

Effects of foreign interference on nicaragua



Nicaragua is a beautiful country, yet it has many deep scars. The beautiful beaches, tropical forests, lakes and mountains of this small Latin American country hide the wounds caused by foreigners, well. This poor country has been occupied dozens of times by persons who claim to know what is best for this country.

Nicaragua has been ruled by the Spanish empire, Conquistadors, Mexico, a confederation of Central American States, Honduras, several dictators, a socialist-styled government, the U. S. marines, so called “ puppet leaders”, and finally as it stands, a democratically elected government. Since the turn of the century, no country has had more influence on this poverty-stricken country than the United States of America. The foreign policies of the United States have resulted in an overall decline in the Nicaraguan peoples quality of life.

The United States has been directly involved in the erosion of the Nicaraguan economy, political stability, and also its social infrastructure. The present situation of Nicaragua can be directly linked to the United States’ policies. The Nicaraguan economy has been traditionally based on agriculture, light industrial production, and exports. The United States destroyed these industries to a point where they are only fractionally as productive as previously.

During the 1970’s, the agriculture industry of Nicaragua was split into two parts. Most farmers owned the land that they farmed. These farms were world-class examples of efficiency, productivity, and profitability. ¹ The remainder of the farms in Nicaragua were state-owned and run cooperatives.

These farms were also very successful and were instrumental in supplying Nicaragua with crops that the other farmers did not produce.

These cooperatives were also dedicated to studying agriculture; many new developments in the field were created here, including seeds used by the other farmers. The Nicaraguan agriculture industry was thriving. In 1982, the United States began backing both militarily and financially, contra-revolutionary forces, located in Honduras (the contras). The sole aim of the contras was to destabilize Nicaragua so that the government could be overthrown. The U. S.

/Contras specifically targeted the co-operatives and the other most-successful farms in the country. They bombed the farms, kidnapped employees, killed livestock, poisoned the land with chemicals, and in general terrorized the industry. " Financed by the CIA and Pentagon..

. contra attacks have caused an estimated \$250 million (U. S. 1982 dollars) in property damage..

. by burning peasant farms, granaries, tractors and trucks, the contras have undermined Nicaragua's food supply. " 2. As a result, the agriculture industry has been destroyed to point where Nicaragua can no longer feed its own people, let alone give their farmers a decent life. In a country where agriculture is one of the biggest industries, this is obviously a huge blow to the economy.

Another important industry in Nicaragua was the light-industrial production industry. This industry employed many of the Nicaraguans who were not

farmers. This industry imported raw materials, and semi-finished goods, and then finished them completely so they could be sold in Nicaragua and the rest of the western world. During the 1970's, this industry accounted for 25 percent of the nation's GDP and it was very successful. 3 In the early 1980's, the U. S.

formed a trade embargo against Nicaragua. This embargo banned the export of U. S. goods to Nicaragua and also forced the trading partners of the U. S. to do the same. As a result, the light-production industry could no longer import technology, parts, and raw materials. The industry collapsed, unable to make products out of very scarce materials. " The U.

S. is nevertheless Nicaragua's largest trading partner...

the sanctions therefore, are a meaningful economic pressure point because they alter trading relationships... production levels.

.. nd thereby force Nicaragua to restructure its now, faltering economy. 4"

Obviously, the aim of the U.

S. was to hurt the Nicaraguan economy by banning trade, and thereby harm industrial production. They accomplished their sadistic goal. The remaining large portion of Nicaragua's economy during the 1970's was centered on trade overall.

Nicaragua immensely benefited from trading with many foreign countries. It was in the unique niche of having good trading relationships with both the U. S. and her allies, and with the Soviet Union and her satellite states.

Nicaragua actively, and heavily traded, agricultural products, raw materials, health equipment, minerals, foodstuffs, and many other goods with almost every nation in the world.

When the U. S. instituted their trade embargo, they succeeded in severely harming the Nicaraguan economy, much to their dismay however, the people of Nicaragua simply increased their reliance on other countries as trade partners. In an illegal and clearly brutal act of aggression, the CIA covertly mined the harbors of Nicaragua. Ships carrying products out of Nicaragua, or bringing in imports were in danger of being blown up.

As a result, international trade fell to a standstill. Ships refused to transport goods in Nicaraguan waters out of a fear of being blasted into pieces. “ The CIA delayed for six weeks in responding to a request by the Senate Select committee on Intelligence for a briefing on covert activities in Nicaragua, which included the mining of harbors... after the briefing.

.. it was concluded that the covert operations..

. severely harmed Nicaragua’s ability to trade with foreign nations. ” 5 Once again, the U. S. accomplished its aspiration; it relentlessly harmed Nicaragua’s economy. The United States of America has specifically targeted the economy of Nicaragua by trying to destroy the agriculture industry, light industrial production, and the trading industry of Nicaragua.

They have accomplished their ruthless aims through the use of the contra’s, economic sanctions, and through military action. By harming the Nicaraguan economy, they have destroyed the Nicaraguans’ employment, and their

ability to feed themselves and have therefore decreased their quality of life. Nicaragua has had a long and tumultuous political history. Before 1990, no political leader had ever left office willingly. Nicaragua has been ruled by the Spanish empire, conquistadors, Mexico, a confederations of central American states, several dictators, a US citizen, a socialist government, several “puppet governments”, the US marines, and finally, as it stands, a democratically-elected government.

No other country in the world has had more influence on Nicaraguan politics than the US which has invaded sovrein Nicaragua, over seven times in the last two hundred years. The US has undermined the authority of the Nicaraguan government by participating in direct interventions, which challenge the sovereignty of this nation. Under their most recent intervention, they have interfered with Nicaragua’s sovereignty by; undermining the Sandinista government; unilaterally interfering in its right to determine its own political system; and by openly encouraging/funding a rebellion by peoples who do not represent the majority. By interfering with Nicaraguan sovereignty, the U.

S. as decreased the standard of living, by not allowing Nicaraguans to have a stable political climate. The U. S.

government has clearly interfered with the sovereignty of Nicaragua by trying to “play God” in determining who has the best interests of the country in mind. The U. S. has undermined the present government of Nicaragua by attacking Nicaraguan government troops through the use of the contras. They have undermined the Nicaraguan government’s ability to

dictate its own economic affairs by using sanctions and other not so friendly methods such as mining Nicaraguan waters.

They refuse to recognize any leftist government of Nicaragua as legitimate and the U. S. claims to know what is best for Nicaraguans. However, there is a clear division of interests, the interests of the U. S. place the interests of Nicaragua second and as such, the quality of life of Nicaraguans has suffered immensely.

The U. S' s main concern with Nicaragua was that Nicaragua was falling under the Soviet sphere of influence. As soon as the new Sandinista government began supporting social programs and redistributing wealth in a more fair and healthy way, the U. S. government cried “ commie”. By attacking the Sandinista government, the U.

S. has pushed many true democrats and moderate liberals, into waiting Soviet arms. The U. S. claims to stand for freedom and democracy, but in practice they have been highly hypocritical. They for years openly supported fascist dictators who brutally oppressed and killed large amounts of people.

In Nicaragua, the U. S. supported the pre-Sandinista, Somoza dictatorship whose family stole millions out of Nicaraguan tax coffers and abused the poor taking kickbacks from the rich. Yet, the U. S.

upported the corrupt Somoza family because at that time, it was profitable, Somoza's let in huge U. S. companies who controlled vast amounts of arable land. The U. S. profited from this dictatorship and they cared not, about the poor exploited Nicaraguans.

The U. S. demanded that the Sandinista government step aside, in favour of a U. S. puppet capitalist government, whereas more exploitation could commence. By hurting the Sandinista government and by trying to make Nicaragua a free market, the U.

S. stopped Nicaraguans from being able to self-determine their political and economic system. By denying them this right, the U. S. has stood in the way of their freedom, and has decreased their quality of life, by making Nicaragua politically instable.

Finally, by encouraging a state of war in Nicaragua, the U. S. has caused the political instability of this humble nation to directly affect its residents. The U.

S. government has funded the contras and has supplied them with military assistance and technical help. The contras do not represent the interests of the everyday Nicaraguan. They embody another face for U. S.

intervention in Central America. The U. S. has used the contras to make the political climate of Nicaragua unstable, and this has led to the Sandinista government's inability to concentrate its effort and resources on worthy causes, rather than on self-defense and self-reliance.

These actions have caused political turmoil throughout Nicaragua, to the point where people can no longer trust the government, or have faith in it. The US has broken international and their own laws many, many times, so that they can "protect" the people of Nicaragua, when in essence, they are doing more harm than good. By openly undermining the present government; unilaterally interfering in its right to determine its own political system; and

by openly encouraging/funding a rebellion by peoples who do not represent the majority; the U. S. hurt all reforms made by the Sandinista government.

This erosion of the political stability of the entire Nation, and introduction of violence into the everyday lives of Nicaraguans, has decreased their standard of living. During the 1970's, Nicaraguans could expect wonderful social services. They had access to world-renowned health care, education, and social welfare programs. The government knew that if it invested in its people, the country would become more independent and stronger. The United States, through military action, and by exerting other influence on Nicaragua, ruined these strong social services destroying health care, education, and welfare programs. Nicaragua had world-class health care.

In 1983, the World Health Organization called Nicaragua a "model country in health care" Nicaragua had more qualified doctors per capita than many "developed" western countries. It had embarked upon a successful spree of modernization and capital improvement. Polio and many other revenging diseases had been eradicated. Soon however, the implementation of the trade embargo began to take its toll.

"How can I treat patients with no medicine? With no supplies? All I can do is tell them to get rest" 6 The US policy of refusing all aid and imports to Nicaragua hurt the health system because medicines, vaccinations and other important supplies were unavailable. This is obviously detrimental to running a country, if people cannot depend on medical care, then they feel like they cannot depend on the government. The erosion of the health system decreases the quality of Nicaraguans' life. Nicaragua also possessed a

wonderful education system. Literacy had been steadily improving at in 1982, the literacy rate in Nicaragua was actually higher than in the U.

S. 7 Education was a priority for the government. The government was striving hard to encourage rural children to go to school, and it even funded its students to go study abroad for university if they so wanted. Two new universities were built in five years and the government was embarking on an adult education plan. Then the U. S.

egan to financially and militarily back the contras. They trained and supplied the contras to harm Nicaragua by hurting the citizens' moral. " The contras commenced a reign of terror on educational professionals and the institutions they worked in. The contra's specifically targeted teaching facilities, personnel, and institutions, as a result we have now been thrown back to the Somoza dynasty. " 8 The Somoza dynasty was a time when there were no proper schools or other services other than the absolute basics.

Clearly, by blowing up teachers' training schools, terrorizing students, killing staff, and such, the U. S. funded contra's have destroyed a first class education system, decreasing the quality of Nicaraguan's lives. Another aspect of Nicaragua's lovely social infrastructure was their social welfare programs. Programs such as old age security, welfare, pension plans, disability payments, were all introduced in Nicaragua to help give a hand up to the poor. Nicaragua was one of the first countries to introduce these programs, but sadly, they were the hardest hit when the government became strapped for money as a result of having to spend enormous amounts of money to defend against U.

S. aggression. When national defense is necessary and you cannot feed or cure your people, other programs are thought of later. " Significant advances in health, education and political reform are jeopardized by the US- directed war being waged by the contras..

. because of the contra attacks 25% of the national budget must be diverted to defense. As of July 1984, no new projects in health or education can be undertaken..

. all other government programs are suspended while they are under review.

9The canceling of social welfare benefits will have a destabilizing effect and once again, the United States had meddled with something that was working quite well. All of Nicaragua's wonderful social services were destroyed by the United States. What were once, proud educational systems, health systems, and social welfare systems, have been destroyed by the United States in its diabolical quest to destroy the Sandinista socialist government.

The United States has used its might, economic sanctions, contra-war, and its influence, to destroy the lives of these now-impoverished people. By destroying these previously successful social services, the US has caused an overall decline in the quality of the Nicaraguans' lives. " Sandinista reforms are succeeding despite immense economic and military pressure from Washington. If Nicaragua is indeed a threat to U. S.

interests (as President Regan asserts), it is a threat because of the hope its example gives to the poor. Hope is a gift that the poor seldom receive, and it threatens the dominant economic interests (local and foreign) of Central America" 10 The foreign policies of the United States have resulted in an

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overall decline in the Nicaraguan peoples quality of life. The United States has been directly involved in the erosion of the Nicaraguan economy, political stability, and finally its social infrastructure. They have done so using tools such as funding, directing, and militarily, supporting the contra war, by emplacing economic sanctions and encouraging or forcing allies to do the same, and by using their sheer might and influence to their own vile ends. The U. S.

destroyed a remarkable attempt by the Sandinista's to help Nicaragua out of poverty. They had no proper justification. Only now, close to twenty years later, are corrections to the damage slowly being accomplished.