
After The Failed Coup, After All The Lies, Nicaragua Rebuilds

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Despite everything, the government has committed to rebuilding Nicaragua, better than before, writes Tortilla Con Sal.

Nicaragua is entering a new political phase of reconstruction in multiple senses, now the U.S.-backed right-wing coup attempt has failed. The political opposition have suffered another catastrophic failure. After months of intimidation and insecurity; savage violence and economic blockade at the hands of the extremist opposition, people in Nicaragua long for a return to peaceful social and economic life. Overseas, Western media and NGOs have confirmed their role as propaganda outlets for the U.S. government and its allies.

Media from the Guardian and the New York Times to the BBC and Al Jazeera – as well as phony progressive media, such as Democracy Now – have misrepresented the crisis, as have human rights organizations such as Amnesty International. All have deliberately omitted overwhelming evidence of crimes, violations and abuses by Nicaragua's opposition. The destruction of Sandinista radio stations; the well-documented strategy of torture and intimidation to terrorize ordinary people; the murder of 22 police officers and dozens more Sandinista supporters, as well as 400 police officers injured with gunshot wounds, are only the most egregious omissions.

These deceitful Western media and NGOs also omitted the taking hostage of hundreds of truck drivers for over a month; the destruction by opposition terror gangs of public sector buildings, vehicles and equipment running into hundreds of millions of dollars; attacks on over 60 schools; damage and destruction of over 50 ambulances; attempted murder of and threats against Sandinista student leaders: the list of omissions is damning. Similarly, these same media have used fake news of disappearances and non-existent police attacks, as well as falsely claiming the protesters were mainly peaceful students. Mendaciously attributing all deaths to the government, phony opposition human rights NGOs and the Interamerican Commission for Human Rights have inflated the casualty list with people whose deaths had nothing to do with the protests.

Systematic Falsehood

In tune with that policy of systematic falsehood, practically no Western mainstream media reported the overwhelming demonstrations of support for President Ortega's government on July 19. In Managua, aerial photos showed hundreds of thousands of people packing the main Plaza de la Fe and the adjacent boulevard. To avoid the threat of violent opposition ambushes, instead of the traditional July 19 celebration with people traveling from across Nicaragua to the capital Managua, separate events were held in Nicaragua's main urban centers, also with massive participation. By contrast, an opposition march held in Managua on Saturday July 21 attracted barely 1,000 participants

Few observers familiar with Nicaragua will be surprised at this outcome. The government always had the support of the labor movement and the great majority of people in the popular economy that generates around 70 percent of employment. The opposition coalition against the government consisted of right-wing big business; reactionary Catholic bishops; U.S. government-funded NGOs and related groups like the foreign-funded anti-Canal movement; regional organized crime; Colombian finance interests, and embittered ex-Sandinistas now allied with right-wing U.S. politicians. A look at how the attempted coup developed explains much about why it failed.

Social media massively reproduced the initial big lie about a non-existent massacre of students on April 18, provoking widespread outrage. Then between April 19 and April 22, opposition extremists ruthlessly exploited legitimate protests, creating provocations and attacks on public and private property, and causing numerous deaths and injuries. Opposition media and U.S.-funded NGOs falsely blamed all the casualties on the government, provoking more widespread outrage locally and also feeding an international diplomatic offensive. By April 23, opposition demands switched from repeal of proposed legislation to a non-negotiable demand for the government resign.

President Ortega proposed a national dialogue, but the opposition then started operating roadblocks and intensifying violent provocations. The political wing of the coup, the reactionary Catholic bishops and U.S.-funded NGO representatives extorted concessions from the government as a precondition for participating in the dialogue, including the withdrawal of police to their stations – also something international media practically never report. Then through May and June the opposition continued extremely violent provocations, causing numerous deaths, attacking police quartered in their stations and strangling the economy with their roadblocks.

International Condemnation

While international condemnation developed based entirely on false opposition propaganda, the coup attempt's momentum inside Nicaragua collapsed. By mid-June popular opinion had reacted strongly against the roadblocks; the intimidation and delinquency; the torture and abuse, the murders and the wanton destruction. A great majority of people were deeply angered by the economic and social effects of the roadblocks, which caused serious, widespread hardship for ordinary people who live from day to day or week to week. In addition to their own personal difficulties, people came to realize the broader reality of the coup.

Few people in Nicaragua now believe the propaganda lie about a government crackdown on peaceful protests. Regular legitimate peaceful protests took place throughout the crisis, but these were constantly abused by provocateurs to create incidents causing death and destruction. Nor do most people in Nicaragua believe the lie that the people leading the protests after the first few days were students. Most middle-class students who began the demonstrations on April 18 avoided serious violence and few took part in the roadblocks. Most less well-off public university students soon realized they'd been duped and used as cannon fodder by opposition extremists. However, overseas opinion continues to be fooled by Nicaragua's opposition media offensive.

People in North America and Europe, trapped in a propaganda bubble, are denied the real-life information they need to be able think freely for themselves. All Western mainstream media and most alternative media operate an endless garbage-in, garbage-out feedback loop. Their anti-democratic betrayal of people's right to truthful news intensifies in inverse relation to the decline of U.S. power and influence and the consequent desperation of U.S. and allied elites. In Latin America, their victims include Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela and Nicaragua, and leaders such as Nicolas Maduro, Evo Morales, Daniel Ortega, Lula da Silva, Rafael Correa and Cristina Fernandez: any government or leader challenging U.S. dominance in the region.

Although the coup attempt failed internally in Nicaragua, it achieved the momentum needed to sustain an international offensive – setting in motion probable sanctions at a time when Nicaragua needs to rebuild all that has been destroyed, both materially and morally. Faced with looming economic and diplomatic attacks, the Sandinista

government is likely to strengthen the popular economy even more than before and rethink domestic policy in the context of the political polarization that has supplanted the previously successful model of consensus and alliances.

Stronger Voice

With little popular support, the country's political opposition seems committed to continue destabilizing the economy by promoting foreign intervention. The Catholic church is finished as the principal moral arbiter in Nicaragua after committing political and social suicide by supporting the coup's murderous, sadistic violence. Big business is discredited as a trustworthy interlocutor for economic policy because it was the popular economy that sustained the country through the crisis. Grassroots-based evangelical churches now have a stronger voice in national life than before, because they very publicly rejected the cynical hypocrisy of the Catholic bishops. These are important changes for Nicaragua.

In institutional terms, the national police have strengthened their moral prestige as they re-establish citizen security. The army stayed completely out of the civil conflict generated by the coup attempt. Its prestige, too, has been enhanced. Both institutions categorically support the government. Politically, the FSLN has consolidated its core support of over 50 percent of Nicaraguans. It seems extremely unlikely there will be early elections before those scheduled in 2021. Nicaragua has entered a new phase: balancing between the inherent political instability caused by a weak, divided opposition and the economic attack threatened by sadistic, vindictive U.S. and European elites. Despite everything, the government has committed to rebuilding Nicaragua, better than before.
