, or as if in Chile they had supported Piñera, or in Brazil Bolsonaro.

The political parties that made the constitutional reforms of 1995, among them the ex Sandinistas recycled as an upstart right wing, consulted no one, not even even for the sake of appearances. In the following year's elections, all together they did not even receive 10% of the vote, which made evident the illegitimate and spurious character of their reforms. All this in spite of the fact that by having control of the electoral power, they blocked, in a self-evidently arbitrary way, any candidate who hindered their plans in those elections, something they forget when they accuse Sandinismo of sectarian abuse of the State institutions, since from their point of view only the right wing are impartial and transparent, when it controls those institutions. A curious fact is that the ex Sandinistas in question were even allies of the FSLN as part of the National Convergence political alliance in the local elections of 2000 and 2004, and also in the national elections of 2001, until they ran again on their own account in the national elections of 2006.

But the final definitive validation of these ex Sandinistas as counterrevolutionaries with no possible redemption was the failed coup attempt in 2018, when they united with pro-imperialist forces and led the armed counterrevolutionary actions that took place between April and July of that year. These individuals, who in the 1990s had already renounced the red and black flag, in 2018 accompanied the neo-Somocista hordes that repeatedly burned that revolutionary symbol, as also happened with the desecration of monuments and even the tombs of Heroes and Martyrs of the Revolution. One more expression of the levels to which these people had already descended by then, was their participation in meetings with individuals like Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Marco Rubio, from whom they received support, as the coup plotters did in general from Álvaro Uribe, with whom they proudly took pictures, and from Jair Bolsonaro, who, making a fool of himself in the way only he knows how to do, offered Brazilian territory to prosecute the Sandinistas.

The café lounge pseudo-Left, which loves to join in the declarations of the imperialist powers against the Sandinista government, has long reproached the ruling Sandinistas in Nicaragua for an alleged alliance with private business leaders and the Catholic Church. Regarding the former, in Nicaragua, since Sandinismo returned to government, the percentage of GDP produced by means of production under associative, cooperative, family and community ownership went from less than 40% to more than 50%, to the detriment of traditional private enterprise, which saw its economic importance decrease from more than 60% to less than 50% of GDP, and in the first nine of the fourteen years that Sandinismo has been in government since 2007, the minimum wage of workers increased ten times more than in

the seventeen neoliberal years. This is hardly favorable to the interests of private capitalist enterprise.

When it first came to power in 1979, Sandinismo offered private enterprise a framework of understanding and consensus for the sake of the country's stability, but since at that time solidarity with the Sandinista Revolution was in vogue, the characteristic snobbery of the café lounge Left did not allow it to accuse Sandinismo at that time of seeking alliances with business people, who in the end back then did not accept the offer of coexistence, as they did when Sandinismo returned to power in 2007. Then, for some years, big business had no other option but pragmatism. However, after some time, at the first opportunity that presented itself and as is to be expected when there are contradictions between antagonistic interests, private business lashed out against the Sandinista government and, together with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, was among the most aggressive sectors during the 2018 coup attempt, curiously enough with the support of all those people outside Nicaragua who accused Sandinismo of being allied with them.

As for the alleged alliance of the FSLN with the Catholic hierarchy, this is a kind of worldwide urban myth. There has not been a single day since Sandinismo returned to government in 2007, as there was not before, of course, in which Nicaragua's Catholic Church leaders have not uttered all kinds of attacks against Sandinismo. The myth of this false alliance stems from the rapprochement that Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo made with Sandinismo during the last years of his life, but that rapprochement cost him precisely the support of the Vatican, so that as soon as he gave the first signs of reconciliation with Sandinismo, Cardinal Obando fell foul of Nicaragua's Catholic Church hierarchy. There are also sectors on the Left whose problem is simply not having the infallible compass of anti-imperialism. That is to say, when one lacks direct knowledge of the situation of a country, it is enough to see which side the Empire and its disinformation media are on in order to at least have the ability to give the benefit of the doubt .

In Nicaragua the term "*puchito*" is popularly used as a synonym for little, and partly for that reason the coup leaders are known as "*los puchos*", but the use of the term "*pucho*" in this case, has a connotation that is applicable beyond a quantitative sense, to allude to those who have no vocation for power, despite the fact that they have exercised it for so long. In Nicaragua, the bourgeoisie seems to have lost its instinct for power as a social class, an unusual phenomenon, but symptomatic of a true revolution.

At the world level, however, unfortunately, there is also an abundance of what one might call the "*pucho Left*", that is, those self-styled Leftist sectors, which are stumbling around disoriented in the world or even in their respective national situations, without a compass to guide them, not just because they are a minority, but because they have not matured enough politically or worse, because they have started rotting away at some point in their erratic wandering. That Left which instead of denouncing imperialist interference, instead of attacking the common enemy of those who are supposed to fight for systemic change at a global level, and that in addition, despite their own impotent inaction, presume to judge who is revolutionary and who is not, or which revolution is a true one and which revolution is not, should make their own revolution so as to be able to preach by example and earn the moral authority to speak in the way they do.

But the coup right wing in Nicaragua is also *puchito* because it has no life of its own. It is a right wing on life-support provided by its imperialist owners. And it is not the fault of Sandinismo that the *puchito* right wing is led by confessed traitors to the nation, who would

also be in jail in any self-respecting country. They are money launderers and even drug traffickers, like some others who were arrested some years earlier, not for the other crimes they had also committed, about which some of them even publicly boasted in messages broadcast in widely disseminated videos, and for which they had already been pardoned before, but in these other cases for common crimes very appropriate to their questionable moral condition, although now they seek to present themselves as political prisoners.

Finally, the strength of the coup-mongering right wing in Nicaragua is evident when, despite its most visible spokesmen being arrested for their misdeeds, not for their presidential aspirations or for simply being opposition, the most absolute calm prevails in the country. Life continues its course in the most serene atmosphere of peace imaginable, and not even the self same *puchos* interrupt their normal routine or even their recreational activities. If the arrested criminals were really political leaders, the situation would be very different. In 2018, when the coup plotters followed the orders of the interventionist imperialist agencies, they manipulated many people via psychological warfare using it as a component of the new coup d'état format designed by their imperial owners. Back then they wasted no time asking for permission to take to the streets.

But while it is easier to manipulate people than it is to convince him they are being manipulated, when they do finally become aware of the deception they have suffered then it is very difficult to manipulate them again. And that is what happens when the new psychological warfare coup formats fail. They will never again snatch from the Nicaraguan people the peace that has cost them so much nor the only true peace of social justice and freedom it makes possible.

Just as it is true that happiness can only be achieved when certain ethical values prevail and which overall in society can only predominate as the product and fundamental content of its revolutionary transformation. That kind of change is the only one from which the new Nicaragua under construction could emerge and from which it is emerging, with Sandinismo at the forefront, in permanent rebellion and victorious resistance against the world power of imperialism. And that itself is part of a long tradition of struggle dating from even before the mid-nineteenth century, when Nicaraguan and Central American forces defeated the filibuster troops sponsored by southern United States slave-owners; passing through the expulsion of the occupying US troops by General Augusto C. Sandino in the 1930's; the overthrow in 1979 of the Somoza dictatorship imposed by the United States after the assassination of Sandino; the victory against the war of aggression imposed by the US government in the 1980s, and then against the neoliberalism imposed by electoral blackmail in the 1990s and following years, and finally against the attempted coup d'état in 2018. The tradition includes all the new victories that are being added in this struggle, one of whose fundamental objectives is, as Carlos Fonseca, whose birthday is commemorated today, declared: "A change of system, the overthrow of the exploiting classes and the victory of the exploited classes".

In other words, the Sandinista government is popular rebellion in power, fighting from the government against the age-old system imposed by the oppressor classes; and as Ricardo Morales Avilés said, for this struggle to bear fruit "so many things must be changed ... first power, property, ourselves, and then... fresh air and maize for everyone; fresh air and flowers for all". This is what Sandinista Nicaragua is committed to achieving, today more dignified and victorious than ever.

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