

US Threatens Nicaragua with more Sanctions.

On June 8 this year, US Senators Marco Rubio and Tim Kaine introduced legislation which would extend the US government's authority to impose sanctions on Nicaragua through to December 31, 2028. The bill is now in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with no vote taken yet.

The current sanctions imposed on Nicaragua by the US are reminiscent of the aggression witnessed in the 1980s when the Reagan Administration was involved in illicit activities, including the sale of cocaine and weapons to fund terrorists in Nicaragua. These actions resulted in the suffering of thousands of Nicaraguans and left the country impoverished and unstable. It is disheartening to see history repeating itself with the resumption of interventionist policies under the Trump and Biden administrations.

The old sanctions stopped most loans from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank and the US now wants to stop the CABEL loans as well. The new sanctions seek to restrict loans for economic development from the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEL) which funds roads, water and energy projects, reforestation, and housing in the country. The proposed new sanctions also mandate a search for violations or some other way to suspend Nicaragua's participation in the Dominican Republic- Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA), a trade agreement which has benefited both the US and Nicaragua. If successful, this would have the affect of seriously harming the progress made in building Nicaragua's infrastructure and economy. Additionally, blocking imports of sugar, gold and now coffee and beef from Nicaragua would not only harm US consumers but also undermine the sustainable agricultural practices and climate-friendly production methods employed by Nicaraguan farmers.

Contrary to the negative portrayal often presented, Nicaragua has made significant strides in improving the lives of its citizens. The Sandinista-led government has restored free healthcare, constructed hospitals and clinics, and revitalised the education system by providing free education from preschool through trade school, college, and professional school. These social programmes have alleviated poverty, reduced hunger, and fostered economic growth in Nicaragua. It is important to recognise and support these achievements rather than undermine them with sanctions which will serve only to adversely affect the economy, increase unemployment and cause the most harm for the most vulnerable people in the country.

The imposition of more and more sanctions on Nicaragua has nothing to do with 'promoting democracy' but rather a continuing attempt by the US to destabilise Nicaragua and bend the country to its will. It is crucial to respect the sovereignty and democratic choices of the Nicaraguan people, rather than imposing external demands for regime change. International solidarity with Nicaragua remains as important as ever and NSCAG will continue to campaign against the US's 'regime change' agenda by opposing these sanctions, defending Nicaragua's sovereignty and supporting Nicaragua's right to self-determination.